

Oakland Public Library
 Director's Report to the Library Advisory Commission (LAC)
 April, 2016

DIRECTOR'S ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

- PLA in Denver (April 5-9, 2016) was a great opportunity for me to visit with old friends, see lots of changes to the city I spent over 20 years growing up in, and enjoy another incredible and productive Public Library Association conference that comes every other year. I was also pleased to see almost all of OPL staff at PLA having a good time. I've asked staff to provide highlights of the conference below. I have done the same. A highlight of the conference was attending two very different presentations - one very somber; the other very energetic.
 - The first, called *It Happened in My Town: Collaboration in Crisis*, we heard from three different cities impacted by two natural disasters - fire and flooding - and, the most difficult to hear from - a shooter in a movie theater. The audience heard from George Noe, City Manager, and Patti Bateman, Library & Cultural Services Director, City of Aurora, CO, about the fateful evening of the shooting that happened across the street from the City Main Library and City Center. The theater is visible from both and the Main Library has particular meaning for me since I was the manager there in the '90s. Twelve people died and 70 were wounded that night in 2012. The Library became the center for healing, for family gatherings, for press conferences, for information distribution, for outreach efforts to the community on helping adults and children to understand grief, tragedy, and trauma. We also heard from Miriam Anderson Lytle with the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, IL, about the flooding that regularly occurs in that part of the country and the library's role in helping to keep people safe, communication open, and accurate information flowing. Finally, Paul Watson-Lakamp with Poudre Valley River Public Library District in Fort Collins, CO, spoke of the horrendous High Park Fire, the second-worst fire in Colorado. Several staff lost homes, so in addition to the "care and feeding" of the public that we all normally undertake, there was also the nurturing of our staff that needs to happen during these difficult times. Also this month, I assisted the Pacific Library Partnership Regional System located in San Mateo, of which I am Vice-Chair, in interviews for their Deputy Director.
 - Moving on to a more spirited presentation, I was delighted to see that Kathleen DiGiovanni was also at the *Design Thinking at Your Library: Try Try Again*. This had a number of folks presenting from public libraries from San Jose, Rancho Cucamonga, and Yolo County. In fact, this was an interactive presentation and was more about learning the concept, practicing, and putting it into a design. The room was set up with all of us sitting at table rounds - good for getting to know new people. We were given stickies, asked to think big - Ideal Library: real big; real, real big; money no object big. You get the picture. Also, tech objects, etc. Lots of creative thinking and juices flowing and lots of fun. One of the last pieces was building the prototype - very imaginative pieces that came out of that process and for a session that was at the end of the day, there was a lot of energy to go around. Our table - an Odor Eliminator! Sits above the door of the Library as everyone walks in....Design Thinking at its best!

- **Lana Adlawan, Supervising Librarian for Teen Services:**
 - Keep an eye on what Denver Public Library is doing with their *Idea Lab* and maker programs. The Idea Lab is a wonderful space in their library, and they readily offer support for those without an established makerspace.
 - Madison Public Library and a representative from the mayor's office in Madison also offered "*Engaged and Inclusive: Institutional Approaches to Racial Equity and Social Justice*" which is a focus their entire city is involved in, and I was inspired to live and work in a city that is also addressing these issues citywide.
 - One of my favorite presentations of the conference was "*Safe in the Stacks: Public Libraries Serving LGBTQ Homeless Youth*" a presentation by a representative from the True Colors Fund and Julie Winkelstein from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Julie was also a featured speaker at the California Library Association Conference in Oakland in 2014, but I am continually impressed by how much she knows about reaching out to these young people and her level of care and respect in her approach. It was stressed over and over in the presentation that library behavior signage and fees can be a huge barrier to homeless youth feeling comfortable reaching out to staff for assistance.

 - **Mary Schrader, Supervising Librarian for Branches:**
 - PLA in Denver was great! Everyone in the City was so nice. I had an opportunity to attend some great workshops. One that interested me personally and would make for some great programs in Oakland was titled *Score! Engaging Sports Fans at Your Library*. The presenter reminded us that sports fans are not passive. They like to be engaged. He even suggested showing live games as they are played - which I think could be a little tricky. But, we are so lucky in Oakland to have 3 professional sports teams, one of which is going to the playoffs. Some ideas that might be possible in Oakland:
 - Request sports memorabilia for display from one of the teams (or all 3)
 - If that doesn't pan out, request sports memorabilia for display from staff
 - Host a fantasy football league or NCAA bracket challenge. Winner's name gets put on a plaque in the library
 - Hold a sports trivia challenge at the library or a pub in the community.
 - Display a Sports Hall of Fame with pictures of local sports figures.
 - Could even do displays of local h.s. or college teams.
 - Another program was *Immigration Reform: Is Your Library Ready?* This focused on DACA - which already exists - (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and DAPA - which is proposed - (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans). Ways that libraries can help our communities:
 - Be a source of reliable information
 - Help provide a checklist of necessary documents
 - Partner with an agency such as Si Se Puede; Legal Aid Society; USCIS.
 - Host DACA and Naturalization clinics.
 - Provide ESL classes or Citizenship classes
- Remember to maintain political neutrality, do lots of outreach outside the library, and be careful about customer privacy.

Good times to host programs are when there is a "spike" in the news which will be April 18 and the end of June this year. I don't think we can hit the April 18 date but we can plan for the end of June. California currently has 1.1 million undocumented immigrants so we certainly have an audience.

- **Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni, Senior Librarian, Adult Reference Services:**
 - Here are two brief PLA highlights from me: "*This Ain't Your Grandma's Library...Or Is It? Serving Older Adults in a Changing World*" This dynamic session was led by Wendy Pender, Older Adults Project Specialist at the King County (Washington) Library. Pender talked about preconceptions about and stereotyping of older adults and about the expectations of aging Baby Boomers, among many other things. She also offered some concrete programming suggestions, strategies for recruiting and using older volunteers, and partnerships in the community.
 - There was plenty of food for thought in the *Big Ideas* talk given on Saturday morning by *Anand Giriharadas*. He's a writer for the New York Times and is the author of "The True American: Murder and Mercy in Texas. His talk was focused on inequality and second chances in America, the American Dream, and why we need to broaden the topic when we talk about race and access to opportunity. Challenging in lots of ways.

- **Daniel Hersh, Supervising Librarian, Tech Services:**
 - I went to several good sessions at PLA. One of the best was on "*data-driven collection management*". The presenters described a system for making weeding and materials budget decisions based on an annual branch-by-branch evaluation of budget, shelving and circulation for fiction vs. nonfiction vs. audiovisual materials. I also attended good sessions on internal communications, civic engagement and outcomes measurement.

- **Sarah Hodgson, Branch Manager, Dimond Branch:**
 - *Getting Real with the Top Five of the Top Five: Non-Fiction:* In this lively reader's advisory session, presenters Rebecca Vnuk, Barry Trott, Katie Mediatore Stover, Craig Clark and Andie Paloutzian identified current trends, personal favorites and upcoming titles to look for in adult non-fiction.
 - MICROHISTORIES (books with very specific themes like, The Toothpick: Technology and Culture by Henry Petroski) Trends: Food; Eras, Events and Places; Objects; Concepts; Health
 - HISTORY Trends: The Great War; Plantagenets In, Tutors Out; Snapshots in Time; Notorious & Notable Women; Crimes of the Century (true crime goes hardcover)
 - POP CULTURE Trends: Hell in a Handbasket; We Are Women, Hear Us Rarrhh; Reading Maps; Podcasts in Book Form; Deadest White Guy in the World (Shakespeare's Grave turns 400);
 - SPORTS Trends: 2016: An Olympic Year; Issues, Issues, Issues; Women in Sports; Friday Night Lights; Participatory Sports Stories, Writer's Play the Games
 - ESSAYS Trends: The Mighty Mom Blogger: Am I prodder of my toddler or my Twitter following? Excavating Personal Truths: Family Frailty, Personal

Crusades and All the Ugly Bits; Voyeurism: Observations on Art and Creativity; Armchair Labtechs; The New, New, New Journalism

Intrigued? For a complete list of recommended books and authors go to bit.ly/PLA-TOP5-2016

- **Sandra Toscano, Branch Manager, Brookfield Branch:**
 - Attending PLA for the first time was a rewarding experience and I was pleasantly surprised by the wide-range of sessions offered. I really enjoyed *Spark Talks I*; the format and structure of the program allowed for a quick and informative opportunity to see what other Library systems were doing. The five minute presentations gave you a glimpse of innovative and fun programs offered in Libraries throughout the country and I was inspired by the work Librarians are doing to connect with communities. The highlight of the session, for me, was *#robotsforthepeople* and the introduction of BiBli - "a robot designed to make the Library experience better for children on the autism spectrum", presented by Katherine Weadley a Librarian from the Longmont Public Library in Colorado. According to her, the robot has been beneficial for people on the spectrum with social anxiety, including people who experience issues with communication and interaction. It was refreshing to see the Library tackle a social issue and collaborate with organizations/businesses to address those issues. In the spring they are expecting to introduce, and make available baby BiBli's, for patrons to check-out and take home, how fun and exciting!

- **Christy Thomas, Reference Librarian, Main Library:**
 - My favorite session at PLA was called *Taking it Personally: Creating Human Connection in a Virtual World*, presented by Alison Kastner and Sarah Mead from Multnomah County Library. The session took a look at their My Librarian service, an online Readers Advisory service that has been an inspiration for OPL's Book Me service. The session offered fodder for thought as we move towards a service that functions more like theirs, as well as validation that it's a very worthwhile effort. This type of online RA reaches patrons in a mode that they demand while offering a personal touch, greatly exceeding expectations and promoting the librarian's role as advisor. Kathleen and I introduced ourselves to the presenters afterwards--Kathleen has called them with questions in the past--and they continue to be very generous with their resources. Non-conference highlight: dinner with former OPL-librarian Jessi Snow.

BUDGET UPDATES

- The Library submitted its mid-cycle changes which included temporary part-time employee conversions, per the MOU contract, additional staffing for the pop-up mobile library, and some clean-up.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- The current OPL monthly calendar is available online at www.oaklandlibrary.org/news