

Valley City Barnes County Library from the director's desk

June 6, 2019

Hello everyone, miss me? I know, it's been several months since my last library column. I had been writing a newspaper article just about every other week for over five years and needed a break. One of the most basic requirements of being a library professional is providing accurate, factual information. Because I represent the library I walk a very fine line and have to make sure I don't get too political. That has been a real struggle for me personally and professionally. So, I have taken the advice given by Thumper's mother, "If you can't say somethin' nice, don't say nothin' at all." This does not mean I haven't been paying attention and keeping up with current events. I have, and quite honestly many of the trends I have been seeing politically and socially scare me. Many of you know my undergrad degree was in history. An often used quote is those who don't learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. Since the beginning of the year I have read about book burnings, attempts of censorship, intimidation of authors and journalists, legislation attempting to curtail our constitutional rights of free assembly and peaceful protest, and many other disturbing events. See, no politics, just expressing personal concerns.

So, how about some other library related subjects. Summer Learning is in full swing and participating is easier than ever. Come in and we can tell you all about what's going on. Additionally, even if you are not a reader come participate in a program. Melissa, Donna, and Angela have a whole bunch of fun activities planned for kids, teens, and adults. The library is about so much more than just books and reading. We have something for everybody.

If you have not been in the library lately, it's not what it used to be. One of the big goals I had when I took over as director six years ago was updating the collection by getting rid of old outdated materials and buying new. We still have some work to do but it's much improved. I recently ran a report through our library software program looking at copyright dates. Two statistics really jumped out at me; first 38% of our collection has a copyright of 2010 or newer. Second 67% of our collection has a copyright in this century, 19 years old or newer. Copyright date of a collection are not statistics collected as part of annual reporting to the state, so I don't know how this compares to the rest of the library world, but I believe these are really good numbers. For the remaining 33% of our collection; 17% are from the 1990s, 6% are from the 1980s, and 6% predates 1980.

One place we could use your help; active library accounts. I regularly talk with folks around the area and often ask if they have a library card. Often, I get a yes. I then ask when the last time they visited the library and checked something out. More often than I would like I get the answer "it's been a while". If you fall in that category you may not be counted in our statistics for active users. Library accounts expire every year, that helps us keep your info up to date. More importantly, because of how we have to do our state

report; if your card expired more than three years ago, you do not count in our statistics. Therefore, if you are reading this and have not used the library since May of 2016 you are not an active patron and are not counted. So, if you really want to help the library, stop in, renew your card, check something out, and keep coming back regularly. It really is all about the numbers.

Quick announcement: the library will be opening at noon Saturday June 15th. Staff will be participating in the Rally in the Valley parade. The nice folks at Miller Motors are lending us a truck to pull a small float which will be decorated by our teen group. We have some real fun throws this year.

Also on Rally Saturday; the library will be hosting a pie social after the parade. If you are willing to donate a pie or two and/or would be willing to help cut pies and serve, we have a signup list at both circulation desks. Last I looked we could definitely use more pies so please help. Money raised will go to setup a computer classroom.

Cogito ergo lego.

Steve