

Valley City Barnes County Public Library Notes

April 27, 2017 by Steve Hammel

Hello Barnes County, in my previous column I bemoaned having spring fever and being stuck inside when I would rather be outside fishing. Several of you have asked, did I in fact go fishing the next day? The answer is no, but I did get my fishing license so that's something at least. Spring is just beginning and the fish are still waiting. This is more of a reminder to myself but if this resonates with anyone else that's okay too: Take time to relax and renew, maximum results can only be achieved when the mind is focused and the body energized.

May 3rd is my fourth anniversary as director here at the library. Other than the period I ran my own carpentry business this is the longest I have stayed in any position. I think this says as much about the staff, board, and community as it does about me. Honestly, what can I say about the staff that I have not said before? We have faced and overcome numerous challenges in the past four years by working as a team. I set high standards and have asked staff to stretch and achieve which they have done admirably. Without good staff a library is just a book warehouse, with good staff the library becomes a destination. Grammar nerds will note the change from the indefinite article to the definite in the previous sentence. One of the biggest challenges for a library director can be his or her relationship with the governing board. Nothing will drive off a good library director faster than a troublesome board. Every day I am thankful we have a good board and for the trust they have extended to me to run the library. The relationship is one of trust and respect; I trust and respect the board's input, they trust and respect my skills and knowledge, and together we move the library forward. Overall a very satisfactory arrangement. The final key to my staying is our community. Y'all have not just welcomed me but you have also welcomed my family, which means a lot to me. We have made friends and gotten involved with different groups and activities. It still surprises me when people I have never met know who I am. Just today a visited a local business I have never been to before and was greeted with, oh you're the librarian, I read your column in the paper. It's a weird feeling, particularly for an introvert who would rather not be noticed most of the time.

I could finish up by talking about the past. I could finish up by talking about the future. I think I will, however, finish up by talking about the present. Overall the library is doing well. Finances are a big concern, the budget cut hurt but we were able to adjust by reducing staff hours and some programming expenditures. We are still able to purchase a good quantity and selection of materials so we almost always have something new every week. We have met all state standard for our size public library except one, a strategic plan, which the board and I will be working on starting this summer. New people are coming in every week to get a library card. A great majority of existing patrons are renewing their accounts, most before they expire, so they don't miss out on any library services. The library has some type of program for children, teens, or adults almost every day. Our computer and electronic resources are equal to or better than every other public library in the state. The only thing we are missing is you. If you do not use the library and have an active updated account, you are not supporting the library. We need the numbers. If you are not a reader, that's okay, check out a DVD. Not into movies,

come to one of our programs. No programs to interest you, suggest one, we might be able to make it happen. We have something for everyone here. For those of you who do use the library regularly; thank you, thank you, thank you! We appreciate you as much as you appreciate us.

Libraries transform, come and see how the library can transform your life.

Announcements:

Help us get a start on strategic planning by challenging the director to a game of Cribbage. Be prepared to talk about what you would like to see for the library in the next three to five years.

The library board meets the second Tuesday of every month at 5:05 pm. The board will have a library foundation meeting first then proceed to the regular business meeting right after.

Please stop in and pick up a calendar of events. We have jam packed calendar of programs in May and you don't want to miss any of them.

Take a look at our new improved website. www.vcbclibrary.org