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Library Activities

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- Libraries cut spending for new books
- Pierce County Library System’s board addresses $3 million shortfall in 2013 budget
- Book publishers hurt Pierce County Library users with e-book blockade
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- E-book publishers say humbug to supplying e-books for everyone
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- Dogs and reading go together
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- Pierce County Library System hosts sixth annual library card drive
- Temporary library digs offer computer access, holds pickup and more
- Key Center library remodel ahead of schedule; expected to reopen Feb. 4
- Key Center library to reopen ahead of schedule with improvements
- What would you improve in Bonney Lake and Sumner in 2013?
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- Prepare for college with help from workshops at Pierce County Libraries
- Q&A: Molly Stuen of the Pierce County Library Foundation
COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD ADDRESSES BUDGET SHORTFALL

At its December meeting Pierce County Library System's Board of Trustees adopted the library's 2013 operating budget of $25,423,927 and $1,632,000 for capital improvements. The budget addresses a $3 million budget shortfall, approximately 11 percent of the 2012 budget.

"We made difficult decisions again this year, keeping in mind accountability to taxpayers and maintenance of core services," said Linda Ishen, chair of the board.

"Our libraries continue to be very busy, with an all-time high number of card holders. We made reductions in areas we anticipate will have the least detrimental impact on the hundreds of thousands of children and adults who rely on Pierce County Library."

2013 marks the fourth year that the economic downturn is showing an impact on the budget, due mainly from reduced revenue from property taxes, which is nearly 97 percent of the system's funding source. From 2010-13, the budget has been reduced by a total of $6.4 million.

The primary steps to address the 2013 shortfall include: reduced books and materials budget; eliminated bookmobile service; transferred less money from operating budget to capital budget; adjusted payments for health care and retirement costs; used money from cash reserves/savings.

In mid-November the system stopped running its 65-year-old bookmobile service, which was aging and costly. In 2013 the system will continue to serve children in schools in low-income areas that most recently checked out books and movies from the bookmobile.

Also, for 2013 staff further sharpened its books and materials buying decisions, which means offering fewer items for people to checkout. To help address the budget shortfall, the library decreased its books and materials budget by $1 million, which is a 25 percent reduction from 2012.

The priorities for the 2013 budget include: maintain core services defined by voters in 2006 – access to library services, books and materials, services for children and teenagers, and customer service and technology; be good stewards of taxpayers' money; provide up-to-date and future-oriented services; build a customer base for the future.
Libraries cut spending for new books
Another year of declining revenue forces tighter belt

A budget has less money for buying books and changes some personnel costs has been approved for the Pierce County Library System for 2013.

Then system's Board of Trustees this month approved an operating budget of $25.4 million, which addresses a $3 million budget shortfall. They also authorized $1.6 million for capital improvements.

"We made difficult decisions again this year, keeping in mind accountability to taxpayers and maintenance of core services," said Linda Ishem, chairwoman of the trustees. "Our libraries continue to be very busy, with an all-time high number of cardholders. We made reductions in areas we anticipate will have the least detrimental impact on the hundreds of thousands of children and adults who frequent the 17 branch libraries, including ones in Eatonville and Graham.

Officials said 2013 will be the fourth year that the economic downturn has had a negative impact on the libraries' budget. The trouble is due mainly to reduced revenue from property taxes, which is nearly 97 percent of the library system's funding source. From 2010 to 2013, the budget has been reduced by $6.4 million.

Officials said the budget steps to absorb the shortfall next year include:

- Reduced books and materials budget.
- Eliminated bookmobile service.
- Transferred less money from operating budget to the capital budget.
- Adjusted payments for healthcare and retirement costs for employees.
- Used money from cash reserves.

In mid-November, the 65-year-old bookmobile service was stopped because its vehicles were aging and costly. In 2013, children in schools in low-income areas that most recently checked out books and movies from the bookmobile will be served by the library system through schools.

Also, fewer items will be available for people to check out because of a $1 million cutback on money allocated for buying new material. That's a 25 percent reduction from 2012, officials noted.

Pierce County Library is the fourth-largest public library system in the state based on the number of people it serves—a countywide population of 555,000.

At the same meeting it approved next year's budget, the trustees received a brighter financial report on Pierce County Library Foundation's activities in 2012. The fund-raising group accepted $252,347 from a combined 1,438 individuals and organizations that made donations to the foundation.
Pierce County Library System's Board Addresses $3 Million Shortfall in 2013 Budget

The Pierce County Library System said its Board of Trustees has decided to cut books and materials budget and eliminate bookmobile service to deal with the $3 million budget shortfall.

- By Patch Staff
- Email the author
- December 14, 2012

3 Comments

Upload Photos and Videos

At its December meeting Pierce County Library System’s Board of Trustees adopted the Library’s 2013 operating budget of $25,423,927 and $1,632,000 for capital improvements. The budget addresses a $3 million budget shortfall, approximately 11 percent of the Library’s 2012 budget.

“We made difficult decisions again this year, keeping in mind accountability to taxpayers and maintenance of core services,” said Linda Ishem, chair of the Library’s Board of Trustees. “Our libraries continue to be very busy—with an all-time high number of card holders. We made reductions in areas we anticipate will have the least detrimental impact on the hundreds of thousands of children and adults who rely on Pierce County Library.”

According to the press release, 2013 marks the fourth year that the economic downturn is showing an impact on the Library’s budget, due mainly from reduced revenue from property taxes, which is nearly 97 percent of the Library’s funding source. From 2010-2013, the Library’s budget has been reduced by a total of $6.4 million.

The primary steps to address the 2013 shortfall include:

- Reduced books and materials budget.
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- Transferred less money from operating budget to capital budget.
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The Library’s priorities for the 2013 budget include:

- Maintain core services defined by voters in 2006—access to library services, books and materials, services for children and teenagers, and customer service and technology.
- Be good stewards of taxpayers’ money.
- Provide up-to-date and future-oriented services.
- Build a customer base for the future.

- Press release by Pierce County Library System.

Related Topics: pierce county library system

**Sharon Hodgins**

7:00 am on Saturday, December 15, 2012

I am a Friend of the Bonney Lake Library and have been so for about 5 years. Many libraries nation-wide have Friends Groups, who are a group of people who attach themselves to a local library and raise money for the local library to provide extras that a local library may not be able to afford. I belong to the Friends of the Bonney Lake Library, and because we receive wonderful donations of books and other media from our patrons, as well as surplus books and media from a local bookstore, we are able to sponsor about 4 book sales a year. The money raised allowed us to pay for 3 Christmas programs this year, and for many items given free to patrons throughout the year -- lanyards used often to library cards, stickers to hand out to kids, movie contests in which we give out tickets to a movie based on a book, new furniture for our meeting room -- we are really proud that we have been able to do this.

At our January meeting, I hope we will discuss contributing some funds to help pay for items that may be cut -- such things as magazine subscriptions, newspaper subscriptions etc. No way that we can fill this hole -- but it is disturbing to me that we will no longer be able to distribute materials that people want in a timely manner.

**Marci Spear**

9:19 am on Saturday, December 15, 2012
I don't get it - every part of the Pierce County 'wheel' seems to need more propping up & yet after statements like 'this will solve the financial problems'... NOTHING seems to work out that way.
This same thing has happened w/ consolidating the Fire Depts & now the library system. I would like to remind folks that in 2006 a levy passed to support the library through an addition property tax - Let let quote from the preview Q&A for that levy-
"In 2006, taxpayers paid 40 cents for every $1,000 in assessed property for library services. On average, homeowners paid $90 in 2006 for library services. Restoring library funding to 48 cents per $1,000 of assessed property would cost the average home assessed at $244,000 an increase of $27 for one year - 2007 - for a total of $117."
There seems to be no levy proposed for 'services' vital to living that does not pass around here & yet time & time again the same thing happens. Still there is never enough funding.
It has been 7 years since I saw 'more money coming into my household' & yet somehow we manage, on much less. I am expected to do as much as I did or MORE with less.
Kudos to the volunteers like Ms. Hodgins - I am afraid that this may be the way for the future. There just is no more that regular people can give dollar wise.
People are tired of throwing money at services with no real results -

Reply

Sharon Hodgins

10:58 am on Saturday, December 15, 2012

It is my understanding that the above 2006 levy was used mainly to keep librarians open more hours. Until then, no library in the Pierce County system was open on Sunday. To honor that commitment, hours will still the same.
What has led to the decrease in the library's budget is the fall of real estate value, and a decrease in many people's property taxes-- therefore, less tax money collected for government and the services it tries to provide. Unfortunately, we are all trying to do more with less -- and that is true of almost any government service. I can assure you that this is the last place librarians wanted to go - that is, to cut the amount of materials purchased for circulation. But it is now a necessity.
Book publishers hurt Pierce County Library users with e-book blockade

By Neel Parikh

The holidays are coming and many people will unwrap Kindles and other e-readers. Good luck getting an e-book from your public library to download to your new gift. Meet the ghost of Christmas past and present: Publishers, the modern-day Scrooge.

Major publishers are not selling e-books to libraries, including Pierce County Library System, and that’s giving residents throughout Pierce County a raw deal. The public is demanding e-books from libraries and publishers are locking them out.

Publishers have drawn an arbitrary line and they are either not selling e-books to libraries or selling them at costs 100 percent to 300 percent higher than list prices or with heavy usage restrictions. Currently, only two of the six major publishers, HarperCollins Publishers and Random House, Inc., are selling to libraries.

Sure, Pierce County Library offers e-books. We simply are not allowed to offer what is available on the open market, especially best-sellers. As a result, we are cutting our e-book budget by nearly 50 percent.

For the books we can buy, because they are so over-priced, we make purchases sparingly to meet our commitment of good stewardship of taxpayers’ dollars. “Fifty Shades of Grey” costs Pierce County Library $47.85 and sells on Amazon.com for $9.99.

Libraries and bookstores share clientele. A recent study found that more than half of all library customers report buying books by an author they were introduced to in a library.

Along with my colleagues, I am confused and frustrated by publishers’ unwillingness to allow us to participate in the e-book marketplace. Publishers are giving no clear reason about why they are blackballing libraries and the public.

It’s quite rare that in a free market, a customer — in this case libraries and the American public — is refused the ability to buy a company’s product and is told its money is no good. Publishers are turning away 122,000 libraries and approximately 169 million public library customers.

Libraries represent core values in this country — the freedom to read and learn, and universal access to books. Libraries help bridge the digital divide to make technology available to all.

Pierce County Library is working with America Library Association and Urban Libraries Council, which are trying to break the blockade from publishers and this blatantly unfair business practice. They have met and talked with many of the publishers, yet we are still locked out.

We hope the blockade crumbles as people get e-readers for the holidays. We hope that publishers give a wonderful present of e-books to the hundreds of thousands of people in our service area and millions across the country.

‘Publishers should stop being Scrooges and untie the strings on e-books.’

Neel Parikh

‘Publishers should stop being Scrooges and untie the strings on e-books.’

Neel Parikh is the executive director of Pierce County Library System.
Our View: Publishers should rethink business model

Published in the Tacoma Weekly
Wednesday, 12 December 2012

It is not news that many daily newspapers are struggling to find strong financial footing in the age of the Internet, when news junkies have gotten used to getting their news when they want it, where they want it ... on their smart phones or computers rather than on a printed page. So too, however, is the book publishing world with the rise of Kindles, Nooks, tablet computers and large-screen smart phones that allow owners to carry around full libraries of digital books, e-magazines and downloaded movies. While it all sounds great for voracious readers who are looking to avoid the hassle and cost of buying and storing their book lists and movie racks, there is a storm brewing on the digital front. Book publishers make their money off printed books, which have set shelf lives, wear out and get replaced. Digital books do not degrade over time, unless of course, technology makes the format obsolete. The rising shift from printed books to digital ones is pitting publishers against libraries who stock their “shelves” with the new formats to respond to customer demands for e-materials.

To make their financial books balance, publishers are either charging more for digital versions than their printed formats in hopes of getting their profits upfront or “renting” the materials to libraries through licensing agreements. The rationale for the higher cost is that the books do not degrade, despite the fact that there are little actual “publishing” costs associated with e-materials. The American Library Association has been in negotiations with publishers about this issue, but talks have gone nowhere. Libraries around the country, including the Pierce County Library System, have mounted campaigns to get readers involved in hopes that political pressure will get publishers to talk about the future of e-materials. “The major publishers (Hachette Book Group, Macmillan Publishing, Penguin Group and Simon & Schuster) are not selling to libraries – including Pierce County Library – or they are selling e-books at inflated prices or with heavy restrictions,” the campaign states. “Pierce County Library is confused and frustrated by publishers’ unwillingness to allow libraries to participate in the e-book marketplace. Publishers have not provided a clear answer to their blockade of libraries or holding them hostage to outrageously exorbitant prices, 100 to 300 percent higher than list prices or burdensome restrictions.”

One solution that seems to be reasonable is the Harper Collins business model concerning e-books. The publisher sells libraries e-books that have been encoded to shut down after 26 uses. The system saves on printing paper copies while also creating a way for publishers and writers to make money off their labor through resale of the same books that was routine in the world of printed word, when book pages faded, covers were torn or bindings became waterlogged. The potential of e-books on society is huge and should be of concern to everyone since digital
materials can now mean information can be accessible to everyone, anywhere, at anytime. Thwarting the populace drive for e-materials seems short sighted since access to such materials will prompt higher demand. Publishers and writers can then lower their prices and retain their profits through the lower production costs and higher demand. They should not be greedy now at the expense of lost sales in the future.
E-book publishers say humbug to supplying e-books for everyone

Weekly Volcano
Dec. 20, 2012

E-book publishers say humbug to supplying e-books for everyone

Pierce County Library asks bookworms to unite against Scrooge-like publishers not selling e-books

BY KRISTIN KENNEDY

There’s a battle going on. It’s a battle that may or may not touch your life, but one that will help to shape the future of digital rights. It’s a battle between many top publishers and libraries. You can join this battle. You can make your voice heard. Pierce County Library’s “Stop Being Scrooge” campaign urges bookworms to unite against Scrooge-like publishers — publishers who are not selling e-books to libraries.

“For the past two years, American Library Association and Urban Libraries Council have met with the publishers, and, yet, we still do not have a business model for the major publishers to sell to public libraries,” says Mary Getchell, marketing and community relations director for Pierce County Library. “Currently Hachette Book Group, Penguin, Macmillan Publishing and Simon & Schuster are not selling to libraries. HarperCollins Publisher is selling to Overdrive, our major e-book vendor; however this comes with significant restrictions, such as e-book expires after 20 checkouts. Random House, Inc. is also selling to Overdrive, unfortunately at exorbitant prices — 100-300 percent above list prices.”

Overdrive is the primary vendor that PCL uses to offer e-books to library patrons. Overdrive is used by other libraries nationwide. If you haven’t yet explored the gloriousness that is Overdrive, you should. No longer is a trip to the library even necessary. Simply sign up using your library card number, click through the prompts and free e-books miraculously deliver to your Kindle or e-reader. It’s a frickin’ miracle for book nerds.

Do e-books hurt author and publisher bottom lines? Perhaps this would be a fair argument — if libraries hadn’t already been offering physical books to readers for as long as libraries have existed. E-books aren’t any different. Libraries must purchase e-books as individual copies — meaning copies are limited. Patrons must still join waitlists and they cannot keep e-books indefinitely. Instead, just as magically as the books pop up onto your e-reader, they magically disappear from it when they are due back to the library. Publishers have given no clear reason why they have blockaded libraries from e-book sales either, according to Getchell.

“Libraries and bookstores — online and in-store — have always worked complementarily, sharing clientele,” says Getchell. “People who borrow books from libraries also buy books from bookstores. Libraries support book buying, which helps authors and publishers sell books. A recent report found that more than half of all library customers report purchasing books by an author they were introduced to in the library.”

Authors and readers have very different viewpoints on this issue. Some authors I queried did not want to comment, as their publishers are among the ones who do not wish to sell to libraries. Other authors are striving to keep up with a changing world.

“As an author, I need to stay current with the writing industry. And the industry is obviously changing,” says local novelist Tom Llewellyn. “I think that libraries need to stay current to stay relevant. The way we access reading materials is changing in the rest of the world. … I grew up in the pre-e-book era, but learned to love books at my local library. Then, as an adult, I became a significant purchaser of books. Modern young readers likely do the same. If they can’t access e-books from their local library system, they’re less likely to grow up as readers. And then they’re less likely to buy books as adults.”

And the demand is there. Getchell says that readers ask every day why the library offers so few e-books and even fewer bestsellers. As a result, PCL is reaching out to their public and asking them to write the publishers — write and inform publishers just how much the public would love to have more e-books available. Those who wish to join in the campaign can find sample emails and postcards at www.PierceCountyLibrary.org.

“Libraries are the backbone of democracy,” says Getchell. “Libraries are the true equalizer, welcoming all. Libraries represent some of the core values of this country — the freedom to read, the freedom to learn, and universal access to books. How does it make any sense to withhold e-books from people who depend on libraries?”

Don’t be shy. Send an email to a publisher (or all of the major publishers) today. It’s good for your karma.

The Don’t Be Scrooge campaign is on through the end of the year, but limits on e-books to libraries will continue into 2013. In fact, PCL is set to offer even fewer e-books in 2013 due to the high prices and limitations on what they can buy.
E-MAIL TO THE EDITOR: Pierce County Libraries Wants Publishers To Respect E-Book Users

Puyallup Patch

They are either not selling e-books to libraries or selling them at costs up to three times as much as list prices or with heavy usage restrictions, the library writes. For example, “Fifty Shades of Grey” costs Pierce County Library $47.85.

- By Brent Champaco
- Email the author
- December 3, 2012

The six major publishers are not selling e-books to libraries, including Pierce County Library System, and that’s giving residents throughout Pierce County a raw deal. The public is demanding e-books from libraries and publishers are locking them out.

“I am confused and frustrated by publishers’ unwillingness to allow us to participate in the e-book marketplace,” said Neel Parikh, executive director, for the Library System. “Publishers have given no clear reason about their blackballing libraries and the public, and taking on the role of a modern-day Scrooge.”

Retailers are projecting Kindles and other e-readers again will be top sellers this holiday season. Last year, after the holidays, people rushed to the libraries to learn how to use their new technology gifts and start downloading e-books for free from Pierce County Library.
Publishers have drawn an arbitrary line and are turning their back on the 122,000 libraries and approximately 169 million public library customers. They are either not selling e-books to libraries or selling them at costs 100-300 percent higher than list prices or with heavy usage restrictions.

Currently, only two of the six major publishers, HarperCollins Publishers and Random House, Inc., are selling to libraries at exorbitant prices or strict restrictions. For example, “Fifty Shades of Grey” costs Pierce County Library $47.85 and sells on Amazon.com for $9.99.

Pierce County Library offers e-books, however because of the publishers’ blockade to libraries it is not allowed to offer what is available on the open market. As a result, the Library System is reducing its e-book budget by nearly 50 percent in 2013. The Library System sparingly purchases the over-priced e-books in its commitment to be good stewards of taxpayers’ dollars.

“It’s quite rare that in a free market a customer—in this case libraries and the American public—is refused the ability to buy a company’s product and is told its money is no good,” said Parikh.

Every day people ask staff why the Library doesn’t offer very many best-seller e-books and why it provides so few e-books. In response the Library is now asking people to take this question directly to the publishers.

It is asking residents to send an email or postcard to publishers and urge them to sell to libraries. People can get a sample email from the Library’s website at www.piercecountylibrary.org or postcards at any Pierce County Library.

-Pierce County Library System

Related Topics: 50 shades of gray, Book, Computer, E-Reader, Electronic, Lakewood, Library, bonney lake, gig harbor, and pierce county library

Sharon Hodgins

7:07 am on Tuesday, December 4, 2012

As a library patron, I did send my post-cards in to publishers to support the libraries position on getting e-books at a reasonable cost. However, when an actual book is purchased, no doubt in larger quantities at a discount, at some point it will have to be replaced. But not so with e-books -- once on line, they could be downloaded a zillion times. Publishers and writers have to stay in business to publish and write. So I can understand why publishers do want some restrictions on how many times the book can be downloaded. I hope a compromise can be reached that is fair to both sides.
County libraries issue call to action on e-book blockade

Published in the Fife Free Press and Milton-Edgewood Signal
Thursday, 13 December 2012

The six major publishers are not selling e-books to libraries, including Pierce County Library System, and that is giving residents throughout Pierce County a raw deal. The public is demanding e-books from libraries and publishers are locking them out. 'I am confused and frustrated by publishers' unwillingness to allow us to participate in the e-book marketplace," said Neel Parikh, executive director of the system. "Publishers have given no clear reason about their blackballing libraries and the public, and taking on the role of a modern-day Scrooge." Retailers are projecting Kindles and other e-readers again will be top sellers this holiday season. Last year, after the holidays, people rushed to the libraries to learn how to use their new technology gifts and start downloading e-books for free from Pierce County Library.

Publishers have drawn an arbitrary line and are turning their back on the 122,000 libraries and approximately 169 million public library customers. They are either not selling e-books to libraries or selling them at costs 100-300 percent higher than list prices or with heavy usage restrictions. Currently, only two of the six major publishers, HarperCollins Publishers and Random House, Inc., are selling to libraries at exorbitant prices or strict restrictions. For example, "Fifty Shades of Grey" costs Pierce County Library $47.85 and sells on Amazon.com for $9.99. Pierce County Library offers e-books, however because of the publishers' blockade to libraries it is not allowed to offer what is available on the open market. As a result, the system is reducing its e-book budget by nearly 50 percent in 2013. The system sparingly purchases the over-priced e-books in its commitment to be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

"It is quite rare that in a free market a customer — in this case libraries and the American public — is refused the ability to buy a company's product and is told its money is no good," said Parikh. Every day people ask staff why the system does not offer very many best-seller e-books and why it provides so few e-books. In response the system is now asking people to take this question directly to the publishers. It is asking residents to send an e-mail or postcard to publishers and urge them to sell to libraries. People can get a sample e-mail at http://www.piercecountylibrary.org or postcards at any Pierce County Library.
Local libraries protest lack of access to e-books

LITERACY: Pierce County Library System starts letter-writing campaign to publishers

WILL LIVESLEY O’NEILL  
Special to the Herald

Since 2007, the Pierce County Library System has been a purchaser of e-books. But recently, four major publishing houses comprising Hachette, Macmillan, Penguin and Simon and Schuster have refused to sell their new titles to the library system and other library organizations across the nation.

“IT’S BEEN A PROBLEM THAT’S REALLY MOUNTED TO FRUSTRATION” said Mary Getchell, the Pierce County Library System’s community relations director. “Here we are, willing to buy, and they are not willing to sell.”

Two other major publishers, Harper-Collins and Random House, also limit libraries’ access to e-books. Harper-Collins only allows 26 checkouts of their e-book titles, while Random House charges libraries much higher prices for e-books than their titles’ market value.

Getchell said a Random House-published e-book that costs $11 on Amazon might cost Pierce County between $50 to $90.

A large percentage of new books and bestsellers aren’t available for the library system to offer on e-book, Getchell said.

The library system has a $3 million budget shortfall going into 2013, and it plans to reduce its spending on new books and materials by as much as 25 percent. While much of the reduction will be based on usage, the e-books budget could be cut by almost half.

Getchell said that, while the library system had allocated more funding for e-books to keep up with growing demand, it’s unable to allocate much of that money due to publisher restrictions, and, as a result, it will have to cut back.

It’s unclear why the publishers aren’t allowing libraries to purchase e-books, Getchell said.

“We don’t have a clear answer,” she said.

None of the major publishing houses responded to requests for comment.

Lisa McNamara, director for the Sumner branch of the Pierce County Library System, agreed the reason is unclear. She said it has something to do with publishers’ profitability and the gray area of developing a model that works well for libraries and publishers.

As the use of e-readers become more popular, more library users prefer to check books out electronically.

There is tremendous demand for e-books,” McNamara said. “It’s incredible. And, after the holiday season, we’re going to see that number booming. For those who have e-readers, this is a great service to offer.”

McNamara said the question the library system asks publishers is: How does it make sense to withhold these books from people who depend on libraries?

“We’re informing people about the situation, and they’re surprised,” McNamara said. “We’re trying to make sure people are aware of what limitations we’re facing from publishers.”

To that end, the library system is increasing awareness of its e-book dilemma.

Pierce County libraries have begun to give patrons postcards to send to publishing houses to let them know their frustration with the lack of e-book access. Postcards are available at local library help desks, and email versions are online at the Pierce County Library System’s website.

“We have them right at our help desk,” McNamara said. “We have six different postcards for the six different publishers.”

Libraries are taking a national approach on this and coming together to persuade publishers to change their practice. More e-books would allow us to even better serve our customers to really get the materials that they want in their hands and connect them to the materials they’re looking for.”

Puyallup reporter Andrew Fickes contributed to this report. He can be reached at 253-352-7001 or by email at andrew.fickes@puyallupherald.com.

“WE’re trying to make sure people are aware of what limitations we’re facing from publishers.”

LISA McNAMARA  
Sumner branch director
Dogs and reading go together

Graham library to host ‘Read to a Dog’ events that draw kids to printed word

The Dispatch

Four-legged friends might be just what a child needs to be a good reader.

Children can build their reading fundamentals with the help of a dog during free events that are being planned by Pierce County Library System for several of its branch libraries, including the one in Graham.

According to library officials, “Read to a Dog” events at the libraries help improve children’s literacy skills through the assistance of registered therapy dogs. Children feel comfortable reading out loud, read more often, attempt more difficult books, and look forward to reading.

“Reading aloud helps children gain confidence and enhances learning,” said Neel Parikh, executive director of the Library System. “Sharing with a dog provides a new dimension that encourages children to read with enthusiasm.”

The first of two events at the Graham library is scheduled for 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The second one is set for the same time on Feb. 19.

The library is located at 9202 224th St. E.

Similar events are also scheduled for the Summit and Sumner library branches. More information is available at www.piercecountylibrary.org.

No registration is required to participate in the events, which are sponsored by Friends of the Library.

Officials said the libraries will use only dogs that have passed the required obedience and temperament testing and are registered by an accredited therapy-dog organization.

Research on animal-assisted therapy and activities shows that the presence of an animal encourages relaxation, lowering blood pressure and heart rate. Children who formerly did not enjoy reading often begin to look forward to sessions with a furry friend, according to officials.

As children start making positive associations between time spent with a dog and reading, they begin to view reading in a positive light. In time, children’s reading ability and confidence can improve because they are practicing their skills in a comfortable environment, which will make them enjoy reading even more, officials said.

CONT. (2/2)
Researchers say children make positive connections with reading and become better at it by associating the activity with time spent with a dog.

Courtesy photo
**Today**

**Pierce County Libraries offer free children's activities**
If you're looking for some free interactive time with your child, then the Pierce County Libraries offer several story times for all ages. Here are few happening today:

- **Bilingual Story Time**, 10:30 a.m., Sumner Branch, 1116 Fryar Ave., 253-548-3306.
- **Family Story Times**, 10:30 a.m., Gig Harbor Branch, 4424 Point Fosdick Drive NW, 253-548-3305.
- **Toddler Play and Learn**, 10:30 a.m., Lakewood Branch, 6300 Wildaire Road SW, 253-548-3302.

- **Spanish Story Time**, 4:30 p.m., Fife Branch, 6622 20th St. E., 253-548-3323.

**Book club meets in Graham**
Avid readers can join the Talk It Up Book Discussion Group that meets the first Mondays at Graham Pierce County Library, 9202 224th St. E., Graham. Anita Diamant's "Day After Night" is the book for today's discussion at 3 p.m. It's free; call 253-548-3322 for more information on the group.

**Local blues featured at The Swiss tonight**
Head down to The Swiss Pub & Restaurant, 1904 S. Jefferson Ave., Tacoma for a night of blues. Each week a new local artist is featured. Tonight it's Blues Attitude playing at 8; there is no cover charge.

**Tuesday**

**Broadway musical comes to the Paramount Theatre**

**Comic pl in the So**
Catch the clean comedy of Larry Jones as he performs Las Vegas style show at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at 12819 Yelm. His act includes impressions...
FRIDAY

Learn about collectibles at free computer class
If you've always wondered how valuable those treasures passed down in your family and other collectibles are, then you'll want to check out the free computer class “Assess Your Collectibles” at University Place Pierce County Library, 3609 Market Place W., Suite 100. The free class is from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., call 253-546-3307 for more information.
Learn how to use and download to your e-readers at free classes

If an e-reader was one of the gifts left under the tree for you this holiday season, then you might want to check out the free classes held by the Pierce County Library system. Here are two happening today and Friday.

- 2-3:30 p.m., Lakewood
  Pierce County Library, 6300 Wildair Road SW, Lakewood, 253-548-3302.
- 2:30-4 p.m. today and 3:30-5 p.m. Friday, University Place
  Pierce County Library, 3509 Market Place W., Suite 100, University Place, 253-548-3307.
50+ CALENDAR

CLUBS/GROUPS
ACTIVE VALLEY SINGLES 55 and over, men and women, monthly activity planning, 6:30 every fourth Wednesday, meet friends, have fun. 253-356-8902. Payette Public Library, 325 S. Meridian Ave., Payette, free.


ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION EARLY STAGE MEMORY LOSS SUPPORT GROUP 10:30 a.m.-noon, Dec. 11, Skyline Presbyterian Church, 6300 Westgate Blvd., Tacoma. Free: 253-529-3888.

ALZHEIMER’S SPANISH SPEAKING SUPPORT GROUP 4:30 p.m., Dec. 20, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Olympia Clinic, 3030 Limited Lane N.W., Olympia. Free. 360-355-1933.

COMMUNITY

CLASSES & CLINICS
CRAFT CLASSES AT THE FERN HILL CRAFT GUILD Each week there is a different craft class to sign up for or just come work on your own project. 9 a.m. Thursday, All Saints Episcopal Church, 205 E. 96th St., Tacoma. First visit free. Yearly membership dues $25. 253-901-7543.

FREE COMPUTER CLASSES Pierce County Libraries offer computer and internet classes at all locations. Go online for details or call your local branch: piercecountylibrary.org.
TUESDAY-THURSDAY

Pierce County Libraries offering free computer classes for your e-reader

- Nook, Kindle, iPad and just about all the new electronics are now offering electronic books. If you already own one or are thinking about getting one for the holidays, you will want to check out the free classes offered by Pierce County Libraries where you can learn all about the resources available for e-readers from your local library. Here are classes scheduled for this week:

- Download to Kindle, 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at Bonney Lake Library, 18501 90th St. E., 253-548-3308; 2-3:30 p.m. Tuesday at Lakewood Library, 6300 Wildaire Road SW, 253-548-3302 and 4-5:30 p.m. Thursday at University Place Library, 9609 Market Place W., Suite 100, 253-548-3307.

- E-Books and E-Readers, 5-6 p.m. Tuesday at Sumner Library, 116 Fryar Ave, 253-548-3306; 5-6 p.m. Wednesday at Milton Library, 900 Meridian Ave. E., Suite 29, 253-548-3325.

- Download to Nook, 2-3:30 p.m. Thursday at Lakewood Library, 6300 Wildaire Road SW, 253-548-3302.

piercecountylibrary.org
Marketing for Libraries
Pierce County Library System Hosts Sixth Annual Library Card Drive

Are you looking to increase your library database usage? Start with your library cards.

Pierce County Library System of Tacoma, Wash. recently held its sixth annual library card drive during October. Staff members at Pierce County had an overall goal to raise public awareness of, knowledge of, and interest in the library's services. The campaign was directed at Pierce County residents in order to increase the overall number of library card holders. To spread the word, Pierce County staff sent a direct-mail postcard to a targeted demographic in the library's area, hosted a Kindle Fire giveaway, and conducted an extensive social media campaign. Throughout the library card drive, Pierce County Library reached 3,203 people with Facebook posts, gaining 36 likes to its Facebook page. Online ads in local newspapers proved quite popular, while the library also took to Google, gathering nearly 600,000 impressions and 579 clicks.

How did these marketing efforts fare? The sixth edition of Pierce County Library's annual library card drive brought a record number of new card holders. Over the month of October, the library welcomed 10,555 library card holders. One important way Pierce County extended its reach in the community was through schools. The library partnered with local school communities, which put a card in the hand of every student who did not already have access to the library.

With their library cards, Pierce County patrons have access to the extensive line of services provided by the staff members, like the job and business centers. These centers, found in six of the system's largest libraries, offer free access to computers, workspace, print and online job resources, and professional librarians who provide valuable insight into job skills, resume reviews, small-business tips, and informational sessions on business databases like Morningstar Investment Research Center.

The job and business centers are just a small part of the services that the Pierce County Library System provides to the public. Libraries across the country can take note of
the initiative that Pierce County staff took during its sixth annual card drive. To increase usage in your library services, both in-house and online, start with the number of card holders.

If you would like further marketing ideas or materials to help promote Morningstar Investment Research Center at your library--or for materials you can use in your own training sessions--contact us at libraryservices@morningstar.com or follow us on Twitter at MstarIRC.
Temporary library digs offer computer access, holds pickup and more

Key Peninsula News
Friday, 28 December 2012 08:17
Written by Rodika Tollefson

Key Center Library senior branch assistant Carol Dike checks out books for David Saar of Vaughn in the bookmobile that has been set up as the library’s space during the branch remodel. On Dec. 19, Pierce County Library announced that the reopening date has been moved to Monday, Feb. 4, almost a month ahead of schedule. Photo by Nickolas Tollefson, special to KP News

It may be cozy and limited, but the space temporarily occupied by the Key Center Library is still offering many basic services patrons have relied on. The library found a home at the Key Peninsula Civic Center, where a bookmobile is serving as the main
digs and the civic center's VFW Room doubles as the library's computer space during specific hours.

And even some programming is continuing on — in January, story time will resume for preschoolers on Wednesday and toddlers on Tuesday.

"We have steady customers. Most of them are here to pick up their holds but some like to look at the book collection. It's mostly new books, including a lot in large print, and holiday materials," said Rosina Vertz, the manager of the Key Center branch.

In addition to new books, the choices in the bookmobile include movies, both for kids and adults, and a small collection of children's books. Kids have their own corner with kid-sized benches — the bookmobile was originally designed for children — and that corner is where the story time sessions will resume.

The bookmobile, which is parked near the civic center's main entrance, also has two computer stations and an outside book drop. The library system is using a dedicated WiFi connection, also available to patrons who want to bring their own laptops to the VFW room during the computer lab hours. The lab has three laptops for the public to use as well, along with a printer and color copier.

"It's really restricted on what we have to work with but it's really nice to have," said Doug Butterfield, a Lakebay resident who comes in regularly. He brings his own laptop to check up on his eBay business, since he lives in an area where he can't get Internet connection. "This is the only way I can get it and the people here (library staff) are making it work for us," he said.

The temporary library has reduced hours because of the limited traffic, but holds are dropped off daily by a delivery van and quickly processed by staff on site.

"People really appreciate that we are here. Some say this is like their childhood memory," Vertz said.

She said the self-pickup system in the bookmobile is good practice for what's to come — once the library reopens after the remodel, all holds will be self-checkout. "We're the last branch in the system that doesn't have self-pickup so it's long overdue," Vertz said.

The remodel is proceeding at a rapid pace. On Dec. 19, Pierce County Library announced that the reopening date has been moved to Monday, Feb. 4, almost a month ahead of schedule.

In addition to the self-checkout, one new feature will be a movie "box," similar to the concept of Redbox. Patrons will pick up empty boxes off the shelf (or from the hold area) and then retrieve the actual DVDs from the kiosk box.
Also new will be a teen area by the young adult book section. The teen space will have a cyberbar and two computers. Two other learning computers will be set up in the kids' area, for a total of 12 in the entire library (vs. eight previously).

The biggest change will be in the lobby and meeting room area. Part of the meeting room and lobby is being integrated into the library and sliding glass doors will connect to the new meeting room. After hours, the sliding doors will be locked and access will be from a new direct door as well as from the existing door through the health center. The room will have a cyberbar for laptop users (when there are no activities scheduled); from 3 to 6 p.m. the space will be dedicated for teen use.

The meeting room remodel is funded through a fundraiser organized by Friends of the Library. The Friends met the goal of $35,000, largely coming from individual donations as well as some local groups.

Maureen Reilly, president of Friends of Key Center Library, said the first $27,000 was raised in five weeks. She and Carolyn Wiley, coordinators of the fundraiser, tapped into social media, friends, businesses and FOL members. A plaque in the new room will acknowledge the major donors.

Reilly said it's amazing to have been able to meet the goal since the fundraiser started only in August. "There were a lot of people who said it can't be done (on the Key Peninsula)," she said. "But I haven't talked to anybody who wasn't excited about the opportunity to contribute."

Library details

The Kids Explorer Bookmobile, the library's temporary quarters at the Key Peninsula Civic Center, is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. The computer lab hours in the VFW Room are noon to 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. The Key Peninsula Civic Center is located at 17010 S. Vaughn Road.

For the story time schedule that will begin in January, check online at piercecountylibrary.org.
Key Center Library Remodel Ahead of Schedule; Expected to Reopen Feb. 4

Gig Harbor Patch

Until the library opens, residents may come on board the Explorer Kids’ Bookmobile at Key Peninsula Civic Center and check out books, movies, audiobooks and other items.

- By Patch Staff
- Email the author
- December 23, 2012

Upload Photos and Videos

Good news! Key Center Pierce County Library, located at 8905 KPN, Lakebay, plans to reopen earlier than planned, on Monday, Feb. 4, nearly a month ahead of schedule.

According to its Community Relations Director Mary Getchell, work to make improvements at Key Center Library has gone much faster than planned.

The library will be closed through Feb. 3. Until then, residents may come on board the Explorer Kids’ Bookmobile and check out books, movies, audiobooks and other items. The bookmobile will be at Key Peninsula Civic Center, 17010 S. Vaughn Rd.

- Monday Friday 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Saturday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

People can also use computers for free inside the civic center, on a first come, first served basis for 30 minutes-1 hour.

- Monday-Wednesday 12-5 p.m.
- Friday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Saturday 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
The library has been closed for improvements to bring customers improved service. During the closure, workers are making the lobby area into usable library space, adding computers and a movie machine, and speeding up Wi-Fi access.

Related Topics: Key Center Pierce County Library
Key Center library to reopen ahead of schedule with improvements

Post by Steve Maynard / The News Tribune on Dec. 19, 2012 at 11:47 am with No Comments »

The Key Center Pierce County Library in Lakebay will reopen ahead of schedule on Feb. 4 with more computers, faster Wi-Fi service and more usable space.

The library has been closed since Nov. 14 for the improvements. It was originally scheduled to reopen Feb. 27.

Here’s the news release:

TACOMA – Good news! Key Center Pierce County Library, located at 8905 KPN, Lakebay, plans to reopen earlier than planned, on Monday, Feb. 4, nearly a month ahead of schedule.

Work to make improvements at Key Center Library has gone much faster than planned.

The library will be closed through Feb. 3. Until then, residents may come on board the Explorer Kids’ Bookmobile and check out books, movies, audiobooks and other items. The bookmobile will be at Key Peninsula Civic Center, 17010 S. Vaughn Road.

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The library has been closed for improvements to bring customers improved service. During the closure, workers are making the lobby area into usable library space, adding computers and a movie machine, and speeding up Wi-Fi access.

Read more here: http://blog.thenewstribune.com/street/2012/12/19/key-center-library-to-reopen-ahead-of-schedule-with-improvements/#storylink=cpy
What Would You Improve in Bonney Lake and Sumner in 2013?

Bonney Lake-Sumner Patch

If you could make a New Year's resolution for Bonney Lake and Sumner, what would it be?

- By Lauren Padgett
- Email the author
- January 1, 2013

9 Comments

Upload Photos and Videos

More than 45 percent of Americans make a resolution every year, according to statisticbrain.com. Some people vow to live a healthier lifestyle, others promise to spend more time with family, and many say they will try to save money.

As millions of Americans make resolutions to improve their lives, what could we do right here in Bonney Lake and Sumner to make it an even better place to live?

What is on your city's wish list? What is one thing you would improve in 2013?

Tell us in the comment section below or upload a Local Voices blog about why you love living here.

Related Topics: 2013, Changes, bonney lake, and sumner

- 9 Comments

Todd
7:51 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

We need somewhere healthy and safe for our families and kids to hang out and to have fun. We need to attract a company like Dave and Buster's [http://www.daveandbusters.com/default.aspx](http://www.daveandbusters.com/default.aspx) and the perfect central location is already available, the old Albertsons store!

---

**Lauren Padgett**

9:19 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I agree, Todd! It'd be great to see a fun place for families to hang out that doesn't cost much in Bonney Lake. Albertsons would make the perfect spot! Many other locals have brainstormed ideas for the Albertsons, read them here [http://patch.com/A-0qWc](http://patch.com/A-0qWc)

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**Mary Hall**

8:55 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I would like the Bonney Lake schools to teach the kids not to litter. It's a horrible, ugly, persistent problem, especially in BL and I know it's kids, because it's always fast food bags, pop cans, plastic water bottles and cheap beer cans that are thrown into the street. I pick up what I can in our neighborhood, but there are stretches of road with no shoulder where it's too dangerous to pick up trash.

The kids need to know that their actions have consequences, like the plastic bottles they toss out the window can end up in the Great Pacific Gyre which is one of five known enormous garbage patches in the Earth's oceans. It's killing fish, birds and other wildlife who mistake the shards of plastic for food. We have to do better.
Lauren Padgett

9:18 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

Good idea, Mary! Sometimes kids need a reminder. As do adults :)

Mark Bennett

10:16 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I would like the City of Bonney Lake to hire a person to be in charge of the traffic signals who knows how to program them properly. Nearly every one in the city is programmed improperly and when I have asked the city to correct the problem the response I get is that the signals are working properly. It is obvious that those in charge of the streets are oblivious as to how ignorant they are and cannot understand how far short of acceptable practice their efforts fall.

Reply

Tamara Miller-Wafford

11:07 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I could not agree more!

Justin Evans

10:18 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I agree with Todd, we do need some better places for families. An ACME bowl style facility would go good in the Albertsons' building. It will give the kids and families something fun to do and will help provide some nightlife to the area. As for the overall scheme of the two cities, I'd like to see the Orton Junction become a reality, the breaking of ground on the Sumner YMCA.
and a much needed renovation to the Bonney Lake library. I think the new Multicare facility will be a nice addition to the area and will bring in decent wages and many needed jobs. I also look forward to the completion of the road construction near AM/PM in Bonney Lake. I don't know how feasible it is, but a nice restaurant on the lake would be a very welcomed addition as well. All in all though, I think both cities have done a good job and I'm certain that 2013 will be nothing less than prosperous once again!

Reply

Tamara Miller-Wafford

11:27 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

There should be more speed patrols in neighborhoods, personally I live on a road were the speed limit is 25 mph and people are constantly speeding and there are kids in this neighborhood and I fear that one of these days someones child will get hit. Those little signs that tell you how fast you are going does not deter anyone. Also there should be a time set up were you cannot make loud noise past a certain time, if such a law already exists, it should be enforced.

Reply

Melody

11:39 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I agree we need a family indoor fun place and the Albertsons store is a very good place, but I also say that the woods between Albertsons to regal Cinamas should be turned into a city park leaving a lot of the trees up, but include grassy areas for play and, trails, picnic tables,a few with roof coverings and in the middle somewhere have a large Gazebo for bands to play, weddings to happen, Tree lighting, the starting point of easter egg hunts etc you name it! and a building for everything use, such as family Bingo night, reunions, receptions, meetings, birthday parties, anything needed. Every city has a very nice large park and this spot would be perfect keeping some of those nice trees! Please?
What Would You Improve in University Place in 2013?

UP Patch

If you could make a New Year's resolution for University Place, what would it be?

- By Brent Champaco
- Email the author
- January 2, 2013

8 Comments

More than 45 percent of Americans make a resolution every year, according to statisticbrain.com. Some people vow to live a healthier lifestyle, others promise to spend more time with family, and many say they will try to save money.

As millions of Americans make resolutions to improve their lives, what could we do right here in University Place to make it an even better place to live?

What is on University Place's wish list? What is one thing you would improve in 2013?

Tell us in the comment section below or upload a Local Voices blog about why you love living here.

Related Topics: 2013, New Year, Things, and University Place

Musique

6:52 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013
2013: I vow to be kinder to everyone i.e. hold the door open (even if not close), smile even when I don't feel like it, say "thank you" more often, and not respond out loud to people who make errors in driving, etc.

Colleen Kaleel-Matzen

7:13 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I resolve to write 2013 on every appropriate thing.

Dan

10:53 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

University Place's 2013 resolution should be to quit looking like a fool in the press. It's been a bad couple of years.

Robin Sullivan

10:54 am on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

remove the trees from the center of Bridgeport way. they are high maintenance add a safety issue for the highway the leaves plug the drain switch also require more maintenance

Nancy Lulay

10:04 am on Thursday, January 3, 2013

First, I would change the city charter so that city council members would have to be representatives from each area of the city. This move would hopefully ensure city money being
spent on the 27th street corridor which has been left to look like the ghetto and provide lighting and sidewalks for the little kids that wait for school buses on the roadside in the gravel where it's dark with blind hills on 35th street between Bridgeport and Grandview. I would then require that they actually talk with their contingency to ascertain the needs and concerns of the community. I would then have each of the members compile, prioritize and problem solve the information and present it to the community on a biyearly basis. I would also change the power structure to an elected mayor and eliminate the city manager position. I would then sell that damn land at the town center, releasing the choke hold this and past councils have had on it and allow it to be developed NOT with high end stores but with shopping that caters to a broad section of the community. I would also mandate real environmental friendly city practices-the solar garbage can at the library is nice but not when I park near it and find the city worker spraying insecticide near my car with my daughter sitting in it. Our city and it's citizens are diverse and we need to address the diverse needs of it and it's members in an equitable fashion to reflect our values as a community.

Chris Anderson

8:36 pm on Thursday, January 3, 2013

Excellent thoughts Nancy!

Brent Champaco

12:12 pm on Thursday, January 3, 2013

This is from Patch user Joy:

I would clean up the slum on the corner of Crystal Springs Rd and 27th street. It is embarrassing also build a motel for the golf pageant coming up. Finish the market Place square. Why not put a hotel/ motel there or raze the buildings at the 27th street and Crystal Springs and build one there.
Kayla Stewart

3:51 pm on Thursday, January 3, 2013

Get some multi-colored lights on our Christmas tree instead of boring white ones. I know it's supposed to evoke class and elegance but it's not much fun to look at... as for me, drink more water. Going big this year!
Prepare for college with help from workshops at Pierce County Libraries

January 4, 2013 By News Room Leave a Comment

Students and parents can learn important information about preparing for college during free workshops at Pierce County Library System in January and February.

SAT Practice Test. Take a free, full-proctored, and completely unofficial SAT practice test to get ready for the real thing. Registration required. This free workshop is being offered at the following locations:

- Parkland/Spanaway Pierce County Library, 13718 Pacific Ave. S., Saturday, Jan. 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Processing and Administrative Center, 3005 112th St. E., Saturday, Feb. 2, 12 – 4:30 p.m.

SAT Test Strategies 101. Learn how to score higher on college admissions tests. Students and parents will make a study plan for success.

- Parkland/Spanaway Pierce County Library, 13718 Pacific Ave. S., Wednesday, Jan. 23, 6:30 – 7:30 pm
- Summit Pierce County Library, 5107 112th St. E., Saturday, Feb. 16, 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Kaplan Pre-College Test Prep representatives will lead the workshops.

South Puget Sound News
Q&A: Molly Stuen of the Pierce County Library Foundation

Molly Stuen is the secretary of the Pierce County Library System's Board of Directors. She's a longtime Gig Harbor resident and patron of the library on Point Fosdick Drive, and she works at Mostly Books.

This is her second year on the library system's board, and she spoke with the Gateway last week about her background and the work with the Library Foundation.

How did you get involved with the Library Foundation?

I'm a book person, I always have been. Throughout my kids' education, I volunteered in their schools, doing a variety of things. I've always kind of felt like, in one way or another, I'd like to help children learn how to read, because reading is the foundation.

After my children left the house, I was asked to consider being on the board. Part of the job is recruiting new board members. I was asked, and when you're asked, you go have a tour of the library administrative building out in Puyallup. I was amazed at all the things the library does — way more than anybody knows who just goes in, checks out books and leaves again. I said, yes, I'd like to do it.

What are some of the things the library does that you didn't know about?

They're very involved in early learning. The Pierce County Library System has won some awards for its innovation in childhood learning. This year they're starting a new "block play" program. And they're doing this because it's been proven that block play enhances learning in science and math and technology.

This is a program that kids under 5 get involved in, to create some interest before they get to school. And they have the most incredible bookmobile now. It's huge, with places for computers and all kinds of things. Unfortunately, because of cutbacks to the library, the bookmobile is not in use right now. They're hoping to bring that back.

There are lots of programs that take place at the library that I didn't know about — job-search programs at the job and business center, traveling laptops that go to schools so kids can learn how to use them.

What's been your focus as secretary?

In addition to the usual duties of a secretary, I am one of the on-record signers for all financial accounts. Also, between regular foundation board meetings, the executive committee responds to financial and other issues that arise and makes recommendations to the board.

I've taken a fairly active role in fundraising for the summer reading program. Last year, there were 21,000 students who took part in that program.

How has the Library Foundation responded to library cutbacks?
The library system is funded by property taxes, and property taxes are going down, so the library, in the last few years and projected a few years into the future, has huge cutbacks. Millions of dollars every year. So they have just asked the Library Foundation to work harder, because we fund programs that the library can't fund through tax revenue.

One in particular is the JobNow program, which provides personality and career assessments, resume assistance and interview coaching. This service continues to be invaluable.

What are you working on now?

Right now, we're working very hard on the summer reading program. We usually start that in December and try to get all the fundraising done by late spring so that we can have everything in place. It's just individual fundraising -- board members meet with people one-on-one, or talk on the phone or get our friends. We go through lists of local businesses.

On the summer reading program, the minimum donation is $500. And it's a sponsorship, and there's publicity that goes along with it.

What do you tell people about the library during fundraising efforts?

I talk about the difference between the library system and the foundation, for one thing, so people understand that we fund things that they're not able to. That's kind of a basic thing that people need to know.

And then I talk about the importance of literacy, in everyone. Another thing that we help support is Our Own Expressions, which is a program for teens. Kids can paint, take photographs, write poetry or write narrative fiction, and then there's a contest. It's just starting now, from Jan. 21 to Feb. 24.

There's a panel of judges that chooses the best in each category, and then there's a program at (Pacific Lutheran University) to recognize these students. I went last year, it was great. These young people are doing amazing writing and amazing artwork. It was very inspiring.

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OTHER LIBRARIES

- Why public libraries matter: and how they can do more
- No more overdue library fines for kids in Whatcom
- Puyallup Public Library forms teen advisory group
- Library to stay at forefront of technology in its 100th year
- The future of reading
- Cream of the librarian crop
- Libraries see opening as bookstores close
- Walk, borrow, read, return and repeat
- A message to all ALA members from ALA President Maureen Sullivan
- San Antonio to open first bookless public library
- The Seattle Public Library offers free financial aid help for students in January
- Library budget reflects digital emphasis, includes purchase of e-readers
- $1.35 million grant going to Washington and Oregon libraries
Forbes

Why Public Libraries Matter: And How They Can Do More

I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expense than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county, to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the country under regulations as would secure their safe return in due time.


From one standpoint, public libraries seem like a small thorn in the side of embattled publishers. They account for a small percentage of book sales, but bleed off more sales by lending bestsellers promiscuously. Publishers, anxious to discover the next Fifty Shades or Hunger Games have little time for their nattering and would prefer that the current fight over eBook pricing quietly disappeared.

But there is another side to public libraries in America: they are dynamic, versatile community centers. They welcomed more than 1.59 billion visitors in 2009 and lent books 2.4 billion times – more than 8 times for each citizen. More than half of young adults and seniors living in poverty in the United States used public libraries to access the Internet. They used this access, among other purposes to “find work, apply to college, secure government benefits, and learn about critical medical treatments” For all this, public libraries cost just $42 per citizen each year to maintain.

The growth of electronic reading holds significant opportunities and threats for both public libraries and publishers. This is no small affair: new research from the Pew Research Center shows that a third of Americans now own eBook readers or tablet devices, and Amazon sells more eBooks than print books.

Big six publishers limit public libraries’ access to eBooks at their own peril. They fail to see that public libraries are an integral part of the fragile ecosystem of reading in America. Without libraries to encourage new readers, foster book groups and promote communities of reading, publishers will find fewer readers for their biggest titles, and readers will have more difficulty discovering works not on the bestseller list.

Public libraries for their part have been slow to react to the dramatic changes in publishing and reading that threaten their ability to fulfill their core mission of promoting reading. By focusing too heavily on giving patrons access to bestsellers and popular movies, libraries risk missing the significant opportunity afforded by the explosion in the number of new books published each year.
This article is the second in a two-part series on libraries and their role in the marketing and readership of books. The first part focused on the current dispute between libraries and publishers. This article details the opportunities and obstacles for libraries in a changed world of publishing and reading.

Why Publishers Underestimate Libraries

Large publishers claim to embrace libraries, and they certainly have well-informed executives who do: just listen to Skip Dye, the VP of Academic and Library Sales and Marketing for Random House:

*We see that the libraries have an important role for us. Libraries have a great influence. They go through the whole family and create a great sense of community through books. We’ve always thought that our role is to help the influencers influence.*

The actions of the big six publishers tell a different story, however. Indeed, Random House itself increased the price of many bestsellers in eBook format – some to $84 or more. As a group, large publisher are wary of libraries, or at best ambivalent.

Publishers have some justification for their viewpoint. In 2009, public libraries accounted for just 1.3% of total book sales, down from 4.3% in 1989. Moreover, Pew research suggests that a third of library eBook patrons might have bought the books they are borrowing had they been unable to find it at the library. This almost certainly exaggerates the actual cannibalization of book sales by libraries (consumer marketers know that self reported purchase intent notoriously overstates actual purchase behavior), but cannibalization does occur.

With this understanding, it’s clear why large publishers might be ambivalent towards libraries. This narrow view of public libraries misses an important dynamic, however. Like the humble starfish that preserves entire marine ecosystems by eating mussels, the American public library is the keystone species in the ecosystem of reading. Without public libraries to promote the culture of reading and build communities of interconnected readers, publishers would face a diminished market for their titles. Indeed, the fact that reading remains a vibrant part of American cultural life is somewhat startling in the face of the competition for consumers’ attention: movies, video games, television, online shopping, browsing and social networking.

Moreover, large publishers face a world that is changing in ways that will make public libraries ever more important to them. The power of big publishers is threatened by Amazon, which depresses margins and promotes self-published authors who routinely underprice the market. At the same time, the number of bookstores is declining – there were 10,800 in 2012 versus 12,363 in 1997. This makes it harder for publishers to develop new authors and new genres. Libraries can help with this – if only they would.

Libraries Need To Rethink Their Acquisitions Strategy

*Find out what they like, and how they like it, and let him have it just that way. Give them what they want, and when they want it, without a single word to say*
Thomas "Fats" Waller

Public libraries risk missing the opportunities of an important trend: the explosion of published books. Back in 1950, there were just 11,022 titles published. In 2010, 328,259 titles were brought to market.

According to the Public Library Inquiry, libraries serving populations of 100,000 or more purchased an average 48,000 books in 1948 – enough to buy over 4 copies of every one of the 11,000 titles published in that year.

Steve Coffman, Library Support Services, Inc. (quoted from a forthcoming article Coffman provided to me)

By 2010, however, the situation had dramatically changed. In 2010, there were over 300,000 titles published, but the average library could buy only 21,000 of them.

Public libraries are still pursuing an acquisitions philosophy that is guided by a reality from the 1950’s. When libraries could buy everything, individual libraries could curate the entire opus of the publishing industry and help consumers get what they wanted. The need for libraries to discover new books was minimal, because everyone knew what the new books were, and publications like The Library Journal and Publisher's Weekly could review most of the important books. The bigger issue was access. Under Charlie Robinson, the Baltimore County Public Library system adopted the philosophy of “Give ‘Em What They Want.” They focused on providing increased numbers of the most popular titles to patrons – and this philosophy eventually expanded to include tapes and DVDs. The benefit to libraries was increased circulation. At one point circulation numbers of the Baltimore County Public Library were topped only by the New York and the Los Angeles public library systems.

The benefit of this strategy is that it helped build loyalty to libraries among adult readers. The problem is that by focusing on books that patrons already wanted, libraries de-emphasized their important role in the discovery of new books.
No more overdue library fines for kids in Whatcom

Whatcom County library officials want to encourage kids to read, so they have decided to stop issuing fines for overdue library books in the two public library systems as of Jan. 1.

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — Whatcom County library officials want to encourage kids to read, so they have decided to stop issuing fines for overdue library books in the two public library systems as of Jan. 1.

The Bellingham Herald (http://is.gd/iLhsrM) reports library officials want to support early learning by getting library cards into youngsters' hands.

Parents have told library staff that fines make them reluctant to get library cars for their children.

The change will affect card holders 17 and younger, who check out children and teen materials.

Youths who fail to return items on time will be notified that they're overdue. They will be charged the cost of replacing items that are 60 days overdue.

Young people still will face overdue fines if they check out materials meant for adults and don't return them in time.
The young adult librarian at the Puyallup Public Library said the agency had two good reasons for setting up a Teen Advisory Group.

Bonnie Svitavsky thinks it’s important to let the teens have a say in the programming for their age group, and as a bonus, they can fulfill their requirements for volunteer hours.

“The Teen Advisory Group can branch into other volunteer work,” Svitavsky said.

“It is nice to hammer out how the teens feel, and how the library is serving them,” she added.

Still in the planning stages, Svitavsky said she hopes to get the Teen Advisory Group running to the point where members can set their own agenda.

The group will create programming, evaluate services, create a welcoming environment and give advice about book titles. They will help select books, create posters, decorate the Teen Zone and write book reviews.

The board met recently to discuss a mission statement.

Svitavsky said members of the group will represent all teens who use the library.

“This is a chance for teens to have a voice and help spruce up the Teen Zone,” she said.

Group member Frankie Prossick said she has been going to the teen club since she was 13. She’s supports library services and has addressed the Puyallup City Council on their issues.

“It is important to me,” Prossick said. “People are friendly, and I read a lot. I don’t want any programs to be cut.”

Josh Bachman, also a group member, said he volunteered at the library for three years.

“I’m a big reader,” he said. “I always try to give Bonnie good ideas.”

Svitavsky encouraged the group to bring friends to the meetings. The Teen Advisory Group does not go through a selection process; everyone is welcome.

Library Director Tim Wadham said the teen group is a great idea.

“It is important that the teens be involved with programs at the library and are part of that planning,” he said, adding that teens can own some of what’s going on at the library, and they can spread the word to their friends.

Wadham said teens often can be overlooked, but the goal is to bring them to the library.

Svitavsky said she likes working with the group.

“They are in an incredibly interesting period of their lives,” she said. “They are very enthusiastic and have lots of opinions. Teens can be incredibly eloquent about how they feel that services at the library can be, and I enjoy the interaction.”

Svitavsky said teens will give advice on how to use funds that are earmarked for teen programs.

“The teens know what they want, use and need,” she said.

Those who want to join the Teen Advisory Group can call Svitavsky at 253-841-5454 or email bsvitavsky@ci.puyallup.wa.us.
Library to stay at forefront of technology in its 100th year

BY TIM WADHAM
Puyallup Public Library

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Puyallup Public Library. It is the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Carnegie library building and of the library becoming an official city department.

Throughout the year, you'll see the library celebrate in a number of significant ways, and I hope you will join with us in celebrating not only our heritage but also a very bright future ahead.

You may already have noticed our new 100th anniversary logo, which appears on our Bookmark newsletter and our new library cards.

So what was happening in the world of books 100 years ago? Can you name the author who won the 1913 Nobel Prize for literature? (Come by the library, and we can help you out with that, and many other questions!)

The year 1913 saw the debut of a new play by George Bernard Shaw called "Pygmalion," which later became the Broadway musical and, later, film, "My Fair Lady." It provoked a huge riot at its initial performance in Paris on May 29, 1913.

At times, the noise of the audience was so loud that the orchestra could not be heard. The audience threw anything they had available at the stage. The headline for the article sent from Paris via Marconi wireless telegraph to the New York Times read: "Parisians Hiss New Ballet: Has to Turn Up Lights."

Check out a recording of this piece from the library, listen to the music, and ask yourself if it motivates you to throw rotten fruit at your stereo system. I doubt it will, and it's fascinating to think how music, which seems so incredibly normal today, was considered subversive and unlistenable exactly 100 years ago.

In this new year, we'll look to the past, but we'll also look to the future of how the Puyallup Public Library can continue to be an indispensable part of this community.

A novel particularly relevant to Puyallup's pioneer heritage that appeared in 1913 is Willa Cather's "O Pioneers!"

Eleanor H. Porter published a novel called "Polyanna," which later became a beloved Disney film starring Hayley Mills.

And be sure to run to your nearest bakery to pick up a madeleine to eat (or retrieve your childhood memories) in honor of the 1913 publication of "Swann's Way," the first volume in Marcel Proust's massive novel, "Remembrance of Things Past."

But along with Proust's notable look backward, 1913 was a year that saw the world of art move into the future in a dramatic way.

Igor Stravinsky, whom I think is the great composer of the 20th century, premiered his ballet, "The Rite of Spring," which

Like the persevering Swedish immigrant characters in Cather's novels, Puyallup pioneers made this area prosper, even in the face of devastating crop failures, such as the hop ice infestation of 1862, after which many farmers turned to berries.

Puyallup always has reinvented itself to stay modern without forgetting where it came from. And that's what the Puyallup Public Library will be doing — staying at the forefront of technology and not forgetting the core mission of a public library and what makes it possible — you, the citizens.

Tim Wadham is the director of the Puyallup Public Library. He can be reached at 253-841-5452 or by email at twadham@ci.puyallup.wa.us.
The Future of Reading

The publishing industry thinks it’s the end of days, but the world of words is a growth market.

I loved that the original Kindle let me annotate a book. Being able to add and search for my own thoughts amid the previously locked words of others without physically damaging the original opened up a world of possibilities. What if you could download books that had been pre-annotated? I would pay extra to read Freakonomics with commentary by Paul Krugman, The New Jim Crow with notes from editors at The Nation, or the Bible annotated by the creators of South Park. A book could always inspire new layers of meaning, but now it can host that inspiration and a slew of associated conversations.

Recently, at the Boston Book Festival, I was lucky enough to take part in an amazing conversation about the future of reading and writing. We can mourn the passing of sustained attention, the hermetically sealed author, and, indeed, the publishing industry’s business model. But the networked world of words replacing it could be even better.

First, let’s consider what we’re losing in the transition. Tufts University child development professor Maryanne Wolf laments the loss of what she calls “deep reading.” Long-form reading has become subject to the same multitasking options as TV, radio, movies, and the web. Read a book on an iPad and the distractions are embedded in the physical form itself. Paperbacks do not have pop-up birthday reminders, a global music library, or kamikaze bird games built in. As a result, English professors report that today’s students are unable or unwilling to read lengthy 19th-century novels. Perhaps someone should adapt Pride and Prejudice into an Instagram feed.

Writing too is losing its mystique, as authors are expected to be the chief marketing officers and customer support VPs for their “brands.” One man angrily tweeted me that because I did not tweet him back, he was not going to finish my book. His loss; I already had his money.

But to focus on the negative would be to miss what’s thrilling about all this change. Harvard Library director Robert Darnton, dressed in sweater, slacks, and a tweed blazer, looked and sounded very bit his job title when he reminded our panel that there were more books published in 2011 than ever, due to the democratization of publishing enabled by technology. Add blogs, texts, and status updates, and it’s clear that words are a growth market (though I grant you that revenue per word is declining).

A look at several of the most interesting apps available today reveals strong hints about where those words are headed. Findings is a web app that allows clipping, linking, sharing, and thus deep remixing of segments of text previously trapped within bound volumes. The e-book platform Readmill makes the Kindle look like a stone tablet in the way it lets readers compare content—and have a conversation—about several books at once. The iPhone apps Circa and Tapestry are among the first text experiences on a smartphone that feel built for mobile first.

Yet we’re doing more than digitizing words and adding tantalizing interfaces. We are networking them—and the ideas they represent. What excites me most about the future of reading is the linking, translating, co-creating, and discovering we have yet to do.

During our conversation, MIT Media Lab cofounder Nicholas Negroponte told the story of a previously nonliterate African village whose children were given tablet computers—without instructions or instructors. Regardless, the students figured out how to message each other and use apps; within weeks, they had hacked Android. If 5-year-olds previously unexposed to writing can do this now, losing a few dusty 19th-century novels feels like a small price to pay for the future those kids might create.

Baratunde Thurston is the author of the New York Times best seller How to Be Black and the founder of Cultivated Wit, a comedy and technology company that tells stories in engaging ways.

Baratunde Thurston
Students appreciate the attention she gives them even when she’s busy. Her fellow educators praise her unflagging dedication.

And the Washington Library Media Association calls Alyse Fritz the cream of the librarian crop after naming her its 2012 Outstanding Teacher-Librarian of the Year.

Fritz, a teacher-librarian at Eatonville High School since 2006, was selected by a committee of the association (WLMA) for the award that recognizes the professional who best demonstrates the ideals of the organization. WLMA represents about 700 of Fritz’s peers, “so this is quite an honor,” she said.

Fritz is a National Board-certified teacher in library media, holds degrees from City University and Eastern Washington University, and has teaching endorsements in K-12 English as a Second Language, library media and reading. She and her husband, Greg Fritz, live Spanaway and have two children, Savannah and Brodie.

Nominations for the WLMA award are made by students and faculties of schools. Fritz’s candidacy was heartily supported in a letter signed by 41 students, as well as letters from other teachers and the now-former principal at Eatonville High.

The students saluted Fritz for the time she gives them “no matter how much work she has.” They also wrote that “the success of students is precious to her,” and she gives them the advice and studious environment in the library that they need.

Margie Hoffman, who teaches English, said she and fellow teachers get “100 percent” support from Fritz with their lessons and technology.

“She is there for whatever help our students and staff need from her,” Hoffman wrote in a nominating letter. She added that Fritz goes the extra mile with her own professional development to continually support teachers and administrators.

Chris Hunke, a history teacher, noted Fritz oversaw the creation of a media services center that has led to “significant gains in student performance and achievement.” She “sets the standard for professional expertise and media-service instruction,” Hunke wrote.

Garth Steedman, who has since moved to a central administrative job for the school district, wrote that while he was principal at the high school, she pushed students to earn passing grades,
in addition to showing by example what school libraries “should be doing. While she still respects the time-honored tradition of physical books, she is also aware that she needs to expose our students to new trends” in literary material.

Fritz, who formally accepted her award at WLMA’s annual conference, thanked those who nominated her. She said their appreciation is overwhelming.

“I am humbled and awestruck at the amount of support from our learning community,” she said.

Fritz started her teaching career as a remedial English teacher at Port Angeles High School in 2000. In 2002, she was recruited by the school’s librarian to take her position while she was on a year’s leave of absence. Two years later, Fritz moved to the Spanaway area and became a library media specialist at James Sales Elementary School, where she helped automate the library and developed an updated information literacy curriculum.

At Eatonville, programs she has instituted include one in which students serve as library administrative assistants and can earn a career and technology education computer literacy credit and five college credits.

Alyse Fritz of Eatonville High School “sets the standard for professional expertise” as a teacher librarian, says one of her fellow faculty members.
The New York Times
Libraries See Opening as Bookstores Close

Vicki Culler shops for discounted books at the Friends of the Public Library in Cincinnati.

By KAREN ANN CULLOTTA

Published: December 27, 2012 268 Comments

At the bustling public library in Arlington Heights, Ill., requests by three patrons to place any title on hold prompt a savvy computer tracking system to order an additional copy of the coveted item. That policy was intended to eliminate the frustration of long waits to check out best sellers and other popular books. But it has had some unintended consequences, too: the library’s shelves are now stocked with 36 copies of “Fifty Shades of Grey.”

Of course, librarians acknowledge that when patrons’ passion for the sexy series lacking in literary merit cools in a year or two, the majority of volumes in the “Fifty Shades” trilogy will probably be plucked from the shelves and sold at the Friends of the Library’s used-book sales, alongside other poorly circulated, donated and out-of-date materials.

“A library has limited shelf space, so you almost have to think of it as a store, and stock it with the things that people want,” said Jason Kuhl, the executive director of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. Renovations will turn part of the library’s first floor into an area resembling a bookshop that officials are calling the Marketplace, with cozy seating, vending machines and, above all, an abundance of best sellers.
As librarians across the nation struggle with the task of redefining their roles and responsibilities in a digital age, many public libraries are seeing an opportunity to fill the void created by the loss of traditional bookstores. They are increasingly adapting their collections and services based on the demands of library patrons, whom they now call customers.

Today’s libraries are reinventing themselves as vibrant town squares, showcasing the latest best sellers, lending Kindles loaded with e-books, and offering grass-roots technology training centers. Faced with the need to compete for shrinking municipal finances, libraries are determined to prove they can respond as quickly to the needs of the taxpayers as the police and fire department can.

“I think public libraries used to seem intimidating to many people, but today, they are becoming much more user-friendly, and are no longer these big, impersonal mausoleums,” said Jeannette Woodward, a former librarian and author of “Creating the Customer-Driven Library: Building on the Bookstore Model.”

“Public libraries tread a fine line,” Ms. Woodward said. “They want to make people happy, and get them in the habit of coming into the library for popular best sellers, even if some of it might be considered junk. But libraries also understand the need for providing good information, which often can only be found at the library.”

Cheryl Hurley, the president of the Library of America, a nonprofit publisher in New York “dedicated to preserving America’s best and most significant writing,” said the trend of libraries that cater to the public’s demand for best sellers is not surprising, especially given the ravages of the recession on public budgets.

Still, Ms. Hurley remains confident that libraries will never relinquish their responsibility to also provide patrons with the opportunity to discover literary works of merit, be it the classics, or more recent fiction from novelists like Philip Roth, whose work is both critically acclaimed and immensely popular.

“The political ramifications for libraries today can result in driving the collection more and more from what the people want, rather than libraries shaping the tastes of the readers,” Ms. Hurley said. “But one of the joys of visiting the public library is the serendipity of discovering another book, even though you were actually looking for that best seller that you thought you wanted.”

“It’s all about balancing the library’s mission and its marketing, and that is always a tricky dance,” she added.
While print books, both fiction and nonfiction, still make up the bulk of most library collections — ebooks amount to to less than 2 percent of many collections in part because some publishers limit their availability at libraries — building renovation plans rarely include expanding shelf space for print products. Instead, many libraries are culling their collections and adapting floor plans to accommodate technology training programs, as well as mini-conference rooms that offer private, quiet spaces frequently requested by self-employed consultants meeting with clients, as well as teenagers needing space to huddle over group projects.

Though an increase in book weeding these days — a practice long known in library parlance as deselection — might be troubling to some bibliophiles, library officials say, many books enjoy a happy life after being sold.

A recent visit to the Friends of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Warehouse Sale proved to be not unlike wandering into a reader’s nirvana for Jeff Borden, 51. A writer and adjunct professor from Chicago, Mr. Borden said he and his wife, Johanna Brandon, left the November sale with shopping bags brimming with an eclectic and bargain-priced assortment of fiction and nonfiction, including the noir novel “The Leopard,” by Jo Nesbo, and “Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde” by Jeff Guinn.

“The books are piling up all over the house,” said Mr. Borden, who estimated that the couple spent about $50, money that officials said will be given to the library system to finance programs including its children’s story time.

“Great fiction is still being written, as well as rotten fiction,” Mr. Borden added. “To my way of thinking, you need to get them in the door of the library first, and if someone’s search for ‘Shades of Grey’ leads them to read D. H. Lawrence, well, that’s not a bad deal.”

Gretchen Caserotti, the assistant director for public services at the public library in Darien, Conn., said, “We are terrifically excited about the sea change at libraries, and rethinking our model in a new world.”

The Darien library has a three-requests policy similar to the one in Arlington Heights.

“The library should be as they say, a third place — you have home, work or school, and then you come to the library because it is the center and heart of the community,” Ms. Caserotti said. “Our staff is 100 percent committed to hospitality, customer service and welcoming people to the library as if they were visiting our home. We need to remember it is their library, not ours, and they are paying for it.”
Walk, Borrow, read, return and repeat

In the middle of a gray January drizzle, on a soggy Tacoma patch of grass, stands something that would make any determined walker push back his or her rain-soaked hood for a double-take: a bookshelf. With books. On the sidewalk. Free for the taking.

ROSEMARY PONNEKANT; Staff writer
Published: Jan. 11, 2013 at 12:05 a.m. PST

In the middle of a gray January drizzle, on a soggy Tacoma patch of grass, stands something that would make any determined walker push back his or her rain-soaked hood for a double-take: a bookshelf. With books. On the sidewalk. Free for the taking.

Or in this case, borrowing, because these bookshelves aren’t the ordinary kind. They’re tiny, homemade weather-proof boxes filled with books for the community to share. They’re called Little Free Libraries, an idea founded in Wisconsin and now a worldwide phenomenon, with four right here in Tacoma.

“We’ve already had five or six people stopping by – and somebody’s been taking the books,” said Craig Rounds, who just set up a Little Free Library outside his North Oakes Street home a week ago. “It’s fun.”

Sharing books, taking books and having fun is one of the main goals of the Little Free Library idea. Begun in Hudson, Wis., in 2009 as one man’s quirky tribute to his book-loving mother, the LFL concept became a partnership, a website and then a global movement. Founders Todd Bols and Rick Brooks are now at the head of a nonprofit organization that makes enough money to give them paychecks, attracts hefty grants and supports library projects around the world. Their original goal was to inspire more libraries than Andrew Carnegie had built. With more than 3,000 at last count, they’ve more than achieved it.

The idea is simple: build a box – anything from birdhouse to playhouse size – put in shelves, make it weatherproof, stick it in your front yard and stock it with books. Then stand back and watch the neighborhood come by to borrow, return and donate their own.

“Lots of people use it,” said Heidi Hutchison, who installed an LFL last summer with her husband, Andrew, at their home on North 10th Street. “The neighborhood kids are really excited, even the high school kids at Wilson.”

Inspired by family visits to Wisconsin, where the LFL movement has hatched hundreds of these box-size libraries, the Hutchisons downloaded plans from the LFL website, adding their own gingerbread touches to a sky-blue gabled box that looks straight out of “Hansel and Gretel.” A glass front clearly shows the books, which are mostly adult and children’s classics, donated by Heidi and her book-club friends.
Occasionally she’s had to edit—“I tossed a couple of trashy romances and a Book of Mormon,” she admitted—but mostly the library looks after itself, with no vandalism and a hedge to help protect it from the weather. Andrew’s even thinking of adding a second level for more books.

Bols and Brooks sell LFL kits on their website, and they do charge $25 a year to have libraries listed on their Google map. But there’s nothing stopping you from building your own library. Folks have made them from fruit boxes, old microwaves, storm debris, even a canoe. Rounds made his from an old bed headboard and cupboard front, with his family pitching in to collage the outside with magazine pictures and text cut-outs to indicate the library’s contents of kids’ fantasy, sci-fi, military and home and garden books. He also knocked on all the neighbors’ doors with flyers about the project, asking them to help keep an eye out to protect the library.

Up on West Road beside the North Tacoma gulch, Bob Jones has a Little Free Library he built six weeks ago from a repurposed bathroom cabinet. With sloping sides and honey-colored wood, it has a cabin feel.

Down near South 19th Street, at the back of a bubble gum-blue garage on the alleyway between Oakes and Anderson streets, LFL owner R.R. Anderson has built shelves under the garage eaves, covering them with clear plastic sheets and expanding the offerings with videos and a USB port for e-books. (He also asks for a 25-cent donation, which isn’t quite the original free concept.)

However the books are housed, the result of Little Free Libraries has been to draw communities together around the love of books. Both Hutchison and Rounds said they’ve met many more neighbors because of the project, and the little notebook in the LFL box on Tacoma’s West Road is full of grateful handwriting: “What a great thing, thank you. I’ll bring back what I’ve read,” signs “a Proctor walker.” Another note reads “Thank you. I’ll read them to my granddaughter.”

“I like the idea of sharing what I have,” Rounds said. “I don’t need to read my books 17 times. I’d rather people read them rather than just giving them to a thrift store. It gives another something for a community to get together around.”

And in an age where more people than ever drive rather than walk, and think reading is something you do on a screen, Little Free Libraries are proving that books — especially free ones from somebody else — have all the magic they ever did.

“It does unite the neighborhood, in little ways,” Hutchison said. “I just like books, and I want to share them.”

Find a Little Free Library

4617 N. 10th St., Tacoma (between Stevens and Orchard Streets). Adult and kid classics.

1702 N. Oakes St., Tacoma. A mixture of kids’ fantasy and adventure, sci-fi, home and garden, military and general.

91 West Road, Tacoma. Small range of adult fiction, some kids’ books.
Alley between South Anderson and South Oakes, between South 17th and 19th streets, Tacoma (back of blue garage). Wide range of classics, nonfiction, fiction, videos and ebooks.

At all LFLs, feel free to take or donate books. Please respect the box and protect the books from the weather. Find more libraries around the world at littlefreelibrary.org, as well as instructions on how to make your own.

Online Comment:

mgopher

What say we just close the useless city libraries
A Message to All ALA Members from ALA President Maureen Sullivan

As we mark the halfway point of the 2011–2015 ALA Strategic Plan, the American Library Association (ALA) has made significant strides towards its goal to provide leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services in an increasingly digital information environment. I am proud to be part of this important work with ALA Immediate Past-President Molly Raphael and President-elect Barbara Stripling. At the highest levels and across the organization, ALA has mobilized around ebooks and larger digital content issues affecting libraries of all types. A great deal of work was accomplished earlier this year under Molly’s leadership and with the very good work accomplished by the Digital Content & Libraries Working Group (DCWG) that she appointed. This continues to be a priority for the Association.

As ALA President, I am encouraged by where ALA has positioned itself. Though there has not been enough progress with publishers and distributors, ALA has made many contributions to library advocacy. I know through my professional work in organizational consulting that revolutionary change is difficult and takes time to work through, and that paths forward are not clear cut. I’m pleased that ALA is making a good effort to navigate this revolution with, and on behalf of, our members. For their contributions to ALA and the library community, I particularly thank the co-chairs of the DCWG, Robert Wolven and Sari Feldman; the members of the DCWG; and the ALA staff who support the DCWG.

As we head into the 2013 ALA Midwinter Meeting, I thought it would be useful to “round up” and share highlights from the past year, say something about some next steps, and invite you to join our efforts. A strong foundation has been laid, and there is much more work ahead in this dynamic sphere. In order to create real change, we will need to deepen and go beyond historical relationships, rethink how we leverage technology to best serve readers, and even shift paradigms—for instance, from repository to creator. There is no doubt that “transformation” is the right frame of reference for the work before us.

Relationship-building and communication with publishers
The first major milestone for DCWG and for me, personally, was a set of meetings in New York with several “Big Six” publishers in January 2012. ALA needed to make our case directly at the highest levels in order to establish direct channels of communication and develop a better understanding of publisher concerns and misconceptions.

One issue that became clear from those meetings is the influential role of intermediaries—aggregators and/or retailers—in library ebook lending. Examination of the issue of library ebook lending involves a much broader look at the entire ecosystem, including not only publishers and libraries but also intermediaries, authors, and even literary agents. These first meetings also introduced us to a central point of negotiation: how much “friction” is acceptable in order for libraries and publishers to do business together? While our patrons love 24/7 access to our digital content, publishers are concerned this easy availability might hurt sales. Of course, we librarians know that our waiting lists already constitute quite a bit of “friction.”

As a result of these meetings, we widened our net to include more players. We participated in new research and had deeper internal conversations about what “friction” means for libraries and our patrons and how this might
translate into different business models. More information about these meetings—and those from subsequent visits to New York by the ALA delegation in May, September and December, and meetings during the PLA National Conference in March—can be found on the American Libraries E-Content blog:

- **Ebook Talks: The Details**
- **Ebook Talks Continued: ALA Meets with Distributors**
- **Ebooks: Promising New Conversations**
- **Focus on the Future**
- **On the Road for Ebooks: How ALA Advocated This Fall**

### Increased media outreach

In any negotiation, leverage matters. From the first news story about HarperCollins changing its library ebook licensing terms, outreach to media has been part of our strategy to raise public awareness of the issues and to increase accountability. Over time, ALA communications have become more immediate and more proactive. As we found some publishers taking steps backward (with increased prices or eliminated access), we responded more quickly and aggressively. We reached out to editorial pages and news reporters to make our case directly to the public, as well as to publishers. Not long after I began my presidential term, we published an open letter calling for more immediate action on the pressing issues facing libraries and our patrons.

In November 2012 with your help, we brought all of this experience together to launch the ebook media and communications toolkit to share what we have learned and extend our reach further. Among the tools are templates and guidelines for using them with editorial and news media contacts, news hooks you can use locally, tips for building relationships with media contacts, and links to examples of ebook-related editorials and news stories.

More information on this work can be found here:

- **Press clips** (pdf)
- **Pew Internet Project research on libraries**
- **Ebook media and communications toolkit**

### Information resources and tools for libraries and library advocates

The principal leverage point, of course, is you. The influence derived from our 58,000 members and the entire library community is powerful. ALA has stepped up its efforts to inform our members and to work collaboratively with our library partners. ALA’s elected leaders, DCWG members, and ALA staff have given presentations and updates at forums ranging from the Public Library Association and the Association of American Publishers to chapter conferences in Colorado, Indiana, and New Hampshire, and even to international conferences in Italy, China, and Russia.

We have published and shared more information and updates online. American Libraries kick-started the E-Content blog in fall 2011 and published two digital supplements in 2012 featuring contributions from many DCWG leaders and collaborators. For their part, DCWG subgroups have: outlined business models; initiated a series of tip sheets to provide librarians with clear definitions; developed examples of how digital content and digital formats impact library services; and identified resources for further information on the numerous and often complicated issues in providing digital resources to their patrons and students.

ALA is working collaboratively with other organizations on a range of efforts. One major initiative is a series of studies on e-reading trends and libraries being conducted by the Pew Internet Project with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. ALA is a partner in the Big Shift, an IMLS-funded research project through OCLC. ALA also participates in the ReadersFirst coalition initiated by New York Public Library, the Digital Public Library of America initiative, as well as in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions’ ebook workgroup.
More information on these tools and initiatives can be found here:

- Business models
- Tip sheets
- E-Content blog
- Transforming Libraries website

Next steps

As we start this new year, publisher merger talks are in the news and the landscape continues to shift. We must keep the pressure on large publishers, while also deepening existing relationships and building new ones across the ecosystem. For example, we will be connecting more with smaller and independent publishers, as well as with authors and literary agents. As we do so, we will keep you informed and create new tools for engagement along the way. We also will look more closely at increasing the possibilities for libraries to market, provide access to, and facilitate production of books. Self-publishing is an exploding area of growth. How might libraries play a role in this trend in furtherance of our goal to connect authors and readers?

DCWG members already are developing new resources related to ensuring ebook access for people with disabilities, as well as examining ebook business models for school libraries. Additional topics and goals are under consideration as we outline the work of the DCWG in 2013.

I have heard from many of our members across the nation on the critical importance of these issues, and I truly appreciate your interest and support. We have worked hard and well together over the past year, and there is certainly more to do in the year ahead. Please be assured that I am looking forward to this work ahead with all of you and our hard-working DCWG members and ALA staff to further advance our cause as we all work through the digital revolution.

Maureen Sullivan
ALA President
San Antonio to open first bookless public library

A new library to be opened in Bexar County, Texas, will provide visitors with a bank of e-Readers for borrowing e-books ... but books of the traditional paper variety will be glaringly absent. The project marks the first public library to be built as an all-digital service and just to make sure library-goers are in no doubt that it's the 21st century, the interior will feature a design influenced by Apple retail stores.

The library, known as the BiblioTech, was announced by Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff and is set to open later this year. If the scheme proves successful, then similar facilities will be opened across Bexar County.

And the library's design? "If you want an idea what it looks like, go into an Apple store," Wolff says. The designers might have a bit of a task on their hands however, with the new library being built in a remodeled structure that currently houses the offices for Tax Assessor, Justice of the Peace and Constable. Suffice to say, its not likely to be quite up there with Apple's Fifth Avenue store, but the artist's impression of the interior does bear a number of the Apple Store hallmarks (at the very least, they didn't skimp on the sheer number of iMacs).

Library goers won't have to provide their own devices to take advantage of the BiblioTech's digital catalog, with an initial stock of one hundred unspecified e-Readers available for lending. Visitors can borrow the devices for up to two weeks, and while the system might seem rather open to abuse, Wolff is confident that theft won't be a widespread problem. "We do have your name, we do have your address," he says. "You check it out for two weeks, just like a library book. In two weeks, your e-book goes dead, so you won't have anything worth keeping."
San Antonio isn’t new to the concept of bookless libraries. The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) was one of the first academic institutions to offer its students a bookless library in 2010, implementing a system that proved popular with students. The public library system will differ from UTSA’s in that it will be “designed for, not adapted to, the digital age”, according to Wolff.

While the jury is out on the success of the bookless library format in the public space, chance are that the new system will split public opinion right down the middle. Though e-book sales
continue to grow in strength, a Publisher’s Association report on the first half of 2012 suggests that this may be having less of an impact than expected, with the sales of physical books largely unaffected.

5 Comments

IMO: I think this is way cool. I think it could be the trend for future libraries. I think some things are great as ebooks and others (photo books, maps, etc) would still be great for actual books. I think there is a place for both.

It would be neat to see these ebook libraries here in New Jersey.

Perhaps when ebooks get big with low prices but higher resolution, it could even replace the books mentioned above.

I think colleges use of ebooks is an excellent idea. They could re-issue or update text books at a lower cost and not use up trees to do so. One could just delete the older or out of date text book instead of having to store or sell them. It could help with student backs by having to only carry an e-book reader instead of those heavy text books. It could save money since ebooks are usually cheaper than printed ones.

BigWarpGuy
15th January, 2013 @ 05:37 am PST

I love the idea. Design flaw on comfort though. No one is going to want to spend a long time in that library the seats look uncomfortable and it is cramped.

Nangela Cooper
16th January, 2013 @ 10:39 am PST

From a cost perspective, why would you use Macs? My assumption of course is that this is being paid for by tax money. I could see iPads for certain media or rich book format consumption because there are some great solutions to support a large number of iPads. I also assume the majority of leanable ebook devices will be inexpensive e-paper ones like the Kindle.

Rann Xeroxx
16th January, 2013 @ 11:45 am PST

This is fantastic. In South Africa we have a massive problem of people, especially youth who do not like reading PRINTED BOOKS. It appears to be hard work, books are heavy and bulky and expensive, resulting in knowledge illiteracy. As all youth are very proficient in the use of mobile phones and read all in the various social media platforms, I am convinced that they would be voracious readers if they had a library in any standard reader format such as Kindle, etc.
I have a dream of an e-library in my home town Pretoria, where the library has not purchased new books in the past 10 years, and the average library assistants do not read books.

The dream is to have traceable WI-fi readers tagged with chips, with index / catalog of books, downloaded with USB dongle at library at a minimal per book cost; book available for 14 days then blocked (book title remains in historic file for reference, notes, and tracking); Reader rented at a monthly affordable fee which includes insurance; same reader used at institutes of learning for downloading text books valid for 12 months, etc. The rentals will pay of the initial cost of the reader which can be subsidized by Public Private Partners and donors. Microsoft could sponsor it out of the exorbitant profits the make out of the expensive software they sell in South Africa.

Sarel T
16th January, 2013 @ 02:08 pm PST

finally a library that understands the concept of what a library should be, a place that not only promotes intelligence but also the innovation that intelligence makes possible. no more dirty torn pages or stolen books, no more abused books that need to be replaced and the greatest moment, access to reference material. welcome to the 21st century, how many yrs. too late?

slayerwulfe
16th January, 2013 @ 06:46 pm PST
COMMUNITY BRIEFS

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY OFFERS FREE FINANCIAL AID HELP FOR STUDENTS IN JANUARY

by Seattle Medium

Originally posted 12/20/2012

The Seattle Public Library will offer free assistance to students filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sat., Jan. 12 and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sun., Jan. 13 at the Central Library, 1000 Fourth Ave., Level 4, Washington Mutual Foundation Meeting Room 1.

Students will be able to talk to financial aid professionals and get help filling out the FAFSA, and receive information about statewide student services, admission requirements and more.

Scholarship Junkies, a team of recent scholarship recipients and mentors, will work with students to complete the Gates Millennium Scholarships essays and help research other scholarship opportunities.

The sessions are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. Students and parents should bring their latest tax information and/or last pay stub from the previous year in order to complete the FAFSA form.

These events are part of the "College Goal Sunday" series. College Goal Sunday is a volunteer program that provides free information and assistance to students and families who are applying for financial aid for post-secondary education.

For more information, call the Library at (206) 386-4636.
Library budget reflects digital emphasis, includes purchase of e-readers

By Steven Frederich
The Daily World

The Timberland Regional Library is striking a deal with Barnes & Noble to begin offering the company's Nook e-readers to loan out to library card holders. The e-readers would come pre-loaded with books and could be checked out just like any other item at Timberland.

Timberland spokesman Jeff Kleingartner said everything is still being worked out, but the library hopes to roll out the concept by spring time, if not sooner.

As part of Timberland's annual budget next year, the library district has set aside $50,000 to purchase 40 Nook HD devices and 20 Nook 'Simple Touch' devices. In return, Barnes & Noble will pre-load the Nooks with a selection of books and software, and the library can update and manage the content.

The funds were expected to be approved Wednesday night as part of Timberland's budget for the 2013 calendar year.

"We are planning for pre-loaded e-readers will be available in a few months," Kleingartner said. "You couldn't just walk into Aberdeen and get one, they will be stored at the library and sent to the library when an item in the e-reader has a hold put on it. It will be similar to placing a hold and picking up the item when it comes into the library you requested."

At this point, the library is still working out the details on how the devices will be checked out and the potential user agreement a card holder may need to sign before getting the e-readers.

"We're starting with 50 of the devices as kind of a test project and we'll add more if the program is successful," Kleingartner said.

Timberland has been letting users borrow electronic copies of books for several years now, but library card holders had to provide their own e-readers. For a while, the only device that would work with the library's offerings was the Nook, but Amazon's Kindle provided software to the library about a year ago and now content can be checked out on Kindles.

Kleingartner said the library is preparing for a surge in electronic book checkouts, knowing that many people would receive e-readers as holiday gifts.

The library district is also planning to reduce the number of printed reference books in order to bolster its online resources accessible to all cardholders.

"The benefits include people can access the reference materials anytime — 24 hours a day, seven days a week — and simultaneously by more than one person at a time," Kleingartner said. "We are not going completely away from printed reference materials in libraries, just reducing those in favor of the more convenient online resources."

Reference Coordinator Alice Goudeaux said in a report to the Board of Trustees that during the past year, the library district purchased more than 100 reference e-books. Through the library's OverDrive library, users have access to 21,042 items, according to a recent report by Timberland's Collection Services manager Felicia Wilson.

As of the end of November, users had checked out 125,940 items — including 10,902 e-books, 4,758 audiobooks, 83 music items and 197 videos.
Besides the e-readers, Timbertown officials are also considering offering a service that will send library users text messages when a book they have on hold has come into the library or is about to become due. Right now, those messages come in via e-mail or users have the option for phone notifications.

Kleingartner said the services is still in the testing phase right now and the library is determining the costs to offer the service.

Steven Friederich, a Daily World writer, can be reached at 537-3927, or by email at sfriederich@thedailyworld.com

Reader Opinion — Potential of crude oil port begs big questions
Many issues remain after Coastal League split
Reform gun laws
$1.35 million grant going to Washington and Oregon libraries

Your guide to the latest news from around the Northwest

January 29, 2013 at 6:15 PM

$1.35 million grant going to Washington and Oregon libraries

Posted by Seattle Times staff

The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation announced it will be granting $1.35 million to support Washington and Oregon library programs this year.

Among the projects and organizations receiving grant funds are the Washington State Libraries for development of a smartphone app that will provide service to rural patrons and Kitsap Regional Library Foundation for a teen library program.

The foundation’s founders are Paul G. Allen and Jody Allen, whose father worked for the University of Washington library system and whose mother promoted reading throughout her life.
WHAT'S HAPPENING

- Are you ready to work at home?
- McCarthy names interim directors for human resources and emergency management
- Pierce County jobless rate rises
- For last time, UP council to start year with pay disparity
- Amazon offers 'innovative' music service
- Flags raised in University Place after controversy over location
- Are they ready for kindergarten? Finally, numbers
- Transit vote much like the last one; cuts to service next
- UPS professors' economic forecast has good news for Pierce County
- B&N aims to whittle its stores for years
- Little sign of a predicted e-book price war
Are you ready to work at home?
Anne Kates Smith
Last updated: December 30th, 2012 06:57 AM (PST)

Anyone who has ever sat in traffic on the way to or from work has dreamed of telecommuting. Others are driven to distraction—literally—by the hustle and bustle of the office and the constant interruptions that punctuate life in the cubicle. And every nine-to-fiver knows that the cost of gas (or bus, train or subway fare) plus dry cleaning and lunches out can put a serious dent in the family budget.

Estimates for the number of Americans working at home at least some of the time range from 16 million to as many as 30 million. In a 2012 study by the Families and Work Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management, 63 percent of employers surveyed reported that some of their employees work at home occasionally, up from 34 percent in 2005.

Another 50 million employees, with jobs that are compatible with at least part-time telework, would jump at the chance to give it a try, according to the Telework Research Network, a business consulting and telework advocacy firm. Some workers even say they’d give up a raise for the chance to stay home sometimes.

The benefits to both teleworkers and their bosses are significant, say advocates. Employees can save between $2,000 and $7,000 annually in transportation and work-related costs, according to Telework Research Network president Kate Lister. You might be able to shave child-care costs (but not during working hours), and some workers can qualify for home-office and other business deductions. The average home-office deduction amounts to $2,000 for teleworkers, says Lister, resulting in a tax savings of nearly $600 for someone in the 28-percent bracket. But you’ll qualify only if your boss requires you to work at home. (For details, see irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p587.pdf.)

Successful telecommuters have similar traits. They’re good communicators and have impeccable time-management skills. They’re proactive, self-starting and self-disciplined; motivation comes from within. They also don’t mind working in solitude, without the camaraderie of colleagues every day.

You might be perfect for telework, but your job must be suited to it. Are your client meetings predictable? Are your main forms of contact email and phone? Can you group together duties to be done at home on a regular basis? Do your performance ratings meet or exceed expectations? A yes to all those questions might indicate that telecommuting is a good fit for you. Working with classified information, needing access to paper documents or being an entry-level employee, however, could put the kibosh on your work-at-home plans. (Find out whether your job lends itself to telework by using the Eligibility Gizmo at teleworkexchange.com.)
McCarthy names interim directors for human resources and emergency management

Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy has appointed interim directors for the human resources and emergency management departments.

Joe Carillo, who has been labor relations manager in human resources for 22 years, assumes the duties of Betsy Sawyers, who retired at the end of December as human resources director.

Jody Woodcock, the deputy director of emergency management and a 22-year county employee, takes over for Steve Bailey. He will retire Jan. 11 as director of emergency management.

Carillo and Woodcock, whose appointments were announced Friday, will work as interim directors while McCarthy carries out a search for permanent appointments.
The Pierce County economy shed jobs in November, resulting in a slightly higher unemployment rate, according to state Employment Security Department data released Wednesday.

The jobless rate rose to 7.9 percent from a revised 7.8 percent rate in October after the county shed 300 jobs in the October-to-November period, the data show.

Regional economist Paul Turek called it a “mild step back” for the local economy because, in the same period last year, the county added 200 jobs. This year, the private sector shed 800 jobs in the October-to-November period, while the public sector added 500 jobs in the same period, he said.

The net loss of 300 jobs could be a sign that business owners are looking for more clarity about the country’s near-term fiscal policy before they invest in new employees, Turek said. Still, there were some bright spots.

• November’s 7.9 percent jobless rate was still at a multi-year low for Pierce County, and was much improved over the 8.8 percent jobless rate reported in November 2011.

• Although many private-sector industries shed jobs last month, the category known as retail trade added 500 seasonal holiday jobs to payrolls.

Meanwhile, Thurston County’s jobless rate also bumped up to 6.9 percent in November from a revised 6.7 percent in October.

Thurston County shed jobs in the same period, too, losing 500, regional economist Jim Vleming said. Still, the local economy has created 300 more jobs than this same time last year, he said, and the 6.9 percent jobless rate was lower than the 7.5 percent reported in November 2011.

“Good news is coming in small doses, but we’re getting there,” Vleming said.

Seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment was 7.8 percent in November. The national unemployment rate was 7.7 percent last month.

NOVEMBER JOBLESS

Not seasonally adjusted:

• King County (Seattle, Bellevue): 6.5 percent.
• Kitsap County: 6.5 percent.
• Thurston County: 6.9 percent.
• Pierce County: 7.9 percent.
• Mason County: 9.1 percent.
• Grays Harbor County: 11.4 percent.
• Lewis County: 11.5 percent

Showing 3 comments

• simonsjs Collapse
  What are the 500 new public jobs?

• harleyrider1
  Don't believe it - the President says things are great. Private sector is thriving and unemployment is down!
  Anything bad is George Bush's fault.

• Alinup
  Then a bunch-o-money is pulled out by a fiscal cliff. Boys and girls; In the next episode of our dysfunctional government...
For last time, UP council to start year with pay disparity

Post by Christian Hill / The News Tribune on Dec. 27, 2012 at 7:30 am

Veteran University Place City Council members will earn more than double the wages of their junior colleagues for a second consecutive year when the council reconvenes next month.

It will be the final year of the pay disparity for the City Council that emerged following its vote in 2010 to settle benefits that the elected leaders had enjoyed for a decade.

Starting in 2014, the council member will receive equal compensation, although the mayor and deputy mayor will continue to earn more money for their additional responsibilities.

Next year, however, a council member elected prior to 2011 is set to earn $36,791.78, while a colleague voted in last year is poised to take in $16,896. (Due to their larger salaries, Mayor Ken Grassi is set to make $40,463.76, and Deputy Mayor Denise McCluskey is slated to receive $38,255.76)

Why?

As I’ve previously reported, the City Council voted for a monthly medical allowance a decade ago. The allowance increased from $273 in 2002 to $1,496.58 this year to keep pace with rising health costs as prescribed by city ordinance. The allowance for 2013 is $1,526.98.

The allowance also came with a perk: If council members didn’t enroll in the city’s insurance or used only a portion of their allowance, they received cash. (The city has paid out the benefit as cash to all eligible council members since last year because not enough of them had enrolled in the insurance plan offered by the city.)

They also approved a 3 percent cost-of-living allowance on their base salary.

The council voted in November 2010 to eliminate the allowance and annual salary increases. But those changes only take effect when new or returning council members begin a new four-year term because the state constitution bars council members from adjusting their own compensation during the middle of terms.

As a result, newly elected council members Caroline Belleci, Kent Keel and Chris Nye earned half the compensation of Grassi, McCluskey and council members Eric Choiniere and Javier Figueroa this year.

Council members said last year the pay disparity is a non-issue because they sought office to better their community, not make money.
Grassi said he's not heard a peep about it since it took effect, either at council meetings or in private conversations.

"It has not come up," he said.

The disparity will end when the four new or returning council members begin their terms in January 2014. At that time, all council members will earn $16,896 annually. The mayor will earn $20,256, and the deputy mayor will earn $18,240.

University Place’s mayor is not independently elected; every two years, council members select a mayor to run meetings and serve as the city’s ceremonial head and a deputy mayor to serve in the mayor’s absence.
Amazon offers ‘innovative’ music service
REX CRUM
Last updated: January 11th, 2013 12:28 AM (PST)

SAN FRANCISCO — Amazon.com Inc. took another step toward improving its position in the digital-music market Thursday, launching a new service that will give customers free digital versions of CDs they purchase from the online megaretailer.

Amazon said that the new, free service called AutoRip will initially feature more than 50,000 albums. In addition, any album purchased from Amazon since 1998 and is covered under AutoRip will be included.

When a customer buys a CD that is part of AutoRip, a digital file of the album will be added to his or her Amazon Cloud Player library. The digital version can then be played on a computer, tablet or smartphone using the Amazon Cloud Player app, as well as downloaded to those devices.

Steve Boom, Amazon’s vice president of digital music, said the addition of AutoRip “adds value to owning music, which obviously benefits everyone in the music industry, including record labels and artists.”

Among the titles available with AutoRip are Adele’s 2011 blockbuster “21,” Maroon 5’s latest album “Overexposed” and Pink Floyd’s classic “Dark Side of the Moon.”

“This is an innovative move, and at the moment sets them apart from other music services,” said Tim Bajarin, president of technology-research firm Creative Strategies, about AutoRip. “It will be watched closely by Amazon’s competitors.”

The biggest of those rivals, Apple Inc., offers more than 26 million songs for sale on its iTunes store. Officials from Apple didn’t immediately return requests for comment on Amazon’s AutoRip service. Amazon said it currently offers more than 21 million songs for sale on its MP3 store.

The main difference between Amazon’s and Apple’s offerings is that Amazon sells physical CDs, while Apple sells only the digital files of albums and songs. The growth of digital music has changed the overall music market, with digital-sales growth outstripping that of CDs.

Figures from Nielsen SoundScan showed that in 2012, total music units sold in the United States rose 3.1 percent from 2011, to 1.66 billion units. Of that number, digital-album sales climbed by 14.1 percent to 118 million albums. CD sales fell by 13.5 percent, but still surpassed the amount of digital albums sold with 193 million units.
Bundling physical media with digital copies is not new in the entertainment business. Content providers such as Walt Disney Co. have found it lucrative to include digital downloads of their movies along with purchases of so-called “combo packs” of videos, which often include Blu-ray and DVDs of their movies.

But the Amazon AutoRip service is seen as the first time a major retailer, online or otherwise, is offering free access to digital versions of purchased physical media. With the success of its Kindle e-book readers and tablets, Amazon could be on the path to offering a similar AutoRip-type service for other types of media.
Flags raised in University Place after controversy over location
CHRISTIAN HILL
Last updated: January 18th, 2013 08:31 PM (PST)

The flags are up in front of the civic and library building in University Place, although weather conditions have prevented them from flying.

City workers raised the U.S. and state flags for the first time this week, completing a project that had generated controversy in the bedroom community of 31,000.

"I think everybody is glad it’s up, and under budget, and it’s looking good," Public Works Director Gary Cooper said.

The only downside, he said, is that the first week has been marked by stagnant air and droopy flags.

"I got no wind to make it fly," he quipped.

The total project cost – including the flags, 50-foot-tall flagpole and lighting – came in at around $12,000. The council had budgeted $20,000 from Town Center development money.

Plans originally called for the city’s current flagpoles, located in front of city offices at Windmill Village, to be transplanted across the street when UP officials move into the civic building at Town Center – a date that is yet to be set.

Councilman Javier Figueroa pushed to erect a flagpole sooner. He cited federal code that requires the American flag be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of public institutions.

Figueroa claimed the civic building, though still largely empty, met that criteria once the University Place Pierce County Library opened in February 2011.

For a year, the City Council couldn’t agree where to put the flagpole or how to pay for the project. Finally, in October, the council decided to place it close to the building instead of near Bridgeport Way traffic.

Figueroa, a naturalized citizen and military veteran, said he and a handful of veteran friends met at the new flagpole Tuesday for a prayer and salute.

"It’s just gorgeous and beautiful," he said.

Mayor Ken Grassi said the council plans to take a lunch break during its retreat at City Hall next Saturday to get a photo with the new flagpole.
The city also is planning a dedication and community celebration later this year when the weather improves. Potential dates include Memorial Day or in early July, the mayor said.

Installing the flagpole, he said, “was a great way to start the new year.”
Editorial

Are they ready for kindergarten? Finally, numbers
Last updated: January 20th, 2013 12:38 AM (PST)

The state Supreme Court’s McCleary decision has this year’s legislators scrambling to pump more dollars – and reforms, we hope – into the public schools.

A potential pitfall is that education will be defined too narrowly.

As far as the law is concerned, “basic education” is delivered from kindergarten through high school. That’s what the Legislature is constitutionally obligated to fund. But what happens before kindergarten – early learning – is at least as important. More so, for many students.

As a rule, kids who aren’t reading as well as their peers by the fourth grade are at great risk of eventually dropping out. Sadly, they often show up on the first day of kindergarten with disadvantages so great that only heroic teaching efforts can help them catch up.

And the same factors that hurt them before kindergarten – such as absentee dads, poverty, untreated illnesses and homes bereft of books – are often still dogging them in the early grades.

Statewide efforts to help these children have been plagued by a lack of information. Washington has had no system in place to track disparities in kindergarten readiness and do something about them. Until now.

Over the last two years, at the behest of the Legislature, early-learning specialists have been development the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills. WaKIDS, as it is called, aims to assist incoming kindergartners in several ways. It emphasizes parental education, for example, for moms and dads who want to prepare their children for academics but don’t know where to begin.

Just this month, it has also begun delivering precious hard numbers.

Despite longstanding concerns about achievement opportunity gaps, this state had never taken a close, statistical look at the needs of its kindergartners.

Under WaKIDS, kindergarten teachers are evaluating their new students against commonly accepted standards. For example: Can they write their own names? Are they familiar with books? Do they make friends?

Roughly a quarter of all state kindergartners were evaluated this first year. It turns out that a little more than 70 percent of them came in reasonably well-prepared. That happens to be close to the state’s high school graduation rate, which may be no coincidence.
Racial and ethnic gaps showed up in the numbers as well, which is certainly no coincidence.

WaKIDS is coming on line at an opportune moment.

These numbers dramatize the importance of preschool programs like ECEAP and Head Start – and the even greater importance of helping struggling young parents teach their children at home.

The Legislature can't nurture a high-performance K-12 system if it fails to do the same for early learning.
Transit vote much like the last one; cuts to service next

BY ALEXIS KRELL
Staff writer

Opposition softened this year against a measure to increase Pierce Transit funding by raising local sales taxes.

But not enough to pass it.

The defeat Nov. 6 marked the second time voters have rejected the proposed 0.3-percentage point increase, which would have raised Tacoma's tax to 9.8 percent. Proposition 1 failed this year by a vote of 100,943 to 100,239, compared to an identical measure rejeted 73,914-62,290 in 2011.

The 2011 and 2012 results were at the same time similar and entirely disparate, Pierce Transit spokesman Lars Erickson said.

Restricting, new Pierce Transit boundaries and increased voter turnout make comparing

See TRANSIT, back page

MAPPING THE VOTE

See how Pierce County's precincts voted on the transit funding proposal. Back page

TRANSIT

From A1

the years like matching apples to oranges, he said.

"It's kind of eerily identical to the results last time, but they're totally different, because you're talking about a totally different starting point, new boundaries; the voter turnout has impacts," Erickson said.

However, some basic conclusions can be drawn from looking at maps of results from both years.

- Support in Tacoma seems to have held strong, with slight gains in the East Side and the South End.
- Residents of Lakewood, University Place and Gig Harbor were about half and half on Proposition 1, which reflected 2011 trends.
- The Puyallup area largely rejected the measure both years, but softened its opposition some this time.
- Opposition in Edgewood increased slightly this year.
- Rejection in Steilacoom and the part of Auburn served by the agency decreased slightly.

In debating the measure, opponents argued that the increase would drive business out of the county, especially automobile sales, and said Pierce Transit instead should do more to reduce employee costs. The agency told voters the revenue was needed to recover from the hit sales tax collections took in the recent recession.

When Pierce Transit's boundaries were redrawn earlier this year, ridership, cost to operate in the areas and how communities voted on the 2011 tax proposal guided the redrawing, CEO Lynne Griffith said.

Bonney Lake, Sumner, Orting, Buckley, DuPont and some areas of unincorporated Pierce County were cut out when the lines were redrawn by a group of elected officials from throughout the county in a process that ended in May. Those areas largely rejected the Pierce Transit measure in 2011.

Last time, the boundaries had about 375,000 registered voters, which dropped to 275,000 this year. Voter turnout on the measure jumped from 136,204 in 2011 to 201,182 this election.

Pierce Transit has said failure of Proposition 1 means weekend service and buses after 7 p.m. will have to be cut. The agency's board will determine how and when the cuts will be implemented, but Pierce Transit officials say they will have to be finished by spring 2014.

Previously, officials said they would need to cut annual service hours roughly in half, to 197,000, but Erickson said they might be able to keep some of those.

Pierce Transit is re-evaluating based on contract negotiations in August that resulted in employees covering more of their own medical costs. The agency's broker also was able to get a better deal this year, and sales tax collections have improved some, Erickson said.

All that should make a difference, but not a drastic one, he added.

"We're still going to be making cuts well above what we had to last time," Erickson said.
After the measure was rejected in 2011, the agency cut about 200,000 of Pierce Transit's 622,000 service hours and got rid of special service to events such as the Puyallup Fair.

The board will have a work session Dec. 14 to make decisions about what the new round of changes will look like.

Federal regulations require the agency to do outreach to low-income and minority populations, and to make sure cuts aren't disproportionate in different socioeconomic areas, Erickson said.

Along with a timeline for implementing the cuts, the board will set dates to seek community input.

"We will absolutely have many, many sessions and opportunities for the public to review the kinds of cuts that are being discussed and speak to them, and there will be public hearings for them to make official comments as well," Erickson said.

The results make discussions about transportation funding in general at the state level during the upcoming legislative session especially significant, Erickson said.

"We will look for every opportunity to be part of funding discussions, without a question," Erickson said. "We've always been a part of those discussions in the past, but we'll have a little more sense of urgency this time."

High school student Lively Beha was affected by the cuts in 2011, and as the associated student body president at the School of the Arts in downtown Tacoma, she's worried about how reduced service will impact future students.

She usually takes Route 1 to school and leaves at 6:20 a.m. to be driven to the bus stop. There wasn't a stop within walking distance after the 2011 reductions.

Beha is a senior and won't have to deal with the next round of cuts, but she's concerned they could deter future out-of-district students from attending the school.

Even getting to school was a challenge for some after the first cuts; the school started providing bus service for students in Northeast Tacoma, Beha said.

She predicted a more difficult commute for the 30 percent of students who come from out of the district to attend the program.

"I feel like it will do a lot of damage to getting a wide variety of students to come to the school," Beha said. "It's just not realistic."

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... And how they voted in 2011
Areas cut from Pierce Transit's boundaries — when the lines were redrawn this year — opposed the tax increase in 2011.

For an interactive version of this map, go to thenewstribune.com.

COUNTYWIDE
45.73% FOR
54.27% AGAINST

MARGIN OF SUCCESS
- 5% 10% 15% 20% +
APPROVED
MARGIN OF FAILURE
- 5% 10% 15% 20% +
REJECTED
Percentage of total vote

Sources: Pierce County auditor; ArcGIS
Staff graphic
TNT

UPS professors' economic forecast has good news for Pierce County

C.R. ROBERTS; Staff writer
Published: Jan. 12, 2013 at 12:05 a.m. PST — Updated: Jan. 12, 2013 at 7:50 a.m. PST

Local business leaders were treated to some good news Friday morning.

Pierce County’s economy will grow by nearly 3 percent in 2013. Unemployment will fall, home sales will rise, hotels will open, personal income will rise and retail sales will improve. That news comes from two longtime University of Puget Sound economists who presented their analysis at the annual Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber Horizons Forecast Breakfast.

Professors Bruce Mann and Douglas Goodman made their 25th and final appearance Friday at the Chamber’s annual meeting. They presented their look at the county’s economy as compiled in their Pierce County Economic Index.

They told an audience of some 550 business leaders and Chamber members that happier days are riding the South Sound horizon.

In their executive summary, the professors predicted, “The pace of Pierce County’s recovery will improve during 2013.”

By the end of the year, “the economy will have completed 14 consecutive quarters of increasing economic activity.”

“It’s been a rough journey,” Mann began. “It’s been a slow boat to China on rough seas.”

The Great Recession fostered something of a lahar in the economic index between 2008 and 2010, slipping 3.25 percent. In the third quarter of 2010, Goodman said, we “boarded the Little Engine that Could.”

Things got better, and better they will continue to be. As Mann said, “We will pick up speed this year.”

“We’re headed in the right direction,” said Goodman.

Among the highlights:

• The economic index will see a moderate increase of 2.75 percent this year, the professors promised. The positive factors leading to this rosy prediction include international trade, the local military presence, aerospace industries, health care, educational institutions and the construction sector.
• At Joint Base Lewis-McChord, 55,000 troops and 40,000 dependents will help fuel the local economy, along with $540 million in construction at military installations.

• Add trade, distribution and warehousing, and the coming of the Grand Alliance shipping group to the Port of Tacoma.

• In addition, “meds and eds” — growth in health care spending and in the educational sector will help improve conditions.

• And at last, prepare for an increase in residential and commercial construction — for the latter, count construction of Amazon’s new distribution center in DuPont.

• But watch out for Europe again this year, the pair cautioned, and there’s the possibility that Washington, D.C., will muddy the recovery with debt and deficit reductions and reductions to defense spending.

• The labor market might also slow the recovery with wage increases and bargaining impasses.

• Where 17,000 jobs were lost to the Great Recession, expect a total of 11,500 new jobs in their place by the end of the year. Unemployment, as low as 4.8 percent in 2007, will fall to 7.9 percent this year from a high of 10.2 percent in 2010.

Not great, but better than it was.

• Total personal income will continue growing, they said, up $2 billion this year — or 5.5 percent — from last year.

• Annual retail sales will increase modestly to modestly 2.2 percent, with dollar volumes returning to levels seen in 2005-2006.

• Housing sales, Mann said, will rise “back to the 2008 activity level.” The housing index will this year see an annual gain of 7.6 percent thanks to higher incomes, low interest rates and affordable prices. Demand for multifamily housing will see weakening demand, what with competition from the single-home market and new units coming available. Tacoma’s North End and the Peninsula will see stronger interest, however.

• And the commercial real estate market will remain flat, they said, although there will be a strong demand for medical space. More on the bright side, look for new hotels in Puyallup, Tacoma and DuPont, and retail space should be opening in Gig Harbor, Parkland, Edgewood, University Place and at Freighthouse Square.

Overall it will be “a pretty nice trip,” Goodman said.

Looking back, Mann said, “It has been fun and people seemed to enjoy it.”
“We have enjoyed the ride,” said Goodman, before the pair handed their baton to the two professors from Pacific Lutheran University who will take control of — and responsibility for — the PCEI.

Also featured Friday was keynote speaker Kimberly Harris, president and CEO of Puget Sound Energy — speaking on the future of energy, especially natural gas, liquid natural gas and compressed natural gas.
B&N Aims To Whittle Its Stores For Years
By JEFFREY A. TRACHTENBERG
January 28, 2013, 12:04 a.m. ET

Barnes & Noble Inc. BKS -1.75% expects to close as many as a third of its retail stores over the next decade, the bookseller's top store executive said, offering the most detailed picture yet of the company's plans for the outlets.

"In 10 years we'll have 450 to 500 stores," said Mitchell Klipper, chief executive of Barnes & Noble's retail group, in an interview last week. The company operated 689 retail stores as of Jan. 23, along with a separate chain of 674 college stores.

From humble beginnings to a bookselling behemoth, Barnes & Noble has seen ups and downs over the decades as it tried to straddle the world of paper books and e-books.

Mr. Klipper said his forecast assumes that the company will close about 20 stores a year over the period.

The chain shut an average of about 15 stores a year in the past decade, but until 2009 it also was opening 30 or more a year. Its store openings have largely dried up as consumers' shift toward digital books has upended the market and developers have stopped opening new malls; this fiscal year it has opened only two stores.

The company's consumer bookstores peaked at 726 in 2008, excluding the B. Dalton chain, which is now defunct.
Even with 450 to 500 stores, "it's a good business model," says Mr. Klipper. "You have to adjust your overhead, and get smart with smart systems. Is it what it used to be when you were opening 80 stores a year and dropping stores everywhere? Probably not. It's different. But every business evolves."

Mr. Klipper's comments come amid growing questions about Barnes & Noble's future. This month the company reported an unexpectedly weak holiday selling season, with store revenue declining nearly 11% from a year earlier. Book sales at stores open at least a year, a key barometer in the industry, fell 3.1%.

After years of losing market share for print books to discounting by Amazon.com Inc., AMZN -2.49%Barnes & Noble is grappling with the print market's shrinkage, thanks to the growing popularity of cheap e-books, also championed by Amazon. Unit sales of print books dropped 9% in the U.S. last year, according to market researcher Nielsen BookScan, and they are off 22% from 2007, when digital books started gaining traction.

At the same time, Barnes & Noble's efforts to build support for its two new Nook tablets have stalled. Amid competition from Amazon, Apple Inc., AAPL +2.17%Google Inc. GOOG -0.27%and electronics companies like Samsung Electronics Co., 005930.SE -3.18%sales of Nook products in stores and online during the holiday season fell from a year earlier.

Plenty of retailers have been felled by digital competition in the past decade, including Tower Records, Circuit City Stores and Barnes & Noble's former rival, Borders Group Inc. Retail consultant Doug Stephens, whose book, "The Retail Revival," is being published in the U.S. in March, predicts that mainstream booksellers eventually will "become a thing of the past."

Mr. Klipper said he thinks that's nonsense. Opening a thick printout of the financial performance of each Barnes & Noble store, he ran his finger over a few lines and said, "This is what's losing money, a handful. Then you go from making money to making a lot of money." He estimated that fewer than 20 of the retailer's stores lose money, or less than 3% of the group's total.

To be sure, the stores remain comfortably profitable, generating $317 million in earnings before interest taxes depreciation and amortization in fiscal 2012. That's more than enough to offset continuing losses at the Nook unit.

David Strasser, an analyst with Janney Montgomery Scott LLC, projects that ebitda at Barnes & Noble's retail group, which includes BN.com, will rise 7% in fiscal 2013, which ends in April, but will decline modestly the next fiscal year.

The next two years will go a long way in defining the bookseller's future. By clarifying how fast the print market is shrinking, Bertelsmann SE & Co.'s Random House, the world's largest publisher of consumer books, says e-books now make up about 22% of its global sales, up from almost nothing five years ago. The head of a major publishing rival says he expects e-books will be as much as 50% of his total book sales in the U.S. by the end of 2014. Digital books already account for 60% of this publisher's sales of new commercial fiction, a key category for the nation's largest bookstore chain.

Mr. Klipper, though, argues that consumers read both digital books and print books. "That's why we're going to be around a long time," he said. "Digital is a convenient format. It could be
expanding the market in fiction. I think the combined book market is growing." Publishers say the growth rate of e-books has slowed in recent months.

Declines in print sales could affect the pace of store closures. Barnes & Noble has 442 leases up for renewal by April 30, 2016, representing substantially more than half of its stores. Mr. Klipper said he expects many will be renewed: "Why close them if they are making money?"

Bookstores remain valuable to mall owners. "They are a destination," said Stephen Lebovitz, CEO of CBL & Associates Properties Inc., CBL +1.01% one of the country's largest mall landlords. "They still do a strong volume, they bring in traffic, people socialize. We still like them as a tenant."

Mr. Klipper said that bookstores serve a different purpose than many other retail outlets. "You go to Barnes & Noble to forget about your everyday issues, to stay a while and relax," he said. "When you go to Bed Bath & Beyond, BBBY -1.86% you don't sit down on the floor and curl up with your blender and your kid."

At least some consumers appear to agree: On Jan. 20, 600 people turned up at a Barnes & Noble store in New York for a reading by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, promoting her new memoir, "My Beloved World." Altogether they bought 1,200 copies that day.
December 23, 2012

Little Sign of a Predicted E-Book Price War

By DAVID STREITFELD

Right about now, just as millions of e-readers and tablets are being slipped under Christmas trees, there was supposed to be a ferocious price war over e-books.

Last spring, the Justice Department sued five major publishers and Apple on e-book price-fixing charges. The case was a major victory for Amazon, and afterward there were widespread expectations — fueled by Amazon — that the price of e-books would plunge.

The most extreme outcome went like this: Digital versions of big books selling for $9.99 or less would give Amazon complete domination over the e-book market. As sales zoomed upward, even greater numbers of consumers would abandon physical books. The major publishers and traditional bookstores were contemplating a future that would pass them by.

But doomsday has not arrived, at least not yet. As four of the publishers have entered into settlements with regulators and revised the way they sell e-books, prices have selectively fallen but not as broadly or drastically as anticipated.

The $10 floor that publishers fought so hard to maintain for popular new novels is largely intact. Amazon, for instance, is selling Michael Connelly’s new mystery, “The Black Box,” for $12.74. New best sellers by David Baldacci and James Patterson cost just over $11.

One big reason for the lack of fireworks is that the triumph of e-books over their physical brethren is not happening quite as fast as forecast.

“The e-book market isn’t growing at the caffeinated level it was,” said Michael Norris, a Simba Information analyst who follows the publishing industry. “Even
retailers like Amazon have to be wondering, how far can we go — or should we go — to make our prices lower than the other guys if it’s not helping us with market share?"

Adult e-book sales through August were up 34 percent from 2011, an impressive rate of growth if you forget that sales have doubled every year for the last four years. And there have been more recent signs of a market pausing for breath.

Macmillan, the only publisher that has not settled with the Justice Department, said last week as part of a statement from John Sargent, its chief executive, that “our e-book business has been softer of late, particularly for the last few weeks, even as the number of reading devices continues to grow.” His laconic conclusion: “Interesting.”

Mr. Norris said Simba, which regularly surveys e-book buyers, has been noticing what it calls “commitment to content” issues.

“A lot of these e-book consumers aren’t behaving like lab rats at a feeder bar,” the analyst said. “We have found that at any given time about a third of e-book users haven’t bought a single title in the last 12 months. I have a feeling it is the digital equivalent of the ‘overloaded night stand’ effect; someone isn’t going to buy any more books until they make a dent in reading the ones they have already acquired.”

Another, more counterintuitive possibility is that the 2011 demise of Borders, the second-biggest chain, dealt a surprising blow to the e-book industry. Readers could no longer see what they wanted to go home and order. “The print industry has been aiding and assisting the e-book industry since the beginning,” Mr. Norris said.

It is possible that Amazon, which controls about 60 percent of the e-book market, is merely holding back with price cuts for the right moment.

The next few weeks are when e-book sales traditionally take a big jump, as all those newly received devices are loaded up with content.
Amazon declined to comment beyond saying, “We have lowered prices for customers from the prices publishers set on a broad assortment of Kindle books.” Barnes & Noble declined to comment on its pricing strategy.

The question of the proper price for e-books has shadowed the industry ever since Amazon introduced the Kindle in late 2007 and created the first truly popular portable reading device. Amazon had a natural impulse to build a market and was an aggressive retailer in any case, so it took best sellers that cost $25 in independent bookstores and sold them for $9.99 as e-books. Consumers liked that. E-book adoption soared.

In a typical ebullient forecast, James McQuivey, a Forrester analyst, wrote two years ago that digital book sales would be $2.8 billion by 2015, up from a mere $169 million in 2009. “A very altered publishing world is about to emerge,” his report said. (He said last week that he was not tempering his forecast.)

Publishers, however, did not want to see their product sold so cheaply by Amazon, which would accelerate the shift away from the printed books they still depended on. With the help of Apple, they introduced a new system that gave them greater control over prices, which went up. The Justice Department found this to be illegal collusion and in April, sued.

After the suit was filed, Amazon said it looked forward to lowering prices. The industry braced itself. The Authors Guild predicted the end of the physical bookstore. “Amazon is committed to capturing the U.S. book market by forcibly moving it online, where it can more easily eliminate its competitors,” the guild wrote. Paul Aiken, the guild’s executive director, did not return calls for comment last week.

As the summer wore on and publishers negotiated with the government, Amazon customers began asking why they did not immediately notice a change. “It seems to me that the Kindle books have gone up,” D. Amick wrote in a typical comment on an Amazon forum.

Some say they never expected a price war at all. “The pricing war hasn’t happened because Amazon can’t afford it,” said Nate Hoffelder of the Digital Reader, a site devoted to e-book news and opinion. “The money Amazon lost on e-book discounts in 2008, 2009 was covered, at least in part, by the high price of
Kindle hardware,” he said. “Now that the Kindle is being sold so cheap, Amazon no longer has the hardware income to act as a cushion.”

This is debatable — Amazon has always devoted itself to market share rather than profitability — but it is undeniable that the cost of e-readers has plunged much more than the cost of e-books. When the Kindle made its debut it was a big hit at $399. The cheapest model is now $69. Barnes & Noble is selling its cheapest Nook for $79, discounted from $99.

Even as prices fall, though, the dedicated e-reader is losing steam. The market peaked last year, with 23.2 million devices sold, IHS iSuppli said in a report this month. This year, sales will be 15 million. By 2016, the forecast is for seven million devices — as opposed to 340 million tablets, which allow for e-reading and so much more.

Jordan Selburn, senior principal analyst for consumer platforms at IHS, said the migration from e-readers to tablets puts Amazon in “an interesting position” with e-book prices.

“Amazon does not make much off the hardware,” he said. “Its goal is to sell you content. When they sell you a Kindle Fire tablet, they are not just selling you books but movies, diapers, garden hose. It’s a portal into their entire store.”

But one day, Amazon must try to make a profit. “In the era of the tablet, the difference between a book and diaper disappears,” the analyst said.

Perhaps there will be loss leaders, but more likely each product will have to carry its own weight. In other words, this might be as cheap as e-books will ever be.