

Hunterdon County Library
Director's Report
October 2009

A Special Message from North County Branch Manager Barbara Riesenfeld

As most of you know by now, I'll be retiring as the Manager of the North County Branch at the end of this year. Can't quite imagine how I'll feel as the ball comes down in Times Square to bring in 2010. Realistically, sleep undoubtedly will have taken over and I'll miss the whole event and wake up to face a new life.

I decided to write this rather unconventional report to the Director because I want to share some thoughts with all of you. Basically, thanks to everyone with whom I've had the opportunity to work over the past twenty (!) years. It's truly been a pleasure to work with and get to know so many wonderful people, both past and current staff. I'll miss you. The support and help that I've gotten has kept me going over the years.

A big part of my heart will always be with the Hunterdon County Library and a huge part of that goes to the staff at North County. You are a very special group of people. Dedicated, hard working and a lot of fun. Your enthusiasm for the branch and for life is contagious and is felt, not only by me, but by our patrons. Thank you.

Speaking of patrons, I want to add three brief interactions which I've had recently. The first is with a friend of mine who just moved into a house on Halstead Street. I encountered him last week on my walk to Clinton. He said that he loves the library. In the past he's spent hundreds of dollars every year buying books. Now all he has to do is cross the street. He finds all the authors he loves and gets great service from a very friendly staff.

The second is from a gentleman who's been coming to the library for several months. He recently presented the reference staff with a beautiful floral bouquet and a note that said "Just wanted to thank you all for your warm hospitality during my months of studying. I passed!" What did we do for him? Provided him with a quiet study room and a friendly greeting every day.

The third is an encounter with a woman who is thrilled that NCB is now offering a venue for a Scrabble Club. She is so excited for this opportunity and came up to the reference desk to ask that we purchase certain Scrabble books (which we did). She also apologized for having to speak through a face mask, but said in a very matter of fact way, "I had my chemotherapy treatment today."

These stories are not unique. They happen every day to the staff here. People telling us of their appreciation for our being here and for what we do. These aren't things that make headlines and they can't be quantified. But they are real and they show how much libraries matter. We provide information, of course. However, that's far from the whole picture. We are a community and we enrich people's lives in so many subtle and important ways.

These are difficult economic times, but I have faith that the strength of our purpose and the strength of our staff will keep the Hunterdon County Library system alive and vibrant for many years to come.

My best to all of you.

Barbara

Circulation Dept.

Circulation Dept. Head Lee Ann Comella has implemented a new schedule in an attempt to cope with our current staffing shortage. Nonetheless, there are nights that the Circulation Dept. is understaffed and only able to keep up with circulation work. Night staff usually are unable to roam the building to help with security.

In an effort to curb the dramatic increase in thefts we have been experiencing, all blu-ray discs are now kept at the Circulation Desk in notebooks. The empty blu-ray cases are being kept in a separate section from our regular DVDs. Patrons have to bring the empty cases to the desk for staff to retrieve the discs and check the item out.

HCL signed up 450 new people for library cards in September for *National Library Card Month*.

Extension Services

The bookmobile attended two recent community events. The Bloomsbury Fine Art & Fine Craft Festival, on September 26th, is an event we have participated in for the last three years. There was a lot of interest in the bookmobile, and the Youth Services librarian held a special storytime program at 1:00 pm.

We also participated in a community fair at the Sergeantsville Firehouse on October 7th. The staff reported that they had many visitors there also, with lots of positive comments from the public. Several people took the time to check out books during the evening. Both events were great PR opportunities for the Library, and we look forward to additional opportunities in the near future, including the ever-popular *Touch-A-Truck* day sponsored by the Parks Department in November.

The bookmobile also visited the Goddard school on Friday, October 9th, and is scheduled to go to the Holland School on October 21st for class visits.

Technical Services Dept.

Ordering is increasing as departments spend down their money for the year. Technical Services staff are very busy ordering, receiving, cataloging and processing items for distribution to all our libraries.

There was a problem with timely deliveries from our main account with Baker and Taylor that has been resolved now that UPS was selected as the new carrier.

Adult Summer Reading Club

The Adult Summer Reading Club was a great success once again. The 194 Adult Summer Reading Club members read a total of 1,811 books this summer, an increase of 21% over the number of books read last year! Club members enjoyed sharing their book reviews, winning prizes, and celebrating at the End-of-Summer Party. Prizes and party expenses were generously donated by the Friends of the Hunterdon County Library. Member feedback was favorable and all look forward to next year's club.

Reference Department

A donation to the Jerseyana collection was made of *All Tombstone Records in Hunterdon County*, compiled by Fred Lathrop. Mr. Lathrop gathered information from various book and online sources to include in the loose-leaf directory. It should prove very useful to our genealogy researchers, and we hope to include an electronic version on the library's web site with the help of the IT Department.

Youth Services Dept.

Storytimes resumed in September. All time slots for all ages at all locations are full! Tours have started up again, too. The bookmobile went to the Goddard School in Flemington where staff conducted tours for over 60 children ages 2 - 6 and their parents and caregivers. Ann-Louise Taylor held tours and storytimes on the bookmobile for the third year in a row at Bloomsbury's Fine Art & Fine Craft Festival.

HCL Amateur Photography Show 2009

The Annual Hunterdon County Library Photography Show is currently on display in the main gallery of our Headquarters Library. This year's show is bigger and better than in years past for a number of reasons.

A record number of Hunterdon County residents entered the show this year. A total of 192 amateur photographs are adorning the walls of the main gallery as well as the lobby area. Considering the overwhelming response this year, entrants in next year's show will be allowed to submit just one photograph as opposed to a maximum of two which has been the case in all previous years.

We were also lucky enough to have well-known New Jersey author and photographer Walter Choroszewski judge the show. Besides judging, he offered suggestions on organizing the show and other insights. In addition, Walter will be presenting a program

titled *Getting to Know Your Digital Camera* on Wednesday, October 14th at 7:00 pm. This also happens to be the night of the *Awards Ceremony* where all of the winners will be announced. This includes the *Public's Choice Award* voted on by our library patrons. If you haven't done so yet, make sure to stop by before Wednesday, October 14 and vote for your favorite!

Circulation Statistics

	Sept. 09	Aug. 09	% Change	Sept 08	% Sept.	YTD 09	YTD 08	% YTD
Headquarters	53,257	60,418	-11.9%	48,394	10.0%	500,714	449,252	11.5%
North County	48,265	54,636	-11.7%	47,242	2.2%	450,919	440,325	2.4%
South County	9,580	10,444	-8.3%	9,152	4.7%	88,434	88,572	-0.2%
Bunnvale	3,521	4,146	-15.1%	3,500	0.6%	35,354	33,903	4.3%
Readington	7,106	7,700	-7.7%	7,185	-1.1%	68,116	66,280	2.8%
Holland/Alexandria	4,440	5,104	-13.0%	4,539	-2.2%	42,331	41,404	2.2%
Tewksbury	5,130	5,636	-9.0%	4,402	16.5%	46,055	43,811	5.1%
Three Bridges	3,605	3,717	-3.0%	3,334	8.1%	32,927	31,517	4.5%
High Bridge	966	1,105	-12.6%	1,078	-10.4%	8,958	10,166	-11.9%
Frenchtown	779	880	-11.5%	607	28.3%	7,031	6,057	16.1%
Bookmobile	1,851	1,174	57.7%	1,874	-1.2%	14,495	14,226	1.9%
Total	138,500	154,960	-10.6%	131,307	5.5%	1,295,334	1,225,513	5.7%



