

Currents Gets Overhauled

As you may have already noticed, the Currents newsletter has been completely redesigned. We have improved the visual appeal of the newsletter and created a new vehicle to better inform you of all the interesting news, timely information and exciting activities occurring at GRRL.

Through advocacy, donations, and our strong volunteer corps, GRRL remains a trusted source of information for learners of all ages. Thanks to the generous commitment of our library supporters, GRRL is continuing to meet Central Minnesota's learning needs.

Available Via Email

From now on, the newsletter will also be available in full color for those members requesting it via email. To reduce costs, save trees and, of course, protect our environment we encourage as many advocates as possible to consider taking full advantage of this by switching to the electronic .pdf version. Please contact Julie Henne at currents@grrl.lib.mn.us if you would like to receive the newsletter by email or have any questions or comments about the new look. As always, the newsletter is produced just for our library advocates. We thank you warmly for your support, and if you have any suggestions about content we would love to hear from you. Happy reading!

GRRL Restructure Places Patron Service at the Top

<p>November 2008 GRRL Organizational Culture</p> 	<p>January 2009 GRRL Hires a Consultant</p> 	<p>April 2009 AN/KI Pilot Project</p> 	<p>June 2009 Town hall meeting</p> 	<p>July 2009 Phase 1 approved</p> 	<p>October 2009 2009 The Calculator</p> 	<p>November 2009 Branch Restructure Committee Update</p> 	<p>2010-2011 Implementation</p> 
<p>February 2009 Bottleneck Findings from visits with staff</p> 	<p>May 2009 Consultant findings</p> 	<p>June 2009 Town hall meeting</p> 	<p>June 2009 The plan</p> 	<p>July 2009 Branch Restructure committee was born</p> 	<p>October 2009 Phase 1 implementation</p> 	<p>March 2010 Board approval of Phase 2</p> 	

Patrons love their community libraries, and it is even more apparent during difficult economic times. Great River Regional Library prides itself on providing exceptional service to our communities. However, demand for materials and services are increasing at GRRL. Our budget has become tighter, especially since we are largely dependent on state and county funds. The popularity of libraries in this economy has challenged us to provide more materials and services without additional resources.

History of GRRL Restructure

In 2008, two full-time vacancies at the St. Cloud Library, led GRRL to examine whether replacing those two positions as-is made sense in light of growing demand for services and tighter budgets.

An administrative workgroup was formed to devise a course of action that would use the available dollars wisely. The focus of the group soon moved to organizational culture analysis. Information was gathered through interviews with staff throughout the region, teams and focus groups.

The feedback from staff showed a strong dissatisfaction with the current GRRL structure. It seemed top heavy, inflexible, and failed to put the staffing dollars where they were most needed: on the front line. Our staffing had been based on historical activity that no longer reflects the current need. An outside consultant was hired to look at the positions and not the person in the position and make an independent restructure recommendation.

2009 First Draft - a Two-Phase Plan

The consultant recommended restructuring the entire organization. A two-phase plan was presented to the GRRL board in June 2009. The first phase was approved and restructured administrative and library staff who work at St. Cloud Public Library. It reduced the number of management positions, realigned

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responsibilities to more appropriate staffing levels, and improved communication flow.

The second phase grouped branch libraries into clusters, consolidating management duties. It redirected clerical, public service, and administrative tasks to the appropriate staffing levels. The Board declined to approve this phase as presented, but recognized the need for branch restructure.

A branch restructure committee (BRC) was created, at the direction of the board, to develop criteria for staffing at all levels within branches. Branch staff members were elected by their peers to serve on the BRC along with management and board representatives.

Pilot Projects Begin

Two pilot projects were established in 2009 to determine if shared branch management would improve customer service while controlling staffing costs. Four branches were selected to participate: Anandale/Kimball and Eagle Bend/Staples. Branch manager openings in two of these libraries due to recent retirements allowed the pilots to be conducted through attrition.

Direct benefits included branch assistants and branch managers having more uninterrupted time for customer service. In addition, having more staff hours allowed branch managers to develop a team with greater depth and breadth of expertise in areas of programming, collection management and community outreach. Indirect patron benefits included increased aide hours allowing faster response time for processing holds, getting materials back on the shelves and available for the next patron, and maintaining an attractive and welcoming library. Additional aide and branch assistant hours also allowed branch managers more time for overseeing program planning and managing the local collections.

Nate Matthews, Staples city administrator, said in a letter to the GRRL board of trustees "On behalf of the City of Staples, I would like to express my thanks for making this move. I can see that the new alignment has allowed for better use of staff skills, and the increase in aide

hours was necessary. Our collection is growing and the quality of our programming has increased because...our new branch manager has more time to prepare. Again...I think the recent change was a fantastic decision...."

Branch Restructure Committee findings

The BRC met from August 2009 through March 2010 to compile staff feedback regarding staffing levels and review statistical data from all GRRL libraries. A staffing calculator was developed by the committee based on their study of tasks and time required to complete them. The calculator identifies each library task that needs to be performed and assigns that task to the appropriate pay level. The number of times that task needs to be performed determines the amount of staffing needed at each library.

The calculator allows us to manage our staffing levels without increasing our personnel budget. It will allow us to provide a consistent level of patron service at every location and to be responsive to increasing busyness at our libraries.

According to Sauk Centre Branch Manager Dawn Shay, "For Sauk Centre, restructure is going to be a good thing because we will get the aide hours we desperately need. Our carts are constantly overflowing. We will be losing some branch assistant hours, but in the long run it will work out better to get tasks done at the right level, to have the right person having time to do them. Branch assistants will be able to do tasks they haven't been able to because they have been shelving books."

Detailed Plan and Tools

At its March 16, 2010 meeting, the GRRL Board of Trustees approved the plan, including the use of the staffing calculator, as a management tool to set staffing levels. Based on this policy, the board also approved the restructuring of staff throughout GRRL.

Starting in May 2010 members of administration met with individual branch managers to discuss the staffing calculator results for their branch and to adjust those results to meet the individual needs of their facility. After these meetings, individual GRRL branch cities were notified of the results with a letter from Director Kirsty Smith and local branch managers. Each of the branch managers was given the opportunity to tailor these letters for their communities, though only two staff members asked for alterations.

Future

As restructure occurs throughout the region, patrons will notice the improvements to service that were seen in our pilot projects. Books will be on shelves, and not on carts. Materials will be processed in back work areas, and not at the front desk. This will allow public service staff to provide more focused service to our patrons.



New Coordinator For Communications & Fund Development

Great River Regional Library is pleased to announce that Julie Henne is the library's new Communications and Fund Development Coordinator. Julie is not a new face. She worked in the library's Human Resources department for three years prior to being promoted to her new position. Before joining the library she was the Marketing/Human Resources Director for a St. Cloud company in the home improvement industry. She has extensive advertising and promotional background from that experience, and has a B.A. from Thomas Edison State College and an AAS in marketing from St. Cloud Technical College.

"I'm motivated by challenges and opportunities to learn and grow," Henne said.

"The library is undergoing both exciting and challenging transitions. We're busier than ever. People are increasingly turning toward digital information resources, but they are also reading more than ever before. There's pressure from every direction. We're lucky to enjoy great public support, and I hope to play a part in mobilizing that support to ensure the library continues to provide outstanding information services to Central Minnesota."



Shh! There Are Fairies In The Library

Despite all the vampire hype, robots, sci-fi and hard-edged storytelling that's popular today, there's still a place for fairy tales.

Twenty children turned out for a recent Fairy Fun program at the Little Falls Carnegie Library. They did creative artwork with a fairy theme and listened attentively as Branch Assistant Susan Larson read fairy stories to them.

"Kids love the magic of these stories," Larson said. "Even though logic will tell them these things don't exist, there is still that wonder, that 'what if' thinking that goes on."

Several books of fairy stories were put on display for children to view and check out after the program.

"Kids become better readers by reading what they like," Larson said. "Great River has in its collection several series with fairies as the theme. By doing the program we hoped to open their eyes to what is available to them and we hope they find something they enjoy reading as well as titles to challenge them to become better readers."

PHOTO: Lydia Depuydt attended the Little Falls Fairy Fun program and brought her own fairy wings.

Library SRP Sweepstakes Winner Receives \$1,000



Photographed clockwise starting from left are: Renee Hill, Nancy Walton, Alex's mother Angie Mages, Paynesville Branch Manager Gretchen Vork, Aaron Mages, Brett Mages, and Alex.

Great River Regional Library's winner of the \$1,000 Summer Reading Program sweepstakes promoted by TIAA-CREF and the Minnesota College Savings Plan was Alex Mages, a patron of the Paynesville Public Library.

Renee Hill from TIAA-CREF, and Nancy Walton, acting Minnesota state librarian, were on hand for the check presentation. Alex is 11, and lives in rural Minnesota. He's not sure what he'll do with his money.

The Paynesville Public Library was also awarded \$500 because that is where Alex registered. The money will be used to support local library services.

Thanks to our Summer Reading Program Donors

Thank to the following individuals and organizations that made donations with a value of \$100 or more to the 2010 Summer Reading Program.

Albany Chrysler CTR Inc., Albany
 Beatty-Humphries American Legion Post #323
 Clearwater
 American Legion Post #350 Upsala
 American Legion Post #46 Little Falls
 Bernick Companies, St. Cloud
 Browerville Lions Club, Browerville
 Central MN Noon Optimist Club Inc., Kimball
 Central MN Orthodontics, St. Cloud
 Chuck's Welding & Truck Repair, Pierz
 Coborn's, Inc., St. Cloud
 Cold Spring Home Pride Lions Club, Cold Spring
 Cold Spring Record, Cold Spring
 Community Connection of Sauk Centre, Sauk Centre
 Crafts Direct, Waite Park
 D.J. Bitzan Jewelers, Waite Park
 DiversiCom, Melrose
 Eagle Bend Volunteer Fire Dept Relief
 Assoc., Eagle Bend
 Fraternal Order of Eagles #622 Ladies
 Auxiliary, St. Cloud
 Elk River Fraternal Order of Eagles #3264,
 Elk River
 First National Bank, Cold Spring
 Frandsen Bank & Trust, Foley
 Grey Eagle - Burtrum Lions Club, Grey Eagle

Hardee's of Cold Spring, Cold Spring
 Jennifer and Robert Hennen, Cold Spring
 Jeffrey Burkhardt, CPA, Annandale
 Jimmy's Pizza, Cold Spring
 LarsonAllen, LLP, Waite Park
 Lions Club of Cokato, Cokato
 Little Birch Lake Association, Grey Eagle
 Little Falls Wal-Mart Super Center, Little Falls
 Long Prairie Packing Company, LLC, Long Prairie
 Marnanteli's Pizza, Cold Spring
 Melrose Lions Club, Melrose
 Lois Merchant-Stumpf and Steve Stumpf, Pierz
 Monticello Lions Club, Monticello
 Northridge Express, Inc., Clearwater
 Nutrena Feed Division, Big Lake
 Pan-O-Gold Baking Co., St. Cloud
 Pine Country Bank, Royalton
 River City Dental, St. Cloud
 Sauk Rapids Lions Club, Sauk Rapids
 Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict, St. Joseph
 St. Cloud Lions Club, St. Cloud
 St. Cloud Medical Group, Sartell
 St. Cloud Moose Lodge #1400, Waite Park
 St. Cloud Morning Optimist Club, St. Cloud
 State Bank of Richmond, Richmond
 Sunrise Kiwanis Club, St. Cloud

eBooks & eAudiobooks Available at GRRL's Digital Media Page

Central Minnesota's book lovers now have eBooks and eAudiobooks available to them through the new Great River Regional Library (GRRL) Digital Library. The digital library is accessible from home and library free of charge to GRRL residents with a library card!

www.digital.griver.org

As of Friday, Oct. 1, GRRL is offering eBooks and eAudiobooks, two new services, downloadable from its website www.griver.org or from the new site at digital.griver.org. Patrons may go through the library catalog at griver.org and click on the Digital Library tab or go directly to digital.griver.org and enter their library card number and PIN to access e-resources. Fiction and nonfiction lists for eBooks and eAudiobooks are presented with colorful book covers and content summaries.

- Digital books will loan out in almost the same way as paper books.
- A digital loan can be for varied lengths of time from 7-21 days depending on title, format and patron choice.
- When a digital copy is loaned, nobody else can borrow it.
- Patrons are able to place up to three 'holds' on items they want but that are already checked out to another patron.
- Patrons may check out six titles (a combination of eBooks and eAudiobooks) at a given time.
- Titles cannot be renewed, but they can be checked out again if they are available when the checkout expires.
- Loans will be available to patrons who do not have fines or charges on their account.

The loan limits will remain in place until the library has purchased enough eBooks and eAudiobooks that staff feel they can adequately meet public demand.

"We will build the digital collections with a focus on

new materials," said Mic Golden, GRRL collection development coordinator. "We know that many people have already listened to older books on cassette and CD, and they will have read older books on paper. Later on we may do some backfilling, but for now, the focus is new titles."

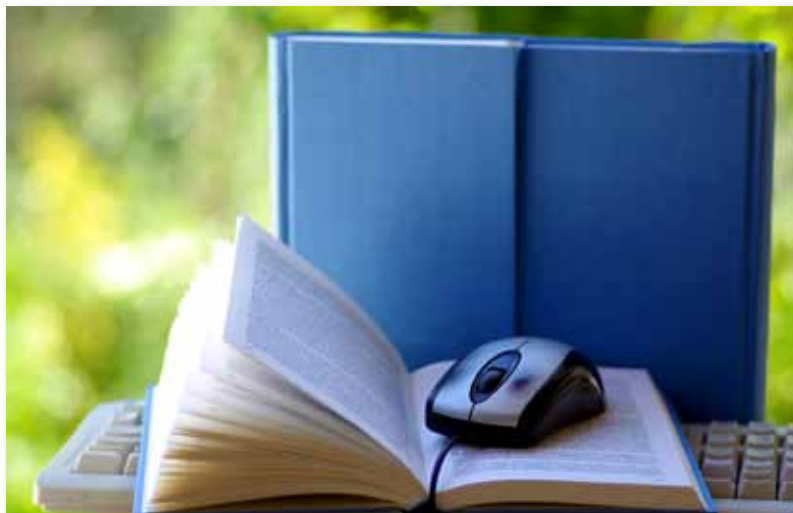
Approximately 15,000 public domain titles dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries, including classics by Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, are available as eBooks and do not count as library checkouts.

Funding to establish the digital collection came from a library reserve fund and was approved by the library's board of trustees. The St. Cloud Friends of the Library also donated \$1,000 toward the digital collection. Funding for future purchases to grow the collection will come from the same budget as traditional books and media.

OverDrive

GRRL is purchasing items for its digital library through OverDrive, a company that provides digital services to many libraries across the nation. The first time patrons check out digital materials they will need to download free software from the OverDrive interface on the GRRL website.

OverDrive provides "how-to" instructions on its pages. It also lists compatible eBook devices. Patrons should consult the OverDrive compatible devices list before making a purchase to use the new digital library.



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