



A librarian for life



Gretchen Schmidt bookworm

Gretchen Schmidt began her long love affair with libraries when she was a small child. As a teenager she flirted with a career in medicine but gave that up after sampling a hospital environment. As a

Stanford undergraduate, she landed her first library job.

“My dad worked for Hewlett Packard,” she said, “and when I graduated from college he told me to go into computers. ‘You’ll never make any money in libraries,’ he said.”

Instead, she turned her back on Silicon Valley and became a librarian for life.

Married the day after she graduated from Stanford, Gretchen accompanied her first husband, an Army helicopter pilot, to Germany where she managed two small libraries on military posts near Nuremberg. Later she worked in city, county and university libraries in and around Carson City, Nevada. In 1984, she served as president of the Nevada Library

Association.

Along the way, she earned a master’s degree in library science from the University of Texas and worked in a nearby community college library.

Gretchen came to San Diego County in 1996 as a reference librarian at the Vista branch of the county library system. In 1998, she became librarian for Solana Beach and Del Mar and when a new library opened in Solana Beach, she was given a choice. It was Del Mar’s great good luck that she picked the newly refurbished branch at 13th street and Camino del Mar.

Calm, quiet and competent, Gretchen is the epitome of a librarian. She combines

(Continued on next page)

Volunteers bolster library’s services

With its workload up and its payroll down, Del Mar Library is turning to the time-honored tradition of volunteerism. Members of the community, young and old, are showing up to restock shelves, meet reader requests and assist in children’s and adult programs.

“I don’t know what we’d do without our volunteers,” says Librarian Gretchen Schmidt.

Within the last year, said Schmidt, book checkouts and check-ins have increased from 10,000 to 15,000 a month. At the same time, the library staff has lost one and a half positions.

Much of the slack has been taken up by the library’s automated checkout systems. The two Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) stations now account for more than 90% of customer usage.

But in other labor-intensive jobs, such as restocking shelves and filling requests from customers and outside libraries, paid staff members must be augmented by volunteers. For 10 years, Sharyn Orcutt and others have maintained the list of requests from other branches.

Sometimes volunteers fill

specialized slots. Debbie Marsh, an early childhood education specialist, conducts children’s story times twice weekly.

The library got a big boost last summer from participation in a county-sponsored program for student volunteers. About 30 teenagers, including 12 Boy Scouts, donated six to 40 hours restocking shelves and helping with craft programs for kids. Now Jennifer Runge, the library’s youth services director, wants to revive teenage participation by setting up homework centers in the library.

Short stories from the Del Mar Library

Mira Costa Programs

Del Mar Library is partnering with Mira Costa College in an ongoing series of programs. The next event is a Chinese culture program presented by Aubrey Kuan at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 4.

With campuses in Oceanside and Encinitas, Mira Costa is teaming up with libraries in Del Mar, Solana Beach, Encinitas and Rancho Santa Fe to provide speakers. Other upcoming programs include:

Tracy Williams will talk about Mira Costa's theater program at 3 p.m. Oct. 23 at the Solana Beach Library.

Barbara Magone will perform Celtic music at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 9 at the Encinitas Library.

John Kirwan will lecture on Cervantes and Don Quixote at 11 a.m. Nov. 20 at the Rancho Santa Fe Library.

Chess Tournament

Del Mar's Chess Club will hold an open tournament at 3:30 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Powerhouse. The competition is free of charge to chess players of all ages.

Founded a year ago by Dawn Erickson, the Chess Club meets at 3:30 p.m. Thursdays in the library's community room. A lifelong enthusiast, Erickson offers lessons without charge to promote interest in the game.

Bridge Lessons

Classes to help bridge players perfect their games are now being offered at the Del Mar Library.

Marilyn Anderson, a member of the American Bridge Teachers Association, will conduct the sessions in the community room

one Thursday each month from 10 a.m. to noon. Not designed for beginners, the lessons are designed to teach new techniques. Upcoming classes include:

Oct. 28, take-out doubles; Nov. 18, overcalls, and Dec. 16, leads and signals.

Readers' Groups

Two approaches to reading and discussing books are available on the Del Mar library.

Book Talks and Treats began as a group that meets monthly, usually at 2 p.m. on the fourth Friday, to hear the library staff's recommendations of old and new favorites.

"At first, we all just came to

(Continued on page 3)

Librarian

(Continued from page 1)

intelligence and experience with a quality common to all good librarians – helpfulness. Watching her assist library patrons in navigating stacks of books, using the new automated checkout system or tracking down a reference work validates the vocation she chose many years ago.

While Gretchen's work might classify her as a bookworm, her life definitely does not. As a native Californian, she participated in two of her state's favorite sports – surfing and skiing. As a youngster and teenager, she braved the cold waters off Santa Cruz to board and bodysurf. And she learned to ski on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada.

During her three years in Germany, Gretchen perfected her skiing in the Swiss and Austrian Alps and when she returned to the United States, she taught beginners to ski at Lake Tahoe's Incline Village.

"It was something I always wanted to do," she said.

Age and a bout with breast cancer, have slowed Gretchen's outdoor activities, but her armchair adventures have led to popular programs sponsored by the library

The most notable was long distance swimmer Lynne Cox, who previewed her book *Swimming to Antarctica* before an overflow audience at the Del Mar Powerhouse. Other author-adventures included mountain climbers Arlene Blum and Kelly Perkins and yachtsman John Silverwood who describes his family's near disaster in the South Pacific. Silverwood wrote part of "Black Wave" at the Del Mar Library.

During Gretchen's tenure, the Del Mar branch has grown to serve far more than the 2,000 households in the city itself. It has evolved from a reference library to a community center used by children, senior and specialized groups such as chess and bridge activities.

With a computer center, California and Del Mar collections and specialized periodicals, the library caters to local readers. It also has become a partner



Gretchen Schmidt snow bunny

in community events and local school activities.

Remarried with a son and two stepchildren, Gretchen says she still looks forward to coming to work every day:

"I love the beauty of Del Mar, its proximity to the ocean and most of all the opportunity to be involved with some wonderful people."

A message from the President

Dear Friends,

Considering what programs other city and county library systems have had to eliminate, the San Diego County Library System has been well served by its



director, José Aponte, and the Board of Supervisors.

The County of San Diego has not cut our hours. In fact, an extra hour has been added to our Sunday schedule. While our budget for materials and programs has been reduced, Friends of the Del Mar Library has donated funds to be matched by the county for financial

publications such as Value Line, Financial Times, Barons, Investor's Business Daily, Daily Transcript, San Diego Business Journal, and the Wall Street Journal. And one of our board members, Marion Perlman, has donated

her credit card points for magazine subscriptions to the library.

We now share the staff position of children's librarian with the Cardiff branch. Del Mar Library continues to be a favorite site for many activities such as learning bridge and chess to meeting various authors. A \$2,000 grant from the Del Mar Foundation has enabled the Library to enhance children's programs and crafts.

Every month, the Friends buy best sellers for its Red Dot collection and fiction and nonfiction Gold Star books. These purchases stay in Del Mar and cannot be requested by other branches. Your suggestions are welcomed.

As our landscaping fills in, I am constantly amazed at the talents in our community. Once again, I want to thank the Del Mar Garden Club.

Finally, I want to thank our patrons for past donations of money and books and encourage future participation. We couldn't provide books, publication and programs without you.

Pat Freeman

Stories

(Continued from page 2)

listen to what the librarians recommended," said volunteer Kathy Ellis, "but this group has so many active readers that they started adding to the list."

For an hour each month the group shares books they are reading or listening to on tape. Then, over coffee and cookies, members make recommendations.

Sponsored by Community Connections, the Seasoned Readers book club meets at 2 p.m. on the last Tuesday of every month except December. The 15 members select one book for each session making sure copies are available in paperback or at the library.

Both groups meet in the library's community room and can be joined without charge.

Mini book reviews

The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet is four books in one. All are brilliant. David Mitchell has painstakingly re-created early 19th Century Japan and its intricate interaction with its only Western outpost – the Dutch trading settlement on an artificial island in Nagasaki Bay. A young Dutch clerk, Jacob de Zoet, glues the plots together. He struggles against corruption in the Japanese Shogunate and his own company, is infatuated with a Japanese midwife, who is confined in a convent run by a mysterious mystic, and has a heroic role against an attack by a British warship. Mitchell's research is impeccable, his characters are unforgettable and his writing at times lapses into pure poetry. A must read!

--Peter Kaye

Growing Up Laughing by Marlo Thomas is a delightful read by the former *That Girl* star and daughter of comedian Danny Thomas. She tells about sharing the dinner table with the greatest of all comedians. Milton Berle did magic tricks at her birthday parties. As a teenager, she'd hurry home from dates because she knew Bob Hope, Bob Newhart or Don Rickles might be there. This is a story of comedy and a close loving family that nurtured the love of laughter. There are interviews with many of the great ones and some of the female comics, including Whoopi Goldberg and Joy Behar. A witty and enjoyable book to laugh your way through.

--Barbara Myers

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**San Diego County
Library**

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Gretchen Schmidt, Librarian
Patricia Selkowitz,
Assistant Branch Manager

Library Hours

Monday Closed
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Wednesday: 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Thursday: 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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www.friendsofdelmarlibrary.org

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