



HLF News

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2018 Helen Everett Award Honoree Ronda Wittenberg HLF Holiday Gala - Monday, December 10, 2018

She's been serving Humboldt County library patrons for over 47 years, yet when asked about her career, Ronda Wittenberg does not express weariness. Rather, she talks enthusiastically about how she's "still being constantly challenged and learning new things."

For the patron who relishes the routine and seamless bounty of the library it may feel the same over time, but there have been profound changes in the library world over the last four decades. Summed up by Ronda, "it's been from paper to computers." She began her library career as a part-time page for the Eureka City Library, which was then housed in the old Carnegie Library building, now home to the Morris Graves Museum of Art.

From a part-time library page to Library Operations Manager, our honoree holds a deep commitment to the mission of the public library. She loves to travel and likens her job to being on a cruise ship -- every port is different, there's always something new to learn and challenges to meet. Over the years, Ronda has worked with seven library directors; managed masses of volunteers and staff; and been the in-house tech expert for each new computer or systems upgrade. She manages all in-house staff training and is the Library's Safety Manager. She oversees the Trinidad Library, the Bookmobile and is facility manager for the Main. She has helped to coordinate, and has chaired, the biannual *Children's Author's Festival*. All agree, she's great at communication, is always gracious, thoughtful and thorough.

When asked about the highlights of her long service, Ronda vividly recalls the enthusiasm of the community and the staff when moving into the new Main Library. "There was such pride in the community, staff morale soared and it brought us to the top of our game. It continues to reinforce the value of the library."

Ronda and her husband Ken moved to Humboldt County in 1969 – Ken was recruited to play football at HSU. They were high school sweethearts from the rural community of Shafter, near Bakersfield, and newly married. Ken made the first journey to Humboldt and assured Ronda it was a perfect fit. She wasn't sure but she was game. It's been home ever since. They've built a home, a family and a very fulfilling life on the North Coast. In addition to the library, Ronda has been a 30 year member of Beta Sigma Phi and volunteers at Christ the King Church in McKinleyville. Ron owned his own construction company for many years. They are proud parents of Jenna, an architect in San Francisco, and Emily, an archivist at the American Film Institute.



A former county librarian may have said it best, "Ronda's work ethic is unparalleled. She puts her heart and soul into what she does, takes pride in accomplishment and inspires confidence in others." At the Humboldt Library Foundation, we couldn't agree more and are profoundly happy to honor this remarkable woman.

From the President's Desk by *Elizabeth Murguia*



“The complexity of things - the things within things - just seems to be endless. I mean nothing is easy, nothing is simple.”

Alice Munro

We’ve just returned from a road-trip up the west coast of British Columbia and the western reaches of Vancouver Island – natural hot springs, ferry crossings and a stopover in the Strait of Georgia, on the islands of Galliano and Salt Spring. Here there are long stretches of quiet beachline, and forests of fir and western red cedar. Looking to burrow in, at a local book shop I found one of my favorite authors, the brilliant Canadian short-story writer Alice Munro, winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature. Her 1998 collection *For the Love of A Good Woman* is one I had not read before. These are stories with the full satisfaction of a novel; you are never short-changed with Munro. Instead, you are drawn to her characters by a mounting tension. A sentence, an observation, a phrase takes you by surprise and there it is, that ‘aha’ moment when a complexity, an oddity, a mystery is revealed. These are characters that stay with you. In this collection, the women tease out the title. Are they good, or flawed, or just surprising? If you haven’t read Munro yet, you should. Or, if this reawakens an interest in Munro, you should definitely pick her up.

Earlier this year we were also lucky enough to travel to Italy. A sojourn, as it turned out, to celebrate the work of Bernini and Baroque architecture while visiting Rome and the ‘heel of the boot,’ particularly the charming walled city of Lecce. Traveling in Italy is a compelling, nay mandatory, crash course in history for me. I devour the guide books, read every church brochure and look for novels to help me see. This time I was thrilled to add an unusual guide found in the English language section of a Rome book store. If you’re considering a trip or just love all things Italian (who doesn’t?), I highly recommend *La Bella Lingua: My Love Affair With Italian, the World’s Most Enchanting Language*, by Dianne Hales. The title tells it all, but just in case you missed the point, this is a love letter to the culture of Italy – language, literature, music and cinema. Dante, Verdi, Mastroianni and others are brought to life in the most charming fashion. You will learn plenty and have fun along the way – without having to travel there if a trip is not planned.

And finally, my son thought I would enjoy *The Doryman’s Reflection, A Fisherman’s Life* by Paul Moyneaux. I have. This part memoir of a deep sea fisherman also chronicles the history and evolution of the East Coast fishing industry. The famed Maine lobster fishery and trawling the Georges Bank aside, there is a direct correlation to our own fishing industry. Sharing stories of a multi-generational fishing family, you feel the longing and importance for tradition, the effects of the boom and bust cycle of a resource challenged to ‘feed the world.’ Moyneaux incorporates an insightful history of the regulatory decision making process and its effects on all US fisheries. Easy to read and not boring.

An apt place to end my musings on the ‘complexity of things — the things within things — just seems to be endless.’

“I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading! How much sooner one tires of any thing than of a book!”

Jane Austen

HLF Legacy Circle

Join members of the Legacy Circle Remember HLF in your Will or Estate Plan

The HLF Legacy Circle comprises a special group of individuals who have remembered the Humboldt Library Foundation in their wills or estate plans. Their gifts will grow the HLF Endowment Fund, a long-term strategy to provide enhanced funding for the library in perpetuity.

For every new HLF Legacy Circle member added during 2018 and 2019, Ed Olsgard and Michele McKeegan will make a contribution to HLF – they've upped the ante from \$250 to \$500. So please consider today – your planning will provide immediate and long-term support for the public library.

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“Of all man’s instruments, the most wondrous, no doubt, is the book. The other instruments are extensions of his body. The microscope, the telescope, are extensions of his sight; the telephone is the extension of his voice; then we have the plow and the sword, extensions of the arm. But the book is something else altogether: the book is an extension of memory and imagination.”

Jorge Luis Borges

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Meet Your New Library Director

After an extensive search, Humboldt County Library has a new Director. Nick Wilczek began his tenure in May. Nick is already familiar to many as the former Branch Head of the Arcata Library.

Nick was born in Bellevue, Washington, but his family soon relocated to Florida. He spent a lot of time at the local library and has fond memories of a collection of jazz recordings on vinyl that he checked out repeatedly. He came to see that the library was a place that could open doors to new experiences and satisfy one's curiosity about the larger world.

At 17, Nick enrolled at the University of Kentucky and moved to Lexington. There he earned a BA in English and a Master's in Library Science. Upon graduation, he was hired as a Reference Librarian at the Lexington Public Library. Two years later, he was put in charge of Adult Services. This position involved programming and Nick found that he really enjoyed reaching out to the community in this way.

One of Nick's close friends had attended HSU and told Nick that he would love this area. Intrigued, Nick checked the Humboldt County website. He found an opening for Arcata Branch Head and applied for the position. Nick brought energy and enthusiasm to the job and worked with the Arcata Friends to make the library a real community center. He also encouraged outreach to underserved groups, working with organizations like the Raven Project to provide support to homeless and at risk teens.

Although it was hard to leave the area and the people he had come to love, Nick felt that he needed to pursue professional growth and accepted a position as Director of the Garden Home Community Library in Portland, Oregon. Once again Nick put a focus on programming. The library offered art classes, movies, Karaoke nights, a series of Community Cultural Conversations and an 80's Prom!

When Nick learned about the opening for Library Director at the HCL, he applied and was hired. He is delighted to be back in Humboldt County and is committed to leading the library into a brighter future. At this point, Nick is gathering information from his staff and the community about what that future should look like. He is interested in fostering collaboration and encouraging creativity and is forming staff teams to deal with various aspects of library service. Nick is also committed to responding to community concerns and providing support through library materials and programs.

by JoAnn Bauer, HLF Board Member



A novel worth reading is an education of the heart. It enlarges your sense of human possibility, of what human nature is, of what happens in the world. It's a creator of inwardness."

Susan Sontag

Humboldt Library Foundation Welcomes New Board Members Alison Talbott, Hannah Eisloeffel, and Cindy Chesbro

HLF is pleased to welcome three new members to our Board of Directors. As an active working board that organizes an array of fundraising activities to support the library, including an annual Gala and auction and other community events, we appreciate the experience, dedication and commitment these new board members bring to the job. Please join us in that welcome.

Alison Talbott comes to us with a BA degree in Political Science from HSU. She works in Public and Government Affairs for PG&E. She is very active in the community, working with a broad array of organizations. As the mother of an eleven year old, Alison is also exposed to school age families who are natural library patrons. But apparently working full-time and raising a daughter isn't enough, Alison is also a member or the Garfield School Board of Trustees, on the board for the Open Door Community Health Centers, is on the South Bay School Site Council, the Humboldt Community Disaster Council and the Humboldt Workforce Development Board. When asked why she wanted to join the HLF Board Alison said, "Working with a solid, dedicated team to ensure our library system grows and prospers." Welcome, Alison Talbott!



Hannah Eisloeffel brings a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from UC Santa Cruz and a Certificate of Completion in Professional Sequence in Copy Writing. She works at the Humboldt Area Foundation as Donor Engagement Coordinator. Hannah is not a stranger to volunteering. She has helped Food for People fill holiday food bags, removed invasive grasses with Friends of the Dunes, cleaned beaches with Pacific Outfitters Green Team and volunteered for the League of Women Voters at their State of the Community Luncheons. Hannah is also a member of the North Coast Growers Association and co-owns Table Bluff Farms in Loleta. When asked what brings her to the HLF board Hannah said, "I would love to contribute volunteer time to HLF because I believe in what the organization does and what it stands up for." Welcome, Hannah Eisloeffel!



Cindy Chesbro contributes an AA degree from College of the Redwoods, a BA in Child Development from Humboldt State University and a MA degree in Early Childhood Education from Sacramento State University. Cindy is a retired instructor from the Los Rios Community College District in Sacramento. She also worked in the Child Development Department at American River College and spent ten years on the board for Beanstalk, a nonprofit program that operated eight preschools, schools and many family childcare homes where they monitored the Federal Food Program. When asked about her desire to be on the HLF Board Cindy said, "I have recently moved back to Humboldt County and would like to be involved in the community. I feel very strongly that the library is a vital community service for all ages. I know how important it is for young children to be exposed to literature." Welcome, Cindy Chesbro!



From the Director's Desk

By Nick Wilczek, County Librarian

As the weather cools and we head into fall, I'd like to take a quick look back at the Humboldt County Library's fantastic summer. This year's Summer Reading program, "Reading Takes You Everywhere," was a huge success. Kids throughout the county participated in special events, programs, story times and crafting opportunities. The Summer Reading program helps kids keep their reading and literacy skills sharp during the out-of-school summer months. I'd like to extend a huge "Thanks" to all the attendees, staff and volunteers who made this such a special summer at the Library.

Fear not! The end of Summer Reading doesn't mean the end of exciting things at the Library. This October the Eureka Library will be taken over by our second Harry Potter Celebration. Started in 2016, the Harry Potter Celebration features activities and crafts, a photo booth, the chance to meet Hagrid and giveaways. Join us on Saturday, October 27th from 11am – 2pm for the festivities. Muggles and magical beings are invited, and all are encouraged to dress as their favorite character.

I've been in Humboldt County serving as Library Director for about 4 months now, and I'd like to thank the community, my coworkers and other colleagues for extending such a warm welcome. I fell in love with Humboldt County during my time as manager of the Arcata Library, and returning to the county after a year and a half in Portland feels like returning home. I couldn't be happier about the opportunity to serve our community again. I've been fortunate to spend some time in most of our branches over the past few months and it's been a joy meeting patrons and staff throughout the county.

I love hearing from folks, whether it be ideas, concerns or compliments. Please feel free to contact me at nwilczek@co.humboldt.ca.us or call my office at (707) 269-1929.

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

Dr. Seuss

Buy a Book

Revive the "How To" Collection

This year the Humboldt Library Foundation's *Buy A Book* campaign has targeted the Library's ever popular "How To" collection. Librarians tell us it needs an update and you can help.

Cookbooks, Garden Ideas, Home Improvement, Adult Crafts & More

- Want to try a new recipe? Or infuse your farmer's market bounty with international flavors? Want to learn new barbecue techniques or how to bring the locavore craze into your kitchen? New cookbooks inspire. Let the library bring them home to you.
- Want to consider a year-round vegetable garden? Want some guidance on how to grow perennial vegetables, find an idea for a landscaping challenge or the best deer resistant plants? Gardening books help answer your questions and inspire your vision. Find your motivation at the library.
- Need to figure out how to install solar panels or how to build a hen house? What about replacing those steps or building a deck? DIY books for home improvement answer your questions and offer step-by-step instruction.
- Inspired to get out that sewing machine? Look to the library for fashion ideas or how to recycle your clothing 'treasures' into art. Adult craft books for the beginner or the pro abound. Browse the stacks and you'll be inspired.
- Want to tap into your creativity and set your inner artist free? Always been interested in drawing, painting or sculpting? You'll find books on everything from watercolor landscapes to sketching with charcoal, pinching clay pots to oil painting portraits. Let the library help!

Contribute to the HLF Buy A Book Campaign

Buy a book today in honor of or in memory of a loved one.

Visit the Humboldt Library Foundation's website at www.humboldtlibraryfoundation.org and use the Donate button or mail your check to the Humboldt Library Foundation at PO Box 440, Eureka, CA 95502-0440.

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The America I love still exists at the front desks of our public libraries.”

Kurt Vonnegut



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