Laptops and iPads at the Library

The Pioneerland Library System (PLS) will be providing patrons with the opportunity to use laptops and iPads in every one of the 31 branches across West Central Minnesota. The Willmar Public Library will have 2 laptops and 2 iPads available for patron use in the library. The laptops and iPads will not be available for check-out. According to Laurie Ortega, PLS Director of Library Operations, the PLS “expects regular use in the library from the start and wants to make the devices available to the largest number of people.”

The laptop and iPad project is part of a 2-year computer upgrade taking place in 2015 and 2016.

Bits and Pieces

- Thank you to all who contributed to the Friends for Give to the Max Day. We were able to meet our $500 matching grant and have added $1460 to the Friends Fund. Grants from the fund are used each year for things such as programming and for building the library collection.

- This year’s Holiday Giving Tree raised $463.82 for purchasing materials for the library. Donors to the Giving Tree have the option of selecting a specific item from the tree, donating an item of his or her choice, or donating money. A huge thank you to Library Assistant Vickie Lucht for setting up and coordinating the logistics of the tree.

- Thank you to Mona Lackore and Karen Lang and to the many volunteers for all of their work in running the most successful book sale in many years. This year’s sale raised $1010.

Friends’ Dues

If September 2014 or earlier is written and circled on your address label, it means that it is time to pay your Friends’ dues. Please use the form on the back of the newsletter when paying your dues. Thank you.

Book Your Winter Getaway!

It is time for the Annual Adult Winter Reading Program once again. This year’s participants have the opportunity to win some outstanding prizes. The Grand Prize is a Kindle Fire HD 6, contributed by the Willmar Friends of the Library. Other prizes include gift cards from Cub, McMillian’s, LuLu Bean’s, Mill Pond Mercantile and Great Clips.

The program began on January 5th and runs through Friday, March 13th at 5:30 pm. For every five books read you will receive a mug or tote bag, while supplies last, and you will be entered into the Grand Prize drawing. Individuals will be limited to one mug and tote bag, but may enter the drawing for every slip returned. Books must be from the library, including OverDrive, in order to be eligible and books read must have been finished after the start of the program.

Be sure to head down to the library or get on line to select some great reads this winter and to have a chance to win some wonderful prizes. Thank you to the sponsors who are helping to make the Winter Reading Program a success.

Did You Know?

- 58% of adults in the U.S. have public library cards.
- Americans go to school, public and academic libraries more than three times more often than they go to the movies.
- Reference librarians in the nation’s public and academic libraries answer nearly 6.6 million questions weekly. Standing single file, the line of questioners would span from Ocean City, MD to Juneau, AK.
- A 2012 poll conducted for the American Library Association (ALA) found that 94% of respondents agreed that public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed because they provide free access to materials and resources.

Facts from the ALA Office for Research & Statistics.
Now that we’re firmly in the middle of winter, we’ve decided to freshen things up by rebooting some of our Teen Programs. One of the reboots I’m most excited about is Teen Hangout. This is a finely tuned combination of some of our previous programs you might remember, such as Wii Wednesday and Friday Funday. Teen Hangout will be a time for teens to do whatever they please, whether it be playing Super Smash Bros. on the Wii, watching YouTube videos on our mobile laptops or—and this might seem crazy, just hanging out with their friends in the multipurpose room where they don’t have to worry about being too loud. Besides having the Wii and laptops set up, we’ll also have a variety of table top games for teens to play, and if all they want to do is find a spot to sit and read, that’s fine too.

Our Teen Book Club has been going strong for these past few months, so much so, that we’ve been itching to get another reading oriented program started. Our solution? Teen Book Chat. Now this isn’t quite a reboot, but our book chat will run very similarly to Teen Book Club, with the exception that teens can read any book of their choosing instead of an assigned book each month. The point of the chat is for teens to share their opinions on books they’ve read recently (whether they’ve enjoyed them or not). Our hope is that this will create a reader’s advisory by the readers themselves. This program is ideal for teen readers who either can’t make it to our book club or don’t like to be confined to reading a certain book per month. Now they will have options when it comes to our book oriented programs; they can choose the chat or the club and maybe, if they’re up for it, both.

Can’t find your favorite mystery series anymore? Where are the paperbacks?

After some consideration, the library went through a major reorganization of our fiction section. You might ask why, and that is what I’m going to explain. Libraries have been debating the idea of separating genre fiction from general fiction books to improve findability among patrons. If you don’t have a specific book in mind, you may want to start in the designated science fiction section if those are your cup of tea. The staff at the library decided we needed to keep some of our genres separate but make them more visible. After reorganizing, we finally have a genre section where the paperbacks used to be housed. The mystery hardcovers are followed directly by mystery paperbacks, and the same goes for science fiction and westerns. This will make browsing much easier, as all the mysteries are in one general area, and the same goes for the other genres. Large print has moved slightly, but it is still convenient and well-marked. General fiction hardcovers follow the large print books in the same area as before, however following the hardcovers are the paperbacks, again making finding certain books easier. Lastly, we made a designated area for Spanish and soon to come Somali books that will better cater to those populations. So next time you are stumped in the stacks looking for your next book, remember that it may have moved. Don’t be afraid to ask for assistance. We are all still getting used to this big, but necessary, change. Happy browsing!
As usual, winter is a very busy time for children’s programming at the Willmar Public Library. One of our most exciting events will be Frosty’s Magic Birthday, a World of Wonder event. This is a 40 minute action packed interactive show in which the kids will help to prepare a surprise birthday party for Frosty. There will be a birthday gift, party decorations, and a very magical birthday cake. Frosty will be there and the children will have the opportunity to hug, dance and pose for pictures with the snowman. This event is especially appropriate for kids ages three to six years old.

For children who would like to relax with a movie after a week of school, there will be two Children’s Movie Afternoons at the Library. On February 27th the kids will enjoy Cars 2 and on March 27th Box Trolls will be on tap. The movies will be shown between 3:30 and 5:15 pm. Popcorn and pop will be provided or kids may bring their own snacks.

One of the newest book groups at the library is for students in grade 2 through 5. This is an opportunity for students to read and share their thoughts on a book. On February 3rd the students will be discussing Tales From a Not-So-Happily Ever After and on March 3rd Sea Monsters will be discussed. The book club meets from 4:00 to 5:00 at the library.

Oh, the Places You’ll Go When You Read is the theme for this year’s Read Across America Day. March 2, is Read Across America Day and this year’s guest reader at the Willmar Library will be Janet Clark. Janet will be reading Oh, the Places You’ll Go by Dr. Seuss. The program will be held from 10:00—10:45 am and is designed for children 2 1/2 to 6.

Book Review of The Red Bird All-Indian Traveling Band by Frances Washburn

In an entertaining and often engaging narrative, which begins on the Fourth of July in 1969 and ends some four months later, author Frances Washburn allows readers a unique glimpse of contemporary American Indian life on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations in rural South Dakota. The novel’s protagonist, Sissy Roberts, is a smart, articulate, and attractive young Lakota woman who always finds herself on the receiving end of whatever it is people have on their mind. Normally, being the recipient of the town’s gossip is not a problem, but when local resident Buffalo Ames turns up dead next to the railroad tracks, after a rowdy Fourth of July night of drinking, dancing, and romancing at the Longhorn Bar in Scenic, Sissy Roberts’ life suddenly becomes more complicated than ever.

When she’s not waiting tables at the local greasy spoon cafe, Sissy plays a mean lead guitar and belts out songs for The Red Bird All-Indian Traveling Band. As the band’s name implies, Sissy and the boys perform at a different venue every weekend. But talented and beautiful young women like Sissy are not always content to bide their time on the reservation. In fact, more often than not, they find themselves pregnant and single with lousy options to choose from, like Sissy’s friend Speedy, who lives with Sissy and her family.

In a novel rich in detail and smart about the lay of the land on and around the rez, Washburn’s novel is both compelling and educational, especially for non-native greenhorns. To find out what happens to Sissy and Speedy and the many other fascinating characters, including an FBI agent with an eye out for Sissy Roberts, you should read this novel! I highly recommend it for inclusion in any tribal or traditional library.

Frances Washburn (Lakota/Anishinabe) was born and raised on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. She is the author of two previous novels, Elsie’s Business and The Sacred White Turkey, and is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the American Indian Studies department at University of Arizona.

The Red Bird All-Indian Traveling Band is on order and will soon be available at the Willmar Public Library.