Deborah Barrow is a recognized leader in using technology to deliver service to patrons and enhance access to information. In July, she became Director for San Diego’s award-winning public library system, succeeding Anna Tatár, who retired in June. She now leads a system with 36 libraries visited by more than 6 million annually and served by nearly 400 employees.

Barrow has a proven track record in public service having been the director of library systems in Northern California for 13 years. Barrow, who speaks Spanish, is a San Diego native who used the Valencia Park and Central libraries while growing up.

Q&A with Deborah Barrow

What’s the most exciting part about coming to the San Diego Public Library?

The best part has been coming home. I grew up here in San Diego. I spent many days at the Valencia Park Branch Library and at the Central Library working on school projects. I’m living proof that libraries change lives. It’s great to be officially part of Deborah Barrow said that as a child she used the San Diego libraries to discover Island of the Blue Dolphins, fairy tales and the Nancy Drew Mysteries.

Meet the New Library Director

Continued on page 3

SupportMyLibrary.org Open for Business

Visitors to New Foundation Website Can Win One Book Selections

The Library Foundation recently launched its redesigned website – SupportMyLibrary.org – which is full of information and options for supporting the Library and its programs. The new site:

◆ Details options for supporting Library collections, programs and capital needs.
◆ Allows for secure online contributions.
◆ Describes Library improvement projects including the new Central Library, with photographs and descriptions of the new facility.
◆ Shows ways to become involved in the Library, including volunteering, joining a Friends group and becoming a Library Advocate.

To celebrate, the Foundation offers those who visit a chance to win a complete set of all three One Book, One San Diego book selections. Visit SupportMyLibrary.org, and click the Sign Up for E-News button. Sign up for E-News before December 31 for a chance to win the set of three One Book titles.
A Message from The Library Director

Deborah Barrow, San Diego Public Library

We all feel the impact of the recent economic turmoil. It affects you and it impacts us here at the Library. I assure you that in everything we do we are looking for ways to become more efficient and more effectively deliver you the services you expect.

That is key now because in tough economic times people turn to their library in greater numbers. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that families are increasingly looking to their libraries for entertainment and services.

It is true nationally and also here in San Diego. In the last three months we’ve seen circulation increase 8 percent compared to the same period last year. Our Summer Reading Program saw increased numbers of people attending our free events (see story on page 7).

We know our patrons are not buying as many books, magazine and CDs as they did in the past. They turn to the library where they can find these resources for free. We know many people have lost jobs and cannot afford Internet access. Not surprisingly, we see increases in the number of patrons who use our public access computers to write resumes, conduct job searches and research continuing education options.

We are heartened to know that our patrons are turning to their library when they need us most. We stand ready to provide this crucial service. And now, more than ever, we thank you for your support in helping us meet these pressing needs.

Friends Receive Top Philanthropic Honor

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) recently honored two key Library supporters for their outstanding contributions. The Friends of the San Diego Public Library received a Special Tribute Award—AFP’s top honor which has only been bestowed four times. The Friends were recognized for their 30-year history of providing advocacy and financial and volunteer support for the Library. Last year, more than 2,400 volunteers donated over 117,000 hours to Library programs—the majority of these were Friends volunteers.

In addition, AFP honored the Target as Outstanding Philanthropic Corporation for their community service, including their past sponsorship of the Children’s Book Festival and the Summer Reading Program.

“This truly is an honor,” said Library Foundation Executive Director Jay Hill. “We are so appreciative of the commitment of the Friends and of our corporate partners like Target. Clearly, the generosity of Library supporters is being recognized in the larger community.”

Friends Receive Top Philanthropic Honor

Target Also Recognized for Library Support

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Check Us Out

Many Friends groups hold regular used book sales, like this one at the San Carlos Branch Library. The Friends have contributed more than $15 million to the Library since 1978.

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The Library’s new Isabel Schon International Center for Spanish Books for Youth helps ensure access to high-quality books for children and adolescents in Spanish and books in English about Latino people. The Center at the San Diego Public Library is a circulating collection that promotes literacy and reading by:

- Collecting recommended and award-winning books.
- Cataloging materials in an online searchable database.
- Conducting conferences and seminars.

Meet the New Library Director

Continued from page 1

this wonderful library system, and to be able to give back to the library community that had such an influence on me.

During these first months, what’s been your biggest challenge?

Remembering everyone’s names! We have a wonderful staff in place, and I strive to make sure they are well equipped and empowered in a way that best serves the interests of the Library’s users. In this challenging fiscal environment, I’ve been heartened by the strong level of support and belief in our system. That speaks volumes about the leadership and public service ethic of the Library staff and those who held this position before me. We are going to need even stronger partnerships with private sector supporters if we are to meet the growing need for library services. I’m excited to meet these partners and begin working with them.

What one thing would you most like to accomplish?

The bar has been set high, but I’d like to see it go even higher. I’d like to see the Library strengthen responsiveness to the needs of our users. One method is to employ technology to serve the public more efficiently and empower more people to take full advantage of Library resources.

You have an impressive resume, but what’s the strangest job, not listed, that you’ve had?

Well, it was a family chore, not a job. And, it probably wasn’t so strange either. As the eldest of seven, one of my chores was to do the ironing. There was a TV commercial in the old days that I related to personally. The scene was of a tired woman at the ironing board. She would say, “I’m Gerty Schmirk, I iron shirts. I iron shirts ‘til my fingers hurt!” As a fellow laundress, I felt complete solidarity with her every time I saw that commercial. I don’t recall if “Super Starch” made the ironing any easier though. I realize now how lucky I was that my parents taught me to do my share and to contribute to the betterment of the family.

What book are you reading?

Of course, The Zookeeper’s Wife by Diane Ackerman!

Library Meets Need for Cultural Programs

The Library is the region’s top cultural programmer, presenting more than 5,700 free events last fiscal year – a 24 percent increase over the number of programs offered two years ago. A recent San Diego Foundation survey found that attending library events is San Diegans second most popular cultural destination—behind attending the movies. To support Library cultural programs, call (619) 238-6638 or e-mail office@supportmylibrary.org.
Gift Helps San Ysidro Branch Complete Renovations

Thanks to a generous gift from Lloyd and Caroline de Llamas, the San Ysidro Branch Library will be receiving much-needed upgrades. The branch closed in mid-November for four weeks while new carpet, flooring and shelving are installed. As a young boy growing up in San Ysidro, the library had a big influence on Mr. de Llamas’ desire to pursue his education and attend college. Watch for photos of the completed project in upcoming issues. If you are interested in helping your branch library make capital improvements, contact Jay Hill at 619-236-5861 or jhill@supportmylibrary.org.

A Granddaughter’s Gift
Memorial Contributions Provide Special Recognition for Library Lovers

Leslie Beebe recently made a memorial contribution to support the San Diego Public Library in honor of her grandmothers—two women who inspired her. Leslie, who is passionate about providing everyone with the opportunities libraries provide, feels a real connection to both her grandmothers although she never met either woman because each died ten years before Leslie was born.

Leslie Beebe’s grandmothers Effie Graham (left) and Margaret Beebe.

“I want this gift to celebrate how these women lived,” Leslie said. “What better way to celebrate their lives than by providing children with great books?”

“My grandmothers did so much good for their community that it inspired me to do something good for my community…”

Effie Graham was a school librarian who cared deeply about books and literacy. She was rarely seen without a book nearby. Margaret Beebe was also a role model, working as a bank bookkeeper, running the family business and teaching craft courses at night; all in addition to mothering four children.

“My grandmothers did so much good for their community that it inspired me to do something good for my community,” said Leslie. “My hope is that by donating to the library in honor of my grandmothers, others might do so as well.”

Your honor or memorial gifts in any amount are welcome. The Foundation will send you a receipt to acknowledge your tax deductible donation and send a letter to the family you are honoring. Your contribution also is acknowledged in Check Us Out. For more information, call (619) 238-6638.
Library Contributors

The San Diego Public Library and Foundation thank the following contributors who made gifts of $500 or more to support the Library from May through September 2008.

$1,000 and above
Robert J. Anslow & Marina L. Marrelli
Deborah Barrow
Charles R. Carlton
Nancy C. Carter
James & Mary Dawe
Caroline & Lloyd de Llamas
Marcia de Peralta Estate
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David & Frances Pierce
Michelle Shapiro
Katie & Dan Sullivan
Tim Tanzer
Lovel Waiters Estate
Les Williamson & Marilyn Gibbs
Hubert & Geraldine Wolff

$500 to $999
Anonymous
Katherine M. Dawson
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Mrs. Aline Hornaday
Mr. Augustus Samuel Magee
Alice B. McCauley
Daniel O'Connor Jr. & Kellie Evans-O'Connor
Una Marie Pierce
Ellen C. Revele
Janet L. Robbins
Lynn Susholtz
Robert & Ginger Wallace
Betty Jo & Hal Williams

“Apart from the ballot box, philanthropy presents the one opportunity we have to express a meaningful choice over the direction in which our society will progress.”
– George G. Kirstein

Thank you to the following contributors who made memorial gifts.

In Memory Of:
Margaret S. Beebe
Leslie Beebe
Sylvia Cedarbaum
Bertram & Jean Fleshler
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Mick Rosenblum
Patrick Durkin
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Legoland California
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San Diego Natural History Museum
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San Diego County Water Authority
San Diego People of Color Quilt Guild
SDSU Foundation
The Samuel I. & John H. Fox Foundation

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California Council for the Humanities
Paradise Hills Branch Library
Point Loma Rotary Club
The Isabella Fund
The Yellow Book Road
United Way of San Diego County
Warwicks

Thank you to the following contributors who made tribute gifts.

In Honor Of:
Anna Tatár
Mrs. Barbara Luce
Carly Bartkiewicz
Lana Bartkiewicz
Leah R. Berman
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Warwicks
2009 One Book, One San Diego Title Selected

San Diego has voted. The Zookeeper’s Wife has been selected as the next title for One Book, One San Diego. Author Diane Ackerman recounts the remarkable story of Jan and Antonina Zabinski, the keepers of the Warsaw Zoo who saved hundreds from Nazi persecution during Word War II.

The Zoo was badly damaged by the Nazi bombardments in 1939. When most of the animals were dead or gone, the Zabinskis summoned the courage to smuggle and shelter Jews and Polish resisters. The Warsaw Zoo became a human refuge, with people hiding in animal cages and crowded closets. It’s a rarely told story of hope and survival.

USA Today described it as “a treatise on nobility.” Ackerman has received many prizes and awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, Orion Book Award and the John Burroughs Nature Award. She has the rare distinction of having a molecule named after her – dianeackerone.

In partnership with KPBS, the Library brings San Diego together to read and discuss each year. Entering its third year in 2009, the program features author events, book discussions at libraries and other in-library events. For information on supporting this program, visit SupportMyLibrary.org or e-mail office@SupportMyLibrary.org.

Stay Informed, Have Your Voice Heard

Join the Friends Library Advocacy Network today

There are many ways to put your love of libraries into action. Financial contributions are crucial. Another way to show your support is to become a Library Friends Advocate. As a Library Advocate, you receive regular e-mails about Library issues and requests for action. With this information, Library Advocates speak with friends and neighbors about the great things happening at their branch or talk with decision-makers about the need for strong public support for the San Diego Public Library. Your voice counts! You have a crucial say in making the case for libraries and in capturing the attention of decision-makers like no one else can. To join this network, visit SupportMyLibrary.org and click on the Sign Up for E-News button on the lower left. And, if you join before year’s end, you will be entered for a chance to receive all three of the One Book, One San Diego selections (see story on page 1).

Downloadable eAudiobooks Now Available for iPods

Library patrons can now download eAudiobooks in the MP3 format for use with their iPods and iPhones. The Library has added more than 440 titles in this format, joining the more than 1,000 eAudiobooks already available in WMA format for use on other digital players.

From home, Library patrons can search and download eAudiobooks at any time from the Library website at sandiegolibrary.org. Some of the most popular titles are available, including Judy Blume’s newest children’s book, Maya Angelou’s memoir, and The Zookeeper’s Wife. If there are titles you’d like to suggest for the eAudiobook collection, email ARTMUSIC@sandiego.gov.
The Summer Reading Program spread the Reading Bug in San Diego with an insect theme for 2008. More than 25,000 young readers across the city signed up for the program and a record number met their goal of reading ten or more books.

In its 84th year, this program builds recreational reading among preschoolers, children and teens. In addition to fun story times, live music and activities, participants earn rewards and prizes. More than 47,000 children and teens attended a record number of 1,100 events at library branches this summer.

Time and again, librarians hear from parents grateful for a way to keep their children reading. One librarian told of a youngster who was scheduled to repeat a grade due to low reading scores. The parent said that with the Summer Reading Program’s help, the student was able to pass the test and go on to the next grade. More than 89 percent of parents responding to a survey said the program helped maintain or improve their child’s reading skills.

The Library Foundation thanks its partners for helping ensure the program’s success. The San Diego Zoo, The Natural History Museum, The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, Legoland, and Sammy’s Woodfired Pizza provided incentives for youngsters completing the program. These enticements motivate young readers to pick up books during the summer and improve their reading skills.

For information on Summer Reading and ways to support the 2009 Program, visit SupportMyLibrary.org or e-mail office@SupportMyLibrary.org.

“Thank you for giving our child an enthusiasm for reading books. She loved coming to get her prizes. It has been fun to watch her grow and learn as she reads books with me.”

– Rancho Peñasquitos parent
When times are tough, demand for library services and materials grows. In 2002, the American Library Association (ALA) released two studies showing that in the recession following 9/11 library usage went up an average of 8.3 percent. "This data confirms what librarians have seen from experience - that in times of economic difficulties people turn to their libraries and librarians," said ALA President John Berry.

Recent Library usage in San Diego also confirms these findings. For the last fiscal year, the San Diego Public Library realized the second greatest circulation total in the system’s history. And, for the last three months, there was an eight percent increase in circulation versus the same period last year.

“People are visiting book and video stores less frequently,” said Library Foundation Executive Director Jay Hill. “We know the Library’s free programs, books, music, movies and entertainment are an excellent choice anytime but particularly in unsettled economic times.”

Visit SupportMyLibrary.org to help support the Library’s free collection and programs.