

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for March 3, 2011

Carl Bulger presided.

We learned that the dedication of the Computer Center will be on Wednesday, March 23rd; not today.

We had four visitors who became new members:

Mary Ellen Merkel, a 47-year resident of Bowie who has business experience with computers but wants to learn more that's relevant to the things she does in retirement.

John Ragan, a retired veterinarian for USDA. Prior to that he was the Tennessee State Veterinarian.

Tom Lewis, retired from OMB. Experience with Word Processing and PowerPoint.

Carolyn Goddard is a piano teacher who wants to become proficient in using email and the internet and office applications.

PRESENTATION:

Nedra Davis is one of the seven IT employees of the Prince George's County Memorial Library system. Their office is located in Largo. Before joining that office three years ago, she was a librarian for 23 years. Kathleen Teaze is the Library Director.

The Bowie Branch of PGCML has 40 computers, most of them hardwired, not wi-fi connected. However, for those patrons that want to use their personal laptops,

iPads, and phones in the library, unsecured wi-fi is provided.

There are limits to how many can be connected at one time. The volume of uploads and downloads is also limited.

The operating system is Windows XP Pro. They also have Microsoft Office 2007.

All of the PGCML computers are in an Integrated Library System with Polaris software, which has been in use for about two years.

Another software, Envision, provides the computer reservation system. If all of the computers are in use, you may place your reservation and wait till one becomes available. You can have three half-hour turns per day. If some computers are not being used, you are free to use a computer as long as you like.

Envision also provides the LPT1 software for the printers.

Computers are connected to the internet. As required by the federal Child Protection Law, the Library's internet filter, AT6, blocks pornography and other sites considered potentially harmful to children. Also blocked are: peer-to-peer sites in response to requests from the Motion Picture Artists Association; phishing sites, sites known to download malicious software, educational cheating sites, and adult personals on Craigslist.

The library offers a kiosk for borrowing DVDs.

The IT department offers computer and software technical support to the library staff. Each problem has a ticket so that requests are not ignored or forgotten.

The IT Department also provides a Webmaster and email/internet services for the staff.

The official website for the Prince George's County Memorial Library system is <http://www.-prge.lib.md.us/>. Click on this link (you may have to press the ctrl key as you click), and explore the site to appreciate the wealth of resources available through the library's website.

In the center of the Home Page is a link to Maryland Ask Us Now, the online equivalent to a reference librarian in your local library. It is described as "A 24/7 live online interactive service for the residents and students of the state of Maryland. It uses the expertise of trained librarians to provide answers to questions, research guidance, and help navigating the Internet."

Just below that is Help Now (powered by Brainfuse): "The Brainfuse eLearning Suite offers HelpNow™ (expert academic tutoring), StudyNow™ (self-study and collaborative learning platform), and JobNow™ (real-time resume and interview coaching and career advice)."

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Below that is an image of the day's Washington Post. To gain access you must enter the first five digits of your library card both for the username and the password. (Library cards are free for Prince George's County residents. Logging into your account requires your username and a password you can specify.) Using the iBrowse software (nothing to download), you can browse the entire day's edition. Since it's on the internet, it's available to you wherever you can access the internet.

Just below the Washington Post is a line of four buttons: Meeting Rooms allows you to reserve a meeting room; Library News; Employment Opportunities where a job is currently advertised for an IT Specialist who will be the eighth in that office; and, Procurement Opportunities (which should be called Contracting Opportunities.)

Below that are three buttons: Downloads powered by OverDrive which allows you to download E-Books and Audio Books; Online Research Resources which is your entry to 55 licensed databases and to a listing of new titles; and, Online Tutoring, another place to enter the HelpNow site.

Also on the Home Page is a Search Box, a Manage Your Account menu, and a Locate a Library Branch.

After you sign-in on the Log In page (powered by Polaris), you can search the catalogs, manage your account, including reserving books or other items. You can establish your personal account in the system on which you can make reservations or request renewals. If you choose, you can have the library maintain a list of all of the books you have checked out in the past.

The online catalog shows every book, DVD, etc., in their system. It indicates which library branches have the book and whether it is currently on the shelf. If it is not on the shelf, you can reserve it. If a book is not in the PGCML system, you can inquire whether it is in some other Maryland library. If it is, you can ask for an interlibrary loan and specify which branch at which you want to pick it up.

The Services page allows access to a myriad of services and information items. Frequently asked Questions are answered.

The Events Calendar page lists only computer classes at the Hyattsville Branch in March for Seniors.

The Online Library page is another entry point for downloading Audio and E-books or music; for help with homework; for access to the databases, and reference librarians.

The Special Collections page describes four rooms: The Mary-

land Room is at Hyattsville; the Selima Room at the Bowie Branch pertains to thoroughbred horse breeding and racing, especially in Maryland; the Sojourner Truth Room in Oxon Hill has 15,000 items on African-American History; and, the Tugwell Room in Greenbelt pertains to the history of Greenbelt and other planned communities.

The PGCML computer system is also connected via iNET to the Maryland Library System, called Marina, which is administered by the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore.

It's also connected to Sailor, the Maryland Public Information Network maintained by a loose consortium of Maryland entities.

The website offers multiple access points to their services. I'll imitate the site by reiterating that it offers electronic editions of the Washington Post and some other newspapers; the Library of Congress (loc.gov); a site for high school students to practice for the SAT or ACH tests; access to the 40 reading rooms devoted to special topics; free legal forms ("Freeegals"); a place where you can download three free songs per week (you can keep them as long as you like), "Ask Us", a site where you can ask reference librarians questions; a place where you can download E-books (You can save them to any compatible device. After the "due date", the copy either disappears or becomes corrupted.); approximately 60 In-

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formation Resources and Research Databases (most are available on the internet but a few (e.g., Ancestry.com) must be used at the library and a couple can only be accessed at the Hyattsville Branch); “Brain Fuze”, an online tutoring service; Net Library (audio books recorded in Edgewater, Maryland); and OverDrive (audio and E-books).

If you are confused or need help, it's available online, by telephone, or in person. If you have further questions, our speaker's email address: Nedra.Davis@pgcmls.info.