

Transcription of Episode 348: Montecito Library

SPEAKERS

Barbara Perler, Bob Firing

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Bob Firing 00:00

Good morning, Shadow Hills. Well, one of the reasons that we are a community and not a development is that we have a lot of things going on here to support our residents. And one of the hard working groups behind the scenes that I'm sure you appreciate, but probably don't know too much about is our library group. And Barbara Perler, who started the this whole thing is here, and is my interview subject today. Barbara, welcome to the podcast.

Barbara Perler 00:46

Thank you, Bob. Thanks very much.

Bob Firing 00:47

So, let's go back to the beginning. I mean, you what the residents see today is a lot different than what Pulte imagined when they built this place. So tell us the story.

Barbara Perler 01:00

Well, we bought our house in '04, my husband, and myself, and the library. The Montecito was even under construction wasn't even finished, when it was finished at the end of '05 and they had the opening. And you went in and we're looking for the library. And it consisted of two little V shaped shelves and a corner by where the computer now sits. And we said library we don't think so. So a group of us went to Pulte and said, Hey, we need some shelves, we need a library. And they came through and what you see is what they gave us. And it was amazing. And we were very appreciative. And it went from there. And then we started asking for books, and every book on our shelf is a contribution. No books have ever been bought. So it's just grown. What our problem now is we don't have enough room. But that's all we're gonna get. We continue to purge and we have a system to tell us what books need to go. And we don't ever throw books away, we give them to Angel View us to come in and take them away and your view no longer comes into Indio. But cod College of the Desert picks them up. And we have a couple of people in the community that take them to senior citizen centers, VFW, hospitals, and so on. And so we have a lot of people that take away the books. And that's important because we don't have enough room. We're always running out of room.

Bob Firing 02:23

So this is kind of a unique library and that there is no checkout.

Barbara Perler 02:28

There's no checkout, you come in, you pick up the book or books that you're interested in, take them home, enjoy. And we just hope that you'll return them in a timely manner. That's what we ask of you. Occasionally we don't get a book back. But for every book, we don't get back, we get 10 More dot don't. Yeah.

Bob Firing 02:44

So how do you know that you don't get a book back,

Barbara Perler 02:47

We have a system, we have labels that we put in the books. And when a book is donated, we put the date in that it's donated, and then it sits on the shelf. And when you take it out and bring it back, we put the date in that you brought it back. So we keep every time where we were checking the labels inside the book. If a book has been sitting on the shelf with the initial date that it was donated, and it's sitting there a year, we say this is the book that's not being read. Or if it's a duplicate or triplicate, and then we box them up, we put them in the credenza, they go to into a storeroom. And then we have them picked up by somebody. But we do have a system those stickers tell us those labels. Tell us how many and we keep adding the date. So if you bring the book back, and a month later, somebody else takes it out and brings it back. The dates go in there. If there's no date in there, but the donated date. Yeah, that's sitting there for a year. It's a goodbye.

Bob Firing 03:39

I see. I see. And so how many people are on your committee?

Barbara Perler 03:44

I have about 33 volunteers spread over a whole week. And it's great what they love about the way we work it, you pick a day and if Wednesday's your day to work in library, you can come in anytime from eight in the morning till five at night when I think well actually I think the Montecito is open at six in the morning. So if you're up that early, you could come into the library, but they pick the time and work as much as they want. As much time as they have as much energy as they have. I don't have them checking in. Somebody said you don't you have your people timecard good, no way. And these are volunteer

Bob Firing 04:21

Work is what you're talking about putting the dates in the books, returning the shelf.

Barbara Perler 04:27

There's two carts in the library. One is for new donations, new books that are well they're not necessarily new, but they haven't been on our shelves and then returns and we know they are returns because we put letters on them. We have a red letter. That's usually it's the last name of the author because we'll get to what kind of books we have. But and then we put the dates in and we keep checking the dates and that's the system we have it and it works. And then we check the books and make sure they're When they returned, that they're in good condition, because some people managed to spilt coffee or drop them in their bathtub or whatever. And so then we give them away or some of

them are so bad that we have to toss them. But then we put them, as I say, box them up, put them in the storeroom and wait for someone to take them away.

Bob Firing 05:17

Yeah. And you have more than books, right?

Barbara Perler 05:20

Oh, yeah, we do. In fact, let me let me talk about the books. First, we have hardcover and softcover. Majority of our books are fiction. And we did a survey one year a number of years ago to find out what do I they really want. Most of our readers want fiction. And then we have a shelf, one shelf, facing the ballroom that is devoted to half of it is historical and political. And the other half are biographies and autobiographies, which I wish we had more room for. Because people really liked those. The rest of the books hardcover and softcover on our shelves are fiction. And the letter that you see at the bottom is the last name, the first initial the last name of the author like James Patterson, okay, you'll see "P". But the, and we also have books on tape, okay, and those people can find on the bottom shelf under the hardcover. So the very end of the alphabet of the hard covers, and these are for people that need did I say books on tape, I meant large print, large print, these are with the hard covers, under on the bottom shelf, at the end of the alphabet with the with the hard covers, but large print,

Bob Firing 06:32

What about audio books?

Barbara Perler 06:34

We have, Okay, that's what I really meant. We have audio books, books on tape, and we have CDs, okay, so you have movies, and all of those are on a shelf facing the Lifestyle desk. So if you come in the library, and you look at the some big counter, and if you look underneath, there's all kinds of CDs, and there's books on tape, and you take it will whatever you want, we just hope you bring them back during the summer, we only had about two CDs because they people take them away with them when the snowbirds coming back. Now, the shelves are all full.

Bob Firing 07:11

The migratory birds huh.

Barbara Perler 07:13

they bring back their boxes, the books, even though we asked you to bring only 10 at a time, from your household per month, people moving or people coming, cleaning up house sprinkling whatever they bring in bags and boxes of books and just sort of dropped them there for us.

Bob Firing 07:28

Now they all have puzzles, right?

Barbara Perler 07:30

Okay. And the puzzles. Also facing the Lifestyle desk is low shelves. And that slide is a slide side to side. If you open them up on the left thigh, we have lots of magazines. And if you open up the right

side, there are a ton of puzzles so many that we really just recently cleared them out because they were on the floor. We didn't know what to do with them. We didn't have enough room. But we were replenishing them. And there's plenty of puzzles. And again, take those that will bring them back. Bring more because the problem was not problem during COVID. Many people stuck in their houses like all of us for two years or whatever. They ordered a lot of things online books and puzzles that were delivered. And so what we found was a lot of people ordered books that we already had on the shelves, they didn't know of course. And so what I'm telling people even today, I just had a gentleman a week ago, bring me to James Patterson, James Patterson writes a book a day, if you don't know the author, and

Bob Firing 08:30

It's a team.

Barbara Perler 08:31

Oh my gosh, we don't have enough room for James Patterson, James Patterson. But some met gentleman brought in to brand new books that he had gone, I think to Costco and they were \$19 apiece, brand new hardcover. And we have on our shelves. So what I'm urging people to do is look at our shelves first before you go and buy a book. Because we have a lot of new books, new popular authors, new books.

Bob Firing 08:53

Now the other thing we have here is a lot of authors, and one of them at Carl Rigoli who I know has put a couple books in the library. And he's monitored, they get checked out frequently.

Barbara Perler 09:08

I don't know. Have you looked on our counter recently?

Bob Firing 09:11

I just know what he's told me.

Barbara Perler 09:12

Okay, because I had a gentleman from the creative right writing club come to me and say, Could we put our books on your shelf? And I said, Yes, but what's going to happen is they're going to get lost in there with hundreds and hundreds of others. So we did mark so we set them we set them on the counter all these books that are published by people that live here in this community there on the counter facing the Lifestyle desk. There's a sign there saying that these are local residents, these are their published work, and it's sitting there with book ends and people can take at will and what we had to do though was put a sticker in and saying that these are books by residents, because we don't want to shelve them. We want to put them back on They counter, they need, they're gonna call off, people aren't gonna see them. So we know when we bring them back in and process them open up, we see that sticker that says, These are resident published books. And they go back on the calendar, okay,

Bob Firing 10:14

So if there are any authors out there, bring them read their stuff.

Barbara Perler 10:19

And we have to, I've seen people take those books away, and we get to bring them back in a timely manner. And because we have a lot of very talented people here. But our library is amenity that everybody loves people stop. They're constantly saying thank you, thank you for this library. And you know that they can come in and just peruse and take what they want. And

Bob Firing 10:44

Yeah, what about magazines?

Barbara Perler 10:47

We have magazines, and we asked please, not something from you know, 1997. But finally, within the last month, if you want to get rid of some magazines, then periodically we go in, and we'll take them out after.

Bob Firing 11:02

And finally, as popular as you are, there are books that you don't take.

Barbara Perler 11:07

There are in it's listed in the view. And despite the fact that we say please, no cookbooks, no religious books, no How To books, no encyclopedias? No, we just don't have the room for them. So I had a woman call me and say I have about 2025 cookbooks. And I said, we don't have room, please, you know, donate them go to Indio, Angel View, whatever. Well, a couple days later, there was a great big box of cookbooks sitting by the library. So I knew.

Barbara Perler 11:40

you're closer than Angel View.

Barbara Perler 11:41

Yeah. All the rules apply to everybody else, but not to me, right. So what we did was just box them up, and we you know, and send them away. We just don't have the room for cookbooks and how to and how to play golf and even our, even our books on biographies and autobiographies. I'm amazed I was in there yesterday, cleaning out books, because we just don't have enough. Yeah. So I have to look. Does everybody want to still read about Doris Day? Well, who's Doris Day to? Well, most of us know, Doris Day, okay. But when there's three books on Doris Day, we just don't need it. So we clean that out too. And but the historical and the and the political are very, very popular. And that's today's you know, climate everybody wants to do books on, on whoever's writing about the politics today. Yeah. So yeah. So when the we I think I'm grateful for my volunteers, because they love books like I do. And it's my passion. And I love being in the library. So I'm there three mornings a week, and sometimes even waiting for on a Tuesday or Thursday for somebody to come pick up boxes. And we just gave to COD about 12 boxes of books. They are so grateful. They have book sales four times a year, and they steal these books and make some money. Yeah, the college.

Bob Firing 13:01

Okay, well, thank you for coming in and reminding us about it. This library doesn't take care of itself. It takes some dedicated volunteers to make it look as good as it does. So thank you come for coming in and telling us

Barbara Perler 13:17

Thank you very much for letting me talk, thanks Bob

Bob Firing 13:19

For the audience, until next time, bye-bye.