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Moraga's New Librarian

By Sophie Braccini



Beth Girshman Photo Sophie Braccini

Beth Girshman, Moraga's new librarian, is ready to make her home at 1500 Saint Mary's Road. "The Contra Costa County Library has a reputation nationwide in the library world for its innovative programs," says Girshman, "they have won many awards and recognition; I am very happy to have been chosen to be part of it."

Girshman was the Adult Services/Community Outreach Librarian at the Jones Library in Amherst, Massachusetts. While browsing the Contra Costa County Library website, she clicked on the job link and saw the Moraga opening. Since she was looking for a new challenge in her career, she decided to apply - as an added bonus, her daughter lives in Berkeley.

At the Jones Library, Girshman was responsible for figuring out ways to service the under-served, through special programs, diversified collections, and programs. She was also in charge of collection development and management of the adult collection.

She initiated numerous programs including "Fireside Colloquies About Old Books," a series of lectures, appraisal sessions and workshops; and "February Feasts," an annual lecture series about all things food. "The last program I organized was with the Emily Dickenson Museum," says Girshman, "it included children's events, a poetry writing workshop, reading, and guided tours."

In Moraga, the new librarian plans to start by reaching out to the community and finding out what residents might be interested in. "When I reviewed the job I noticed that Moraga has a very high circulation number; I knew it was a well used library. There is a lot of original programming and if it is small it means that people are encouraged to work collaboratively."

Previous librarian Linda Waldroup had scheduled activities ahead of time, so Girshman has a few weeks of respite. "I'm good at finding people to work with," says Girshman, "and I'm always astounded at the great human spirit."

In other County Library news, Barbara Flynn was appointed on February 15 to the position of County Librarian by the Board of Supervisors, replacing the recently retired Anne Cain. Flynn comes from San Diego County where she served as Deputy Director of the County's library system.

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