

**Darien, Illinois
Oral History Project**

Mr. Robert Kampwirth

**interviewed by Deb Barrett
September 25, 2013**

**Indian Prairie Public Library
Darien, Illinois**

Today is Wednesday, September 25, 2013, and I am with Mr. Robert Kampwirth at the Indian Prairie Library in Darien, Illinois. My name is Deb Barrett. Mr. Kampwirth was born on September 23, 1939, in Chicago, Illinois. He has lived in Darien since 1967, and has been instrumental in its growth. He is here to share his memories of this area.

Coming to the Area

So Bob, when did your family move here? Where did you move from and why did you move?

Well, we actually moved to Hinsdale first when I started working as a scientist at Argonne National Laboratory back in 1964. We wanted to get a little bit closer to the laboratory, and I my route from Hinsdale to Argonne was always right through what is now Darien. And, having traveled through here many times, it was such a nice rural area. There was nothing here in 1964 except an IGA in what is now the Brookhaven Shopping Center, plus a couple of other small stores and a big church on the corner of 75th and Cass – St. John’s – which is now the Taco Bell and Buona Beef location.

We decided we wanted to get a house for ourselves. We came out to this area and looked for houses, but specifically I had a friend at the Laboratory who was renting a house in this area. He was going to be leaving and going to work as a professor at another university, so we went and looked at the house and decided to rent it.

We started renting in 1967. We bought the house in 1968, and we’ve had the same house since 1968. We’ve made some additions to it, of course, but that was my first introduction to this area.

And that house is in the Brookhaven section?

Yes, it’s in what used to be called Brookhaven West. There were two Brookhaven’s: Brookhaven East, which was east of Cass Avenue, and Brookhaven West, which was west of Cass Avenue. Those two areas were part of a group of developments here.

Marion Hills was one of them. Clarefield was another. Those were really the main areas here. Hinsbrook was just beginning to get developed in 1964 and 1965. There were really not much in the way of Gallagher & Henry developments back then. Of course Gallagher & Henry, since then, has pretty much dominated the Darien area with their developments.

They started after Hinsbrook – two years after Hinsbrook, if I recall.

Yes. Anyway, that’s where we moved.

We got involved with the community in late 1968 when my wife and I both joined the Brookhaven Civic Association. Somehow I ended up as president of that. I don’t know quite how that happened, but anyway I must not have been able to keep my hand down!

Community Involvement

So you got very involved from the beginning.

Pretty much so, yes.

Had you been involved in Hinsdale and Chicago before that?

No.

What prompted you this time? Did you have a family?

I had a family of two children at the time, and another one was on the way in 1969. I think my wife was actually somewhere in 1968. But yes, we had a family.

It was really my wife who was the driving force behind this. She decided that I needed to be involved with the Brookhaven Civic Association because we wanted to make sure that the community developed along lines that we hoped it would. That's the way it started.

Again, I ended up becoming president of the Association. And because I was president of the Association, I became involved in a nascent development that we didn't even know about, and that was the attempt to try to incorporate the various different subdivisions here into a community. And a committee to explore incorporation was already underway when I became president of the Association. So I naturally got involved with that. And through late 1968 and a good part of 1969 this committee, which at some point was as many as 28 members from the four, actually five, different communities.

Hinsbrook, which actually was the driving force behind it because the leader of that group was Dell Hayenga. Dell lived in Hinsbrook, and a colleague of his, Al Stramaglia, also lived in Hinsbrook. And the people involved from Marion Hills were people like Sam Kelley, Gene Kolling and Elmer Kalny. Between those people and Earl Boehm from Clarendon Hills and a number of others, this committee became very active. We used to meet at the Clarendon Hills Bank in Clarendon Hills, simply because Gene Kolling, who was a member of the committee, was a vice president at the Clarendon Hills Bank. So that's where we held all of our meetings while we tried to figure out a strategy for how to incorporate this community. And we actually had the incorporation vote in December of 1969. We passed by, I think, about 24 votes out of 5,000. It was a very, very close referendum. We had a lot of opposition to it. Interestingly enough, one of our very well known members, Gert Coit, was a leader of the opposition to incorporation.

She later became city clerk.

Yes. She later became city clerk and later became a member of the county board – the DuPage County Board.

What do you remember about the reasons for the opposition? Was it financial? Was it something other?

It was always financial. Anytime you talk about taxes people get very nervous because people always feel they're paying too much in the way of taxes and not getting any benefits from it. What people fail to realize is that they are getting benefits. It's just that they don't see them so easily.

So it was about not being taxed. For example, we had no police department here. We were covered by the County. The County is a very big county, and they had very few police vehicles and policemen to cover a very large DuPage County. So if there was a problem down here the response time was very long. It could take as much as an hour for a police car to get here. That was a concern.

The other concern was development that really wasn't controlled locally. The County was the zoning arbiter for here. The County was putting in developments down here that were very high density: 18 units per acre, at least. For example, the developments that are just to the west of this library – the Willowbrook Apartments here – part of those were in Willowbrook, part of them are in Darien, but both of them were very high density developments. You had really a rural community with pockets of high density apartment complexes that were zoned by the County, because, in all honesty, as far as the County was concerned we were the end of the world. We were so far south and east, and DuPage County ends not very far south from where we are right now, and not very far east from where we are right now. So it really was incumbent on us to try to get control of our own destiny.

That was really the driving force behind incorporation: To try to get control of our own destiny.

But the question you asked me earlier: What was the opposition all about? Well, it was really all about taxes, about many people feeling that we really didn't know what we were doing – that we wouldn't be able to run a community effectively because our goal was really to form a city; very different from most of the communities out here which have a commission form of government. We wanted to have a council form of government with aldermen representing various districts, as opposed to a commission form of government where the community at large is represented by each commissioner.

So you wanted to have representation in each geographic area.

Exactly. So we worked hard to come up with something that would allow us to do that, and the best way to do that was a city council/aldermen form of government. So that's really what our goal was, to do that. Again, the referendum passed by a very narrow margin and we formed a city.

I and seven other people were on the first city council. Our goal was to really get started with a police force, with a control of the local planning and zoning, with all of the things that go into building a city. So we had to have road commissioners, we had to have a police chief; we had to have people who handled the day-to-day operations of the community. So it was pretty exciting.

Our first city hall was actually over where the Darien Historical Society is now. And that's where we met.

The old one-room schoolhouse.

The old one-room schoolhouse.

It was a lot of work. I had, obviously, more than a full time job because I was a researcher at Argonne and that usually took more than 40 hours a week and I had a family of three children by then. I ended up spending close to another 30 to 40 hours a week helping with getting the city started.

Were these positions all volunteers?

All volunteers.

So there was no compensation.

We did compensate a secretary. Our first secretary was Nicky Pankow. And we compensated her. And then we had to hire police. Our first police chief was Roger Clark. One of our first police hires was Musial. Those were all things we did. We had to buy police cars. We had to start the zoning process, and we had to start to think about where city hall was going to go. So the mayor and I began a process of looking for a place.

The first mayor was Ed Jenkins. I should go back and say we actually went out to look for a mayor. We had the committee, and the incorporation took place on December 13, 1969. We had to figure out who the mayor was going to be. It was not a matter of us telling the community, it was up to us to recommend to the community who the mayor should be. And, of course, there was opposition to that. We interviewed. I was chairman of the committee to try to find a suitable candidate. And Ed Jenkins was the person who came most to mind because he had been very actively involved in the school board and various other community activities prior to anything ever existing out here. So he was a natural person to look at. He was also a leader, and that was very important. So, anyway, Ed was the first mayor.

Then we had to go ahead and get a city hall. We ended up buying the acreage where the city hall is right now. That was part of what was the Rohrer property that was the north end of the property. That was actually their farmhouse and barn. The property extended south of Plainfield Road, all the way down to what is now the golf course at Carriage Greens. All of that, I think it's close to forty acres or more of that, was all farmed by the Rohrer family – the acreage that they could farm, because there was a lot of swampy area over there. Anyway, we bought that and the rest is history. I don't need to go into all of that because somebody else can do it better than I can.

Anyway, I served on the city council for a year because the agreement was that the first eight aldermen would serve for one year and then there would be elections for four-year terms.

So it was just to get things off the ground and rolling.

To get things off the ground.

I decided not to run for a four-year seat, and instead went on to the plan commission, and ended up chairing the plan commission until close to 1976.

What did the plan commission work on during that time?

We worked on a variety of different things. There were many different properties that were active at the time. For example, Farmingdale South. If you don't know what that is, let me briefly say it is south of the McDonald's – south of 75th Street. That whole area was a Gallagher & Henry development. And when they first proposed it, they proposed developing the entire piece of property – you know there's a stream that runs through there – that stream was going to be paved over. There was going to be no stream. There was going to be culverts in the ground and that was it.

So what we did was we talked them into saving fourteen acres out of that development, which became the stream area you see going through there, plus the park at the southern end around Nantucket. That was all part of essential a water retention and detention area that was going to help the flooding problems upstream.

In return for that we allowed them to develop smaller lot sizes. Namely, instead of the standard quarter-acre of 10,000 square feet we let them develop lots of 9,500 square feet. And in return we got the 14 acres. So it was a trade-off.

And this is what happens in most developments when you meet with developers: You make trade-offs. The same thing happened with the Exner property, which is up along Exner Boulevard, which is west of the Eisenhower Junior High School, west and north. There were no parks over there, either, when that proposal was put together. And we managed to get some park area over there that also functions as a detention or retention area during flooding.

Is that Farmingdale?

We called it Farmingdale North, although it's not really Farmingdale North. The real Farmingdale North is directly north of Lace School, that is still unincorporated Darien.

Yes. I was surprised to find that out.

They chose they never wanted to be part of Darien. We do provide police services to them.

That's kind of what happened in 1976. I decided to get off the plan commission. I'd been on long enough and it was taking a great deal of my time. I thought I'd just relax a little while and enjoy my family, and work hard at the Laboratory.

Beginning the Indian Prairie Public Library District

Then I got a call from the president of the women's club, and she asked me if I would be interested in putting together a volunteer library. This was dear to my heart, because, actually, the Brookhaven Civic Association agreed to donate their treasury, which was not much -- \$460, I believe – that was left over. Why was it left over and where did it come from? We decided, as an Association, that it didn't make sense to exist after incorporation. So we agreed to disband the Brookhaven Civic Association.

And we had a treasury. We asked, "What are we going to do with the treasury?" I think it was my wife, Pat, who actually suggested, "Why don't you give it to the city and designate it for development of libraries within the community." I said that was a good idea and when to the board. I asked them if they wanted to do this, and they said, sure. So we did.

That was really the sort of nascent beginning of the library. Even though it didn't do anything – the money sat in the city council treasury designated for that for quite a while, actually – and libraries developed a little differently here.

A group of us wondered if we could get a bookmobile out here. In the early 1970's we approached the Suburban Library System and asked them if they could provide bookmobile services to our community because at that time we had close to 8,000 people living out here in Darien. We thought, well, we really needed a library here. There wasn't a lot of enthusiasm to form a library district at that time ...

A lot of people were using the libraries in Downers Grove and Westmont and Hinsdale.

Right. But we thought it would be much more convenient if people didn't have to travel so far. Anyway, the Suburban Library System agreed. The Suburban Library System, by the way, is a state-organized entity that serviced a number of libraries in this particular area. Actually, at one time they serviced up to 80 district and community libraries. Anyway, they had a budget and a bookmobile. So we got a bookmobile out here for one year, once a week, starting in 1972 or 1973. The deal was, very simply, if we accepted the bookmobile we would have to have a referendum within one year as to whether or not we wanted to form a library district.

Actually, we didn't have to go that route. We could have formed a city library if we wanted to. The feeling at the time was that the city had enough on its plate, and there probably wasn't a need to do it that way if you could form a district library. And it's not unusual to have district libraries out here, so we thought okay, let's try for a district library.

Well, the long and short of it is the referendum was soundly defeated, probably by a factor of at least three-to-one. The main response was there were too many other things we had to worry about at the moment. We were a small community and we had so many things on our plate, if we formed a district library it would be another tax on the community and we were already paying tax to the city – we don't want to pay tax to the library district, and there were libraries nearby. It was not like we couldn't get library service. And that was the end of it.

Nothing happened for about four years until the women's club approached me and asked me if I'd put together a volunteer library committee. I agreed to do so, even so I'd only retired from the plan commission for about two or three months, much to my wife's chagrin. So we put together a volunteer library.

The volunteer library needed a place to have books so people could get to them. So the women's club really did a great service for this community. The Darien's Women's Club really was a great organization. It still is, of course. They agreed to try to buy a bookmobile. Well, it turned out that the bookmobile that used to come to Darien in the early days was no longer being used by the Suburban Library System. So the

women's club bought the bookmobile for \$2,400 and donated it to the Darien volunteer library.

When was this?

In 1976. So, in 1976 we got a bookmobile. And the first thing we did with it, since it was still mobile, was to have it in the parade – the Lion's Club Fourth of July Parade. I don't know if we did it one or two years, but I know we did it at least once.

What we did was we put a big sign on the side saying "Darien Volunteer Library". We put it in the parade. We put a helium tank on the bookmobile, blew up balloons with the helium and passed them out to the kids. They [the balloons] all said "Darien Volunteer Library" on them. That was essentially the beginning of the volunteer library.

So the way the volunteer library worked, very simply, was that we had a board of directors. I was president of the board. And we had membership. The membership was \$5 a family. So if you wanted to participate and take advantage of the library, you paid \$5. And that helped us to run the library. We had no money otherwise.

Was it \$5 ...

Per year, per family. Finally, after two or three years, we had almost 1,000 families as members.

How did we get books? It was pretty straight forward, actually. With the help of the Suburban Library System, and Beth Mueller, who was a real advocate for libraries and really our guardian angel when it came to libraries in the community. She helped us a lot, because she pointed us to various places where we could get books. For example, libraries are always culling their collections, so we got books from the Downers Grove Library, we got books from the Bolingbrook Library, and we got books from a number of other libraries – the Hinsdale Library – any time there were book cullings we would go and get the books and put them in our library. That didn't mean they were second rate books. Many times it was because they were a little more worn than the library wanted, or maybe they had more than one copy. So we could get them, and we did.

Was the bookmobile parked in one place? Did it travel to different locations in the city?

We decided it wouldn't make sense for it to travel around the city. It was too hard to maintain that way. So what we did was, we sat down with the District 61 School Board. Talk about support. District 61 was just fabulous helping this community, not just the library. They helped the city because they owned the old historical building there and they let us use that as a meeting place. We met in the small media room in Lace School for various meetings, public hearings and so forth. We used the gym at Lace School for public hearings. I mean, you couldn't ask for a better community partner than Community School District 61, and Mark deLay. Mark deLay was the superintendent for District 61, and Mark was just a wonderful advocate for community participation. He really believed, and he convinced the Board, because he was a wonderful sales person

when it came to trying to sell things. And he convinced the School Board that it was the right thing to do. So the school district became a real place where we could meet and carry out our business until each and every one of these organizations could go ahead and establish their own places to meet.

So the long and short of it is I went to Mark deLay and talked to him. He said, "I'll tell you what. Why don't you go ahead, and with the approval of the School Board of course, put the bookmobile on our Lace School property, right where the driveway is where you pull in. Just to the right of it you can pull in your bookmobile there." And if you want to know where that is, that's where Safety Village.

So we put the bookmobile there and put it up on blocks. We got an electrician friend of mine whom I commandeered to volunteer his services to run electrical service from the back of Farmingdale North because there is a property line there which abuts the Lace property. We rented a trencher and trenched a line across the Lace property to the back of the Farmingdale property and tied in there, and we got power from there. We didn't steal it. We paid for it, obviously. But we did all of it ourselves. There was no help from anybody else. All of us were volunteers. We had a wonderful volunteer Board. We had four people on the Board – president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.

And we had a great many people who were volunteers at the library. Many of them actually had library experience. Some of them were former librarians. For example, the driving force behind getting our library organized, besides Beth Mueller from the Suburban Library System, was Mary Siebert. Mary Siebert was a former librarian, or at least she was very experienced in library services. So she helped set everything up and dedicated a great deal of her time getting things organized.

We got a great deal of books from various different places. We couldn't always get the books organized the way we wanted, so where did we store them? Of course, at Lace School in a closet that we were given to use to store our books while we organized them and got them Dewey-decimalized into the library. We bought a card catalogue and set it up – actually I think the card catalogue might already have been in the bookmobile.

So that's where it started. In the summer time it was a good deal. In the winter time it was kind of a rough deal because the bookmobile was heated by propane gas. They had a small furnace that heated it. The problem was that the pilot was located underneath the bookmobile and it would continuously blow out in the winter months. One of us would have to go over there at least once a week and crawl underneath the bookmobile and relight the pilot. We'd get the call from one of the volunteer librarians, "It's cold in here!" "I'm freezing!" So we kept it going that way. And we did this for probably about two years or so.

Do you remember how many books the bookmobile held?

You know, I don't remember, but it was at least 1,000. We were stacked. We were full. There wasn't room for anything. That was part of the problem.

It's a good thing you asked that questions because the driving force behind the volunteer library board was what were we going to do. We had a lot of books, a lot of members. How were we going to expand our services without going for a referendum because the time was not right for one. There was a strong poll held. In fact, the money

held by the Brookhaven Civic Association had given to the city to hold for us – for libraries, not necessarily for us. That money was just sitting there. And in 1976 we asked the city council to hold a straw poll as to whether or not there would be interest in a real library. The answer came back resoundingly “no,” and we had they used most of the money that had been set aside to pay for that straw poll. So the \$460 went to pay for a straw poll that told the city council: Sorry, but there is not enough support for a real library in the community. And that continued to be the driving force behind going ahead and getting a volunteer library set up.

You can see I’m kind of jumping around here as I remember things.

Anyway, as a volunteer library board we had to decide what to do. We looked at a number of different possibilities. The thing that jumped out at us was – and I don’t know how we got this information – but somehow we got the information that the Lansing School District was getting rid of temporary classrooms. These were classrooms that were 24’ X 24’.

Trailers.

They were not trailers, really, as much as stand-alone 24’ X 24’ buildings that had been constructed on pylons and were part of a temporary classroom system. And so we found out about this, and I believe they were willing to just give us this classroom if we could get it off their property. So the board agreed that this was what we should do. So the real challenge was how to get the classroom that’s 24’ X 24’ from Lansing, Illinois to Darien, Illinois: How do you do that? So what we did, I contacted a company that moves buildings like this and they put together a plan. The plan encompassed traveling roughly 80 miles in order to get the 30 mile difference from here to there, because you had to find roads that were wide enough to accommodate this ultra-wide load. And it couldn’t be down the toll road – the classroom was right off the toll road. So this circuitous route of 80 miles was set up, we were all set to do this, we ran an article in the local newspaper, *The Darien Met*, talking about what we were going to do. Interestingly enough, that prompted a call from the managing partner of the Brookhaven Shopping Center. His last name was Vranis. I forgot what his first name is. But Vranis gave me a call one night and said, “You know, I want to make a deal. I have some empty space in the Brookhaven Shopping Center, and I’m willing to lend that space to you at a very nominal rate if you would be willing to set up your volunteer library there. And, of course, there was a method to his madness. He realized that we had a large group of people who used the library. We had quite a large circulation. So he thought, well this would bring people into the Brookhaven Shopping Center. So it was a win-win situation, because we decided as a board to abandon the idea of putting a 24’ X 24’ classroom on the Lace School property which, by the way, the Lace School Board had been willing to sell to us. So right where the Safety Village now is located is where we were going to put the 24’ X 24’ library. And that was all set up and ready to go until Vranis called up and said he would let us use one of his storefronts.

How much room was there in the storefront compared to the temporary classroom?

There was more room in the storefront than in the classroom. The classroom was 24' X 24', and I think the first storefront was almost 1,000 square feet.

And so we decided okay, we were going to do this. I think the rent at the time, he agreed he would rent it to us for about \$400 a month or something like that. It was a very nominal rent. And we figured that with the money we were taking in for donations we could probably afford to pay that. It may even have been less than that. I'm really at a loss to remember. But it was something that we could afford, and I'll leave it at that.

So what we did was move in that space. And if you wonder where that space was, there is an ABC Nursery School there in the back of the Brookhaven Shopping Center. There is that back parking lot between the north and south sides of the Brookhaven Shopping Center. And right back there, there is a nursery school, and right on the corner is where the temporary post office box was. Right next to that there was a single space and that's where the volunteer library space was. And that's where we moved in.

The problem was we had no shelves. We had lots of books, but there was no place to put the books. But we were lucky. We were really lucky, because at that time the Lisle Library District was formed and they were moving out of their storefront library. They had a storefront library in Lisle which was actually on the second floor of a building. We got a call from them, and this was probably, again, all set up through the Suburban Library System because they were plugged into everything that was going on in the various different libraries. It may have been Beth Miller who called and said, "You know, they've got shelving. If you guys can take shelving out of their temporary storefront library you can have it." So I said to the board, "How about that? Can we do that?" And they said, "Sure! Is your Suburban available?" I had a GMC Suburban at the time. So what I did was, I got together the board. We all went over there, dismantled the shelving, loaded it into the back of my Suburban. We probably made about five or six trips because there was a lot of shelving and it was very heavy – really, really heavy stuff. And that was where we got all our shelving. And that's what we used to setup the first storefront volunteer library in the community.

And when was this?

That was probably in 1977 to 1978, I would guess. And we ran that library for a couple of years. Then it was approaching the time when we thought we should really talk about another referendum, and seeing if we could get a permanent library. I was thinking people got a taste of library services and we should really do something about it. So we decided in late 1978 or early 1979 to approach the Suburban Library System about setting up what is called a demonstration library.

A demonstration library works a lot like the bookmobile that I talked about earlier. And that is it had a set of criteria associated with it. The Suburban Library System would help set up a demonstration library. Funding would come from the Suburban Library System, and the funding that the Suburban Library System got was actually from the State of Illinois. The Illinois State Library had funding from the way in which it taxed throughout the State, and it would put money into the various suburban library systems, and there were a number of them. There was the North Suburban, South

Suburban, West Suburban – there were a number of library systems. So the Suburban Library System agreed to fund a demonstration library.

**How was the demonstration library different from the volunteer library?
Was it just the funding?**

The difference is subtle but dramatic in a way. We had to have a formal board. So a board had to be appointed, and so we had a formal board. We had to have a library director. So the Suburban Library System, again being conversant in all these kinds of things, essentially picked our first library director and they paid her. Her name was Betty Hughes. She was an absolutely superb library director – very dynamic. She fit in with the pattern of library directors in Darien. She was six feet tall! We have to have library directors that are at least six feet tall! I don't know if you remember, but Lee Schacht was about six feet, and Jamie, our new library director, is about six feet. So library directors have to be six feet! I don't know if they were six feet, but they were tall women.

So Betty Hughes was a very dynamic person. She had a lot of library experience. So she was appointed our first library director and she hired the staff. The library board had nothing to say about the staff. We, essentially, managed the big operations of the library, and the board was responsible for preparing for a referendum.

That was the criteria. You had a demonstration library for one year. Then you had to have a referendum. And it was an up-or-down type of referendum, whether or not you were going to have a library district. And this was going to be a district because it was all being done independently of the City of Darien. There was nothing that the City was involved in at this point, in effect. There never has been, really.

So we ran the Darien demonstration library for one year. We had a referendum in 1980, I believe, and it passed. And in 1981 we formed the Darien Library District.

Now, you were still in that storefront?

No, we were not, actually. Thanks for asking. We'd moved. As soon as we got the demonstration library we moved around the corner. We were still in Brookhaven, but we moved out of the smaller space into a space that was about twice as large. And that was around – if you know where that tunnel is that connects the two parts of Brookhaven Shopping Center – and the space in between what used to be Ace Hardware and where Darien Dental is now, there are a couple of storefronts there that were almost right on the corner of that space. We took one of those storefronts. So we got about twice as much space as we had. And that's where the demonstration library was set up. And we kept it there until it passed officially in the referendum and we formed the Darien Library District.

One of the first things we wanted to do was find a more permanent space because we felt the space was a little small. So we looked around the Brookhaven Shopping Center, logically, because they had been very generous to us in the past. The rents that we were paying were very nominal compared to what we would have paid elsewhere. The rents typically went from \$12 to \$14 a square foot. We were paying about \$4 a square foot. That was the deal we made with Vranis and his managing partners to be

there. And of course we pulled in a lot of people and that was important to them. So we looked around and there was a drapery store – Massey’s, I believe, Massey’s Drapery Store was right next to K&B, which was the appliance store. And Massey’s was closing. That was a 6,000 square foot space.

So we rented that from Vranis & Associates, and that’s where we moved next. Before we moved in there I actually talked to one of my colleagues at Argonne who was doing consulting work on the side, and he did an energy analysis of the space because we wanted to keep our expenses as low as we could. So I got him to essentially donate his time to do an energy analysis. And we did some work inside the library in order to improve the energy – lower the energy use of the building. We insulated the north wall completely. We built a false wall. Because the only thing that was in the library was, essentially, concrete block wall on the north wall which had virtually no insulating factor. So we built a false wall and insulated it with insulation and then plastered over it. That was one of the first things we did. We did the *el cheapo* method of insulating the front windows, because the front windows of Massey’s – the entire front of the library, and there are pictures here that you can see someplace in this library that show the front of that library. It was all glass – the entire front wall was glass. And so, what we did was built large frames and covered them with transparent mylar and installed that on the inside of the windows to insulate the windows so that we wouldn’t lose so much heat through the windows. And the librarians who were working at the front wouldn’t freeze to death. And we used the desk that was Massey’s front desk for selling their draperies and so forth – we used that as the first circulation desk for that library.

So that was the beginning of the Darien Library District. And we stayed in that building for many years, until 1989.

In 1987 or 1988 the library directors from the Willowbrook and Darien Libraries, and the two presidents – myself and Terry Kelly who was president of the Willowbrook Library, got together and talked about whether or not it made sense to have two small libraries so close to one another, or whether it was better to have one larger library that would serve both communities. After a fair amount of discussion we decided it made more sense to see if we could combine our library districts. We were both library districts. Willowbrook had gone through much the same process that we had gone through. I don’t know if you’ve interviewed any of the board members from the former Willowbrook Library, but you should get a hold of Terry Kelly if she’s still around here anymore. Terry is the key person you want to talk to because she’s completely familiar with the history of the Willowbrook Library. I think she’s maybe one of the only ones left. Most of the original board members, I believe, have died. And this is always the problem with doing histories – we’re all getting pretty old!

Anyway, the four of us got together and had a number of meetings just to discuss this. We finally decided we would go back to our respective boards and propose a merger of the two districts. This was, I believe, the first time that something like this would ever be done in the State of Illinois. So we laid the groundwork for doing this. We had a referendum and that referendum passed.

Do you remember what year that was?

They will have it here in the library. It was 1988, I believe. I have most of the documentation for that sitting in the back of my car, which I would like to give to the library today. They can have it all.

Anyway, we formed the combined district library. We sat down to come up with a name for it. We met over in the Willowbrook Library, which was on the corner of the shopping center at Clarendon Hills Road and 75th Street. There was a strip mall there. The corner building in that strip mall was where the Willowbrook Library was located. We decided that was too small for us and that we needed another space. So when we merged – I don't remember if we ever merged into that space or not, but certainly we ended up merging into a space over there which was directly adjacent to the Ashton Place – directly east of Ashton Place. We had a place there which, I believe, was 8,600 square feet. That's where we rented our first real space for the new library. And we stayed there for many years – 1989 until this place was finished and dedicated in 1996.

So, with the merger we had to come up with a name. And we met as a combined board of thirteen people. I have this in the notes I gave you, but I believe Marian Krupicka, who is currently still on the library board here, suggested 'Indian Prairie.'

We had many names that we came up with. We played with all kinds of combining names like 'Darien Willowbrook,' 'Willowbrook Darien,' some other name that would represent the area in much the same way as we tried to come up with the name 'Darien' many years prior. And some of those names were pretty odd. One of them, the chairman of our incorporation committee wanted to name the city 'Quinta.'

I remember that story. It was for five communities.

Yes. It was for the combination of the five communities, which were really four because Knottingham dropped out. But the four communities tried to come up with combinations. Quinta was actually the name of a city in the quad-city area of Iowa where Del Hayenga had come from. But nobody liked that name. Anyway, I'm glad we didn't name it that. Sam Kelly actually came up with the name 'Darien.'

I remember him talking about that.

The name was from Darien, Connecticut. He was familiar with Darien, Connecticut and he came up with that name and we all agreed to it.

So the Indian Prairie Library was set up in the strip mall on Clarendon Hills Road and 75th Street, just east of where Marie's is now. And you were outgrowing that space.

We were. We were jammed into it. All the shelving we had in the Darien Library was moved over there, and all the shelving that the Willowbrook Library had was moved over there. And it was jammed into that library. We had a lot of books – 30,000 to 40,000 books at least in that small space. We were really crowded, and we all saw the handwriting on the wall.

But we had planned for that. We really thought we couldn't survive in any of these spaces. So even prior to the merger we talked about what to do about space and the

long-term needs of a library. There was space available, but it was going fast. So in conjunction with the Willowbrook Library board and the Darien Library board, we agreed that we would try to buy a piece of property.

We looked at a number of places, and we saw this place where the current library is located. This looked like an ideal location. Even though it was in Darien it was situated in the middle of Willowbrook and Darien, as far as access was concerned. So we suggested this space to the Willowbrook board, and the Willowbrook board said, 'Yes, let's see what we can do.'

Actually what happened was the Darien board bought it. We approached the people who owned it – Lujack's, I think – had owned this property for a long, long time. And they agreed to sell it to us. And we bought it for a bargain-basement price of \$400,000 – essentially \$100,000 an acre. It was four acres. And that may sound like a lot to you, but as far as non-residential property was concerned that was a bargain. So we got it for \$400,000 and the Darien Library District actually bought it and financed it through a bank. I believe we financed it through the West Suburban Bank of Darien.

Which was the Darien Bank at the time.

Yes. And formed by Gene Kolling by the way.

I remember his face on the shirt!

Yes! We bought the property in anticipation of the future growth of the Indian Prairie Library District.

So the two library districts were working together, but were they formally merged yet?

No. We had not formally merged yet.

And that's why the Darien ...

That's why we bought it as the Darien Library District, because it was easier for us to purchase it. It was in Darien. It was in our district.

So once we merged the land became the responsibility of the new Indian Prairie Library District. And then we were still paying for it, so the paying for it was part of the Indian Prairie Library District.

So after staying in the property in the shopping center for several years ...

And I should add just one other thing. When you talk about a merger, we had two library directors. So what was going to happen? Were we going to flip a coin to see who was going to be the library director, or were we going to have a vote of the new board to decide who was going to do it? Because we had two extremely competent library directors in Betty Hughes and in Lee Schacht. Lee Schacht was the director of the Willowbrook Library District. And at the last minute, or it wasn't even the last minute, Betty said, "I'll tell you what. I'm going to just step away from this. I will resign as director of the Darien Library District upon merger and if Lee is willing to accept the

directorship of the new merged library, and the board agrees that she is the person to do it, then that is fine with me.” So that’s how Lee Schacht became the first director of the new Indian Prairie Library District. And Betty went on to become director of the Glen Ellyn Library District for many years, and was involved in the expansion of that library with a considerable amount of space added to that library during her tenure there.

Betty is now up in Bath, Maine. She and her husband are very active in that community and she was either director or certainly an active consultant to the library in Bath, Maine for many, many years. I believe she’s now stepped away from it according to the latest Christmas card we got from her this last year.

Anyway, we had to decide what to do about space. So we decided we were going to have a referendum and we appointed a referendum study committee and we hired consultants to help us with this. This is a procedure that is very standard in any system like this, where you go ahead and bring in some experts who are familiar with library services. And you ask them to consult and come up with a plan.

So they came up with a plan. The plan was to build a 64,000 square foot library on this site. And this was great because this would fit nicely with what we projected the population of the combined district. We thought the combined district, which was not only a combined district of two communities but also of quite a bit of unincorporated area that was not part of either community. So this whole thing needed to be serviced. We expected there would be about 50,000 people in this whole area. So what you want to do is have between 1 and 2 square feet of usable library space per capita.

We looked at many libraries throughout the Chicago area. Some of them, like the Northbrook Library, had 2 square feet per capita. This was an ideal number. We wondered if we could do this, and then we thought maybe not. We didn’t have the property. It was four acres and it would have been hard to have a parking lot and a building. We figured that 64,000 square feet would work.

So the committee that we put together went out and tried to sell a 64,000 square foot library. The bottom line is that it was resoundingly defeated. Because the tax rates were really going to be significantly higher than people were willing to stomach. And so we decided to go back and try a second referendum. I know we reduced the size, but I don’t know by how much. It was a slightly smaller footprint, and we thought we could lower the taxes a bit. So we tried the second referendum, and that, too, was defeated.

Finally we put together another committee. These were members of the community. They were not board members. They were members of the community, as they always were. And we came up with a proposal for a 35,000 square foot library with a 45,000 square foot footprint for the building. And this passed in 1994 or 1995. We had an architectural firm – we had interviewed many, many different architectural firms. We probably interviewed a half-dozen firms that specialized in building libraries. And we went to visit every library they had built or had made additions to. We finally chose LZT as the firm that we would hire to build our new library.

We went ahead with them. We spent many a meeting in the tiny little meeting room that we had in the other library. And we discussed what kind of building to build. We had many proposals.

The strangest one, as far as I’m concerned, was by the architect we had actually hired. I’ve forgotten his name now, but you can find it; it starts with an ‘M’ – Maniotti, I think. He was part of LZT. He was their architect. Well, he was one of their architects.

He came up with a proposal based on an industrial building owned by Hewlett-Packard in Naperville. We looked at it. It was very modern, and it was one of several. We just scratched our heads and said it didn't make any sense.

It didn't fit in the community.

Yes. It didn't make any sense in the middle of a residential community. We have a park across the street, we have single-family homes all around us. They had to find an architecture that would fit within the community.

One of the recommendations was to come up with something that would look more like a residential home, but obviously very much larger than a residential home. So he actually suggested something along the style of what was called 'Richardsonian Architecture. Richardson was a famous architect from the east coast. He had built a number of libraries and municipal buildings on the east coast – designed and built them. And one of the things he was famous for was an entrance that was made to look like an arch. And the other thing that was nice about his architecture was the fact that the roof was a standard roof line that you would find on any single-family home, just like you see in the library we're sitting in now. This seemed to make a lot of sense.

I was a real strong advocate of this, and I was president of the board at the time. So I pushed pretty hard for this and the board was very agreeable after a lot of discussion. Trying to argue about architecture is a very personal kind of thing because everybody has their own concept of what works. But, again, in the final analysis we agreed on the building that we currently have. It's a Richardsonian style. It has the arch in the front – the brick arch, if anybody sees it when they walk in; or maybe they don't even notice it anymore, but it's there. And the sloped roofs like you see in this building. And so that was built and dedicated, and I think we opened in 1996.

Since then the building and the community have accepted what we have done, and what they have done really. Because they were the ones who agreed they were willing to do this, agreed to support a bond issue that would build this building for the very partly sum of about four million dollars. We built a very fantastic library for a very reasonable price – much more reasonable than anything you could imagine these days.

In the times I've been here and brought people in for interviews from other areas they have all commented on what a great library this is and how much they like it. What do you think caused the change? Because you had trouble getting these referendums passed. What do you think caused the shift in opinions?

Two things, but they were both tied together. It was really about money. The tax rate that we were proposing to build the building that we're in now was much lower by a factor of at least two or three from what we had originally proposed. And the size – I think people felt the size made sense and the design made sense, because we had already come up with a design. And the cost to them made sense. I believe the tax rate was going to be 15¢. The tax rate was 15¢, but it was the bond issue: How much was the bond issue going to raise the tax rate. And the bond issue raised the tax rate by I think only about 5¢ per \$100 of assessed valuation. I could be mistaken. I can't remember anymore – it's been a long time. But it wasn't much. It was an incremental increase in

the regular tax rate. And the regular tax rate was pretty low. Most communities' tax rates were at considerably higher rates around us, so we felt we were getting a real bargain.

I think the people in the community appreciated that, and I think the last referendum committee that worked on this did an enormously effective job. They actually sold it. They held the community meetings. We were there as representatives of the board, prepared to answer questions, but it was really the referendum committee that did the work and sold it to the community. And the committee was a big committee – I think 20 or 30 people.

That was really what it was all about.

And getting people to the polls. We had a calling tree. We had all kinds of people calling to get people to the polls to vote, and we were willing even to drive people to the polls to vote if necessary. We weren't going to tell them how to vote, but we certainly were encouraging them to vote for it.

That I think really was the key factor. The community recognized we needed a new building. They recognized that what they were getting was a real bargain for what they were going to have to pay.

Which was really in line with the way you operated all along. It sounds like you were very conscious of costs – out of necessity when this whole process started with getting casts offs from other libraries, shelves that were used. You were very conscious of keeping the costs down out of necessity, and I think when you came to this point, even though it took a couple of tries, I think people understand and appreciate that approach.

Either that, or the third time was the charm!

Because now this library is so much a part of the community. I think if you told people it was going to go away you'd have a real problem on your hands.

We would. There's no question about it.

And everything didn't go smoothly. I should add that once the building was built we had some issues. We had a number of major issues which caused some major efforts on the part of the board to resolve.

One of them, for example, was a very poorly designed boiler room system. It turned out that the way it was designed, the outside air being sucked in during the wintertime through the grates was so cold because it was not being pre-heated, that it was essentially lowering the temperature of the furnace room to the point where it wasn't functioning efficiently. So that had to be completely redesigned.

The roof was a problem. We had gotten into a lengthy discussion during the building process about how to do this roof. They had proposed a roof design with a ridge vent to ventilate the roof. That's a pretty standard thing. On the other hand, they had no soffit vents. And if you have a ridge vent you should have a soffit vent. I got into a big argument with the architect about this. He told me, "Listen, you really have to take our word. We're the experts on this." And I said, "Well, you know, houses are always designed with ridge vents and soffit vents because otherwise you don't get flow." He

said, "You'll get plenty of flow." Well, it turned out we got no flow, and as a result in various times of the year we had our own rain maker up in our attic. Moisture would condense up there and would drip on the ceiling above the second floor. Tiles began to get ruined. We had some problems, and we knew we were in trouble. That was one thing.

The second thing was that the mortar probably wasn't done properly, at least on the second level of this building. As a result, water actually came through the mortar separating the bricks, leaked into the space between and then continued going through the concrete block walls on the other side, and leaked directly through the walls to cause the plaster to begin to get mildew on it.

We got into a big discussion about this with our architect who had already finished the building; we'd paid him for it and everything else. He felt it was not his responsibility to deal with the issue. He felt he had done the right job, that he had designed it correctly, and that it was really the general contractor who actually built the building.

We talked to the general contractor and he said it was the architect, that he just follows the architect's plans. So neither of them agreed. We sat down with them many times to come up with some kind of a solution. The long and short of it is we ended up having to sue the general contractor and the architect because they weren't going to try to fix the problem. The suit never went to court, but it came very close. We hired a lawyer. We paid substantial lawyer fees. This is all on the public record so I'm not telling you anything that isn't in the public record. We finally settled after a couple of years. We settled the lawsuit out of court. We got almost \$900,000 in compensation and used that to put a new roof on this building and to re-tuck-point the upper part of this library to better seal it so we wouldn't have permeation of water through the mortar, and we wouldn't have the problem with the attic becoming a rainmaker under certain conditions.

That was big effort to replace this roof. It was a monumental effort. To re-tuck-point the upper part of the building was a monumental effort.

Just the dark part?

Just the top part. The bottom part seemed to be okay.

How did you know that?

How did we know that? Because we hired experts to come in and actually permeation studies on the walls, where they would put a device against the wall and spray water at it and see how much water leaked through. We made studies all over the entire building, and it turned out that it was basically the upper level that was leaking.

Isn't it the same mortar up and down?

It turned out that different parts of the building were built at different times of the year, and it depends when you're building a building how warm you keep the mortar. And I believe they probably didn't do a good enough job keeping the mortar for the upper level warm during the time it was being built compared to the lower level. As a result we

had severe leakage through the mortar. Part of the building was built in the wintertime; the upper level certainly was, and you're supposed to change consistencies of the mortar, you're supposed to keep the mortar warm and do all kinds of things to make sure it's done correctly. And it wasn't done correctly.

So part of the problem was the architect's and part of the problem was the general contractor's.

And they were pointing to each other for the blame.

Right.

But we had also hired the architect to be our site superintendent. They were supposed to come out here and monitor what the general contractor was doing. Quite frankly, I don't believe they did the job they were supposed to do. So we actually ended up hiring a separate contractor, a building expert, to come in and take over that job at some point.

There were a lot of things that went into it. Building buildings like this is not easy. The ventilation system had to be reworked for a number of different reasons, because there were hot zones and cold zones in the building. That's not terribly unusual in large buildings such as this because it is very difficult to design HVAC systems that work properly in large buildings like this.

Anyway, all the various issues. But now we have this wonderful library. And actually, before I got off the board which I think was around 2006 or so, we decided to go to the next level. And that was to take the unused space – remember I told you earlier that we built about a 44,000-45,000 square foot building of which only 35,000 as used.

So you had planned for future expansion.

Yes. We had planned for expansion. So we talked about what to do with the unused space. It turned out that we could afford to expand into the unused space and redesign the library itself to take advantage of that unused space which was being used primarily as a storage area for both the library staff and for the Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Library had kept all their used books in the unused space.

Anyway, that was done before I left. And it was what I was hoping to do before I got off the board, to encourage the board and the board president to really push through the development of the unused space.

So again we hired another expert to come in and redesign the library and come up with a plan. That plan was implemented, and very recently, as you probably know, the design was redone again. And I think the new design of this library is far superior to anything we did in the past. It really has done a great job of opening it up even more.

When we redesigned the library initially, one of the things we wanted to do was make sure that in vast open flat spaces like the first floor that you didn't feel claustrophobic. We had been in libraries where they had designed them with eight foot ceilings, and they had 20,000 to 25,000 square feet on one floor. When you go into a place like that you feel almost like you're in a tunnel. It's very claustrophobic. So we looked into how not to have that happen. So we had higher ceilings, and we built these domes – there's a central dome. That was an architectural wonderful idea, but also it was

an acoustically terrible idea! It acted as a parabolic reflector for sound. So in the new design they took care of that by treating – I was not on the board, but I think I know what happened – they sprayed it with a popcorn type insulating plaster that has a lot of trapped spaces in it. So, rather than sound reflecting directly back, it gets trapped in this kind of rough surface.

We had lights that we had put in here that turned out to be a real maintenance problem. They were arc lamps, and the arc lamps would go out from time to time. They were very nice, attractive fixtures. They looked great in the library, but they were very expensive to replace, and they just didn't make a lot of sense, ultimately. But it was hard to come up with another redesign, which we did for the lights. But, again, in the redesign at one stage – and I think it was with the open space – we changed the lighting system completely. And that was a great improvement.

With all of things it's an evolutionary process. Our great library director, Lee Schacht, retired, I believe, just after I got off the board. Jamie, our new library director who came from Hinsdale – she was at the Hinsdale Library – has done just a fantastic job as library director. And so we've got a first class library. I think it's the best library in the whole area.

And libraries themselves have been going through a metamorphosis. It's not just going in, everybody stays very quiet, you get your book and you leave. It's really become a community center. There's a lot of other things happening here at the library.

You know, a number of us always wanted it to be a community center. We kind of competed with the park district for that because the City of Darien and the Village of Willowbrook didn't have community centers. So where was the focal point for the community? It couldn't be city hall in Darien or village hall in Willowbrook because that just didn't make sense. We wanted it to be the library, but the park district felt it should be the park district.

I believe we ended up being a community center not because we set out to do it necessarily, but I think somewhat by default because there really wasn't any other place in the community where people could come together. You know the community room we have up here on the second floor of the library, which has been expanded since we first built the library, was essentially the first community room in this community – the larger community that we're talking about. It served that small purpose, but the whole library is a place where you bring people together, and it continues to bring people together. I think it does a great job of being a community center without being a community center because it's really a library. That's great, and we're really happy about that.

It's been a wonderful trip. And I think the things I got out of it really were the involvement we got in this community from the people in the community who knew what was right and made the right decisions about going forth. More important than that, providing a space for the children of our community to come together to have books and various other media available to them; to the seniors where they could come and get the media and books they're looking for; and to the general community for coming together

and taking books off the shelves, getting our popular collections. All of these things were so important.

We have a tremendous turnover in this library of materials – much higher than other libraries on a per capita basis, on a per item basis. Things really move through this library. I don't the current numbers anymore, but when I left the board in 2006, our circulation was around 750,000 items a year. That's very high for this community. That turned out with the population to be around 7 or 8, or whatever it was. It was even higher than that; a very high number per capita. Of course, when you think about who uses it – about half the community really uses the library. We don't have full usage, but we have enough usage to get the sense that this is really the library that people want.

And you have the usage by all generations.

Absolutely.

And that's wonderful to see. There's programs not just for adults, but separate programs for teens, separate programs for kids of different ages. So you have a built-in constituency going on.

And when you look at libraries, every library has to have a mission statement. The mission statement really defines what kind of library we want to have. We always had a mission statement that focused on a broad selection of materials, but with specific emphasis on popular materials because we felt that this was what people in the community really wanted.

We wanted to have a core of material, but we didn't think we could be a research library. This is not really, I think, what this community wanted even though we started out with a separate room for business research. Back then that was the appropriate thing to do, where you could get all the various different business journals, you could get the Moody's Index, where you could get the Standard and Poor's stuff – all of the various business things that would help this community be a place where you could get that kind of information. But over time we realized that this was not something that was absolutely necessary. That's why that business part of the library – that separate room – disappeared.

But it didn't change the emphasis. In a way, the emphasis was on popular materials all along. If you looked at our collections, we had an enormous collection of videotapes. Not only popular videotapes, but just like we did in the volunteer library. In the volunteer library we went ahead a long time ago and bought the first video recorder and video player, and we actually rented it out. And we bought videotapes. This became one of biggest and most popular things we had in our volunteer library. And one of the things that we made the most money off of, because we charged per night for the video player. People could take it home because many people then didn't have video players. So we charged a rental of \$5 a night or something like that, or maybe it was \$5 for three nights, and a buck a tape, and people could rent the tapes for three or four days.

We continued that theme here, so we had a huge videotape collection. One of our board members here in this library was a really consummate classic music person – Harry Kenny. So Harry Kenny volunteered to go ahead and put together a CD collection of classical discs. He really did a great job of advising our library staff on what to buy.

Really I should say very clearly it's not the responsibility of the board to tell the staff what to buy. It's the responsibility of the board to set the mission for the library, and a set of guidelines for the library. And the library director and his or her staff implement all that. We keep our business out of that. It's not for us to do. That's why we hire professionals. I want to get on the record to say that as a library board we never told the staff what to do. But Harry Kenny did volunteer to provide some guidance, and that's how we started our classical music collection of CD's. And we have a wonderful classical music collection.

He is also a library patron.

He was a library patron. He was a member of the library board, but he was really functioning as a patron.

And he had a special interest in it.

Yes. And that was kind of the beginning of the CD collection, but obviously that CD collection expanded way beyond that because our library staff and I think Debbie Wordinger was principally along with various other members of the library staff of expanding that collection, of expanding the videotape collection.

And then switching. We made a transition from VHS videotapes to DVD's. And that was a logical transition. And we also did something that was unusual in libraries, and it was before I got off the board; we set up a wi-fi hotspot in the library. The library became a wi-fi hotspot long before most libraries did. That was something unusual, but it was something I felt and I know the board felt was a very important thing to do. So we asked that the library staff set this up. And our excellent MIS director, Ann, is the one who set that up. So we've been a wi-fi hotspot since 2004-2005 which was ahead of the curve.

Those were the kinds of things we did as a library. We tried to keep ourselves modern. We tried to take into account that we are a 21st Century library. We set policy as a board and let the director and staff implement it. And that has worked out beautifully for this library. No micromanagement on our part.

If you could wish for anything for this library in the future, what do you see? What do you want?

Well, libraries are facing a time where there's a transition. The world wide web – the internet – is being ubiquitous. Practically everybody has access to the internet. So information flows freely. So how does a library deal with a situation like this? What do we do as a library that takes into account the fact that you don't have to go to the library to get information anymore. You can be sitting at your supper table when you have an argument, or standing outside someplace where you've having a discussion about something and look it up on the web and find the information. So what do we do as a library?

Well, I think that is the most important thing that the board has to think about, or any library has to think about: How do we move into the future and what do we do about it?

I think what the board is doing is the right thing. It's continuing to buy AV materials where it seems appropriate, it's continuing to expand the way in which books are available by offering e-books. It did something wonderful many years ago when it got into the audio-book business – not only buying audio-books, which we started out buying them on cassettes and then buying them on CD's and then making them available as a downloadable book. Those are all evolutionary processes that are part of anything.

In a way I'm not answering your question. What I'm really trying to do is avoid answering it because I don't know how to answer the question! I think the future of libraries is somewhat murky. We have to learn how to live in an information age, and what's important for a library.

I think what we have here works. You can tell it works. We have people who come in here to use the library as a community center, to read magazines or to just browse. We have people who come in here to check books out, because people still do read books. We have people who come in here and make very good use of the AV collection that we have. Those are the kinds of things, I think, that a library can do very well. And it can save people in the community from having to buy these things themselves. And that's really why we did it. Offering them to people for a nominal fee or no fee makes a lot of sense. I think that's really, in a way, a direction for the library. But that direction is going to evolve as time goes on. I'm sorry that I can't answer your question, but I just can't!

Final Thoughts

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

You know, I think that the community and the board did a first-rate job of putting together a first class library. Are we the right size? Is this building the right size? Maybe if we were a little bit bigger it would be better. We actually designed this building so it could be expanded if we wanted to. But, again, with the future of libraries being what it is, maybe we are right-sized for future growth. I just don't know. I'm kind of stuck with where to go. But, then again, I don't have to worry about it, do I!

Because you're going to be moving!

Eventually, yes, I'll be moving. It's not so much that as it really is the current board that has the responsibility of making sure the right decisions are made. And the board has never failed this library yet. They are the best board you could get for any community library. I think they're doing a fantastic job.

When I look at the mission statement on the wall there it says: "We enrich people's lives by providing opportunities to explore, connect and be inspired." And I think you and your colleagues did a wonderful job getting us to this point. Thank you!

Anything else?

I think I've run out of words!