

NEW BEGINNINGS



We spent the last week of February and much of March training Library staff on our new computer software that goes live on March 25. Our training rep traveled from snowy Ohio to train staff for 7 days, 6 hours a day. It was a lot of training!

Our trainer made the most of her non-working hours here and, as you'd likely suspect, fell in love with our island, posting gorgeous photos on Facebook to share with her snow-bound coworkers in Ohio. We suspect those friends have likely added San Juan Island to their travel bucket lists!

Training intensively as we did can be exhausting. When I asked staff how they felt about the training and the new system, I half-expected some moans and groans. Aside from remarks about stiffness from sitting so long, I heard happy comments about the new things staff and patrons will be able to do. I felt like Alan Turing building the machine to solve Enigma. It's going to work!

There are three sides to our new software: one is the complex staff side that has the power to bring back unicorns and conjure miniature rainbows. Hmm, that's a slight exaggeration, but that's how it feels to have a system that supports all we need to do our jobs well, and serve our patrons in the best ways possible.

The second is a simplified interface that will be used mainly by staff and volunteers at the front and back desks to check in and check out materials, manage patron accounts, collect money, search for materials, and place holds. It's clean, simple, user-friendly, and we think our volunteers will like it.

The third is the patron side and it will include many new features for our online catalog, such as ratings and reviews, ebooks and eaudio right in the catalog, enriched content such as tables of contents and recommended read-alikes. We know that not everything will start on day one. We will be adding these and other new features as summer moves along, and will keep you informed of our progress.

Please keep in mind we're suspending all new holds, interlibrary loans, and purchase requests from March 16-24, and will be CLOSED on March 23 and 24. This is necessary to get a clean data load and finalize the transition to the new software. We hope you'll celebrate with us on March 25 with some "SJI Library Has New Software!" cake and punch beginning at noon as long as they last. Until then, happy reading!

Laurie Orton

Library Director

San Juan Island Library