

# Loose in the Foothills

by Bob Ring

## Maximizing My Library Experience

I've always loved books and reading, and have frequented libraries all of my life. It's nice to have two branch libraries, Dusenberry-River and Kirk-Bear Canyon, to serve the Foothills and Tanque Verde Valley.

I'm especially fortunate to have three librarians in my close family (Pat, covering my local needs; son Steven and his wife Lynne in Houston, for family historical research and children's book recommendations for the grandchildren, respectively).

We've certainly gotten our money's worth (as in free) at our neighborhood Dusenberry-River Branch Library. Pat tells me that in the past year we have checked out over a hundred books, fifty movies or DVDs, a handful of music CDs, a couple of audio books, and a few magazines. And we are reading more and more E-books as availability increases on the library's downloadable media site.

Besides enjoying these items on their own merit, we preview books we might want to buy (like *Appetite for America*, the recent Fred Harvey biography) or keep a thread of interest going (like viewing the movie *Cabaret* and the Garland-Minnelli London Concert DVD, after attending a Liza Minnelli concert). We also like to review travel guides ahead of the trips we take and that I write about in this column. And those audio books (usually mysteries) sure keep us entertained on long road trips.

Pat and I each have library cards and have learned that we can "link" them so that either of us can check out items on the other's card.

We make full use of the library's reservation system and sometimes find ourselves up against the limit of 30 items for the two of us.

We pay attention to book publishing dates, book reviews, and movie schedules to get a "heads up" on reserving copies, sometimes even before the library orders a particular item. Also, the library sends us E-mail newsletters with book recommendations.

We submit our reservation requests and then can go online to check our reserved item position (e.g., 3 of 124). When the item is available for pick-up, the library sends us an E-mail.

There are numerous library reference and research tools available online. Using a newspaper database, my son Steven has just found articles written in 1851 that detail the safe return of my great-grandfather Eugene Ring to the US after his remarkable experiences surviving a trek across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico. This confirmation of Eugene's memoir had produced great excitement in the Ring family!

We can search libraries all over the world for availability (or ask the library to do it for us) and then request an interlibrary loan. I've used this system to get transcripts of the old PBS TV show, "Meeting of the Minds" with Steve Allen, from Yavapai County

Library in Prescott; and copies of articles from a 1961 engineering magazine from Purdue University. Yes, I had to pay a fee for the copies, but that beats traveling to Indiana!

When I was researching my great-grandfather's California Gold Rush experience, Pat's search of a library database found a rare book available in the University of California at San Diego Library. We stopped by on a vacation visit to San Diego to review the special collection materials.

For items available anywhere in the Pima County Public Library System, a simple request will usually bring the item to our library within just a few days.

When we go to the Dusenberry-River Branch Library, we immediately scan the "Express" display of new books for anything we "missed." These books can be checked out for three weeks, but can't be renewed.

Within the library we can use a variety of reference materials or connect to the internet on hard-wired library computers or with our own laptop via WIFI hotspots.

There are also regularly-scheduled community programs and meetings, art exhibits, plus community communication "boards" and stacks of take-away periodicals such as copies of the *Foothills Star*. You can even reserve space for your own community meetings.

Pat and I certainly have found our library experience to be tremendously educational and satisfying!

*Sources: Pima County Public Library Web site: "About Dusenberry-River Branch" and "About Kirk-Bear Canyon Branch."*

### **Dusenberry-River Branch Library**

**Location:** 5605 E. River Road

**Telephone:** 520-594-5345

**Manager:** Dianna Thor

**Hours:** Mon-Thu 10am-8pm  
Fri 10am-5pm  
Sat 9am-5pm  
Sun 1pm-5pm

**History:** Opened in 1991. Named after Kathryn "Katie" Norton Dusenberry (1924- ), a long-time Tucson resident and business owner who has served the public in many capacities.

### **Kirk-Bear Canyon Branch Library**

**Location:** 8959 E. Tanque Verde Road

**Telephone:** 520-594-5275

**Manager:** Margaret Wilkie

**Hours:** Mon-Thu 10am-8pm  
Fri 10am-5pm  
Sat 9am-5pm  
Sun 1pm-5pm

**History:** Opened in 1991. Named after James Lee "Jim" Kirk (1926-1991), three terms on Tucson City Council and eight terms as Pima County Treasurer.