

Library event launches Branch District campaign

By Roland Stoy

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COLDWATER — "Geek" used to be defined by some as a person one picks on in high school but winds up working for as an adult.

It was a noun, but now, it is also a verb meaning that one has passion for something.

Information at the Geek the Library project website at geekthelibrary.org

said, "No matter who you are, there are things you are passionate about — things you geek. Maybe you geek engineering or hip hop. Maybe you are passionate about composting, schoolers or vampires. Or maybe you just geek the weather. Whatever you geek, serious or fun, the public library supports you."

This includes the Branch District Library, which launched their Geek

campaign on Friday night, with an event that featured food, music, henna body art and massage by Lauri Rowe of the Integrative Somatics Institute of Coldwater.

As a centerpiece of the event Mary Smith got a new library card, made what Director Yvette Atkins called a "generous" donation to the library, and received a tour of the stately Edwin Clarke



BDL Director Yvette Atkins, left, with Mary Smith. STAFF PHOTO

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building at the Four Corners from Chair of the Library Board Dorothy Cherry.

She also received a massage from Rowe before saying farewell and being escorted out of the building by Judge Michael Cherry, formerly of Branch County Circuit Court.

Randall Hazelbaker, Russell Gates and John Rucker provided the music, with Rucker proving himself as adept at percussion as he is with keeping the busy computer system running for the BDL.

Posters were displayed of some area people and what they geek. The Hazelbaker poster said he geeks jazz, the Mary Smith poster said she geeks the Tibbits Opera House, a Ken Delaney poster said he geeks radio, and Rucker's poster said he geeks "truthiness."

Librarian Gina Horn circulated in the crowd, estimated at around 200, signing people up for more geek posters. Those interested in being on a poster proclaiming what they geek may call her at 278-2341, Extension 10.

With the overall national campaign

supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Friday night event was supported by a long list of businesses and individuals in the Branch County community.

The geekthelibrary.org site said the public awareness campaign is aimed at spreading the word about the vital and growing role of public libraries, and to raise awareness about the critical funding issues many libraries face. The library board will be finalizing their 2013 budget this week, a document that will reflect very hard times with severely declining revenue. This is in the face of increased usage by the public, not only for what they geek but in other areas such as accessing resources in essential areas like job hunting. A report on the library budget will appear in The Daily Reporter.

Meanwhile, geekthelibrary.org says "The campaign hopes to inspire a conversation about our incredible public libraries and their urgent need for increased support. We hope you tell people what you geek, how the public library supports you and your community, and that everyone in your community benefits from the services your local library provides."

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