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After the fund-raising comes the building. Michael Gaston describes one architect's influence on public libraries in Oregon. — the editor

Rich Turi, Architect

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Rich Turi continues to receive compliments from the eight library directors he has worked with during the past seven years. Each credits Turi for his ability to listen and for his commitment to work with committees to design buildings that fit the style and needs of the local community. No one accuses Rich of taking a "cookie cutter" approach to library design.

I enjoyed working with Rich, and I like to tell the story of his early interactions with my building committee as an example of both his sense of humor and his flexibility. We were putting the finishing touches on our design just as construction of the North Bend Library neared completion. All was going well until one of my more vocal board members saw the North Bend building. She didn't like the aesthetic choices of the North Bend building committee and expressed concern that our building would look and feel the same.

Rich took time to explain that the North Bend building had been designed to reflect the surrounding architecture, particularly that of the North Bend City Hall. He patiently explained that the Siuslaw Public Library would reflect our community as interpreted by our building committee. Not to be deterred, my board member aggressively raised the same issue at the beginning of the next two building committee meetings. I began to worry about the committee's dynamics.

Rich was prepared for the third meeting. After the group was assembled and called to order, he raised his right hand and preempted further discussion by swearing, "The Siuslaw Public Library will look nothing like the North Bend Public Library, so help me God." He made the same statement at the beginning of each meeting, and he averted a crisis. My board member now refers to the Siuslaw Public Library as "her" building and is a member of Rich's fan club. Rich really does listen to building committees.

Alan Miller, who is about to break ground at Silverton Public Library, echoes many of these same sentiments. He praises Turi as "a joy to work with, someone who listens and responds" and describes



The Siuslaw Public Library (above) and Douglas County Library (below) are two of eight Turi libraries in Oregon. Others include North Bend, Chetco, Monmouth, Bandon, Coos Bay, and Silver Falls.

him as someone who favors function over form. "He builds libraries, not monuments," he says. Miller explained that while Turi respects and relies on the local building committee to provide guidance and direction, he provides counter arguments when he feels staff may have overlooked the implications of specific decisions. "He convinced me that a two story building would be more expensive both to build and operate," Miller said.

We hired Rich to design the Siuslaw Public Library in large part because we felt that Sheila Wilma of

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Turi

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North Bend had done an excellent job of introducing Rich to the world of public libraries. She and Rich cruised the state evaluating recently constructed buildings to evaluate floor plans and functional elements. I'm the first to say that we "borrowed" a substantial portion of our floor plan from North Bend, and I suspect that two or three of Rich's later projects were based somewhat on the design of our building in Florence. As the proverb says, "what goes around comes around."

The "Turi" libraries share similarities. As Carol Ventgen of Coos Bay said, when you hire Rich you get the benefit of the accumulated insights of each of the eight library directors he has worked with during the past decade. Rich likes to use natural lighting and high ceilings to open up the building and provide a more welcoming atmosphere. He works closely with staff to ensure that the entry is designed to lead library users to a staffed information desk and that the general layout of the building flows logically and is well signed. As Judy Romans of Bandon observed, Rich also designs efficient, easily managed buildings. In almost every case, one or two staff members can view nearly every nook and cranny of the facility without leaving an assigned workstation.

But each of the eight libraries also incorporates unique features that reflect local preferences, priorities, and procedures. North Bend has a drive-up book drop attached directly to the workroom and features a combined reference and circulation station. Siuslaw Public Library preferred the circulation desk and workroom to be adjacent and asked for a separate reference area. Betty Hazel of Douglas County Library noted that Turi created a floor plan for her library that follows the contour of a

neighboring creek. Hazel is proud of her building, which is considered by many to be the most attractive building in Douglas County. "And we came in under budget," boasts Hazel, "which shored up our credibility with area taxpayers."

While Rich gets two thumbs up from each of the library directors he has worked with in Oregon, life wouldn't be life without a few snags. Rich discovered that concrete roofing tile doesn't work as intended in a windy coastal environment, and Siuslaw has had to remove tiles to place a water-proof lining directly on the building in several locations. Betty Hazel has replaced some lighting fixtures in Douglas County Library because they interfere with barcode readers. And Brookings has added acoustic tile to reduce noise. The tile was included in the original specs, but was later removed to reduce costs. None of the criticisms casts a shadow on the overall success of the project.

Reading about library facilities is interesting, but visiting a building is the only real way to get a feel for an architect's work. The next time you are out on the road looking for adventure, and it rains, drop by any of these libraries for a brief busman's holiday. Each offers a good introduction to library facility design and provides a pleasant refuge from inclement weather. The directors share a common trait: Each is proud of his or her library and is willing to provide a guided tour—complete with an in-depth discussion of esoteric topics ranging from bathroom color selection to shelving behind the circulation desk.

If you're into library construction, it's fascinating stuff, but it's not recommended for non-library spouses. **Q**

PCC

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Faculty and staff were closely involved in planning the buildings. The process began with listing the desired services and "sizing" through a set of standards what the services would require. The look and feel of the buildings were also very important—the new needed to blend with existing structures and reflect the personality of each campus. At Cascade, the library is more traditional and has a sense of Monticello with its rotunda entry, pillars and cherry casements. At Sylvania, nature surrounds and flows through the windows with views of fir groves, the Willamette Valley and the Coast Range.

Art enlivens the atmosphere of the buildings as well. The college set aside one percent of the pro-

jects' funds for art, and again campus committees selected items. At Cascade, the faculty commissioned three local artists to create a mobile that plays visually with language and ideas. The Sylvania committee chose a variety of Northwest art in a juried process and framed prints donated by the Leach family of Seattle. Rembrandt now hangs beside "Fried Eggs."

The libraries are popular with students and staff. Circulation at Cascade has more than doubled in just a year, and the monthly gate count at Sylvania is about 40,000. The buildings are open to the public and PCC welcomes visitors. If you would like a tour, call Barb Swanson at (503) 977-4497. **Q**