

Library rolls along with old, new employees

BIBLIOFILES

Dana Hendrix

Last week, the library staff said a tearful goodbye as our longtime director Eric Lashley retired, but we are now sailing along under the very capable direction of Sally Miculek, who has served as our assistant director since 2014. She knows the library inside and out, and she shares our former director's service philosophy as well. Library patrons can feel certain that the library they love is still here for them. She will serve as our acting director until the director position is filled.

As acting director, Ms. Miculek has a staff of more than 20 employees. One of those is cataloging librarian Becca Sexton, who works in the library's Technical Services area as one of two catalogers. She started work at the library in November.

"As a cataloger," she said, "my main responsibility is to make our materials findable for users by entering them into our electronic catalog with complete and accurate information."

Before joining our staff, the cataloger was the director of the Bastrop Public Library. She has also previously worked at both the Cedar Park and Pflugerville public libraries.

"I've done a little bit of everything in public libraries," she said, "including circulation, reference, and programming. I've never officially worked in youth



Cataloging Librarian Becca Sexton joined the staff of the Georgetown Public Library in November.

services, but I do enjoy interacting with kids and teens and have pinch-hit in that area from time to time."

She said she has been delighted by how quickly and warmly she has been welcomed by her colleagues here.

"I can hardly believe I've only worked here a couple months. I feel like I've been here forever — In a good way. I can't wait until I can actually interact with patrons and explore our community. I'm looking forward to getting to know Georgetown and its citizens better."

When asked how she got her start working as a librarian, she said, "I got my master's degree from The University of Texas at Austin (Hook 'em). I sort of fell into this career accidentally, but

I'm an extrovert who loves working with people, so I do think it's a natural fit. I always knew I wanted to do something where I'd get to interact with people and that made me feel like I was making a difference in my community. I thrive on change and enjoy creativity and innovation so I appreciate that no two days are the same in a public library. Add in my life-long love of reading, and it really is the perfect job for me."

It's not surprising for a librarian to have a love for reading, but Ms. Sexton is also full of surprises. For instance, before the pandemic, she was a member of a competitive axe-throwing league. She said it is like "darts and archery in that you're aiming at a circular target and hoping for a bullseye, but I have to say I find

the 'thunk' of the axe hitting the target a lot more satisfying. Austin has a thriving axe-throwing community — several local throwers have competed in international tournaments. I am *not* one of those people. But I still have a great time doing it. It's an incredibly fun sport and a supportive community. I miss it."

When asked about her favorite reads, Ms. Sexton said, "English major confession: I've never read 'Pride and Prejudice.' I got a copy for Christmas, so this is something I will finally be rectifying in 2021. But, over the years, I have enjoyed several P&P adaptations. I recently read 'Ayesha at Last' by Uzma Jalaluddin. In this modern twist, Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy are replaced by Ayesha and Khalid, whose Muslim fam-

ilies immigrated to Canada from India. Like 'Pride and Prejudice,' it is a lovely and sweet romantic comedy about class, family and the tension between others' expectations of us and our own desires."

By the way, if you would like to read the library's copy of "Ayesha at Last" or "Pride and Prejudice," all you need to do is reserve it, then come pick it up curbside after you're notified that it is ready for pickup. Just call the library at 512-930-3551 for more information about our curbside pickup process.

The library staff are all enjoying getting to know Becca Sexton, and we are excited about her varied library experience — and her axe-throwing skills. We also have an energetic new teen services librarian, Margaret Lange, who will be profiled in an upcoming column.

For your information

The Georgetown Public Library building remains closed to the public, and the WOW!mobile is not running. Curbside pickup of previously reserved materials is available six days a week at the library:

Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–noon and 2–6 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.–noon and 2–5 p.m.

For more information, go to library.georgetown.org or call 512-930-3551.

Dana Hendrix is the Adult Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.

New leaders appointed in sheriff's office

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Mr. Evans said he plans to first develop a mission and a vision for the sheriff's office, and then follow up with a strategic plan to improve the organization over the next four years.

"Procedural justice is very important to me," he said. Within the organization and how it deals with the public, he said, "we must have fair processes, transparent actions, opportunities to voice [feelings and opinions], and impartial decision making."

Mr. Evans emphasized the importance of listening and de-escalation.

"I'm not about the title, I'm about making a difference," Mr. Evans said. "I help organizations and people achieve goals. I find the most talented people in my organization, and I train them and empower the team."

Leadership Experience

Much of Mr. Evans' experience, he said, comes from working with underperforming police organizations with high turn-over rates and helping them to become high achieving units with low turn-over.

Mr. Evans returns to the county from Commerce City, Colorado, near Denver, where he rose to the rank of deputy chief in 2017 holding that rank until he left the department in October 2020.

Around the same time that Commerce City hired him, Mr. Evans said, the city had also hired successful police executives from other states and had begun a voluntary Department of Justice program that would help the Commerce City police turn from a troubled and uncertified department into a best-practices organization.

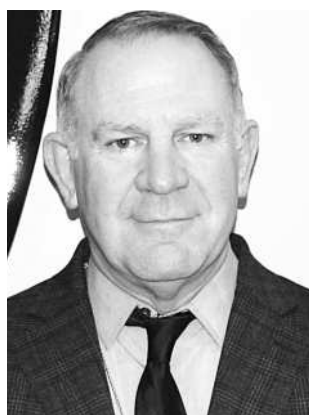
These experiences also let Mr. Evans work alongside the other police executives and learn from their combined experiences.

Before his work in Colorado, he was Chief of Police in Live Oak, Texas, for nearly four years from June 2012 to March 2016.

Prior to Live Oak, Chief Evans served over 13 years with the Round Rock Police Department, from 1999 un-

til 2012. During his time in Round Rock he said he was responsible for the Emergency Management and Homeland Security activities within the department. It was in this role that he met Sheriff Gleason, when they were both Lieutenants.

When he is off duty, Mr. Evans and his family enjoy camping and boating, but they really love to ski. "That's why I got Germany in my [Army] enlistment contract as a duty station, and part of the reason we went to Colorado — I love skiing and so does my family."



Assistant Chief Deputy Patrick Erickson

Before his appointment as assistant chief deputy, Mr. Erickson had a 34-year career as a peace officer, his last two years in Belton at University of Mary Hardin Baylor. Before that he served 18 years in the Williamson County Sheriff's Office. Like Mr. Evans, Mr. Erickson began his career in the Army as a military police soldier, enlisting right out of high school in 1985, he said.

"I was raised in a small farming community, Orion, Illinois where the options were farming, community college, or the military," Mr. Erickson said.

"The obvious path was to venture away from small town USA and join the Army," he said. "There was no 'Aha!' moment." As a high school junior, he knew he would enlist as soon as he graduated. After watching all the recruiting videos, he chose to join the Army as a military police soldier.

His primary hopes for the residents of the county would be "voluntary com-

pliance with the law," he said. And he wants all of his deputies to act as professionals and treat residents with courtesy.

His primary goal for the department, he said, would be to raise the confidence level the employees place in the leadership.

Now 53, Mr. Erickson returns to the county following two years in Belton as Lieutenant of patrol services at University of Mary Hardin Baylor.

From 1999 until 2018, he served in the Williamson County Sheriff's office, rising from Deputy to Lieutenant, retiring voluntarily. While a Lieutenant from 2009 until 2018, Mr. Erickson oversaw units in traffic, patrol and in criminal investigations. He worked in those same units as a deputy, a detective and a sergeant.

In the Army, Mr. Erickson spent his first five years in nuclear security in Germany before going into law enforcement. He left the Army as a mid-grade non-commissioned officer in 1999.

"The only hobbies I have are working out, weights, not cardio — cardio is evil," he joked. "I have also started playing golf," he added.



Assistant Chief Deputy James Carmona

Before his appointment as assistant chief deputy, Mr. Carmona, 56, had a 23-year career in the Williamson County Sheriff's Office, retiring as a Lieutenant in 2017. For the last three years, and while they were both private citizens, Mr. Carmona worked with Sheriff Gleason in a ride-sharing business that employed off-duty and retired peace officers.

Mr. Carmona says his goals are to see that sworn deputies and employees are properly trained and that this training is properly documented and reported to the state. Additionally, he said, he wants the Deputy A. W. Grimes training facility to regain its state certification which would permit the sheriff's office resume training peace officers for surrounding departments.

Mr. Carmona got his start in Taylor. "I knew the officers in Taylor," he said, "and they had an opening for dispatch. I did that until I was sent to the Basic Peace Officer's Course and then I went to patrol."

Later, in the sheriff's office, Mr. Carmona served 23 years before leaving in 2017. During that time he rose from deputy to detective, in juvenile crimes and then in internal affairs.

After a time in narcotics, and negotiations, Mr. Carmona, as a lieutenant, took over the training department. For eight years he oversaw training for new employees of the sheriff's office. A few years before retiring, he returned to patrol.

"As for hobbies," he said, "I like cooking and being with my family."



Assistant Chief Kathleen Pokluda

Before her appointment as Assistant Chief Deputy of Corrections, Ms. Pokluda had a 22-year career in corrections with the sheriff's office, before leaving in 2017.

Since then, she worked for the Texas Commission for Jail Standards developing and delivering mental health training for corrections officers across the state. "I was also the complaints department,"

she said. For her last seven months there she said she was the sole employee processing complaints against the jails.

After motherhood and a bachelor's degree, Ms. Pokluda moved into corrections work at 35, about the time her children were teenagers.

"I had just completed my degree in social work and a friend of mine suggested working in the jail," she said. She hired in as a corrections officer and liked it, she said. "I could make a difference in the lives [of the inmates]."

In her career with the sheriff's office she held positions at all ranks in the jail from corrections officer to sergeant, lieutenant and commander. Ms. Pokluda said that in the middle of her career she took basic peace officer certification so that she could work in prisoner transport.

"I was excited to return to the sheriff's office [to run the corrections bureau] under Sheriff Gleason, because mental health is so important to him," she said.

Above the light switch next to her office door hangs a small framed document — her late father's ten tips for success. Near her desk are family photos. Stuffed Doctor Seuss characters whose stories inspire her sit atop office cabinets. Ms. Pokluda says she values Horton who kept his word and the Lorax who "spoke for those who had no voice."

As for the jail, "I want to restore the mental health pod," she said. She also wants more training for all the corrections officers in mental health and other tools for dealing appropriately with different types of inmates.

After Covid-19 restrictions relax, she wants to make improvements for the inmates, bringing back Alcoholics Anonymous, parenting classes, and an instructor for GED classes. The inmates are people, she said, and "they'll be rejoining society. We need to prepare them for that."

Chief of Staff Rebecca Rodriguez

Chief of Staff Rebecca Rodriguez, 43, is one of the



senior leaders who passed through the last administration, into the current one, receiving a promotion in the process.

Under the prior sheriff, Ms. Rodriguez was administrative services manager. Under Sheriff Gleason, she becomes the civilian equivalent of Assistant Chief Deputies Erickson, Pokluda and Carmona, reporting directly to Chief Deputy Evans.

Ms. Rodriguez grew up in Garden Grove, California, not far from Disneyland. "I came from a public service family," she said, "my father was a police officer. My mother was an ER nurse, and my brother was a paramedic."

After moving to Texas, Ms. Rodriguez began her work as a dispatcher in Round Rock in 2001. She rose through the civilian ranks in Round Rock to be in charge of the communications center when Mr. Evans was a lieutenant there. "He was my lieutenant," she said.

After Mr. Evans left in 2012, she rose to be in charge of all the civilians in Round Rock Police Department. "I came here to do the same thing in May 2017."

She now manages the civilian staff and areas such as human resources, communications, and technology.

She emphasizes fairness and serving the community. One of her goals, she said, is "to help all employees of the sheriff's office — sworn deputies and civilians — to be well trained, well informed servants of the community."

She also wants to see that "everyone gets a fair shake — county residents and sheriff's employees" alike.