

## ***“Librarian’s Shelf” by Brad Hruska***

Library helps lessen the blow of current economic woe

My wife, Mary, and I, like countless couples across the nation, have had to tighten our financial belts during these strained economic times. With the price of gas and basic necessities rising daily, we have had to make major cuts within our family budget. But thanks to services provided by the Columbus Public Library (CPL), our sacrifices were not as painful as we had originally thought. One of the biggest decisions that we made was to discontinue our cable television service. For us, this was a colossal decision and required numerous discussions because Mary and I were big TV watchers and our children loved viewing programs like Dora the Explorer, Max and Ruby, and the Backyardigans. But after talking with multiple individuals who have chosen to do without this luxury, we were able to make the conscious decision to drop our cable television service, saving about \$70 a month. We chose instead to rely on the library’s wonderfully, diverse DVD collection, which features more than 700 titles like “Twilight,” “Spiderman,” “Cinderella,” “Shrek,” and “The Bee Movie.”

Forgoing internet in our home was another difficult decision, primarily because my lovely bride was an internet junky who loved surfing the web for recipes and staying in touch with her family and friends via Facebook. Once we decided that we could survive without internet and save about \$30- now saving about \$100 including the money spend on cable-it was a no brainer. We did have to schedule in time for us to be able to go to CPL, so we could each get our internet fix, but with communication and compromise, we were able to make it work.

It should be no surprise that my wife and I are colossal readers. We enjoy reading various materials like books, newspapers and magazines. But when we began taking a closer look at where our money was going, Mary and I discovered that we were needlessly paying for periodicals that CPL already had like “The Omaha World-Herald,” Lincoln Journal Star,” “People,” Time” Oprah’s “O” magazine,” “Taste of Home,” “Good Housekeeping,” “Nebraskaland,” and “National Geographic.” We calculated that if we relied on publications provided by the library, we could save a little over \$30 a month-saving about \$130 if you add that to what we are already saving by living not having cable and the internet-so we let all of our magazine subscriptions expire and now checkout those items from the CPL.

Another line item that Mary and I eliminated was our book budget. We have books in our home that were purchased for Mary and me and books that were bought for our three small children. It seemed like we were purchasing a few books every week, spending about \$50 a month. We have decided to stop this practice. Doing so brought our grand total of savings to \$180 a month if one adds in what we were already saving by not having cable, internet, and various publications... again, another no-brainer.

So if your family is like mine and you are trying to control spending, take a FREE trip the Columbus Public Library and check out what services are available. You might be pleasantly surprised by what programs and services you will find. If you have any questions about the other events offered by the library, please feel free to contact me at (402) 564-7116 ext. 4.