



## **Palm Beach County Library is Celebrating 50 Years**

Vivian, Meaghan, Janet and I want to wish a Happy and Healthy New Year to all of my Jewish constituents, friends and neighbors. I sincerely hope the coming year will be a prosperous one for you and all your family. I would also like to wish all a happy Fall, as we get closer to the end of Hurricane Season and cooler weather – a joyous time for us!

Did you know the Palm Beach County (PBC) Library System is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary? In September 1969, the PBC Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the operation of free library service in the County. In 1963 and 1965 the League of Women Voters appeared before the BCC to request library service for the citizens of the unincorporated areas of the county. In February 1967, the BCC appointed the first PBC Library Advisory Board. In April 1967 The Florida Legislature passed a Special Act establishing the Library Taxing District of PBC and in September 1969 under the direction of Library Director, Florence Biller, the first PBC Public Library location opened in Tequesta and the first bookmobile entered service.

The library system has grown exponentially over the years with two voter approved expansion programs into a system with 16 branches, a Main Library, an Annex and a Bookmobile. The Library has added services and activities for all ages including literacy tutoring, job seeker and small business resources, children's and teen activities, computer training, Internet access, government and genealogy research, consumer health information, and other means of community support and enrichment.

The library continues to explore new ways to serve the residents of PBC as our population grows and technology changes while retaining a personal connection with our residents when they walk in our doors. Recently our Library System requested the BCC eliminate overdue fines for library card members. This is part of a nationwide movement as public libraries recognize that fines limit access to the library for those of limited financial means and are not effective in encouraging materials to be returned on time. Instead, members are charged the replacement cost for items still out seven days after the due date, which may result in a suspension of borrowing privileges. Charges for lost items will be removed from the member's account upon return of the overdue items. The collection agency referral limit was raised from \$25 to \$50.

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary the Library continues their yearlong celebration with themed monthly activities that are relevant to our members and demonstrate how the library connects, inspires and enriches the lives of our community. For more information, visit <http://events.pbclibrary.org/events-and-classes/50-anniversary/2019>.

As always, I invite your comments on any issue of interest to you. As your Commissioner, I am here to help you. You may write me at 301 N. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach, 33401 or at [MBerger@pbcgov.org](mailto:MBerger@pbcgov.org). You can call me or my staff at 276-1310 or toll free at 877-930-2205. Please visit me on the Web at [www.pbcgov.com/d5](http://www.pbcgov.com/d5).

Yours in Public Service,

*Mary Lou Berger*