Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
Friday, 14 July 2017 04:08







Mary Ellen Pellington, the affable and studious Octavia Fellin Public Library director is set to retire in the coming weeks.

Pellington, who hails from New Jersey, but whose career adventures readily dot a U.S. map, sat down with the *Gallup Sun* to reminisce on her library career in Gallup. She arrived in 2009, to the water-scarce region after spending decades near sandy beaches and flowing waterways – even living in Florida for two decades.

“I lived all over,” she said, adding that she earned her Master’s degree in 1973, before “Post-It Notes” were invented and during the dawn of liquid white-out.

Pellington explained that when she arrived in Gallup, she had the goal of enhancing and making the two-library system work. It struck her odd that the Children's Branch was separate from the main branch. And logistically, it was an administrative nightmare.

However, what anchored her was a supportive City Council whose members listened to her concerns and supported her vision of adding more children and adult programs, the latest technology in the form of computers and a 3-D printer, and even a prestigious annual book festival.

"I believe we worked to make this an inviting environment," she said. "We work to make sure the entire community knows they're welcome."

In her eyes, Pellington believes strongly in the celebration of local cultures. So, bringing in storytellers and singers during African American and Native American awareness months is a must-do.

"Hopefully the library has embraced all the cultures" from the surrounding areas, and beyond, she said.

The art on her office walls showcases her appreciation of diversity, with eclectic pieces from Morocco, Nepal, India and Egypt. Art she's collected over the years.

Pellington is heading home to Manchester Township, N.J. And she said that she'll continue to travel, and continue to dabble in her passion for black and white photography. Manchester is about 40 miles from New York City, she explained, where she'll head to some Broadway plays and mingle with old friends.

"You never know where your next adventure can be, so I am looking forward to my new adventure," she said.

## PELLINGTON'S VISION COMES TO LIFE

When she first arrived in Gallup, Pellington knew the library needed a bigger and better place to call home, and that the adult and children's books need housed under one roof. Her vision is one step closer to reality. It will take a collaborative effort to make it happen, one that Pellington said is essential as the current buildings are showing their age.

The Gallup City Council received a concept report April 25, on a possible new library. Gallup Public Works Director Stan Henderson and Pellington stressed that the report was a follow up to last year's downtown redevelopment planning sessions.

The report was presented by the Dallas-based Huitt-Zollars and at a cost to the city of around $35,000.

Joe Gallegos and José Zalaya of Huitt-Zollars told council members about design layout and cost, saying a new library would cost in the range of a little more than $18 million.

The proposed location of a new Gallup library is at the northwest corner of Second Street and Aztec Avenue, which is the current location of Gallup Children's Branch library. The diameter of the Octavia Fellin Library and the Children's Branch is a little more than 24,000 square feet Gallegos and Zalaya told council members.

A new facility would expand to some 44,000 square feet.

Pellington said a new library director will go into the venture with an opportunity to see the project to completion.

"A new director will have fresh eyes, and will take the library in an exciting direction," she said.

***Library staff have planned a going away celebration for Pellington July 21, from 10 - 6 pm, 115 W. Hill Ave.***

***By Babette Herrmann***

***Sun Editor***