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## My “Green” Visit

I visited the Delmont Public Library (DPL) recently for the first time since it opened the doors to its new stand-alone “green” facility, which is in very close proximity to its old shared quarters in the Delmont Borough Municipal Office. That is where any similarity ends.

DPL opened on January 23, 2021 as an eco-friendly building equipped with solar panels on the roof, electric charging stations, geothermal heating, LED lights and more. The building does not even have a conventional hydrocarbon-based combustion furnace. It sells green electricity into the grid in times of abundance, and buys back in times of need. The energy ledger so far shows a small net gain.

Partially funded by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, this capital project started DPL off as a green operations center with visible examples for the public of what is meant by being green. Then, in partnership with the Michael John and Aimee Rusinko Kakos Foundation and the PNC Charitable Foundation, an Outdoor Learning Center was opened on June 7, 2021. This outdoor space includes raised garden beds filled with pollinator plant donations from an entire community. It is the site of a lot of green programming with patrons of all ages. One example:

“Microscope Magic - Come explore the world of mini things with Miss Diane. If the weather is nice, we will meet in the garden. We will have hand magnifiers, handheld microscopes, heavy duty microscopes and binoculars to try.”

Most imaginative of all to me is the homemade Caterpillar Habitat at the very entrance of the building. It fills the entranceway in a way that says you cannot pass me by without stopping to view the caterpillars within and the monarch butterflies hanging from the roof. When I visited, there was to be a butterfly release the following Saturday. A program of earlier this summer was described this way:

“Caterpillar Time at the Habitat - Come any time during this hour and Miss Diane will talk to you about the caterpillars in our habitat. If they are big enough you may be able to hold a caterpillar. Learn about how we feed them.”

Having for much of my professional career worked in a research and development environment on technologies for green commercial architectural fenestration, I am very taken by the significance of the green symbolism at the Delmont Public Library. The Library stands as a green Center of Excellence for an increasingly essential aspect of all our lives. Library staff can knowingly now lead its patrons to important resources on the subject, and in that way help patrons, especially young ones, understand how they can find careers that are relevant to the modern age. They are being made aware of the challenges of modernity.

It has been a long journey from the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Lewis and Clark Expedition through a relatively lightly-peopled West of America, without serious human-induced environmental issues, about which I have been telling you on these pages.

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What Delmont Public Library has so successfully done, with so much support from its community, is recounted by its indomitable Library Director Denni Grassel in a recent nationally broadcast podcast from the American Library Association. You can listen to it at <https://soundcloud.com/dewey-decibel-703453552/episode-63-the-great-outdoors>. Do take the time to do that and be sure to make a visit to the WLN's uniquely green Library in nearby Delmont.

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