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State Library partners with OCLC on “Geek the Library” campaign

Libraries in four central Iowa counties will “get their geek on” this year to help raise awareness of, and support for, library funding.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently announced a \$5 million grant to the OCLC library cooperative to develop a public awareness campaign that highlights what people are passionate about and how libraries can support them, in an effort to heighten understanding about the critical funding issues public libraries face.

OCLC is partnering with libraries in two regions of the United States - central Iowa and Savannah, Georgia – to pilot the campaign. The Iowa campaign launched on June 25 at an Iowa Cubs game in Principal Park, Des Moines, and will run through December 2009. Libraries in Dallas, Polk, Story and Warren counties are the initial participants. OCLC will make the campaign materials, along with information from the pilot campaigns, available to all Iowa libraries in 2010.

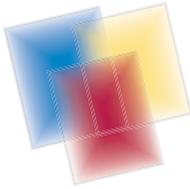
Although millions of Americans enjoy public library resources, and understand the transformational role libraries play for individuals and communities, most people don’t know if their local library is adequately funded or that they have an influential role in how well their library is supported. The campaign is designed to help build public awareness that libraries need community support and adequate funding in order to remain strong.

“Libraries are working harder than ever to provide the services their communities need but resources are strained,” said State Librarian Mary Wegner. “Public libraries in Iowa and across the country play a vital role in transforming people’s lives and building community, and we’re excited about helping Iowans better understand the challenges of library funding and how every individual is part of the equation.”

The campaign introduces the word “geek” as a verb. To “geek” something is to have a passion for it and to possess a large amount of knowledge about it. Whatever you geek, the library supports you.

The campaign features advertising, e-mail marketing, a campaign Web site (www.geekthelibrary.org), and grassroots community initiatives. It aims to help people understand how their public library is personally relevant and uniquely vital to their local community. It hopes to start a conversation about library funding to inspire more people to take personal responsibility for keeping their local public libraries vital in their communities.

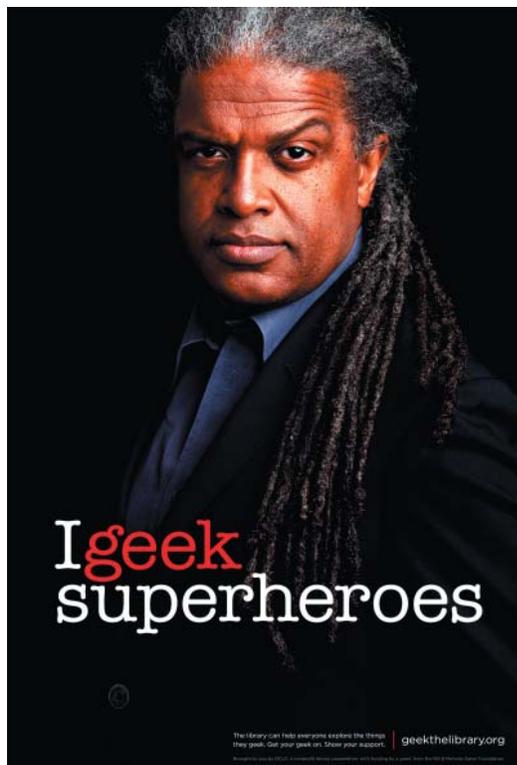
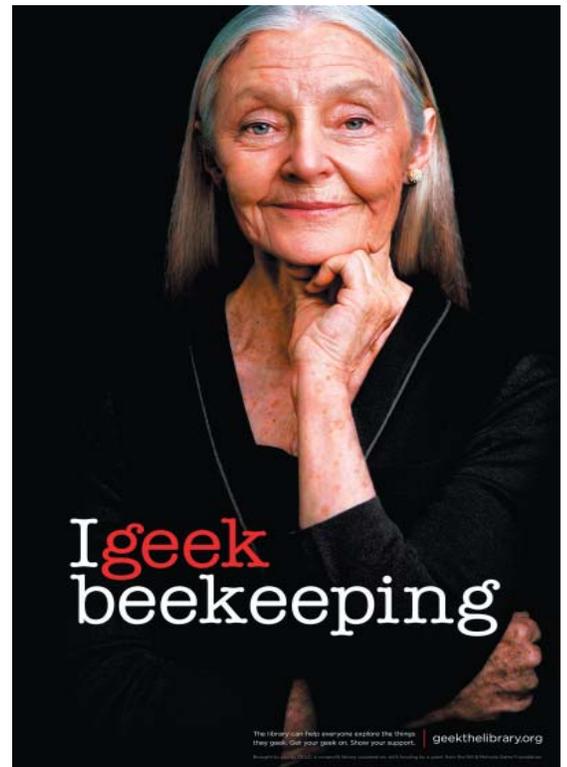
The campaign is based on findings from a 2008 OCLC research report, “From Awareness to Funding.” OCLC found that while public library use is growing, funding has declined. Other key findings of the report are that perceptions of the librarian are an important predictor of library funding support and that people who perceive the library as a transformational force in their lives, as opposed to simply an informational resource, are more committed to library support.



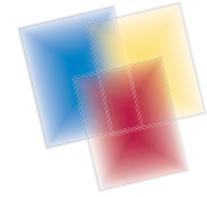
What do you geek?



State Library Commissioner Daniel Boice threw out the first ball at the June 25 Iowa Cubs game to help kick off the "Geek the Library" campaign.



Also at the Cubs game were, from left, Jenny Johnson, OCLC; State Librarian Mary Wegner; Cathy DeRosa, OCLC; and Dr. Douglas Dornier, library supporter and co-owner of the Iowa Cubs.



Von Wald leaves significant legacy as Iowa Center for the Book coordinator

Retirement from the library world did not last long for Katherine Von Wald. She retired as administrator of the Central Iowa Library Service Area in March 2002 and jumped feet first into taking on the position of coordinator for the Iowa Center for the Book (ICB) in October 2002.

Von Wald helped pick the first All Iowa Reads (AIR) book, "Peace Like a River," in 2003. She served on the AIR committee from its inception and has weighed in on all seven titles considered since then. She helped design the ICB's Web site,

creating a statewide literary event section as well as the Iowa Author List.

Iowa became involved in the national Letters About Literature program under Von Wald's leadership. In the past six years, Iowa has had two national winners in the reading and writing competition, and two national honorable mentions, due in part to Von Wald's passion for the written word and her willingness to attend conventions where she could publicize the program.

"Much of the success of the Iowa Center for the Book and its programs has been due to Katherine's good ideas and hard work," said State Librarian Mary Wegner. "We feel fortunate that she shared her talents with the State Library and will miss working with her very much."

Von Wald said the best part of being the coordinator was "the people I have worked with."

When asked why she thought the ICB is important, she noted that "the programs of the ICB encourage the reading and sharing of ideas about books. All Iowa Reads selects one book each year for individuals to consider reading and discussing at their library or with their private book club or their friends or neighbors or the person who checks out their groceries. Students who write a letter as part of the Letters About Literature program share how a book has had an impact on their lives. The ICB Web site includes listings of literary events to encourage Iowans to attend book discussions, author programs and other book related programming. The list of Iowa authors encourages Iowa readers to sample what authors presently in Iowa are writing. All of these programs have been fun to work with."

Survey shows Iowa libraries are using WebJunction

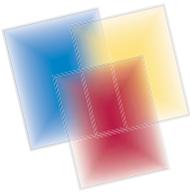
A 2009 member survey of Iowa libraries, conducted by WebJunction, shows that courses offered on WebJunction Iowa (<http://ia.webjunction.org>) are one of the favorite features of Iowa librarians.

The State Library of Iowa has partnered with OCLC to make WebJunction Iowa available to library staff from all types of Iowa libraries. WebJunction Iowa is part of the State Library's web service for libraries. It is an online community where library staff members meet to share ideas, solve problems, and take online courses-while having fun in the process.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents were from small libraries. Visits to WebJunction increased from 29.8 percent visiting the site weekly or more to 37 percent. Eighty percent said they are "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with their overall experiences on the site.

Members also said they value WebJunction because of its easy access, availability and affordability. (The State Library pays for WebJunction and makes it available to Iowa libraries.) Iowa members also appreciate connecting with and learning from peers, its rich central information hub, and all the available resources.

Resources include technology and computer support, TechAtlas, sample policies from other libraries, how-to tutorials, information on managing a library, and state-specific content.



King takes presidency seriously...as a rule



State Library staffer Karon King, library resources technician, patents, served as daring and dramatic president of the Patent and Trademark Depository Library Association in 2008-09.

The association assists the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) by planning and implementing services for depository libraries like the state library's, as well as advising the USPTO of the interests, needs and opinions of their customers.

King's responsibilities included conducting executive council meetings, presenting recognition awards and coordinating a seminar at the association's annual meeting 2009. Her last duties as president include arranging speakers for the upcoming American Library Association's conference on July 11.

Never one to let boredom rule, King dressed up as Rosanne Rosannadanna, a popular character from early "Saturday Night Live" episodes for a business meeting on "The Problem with Patent Searching." She rehearsed for State Library staff who gave her two big thumbs up.

Town Meetings scheduled for September/October

State Library staff are busy preparing skits and courses for this year's Town Meetings. Mark your calendars now for one of the seven meetings.

Tuesday, Sept. 22, Creston Community College
 Wednesday, Sept. 23, Storm Lake (BV Univ.)
 Thursday, Sept. 24, Mason City (NIACC)

Tuesday, Sept. 29, Coralville Public Library
 Wednesday, Sept. 30, Waterloo Arts and Rec Center
 Thursday and Friday, Oct. 1 and 2, Urbandale Public Library

Help clean up the Continuing Education (CE) catalog

July 1 is the start of a new fiscal and it's time to do a little cleaning. Please log in to your account in the State Library's CE catalog, <http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/cgi-bin/cecat/>, to make sure all of your information, especially your e-mail address, is current. Check spelling and capitalization because your account information is used to automatically create your nametag. **Lastly, please do not create multiple accounts in the catalog.** If you have trouble with your username and/or password, use "Forget your password or username? Click here" or contact Fran Fessler at the State Library, fran.fessler@lib.state.ia.us. Happy cleaning!

Certification Update

Congratulations to the following public library staff certified for the first time through the State Library's Iowa Certification Program for Public Librarians.

Laurie Boies, Earlville
 Linda Eldred, Springville
 Andrew Fuerste-Henry, Dubuque
 Rhonda Harn, Westgate
 Wanda Gardner, LeClaire

Shari Minnehan, Churdan
 Melanie Murray, Lehigh
 Diane Sinclair, Williams
 Lisa Swingen, Crystal Lake
 Nancy Voltmer, Ames





HealthInfoIowa, the State Library's resource for finding reliable health information, has a new look. Check it out at www.healthinfoiowa.org.

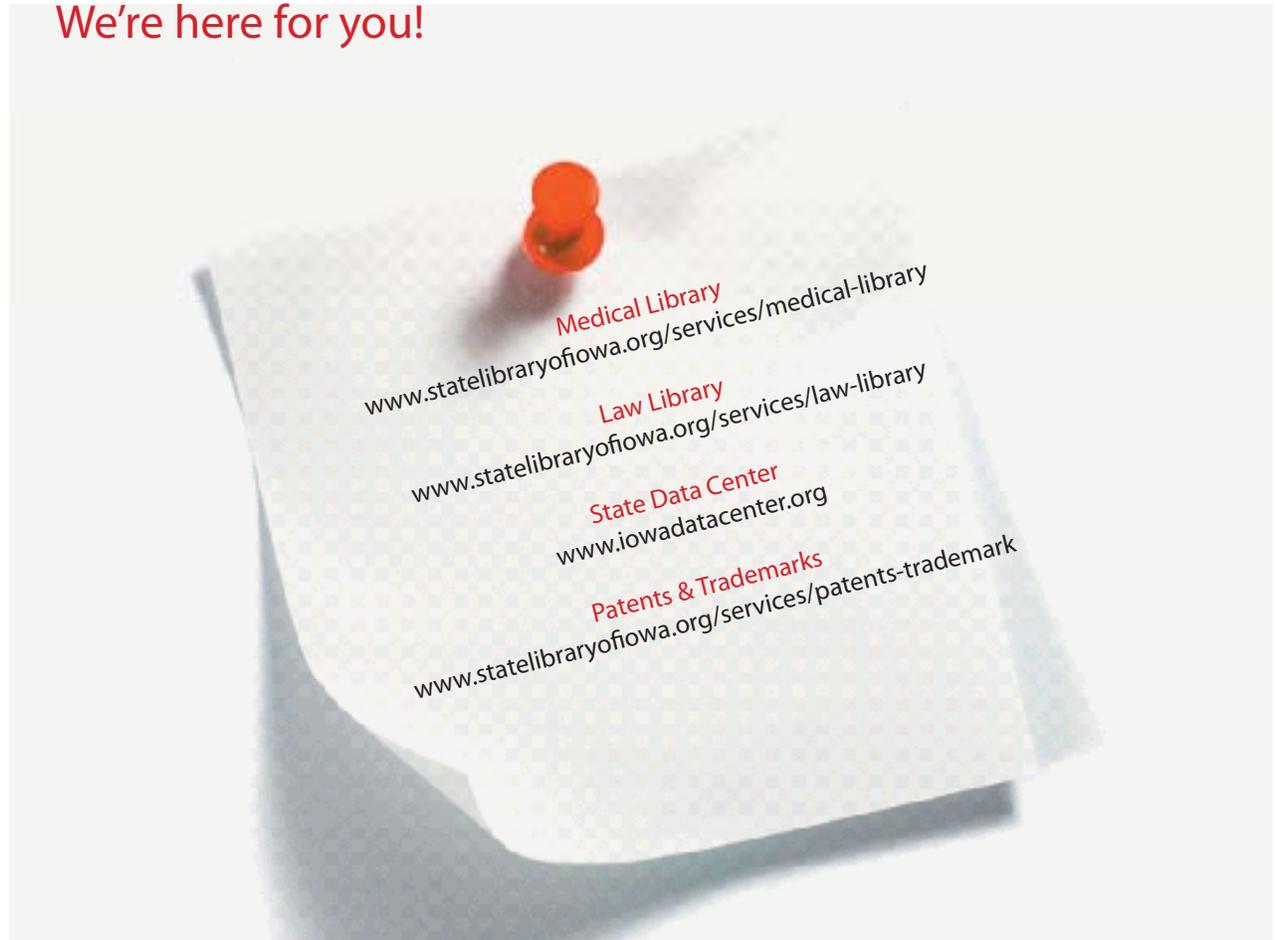
This gateway to a wide range of health resources makes it easy to find health information located in Iowa, general health information, tips on evaluating online health information, and resources for healthcare providers and professionals, librarians, and students. Use HealthInfoIowa to locate information from national, state, regional, and local resources, and to connect with agencies, organizations and services in Iowa that can help meet health information needs.

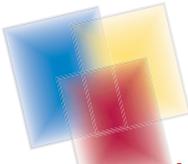
Links have been updated connecting users to the most reliable, authoritative information. One feature has moved: Look for tutorials under "About Online Health Information."

For assistance using HealthInfoIowa, or for help in answering medical reference questions, contact the State Library at 800-248-4483, 515-281-4102, or is@lib.state.ia.us.

Don't forget.....

We're here for you!





Katherine Perkins, Iowa Public Radio, judges Letters About Literature at national level

Having been a judge for the Iowa Letters About Literature contest for at least five years, Katherine Perkins, seemed a natural fit to judge students' letters at the national level this year. She is commentator and host of Iowa Public Radio's "Talk of Iowa," and producer of "The Exchange" and "Talk@12." Katherine Von Wald, coordinator of the Iowa Center for the Book (ICB), nominated Perkins for the position.

"I loved the experience," said Perkins.

"I'm always impressed with the letters submitted at the state level. It's a whole different ballgame to read the best letter from each state," said Perkins. "These young people were writing about losing a parent, or a sibling, dealing with issues of racial identity, suicide, eating disorders... so many problems. And, I'm always astounded at the comfort you can find in a book that describes how a character has dealt with a similar challenge, or that comforts or inspires, simply through the written words."

Perkins, Alex Espinoza (author and teacher, California State University, Fresno) and Jamilla Coleman (Writers in Schools Coordinator, Pen/Faulkner Foundation, Washington, DC) read and judged 49 state-winners' letters in Level III (9th through 12th grade). Each judge sent his/her top five favorites to the coordinator.

"I guess for the first time, we only had to go through one round of judging. There was consensus between the three of us about the top five letters, and the overall winner. We just had to rank the other four, which was accomplished through another round of e-mail."

"The best part was reading about the profound impact that books can have on a person's life," said Perkins. It's a belief I've always held, but that's never really been tested on a personal level. I've never had to deal with the kinds of tragedies that many of these young people have dealt with. It was comforting to know that if I'm ever tested in that way, I can turn to reading as a relief and inspiration. The hardest part was making a choice. The letters were so heartfelt, so well written, it was really difficult to choose among them. I think we made a good choice, but it wasn't easy."

Said Von Wald, "Katherine Perkins is an example of why being the coordinator for the ICB has been so enjoyable. She has been a volunteer who has done a wonderful job. Without people like Katherine, we would not have been able to accomplish what we have with the ICB programs. And there have been many other great volunteers."

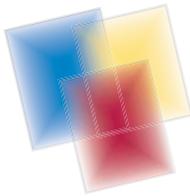
Perkins said she "loves" Letters About Literature.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for readers to express, not just appreciation for a book, but to reflect more deeply on how reading a book has shaped or changed their perspectives. I don't think that's something we give a lot of thought to, unless it's for something like this. And, I think it helps reinforce the importance of reading and literature. It's more than a skill, it can be life changing. I can think of no better argument for picking up a book."

For more information on Letters About Literature, visit <http://www.iowacenterforthebook.org>.



LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE 



News from around the state

Archived newspaper project completed

A shout out to the Dickinson County Library Association ([Spirit Lake, Milford, Arnolds Park, Lake Park and Terril public libraries](#)) for completing their archived newspaper project. The online newspaper database can now be searched from 1886 through 2004. Fourteen newspapers in the area were archived. The project was paid for by a grant from the Dickinson County Endowment Fund.

Wilton library receives literacy award

The Bi-State Literacy Recognition Award for outstanding efforts in promoting literacy was recently awarded to [Wilton Public Library](#) director Sharon Bowers and her staff. Shirley Petersen, Wilton Elementary School librarian, nominated the library for its leadership in providing literacy opportunities for Wilton citizens.

Creative cycling

The "Ames Tribune" recently ran a story relating to interlibrary loan services in the city. Jim Gregory, courier and co-owner of "Bikes at Work" hauls books, articles and other materials around town daily to the [Ames Public Library, the Veterinary Medical Library and Iowa State University Parks Library](#) on his bicycle. According to the Tribune article, Wayne Pedersen, head of acquisitions for the Parks Library, said "We see this as a win-win-win scenario. It's good for the environment, the service is faster, and it promotes a small business."



Davenport PL partners with community in oral history project

In honor of the 150th anniversary of Davenport schools, students from six intermediate schools interviewed retired Davenport teachers for the Iowa Stories Oral History Project (SOHP). SOHP began five years ago as a community initiative created by former Iowa First Lady, Christie Vilsack. The goals of the program are to encourage reading and sharing of family stories; rebuild a sense of community in Iowa; focus on public and school libraries as community centers for lifelong learning; foster a working relationship for school and public librarians; and to encourage non-traditional partnerships between libraries and other community organizations.

The students created oral history projects in the form of PowerPoint presentations, storyboards, and videos that will be housed in the [Davenport Public Library](#) for future generations to enjoy.

In 2004-05, students interviewed African-American seniors; in 2005-06, they interviewed seniors with German heritage. 2006-07 featured the city's Mexican-American community, and last year focused on the Irish-American community in Davenport.

Congratulations to retiring library staffers

[Sara Pearson](#), Urbandale Public Library director for the past 35 years has retired. Library foundation president Kay Readinger said "Sara has been an integral part in creating and maintaining the library that we all know and love. Her expertise and thorough knowledge of the library's operations will be sorely missed."

[Jan Behrens](#) retired as director of the Knoxville Public Library at the end of May. Jan had been library director since 1995. She plans to do some traveling and spend more time with family, but promises to stay involved with the library through its book club and Friends group.

A farewell party for [Marcea Clary](#), Sloan Public Library, was held May 30. She had been with the library for 17 years. Said library director Mary Parker, "She will be greatly missed not only because she is a great person but because of her dedication and the wonderful things she has done for the library."