

Inside this issue

All Iowa Reads book discussion
scheduled in January.....pg. 2
Law Library receives questions
reflecting economic times.....pg 4
State Library takes over Iowa
Heritage Digital Project.....pg. 5

Gates "Staying Connected" grant comes to end; State Library continues PLOW project

The State Library is writing its final report to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the "Staying Connected" grant that began in 2006. A lot can be said about the dynamic impact this grant has had on hundreds of Iowa libraries and their customers.

First, there were courses on e-mail hosting. Most libraries now have consistent and stable e-mail addresses regardless of the Internet service provider.

Next came the ever popular PLOW project (Putting Libraries on the Web). PLOW was the most visible part of the \$749,000 "Staying Connected" grant that sought to sustain and expand public access computing in Iowa public libraries.

The State Library hoped that 100 Iowa public libraries would participate. Today, there are 287 public library Web sites up and running. Web sites were preloaded with a variety of local information specific to each library, including links to local catalogs, location, hours, contacts and trustees. Library customers also have access to state-wide resources, such as EBSCOhost and FirstSearch through their library's Web sites. Once trained, librarians were able to add their own content.

The Staying Connected grant allowed the State Library to provide technical and consulting support to librarians in maintaining their computers, and to train librarians in helping the public increase their computer searching skills.

One library that took advantage of the Staying Connected grant and, in particular, PLOW, wrote to the Gates Foundation that "This has not only enabled us to have a much more professional Web page, but more importantly we can offer a much greater service to our patrons. A week doesn't go by that someone doesn't discover something on our Web site that enhances their lives. We never could have afforded this in our little town of 1,700 without your help."



But wait. There's more.

Although the grant officially ends in 2008, the State Library is committed to continuing the PLOW project. Already, more than 20 Iowa public libraries have sent in letters of intent to attend PLOW classes and develop Web sites in 2009. Another round of classes will be held in 2010 and beyond.

"Today's library users expect to visit their library via the Internet as well as in person," said State Librarian Mary Wegner. "Computers and the Internet bring the whole world of information into all Iowa libraries, regardless of size."

"Library Web sites are important because they connect Iowans with accurate and helpful information and services around the clock," said Wegner. "We are thankful to the Gates Foundation and their commitment to public access computing, for making the grant funding available to us."



ICN session scheduled to discuss the 2009 All Iowa Reads selection

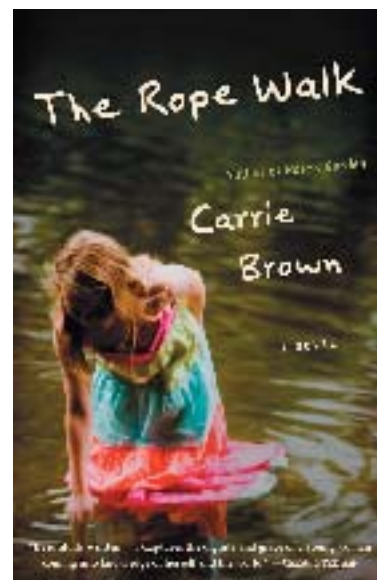
Save the date: 6:30 to 8 p.m., January 14

The annual All Iowa Reads (AIR) ICN session will feature a discussion between Dale Ross and Susan Craig of the 2009 book, "The Rope Walk," by Carrie Brown. Available ICN sites will be announced soon. They will also be listed at <http://www.iowacenterforthebook.org>.

Other features of the session will include a quick review of this year's AIR Web site, including promotional materials. Instead of the usual list of books on a similar subject, the Web site will include the names of all the books mentioned in "The Rope Walk."

According to Iowa Center for the Book Coordinator, Katherine Von Wald, anyone attending who has already had a book discussion on the title will be welcomed to talk about their events.

"We expect January 14 to be full of sunshine with temperatures in the 40s," said Von Wald.



Public libraries, IPTV help Iowans convert to HDTV

The Ellsworth Public Library board of trustees recently decided to sponsor a program on the high definition TV conversion scheduled to take place on February 17, 2009. Iowa Public Television (IPTV) offered to provide the program and locals offered to help people in their community install converter boxes. IPTV was intrigued with their plan and decided to shoot scenes there for a program they were doing on the conversion.

"Two people from IPTV came a week before the program and filmed many scenes from the town of Ellsworth, including the library," said director Janet Adix. "They also came to my home and filmed one of the volunteers and me actually installing a converter box."

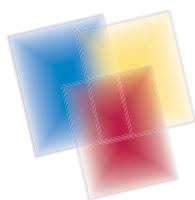
Over the past year, Iowa Public Television has partnered with libraries across Iowa to help spread the word about the switch to digital television, according to Molly Phillips, director of communications at IPTV.

"Our engineers have conducted free informational sessions at libraries from Shenandoah to Clinton and many places in between. The sessions – which offer basic and technical information with an extensive Q&A – have demonstrated the important role public libraries and public television play in our local communities," said Phillips. "Iowa Public Television and our libraries have been the primary sources of critical education information about the switch to all-digital television."

Librarians interested in helping their community make the switch can contact Iowa Public Television at (800) 532-1290 for more information. IPTV can schedule free information sessions, provide training for volunteers and send information for customers.

Plenty of opportunities to celebrate Lincoln's Bicentennial

The Iowa Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Committee (IALBC) is promoting and endorsing the Lincoln activities and programs that Iowa libraries and towns are planning between now and February 12, 2010. The IALBC Web site is <http://www.iowalincoln200.org>. To have your event endorsed, click on the button on the main page that says "Event Endorsement." The Web site contains ideas and suggestions to celebrate Lincoln's birthday. Lincoln had a variety of connections to Iowa. A 25-30 minute PowerPoint is available on the Web site to illustrate these connections and to help with discussions. There are also people listed on the site who are willing to lead discussions for free (travel reimbursement is expected). For more information, contact Walter Reed, Jr., director of the Department of Human Rights at walter.reed@iowa.gov, or Darla R. Welch, administrative secretary at (515) 242-5655, darla.welch@iowa.gov.



State Library staff attend eighth National Book Festival in Washington, DC

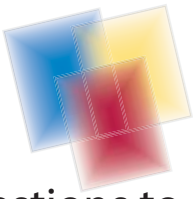


More than 120,000 book lovers attended the 8th National Book Festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC, on September 27. State Library staff Steve Cox and Annette Wetteland, as well as volunteers, staffed a display in the Pavilion of the States with literary information about Iowa. Said Wetteland, "It's always a thrill to share information about Iowa. A lot of former Iowans like to stop by and catch up on what's new in the Hawkeye state." The free festival was sponsored by the Library of Congress and hosted by First Lady Laura Bush.



From left, Steve Cox, Julie Scheib, Annette Wetteland and Mary Chute, deputy director of library services, Institute of Museum and Library Services.





Questions to law library reflect economic times

The reference librarians at the state law library answer almost 500 requests for legal information every month. Within the last few months, the nature of the questions has begun to reflect the state's economic crisis.

Staff has observed an increase in the number of requests for information regarding legal and illegal debt collection practices; the rights of tenants who cannot pay their rents and landlords who cannot collect rents due (for both residential and commercial properties); squabbles among members of homeowners' associations; how to collect money owed (for instance, from a small claims judgment); questions about student loans, particularly how bankruptcy affects them; leaving children home alone; relatives who want or need to assume the guardianship of minors; health insurance coverage laws; and used automobile purchases and automobile repairs.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of questions about labor law, especially pertaining to involuntary terminations and layoffs. Staff is also fielding questions about "green burials," a much less expensive and more ecologically-friendly alternative to traditional funeral home burials.

The Law Library has always served a significant customer base known as "self-represented litigants" (plaintiffs and defendants who wish to act as their own attorneys), but there are now many more customers walking through the doors saying they cannot afford to retain legal representation. The most common type of self-represented litigant is a person who wants to obtain a divorce; there has been a significant drop in requests for this particular type of assistance. Unfortunately, in what may be a related statistic, the number of questions about domestic abuse and how to obtain protective orders has risen. Finally, smaller law firms are asking for more help from the law library because they've cut costs by cancelling expensive print and database subscriptions, as well as paralegal and law clerk staff.

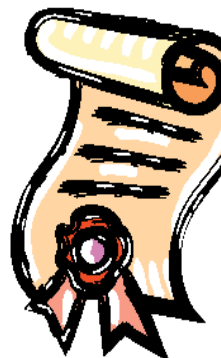
The State Library of Iowa's special collections in medicine, law, Iowa statistics, and patents and trademarks are available for use by Iowa librarians and their customers. The State Library's hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. E-mail requests may be sent 24 hours a day to is@lib.state.ia.us. Our subject specialists can provide assistance with your reference questions, or you may refer customers directly to us, 515-281-4102 or 800-248-4483.

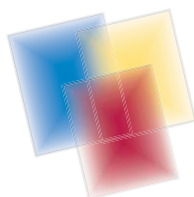
Reminder:
**The meeting minutes of the Iowa Commission of Libraries can be
found at**
<http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/about/gov>

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.

Heather Bente, Waterville
James Boyd, Bondurant
Michael Burris, Harlan
Kathryn Dreyer, Pella
Kelly Fischbach, Carroll
Kelly Henrichs, Allison
Crystal Kehoe, Eldridge
Brenda Kremer, Eldon
Alethea La Mar, Morning Sun





Attendance good at fall Summer Reading Program workshops

State Library staff were pleased at the turn out and excitement generated during the 2009 Summer Reading workshops held in October. More than 500 youth services librarians attended 11 children's workshops and 176 librarians participated in four teen workshops.

According to State Library Youth Services Coordinator Karen Randleman, an impressive 81.9% of the children's librarians and 77.1% of the teen librarians preferred the workshops in the fall rather than spring according to evaluations.

Combining the children's and teen workshops on the same day met the approval of 94 percent of attendees. This year's children's workshop presenters were Becky Bilby, Orange City, and Sonia Ernst, Sibley. Kathy Rogers, Bettendorf, was the teen workshop presenter.

According to Marty Stahl, director of the Kothe Memorial Library in Parkersburg, presenters did a "fabulous job of presenting great ideas and suggestions."

"Their enthusiasm and joy was infectious," said Stahl.



Becky Bilby, left, and Sonia Ernst got the crowd on their feet and "jazzed" during the first five minutes of the children's workshop.

State Library to become heir to Iowa Heritage Digital Collections

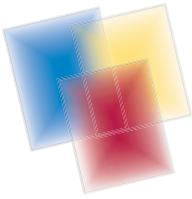
The Iowa Heritage Digital Collections (IHDC) Web site was established in 2003 as an online collection of Iowa history and culture created by bringing together documents, images, maps, finding aids, interpretive and educational materials, and other media from collections held by a wide range of organizations throughout Iowa. These organizations include colleges and universities, public libraries, historical societies, and museums. Users of IHDC can search across these multiple collections to explore a gold mine of Iowa history and culture.

Since 2003, staff at the University of Iowa's main library has hosted, developed and maintained IHDC. But in 2009, the State Library will assume those duties. With the able assistance of the university staff, the data will be migrated to State Library servers and the day-to-day operations will be taken over by State Library staff.

The State Library will continue to work with the current IHDC Project Committee to develop and grow the collections.

Barb Corson, the State Library's Information Services Program Director, said "We have created a Digital Projects Team which will work with current and new institutions that wish to add to collections in IHDC or add new collections to it. State Library staff will provide training and technical assistance. We hope to be able to accept new collections in late summer or fall of 2009."

Check out Iowa Heritage Digital Collection at <http://www.iowaheritage.org/> to see a wide variety of fascinating information about Iowa history and culture.



News from around the state

The Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) conference held in Sacramento, CA Sept. 19-21 was reinvigorated with great programming and a range of some 260 attendees from 31 states, according to "Library Journal." Among the many speakers were Pat Means, Villisca, Tena Hanson, Milford, and Sarah Willeford, Central Iowa Library Service Area. They demonstrated how rural and small libraries can use technology to collaborate, minimizing problems of travel and short staffing, including how to use Web 2.0 tools and examples of successful collaboration projects by rural and small libraries in Iowa.

"People at the conference were truly impressed with all that Iowa's small libraries are able to accomplish using new technologies," said Hanson. "The conference was an outstanding experience and brought those from small and rural libraries nationwide together to share experiences and network."

Hanson said all of the session offered at the conference were tailored to the small library environment.

"We highly recommend that if anyone from Iowa's small library community has the opportunity to attend a national conference, they should seriously consider ARSL. It was a worthwhile experience and one we hope can be held in Iowa in a few years."

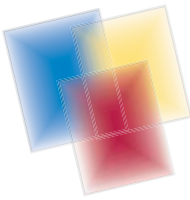
Bondurant celebrated the grand opening of their new library on December 6 with a flag raising ceremony, ribbon cutting, and an open house featuring entertainment, children's activities and live music, according to library director Karen Pederson. The new library is located at 104 Second St., NE.



State Librarian Mary Wegner spoke at the dedication of the new **Sioux Center Public Library** on November 2. The new facility has a "prairie schoolhouse" design with a brick exterior, warm oak-toned interior, and mission-style lighting and furniture." Library director Dave Netz was quoted as saying "It's a reward to the community and shows their commitment, understanding and appreciation for education and learning." The former library was gutted in a vandalism-related fire in 2003.

The soon-to-open new **Marshalltown Public Library** is in the running for the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design silver certification award from the U.S. Green Building Council. Architect John Karmann with FEH Associates and Jaime Rochleau, site superintendent for Story Construction, building contractor are being heralded for their efforts. The USGBC awards "green" points in broad categories of energy and atmosphere; indoor environmental quality; sustainable sites; materials and resources; and water efficiency. The Marshalltown library was highlighted in a recent Library Journal article (LINK). <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6608914.html?desc=topstory>

The **Cedar Rapids Public Library** is moving into what it's calling the "Bridge Library" in Westdale Mall. The library will have 23,784 square feet in an old Osco Drug Store and is expected to open in January. The library was flooded June 11-13, 2008. The destruction at the 85,000 square foot library, which occupied a square block in the city's central business district, is believed to be the largest public library disaster in the U.S. It is still unclear whether the library will be able to move back to its former site downtown.



Parkersburg, IA: One library's story

The following was written by Marty Stahl, Kothe Memorial Library, Parkersburg

On May 25, 2008 an F5 tornado hit Parkersburg, a town of 1,890 just 20 miles west of Cedar Falls. The result: six people died and 280 homes and businesses were destroyed. We had no gas station and no grocery store. Heavy rains and floods followed a short time later. Fortunately, the library and main street were not damaged.

It took most of the week for people to begin to filter back to work as we waited for the electricity to be restored. For anyone coming into the community, it was like stepping into the twilight zone. Nothing would ever be the same. The library could have been renamed "city morgue" instead of the Kothe Memorial Library. The three of us on staff could only sit at our desks and try to function. We were not very successful as we desperately tried to grasp the enormity of what had happened. The result was that we stopped trying to do business as usual and be what the community needed. Circulation was at an all time low. No one cared. Helping those in need was the focus, but how?

There were not enough homes to rent or buy in Parkersburg so people scattered to other towns. The question I asked was, were there any children left in the community? I knew many parents had packed up their kids and headed to relatives to shield them from the devastation. After the first week, we did see a few kids trying to find something to do and somewhere to go. Taking the emphasis off of reading, we cleared the children's tables of books and replaced them with coloring sheets and crayons. Puppets were set out. We emphasized a "helping hand" craft for kids to express whatever they were feeling. These were paper cut-outs of a hand that kids (and adults) filled with scriptures, stickers, and doodles. We plastered them across the library's front window with a sign that read: "Parkersburg's Helping Hands".

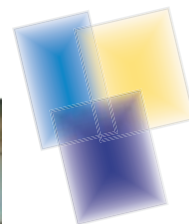
When patrons started to filter back in to the library, all they could do was talk. We listened. Some families used the library as a gathering place for their kids. After much deliberation, it was determined that our summer reading program would proceed. I thought that even if we had a handful of kids it would be worth the effort. Amazingly, we ended up with 109! Every parent wanted their child to get back to "normal" and the library was the perfect place to fill that need.

Pathways Behavioral Services received a grant to help children and adults with crisis intervention. The library opened the doors to a support group called Together We Are Better After the Tornado. It was not only for those who suffered loss, but also for a tremendous number of people who experience survivors' guilt (those who did not lose anything and were overcome with guilt). A Pathways children's specialist was always present at our Story Time to help children deal with tornados, weather, noises, and losing their homes. We invited the preschool class from school to participate. Drawing fear from a child is not an easy task. Many children were still traumatized and continued to play "tornado".

Over the summer, the biggest demand was for internet access. People checked prices for building materials, insurance issues, and some even ordered groceries from Hy-Vee online because they had free delivery service. Thankfully, as people have begun to heal, their desire for reading is returning.

We are forever changed and I am so glad. Instead of always trying to get one more thing done, we now have a new spirit within us. As people try to put the broken pieces of their lives back together, the staff learned to keep listening. The library has a new attitude: lighten up and laugh. Time is precious. I am so grateful we can be life giving.





From all of us at the State Library
of Iowa, have a *safe*, warm and
wonderful holiday!