

LIBRARY Connections



City Councilman Michael Wojcik, Council President Randy Staver, Library Director Audrey Betcher, and Mayor Ardel Brede

Library Celebrates 150 Years of Service

It took just \$1,000 to start library service in Rochester, Minnesota, at the W.W. Ireland store on the corner of Broadway and 2nd St. SW. The year was 1865 and, at the time, patrons paid an annual subscription fee of \$3 to peruse the one-thousand-book collection. And that's how library service started in Rochester 150 years ago.

Over 250 community members helped the Rochester Public Library celebrate this milestone in November at a "Behind-the-Scenes Birthday Party," and even more people participated in other birthday-related events through the week. On Monday, November 2, Mayor Ardel Brede delivered a special proclamation to Library Director Audrey Betcher. "Rochester has a long, rich history of library service," says Betcher, "with first the subscription service starting in the 1860s and a Free Reading Room added in the early 1880s."

By 1891, the library was free and open to all community members and just a few years later the first library building was constructed for

\$15,000. The citizens of Rochester were proud of their library building that utilized newer technologies such as gas and electric lighting. The first building was used until 1937 when the Crawford building was constructed, in part by Public Works Administration (PWA) grants.

It was the Crawford building where former employees fondly recall the beautiful architecture and the two fireplaces. Storytimes around the fireplace were common and former library employee Rose Laabs says she remembers the space being used by the homeless during cold winter months. "It was a place for everyone," she says.

("Library Celebrates" continued on page 2)



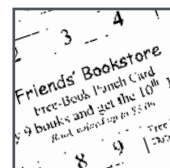
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"Library Celebrates" (continued)

Former Children's Librarian Barb Madsen also remembers the Crawford Library, in particular those fireplaces. "We used to have Storytime around the fireplaces," she says, "I've always been interested in anything for the children."

After the Crawford Building, the library was housed in a former J.C. Penney Building in 1972, and then moved to the Second Street SE location in 1995. "It's hard to believe you've been in this location for 20 years," says Brede, adding he hopes the library will stay in its location "For many, many more."

The Story of Rochester Public Library



1865 Rochester Public Library Association formed as a subscription-based library in the W.W. Ireland store.

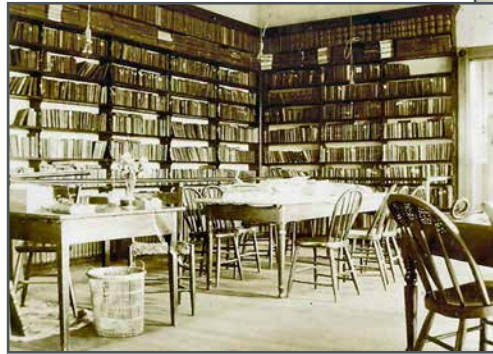


Photo of the second floor reading room at the old City Hall, circa 1890. By this time, community members could use the Free Library and Reading Room.



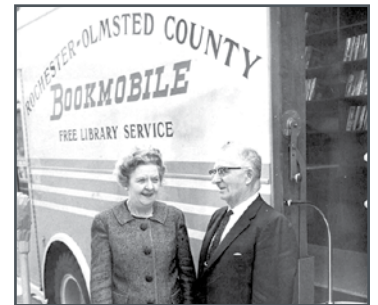
In 1895, Minnesota law allowed for the formation of library boards. Rochester's first library board was formed. The first library building was completed in 1898 for \$15,000.



The 2nd Rochester Public Library, the Crawford Library, is now home to the Mayo Medical School Student Center.



The children's room in the Crawford Library, circa 1950s.



It took twenty years of hard work for librarian Lucille Gottry to bring a bookmobile to Olmsted County. In 1966, her dream became a reality.



An old J.C. Penney building is converted to the library's third home. The building opens in 1972.

The children's room and puppet theater in the J.C. Penney building.



The library's fourth home opens in 1995, with initial plans for three floors, but due to budget constraints, opens with only two floors. Today the library is out of space, prompting the Library Board to move forward with plans for a 2-story expansion



Expanding Ideas: Twenty Years in the Making

November 1995 was a big month for this library. When our doors opened in 1995, we opened

with grand fanfare as a beautiful, central location for Rochester residents and that continues to be our goal: to provide Rochester and Olmsted county residents with an inviting, open, and free space. Since our opening day 20 years ago, the population of Olmsted County has increased 22%. Meanwhile, our library use is outpacing the population growth. For example, we've seen a 28% increase in the number of cardholders over the past 20 years, a 53% increase in circulation, and a 347% increase in reference questions. It's our programming numbers, however, that have seen the most dramatic increase: up over 1,000%.

As the library moves forward with a plan for expansion, we are mindfully gathering valuable information and feedback from you- our community. We are currently

working on two major components before moving forward with our library expansion plans: first, updating our strategic plan and second, starting a feasibility study.

In November, I reconnected with over two-dozen residents, community leaders, and other library stakeholders to take a look at the library's Strategic Plan. This same group of people met three years ago to create our current plan, providing valuable community input into how we serve the city of Rochester. The plan is our guide; everything we do, every service we have, goes back to the needs identified in our strategic plan process. At our November meeting we looked at how we need to tweak the 2012 Strategic Plan to align with what the community needs. Back in 2012, when the original plan was created, we didn't know anything about DMC or how much demand there would be for library space and programming.

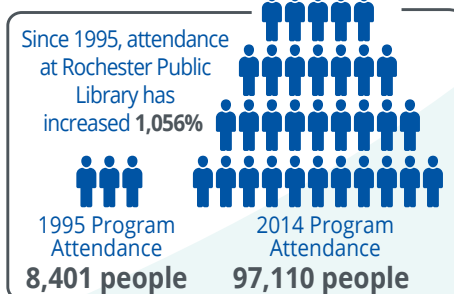
In October, the Library's Foundation hired the Paul J. Strawhecker firm to conduct a feasibility study. We've known throughout

this process that we will need public support in order to move forward with an expansion, and the Strawhecker firm will help us gauge that support.

Where will we be 20 years from now? It's hard to predict the future, but we will use all of our knowledge, experience, and community input to make sure the Rochester Public Library continues to provide the best opportunities for imagination, creativity, engagement and learning.

Audrey Betcher

Rochester Public
Library Director



Pedaling Books

Hoping to reach Rochester residents in a new way, the library "rolled out" a new outreach program this year. In April 2015, Rochester Public Library (RPL) launched the BookBike, a little library on wheels. Pulled by library staff on bicycles, the BookBike visited 113 parks and events in spring and summer, offering library books, library cards, program information, assistance with digital materials, bike trail maps and fun incentives for kids. Staff also handed out BookBike stickers, bike lights, sidewalk chalk, water bottles and bubbles to thousands of visitors.

In total, almost 700 books were checked out from the BookBike, 1,172 reference questions were answered and almost 5,700 people visited. An overwhelming 98% of BookBike visitors surveyed rated their experience as good to outstanding.

Children especially enjoyed visiting the BookBike. A pair of siblings used the online BookBike schedule to track its movement on a map, one family showed up early at an event just to watch staff set up and many families throughout the summer were pleasantly surprised to be able to visit the library and the park at the same time. One sunny Saturday at the Rochester Downtown Farmers Market two young girls from out of town stood near the BookBike for over an hour and read two books each!

RPL worked with several community partners on this successful outreach program including Rochester Park and Recreation, We Bike Rochester, Rochester Area Family YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, Riverside School, and Rochester Downtown Farmers Market.

The great thing about RPL's BookBike is that it can convert to a push cart for use in the subways and skyways during the colder months. RPL staff is currently working with partners to create a winter schedule. We hope to see you indoors this winter or out on the road next summer!

The BookBike project was funded in part with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, through a Community Collaboration grant from Southeast Libraries Cooperating (SELCO).

BOOKBIKE
ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY



Letter from the Foundation Executive Director



Fall has come and gone, kids are in school and everyone is busy getting ready for our version of winter hibernation. Here at the Foundation, things are kicking into high gear as we connect with you, the donor. The wonderful 150th Birthday Celebration gave you a chance to see how far we have come in providing library services to the community. Then as part of Give to the Max, many of you gave online (THANK YOU)!! These funds will help us grow for the future. As part of that growth, we are busying working with an outside firm to assess the community's capacity to support our upcoming library expansion. The Foundation is a huge part of this plan as we are the direct contact to you, our donors. We are funding this study to ensure that we have "all our ducks in a row" as we move forward during this exciting time of planning for the future. In partnership with the Library, the volunteers, the community and the City of Rochester, we are working hard to bring you the library you have asked for and need.

Be sure and register to attend our fabulous yearly event, Wit, Wisdom & Wine coming up on January 16. Registration opened November 15 and we have added some great new speakers! I love this event because it showcases the spaces

in the library as various speakers share their knowledge and wit or maybe wisdom! It's a fun, education filled evening topped off with good food and wine as well. We have been working hard to bring you a great event and look forward to seeing many of you here on January 16th.

Thank you for your financial support as a new or long time donor. Your gifts ensure that we can offer the best library services available. You can give online and/or register for Wit, Wisdom & Wine at www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org/wit and join me as we (hopefully) slow down to enjoy the special moments of the holiday season that will soon be here.

Vicki Allen

Rochester Public Library Foundation Executive Director
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vallen@rochester.lib.mn.us
507.328.2387

Congratulations
Rochester Public Library Foundation
on this special recognition!



Donors from August 1st - October 15th, 2015

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15TH ANNUAL



WIT Wisdom & WINE

Saturday
January 16, 2016

6:30-10PM
ROCHESTER
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ENTERTAINMENT & INFORMATIVE SPEAKERS
SILENT AUCTION, JEWELRY RAFFLE,
WINE AND HORS D'OEUVRES

Early Bird Registration: \$75 | \$85 After Jan. 10

FORAGED

- Paul Koerner -

FINE WINES OF ITALY

- Alfonso Aiello -

THE STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

- Tim Penny -

SIMULATION IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

- Dr. Walt Franz -

UNLACED: THE LEGACY OF RED WING SHOE COMPANY

- Clare Pavelka -

LOOKING AT RELIGION THROUGH A 21ST CENTURY LENS

- Father Nick Mezacapa -

THE REGAL MONARCH BUTTERFLY:
THE MYSTERY, THE MIGRATION, THE MAGIC

- Pamela Meyer -

150 YEARS OF LIBRARY SERVICE IN ROCHESTER

- John Hunziker -

BAKING BOOT CAMP FROM THE CIA: WHAT WE LEARNED

- Elaine Case & Bill Wiktor -

THE ME DECADE, THE WORST DECADE EVER, THE DISCO ERA

- Chad Israelson -

Featured
Speakers



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For more information and registration, please visit
rochesterpubliclibrary.org/wit
or contact the Foundation Office at 507-328-2387

My Punch Card: A Visitor's Tale

In October, the Friends' Bookstore received some welcome attention from a surprising source: a mention in *The Myeloma Beacon*, an online publication dedicated to news and information about multiple myeloma (cancer of plasma cells). The following is an excerpt from contributor, April Nelson:



"I am now the proud possessor of a Rochester Library Friends' Bookstore punch card.

I was back in Rochester, Minnesota, in September for a quarterly check at the Mayo Clinic. I had arrived in town from Oregon a few days before my appointment, to give myself the opportunity to collect my urine in relative comfort and without the oversight of the TSA. My husband Warren had not yet joined me from Ohio. So exploring the town on foot, albeit never too long or far from my hotel room, was the order of my days.

Like Thomas Jefferson, I cannot live without my books, so finding the library was a given. The Rochester Public Library is located in the heart of downtown. It has a splendid mural of stuffed bookshelves on its west wall. Even better, it has the Friends Bookstore – a

small but well stocked bookstore that sells library castoffs and good quality donations. After an hour in the library reading, I hit the bookstore.

*Even though I am of an age where I am trying to shed myself of worldly possessions, a good book will always tug at my heart. I was not disappointed. I managed to score a copy of Jill Lepore's *The Mansion of Happiness* for two dollars. And then I came across a vintage *Dictionary of the American Indian* (don't even start me – this is like collecting racially offensive material if you are a member of the race being caricatured) for my Chippewa daughter-in-law, who works at an urban Native American center, and procured that as well.*

When I checked out, the volunteer asked me if I had a punch card. If not, would I like one?

The Friends' Bookstore punch card is a frequent flyer incentive. Buy nine books and the tenth is free up to three dollars.

Oh joy! Rapture!

In addition to the library and its splendid bookstore, Rochester is a center of the Little Free Library movement and without even trying I found six of them within easy walk of my hotel. (Yes, I brought home a book from one of them as well.) There is a wonderful regional artists collective store in the downtown, which I wandered through and bought note cards (being cheaper than the artworks, which I also admired) as I am one of the last humans in America who still communicates by letter. And of course, there is the punch card."

*April Nelson
(The Myeloma Beacon Contributor)*

Bookstore co-manager, Karen Nath, says "This is exactly why we do what we do," adding, "the community donates books, our volunteers donate their time sorting through the books, and people donate their money to buy the books. It's a perfect cycle."

The full article can be found on their website at: www.myelomabeacon.com

Letter from the Presidents of the Friends

Welcome to our second joint newsletter!

We would like to welcome Karen Lemke who is the new Head of Marketing and Community Engagement of the Rochester Public Library. We agree with Director Audrey Betcher's statement - "Karen's combination of journalism and librarianship is the right fit for where the library is heading in the next few years." We look forward to working together with Karen in the years to come.

Since our last newsletter we have had our Rochesterfest Book sale and Fall Book Sale in early October. We want to say Thank You to the 41 volunteers

who put in more than 217 hours of hard work for the Fall Sale which was a huge success. So was our Rochesterfest Book sale in which 51 volunteers donated more than 274 hard working hours.

We also want to say A BIG THANK YOU to all our new members and existing members who have renewed their subscriptions. Each and every dollar that you donate goes towards our efforts in supporting the Rochester Public Library. During this time when the library and the city of Rochester are going through so many expansion ideas and projects we need your support more than ever.

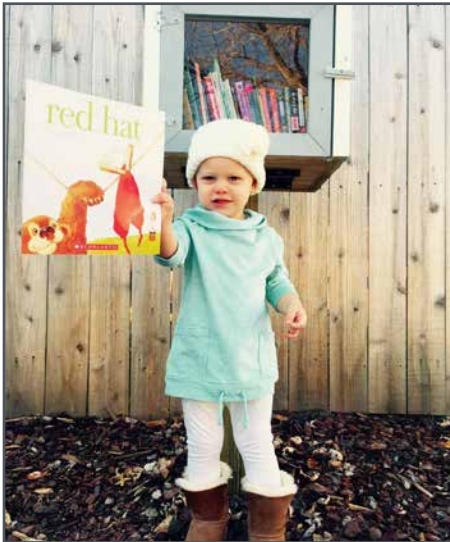
We also want to give our heartfelt thanks to the Rochester Commercial Bankers Association for their donation of \$1,000. This will go a long way in helping us support the Library in various literacy and other initiatives for both children and adults.

And as always a Big Thank You to all the Friends for your continued help and support.

*Phyllis Hambright and
Lathika S. Nair*

*Friends of the Rochester Public Library
Presidents*

News From the Bookstore: 2nd Saturdays



Paisley Mottram shows off a book from her family's Mini-Library

The second Saturday of each month is a good time to stock up on unique, timely books at our "2nd Saturday Sale." These themed sales vary from month-to-month, depending on what we have in stock. In October, we focused on biographies, coffee table books, big books and children's non-fiction books.

2nd Saturday Sales run from 10AM to 1PM every month.

How does your support help Rochester? Every donation (either by bringing in books or by buying them) helps the Friends of the Library support library programs and events. One program we continue to support is the Rochester Mini-Library Initiative. Nichole Osterman, of Marvelous Imaginations Child Care, LLC, is a recent addition to the list of mini library stations throughout Rochester. "The Mini Library project helps bring my neighborhood, friends, and family closer through imagination and fun!" With the help of generous community donors, many of the physical structures, the installation, and the books have all been offered to residents, like Osterman, for free.

"The United Way and Leadership Greater Rochester (LGR) have both been strong partners of this initiative," says Youth Services Librarian Jonathan Allen, adding, "with their assistance, over 70 mini-libraries have been installed throughout Rochester." When combined with the mini-libraries installed by individual residents and groups, there are 117 of them

registered to receive books from the library.

Do you have a mini-library of your own? Contact the library's Youth Services Division (507.328.2003) to learn more about receiving FREE books.

GIFT QUALITY BOOK & BAKE SALE

FRIDAY DECEMBER 4 11AM-5PM and SATURDAY DECEMBER 5 9:30AM-4PM

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GREAT SELECTION OF GIFT-QUALITY BOOKS FOR ALL AGES!
DELICIOUS HOME BAKED GOODS AND OTHER ITEMS.

Celebrating Kay Aune



Sitting at a local coffee shop last month, volunteer Kay Aune enthusiastically told me, "Tomorrow is my birthday!" With her characteristic big smile,

she explained she was celebrating her 71st birthday this year, marked by spending time with husband Robert, son Ray, daughter-in-law Kelly and granddaughter Vivian.

While her family helped her celebrate her birthday, the Friends of the Rochester Library are celebrating Kay. As a voracious reader (she reads 20-30 books a week!), it's no surprise she's one of our many dedicated volunteers. Kay retired from her career as a nursing instructor at Rochester

Technical and Community College in 2005, and started volunteering on the Library Board, Friends of the Library Board, and in the Friends Bookstore in 2006.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF ROCHESTER-AREA AUTHORS

Kay is the brains behind our recent Local Author Celebration event. "I feel there is always the need for a day time activity like a celebration of local poets, artists, and writers without the distraction of wine or beer," she says. And that is when the Friends started organizing this event, at first on a small scale in the summer at the Plummer House in the day time

followed by a bigger fundraising event in the evening (with dinner and drinks!). When the daytime event kept growing, the Friends realized it was time to move. This year's event drew in dozens of area residents and literature lovers.

Kay has loved working at the Bookstore and serving on the Friends' Board. "I liked every single person I have worked with", she said. "We are lucky that we have always had exceptional volunteers". There have been a lot of positive changes since she started volunteering with the Friends, the most significant one being the Destination Medical Center project. She hopes it will bring more and more visibility and expansion for the Library she loves and the city she lives in.

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How to be a Friend

You can become a Friend of the Rochester Public Library. A Friends' membership keeps you in touch with what's happening at our library and directly supports library services and enriches our community.

A variety of membership levels are available. Membership forms are available to pick up in the Friends' Book Store or you can sign up online.

Your membership allows you early admission to preview sales for Rochesterfest and other book sales. Friends are also entitled to a discount on materials purchased in the Friends' Bookstore.

The Rochester Public Library needs a friend like you. Please become a Friend and join today!



The Backstory: Ira Metzger

November 5th was a special day for the library, but also for Ira Metzger. This little guy turned 4 years old on the same day RPL celebrated 150 years of library service.

Mom, Kelsey Metzger, says "We love Rochester Public Library!" So what did they do to celebrate? Ira and his mom made a trip to the library's "Behind-the-Scenes Birthday Party."

Little Ira also received a bathtub sailboat and a green ukulele as birthday gifts.

Sounds like a perfect birthday to us!

Get Ready for our Friends WinterFest Book Sale!

Rochester Public Library Auditorium

Thursday, February 11 • 5-7PM
(Friends' Preview Night)

Friday, February 12 • 9:30AM-5PM

Saturday, February 13 • 9:30AM-5PM

Sunday, February 14 • 1:30-4PM

Sale includes hardback and paperback non-fiction, fiction, and children's books as well as CDs, VHS tapes, and cassettes.

The Friends of the Library help support the library by raising money through book sales. The money raised helps the Rochester Public Library expand their collections and to finance special programs.

