

ALBERT LEA PUBLIC LIBRARY
Lori Barkema, Library Director

Our book, *Albert Lea Remembers*, was the main Library project for 2004. This successful project was sponsored and funded by the FRIENDS of the Library. Community partners included Bev Jackson from the Freeborn County Historical Museum, Grace Haukoos from The Constant Reader, Heidi Cunningham from Community Education and Lori Barkema, Library Director. *Albert Lea Remembers* is a compilation of 100 stories written by 82 local authors, edited and compiled by Joan Claire Graham, in honor of the upcoming city sesquicentennial.

In 2004, the Library staff played an important role in the success of the Minnesota Design Team visit to Albert Lea by serving on the steering committee, creating a website, marketing and promoting this event, and working with the team members to share their vision with the community. Library staff also participated in the Albert Lea Listens strategic planning process.

2004 marks the 35th year of cooperation between the City Council and the County Commissioners to jointly fund the Library so that all Freeborn County residents would have equal access to quality library services.

Library Advisory Board Members

Ken Bertelson
Harlan Bang
Gail Batt – Freeborn County Representative
Grace Haukoos
Kristen McGivern
Roger Lonning
James Munyer – SELCO Representative
Jane Saunders

FRIENDS of the Library Board

Elaine Baer, President
Virginia Sorenson, Vice President
Joanne Johnsrud, Treasurer
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Ruth Pleiss
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Betty Twait
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FRIENDS of the Library and Volunteers

The FRIENDS of the Library provided funds to the Thompson's Nepal Social Service this year with the goal of establishing a sister library in Nepal. Dr. Earl Thompson and his wife Beverley note "By educating the women, you educate a family, and hence, the whole village."

The FRIENDS sponsored an appreciation coffee for our volunteers. Volunteers honored included the Library Advisory Board, FRIENDS, Junior FRIENDS, Senior Outreach and Daycare Delivery Volunteers. The Library is also fortunate to have many young volunteers after school and during the children's summer reading program. The Library would not reach as many people without the contributions of these volunteers.

Junior FRIENDS of the Library

This group was begun in 2004 to promote library services to our younger users. This great team has been wonderful to work with and bring new energy and enthusiasm to our efforts to connect with the community.

Library Staff

Lori Barkema, MLS, Director
Theresa Schmidt, MLS
Sarah Clendineng, MLS
Staci Waltman
Denise Sande
Teresa Kauffmann
Gail Rasmussen
Sandy Soli
Patty Greibrok
Jenny Hanson

Junior FRIENDS of the Library

Jeff Bodensteiner
Erin Brick
Kate Buringa
Matt Dorman
Max King
Logan Tufte
Lilia Walther

The Junior Friends helped promote the Library by cutting radio ads on the theme of “the best back to school supply is FREE and it’s at your library” encouraging their peers to sign up for a library card.

Adult Library Services

The Library staff continues to produce the quarterly City Newsletter and maintain the City web site. These efforts are a very effective way of keeping the community informed about city government and also successful in promoting the Minnesota Design Team events and Albert Lea Listens. Library staff also produces a monthly Jr. FRIENDS of the Library newsletter to promote upcoming events and programs in the Children’s Library and a bi-monthly FRIENDS newsletter to cover broader library issues. We are committed to keeping our community informed about the services provided by the Library and by the other city departments as well.

Fountain Lake Readers continues to be a popular program for our adult library users. Three sessions are held each month with Librarian Sarah Clendineng organizing these events. These reading discussion groups are open to anyone who is interested in attending. The Library also offers Book Club in a Bag kits so that groups can have all the books, reader’s guides and background information they need to host their own reading discussion groups.

The Library continues to promote its **Senior Outreach Services** to Albert Lea residents and also rural Freeborn County residents including the Emmons Community Library. Librarian Theresa Schmidt and staff member Gail Rasmussen coordinate these outreach efforts. Our volunteers are Roger and Marjorie Lonning, Phil and Kathy Rogers, Louis Henderson, C.E. Vollum, Ray Riemer and Gaylord and Shirley Olson. Theresa also provides services to seniors by taking programming out to Oak Park Place.

Children’s Library Services

The Children’s Library held several special events for kids during fall break and again during winter break since when school is out of session there are so many children looking for something to do. And of course, the **Summer Reading Program** continues to draw many children to the Library over the long summer school break. This year the theme was Vote for Reading! The Children’s Library again had an entry in the July 3rd parade. The Children’s Library hosted a Freeborn County Fair Booth which was very popular with the children. Children’s Library also participated in the Family Fun Festival, Relay for Life, and Family Fair. These special events are funded by the FRIENDS of the Library. The FRIENDS also provide funding for several special programs throughout the year including the annual visit by the Zoo Man.

The Library’s **Daycare Delivery** program serves over 40 sites and reaches almost 600 children each month in Albert Lea and Freeborn County with rotating collections of library materials and on-site programming. Librarians Staci Waltman, Patty Greibrok and Jenny Hanson present these story times, manage the rotating collections and recruit delivery volunteers. Volunteers are Richard and Shirley Nelson, Phil and Kathy Rogers, Alice Peterson, Bill Danielsen, Gerald and Vallene Knutson, Earl Jacobsen, Dick Cameron, and Eunice Johnsrud.

The Children’s Library again this year served as the school library for classes from St. Theodore’s. School classes come every week and the Library provides materials, story hours, and library use skills training to children from kindergarten to sixth grade. The Library also presents a weekly after school program of games and crafts each Tuesday during **LAF (Library After School Fun)**.