

Albert Lea Public Library
Peggy Havener, Library Director

2005 has been an eventful year for the Albert Lea Public Library. The staff welcomed a new Director, Peggy Havener, in July. Ms. Havener is committed to staff involvement and teamwork. She has provided the much needed time for staff meetings by changing the hours of operation. This extra time provides the staff with the time needed to plan and prepare in order to better serve the patrons. The library staff and the Director were focused on the appearance of the library and the accessibility of the collection. The library had become overcrowded and unattractive. New shelving, circulation desk, and reading chairs have been added to the Adult Library. The new shelving created more floor space which now provides the patrons with tables and chairs by the window where they can enjoy both the Library and its view. The new circulation desk has an ADA component to better serve our patrons with disabilities. The Children's Library has new shelving that has eliminated the book corrals, and again, the collection is easier to access by both patrons and staff. These positive changes have been appreciated by both the staff and the patrons. The Library now offers wireless internet access in the Adult Library and the lobby of the City Center for anyone with a wireless enabled laptop. This is a service that is being used by both local residents and out of town visitors as an added value to library services. It has been well received and appreciated by businesses, students, and patrons.

Ms. Havener was only one of several personnel changes in the Library. Theresa Schmidt did an outstanding job as Interim Director and in recognition of her hard work and dedication she was promoted to Library Services Manager. The staff also saw the addition of 4 new part-time clerks. The staff has been taking and will continue to take advantage of the training opportunities offered by SELCO. This training enables the staff to make the best use of our available technology.

2005 marks the 36th year of joint library funding by the City of Albert Lea and Freeborn County. Their continued support insures that all residents have free access to library material and services.

Library Advisory Board Members

Ken Bertelson
Harlan Bang
Gail Batt – Freeborn County Representative
Grace Haukoos
Gary Koeder
Kristen McGivern – SELCO Representative
Jane Saunders

Library Staff

Peggy Havener, MLS, Director
Theresa Schmidt, MLS
Sarah Clendineng, MLS
Staci Waltman
Denise Sande
Gail Rasmussen
Sandy Soli
Patty Greibrok
Cindy Gandrud
April Chance
Jenny Jensen
Elisabeth Dyvig

FRIENDS of the Library Board

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Virginia Sorenson, Vice President
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FRIENDS of the Library and Volunteers:

This year the FRIENDS of the Library provided funds for reading chairs, Adult Library shelving, Children and Adult Programming, and snacks and treats. They also sponsored the annual appreciation coffee for the many volunteers who broaden the scope of the Library by making outreach deliveries. The FRIENDS are an invaluable asset to the Albert Lea Public Library not only for their financial support, but because of the many services they do for the Library.

Programming:

Library staff produces a quarterly newsletter promoting upcoming events and programs in both the Children's and Adult Libraries. This newsletter also serves as a way to keep the community informed about changes and improvements in the Library and to library services.

Adult Programming:

Fountain Lake Readers continues to be a popular program for our adult library users. Two 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 continues to offer 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 book discussion groups.

Adult Summer Reading Program:

This past summer, we held our first Adult Summer Reading program in addition to the usual Children's Summer Reading Program. The Adult program was very successful with many people registered to keep track of their reading and the majority of those completing at least the first of three reading tickets. We also had six different evening programs, four of which focused on the best selling book The DaVinci Code.

Senior Outreach:

The Library continues to serve the patrons of Albert Lea and Freeborn County. Librarian Theresa Schmidt and staff member Gail Rasmussen coordinate these outreach efforts. The volunteers who facilitate this program are: Roger and Marjorie Lonning, Phil and Kathy Rogers, Louis Henderson, Ray Riemer, and Gaylord and Shirley Olson. The outreach collection includes music CDs, videotapes, and books on tape.

Children Programming:

As usual, the Children's Library has been bustling with events throughout the year. There have been more than 20 special events which have been attended by more than 2,000 children. These events included the Harry Potter Book Event, the Zoo Man, and the Narnia Party just to name a few.

The Children's Library offers story time from September to May. The Library has pre-school story time, toddler story time, and LAF (Library After School Fun). These programs are offered weekly and have an average attendance of 22 to 25 children.

The Children's Library also serves as the school library for classes from St. Theodore's School. Their classes come to the Library every week and the Library provides materials, story hours, and library use skill training to their classes from kindergarten through the sixth grade.

Summer Reading Program:

The summer of 2005 was as busy as ever at the Library, offering parents and children a variety of fun events all during the summer months. The summer reading program, Stampede to Read, was a great success with more than 556 children participating. The Children's Library again had an entry in the July 3rd parade and also hosted a booth at the Freeborn County Fair in August; both are favorites with the kids.

Daycare Delivery and Outreach:

The Library's Daycare Delivery program serves over 41 sites and reaches almost 600 children each month in Albert Lea and Freeborn County with rotating collections of library materials. Librarians Staci Waltman, Patty Greibrok, and April Chance 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. Staci Waltman and Patty Greibrok also manage the Daycare Outreach Program. They visit 26 sites a month to present a story time with stories, songs, and poetry.