



The Next Chapter

Newsletter of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation

'Hidden Treasure' exhibit at CRMA to showcase library's collection of children's book illustrations

Curious George, Babar, Madeline, Dennis the Menace and dozens of other classic children's book characters will share the limelight during an upcoming Cedar Rapids Museum of Art (CRMA) exhibit featuring one of the library's most valuable but rarely viewed collections.

Called "Hidden Treasure: Original Children's Book Illustration from the Cedar Rapids Public Library," the exhibit will run from January 27 through May 13, showcasing 120 works chosen by the museum staff from the library's collection of more than 850 original children's book illustrations.

The extraordinary collection is the legacy of CRPL children's librarian Evelyn Zerzanek, who served the library for 47 years before retiring in 1972. Zerzanek and her staff wrote letters to hundreds of artists asking them to donate an original artwork from one of their books. Many responded, sending existing illustrations or even creating new ones that were inscribed as gifts

to the children of Cedar Rapids. The resulting collection was appraised at a value of \$750,000 two decades ago, says CRPL Assistant Director Tamara Glise.

CRMA Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Sean Ulmer says the museum at first planned to mount a small exhibit of works from the collection. "The more I learned and saw, the more I felt that the work was so strong and interesting and it was such a wonderful collection that we needed a big show to give a sense of its breadth and depth."

In conjunction with the exhibit, the library and art museum will collaborate on a series of events and activities intended to draw visitors to both institutions, beginning with a Family Fun Day on January 27. The celebration will include special story times, craft activities and walking storybook characters, says Glise.

"We will also kick off an inter-generational reading program with kits of books that adults and children can read together, using books with

artworks in the exhibit – including some older books that adults may know but children may not have read. This will be a way for adults to share favorite books with their children." Other events will include visits by children's book authors and illustrators, a treasure hunt and a puppet show.

"This is one of the most important projects we have ever undertaken," says the library's Glise. "It's one of our most meaningful collaborations with another organization, and we have come to realize that the collection itself may be one of the most significant collections of children's illustrations in the country."

Evelyn Zerzanek, who died in 1995, provided a major gift to the library through her estate, earmarking the funds for children's materials and services. In addition to its ongoing support for purchases of children's books and materials, the Foundation is pleased to honor her wishes through its support for programming related to the "Hidden Treasure" exhibit.



This Maurice Sendak illustration was created for the Cedar Rapids Public Library in the late 1950s in response to a request from children's librarian Evelyn Zerzanek.



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enhances the quality of
the Cedar Rapids Public
Library services to the
community by securing
resources to support
library programs and
projects not normally
met by public funding.*

Careers, cars, heritage and more: Library databases are portals of discovery

David Faribault, a semi-retired investment advisor, visits the library weekly to view information and advice about stocks available through the online Value Line investment survey.

“I’ve always searched for an independent, reliable source of market information – unbiased by the ‘sell’ attitude of brokerage firms,” he says. Faribault used to scour the library’s print version of Value Line, but now appreciates being able to go online to obtain the most timely information.

Another library patron, Jim Pippenger, has created a foundation to provide financial support to military chaplains. To guide his investment choices, he also studies Value Line, as well as the library’s print version of the Standard and Poor’s 500 Index.

“I have used the information to develop a worksheet of about 500 selected companies we’re investing in,” he explains. Nearing his 86th birthday, Pippenger says that the library’s resources have helped him put a solid plan in place for the trustees who will succeed him. He also praises “the excellent service I’ve had at the library when I’m in trouble online.”

Like other patrons, Faribault and Pippenger have discovered that library resources can provide useful and interesting information about an amazing variety of topics.

The library has always been a source of published material for those wishing to start businesses or pursue other interests, says Gerry Hopkins, a library audiovisual specialist. Now online databases available through the library – including some that can be accessed from home with a library ID number and some that must be viewed on a library computer – have opened up whole new worlds of information.



Jim Pippenger (right) and colleague Brad Dirks have been using stock market surveys available through the library to manage the assets of the foundation Pippenger founded.

“The advantages are speed, searchability and ease of use,” says Hopkins. “Plus more than one person can use them at a time.”

To check out the databases available through the CRPL, go to the library’s website (www.crlibrary.org), click on “Reference,” then click “Research Databases.” Here are a few of the intriguing sites you’ll find:

Heritage Quest – census records and other information to aid genealogy research

Auto Repair Reference Center – information about how to make repairs to vehicles indexed by year, make and model

Learning Express – practice tests and tutorials to help users prepare for academic or licensing exams

Vocational Biographies – descriptions, real-life examples and advice about a host of careers

NoveList – information about books and authors, including the popular “Read-Alikes” feature that directs readers to books and authors similar to their favorites

Being a dad inspires board member's support for CRPL

Like many gown-ups, CRPL Foundation board member and treasurer Todd Kerska had lost the habit of visiting the library that he enjoyed as a child growing up in Cedar Rapids.

"As I had kids of my own, I began frequenting the library again," he says. These days, he and his wife Tawnie make weekly trips to the library with their son Austin, 9, and daughter Kaitlin, 5. "We go for the activities, like story time or crafts, and they just love to read. Our whole family does."

Kerska, who is vice president of operations and information systems at Guaranty Bank, believes it's important for the public library to offer a wide variety of materials, including books, CDs, DVDs and programs for children and adults. For that reason, he says, he accepted eagerly when bank chairman Harold Becker encouraged him to become a member of the Foundation Board.

"The Foundation's role is to provide services and financial support to the library beyond what its budget can meet, including special projects such as the Intelligent Library System."



Foundation board member Todd Kerska gets out of his office and into the library on a regular basis, thanks to his children.

Van Vechten window still lighting the way after 100 years



Have you ever stopped to admire the beautiful stained glass window above the library's grand staircase? Known as the Van Vechten window, it was given to the library as a memorial to Ada Van Vechten, who led efforts to found the public library in Cedar Rapids in 1905. The window, which reflects Ada's love of the outdoors with its colorful sky and flowers, was installed in the library's Carnegie Building (now part of the Museum of Art) in 1907 and became a centerpiece of the new library building in 1985.

The library will mark the 100th anniversary of the Van Vechten window with a speaker and reception at 2 pm, Sunday, February 4, 2007. Library patrons are invited to join in this special remembrance of the remarkable woman who inspired our community to work toward the dream of creating a free public library.

Get more out of your giving

Recently I read that the majority of Americans want to give to charity but most of us don't have a giving plan. That includes me.

My husband and I are in the group that gives to charity willy-nilly – a technical term used to describe donors who contribute here and there throughout the year, usually to organizations and causes that catch us on pay day.

No more. We put together a plan for 2007. We listed all the organizations we've given to in recent years, added a few we would like to support, then decided which ones we are passionate about. (The Library Foundation is at the top of the list, of course!)

We came up with a total cash amount we are comfortable giving away, figured the tax advantage, and divided the amount among the causes that made the final cut.

The result: We feel great about directing our dollars to organizations important to us, and we will actually give more than in previous years because we aren't giving in our usual piecemeal manner. It's a fact that when donors eyeball how much they give without actually knowing how much they can afford to give, they usually underestimate how much they can afford. Several decisions over time make total donations "feel" more costly.

So, when we are asked for donations next year, we will provide the appropriate response based on our 2007 charitable giving plan – unless the request happens to be made on pay day.

*Marie DeVries
CRPL Library Foundation Director*



Last call for 2006 gifts

If you missed us last time, please consider a gift to the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation. A contribution in honor of a friend or family member can be a great Christmas present. Include relevant information in the envelope provided with this newsletter.

OOPS

An incorrect circulation number was printed in the last issue. The library's circulation for FY06 was 1,156,124, about a six percent increase over the previous fiscal year.



Celebrating our supporters

Joan Thaler (left), president of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation, talks with Keith and Neva Griem of Cedar Rapids. They were among more than 100 library supporters who attended a Foundation reception in October.



Cedar Rapids Public Library
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