

Brunswick Area Public Library

The residents of Brunswick and the surrounding communities can say with pride, "Brunswick Area Public Library is OUR library" because a vast majority of the people in this area have donated money, labor, talents, or a combination of all three.

On June 6, 1970, the Worthwhile Club discussed the need for a public library in Brunswick. The president appointed Mrs. Laurence Storer, Mrs. Fred Heimer, and Mrs. Wm. Holtmeyer, Jr., as members of a public relations committee. They volunteered to have the establishment of a library as their project for the year. The committee sent a letter to the president of every community organization, asking that a representative of each club attend the October Community Betterment Committee meeting to discuss the organization of a library.

A delegation, composed of Mrs. Lloyd Herring, Mrs. Kenneth Richardson, and Mrs. Laurence Storer, met with the City Council asking them if the city would provide the space on the east side of the first floor of the City Hall for a library. The Council agreed to provide the space and pay for the utilities; in return, the library committee promised to provide volunteer labor to repair, redecorate, rewire, and install a new lighting system.

A public meeting was held in the high school library with almost a hundred people attending. A slate of officers placed by Mick Reichert, representing the Community Betterment Committee, was elected by acclamation. Those elected as trustees were: J. McKinny, Walter Riffle, Mrs. Evelyn Smith, Mrs. Constance Fristo, Mrs. Ann Herring, Mrs. Cynthia Holtmeyer, Jack Lukehart, Mrs. Archadean Storer, and Mrs. Llenell Richardson. During a meeting of the trustees, Mrs. Storer was elected president; Mr. Riffle, vice-president; Mrs. Smith, secretary; and Mrs. Holtmeyer, treasurer. Area representatives elected were: Mrs. Elmer Leimkuehler, Dalton; Claude Murray, Triplett; Lee Widhalm, Indian Grove; Mrs. Jack Squires, DeWitt.

Committees named were: By-laws and constitution, Mr. Hibler, chairman, Mr. Lukehart, and Mr. Riffle; Housing, Mrs. Smith, chairman, Mrs. Holtmeyer, and Mr. Lukehart; Budget and Finance, Mr. Riffle, chairman, Mrs. Herring, Mrs. Fristo, Mrs. Holtmeyer; Book, Mrs. Storer, chairman, Mrs. Llenell Richardson and Mr. McKinny; Special Finance and Membership Drive committee; Mrs. Herring and Mrs. Kenneth Richardson, co-chairmen. Many others became members of this committee and helped to solicit money. Members of the high school library club, Boy Scouts, and other high school students helped to collect books donated by the people of the town and later helped transport them to the city hall from the elementary school, where they had been stored.

Mrs. Herring and Mrs. Richardson set \$5,000 as their goal. By June 17, 1971, the goal had been exceeded by \$270.63. Membership dues had been set at \$5.00, but the first twelve donors averaged \$100 per family; 512 family membership cards were issued and every gift, large and small, was appreciated. Each gift represented a family interested in having a library. The largest single contribution was money for the Mary Jo Swan collection of children's books, given by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Swan in memory of their daughter, Mary Jo. Since that time, many books have been given in memory of friends and loved ones.

Volunteers built and repaired shelving, and redecorated the entire library space. The plumbing labor was donated; lighting fixtures and materials were furnished at cost, with part of the labor being donated. Mrs. Storer, assisted by Mrs. Jane Bahr, and Mrs. Ollie Belle Hedrick processed approximately 2,500 books in a room on the second floor of the City Hall (with no air-conditioning), while the library was being redecorated. They were aided in shelving the books by the high school library club. Mrs. Heimer, a professional librarian, assisted in the selection of the books.

More than 200 persons attended the opening of the Brunswick Area Public Library on a Sunday in October 1971. When the library opened, Mrs. Herring reported that \$6,195.03 had been contributed. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Romie Spence, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Richardson, and Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Richardson, Jr. donated \$154.26 in magazine subscriptions. The Commerce Bank of Brunswick donated a Missouri flag with stand and a table with eight chairs. Funds were raised again in 1974 through an auction to finance a new \$1,500 heating and cooling system.

Trustees and officers for 1976-77 were: Mrs. Lloyd Herring, president; Mrs. Jess Smith, vice-president; Mrs. Laurence Storer, secretary; Mrs. Wm. Holtmeyer, Jr., treasurer; other trustees: Walter Riffle, Mrs. Winst: Walter Riffle, Mrs. Winston Blanton, C. N. (Dutch) Stroemer, Mrs. Charles Richardson, and J. J. McKinny. Area Representatives: Mrs. Jack Squires, DeWitt; Mrs. Lawrence Kipping, Triplett; Mrs. Bob Littleton, Dalton; Mrs. Lee Widhalm, Indian Grove.

Mainly volunteers staff the library, but we are grateful for the workers who assist in the library work under the following federally financed programs: Neighborhood Youth Corps, Green Thumb, and Main Stream programs, and CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Agency). The library is financed by gifts from many friends of the library; one member of the City Council gives his annual salary from the city to the library. Mrs. Kenneth Richardson, Busy Brunswicker 4-H members, Mrs. C. N. Stroemer, and Rho-Gamma of Beta

Sigma Phi have conducted story hour for children. Mrs. Carlos Edwards of Carrollton has contributed clever and appropriate posters each month.

The establishment and maintenance of our library of more than 6,600 books is a truly magnificent example of cooperation, and proves that the people of Brunswick and of the surrounding communities still have a high degree of public spirit.

The years following

That spirit of dedication continues today in totally volunteer staffs and librarians. There have been two librarians since Mrs. Archadean Storer headed up the new collection and began the work of structuring a library. Geraldine Stroemer was her successor and held the librarian position for many years. She worked diligently to accumulate a selection of books, both well rounded in subject matter and to the liking of the patrons served. Lynn Leimkuehler followed as librarian in 2005. The library was renovated under her management, and computers were installed for both staff and public use. With the computers came the beginning of the automation process. Staff volunteers started, and continue, to bar code books and enter them into a computer program. The program allows the user to simply scan the bar code of a book to accomplish all library transactions. The renovation and the computers, along with other services, were made possible by the generosity of civic minded and dedicated individuals. For almost forty-four years now, library patrons have derived a great deal of reading pleasure from the efforts of those who established the library in Brunswick and those who followed. Please come join us.

Family/Individual Membership is \$18.00 yearly.

Services offered: Books

Audio Books

Movie DVD's

Magazines

Local Newspapers

Bound Historical Brunswickers

Copier

Computer Use/Printer/Internet Access

Local Library Card Catalog available through Internet