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## Census 2010 Anime Clubs Brings Teens Together Around Japanese Art

On April 1, 2010, the nation will take part in the national census. Libraries across Minnesota are partnering with Census 2010 planners to ensure citizens have the information they need to complete their census forms correctly.

Census data helps to determine how more than \$400 billion of federal funding each year is spent on infrastructure and services like job training centers, schools, bridges, tunnels and other public works projects.

That's why Great River Regional Library (GRRL) will assist the census bureau in informing the public about their responsibility to provide information requested. Census bureau staff plan to be at all 32 GRRL branches in the final week of March so they can provide information and answer questions.

Visit your local GRRL branch library for more information.

Teenagers interested in Japanese animation, cartoons and culture are meeting in *Anime* clubs at Great River Regional Library (GRRL) branches.

It's a cultural reversal of sorts. For decades, kids from other countries have been fascinated by American pop culture. Today, the Japanese full-length picture books called *manga* and the animated video versions called *anime* have a huge following among young Americans. Some of the characters and series, such as Hello Kitty, Dragon Ball Z and Yu-Gi-Oh have passed from sub-culture to mass culture.

Club activities are coordinated by Chris Mallo, GRRL's Children's Services Specialist. She compiles club activity kits including books and videos and a newsletter about new releases and the artists who create them. She uses the kit first with the St. Cloud club of about 25 teens, then routes the kits to Big Lake, Buffalo, Elk River and Monticello. Staff at those locations adapt the materials to meet local interests.

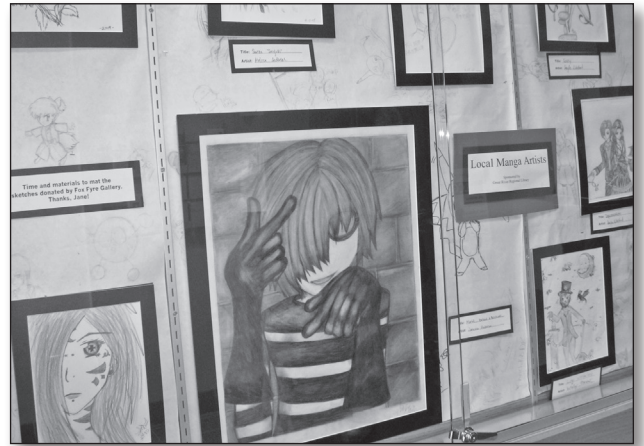
"There's a broad cross-section of people who enjoy things other than the standard fare," Mallo said. "The teens in the anime clubs get really excited learning about Japanese culture."

Buffalo Public Library Branch Assistant Jill Mertes coordinates the Buffalo club, which in 2009 put on its own art show of anime style. "They are wonderful, wonderful kids, artistic and creative," she said.

"I've been a hard-core anime fan since I was about eight, almost eleven years now," said Buffalo club member Janessa Anderson. "I have participated in things like anime conventions. When we were able to get the anime club started at the Buffalo Public Library I was ecstatic. It gives us a chance to introduce anime to those who are interested. It also allows fans to discover new series."



Buffalo Public Library's anime club brings teens together around their shared interest in Japanese animation. They staged their own exhibit of anime-inspired artwork in the fall of 2009. (below).



## Library Business Soared in 2009 as Checkouts Set Record Pace

The two numbers most used by libraries to measure business increased at Great River Regional Library (GRRL) in 2009: checkout sessions increased 15 percent compared to 2008, and items checked out (total circulation) also increased 15 percent. The increases continue the upward trend of GRRL library use, which has seen total circulation soar by 41 percent since 2004, from 2.9 million in 2004 to 4.1 million in 2009.

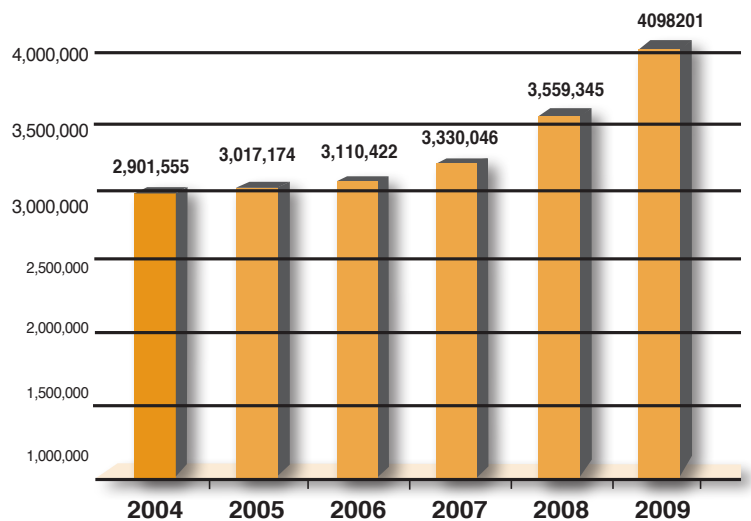
"This is a significant jump for GRRL, considering that five years ago the number of items checked out had not yet broken 3 million," said GRRL Director Kirsty Smith. "If we continue at this rate, it will only take two more years to jump another million."

Internet service shows even more dramatic growth, from 134,000 patron Internet sessions in 2004 to 264,000 in 2009, a 97 percent increase. "When GRRL first got Internet computers, most households didn't have them, and it was a much-needed service," said Karen Pundsack, Patron Services Coordinator. "Now, even though many households have computers, it's still an in-demand service. It's even more important in our rural areas where high-speed and wireless are not as accessible. The library is the only wireless hotspot in some of our smaller branch communities."

GRRL also looks at its number of cardholders as a measure of business activity. From 2004 to 2009 the number of cardholders grew 17 percent to nearly 134,000 cardholders. During the same period, U.S. Census Bureau estimates show the regional population for Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, and Wright counties increased only 11 percent.

"GRRL is definitely reaching out to more people, and they are using our services more intensively," said Pundsack. "Every new cardholder means exponentially more business for us. In their pursuit of learning, cardholders borrow materials, need reference assistance, use computers, and attend programs."

Circulation History 2004-2009



### BUDGETS

"We have looked at and will continue to look at how we can meet our patrons needs more efficiently," said Pundsack. "As our book budget has remained flat and materials costs increased, we had a lot less buying power. We now lease rather than buy outright many popular best-selling books. Our patrons' needs are still met, but our staff processing time has been reduced. Every improvement, no matter how small, helps us keep Central Minnesota reading, learning, and growing in healthy ways."

## Donations to GRRL in 2009 Show Libraries Valued; Public Support Helps Fund Collection Enhancements

Thanks to more than 2,300 donors in 2009, Great River Regional Library (GRRL) continues to be a recognized source of knowledge and information in Central Minnesota, helping more than 450,000 people transform and enrich their lives.

Generous library supporters donated more than \$268,000 in 2009. This support was used to meet learning needs by lending 4.1 million books and other items during the year – a 41 percent increase since 2004. Another 60,000 people attended library programs last year such as Computer Instruction for Seniors, Interest and Assessment Job Search Tools, Baby Bounce, book clubs, and Game Night @ Your Library. More than 45,000 engaged in meaningful community conversations by using public meeting and conference rooms.

More than 70 percent of the donations received in 2009 were in support of the Library Plus You Fundraising Campaign to meet increased needs for books and other information and entertainment resources, said Diane Vosen, Communications and Fund Development Coordinator. “A big part of this motivation was the challenge grant from the Morgan Family Foundation, which matched contributions from

the public designated for improving the collection. This alone generated \$66,000 in donations from the public.”

More than \$17,000 was raised through the organization’s annual High \$5 fundraising drive in March. “We ask library users who value our services to tell us ‘Good job!’ by making a \$5 donation; more than 1,700 library lovers responded. With the economy still sluggish, we are seeing many people turn to GRRL for the first time for things they might have purchased in the past. They are more than happy to donate \$5 when they’re borrowing an average of \$140 of materials every visit,” Vosen said.

Financial support from individuals, businesses, organizations, Friends of the Library, and foundations has become essential, as it provides resources for both ongoing and special projects at GRRL.

“We’ll continue advocating for sufficient public funding of libraries,” said GRRL Director Kirsty Smith. “Meanwhile, this private support is increasingly important in maintaining our services and resources, and we are very appreciative of our donors who give generously when we ask.”



What does it mean to you?  
Job well done? Great work?  
We hope so.

We hope you’ll consider giving GRRL a High \$5 for all we did last year and for what we’ll do in 2010. We added Internet terminals, books, and programming options. With new buildings opening in Staples and St. Michael, and a remodeling in Buffalo, we’ll provide even better service in 2010. You can help us to continue providing outstanding library services with a donation of \$5 or more.

**Look for more information about High \$5 at your library, or check our website at [www.griver.org](http://www.griver.org).**

### Request Response Earns Kudos

A Great River Regional Library (GRRL) patron recently wrote, “I wanted to compliment your library system. I order books that I think will be too new to be in the library and you almost always have them.

“In fact, just about every book I order is in your collection. Who ever does your ordering is great. Keep it up. Your ordering system must be staffed by some hard workers as I receive my books in a very timely fashion.”

With so many choices, how does a library decide which videos, books, magazines and DVDs to buy?

One way is to let library users guide you, says Mic Golden, GRRL’s Collection & Distribution Coordinator.

Making requests is easy. The top bar of the [www.griver.org](http://www.griver.org) Library Catalog has a tab for “Suggest a Title.” Simply follow directions to make your suggestion, Golden said, and staff will give it a high priority!

“We receive about 20,000 requests a year,” she said. “Many of those we purchase. Some we interlibrary loan, and some we don’t obtain, but we always respond.”

# Theater, Authors, & Musicians

Great River Regional Library is pleased to present brand-new programs in 2010 to preserve Minnesota’s arts and cultural heritage

*Free and open to the public, these exciting upcoming programs include:*

March 23	Cartoon Art Workshop	Cokato Public Library
March 25	Guthrie Theatre workshop: Intro to Stage Combat	Becker Public Library
March 27	Genealogy Laptop Lab	Little Falls Carnegie Library
March 27	Guthrie Theatre workshop: Intro to Memoirs	Foley Public Library
March 30	Jack Pearson: Song-Strummin’ Storyman	Delano Public Library
April 1	Author Jonathan Friesen	Elk River Public Library
April 1	Perpetual Vaudeville	Monticello Public Library
April 5	Gary Harbo, author, illustrator	Roy Simms Community Library, St. Michael
April 5	Tehim Kehoe, author & inventor	Becker Public Library
April 7	Golden String Trio	Royalton Public Library
April 24	Mixed Blood Theatre’s “HijabTube”	St. Cloud Public Library
April 24	Author Douglas Wood & Musician George Maurer: Song & Story	Paynesville Area Auditorium
May 8	Mixed Blood Theatre’s “HijabTube”	Upsala Public Library
May 11	Minnesota Author Lorna Landvik	Myrtle Mabee Library, Belgrade

These programs are funded by the people of Minnesota, with your vote in November 2008 to dedicate funding to preserve Minnesota’s arts and cultural heritage.

Find a complete listing of these and other events, as well as registration information, on our Events page at [www.griver.org](http://www.griver.org).

## GRRL Management Structure Places Patron Services at Center

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) reorganized its management structure in 2009. Some positions were eliminated and others reorganized to place increased focus on service to patrons.

Karen Pundsack was named Patron Services Coordinator and heads the newly formed Patron Services department. Prior to taking her new position, Pundsack was Branch Manager of the Albany Public Library where she earned a reputation as a creative, thoughtful team member comfortable with new technologies. Her new job is to ensure the library provides services patrons want, today and tomorrow.

"I just read a prediction that books will be obsolete in a decade," Pundsack said. "I don't believe that to be true, but the library needs to think about it. What would that mean? How do we prepare ourselves so we are able to provide all of the online and electronic resources our patrons are going to want, without losing the personal touch?"

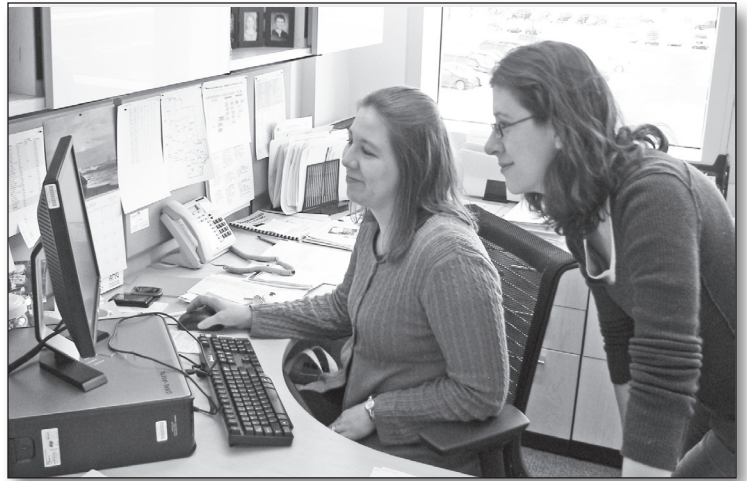
Pundsack is assisted by Brandi Canter, Janie LaBree and Michele Monson, three Regional Supervisors responsible for supervising the Branch Managers of the region's libraries. They ensure the direction Pundsack provides doesn't waver over time and distance. "We meet and we talk about changes. I do a lot of reading about services provided by other libraries. I'd like us to stay ahead of the curve," Pundsack said.

She and her staff are managing a major new initiative. In 2008, Minnesota's voters approved funding to preserve the state's arts and cultural heritage. Some of that funding was allocated to libraries for programming purposes. As a result, GRRL is providing programming of an unprecedented quantity and quality in 2010. "Because of the scope, we need to manage programming centrally," Pundsack said. "We have contracts with Mixed Blood Theatre, with the Guthrie, with the Minnesota Zoo, and with many individual authors, artists and musicians."

Pundsack is looking at the big picture; Beth Ringsmuth-Stolpman is taking care of the details. Ringsmuth-Stolpman is the Patron Services Specialist, a new position largely responsible for coordinating programming. For example, she will coordinate two visits of the Minnesota Zoomobile to each of GRRL's 32 branches in the first half of 2010.

*"How do we prepare ourselves so we are able to provide all of the online and electronic resources our patron are going to want, without losing the personal touch?"*

Karen Pundsack, Patron Services Coordinator



Patron Services Coordinator Karen Pundsack and Patron Services Specialist Beth Ringsmuth-Stolpman read a library patron's comments online.

"She's also the go-to person with reference to the Winter Reading Program and the Summer Reading Program," Pundsack said. "And we plan to expand our programming for adults and teens."

At branch libraries in St. Cloud and Elk River, patrons can place materials on hold, receive email telling them when those items arrive, go retrieve them from a designated shelf, and use self-checkout machines to check them out, all without speaking once to library staff. Technology is changing faster than behavior, and some patrons adapt to new technologies faster than others.

"That model of service is working for some people and meeting their needs, so we need to look at whether we should do it elsewhere," Pundsack said. "We need to find a balance between technology and personal service."

GRRL's strength, according to Pundsack, is its centralized structure and the individual skills and knowledge of its employees. That combination has the potential to create efficient, innovative services. Technology may drive changes and so may the economy, Pundsack said. "We know the people who use our libraries like them, but what about the people who aren't using our libraries? What can we be doing or what should we be doing to make ourselves valuable to them?"

## Additional Magazines for 2010 Expand Selection Available Across Region

Sometimes you just don't have time to read a book. That's why they make magazines.

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) has a great selection of magazines for readers to enjoy and learn from. Some are special interest, like "Guitar Player" magazine; others, like "Time" and "The Ladies' Home Journal" are more general.

More than 50 new titles were added for 2010. Some are on the shelf at your local library and the rest you can find on GRRL's online catalog. If you do a subject search of the catalog using the subject term "magazines" you will see GRRL has more than 400 different titles available. New titles were selected from public requests, usage data, and staff input. The current issue of a magazine is available for use inside the library. Back issues are available for checkout, just like books. Here are a few of the new titles this year.

*All You* (women's health, recipes, relationships, etc.); *Art Jewelry* (for jewelry makers); *Atlantis Rising* (ancient mysteries, future science); *Autism Spectrum* (for families affected by autism); *Bark* (a dog

magazine); *Chile Pepper* (for people who like bold-flavored food); *Click* (science and nature for children); *Dish* (fashion and style for "young women of all ages"); *Disney and Me* (for children); *Fast Company* (business, with focus on new technology); *Fresh Home* (easy ideas for hands-on people); *Game Pro* (video games and systems); *Good Old Days* (nostalgia); *Kiki* (for girls "with style and substance"); *Living Crafts* (for socially conscious crafters); *Mystery Scene* (novels, films, TV); *Spin* (contemporary music); *Stringing* (stringing, beading, etc.); *Twist* (celebrity teen magazine); *VegNews* (vegan news and food); *Warsan Times* (Somali news).



## Thanks to Donors for Their Contributions to GRRL Services

**Thank you to these generous donors who donated \$250 or more to GRRL or the "Library Plus You" fundraising campaign Oct. 1, 2009 through Jan. 22, 2010.**

Array Services Group, Inc., Sartell  
Christopher and Brenda Behm, Maple Lake  
Jill and John Bishop, Annandale  
Diane and John Borgert, Swanville  
Bob and Marsha Bunger, Milaca  
Jennifer and Jeff Edling, Becker  
Emerging Leaders Forum, St. Cloud  
Dale and Carol Emmel, Sauk Centre  
Friends of the Library, Buffalo  
Friends of the Library, Little Falls  
Friends of the Library, Long Prairie  
Friends of the Library, Rockford  
Friends of the Library, St. Cloud  
GLTArchitects, St. Cloud  
Grey Eagle - Burtrum Lions Club, Grey Eagle  
Nancy and Ralph Gundersen, St. Cloud  
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Robert Klein, Monticello  
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Charlie and Maureen Spanier, St. Cloud  
St. Cloud Reading Room Society, GFWC, St. Cloud  
State Bank of Cold Spring, Cold Spring  
The Artists Company, Los Angeles, CA  
Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, St. Cloud  
Wal-Mart, St. Cloud  
Doris and Sylvester Weiman, St. Cloud  
Sharon Widstrom, St. Cloud

## Community Gets Behind Staples Library In New City Building

Patrons of the Staples Public Library are enjoying their new library as of February 1, 2010.

In 2009 the City of Staples received a Minnesota State Public Library Accessibility and Construction matching grant of \$420,000 to use for a new library. That grant pushed planning for a new city building from paper to reality.

"I think the city has been working toward this for about ten years," said Staples City Administrator Nate Mathews.

Front doors of the new building enter to an atrium with city offices and council chambers to the left, the library to the right. The council chambers can be entered from the library, and a movable wall partitions part of that space for small storytime activities. For programs requiring more room, the entire council chamber will be available.

Through Gates Grant funding of an Opportunity Online Hardware Grant, the library will receive four additional Internet stations in 2010 and two more in 2011. One of the new stations will be wheelchair accessible.

The Friends of the Staples Public Library have raised \$30,000 toward the building. That money has been spent on furniture, lighting, artwork, an outdoor bench and a bike rack. "They have been very involved," said GRRL Regional Supervisor Janie LaBree, "right up to ordering food and buying prizes for the Grand Opening."

The library is very important to the Staples area, Mathews said. He estimates the city population at 3,300 and the surrounding rural area population at 4,000. "We have a relatively high poverty level in the area, and many people don't have the information resources you expect closer to the Twin Cities metro area," he said. "Having fast Internet service at the library and additional Internet stations, as well as all the other informational resources in this library is great for the community."



The new Staples library stands ready to receive customers for the first time on Feb. 1.

*"Having fast Internet service at the library and additional Internet stations, as well as all the other informational resources, is great for the community."*

Nate Mathews, Staples City Administrator

The building includes a variety of 'green' features. Carbon dioxide sensors measure the number of people and adjust heating controls. Lighting fixtures have multiple settings between on and off. Windows actually open, so nature can do some of the work. .

When people visit the library they'll also find a refreshed collection of materials on the shelves. Many of the older and unused items have been removed, LaBree said, and GRRL staff is directing new materials to the Staples branch as multiple copies are purchased and processed. "We're starting off with a fresh collection in a wonderful new building."

## St. Michael New Building Puts Library By City Hall, Senior Center

The City of St. Michael received a Public Library Accessibility and Construction grant through the Minnesota Department of Education in 2009.

The grant of \$400,000 is helping build a project including city hall, a senior center, community room and historical society offices. Groundbreaking took place in November, 2009.

A framework of steel girders is all that shows of the building at this time,

but walls will soon begin to fill the empty spaces in between, according to Marla Scherber, the St. Michael Branch Manager.

A rendering provided by KKE Architects (below) shows the library on the right side of the building.

As measured by items checked out, St. Michael was the sixth busiest Great River Regional Library branch in 2009.



If you have questions or comments about Great River Regional Library, or want to support libraries and access to information, please call Diane Vosen, Communications and Fund Development Coordinator, at (320) 650-2532. Mailing information can also be updated by calling this number.

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