



CURRENTS



Volume 11 Issue 2, Fall 2016

To our donors,
our Friends groups
and other supporters



- With your help this year -
- we enhanced programming
 - We brought children and teens back into the library through the Read Down Your Fines program.
 - We provided reading program incentives
 - We enhanced the library's collection, including book club kits
 - We provided eMagazines
 - We purchased We Play Here kits for young children and Brain Fitness Kits for older adults
 - We funded the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program at various locations

You made a difference!

*Enjoy a wonderful
New Year
and
Happy Holidays!*

Brain Fitness Kits to Keep Minds Sharp

To assist in keeping minds sharp, GRRL has assembled new Brain Fitness Kits that are available for checkout at any branch. Each kit includes four games, one each based on matching, storytelling, memory retention, and numbers. Games include Pathwords, Story Cubes, Brick by Brick, Scrabble Boggle, and more. Each kit also includes a sheet of resources, as well as a booklet with questions. The kits were purchased with support from the St. Cloud Friends of the Library.

Memory problems are typically one of the first signs of Alzheimer's disease. According to the National Institute on Aging, Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, but recent estimates indicate that it may rank third, just behind heart disease and cancer, as a cause of death for older people. From Rita Hayworth to Margaret Thatcher, and from Ronald Reagan to Bobby Vee, Alzheimer's shows no respect to station in life as it selects its victims.

Memory problems associated with Alzheimer's may take the form of word-finding, vision/spatial issues, and impaired reasoning. There is some evidence that keeping the brain active, along with a good diet, plenty of sleep and regular exercise, can help prevent dementia. The Alzheimer's Association, at its website alz.org, suggests:

- Stay curious and involved — commit to lifelong learning
- Read, write, work crossword or other puzzles
- Attend lectures and plays
- Enroll in courses at your local adult education center, community college or other community group
- Play games
- Garden
- Try memory exercises

Playing games isn't just therapeutic, it's a fun activity that can be enjoyed with the entire family.

Several of the region's branch libraries are providing programming on Alzheimer's and associated issues.



If you are seeking information about Alzheimer's, the GRRL collection is an excellent resource. The catalog lists more than 280 books with a general subject of Alzheimer's.

Fire Damage Closes St. Cloud For Two Months

On August 17, 2016, a man set fire to a chair in the upper level of the St. Cloud Public Library. He fed the fire with pages torn from a book. He told people to call the police, and when they arrived he accepted arrest. According to later news reports, the arsonist had a long history of criminal convictions. Probably, he had no idea of the damage he would cause.

When the arsonist began setting his fire, a patron warned staff, who sounded the alarm, dialed 911, and moved quickly to evacuate the building. It was 1:00 p.m. The fire created a huge volume of sooty smoke, generating sufficient heat to damage the granite cladding on a nearby pillar and to warp a nearby window frame, cracking the shatter-proof glass.

The smoke had nowhere to go except within the library. It quickly reached the high ceiling, and within minutes flooded most of the large open space of the upper level. A police officer responding to the alarm used a fire extinguisher to put out the flames, but by then the damage was done.

Staff and patrons lingered in the library parking lot for about 30 minutes before Director Karen Pundsack told them the library would not open again that day.

The first notice of the fire posted to the Great River Regional Library's intranet "Daily News" informed staff from the other

31 branches that "The St. Cloud Library will be closed for the rest of the day due to a fire.... At this point we are expecting to open again tomorrow.... Good news: the fire was quickly contained and no one was hurt." That last point was correct. The St. Cloud assistant public works director praised the staff for moving quickly and said they may have saved the building.

As the smoke cleared, a sooty residue settled over carpets, work surfaces, and books, thickly in areas close to the fire, thinly in the lower level and areas partly separated by closed doors. Tests taken shortly after the fire showed that soot had contaminated the entire building.

The City of St. Cloud, together with the library, determined the best course of action would be one that protected staff and patrons from any possible harm caused by inhaling or ingesting fire related particles. They put out for bid a proposal for thorough cleaning and restoration of the entire building.

The library remained closed. To meet pent up patron demand, open hours in Waite Park, Clearwater and Albany libraries were expanded. Some St. Cloud staff began working at those locations. Because St. Cloud is the hub for daily deliveries to all of GRRL's 31 other branch libraries, selected regional staff worked in the distribution area where they unloaded and loaded bags of books destined for those communities.

The St. Cloud collection was put off limits for placing holds. The loan period for items borrowed from St. Cloud was extended. The library stopped ordering new materials, because there was nowhere to store them.

The administration team and St. Cloud building staff met regularly to find workarounds for problems the fire caused. Even after the administration area was cleaned, staff were able to return to their offices only on a limited basis. The building was designed so those offices capture sunlight to create warmth, and the HVAC system moves the warmth to other areas. Without an operating heating and cooling

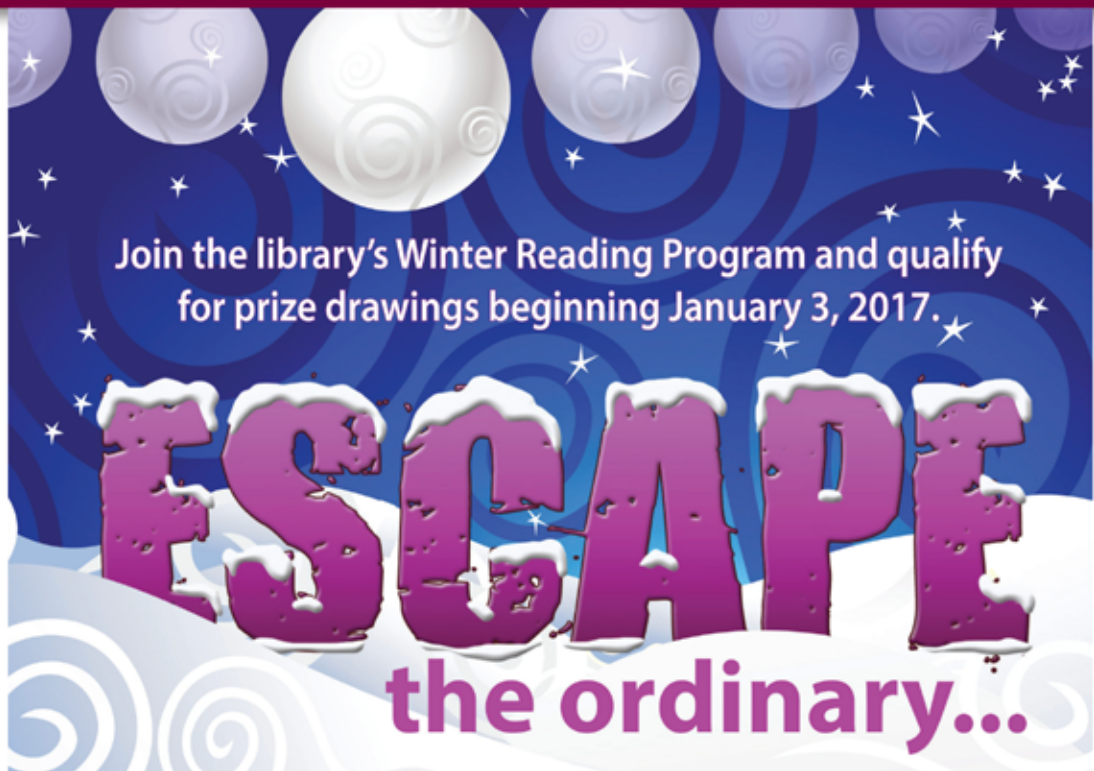
system, the offices were like saunas on sunny September days.

Between Sept. 20, when the cleaning bid was approved, and Oct. 24, when the library partially reopened, the entire library was cleaned, including seven linear miles of shelving, book by book. Even on Oct. 24, the main public areas were not open for browsing. Patrons could pick up holds and Summer Reading Program prizes. But most of the library's collection was still under plastic, waiting for staff to check that everything had been properly put back in place after cleaning.

On Thursday, Nov. 3, the library officially opened and normal service was resumed. Welcome back!



Clockwise from top: Smart Play Area pieces are wrapped after cleaning. The immediate fire area. Restoration workers wrapped shelves and equipment in plastic as they worked from scaffolding to replace ceiling tiles. Signage informed visitors the library was closed.



Read Down Fines

"Read Down Your Fines" will take place Monday, Dec. 19 through Saturday, Dec. 31.

This event is for children and teens who are younger than 17 and are unable to borrow library materials because of outstanding fines. It gives them the opportunity to regain library privileges just by reading at the library.

Since the program began in 2013, 924 children have taken part. Individuals record time spent reading at the library on coupons obtained from the library desk. They are allowed to read materials of their choice, but it must be physical print materials such as a book or magazine. For each 15 minutes spent reading, they eliminate \$1 in fines.

Read Down can only be applied to fines for late return of materials. It can't be applied to fines or processing fees for lost and damaged items.

Read Down Your Fines is totally paid for through public donations. The average fine paid off is approximately \$5. An average of 24 branches have patrons taking part each time the program is offered.

Sign up for the library's **Winter Reading Program** beginning Tuesday, Jan. 3.

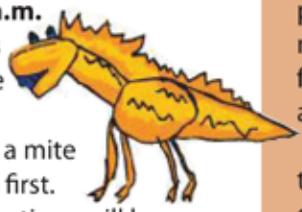
This year's theme is Escape the Ordinary. We're encouraging you to read outside your normal reading lines. With so much to read, why stick with one genre? So if fiction's your thing, maybe try a biography. Or if you're a mystery reader, try a romantic comedy.

We'll be having drawings for the collectible Winter Reading Mugs with awesome artwork (above), so don't forget to complete the reading slips. Talk with your local library staff for more details.

TRIVIA...TRIVIA...TRIVIA

The library is offering its second annual **Winter Reading Program Trivia Contest on Saturday, Jan. 21, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.** Get some friends together and try to win the traveling T-Rex Trophy.

The second contest will be a mite more challenging than the first. Answers to most of the questions will be on the library's website. They're there, but you will have to dig to find them. Official answer sheets will be available for completion at home or at the library.



Each year, we ask for library supporters to provide a tax-deductible donation to help keep the library at the center of Central Minnesota's cultural and educational community. Visit griver.org/support-library to make an online donation.

Help Support Library Services For 2017

Name : _____

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City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

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My/our donation, payable to GRRL: \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

Please include name in donor recognition as above. This gift is anonymous.

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Check Out Our New Online Library Store

Visit griver.org to view the selection of customized library products available at the new library store. Click on *SUPPORT US* and *GRRR ONLINE STORE* to see this great new selection!



Online Software Training at GRRR

One of the biggest challenges to adults who are trying to advance or begin their careers is changing technology.

People fall behind, and it's hard for people to move ahead without current technical expertise. But the library can help.

Of all the databases available at the library, the most career focused is Lynda.com. Free of charge with your library card, Lynda.com teaches current work related skills through thousands of hours of computer based training modules. Course categories include 3D & Animation, Audio & Music, Business, Computer Assisted Design (CAD), Design, Developer, Education & Learning, IT, Marketing, Photography, Video, and Web.

In just one area, Business, you can learn how to use Excel and the complete Microsoft suite, project management, purchasing fundamentals, market research, financial analysis and much, much more. Under Accounting, 37 courses and 1,466 video tutorials are available, from fundamental skills to advanced.

If you need to update your own personal skill profile, check out Lynda.com.

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