



FRIENDS of Decorah Public Library

Winter 2018 Issue

Friends 2017 Year in Review By Kris Peterson

A glimpse of the work we have done and projects that we have supported collaboratively or in full in 2017.

Thank you for your financial support of the library through the Friends organization; it is through your **memberships, gifts,** and **memorials** that these projects are made possible!

Funded \$8000 pilot programming project for 2017:

- Summer reading program special events & supplies for children and families
 - CONNECT adventure program series for middle school girls
- Large-scale special events for families, including
 - Eric Litwin and the Grout Museum
- New children's, junior, and young adult materials
 - New children's books for outreach to local school classrooms
 - Multiple copy book sets for History & Happy Hour Book Groups
- Honorariums for presenters and visiting authors at adult programs
- Snacks for literary-themed events for children and adults
- Photography project for website & promotional materials



- Board members volunteered for numerous events including the Healthiest State Initiative Walk, Bubbles event, Eric Litwin event
- Co-hosted reception for retiring Director Lorraine Borowski
- Funded special projects in honor of retiring staff members
- Hosted appreciation brunch for the library staff
- Provided monthly homemade treats for library staff meetings
- Created the Friends newsletter – fall, winter, and spring
- Used book and magazine sales

Additional projects:

- LED light installation
 - Boiler replacement
 - Landscaping update
- Lower level door replacement
- Security Camera installation
 - Staff laptop
- New furniture for public areas



An Easy Way To Support Friends By Mark Ruen

Getting ready to renew your Friends membership? Remember that in addition to mailing your renewal payment, you can drop it off at the library front desk or pay online through your bank! It's easy to add Friends as an online payee—just use the following information, and save a stamp!

Friends of Decorah Public Library
202 Winnebago Street
Decorah, Iowa 52101
(563) 382-3717

And however you choose to pay, Thank You!



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Meet Your Decorah Public Library Staff: Library Assistant Mark Whelan

I was born in Decorah, a spindly and curious little imp with a flair for the dramatic. Unlike many towns emulating its small size, Decorah proved a fertile and invigorating environment for an inquisitive young mind to grow.

This is due--in no minor part--to its public library.

Once a single construction, the library (in concert with the city courthouse) embraced its antiquated architecture making its distinguishing features all the more striking. To a child born and raised in the 1980s, the Renaissance-inspired exterior design created a commanding impression. It was a castle overflowing with treasure that my friends and I would spend hours exploring every inch.

I was in high school when Decorah underwent a massive street renovation which paved the way for new prospects, including an expansion to its library. With its new addition, technological advancements followed such as a computerized cataloging system and computers for public use. Most importantly the extension permitted a larger space to house more titles.



I received a degree in Art from Luther College in 2002 carried with the ambition of a career in motion pictures. As it happens the unpredictability of my life has found me in the service of books the past fifteen years, which in no way is time fruitlessly spent. The palace I once patronized in my youth has since become a proud place of employment and a bastion for our community.

I am stepping into my eighth year working at Decorah Public Library. In this modest timeframe I have established a sense of personal growth and a passion for service. My tasks include your typical library staff responsibilities: shelving, checking-in and checking-out items, and working with the public. When not scheduled at the desk, I design publicity slides for our website as well as our local public access television station. The ability to design and create is both liberating and enjoyable and I am grateful to work in an environment that recognizes and utilizes my talents. Occasionally, I manage to eke out a film review, or two, on the library's website for our ever-increasing library of DVDs and Blu-Rays.

The Decorah Public Library is home to many. It is a sanctuary teeming with the resources and tools necessary for educational and recreational use, and I am proud to contribute to such a vital component to our community.

A Library Within A Library By Jane Kemp

The Decorah Public Library has a library within a library: the 12,000 volume Vera Harris Large Print Collection. This collection was started in 1993 when local resident and library patron Vera Harris passed away. Memorial gifts to the library in her name, plus a 3,000 volume large print book collection from the Regional Library of Waterloo, formed the core of the new collection. The books, intended for the visually impaired, were to be circulated not only to local patrons but to libraries around the state of Iowa.

Volunteers continued to service this collection in 2017, recording 1,158 hours while selecting, packing, and mailing the books to 124 libraries in Iowa. All books are mailed postage-free by the U.S. Postal Service. Fifteen current volunteers select westerns, mysteries, general fiction, romances, and non-fiction (including biographies), with westerns being the most-requested genre. The books are mailed monthly, quarterly, or at other intervals selected by the requesting libraries. Typical boxes contain 6-15 books.

The Vera Harris Collection is continually refreshed with new purchases while older, damaged, and low-circulation books are withdrawn. A survey conducted in 2017 revealed that the average age of patrons requesting large print books was 80; most said they requested them because of poor or failing eyesight, with some indicating they were legally blind. With the assistance of RSVP recruiting volunteers to work with the collection and the U.S. Postal Service providing free postage, the Decorah Public Library plans to continue this service as one of the only libraries in Iowa which supports sending books for the visually impaired outside of its regular service area.



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Acclaimed Children's Author Eric Litwin Performed in Decorah By Jane Kemp

"Let's start our program today by putting a child on your lap." So began the performance by Eric Litwin on Saturday, November 18th in the Carrie Lee Auditorium. The #1 New York Times best-selling author of the original four Pete the Cat books, The Nuts, and Groovy Joe, made two presentations to an audience of over 600 people of all ages from around northeast Iowa. Litwin is a self-described "recovering teacher" who brings a multi-learning approach to all his books and performances.

Litwin held the audience's attention by playing music on his guitar and harmonica, singing, and reciting some of his writings, as well as with his interactive style: audience members were asked to stand and jump, swing their arms, and move their bodies as he directed. Several children were invited to interact with him on stage as he performed. The result was a winning combination of drama, narration, and music enjoyed by all ages present.

Children were invited to bring books for Litwin to sign following both performances. For those who didn't bring books, the Decorah Public Library supplied book-plates to be used for signing his autograph, which could later be pasted into books.

Litwin is the original author of the first four Pete the Cat picture books: I Love My White Shoes, Rocking in My School Shoes, Four Groovy Buttons, and Pete the Cat Saves Christmas. These four books have sold over 10 million copies, been translated into 14 languages, and won 19 state and national literacy awards.

Arrangements for Litwin's performances were made by the Decorah Public Library. The performances were sponsored by the Friends of the Decorah Public Library with support from the Walmart Foundation and were free and open to the public. The Decorah Community School District was the host for the event.



FRIENDS OF DECORAH PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Decorah, IA 52101

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For details about upcoming programs or to see pictures from recent events, like Decorah Public Library on Facebook!



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FRIENDS of the LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Junior Friend (18 & Under) \$2 Supporting Friend \$50 Supporting Business Friend \$50

Adult Friend \$5 Sustaining Friend \$100 Sustaining Business Friend \$100

Family Friend \$25 Business Friend \$25 Other \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Friends of the Decorah Public Library
Send to: Friends of the Decorah Public Library 202 Winnebago St. Decorah, IA 52101
— Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law —