

Winter 2019

## Creating a patchwork of community

Schedule conflicts make it difficult for Mary MacNeil to attend the Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation's annual Arts and Crafts Bazaar, but she's there in spirit – along with her quilt.

MacNeil has donated handmade items to the bazaar every year since 2012, but she upped the stakes in 2014, donating a book-themed quilt that wowed shoppers. It was such a hit, she designed and

created a different book quilt for the 2015 bazaar and every year thereafter, a tradition she'll continue for the sixth time at next month's sale.

MacNeil started quilting about 40 years ago. She learned to sew with her grandmother, later expanding her skills to create homemade gifts for friends and family. A retired teacher librarian, she's an ardent library supporter.



Mary MacNeil at home in her quilting studio.



PATCHWORK OF COMMUNITY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Building support piece by piece



When Rasmus Schlutter graduated from City High School in 2017, his parents suggested he go through some of his childhood belongings to see if there was anything he could give away as he prepared for the next step of his life: college.

They specifically targeted his Legos.

"I was like 'Oh my gosh, I have a lot of Legos,'" he recalls.

It took about 18 months, but eventually the urban studies major at Yale University pared his collection to a manageable number, earmarking several boxes for donations. His first stop was the Iowa City Public Library.

BUILDING SUPPORT, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# THE WINDOW

Winter 2019

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"I was kind of hesitant when my parents first mentioned it, but then I realized the best way to keep these Legos alive is for them to be used and enjoyed," Schlutter, 20, says.

After that, bringing the large tote of plastic building pieces to the Library was easy.

"When I was little, visiting the Library was a highlight of attending the Lincoln-Shimek summer program," he says. "That's why it didn't really feel like I was giving the Legos away, but giving them to an entity that has supported me so much."

The Legos were added to the Library's existing collection for its ongoing After School Lego Club. This program for elementary school-age students meets from 4 to 5 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month during the school year. Lego programs are often held during school holidays, too.

"Lego play is engaging for kids of all ages, and enjoyable for everyone involved," Children's Services Coordinator Angie Pilkington says.

Studies have found that adding Lego play to storytime helps children develop and reinforce early literacy skills. Legos are also credited with helping children use spatial reasoning skills, while encouraging creativity and imagination.

"Staff look forward to seeing the kids' creations and hearing about the descriptions each time," Pilkington says. "We have very creative kids in our community!"

Schlutter says he's thrilled his Legos will be part of Lego Club – at ICPL, as well as the New Haven Free Public

Library and Life Haven Shelter in New Haven, Connecticut.

Schlutter and classmate Tomas Carrillo are co-founders of the Yale Undergraduate Lego Club. After the pair secured funding for their club, they used the money to purchase Legos for a Lego building club at the New Haven library. The club met for one hour once a week this past summer.

"We focus on building in the spirit of collaboration and imagination," Schlutter says. "A lot of life is learning how to work with other people, so when I see a kid make a car, I first tell him what I like about it, and then I ask how he can incorporate it with what someone else is making."

This semester, Schlutter and Carrillo plan to expand the program so it operates between the library and Life Haven, an emergency shelter for single moms and their children.

"It's heart-warming when people contact us about donating *anything* to the Library because they are sure that we will put their treasures to good use. When Rasmus and I talked about his desire to give his Legos and he shared the impact ICPL had on him while growing up in Iowa City, his future plans and why he wanted to help other young people have a similar experience, my eyes filled and my heart sang," ICPL Development Director Patty McCarthy says. "It's exciting that people are thinking about how their contributions can fuel opportunities and experiences for everyone from all different backgrounds through ICPL."

If you're interested in making a donation to the Library, contact the Development Office at 319-356-5200.





Dear Friends of the ICPL,

I am excited to serve another term as the President of the ICPL Friends Board. The Library has experienced significant changes this year, beginning with the retirement of our long-time Director, Susan Craig, and welcoming our new Director, Elsworth Carman. In addition, the renovation of the Pedestrian Mall adjacent to the Library is complete and we are happy to see the improvements to it!

An additional change that occurred this summer was the elimination of late fines for overdue materials in the Children's and Teen collections, effective June 1st of this year. Research has demonstrated that such fines are a barrier to accessing Library collections, and staff determined that this impacted residents of Iowa City. In particular, staff research showed that the most blocked Library card accounts were in neighborhoods farthest from the Library and had a higher proportion of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunches through the schools. It is the hope of the Library that eliminating these fines will increase access to books and materials, and improve literacy. This decision will be monitored over the next year and after one year a findings report will be presented to the Library Board of Trustees and City Council.

Please join me in supporting the ICPL in this exciting time of change. Use the enclosed envelope to send or deliver your financial gift to the library Friends Foundation, or give online at [icpl.org](http://icpl.org) by clicking on the green Donate button. Thank you.

Dave Bright



Meet the members of the Friends Foundation Board

*From l to r, front row: Susan Carroll, Erin Dougherty, Carol Kirsch, Deborah Hoffman, Katie Runde, Laura Ebinger. Back row: Robin Paetzold, Catherine Erickson, Wesley Beary, Jeff Rudolph, Jenny Olson, Dave Bright. Not pictured: Travis Brockett, Justin Hepker, Michael Lensing, Nicki Maurus, Trinity Ray, Andy Swanson.*



Dear Friends,

Time has flown by since January, when I joined the Iowa City Public Library team. I am thankful for the ways the Library and community have welcomed me; your kindness and information sharing helped me acclimate to my position and begin to gain a better understanding of the shared aspirations in our community. I continue to be impressed by the passion and skill of ICPL staff and volunteers, and am finding joy in becoming engaged and involved with the Iowa City community. My family cannot imagine a place we'd rather be!

I am proud of the ways ICPL is actively working to reduce barriers to service and authentically welcome our community, and that work is elevated by the support of the Friends Foundation. Your support allows us to try new things and react nimbly to the changing needs of those we serve. Going fine free for Children's and Teen materials is a great example of the impact of your support. Rolling this initiative out in June was really exciting, and thus far feedback has been positive. We look forward to analyzing and sharing the data as the year progresses.

What do you think about our fine-free initiative and other service offerings? Is the Library's work reflecting your needs? Your input is critical for the Library to remain a relevant, thriving agency, especially now as we prepare to craft a new multi-year strategic plan. Watch for information related to community conversations and opinion seeking related specifically to this plan, but please don't think you need to wait until then to share your thoughts. I would love to hear from you via phone call, email, or in-person meeting!

Thank you for your generous support,

Elsworth Carman

# Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation Report to Donors

Thoughtful gifts donated by the following friends of the Iowa City Public Library provide wonderful opportunities and experiences for everyone through the Library. The generous gifts of money, books, movies, music, and other items were received from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Please contact us at [development@icpl.org](mailto:development@icpl.org) with any questions.

*Thank you for your generous contributions to ensure the vitality of the Library.*

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Freedom to read, freedom of ideas, freedom of  
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about entertainment, about making safe spaces,  
and about access to information.”**  
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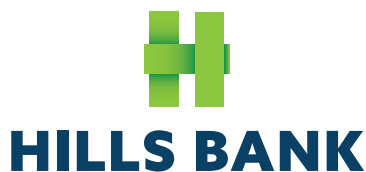
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### Tribute Gifts

Many library friends decided to honor and remember special people in their lives through a gift to the Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation in their names. Thank you for creating a lasting impact through these special tributes.

#### Gifts were given to honor the following:

Carl and Diane Baker  
Rhonda and John Barr  
Oscar Beasley  
Merrilee Beckman  
Connie Brothers  
Ellen Buchanan  
Mary Rita Burns  
Karen Chappell  
Ginny Clemons  
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Kathryn Wallace  
Mary Westbrook  
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Pam Willard  
Steve Young

#### Memorial gifts were given to remember the following:

Joseph Ascroft  
Otilie Blodi  
Leo Cheney  
Jim Curry  
Nancy Ellen Dooley  
Larry Eckholt  
Luke J. Flaherty  
Robert J. "Bob"  
Hansen  
Stan Haring

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### PATCHWORK OF COMMUNITY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Libraries are an amazing thing – free books! You walk in with nothing and leave with an armful; what can be more amazing than that?" MacNeil says. "Libraries are the cornerstone of democracy."

It's that kind of enthusiasm that makes MacNeil spend countless hours in her sewing room, piecing together fabric to make an original work of art for someone she'll never meet. She estimates it takes about 100 hours to complete a quilt, a time that can vary depending on her design.

MacNeil doesn't use a pattern for her quilts. She's an improv quilter, meaning she sews smaller pieces of fabric together to create larger pieces which are incorporated into quilt blocks.

"They're unique," MacNeil says. "No one else will have a quilt like it."

MacNeil's 2019 book quilt will be available for purchase at this year's bazaar, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 7, in Meeting Rooms A, B and C. Proceeds from the sale support the Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation to benefit Library programs and collections.

Those wishing to donate items may bring them to the Library during open hours before Wednesday, December 4. All items must be handmade and be delivered with an ICPL Arts and Crafts Bazaar donation form (available at the Library and online at [icpl.org/arts-and-crafts](http://icpl.org/arts-and-crafts)).

### Grow ICPL on November 13!

Give to the Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation on the first-ever Great Give Day of the Community Foundation of Johnson County. Let's make a big impact together! Details at [www.CFJC.org](http://www.CFJC.org)



**shop the arts and crafts bazaar and book sale!**

**December 7, 10-3**

**Iowa City Public Library**

[icpl.org/arts-and-crafts](http://icpl.org/arts-and-crafts)

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Event to benefit the Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation.  
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# In need of your next great read?

We have suggestions for you!

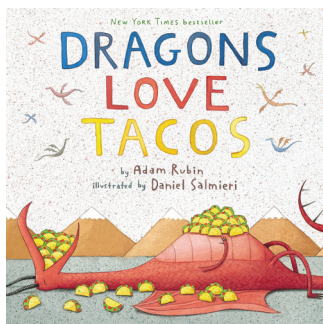


DEBORAH



## *Foreign Affairs* by Alison Lurie

This 1985 Pulitzer winner for fiction still delights with its tale of two lonely American English professors on leave in London. Hilarious and poignant, it's a story for Anglophiles, academics, and anyone who appreciates a good romance.



## *Dragons Love Tacos* by Adam Rubin

Everyone knows dragons love tacos (I mean, who doesn't?), and even more than that taco parties, but mistakes were made and food allergies were ignored which can only lead to trouble for one little boy.



JUSTIN



ERIN

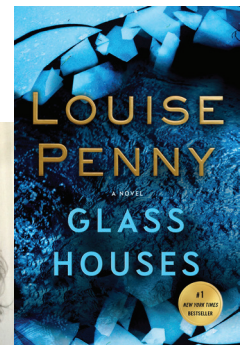


## *Fleishman is in Trouble* by Taffy Brodesser-Akner

This book—told from a woman's point of view about her long-time friend and his estranged wife—has us rooting for Dr. Toby Fleishman until all the characters start to form, at which point the reader's recognition and empathy are redirected. Brodesser-Akner's writing is hilarious and shameless, relatable but unexpected, and reminds readers not to judge too quickly.



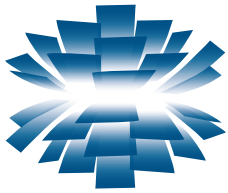
SUSAN



## *Glass Houses* by Louise Penny

As usual, Louise Penny continues to push the boundaries of the mystery novel genre. In this Inspector Gamache novel, she again gives us an intricate plot, engaging characters and a surprising, scary climax ... all set in a small village outside the environs of Montreal.





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