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.

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.
“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 by clicking on the green Donate button. Thank you.

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

“Libraries are about Freedom. Freedom to read, freedom of ideas, freedom of communication. They are about education (which is not a process that finishes the day we leave school or university), about entertainment, about making safe spaces, and about access to information.”

— Neil Gaiman

Publisher’s Circle $1,000+
Francois and Doris Abboud
Anonymous
Kathy Bright
Nancy Caner
Dudley and Terri Caplan
Richard and Ellen Caplan
Jo Catalano
Mavee Clark
Community Foundation of Johnson County
John R. and Frances C. Doyle
Karen Eldridge and Tom Charlton
James Fluck
Alan R. and Dorothy L. Frank
James and Laura Ponto
Horace Porter and Carla Carr
Trinity Ray and Tara McKee
Tracy Robinson
Susan H. Rogers
Aaron and Shana Schaefer
Steven and Linda Schreiber
Simmons Perine Meyer Boggess
Fund of the Greater Cedar
Rapids Community Foundation
Ken and MaryBeth Slonneger

Irene Ascroft
Olivia Archerson
AW Welt Ambrisco Insurance, Inc.
Carl and Diane Baker
Richard and Julie Ballardby
Kerry A. Bartol
Patrick Bauer and Christine Lizzie
Amy Becker
Susan Beckert and Laurie Haag
David H. and Constance A. Berman
Bicyclists of Iowa City
Ratany and Manju Birla
James and Kathleen Bishler
Barbara A. Booth and Thomas L. Carlisle
Stefanie Bowers
Terry & Susan Brennan

Phyllis Fritschle Nelson
Sherri Farmer
Janelle Gilmore
James Glore
Goosetown Cafe
Jennifer Gvert
Kathry Hall
Mitchell Hames
Peter and Katy Hansen
Shawn and Judy Harmsen
Bruce and Mary Harrelld
Anita Hartwig
Rebecca Herdicka
Bradley and Jo Ann Hindman
Howard H. Hintre
Maggie Hogan
Rick and Jan Hollis
Albert and Jean Hood
Nathan and Linda Hopkins
Jim and Judy Houghton
Douglas and Diane Ingersoll
Iowa City Public Library
Jane Jacobson
Phyllis B. Jones
Anne Judge
William and Judith Klink
John Kramer and Jan Friedman
Matthew Kraasow and Erica Reschly
Tim and Sarah Krumm
Merle Krummel
Sam and Marjorie Kuperman
Lynette and Bill Lancial
Ann Lingenfeld
Steven and Karen Laughlin
Susan Lench
Michael Lensing
Father Loui Leonhardt
Lola Lopes
David and Martha Libaroff
Chuck and Karen Lynch
David and Cynthia Malott
Bryan and Anne Mangano
Erin McCormick and Mark Poosley
Oris McGowan
Terry and Scott McNabb
Jessica Mederson
Jerry and Pat Meis
John R. Menninger
Ray Michele
Dixie Miller
Kate Miller
Stu R. Miller and Kathy Polvi
Ashley and Zachary Monroe
William and Wendy Moorhead
Christian Mozena and Jane Moezkl
David Murray
Jack and Nola Naughton
Suzan Nehring
Bobbie Ney and Dan Brock
Gary & Jean Norton
Naomi J. Novick
William Nusser, Jr. and Betty Boyd
Kathleen Oberle
Douglas and Joan Olson
James Olson
David W. Owen and Ellen N. Kamoe
Gary and Nancy A. Pacha
Theresa Paglia
Brent Palmer and Karen Fischer
Wilma D. Pedersen
Mark and Bonnie Penno
Charles and Mary Ann Peters
Douglas and Susanna Piro
Rex and Chris Prues
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 and online at icpl.org/arts-and-crafts.

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).

“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 and online at icpl.org/arts-and-crafts.

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).

“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.
In need of your next great read?
We have suggestions for you!

**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.

**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.

**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.
EDDM******ECRWSS***
Local
Postal Customer

USED BOOKS, MOVIES, MUSIC, & MORE!
All proceeds benefit the Iowa City Public Library

icpl.org/about/book-end