A person’s library consists of all the books he has that no one wants to borrow.

-- Rodney Borstad

Please Note: The Friends of NIU Libraries received a free publicity page in the April 14, 1999 Midweek, page 22. The NIU Publications Office sponsored the page, listing the names of all Friends’ members.

The Friends web-site:
http://libws66.lib.niu.edu/friends/frame3.htm

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From the President ...

The Friends of NIU Libraries is now sixteen years old. Though it is still a “teenager,” Friends has made impressive growth in its accomplishments, its membership, and its plans for the future. Friends secures gifts and bequests and provides funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other materials that could not otherwise be acquired by the NIU Libraries.

The past year fled by so quickly! Serving as president of the Friends of NIU Libraries was an honor for me. I am most grateful to the members of Friends, the Board Members of Friends, and the presenters for their excellent programs ... they were Mary Schriber, Martin Dubin, Ronald Klein, and Clark Neher. I wish to give special thanks and recognition to Sam Huang and Mark Williams for their significant contributions in making the Friends of NIU Libraries what it is today! Working with such GOOD people adds enrichment to one’s life! Good luck to Christa Even, next year’s president, and her Board. They will do much to enhance the Friends’ growth and achievements.

The Annual Board Meeting

The Annual Board Meeting was held on May 18, 1999, at the Country Inn Restaurant of Sycamore. The Board voted on nominations to open posts for the coming academic year. Newly elected board members are: Christa Even, President; Rodney Borstad, Vice-President; Byron Anderson, Secretary; Mark A. Williams, Treasurer; Sam Manivong, Publicity; Ron Klein, Program Committee Chair; Ralph Crafton, Rosalie Hewitt, Harriett Kallich, and Jerry Zar, Program Committee; and William Blair, Member-at-Large.

The Board also voted to move all funds raised from the Ensuring the Future program to the endowment fund. This is in keeping with the spirit of the program. It was also decided that for the annual purchase, the Friends would acquire two important microfilm sets: Papers of the Society of American Indians, 1906-1946 (10 reels) and The Indian Rights Association, 1885-1901 (24 reels). These sets will support graduate research at the M.A. and Ph.D. levels in anthropology, history, political science, and communications.
Submissions for the NEXT edition of Founders’ Type are welcome. All submissions will be considered and printed as space allows. Please direct any such materials to: Samuel Huang, Northern Illinois University Libraries, DeKalb, IL 60115. All unsigned items are contributed by the editors.
Dash to DeKalb a Success!

The 1999 Horatio Alger Society Convention was held in DeKalb May 13 - 16, 1999, and was hosted by the NIU Libraries. 86 people from as far away as New York, California, and Canada convened upon DeKalb to attend lectures, auctions of Alger and Alger-themed books, board meetings, and to visit the NIU Libraries, the official Horatio Alger Society Repository.

Convention-goers stayed at the Holmes Student Center Hotel, where most events were held. An Horatio Alger Society Board meeting was held on Thursday in the Regency Room of the Holmes Student Center in which Arthur Young, Dean of the University Libraries, was elected president of the Society. An early morning breakfast with the Dean of the University Libraries was held Friday in the Staff Lounge of Founders Memorial Library before a member-consignment auction of Alger and boys' and girls' series books and a book-repair demonstration by DeKalb resident Virginia Plemons. Friday evening, the Kishwaukee Country Club was the site for a fine dinner and lecture on dime novels by Randy Cox, editor of Dime Novel Round-Up. Saturday, convention-goers were treated to a patio lunch buffet at Samuel & Corinna Huang’s house and an historical bus tour of DeKalb by Steven Bigolin. Saturday evening, the Sky Room of the Holmes Student Center hosted an excellent dinner prior to a lecture on Bibliomania by noted speaker Nicholas Basbanes, a benefit auction, and acknowledgement of the Convention’s poster competition award. The Horatio Alger Society also presented its Strive and Succeed award during the Saturday evening program to Sycamore High School graduate David Wennemar. The Strive and Succeed award continued on page 7 ...
In 1981 Samuel Huang established a special study room in Founders Memorial Library which contained technology, materials, and tools to expand the library collection access for people with disabilities. The study room contained a Kurzweil Reading Machine, a new and wonderful talking machine, which would read aloud the printed book placed upon it. There were also a couple of CCTVs, TV-like machines with inner cameras. The images of printed material placed on a moveable shelf under the camera appeared on the “TV” screen in large print which could be easily adjusted to even larger print. At various study cubicles and tables around the room were adjustable lamps, magnifying glasses, cassette player-recorders from the American Printing House for the Blind, and Perkins Brailers so students could type notes in braille. There were also typewriters, including a large-print typewriter, since the typewriters in the library typing room (no longer extant) required being fed with a quarter every 15 minutes; this did not seem fair for people who, because of a disability, needed extra time and care to complete their typing accurately. We also had an Optacon, a little machine, not used very much any more, which could scan a printed page and transmit the words by means of little electrical impulses to the fingertips of a blind reader who had learned the “language” of the electrical impulses.

In 1985, Sam moved on to a different position in the library, and I took over coordination of our Library Services for Persons with Disabilities. I concentrated on building a program of research and reference services, keeping in mind the same goal that Sam had when he established the study room—to expand access to our library for persons with disabilities. Students, teachers, and other people with disabilities of any kind can and do call us for individual consultations about papers and projects. We assist with computer searches, gather materials for people who can’t reach them, who are visually impaired, or who have a learning disability. We photocopy reserve materials for people who need more time than the usual reserve checkout time. We offer individual tours and teach database searching one-on-one and, in general, tailor our services to the particular needs of the individual. We also have workshops and programs to help our entire library staff become more aware of ways we can better serve persons with disabilities. We are now making a greater effort to increase the hiring of student library-workers with disabilities.
to use their special services such as adapted test-taking, special campus orientation sessions, guide and signing assistance, and many other services, reports that about 280-285 individuals are registered with their office in any given semester. The numbers have increased over the past few years with a growing awareness about learning disabilities (LD) and what can be done to assist students with LD. Students with visual impairment, deafness, hard-of-hearing, physical or chronic medical disability, and other disabilities have remained more stable in numbers. The library has a responsibility to all of these students plus library patrons with disabilities from outside the university and others that are not registered with CAAR.

In recent years, our specialized study room has been moved closer to the entrance of the library. It still has cassette player/recorders, Perkins Braille, typewriters, and any books we have in braille, large-print, or cassette format. However, our wonderful Kurzweil Reading Machine came to the end of its life and has been replaced by a more modern Kurzweil/Xerox Reading Edge. We have replaced old CCTVs with newer ones, one of which has a large screen and color-change capability. We have a computer station which makes available in large print and speech output our book catalog, internet, and journal indexes—the same databases available to the public on our computers in the library reference departments. We are having some trouble right now with the speech output in our Windows-based environment, but hopefully these will be resolved this summer. Plans are in the works for a second computer station, which will probably be outfitted with software that matches the adapted computers in student computer labs on campus.

There are other things we need. We ought to have a Refreshable Braille Display on one of our computers, so that people can “read” the computer with their fingers. For people who read braille, this is much more pleasant and efficient than listening to it being read by a computer voice. A librarian in Texas, who works with blind students in a university library, says, “It’s the difference between doing your own reading and being read to.” You can imagine that it might be pretty difficult to listen to even a real, live person reading catalog cards aloud! However, a Refreshable Braille Display costs from $7,000 to $14,000, depending on the length of line and the number of braille characters it shows. There are also brand new things (such as Dolphin’s Supernova) coming on the market to make the new Windows environment easier for people with disabilities to manage. The Windows environment, which may be a good thing for sighted people, has definitely caused complications for blind and visually impaired people. Up to now, even though we have had technology for the blind that works with Windows, that technology takes a long time to learn—40 to 80 hours in the opinion of one expert. Each new step forward is costly.

Over the last two decades we’ve come a long way toward equal access for people with disabilities. With the almost overwhelming speed of electronic development in our society today, we see both positive and negative results of fast and relentless change. One of the very positive changes is the continuous expansion of new opportunities for persons with disabilities. Keeping abreast with the advancement of technology in this area requires both internal and external funding. If you or someone you know of, would be interested in contributing to this key area, please contact me.

Dorothy Jones (Dolly)
Coordinator of Library Services for Persons with Disabilities
The New Vietnam

The fourth and final Friends program for the 1998-99 academic year was a well delivered slide and lecture presentation by Clark Neher entitled, “The New Vietnam.” Professor Neher has been a member of the NIU faculty in the Political Science Department since 1969, specializing in comparative politics, and since 1996 has served as director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

For more than thirteen years, the United States was involved in what is referred to as the Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-75. During this war, more bombs were dropped than in all the wars of the world combined up to that period, and over two million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans died. Looking back, much of Vietnam’s history has been one of occupation and war. For more than a thousand years, the land was occupied by the Chinese. In the mid-1800’s, the French colonized the country, and in the 1940’s the Japanese arrived. The French-Indochina War was between the years 1946-54, a war primarily financed by the United States. With all its history of occupation and war, Vietnam emerged with its culture and language intact. The United States failed to recognize this fact on the eve of its involvement.

During the post-World War II period, the Geneva Convention divided the country at the 17th parallel into a North Vietnam with its capital in Hanoi and a South Vietnam with its capital in Saigon. During the tumultuous Tet Offensive of 1968, the enemy was still strong, and it was a psychological disaster for the U.S. America lost further credibility as a result of the My Lai Massacre. Anti-war sentiment argued that Vietnam was a civil war and presented no threat to American security. The war had produced a disproportionate amount of destruction that cost billions of dollars that would be better spent on America’s needs. America’s foreign policy was doing no more than buttressing a corrupt regime in South Vietnam whose leaders were dictators. When Nixon’s escalation moved the war into Cambodia, it sparked some of the most violent anti-war protests in this country. Neher remembers this period as a “heady” time, both fantastic and ghastly.

The turning point came in 1968, when the U.S. failed to achieve its objectives in the Tet Offensive. The battle made clear that the enemy was still strong, and it was a psychological disaster for the U.S. America lost further credibility as a result of the My Lai Massacre. Anti-war sentiment argued that Vietnam was a civil war and presented no threat to American security. The war had produced a disproportionate amount of destruction that cost billions of dollars that would be better spent on America’s needs. America’s foreign policy was doing no more than buttressing a corrupt regime in South Vietnam whose leaders were dictators. When Nixon’s escalation moved the war into Cambodia, it sparked some of the most violent anti-war protests in this country. Neher remembers this period as a “heady” time, both fantastic and ghastly.

The United States pulled out in 1973. However, Neher stated that if Vietnam won the war, it lost the peace. The country went into chaos, and millions of Vietnamese tried to leave the country. Among those who left were some of the very best minds. Many became “boat people,” and hundreds of thousands of lives were lost when overloaded, makeshift boats sank. Over a million Vietnamese came to the United States. A country that had been a major exporter of rice became a major importer of rice.

In 1986, a new national policy called Doi Moi, or renovation,
began. This policy essentially ended the socialist economic system and introduced capitalist reforms. The people rallied, and today the country is once again a major rice exporter. While the country is more open than any time in the recent history, it still has many problems. There is a single political party system, and oppression continues. The population has swelled to over 75 million in a country the size of California. Vietnam is an environmental disaster. The number one problem is education.

The United States lifted the trade embargo in effect from 1975-95, and reinstated diplomatic ties in 1996. It established an embassy in Hanoi. Foreign investment is now seen nearly everywhere, and economic growth rates are running approximately 8 to 10 percent a year. Tourism has become the main industry. From the slides shown of modern Vietnam, it is almost impossible to see any devastation from the war. Neher concluded with what he felt is the key to understanding Vietnam—nationalism and a sense of independence.

Byron Anderson

is a monetary award given to a recipient who has demonstrated an Alger-like character in overcoming obstacles to advancement. Mr. Wennemar will begin his undergraduate studies at Northern Illinois University in the fall of 1999.

Sunday morning, a farewell breakfast was held in the Pheasant Room of the Holmes Student Center. Prior to their departure, many members informed us that this was the best convention in the Society’s thirty-five year history! This convention has brought great prestige to the NIU Libraries and involved many departments on campus, including the Art Department, whose students competed in the poster competition.

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  - Heartland Books, Woodstock.
  - The Book Rack, St. Charles.

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Member News

Anthony Scaperlanda, NIU Economics Professor and Friends’ member, was named Acting Assistant Provost for Resource Planning. Dr. Scaperlanda agreed to postpone his retirement for one year in order to fill the position left by the retiring Nicholas Noe until a nationwide search can be conducted.

Patsy Lundberg, Kishwaukee College employee and Friends’ member, received that college’s “Award of Excellence” for 1998-99. This award is given annually during commencement ceremonies.

Welcome New Members!

Donors: Douglas Moore, Mary & Charles Munroe, and Joseph & Carole Novak.

Family Members: Elizabeth Warren.


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