

Junction City is Celebrating Important Anniversaries

by Susan Moyer, Director, Dorothy Bramlage Public Library

If you happen to be in downtown Junction City this spring, you will see two special banners flying along Sixth and Washington Streets. One of these trumpets the launch of the community's year-long Sesquicentennial Celebration, which began with Founder's Day in February. The other recognizes the 100th Anniversary of public library service.

Both of the two public libraries that have served Junction City for the past century have been built with private funds. Those for the Smith Library came via his estate and raised the eyebrows of all but the few in the community who were aware of the full extent of his lucrative business dealings. Though it took approximately three years to come to fruition, the bequest was honored and the first library opened for service on March 17, 1908.

One of the most notable features of the facility reflects Smith's business acumen. The Library was actually located on the second floor of the building while the ground floor was divided into office and retail spaces. His idea was that the rents from these would fund the operation of the library, a plan that was successful for nearly forty years until the first levy for public funds was adopted.



***Library READ Poster Featuring
Playwright Velina Hasu Houston***

The Smith Library served the community well for seventy-five years until the Dorothy Bramlage Public Library was erected with a donation from the Bramlage Family. It opened in May of 1983, giving 2008 another library celebration, the 25th Anniversary of Dorothy Bramlage Library.

Holding Bulfinch's Mythology

For two such grand occasions, the library staff and board have planned a twelve-month party full of programs, activities and events. It includes the launch of new services, the return of signature events from days past, and appearances by nationally known figures. One of the primary goals was to spread the celebration throughout the community and to recognize the partnerships that have been forged over time with other agencies and organizations. As a result, the hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, the extension office, the Arts Council, the school district, and others have all joined the party.

April will be a particularly busy month, featuring three premier events. Art lovers and book lovers will mix and mingle at the opening reception for the new READ poster series at the gallery of the Junction City Arts Council on April 4, 2008. Here they will see their friends and neighbors starring in their own posters along with their favorite books. Approximately thirty posters will feature local celebrities from all walks of community life. This includes two hometown heroes, Kevin Willmott, film maker and University of Kansas Assistant Professor, and Velina Hasu Houston, playwright and Director of Dramatic Writing at the University of Southern California.

In addition to the posters, the exhibit will also feature a series of re-designed book jackets created by area students. These will be used to breathe new life into older books whose exteriors are worn and outdated, but whose stories and content continue to shine. Both the book jackets and the posters will remain on display at the gallery through May.

Next, the Friends of the Library will throw their annual party, the Friends' Fiesta, on April 19. It will feature a potluck dinner and the finger-poppin' tunes of the Manhattan Barefoot Dixieland Band. In addition, the Fiesta will include the presentation of awards to the winners of the newly-revived bookmark contest.

The month will wind up with the spring edition of the library's annual two-part book and author lecture series Frank Talk. Dave Pelzer will be the featured speaker at two programs to be held in the auditorium of Junction City High School on April 24th. The first will be an afternoon assembly for school staff and students and the second will be an



***Paul Glenn Pierce III and His Mother Catherine Cole
Receive a Library Basket from the Friends of the Library***

evening program for the general public. The latter is a ticketed event and all of the six hundred available seats have been claimed. In addition to local and area residents, this includes library friends traveling from western Kansas and one Pelzer devotee flying in from Milwaukee!

The library's silver anniversary will be celebrated in May with the Chamber of Commerce at an outdoor party featuring food, music and perhaps even...beer. Egad! It will also feature the bluegrass flavored music of Walnut Valley

Festival favorites Kansas Heart, a band which includes Bob Atchison, brother of Manhattan Public Library and North Central Kansas Library System Director Fred Atchison, as well as current Kansas Securities Commissioner and former Geary County Attorney Chris Biggs.



***"Kansas Heart" Group
Features Bob Atchison and
Chris Biggs***

A summer reading fair, the return of the library camp-in and the dubious privilege of spending the night in a sleeping bag on the library's concrete slab floor, an American Girl Tea Party, a Touch-a-Truck Day, and a program on Laura Ingalls Wilder by author and historian Bill Anderson are among the year's remaining activities. There will also be the launch of a library card incentive campaign and an expanded tutoring program.

All the community celebrations should be great fun and, hopefully, great ways to pay homage to a one hundred year library tradition.