

Friends celebrate Heginbotham Library's 40th with b-day party

Written by April Peregoy

2009 marks Heginbotham Library's 40th birthday, and Friends of the Library celebrated with a "Happy Birthday Dear Library" theme at their annual salad luncheon on Monday, Feb. 2 at Phillips County Museum.

The Friends of the Library Luncheon is held every year to honor and appreciate those who have put in valuable time and resources toward the library.

Special guest speaker at this year's luncheon was Carol Koontz, who has been a member of the library board since 1983, and was one of the original founders of Friends of the Library. She was also instrumental in the process of getting Heginbotham Library placed on the State Register of Historical Places.

Koontz recounted the struggle she and fellow board members had in obtaining the historical designation for the building. "It was a long journey," she said, but the building was finally registered in 1988, after four years of trying.

Koontz also took luncheon guests on an imaginary tour of the library as it must have appeared in the 1920s, when the Heginbothams were living inside.

Friends were then treated to a performance of two numbers from the Holyoke High School Select Choir, and HHS senior Nora Roth sang a solo piece.

Afterward, Friends president Janice Hibbard honored Karen Crocker and Sara Bohrer (who was out of town the day of the celebration) as Volunteers of the Year. She also presented librarian Laura Roth with a gift for all her hard work and dedication to the library over the past year.

Friends of the Library is a group of people who are dedicated to the promotion of the library and its activities. They are made up of people who realize the importance of reading and are interested in contributing resources to the library.

Their annual used book sale in September and membership dues are used to benefit the library. The last two Decembers, the group has sponsored the Library Extravaganza as well to raise funds for the maintenance work needed on the exterior of the library building. In Roth's report to the board on Monday, she announced the work is expected to begin this year.

In 2008, the Friends purchased Christmas ornaments, which were sold at Holly Daze and the Library Extravaganza. Three lightweight tables were also purchased for the book bonanza and a ceiling fan for the library.

Officers for the 2009 year were finalized Monday, with Hibbard agreeing to return as president for one more year and Marge Berry as treasurer. The Friends decided that next January, other members should fill these two offices and serve a two-year term as well.

Secretary Mary Carlsen and vice-president Peggy Bennett decided to retire from office. Replacing them are new secretary Karen Crocker and vice-president Dorothy Sisneros.