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Lang Memorial Library turns 100

BY CATHERINE DOUD

Ellsworth County I-R

WILSON — One hundred years of literacy was celebrated Dec. 11 at Lang Memorial Library, Wilson.

The library opened its doors to the community with an open house, inviting all to enjoy the building, the books, the new technology and lots of delicious food and holiday decorations while sharing fond memories of the past.

Lang Memorial Library was founded with an open house in April 1923.

Lizzie Lang donated \$10,000 to the City of Wilson to erect a memorial library building in memory of her late husband, John A. Lang, and the rest is history.

"One of the best things is we have such a strong library board," Jenna Lanter, current library director, said as she decorated for the event earlier in the day. "They support the library and we wouldn't be able to have an event to this extent without them."

Lanter said originally, they had planned on just offering a few soups. However, the event quickly grew.

Board members, along with Lanter, were setting up the scene early that day with a food bar in the adult room and a raffle table, snacks, fresh popcorn and a movie in the children's area. Well before the start time of 5 p.m., the library began filling up with guests. Some visitors were patrons who had enjoyed the library for years, and some were former library directors excited to celebrate the day in a historical building that was part of their lives. By 5:30 p.m., all rooms in the library were crowded with well-wishers telling stories of their memories in the building.

Former library director

Cherilee Ward (2017-2022) arrived and was quickly greeted by long-time patron Ernie Masden.



CATHERINE DOUD/Ellsworth County Independent-Reporter

The library board with the library director Jenna Lanter. Front row, from left, Lorie Taylor, Allison Ford and Marcie Beneda. Back row, Lanter, Becky Sells, Desiree Larsen, Kayanne Meitler and Sadie Soukup.

stripping put in. But we all rode out that big wind together here at the library. People kept calling and saying, 'Did you see that wall fall?'

But everyone was safe in the library, which Ward said has played a role over the years as a safe haven for the community of Wilson.

"There used to be Girl Scouts meetings downstairs when I was here, and Boy Scouts. Years before that, they had what was called a Dragons' Den for young people to hang out. Even the city council met sometimes downstairs," she said. "The whole building has been used by the community in some way over the years.

"This was kind of a

sanctuary for people who stopped off the interstate.

They'd stop in for help or genealogy or just information about the area, like the egg."

One thing the current

and some former library

directors all had in common was fond memories of the children's programming offered by the library.

"I think one of the better facets I add is the children's program," Lanter said. "I'm a former teacher

and we do a lot for children's programming. We've put funding into new toys, decorating and a lot of new children's books. In the summer time, we have live creatures, bubble paint and make s'mores. We do whatever you can think of with the amount of space that we have."

Ward agreed.

"I think the summer programs with the children were a big part of all our memories," she said. "We always had themes. The Central Library System gave the theme. One year we had rockets out here and you'd put water in them and they'd go way up and some would go on the roof here."

"Before COVID, we

had an activity every

Friday for the children

here, so the Friday afternoon activities were a big

part of what I did. Usually

there would be seven to

eight children, and we'd

have something new to do

every week."

Former library director

Cheryl Ptacek (2008-

2013) agreed that her

favorite memories were

working with children,

particularly preschoolers.

"My first activity with

them was an idea I saw in

Salina," she said. "We did a series called the Book Cooks. It consisted of making a little snack and then reading a book that had something to do with the snack while they ate it. We made little chef's hats for them so every time they came, they got a star for attendance and then someone took all the recipes we did for the series and turned it into a little recipe book for the kids."

While the building has been in place for 100 years, the library director and former directors agreed a lot has changed.

"We have that technology room that we never had before. We've been fortunate to have grants over the years," Ward said.

"We had a grant for the

big egg and a sign outside,

and before me, we had a

grant for the windows to

be replaced for more

weatherized windows."

"We've had grants for

new printers," Lanter

chimed in. "And we got a

grant for a smart TV and

the sound bar."

Ward, an avid historian

and genealogist, also has

fond memories of older

technologies.

"What I loved about the

place was the old newspapers in microfilm, way

back before we had the internet," she said.

Ward compiled a history of the library, which was on display along with a bust of the library's namesake, John A. Lang.

History

Lang Memorial Library was founded in April 1923. Lizzie Lang donated \$10,000 to the City of Wilson to erect a memorial library building in memory of her late husband, John A. Lang.

Construction began in September of that same year. On Aug. 7, 1924, an open house for the new library was held, and Lang Memorial Library was a reality.

John A. Lang was born Nov. 12, 1840, near Appleton, Mo. After his Civil War service, he moved to Wilson in 1881. He was on the first board of directors when the Wilson State Bank was organized in 1886. He was also the first mayor of Wilson and a member of the Wilson Post No. 115 G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic).

The ground for the library was donated by Mrs. Sam Anspaugh, A.D. Jellison and Mrs. Joe Tobias.

Until it was completed, the library's collection was housed in a room of the Longfellow Grade School. Nearly 5,000 books of reference, fiction and classics were donated and purchased.

Library Board President Marcie Beneda said the board was happy with the great turnout for the event.

"Many commented on the beautiful old building that was decorated for Christmas," she said. "We enjoyed listening to visitors reminiscing about their memories from the library."

The Christmas hanger raffle prize, made by board member Sadie Soukup, was won by Cheryl Ptacek.

USD 112 votes to mitigate asbestos at CPJSHS

BY KAREN BONAR

Ellsworth County I-R

HOLYROOD — The Central Plains USD 112 Board of Education approved a contract to mitigate asbestos at Central Plains Jr./Sr. High School during the Dec. 9 board meeting.

USD 112

Superintendent Bob Murphy said two of the three companies he reached out to submitted bids.

The board approved a contract with ACM for \$62,975.

"ACM was only company to send a person out to take measurements,

walk the hallways before they put the bid together," Murphy said.

The mitigation, which is set to take place after June 15, should take three or four weeks.

Once the mitigation is complete, Murphy said an air quality test will be administered.

"Once they do the air quality test, it's a three-day turnaround," he said.

Only once the test is passed will building staff be able to return to that portion of CPJSHS to do any work, such as waxing the floors or installing new ceiling tiles.

In other business:

• Murphy said a lease for the district's day care

in Holyrood will be about \$9,000 per year for two rooms.

During updates from the superintendent, Murphy told the board furnishings are being purchased for the rooms in Holyrood. He said the day care rooms (Holyrood and Wilson) are being added to the insurance policy for about \$1,000 per year.

Murphy also said the Holyrood facility is opening applications for non-faculty families.

"(We're) not promising anybody spots yet," he said. "(We're) still waiting on final sign off from fire marshal."

He also said KDSE still

has to complete its on-site inspection.

• Dave Wirth praised CPJSHS Principal Jessica Murphy for assisting his granddaughter.

"She took it upon herself to help her with her homework to go beyond what was expected," he said.

• Twice, the board discussed a CMC machine. Wirth told the board during public comment community members are willing to help pay for the equipment. He said while new machines run \$30,000-\$40,000, used ones can be in the \$100,000 price range.

"I would like to do some fundraising to help

this happen," Wirth said.

During the superintendent's report, Murphy said there is a used CMC machine in Lorraine. CPJSHS staff will review the machine and see if it is a good fit for the school's academic goals.

• Central Plains Elementary School Principal Jane Oeser reported on recent events, including a project for sixth grade students with robots. Students are set to attend a competition in Hays.

She also said students are raising money for Keren Comfort Dog, who visits the school twice a month.

Oeser said the school

held a food drive to assist the church. She also said CPJSHS students collaborated with the elementary school on a giving tree to help provide gifts for 28 students.

She also said H&B Communications provided food to 14 families recently.

• Wilson Elementary School Principal Karin Mohr said she recently received her principal's license.

"(I wish to) express my gratitude for the opportunity," she said. "I hope I can continue to serve."

Mohr also reported on the Festival of Trees.

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Ross Janssen's

Weather

Dec. 18 - Dec. 24

WEDNESDAY 42/26

Sunny

THURSDAY

Sunny

56/29

Sunny

SUNDAY

Sunny

44/23

Sunny

FRIDAY

37/23

Mostly sunny

MONDAY

51/31

Mostly sunny

TUESDAY

53/36

Mostly cloudy

OBITUARIES

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OPINION

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KID SCOOP

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