We recently spent a wonderful holiday in the family room of our new home. Our family room is a special place, often considered the heart of our home. It is casual, comfortable, cozy, and sometimes messy. It’s where multiple generations of family and friends “hang out,” and where we reconnect. Tears, laughter, and warm conversations reverberate from the walls. Whether playing games or swapping stories, what we are really doing in our family room is strengthening ties, creating experiences, and building memories. I’m sure your family room is much the same.

Would it surprise you to learn that you can have similar experiences at the Library? It’s true! It was Microsoft’s Akhtar Badshah’s analogy that first helped me make the connection.

Like a family room, the Library is a casual, comfortable, cozy place where people gather to learn, share ideas, connect, and create experiences. Like a supportive family, staffers stand ready to assist patrons with finding books, movies, learning opportunities, local businesses, job resources, and each other.

In this newsletter, staff members share a few of the many services we provide. From serving as a community center and providing recommendations on books, movies, music, games and more—to crafting, computing, and classes galore—we are here for you! More than advocates, we are facilitators who equip and empower individuals to have a positive impact on our community.

At the Library, we have a multitude of offerings. Stop by today to hang out or to create a new experience. You may be surprised at how much we have to offer. You are always welcome in our family room.

“The library is first and foremost the family room of a community. That’s the vision, that’s the future.”

–Akhtar Badshah, Aspen Institute
The Library’s Best Kept Secret

What do think of when you think of the Library? Most people answer with books. Some people say Launching Little Learners. Others might say movies. A few might say Family Night. But one thing that the Library has that most people don’t think about is music. That’s right! The library has music and lots of it.

The Library has thousands of music CDs available to all patrons. They can be checked out for three weeks, just like most of the other items we have. Plus, they can be renewed twice before you have to bring them back. That is a full nine weeks of listening to your favorite tunes!

This wonderful secret is kept on the first floor of the main branch by the 2nd street entrance. There will be a little bit of movement for this collection, though. Currently, the CDs are somewhat divided, but they will all be together soon and still will be on the main floor. The CDs that are in the action alley right in front of the entrance will merely be moved over to the side wall that overlooks the atrium where the other half of the CDs reside. So everyone will still get to enjoy all the music the Library has to offer. It will just be together.

Come check it out. There is something for everyone.

The Library’s longest serving employee

Kate Mutch
Public Services Administrator

In today’s business world someone who works for the same organization for 10 years could be considered admirable, 20 years a dedicated professional, but 40 years is almost unheard of. January 2017 marks the 40th working anniversary for the Library’s Lida Volin.

Lida has served in many positions during her tenure, including: shelve, clerk-typist, Information Service Technician II, Library Assistant II—and since 1991—her current position as Interlibrary Loan Clerk. Her assistance to the genealogy community and with Interlibrary Loans is particularly noteworthy. Locating books across Wyoming and the United States to meet thousands of patron requests annually is her specialty. She has seen many changes during her time at the library, from the introduction of computers and automation to the addition of formats that were not even thought of in 1977 such as audiobooks on CDs, video games, and downloadable eContent.

Over the years dozens of patrons have noted Lida’s exceptionalism and cheerful demeanor. Her suggestions to researchers and willingness to provide assistance helps save them time and frustration, and her concerted efforts to find the item they need or want is one of the characteristics that makes her so valuable and special to Natrona County.

While we all can look forward to Lida’s continued service at the Library for years to come, please join us in celebrating her 40 years of dedication and steadfast service at an open house Wednesday, January 11, 2017 from 3 to 6 p.m.

The Library’s longest serving employee

Kate Mutch
Public Services Administrator

In today’s business world someone who works for the same organization for 10 years could be considered admirable, 20 years a dedicated professional, but 40 years is almost unheard of. January 2017 marks the 40th working anniversary for the Library’s Lida Volin.

Lida has served in many positions during her tenure, including: shelve, clerk-typist, Information Service Technician II, Library Assistant II—and since 1991—her current position as Interlibrary Loan Clerk. Her assistance to the genealogy community and with Interlibrary Loans is particularly noteworthy. Locating books across Wyoming and the United States to meet thousands of patron requests annually is her specialty. She has seen many changes during her time at the library, from the introduction of computers and automation to the addition of formats that were not even thought of in 1977 such as audiobooks on CDs, video games, and downloadable eContent.

Over the years dozens of patrons have noted Lida’s exceptionalism and cheerful demeanor. Her suggestions to researchers and willingness to provide assistance helps save them time and frustration, and her concerted efforts to find the item they need or want is one of the characteristics that makes her so valuable and special to Natrona County.

While we all can look forward to Lida’s continued service at the Library for years to come, please join us in celebrating her 40 years of dedication and steadfast service at an open house Wednesday, January 11, 2017 from 3 to 6 p.m.
What is the difference between a good library and a great library? A great library is measured by its ability to go beyond basic services with the help of private funds to provide programs and collections of true distinction. With your help, the Natrona County Library can keep providing the quality programs and materials its patrons have come to expect – both today and in the future.

All endowment funds are placed in a permanent account to augment the Library’s collections, provide expanded library programming and help operate the Foundation for years to come. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation or would like to learn more about the Foundation, please contact us at 237-4935 extension 104.

Board of Directors: Steve Degenfelder - President • John Griffith • John Jorgensen • Anne Ladd • John Masterson • Michael Merback Brent Pickett • Lisa Scroggins • Jansen Curry • Susan Stubson • Sam Vigneri • Scott Wells

Foundation Board members are available to discuss with you and your advisors the best planned giving opportunities.

Mail can be sent to: Natrona County Library Foundation, 307 E. 2nd Street, Casper, WY 82601
Make checks payable to: The Natrona County Library Foundation
All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ I am enclosing a check for $ __________

☐ Please contact me to arrange a meeting to discuss future financial support.

Name: ________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________

City: __________________ State ___________ Zip: ____________

Phone: _______________________________________

Comments: ____________________________________

Thank You to our Recent Donors:

CK Adams
Jim and Susan Anderson
Jim Brown
Stephen Brown
Ann Carnahan

Russell and Carola Cowan
Erich and Tammy Frankland
Rulon and Kay Hawker
John Kerns
Sheila Kimble
Margaret H. and James E. Kelley Foundation

Anne Ladd
Tom Lockhart
Elizabeth Norcross
Paul and Vicki Peters
Lois and Ted Purvis

Tim and Judy Schenk
John and Linda Staley
Judi Van Rensselaer
Barbara Walker
Eleanore Walker

Have you remembered the Natrona County Library Foundation in your will?
THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY IN A 21ST CENTURY LIBRARY

Beth Worthen
Executive Director, Natrona County Library Foundation

For centuries, private funding has been a significant factor in the ability of public libraries to flourish in the United States. Philanthropists such as Benjamin Franklin, Jacob Astor, and Andrew Carnegie recognized the value of libraries as societal institutions, providing free access to knowledge and information for its citizens. In fact, Carnegie donated funds to build nearly 2,000 public libraries across the United States—including our own in Natrona County.

Today, philanthropists continue to value libraries as a public good. Bill and Melinda Gates, for example, have given more than $400 million to libraries across the world to improve literacy and bridge gaps in the digital age. And while public monies from local government support the general operations of libraries, private funds allow libraries to do more.

For this reason, public libraries around the country have active Library Foundations and Friends of the Library organizations. Let’s look at a few of the ways in which our community members act today as “Casper’s Carnegies” by donating to our Library Foundation and supporting the activities of the Friends of the Library.

1. We can try new things. The image of a library full of musty books, presiding over by a librarian “shushing” its patrons is absolutely a thing of the past. Today, our library is a busy center for families, students, job seekers and entrepreneurs. To meet our community’s needs in cutting edge technology and innovation, our library can offer items such as eBooks, video games and virtual reality programming because of donations to the Library Foundation.

2. We can go beyond basic services, particularly when local government revenues are down. The Library Foundation helped with the library’s equipment budget this year, thanks to income from its private endowment. And while private funding can’t—and shouldn’t—permanently replace public dollars, the library has worked hard to withstand Natrona County’s temporary economic downturn with minimal impact to its programs and services.

3. We have a better ability to be a community hub. The Library connects people within our community in many ways. It can be through simple ways, such as offering food at family and after-school programs—paid for by the Friends of the Library—or as exciting as our plans to pursue grant funding for a new “makerspace,” where people of all ages will gather to create, invent and learn. We call our library “the family room of our community” for a reason—and private dollars help build it.

4. Someday, private support will help build a new library. We know the need for a new library is not going away, but respect that now is not the time to pursue it. When the time is right for Natrona County, the Library Foundation will be a partner in this effort by raising awareness within the community and overseeing a campaign to fund a portion of the building project with private dollars.

The Library Foundation is grateful to “Casper’s Carnegies,” whose donations—no matter the size—allow our library to truly serve our community. Thank you for continuing the tradition of philanthropy for our 21st century library.
Choose Your Own Adventure

Matthew Farnsworth
Technology Specialist

There once was a man who had three children. One night, as he was telling stories, he came to the realization that he had run out of story. He turned to his children and asked, “What happens next?” Delighted, each child gave a different answer and so the story split into three endings, one to fit each child. A few years later, the first Choose Your Own Adventure books were published.

Narrative experimentation in the late 1960s led to the popularization of the gamebook genre in the 1970s. But it wasn’t until the Choose Your Own Adventure series that the genre really exploded. Publishers from across the globe began printing gamebooks in many languages and countries. Readers were able to control the actions of Indiana Jones, James Bond, or Doctor Who. While most of these books are aimed at entertaining younger readers, some have been used for education or even religious instruction.

During the Golden Age of gamebooks, computer programmers began toying with a genre that would later be called Interactive Fiction. The text-based adventures from the early 1980s would directly inspire the early graphics-based adventure games. Series such as “Zork,” “King’s Quest,” “Myst,” and “The Secret of Monkey Island” can all be traced to the early paper gamebooks. Mobile apps such as the Steve Jackson’s “Sorcery!” and Rick Riorden’s “Demigods of Olympus” are simply Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books for the digital age.

The impact of gamebooks can still be witnessed across the globe. Some publishers have even begun printing augmented reality books that allow readers to unlock digital content hidden in the text using a smartphone or tablet such as the “39 Clues” Series. Elements of gamebooks are now being applied in video games and virtual reality experiences available at the Library. The next adventure you choose could be your own.

Clicks & Picks

Jerry Jones
Youth Services Manager

It probably comes as no surprise that our Youth Services staff is made up of avid readers. One of our favorite things to do is to share books we’re inspired and excited by, or that we enjoy reading with our young patrons. A new feature to do just that was recently added to our website. Using this new service, Select Reads, our staff has created numerous lists to help young patrons’ connect with some of the best youth literature.

Scroll down to the heading Library Lists on our home page and you will find several lists we have created featuring a lot of our new favorites. There’s a list of board books for our beginning book browsers, new nonfiction for those who like reading about things that are the real deal, and numerous lists of new fiction, including picture books hot off the press and chapter books just added to our collection.

Some other options to streamline your searches might be found under Award Lists. You’ll find the Newbery, Caldecott and Printz Award winners, and also some children’s and teen awards you might not be so familiar with. Did you know there is an E.B. White Read Aloud award? How about the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature? And graphic novel enthusiasts might want to check out Great Graphic Novels, a list of ten top titles. There are also newsletters for award-winning books and staff picks.

These lists are just the tip of the iceberg, and we certainly don’t want them to replace talking to you in person. It’s just one more opportunity for us to provide a different level of customer service. Go to the Library’s website to discover your next great read.
Every year, more and more movies are making it to the silver screen. While this may be exciting for some, others may find it difficult to find the time and money to make it to all the major blockbusters before the films leave the theaters. Thankfully, the Library maintains a large collection that includes all of the popular titles you may have missed, as well as some excellent films that may have flown under the radar. Recent additions to our collection include “Finding Dory,” “The Secret Life of Pets,” and “Jason Bourne.”

Hollywood stars are not the only celebrities in our collection. Many television shows are also released on DVD, allowing patrons to “binge watch” an entire season without the need of a Netflix subscription. This is a great way to catch up on a series before the next season hits the small screen. Some of our favorites include “Longmire,” “NCIS,” and “Once Upon a Time.”

We are constantly adding new records to the catalog for future releases of popular movies and television shows, allowing our patrons to place holds weeks before the DVD or Blu-Ray is available. Our staff is happy to help place a hold either over the phone or in person.

With the exception of children’s movies, which are housed in the Children’s Department, all movies are now located in the old magazine area on the main floor. We hope that our patrons will find this larger area easier to browse, while also giving them the option to check out the nonfiction movies that were previously located on the second floor.

As such, our staff develops relationships with library users. We rejoice with you in your joys and weep along with you when life is rough. We become friendly faces, listening ears and sounding boards, reader’s advisory specialists and movie critics, craft connoisseurs and technology trainers.

The Library is a place for everyone to visit, explore, transform, and belong. Make it a part of your life’s journey this new year.