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*"Bare branches of each tree
on this chilly January morn
look so cold so forlorn.
Gray skies dip ever so low
left from yesterday's dusting of snow.
Yet in the heart of each tree
waiting for each who wait to see
new life as warm sun and breeze will blow,
like magic, unlock springs sap to flow,
buds, new leaves, then blooms will grow."
~ Nelda Hartmann*



Happenings

Library Happenings are written and submitted by Sunny Robbins, Director of the Donnellson Public Library, unless otherwise noted.

We thank Our Generous Donors:

We would like to thank the family and friends of Merle Adkisson for their donation to our library.

If there are books, authors, magazines subscriptions, or newspapers subscriptions you would like to adopt for the library, please mention it to the librarian on duty. She will take down the title/author, your name, and your number so we can get back to you on the adoption status and price. Thank You!

Preschool Story Hour

This past month we read books about Farms and Their Animals, Sick Days, Pigs, Snow and Dinosaurs! The daycare has made it a few times. Also, we visited the preschool at Central Lee and read stories about winter.



The Donnellson Book Core

The book club met on Monday, January 16, to discuss *The Lost Vintage* by Ann Mah. It received mixed reviews, but in general they liked it. The main character digs into family history that leads back to WWII.

Next month's book is a classic *How Not to Die Alone* by Richard Roper. **Here is what Goodreads has to say:**

Andrew's day-to-day is a little grim, searching for next of kin for those who die alone. Thankfully, he has a loving family waiting for him when he gets home, to help wash the day's cares away. At least, that's what his coworkers believe.

Andrew didn't mean for the misunderstanding to happen, yet he's become trapped in his own white lie. The fantasy of his wife and two kids has become a pleasant escape from his lonely one bedroom with only his Ella Fitzgerald records for company. But when new employee Peggy breezes into his life like a breath of fresh air, Andrew is shaken out of his routine. She doesn't notice the wall he's been safely hiding behind and their friendship promises to break it down.

Andrew must choose: Does he tell the truth and start really living his life, but risk losing his friendship with Peggy? Or will he stay safe and alone, behind the façade? *How Not to Die Alone* is about the importance of taking a chance in those moments when we have the most to lose. Sharp and funny, warm and real, it's the kind of big-hearted story we all need.

Join the Donnellson Book Core by letting the librarians know you are interested. We will get you the current book, and make sure you can come to the next discussion. Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the library Activity Room.

Senior Crafternoon

We made cute snowmen for January. Big thanks to Victoria Matlock and the Montrose Health Center!

The next Senior Crafternoon will be held on February 8th at 3:30 and is a Valentine themed floral arrangement.



February Library Activities

11:30 a.m. February 3rd, 6th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 20th, 24th, & 27th
ENERGIZE, DVD led exercise group
Every Monday and Friday

10:00 a.m. February 7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th
Story Hour

3:30 p.m. February 8th
Crafternoon by Lee County Floral
Sponsored by Montrose Health Center
Call to register

1:00 p.m. February 15th
Writer's Bloc

5:00 p.m. February 15th
Girl Scouts meeting

1:00 p.m. February 16th
CARDS - The 3rd Thursday of each month

7:00 p.m. February 16th
Library Board meeting

7:00 p.m. February 20th

Book Core

Discussing “How Not to Die Alone” by Richard Roper

Picking-up “Sunflower Sisters” by Martha Hall Kelly

5:30 p.m. February 21st

Friends of the Library Meeting

CLOSED February 20th for President’s Day



The Writers’ Bloc meeting was held January 18 in the Donnellson Library Local and Family History Department. Attending were Jan Blankenburg, Diane Kruse, Marty Miller, and Tom Moeller.

Diane reported on the progress of her book entitled *The History and Heritage of Lee County, Iowa Rural Schools*. Progress of the book is moving along very well as the book’s first draft manuscript has been proofread, errors have been corrected and some suggestions were added. Since more information was found during the several months of reading and making corrections, it will be necessary to obtain a second final draft. When a final draft is reached, the book will be sent to print for a proof issue. The publishing date has not been set but an early-late spring deadline is planned.

Marty wrote a poem which suggests that if you are trying to describe the world to someone with no knowledge of it, start with something simple like water. The speaker in the poem tries to use simple words to explain water, but the conversation very quickly gets complicated. You can't stand on water without falling in unless it is very cold and then the surface is very hard and you can stand on it. How would you explain that? The end of the poem suggests if you are going to describe the world, do not start with water. However, whatever you start with, it quickly gets complicated!

Jan submitted many poems she wrote during the holiday time including one called *Bah Humbug* since they spent Christmas alone in their house due to the weather. She had time to write and send her poems to the Lyrical Iowa poetry contest in each of the categories to include *A Sorrowful Nation Gathers*, *Winter Play*, *No Pain, No Gain*, and *Bring Them Back*. Other poems read were *Inspiration*, a poem about covered bridges, and *Anticipation*, which suggest the signs of spring.

Tom as usual had several poems to share, some were tragedies, some were humorous to include *A New Year* which reminds him of things which make you feel better; *The Cinnamon Roll Explosion* which included how to explain the kitchen experience of a “famous local poet” even though no one was seriously injured, and *Melvin and Sadie’s Last Date*.

Of all the annual holidays he mentioned his least favorite holiday – Valentine’s Day – and challenged other members to write a poem about that day. Diane will not write a poem but share

special times children shared from rural school days Valentine's along with a scrapbook of old-time valentines from years ago.

Our Writers' Bloc group meets every 3rd Wednesday from 1-3 pm in the Local and Family History room. We invite you to share or just come listen to others as they present what they have written. Our next meeting will be February 15 in the Local and Family History Room.~ **Written and submitted by Diane Kruse**

January Suggested Reading: Best of Dee Brown's West

This month's suggestion for excellent reading is an anthology of stories written over a period of years by Mr. Dee Brown. Mr. Brown differs markedly from any fiction writer turning out stories about the Old West, in that he has researched his topics carefully and provides the reader the true facts of many aspects of this part of American history. The stories given in this anthology provide extensive detail (again, carefully researched) which will fill out and correct much popular myth and misconception about the Old West over a hundred year period.

Mr. Brown is the author of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and 30 more books, plus dozens of short articles, about this culturally popular part of American history. In the current selection, he starts with the years when the 'West' was anything west of the Appalachian mountains and the westward trek started with a flatboat down the Ohio River where a persistent danger was pirates who tricked travelers into losing their boats and often their lives. The heart-rending story of the Trail of Tears and the American Indian families destroyed is detailed.

The stories provide great detail on life in the early years ranging from the Lewis and Clark expedition and early movement of settlers and supply trains over the Santa Fe Trail, along with an entertaining story of brides who went west in search of home and happiness and a tragic story of the Donner Party's loss written by a 12-year-old girl who was part of the party. Heroic figures such as Jim Bridger (could not read or write but quoted Shakespeare and spoke French, Spanish, and a dozen Indian tongues, and Ely S. Parker, the American Seneca Indian who joined Ulysses S. Grant's wartime staff and later became the first pure-blood Indian Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Such figures as the real Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, plus leading Indian chiefs and warriors from among the Plains Indians have their place, and the history of the American buffalo and longhorn cattle (and cattle drives) are a study in the history of our country.

Any aficionado of the Old West will find this an enthralling series of stories as well as a study in true history. ~**Written and submitted by Aaron Kruse**



Friends of the Library Book Sale

With the month of January almost gone, it is time to start looking through books and deciding which books need to be weeded for the upcoming summer book sale. Summer may seem far away but it will be here before you know it. As we get closer to making plans for a date, a day and time will be announced in newsletters and newspapers in order for books to be delivered to the library in a timely manner. We are always in need of collections of children and adult favorites, classics as well as selection of cookbooks, gardening, historical, political and military topics. CD's and videos are also welcome.

Richard Proenneke Museum



“Royalty” comes to the Richard L Proenneke Museum

Richard Proenneke enthusiasts who have followed Richard’s life in Alaska are very familiar with the name “Alsworth”. Babe and Mary Alsworth homesteaded on Lake Clark in 1942. They saved many a traveler caught in storms, and in 1950, Tanalian Point was renamed “Port Alsworth.” While Richard was visiting Twin Lakes, AK, with the Carrither’s in 1965, it is believed this is where he first met Babe. Arrangements were made for Richard to stay on at Twin Lakes for another 4 weeks alone using “Spike” and Hope Carrither’s cabin. Babe would fly in and pick up Richard on October 10th and fly him to Port Alsworth for the first time. Richard writes:

“I met the boys Glen & John and “B” and their brother Lonnie (the wild married one) and the sister Sis, and the grand child and the Mrs. Mary Alsworth – A short heavy woman – dark complected with near black hair. A good looking and good natured woman. It was at supper I found what keeps that old T craft going. Babe thanked the man upstairs for the safe trip and most everything else that happened during the day. Sunday evening I was sure we was in for a religious meeting but Terry the prospector came over with some movie film taken on his gold diggings during the summer and it got late.”

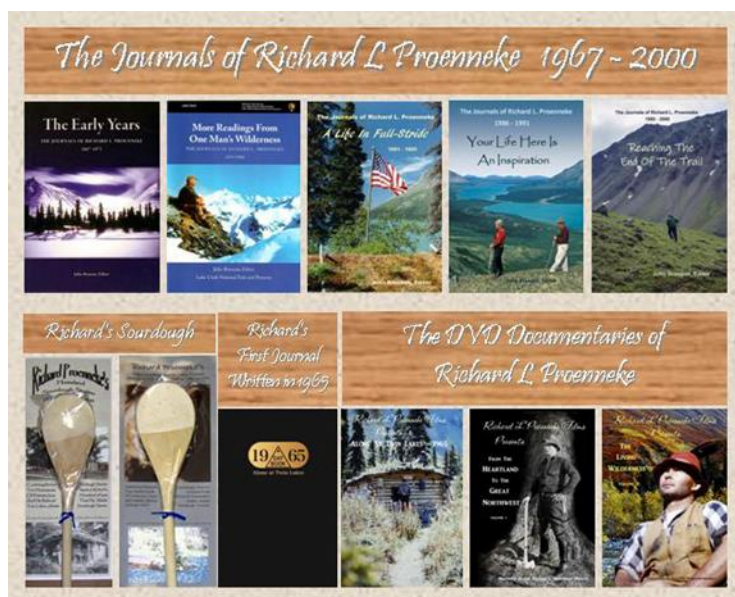
Oct. 11

“We would cut some wood so we took the Ford tractor and flatbed trailer. Babe, Glen, John and I all with axes and one swede saw. We cut birch – two loads of it. No wood cutting after lunch so I hiked up to Tanalian Falls and caught four nice grayling in no time. The falls are huge and beautiful and what a perfect place to fish. After supper a visit – Babe frequently turns to the subject of religion and told me he looks forward to leaving this world. I hope he isn’t going when I am along in the T craft.”

On January 11, 2023, Babe and Mary Alsworth’s son John and wife Esther Alsworth, along with Esther’s sister Cody & husband Jon, and Jon’s brother Kevin visited the Richard L Proenneke Museum. John and Esther operate the “Alaskan Aircraft Engines Inc.” in Anchorage, AK. The Alsworth’s and Richard shared a formidable bond and deep affection for each other, as close to being Richard’s “Alaskan Family” as anyone possibly could. With the Alsworth’s trek to Richard’s Iowa homeland, their deep ties to each other have once again come full circle.

On our trip in 2019 to Port Alsworth, and Twin Lakes, AK, John’s brother Glen chauffeured us from “Lake Clark Air” at Merrill Field in Anchorage to Port Alsworth. Port Alsworth is a special place and the Alsworth family are truly special people, and one could even consider them “Richard Proenneke Royalty”.

Are you a Richard Proenneke fan? Would you like to learn more about this incredible man who grew up in our backyard? Consider joining us and lending a helping hand. Drop me a line at: Brie Anderson, Richard Proenneke Museum Curator: brie@richardproenneke.com or contact the new Library Director Sunny Robbins: director@donnellson.lib.ia.us



In addition to all the above, a discussion of the Local & Family History Department to start a session for patrons was brought up on how to build your family tree, since there are several websites to search. Once a scheduled plan is written it will be posted in a newsletter.

We thank our Generous Donors: Cheryl Bell for research done on the Bell and Caldwell situation at Clay Grove Cemetery, James Lemberger for his research request on the Lee County Railroad system, and Ray Tull for purchase of the 1874-1916 West Point Township maps.

In addition to the monetary donations, the Department received four Donnellson High School annuals for the years 1956-1959 from David Burnett.

Upcoming Local & Family History Display

The Christmas display was kept through the celebration of the Epiphany in January and was taken down mid-month to plan for the February display which will cover the Civil War. This display will cover some of the many battles which took place over the four-year period with several patrons sharing photographs of their ancestors and their role in the War.

February is also Black History month and will cover Harriet Tubman's life after her efforts in the Underground Railroad and freeing of the slaves. It will show how she continued her involvement as a Civil War heroine. She helped to coordinate a military assault during the Civil War which freed 700 people from slavery. When the Civil War finally began Tubman did not stand on the sidelines. She first served as a cook and a nurse then as a scout and a spy for Union soldiers in South Carolina. In June 1863, under the leadership of Colonel James Montgomery, she served as a key advisor for an operation in Combahee, South Carolina. Below are some photographs for the upcoming display courtesy of Carole Landes Elston.



Newsletter Editor: Diane P. Kruse

