

Editor's note: This is the second story in a two-part series reporting the history of the Hornell Public Library and the events planned to mark the library's 150th anniversary.

HORNELL — For 150 years, the Hornell Public Library has been a partner in the intellectual growth of the communities it serves, offering not only books, but educational programs that have nourished the minds of generations.

On May 20, the library's long history and that of other mainstays of the community will be celebrated with a sesquicentennial dinner and presentation at The Main Place in Hornell.

It all began in 1868, when prominent community members Irvin Near, Elijah Johnson, Charles Adsit, Safford Thatcher, John W. Shelley, Stephen Gilbert, N.P.T. Finch, Andrew Charles and J.W. Burnham, first met to establish what would become a crown jewel in the city.

The dinner will honor past and present library board members, staff, volunteers, partner organizations and elected officials who have supported the library's mission.

"It's not a fundraiser, it's a celebration," said current library board member Mary McDaniels.

A special presentation will recognize churches, businesses and organizations that have been a part of the community for 100 years or more, with former Hornell Mayor Shawn Hogan acting as master of ceremonies. Other businesses participating include St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell Area Family YMCA, Maple City Savings Bank and The Evening Tribune (Others are welcomed to participate).

The dinner will also serve as the launch of the library's annual traveling basket auction, featuring donations from many area businesses. The baskets will travel to three sites around the city, and tickets can be purchased there, or at the library. The cost for a chance at a large basket is \$2 each; three tickets for \$5; or seven for \$10. Chances at a small basket will be \$1 each; three for \$5; or 15 for \$10.

Tickets for the dinner must be purchased by Monday, May 14, and are \$25 for individuals and \$200 for a table of eight. Those purchasing a table will be featured with an ad in the event program. Tickets may be purchased at the Hornell Public Library during business hours — Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Doors open at 4 p.m., dinner begins at 5 p.m. and historical presentations begin at 6 p.m.

However, the dinner is just the beginning of a six-week long celebration. Following the event, many of the +100 year businesses honored at the dinner, will make presentations about their history at the library. Dates, times and participants will be announced at a later date.

"Usually we have our basket raffle during our dinner theater event, but we thought we would try something different this year," McDaniels said. The raffle will benefit the Library Association.

The library's role in the community over its 150 years, will be further detailed in a movie produced by The Hornell Intermediate School's 6th grade Technology Class. It will be shown at Spotlight Theater on Saturday, June 9 at 1 p.m. Admission is free.

Events will conclude on June 29, at 3 p.m. with a party. The event is open to the public and light refreshments will be served. Winners of the traveling basket raffle will be chosen at that time.

Banners will also be mounted in front of the library, noting its 150 years of service to the Hornell community.

For a complete history on the Hornell Public Library, visit their website www.hornellpubliclibrary.org, or check

out the May 3 copy of The Evening Tribune.

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