

The History of the Bonduel Public Library

September 25, 1934

A special meeting of the Women's Club was held for the purpose of introducing the library project to the club. "As the specific aim of our club is to further public improvement, the idea of a public library met wholehearted approval. We think of no better way to carry out our aim, and incidentally, improve our community, than by lending this movement our support."

Mrs. Robert Rose, President of the Women's Club, met with Mrs. Pearl Humphrey and Mrs. Westlock, Bonduel Village President Mr. Friemuth and members of the Chamber of Commerce to plan this project.

The State of Wisconsin offered to give the new library 700 books that would meet the various needs and tastes of the community. The Women's Club would devise ways and means of building up the library and would assume responsibility of seeing that the books in the library would meet the highest standards of literature.

October 16, 1934

The Women's Club met to discuss the new library. Present were County library workers Ella Veslak, Mrs. Czeskleba, Mr. Jensen of the FERA, and Fred Friemuth, Bonduel Village President.

It was decided that they would be fairly organized to open on November 1, 1934. The Women's Club is determined to make the library a success.

On the evening of November 1, a card party is planned to raise money for the library. Skat and 500 will be played. A plate lunch will be served at 25¢ per plate.

November 1, 1934

The library officially opened, with Miss Ann Larsen as the first librarian. She brought with her 200 books to add to the library collection. People were asked to donate their old books and magazines to help increase the collection.

Emil Rosin, Ray Kobs, Ernest Runge, G.A. Gartzke and Robert Rose donated their time by building shelves and getting the library room ready. The new library was housed in what is now the Reference Room on the second floor of the village hall building. There were 600 books.

Library hours will be every afternoon from 2-5 p.m. and Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings from 7-9p.m.. Books can be checked out for 2 weeks with a 1¢ per day overdue fine.

Story hour will be held for 2nd to 4th graders at 10am on Saturday, and for kindergarten to 1st grade children at 11a.m. on Saturday. There were 36 children in attendance.

The first children to receive library cards were: Edward Krueger, Warren Moede and Harold Heuschen. Seventy people had received library cards at that time.

The first book to be checked out was Wanderer of the Wasteland by Zane Grey. It was checked out by Eldo Boettcher. Average circulation was 20 books lent out per day.

November 16, 1934

Our library leads the list of newly established libraries in the county, on the number of books donated, books in circulation, and hours kept open. You can renew a book by dropping a penny postcard to the library.

January 16, 1935

The Bonduel Library has 1,050 books, mostly donated, and 234 patrons. In December 1934, there were 1,010 books circulated. There were 10 libraries in the county: Bonduel, Bowler, Caroline, Cecil, Eland, Gresham, Leopold, Mattoon, Navarino, and Tigerton. Bonduel leads in circulation.

June 1935

A Street Carnival and Sideshow was held to raise money to buy new books. The program included such acts as the Little Sunbonnet Girls; the Tuxedo Boys, the Sweet Little Shirley Temple Girls, comic dialogues, the Spirit of Springtime, a Japanese Drill, and a Circus complete with jungle animals. Admission for adults was 25c and 10c for children. The following children participated: Doris Barkowiack, Regina Barkowiack, June Beilfuss, Luella Beilfuss, Margery Beilfuss, Wally Beilfuss, Inez Benter, Vernon Berkhahn, Arbutus Bonnin, Charlotte Bonnin, Lois Bonnin, Willis Bonnin, Arnold Buchholtz, Billy Burmeister, Harvey Buss, Violet Buss, Wilma Dahms, Alice Dingeldein, Charles Druckrey, Louis Engel, Lois Froehlich, Lorenz Froehlich, Bobby Gartzke, Audrey Gerondale, Ruth Heise, Robert Kallies, Marjorie Karrow, Billy Kosbab, Rudolf Kosbab, Delmar Krueger, Myron Krueger, Barbara Laehn, Betty Laehn, Fern Ann Larsen, Raphael Larsen, Geraldine Meisner, Jean Monroe, Joyce Monroe, Corrine Mueller, Howard Mueller, Ruth Nicholas, Eva Pelnarsch, Marjory Peterman, John Rose, Buster Rose, Billy Rotter, Lorraine Rotter, Leo Sumnicht, Billy Weier, John Weier, Delores Westphal, Blanche Wochinski, Elaine Wudtke and Dorothy Wussow.

November 1936

Periodicals available at the library are The Walther League Messenger, American, Cosmopolitan, Redbook, Delineator, Popular Science, McCalls, Geographical Reader, and Library Digest.

March 1937

The classic Gone With The Wind has arrived at the library.

Location, Location, Location

In 1934

The Bonduel Public Library was located in a small upstairs room in the Village Hall, which is most recently known as the Reference Room.

In 1965

After the Village of Bonduel built a new Fire Station and garage, the library was moved into the entire space that had been used for fire trucks and equipment. The Village Hall was entirely renovated, and the library was then located on the ground floor, with a greatly expanded and modernized area. The blueprints show a very attractive library. Shelving was installed on the entire west and north walls and most of the east wall. Rows of shelves were extended out into the room, making space for many more books. Newspapers and periodicals were added.

The ceiling of the library room was lowered with acoustical tile and the floor was tiled. The large garage doors on the south side were removed and the area was closed in with colored glass block, forming an attractive appearance from the exterior.

The village office was moved to the space formerly occupied by the jail. A library check-out desk was placed near the area of the old office. The entire second floor of the Village Hall building was remodeled, making a larger club room, more adequate kitchen space and rest rooms.

In 1977

The need to expand the library was brought before the village board. The only real opposition was found in the use of the stairs by the elderly and women with small children, and the atmosphere compared to the downstairs. Other possibilities of expansion discussed were the garage at the rear of the library and the use of both the upstairs and downstairs. It was added that much more need space would be gained by using the upstairs compared to expanding to the back. A motion was made to go ahead with expansion to the upstairs in the Village Hall. The move was made to the upstairs of the Village Hall in early 1978.

In 1990

A public meeting was held for Bonduel's Community Development Plan. Residents indicated that a multi-purpose community center was a top priority. In 1992, the plan was published, and stressed how maintaining the existing Village Hall and Library could be costly and detrimental to future growth and economic development.

In 1996

The Village Board was looking into acquiring property adjacent to the Village Hall, to build a community center. There had been complaints about the inaccessibility of the second floor library and comments about the village complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Installing an elevator would be very expensive, considering it would not alleviate the cramped conditions in the building. Stairs were posing a barrier to some residents and the small space allotted to the library made it impossible to efficiently serve the public.

The community center never materialized, but the need to make the library accessible to all remained an ever present issue. The Bonduel Area Community Fund, Inc. was organized as a foundation to serve interests benefiting the community. Over the years, numerous money-making events were held to raise money for a new library, with the fire of hope remaining lit.

In October 1997

The Bonduel Public Library became part of the OWLSNET automated system, which linked it to 50 other libraries in nine counties. Books and library cards were transferred to a barcode system. Card files were eliminated; ordering and checkout were computerized. Library resources available were increased to 1.5 million items.

In 2008

Kwik Trip generously donated their vacated gas station building to the Village. The dream of a new library facility looked like it was finally going to materialize, and right across the street from the current building, on the corner of Green Bay and Cecil Streets. But the hopes were again dashed when the village board voted to put the newly acquired property up for sale.

The dream was rekindled when John Engel of Mill Creek Log Homes submitted a proposal to swap the building he owned at 125 N. Washington Street for the Kwik Trip building. This proposal was accepted by the Village Board, and the board in turn offered the property to the Library Board. The Library Board accepted the offer. To equalize the value of the properties, John Engel agreed to perform all the necessary renovations needed to make the Washington Street property into a usable library facility. For 62 years, the library had been located in an upstairs area, preventing some citizens from utilizing its services. Finally, after 74 years serving the Bonduel area, the Library would be on ground level and accessible to everyone in the community.

Months of planning by Carol Luepke and the Library Board culminated in moving approximately 13,000 books during the week of November 29-December 7. Donations were received from numerous individuals and businesses in the village and surrounding area. World Wide Signs designed and donated a lighted sign that for the south side of the building.

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held December 8, 2008 at 3 p.m. opening the new library quarters for business.

An Open House is planned for the spring of 2009, celebrating 75 years of the Bonduel Public Library.

Bonduel Village Board

Grant Staszak, President
Kristy Brockman
Jeremy Leitzke
Vicki Mueller
Stuart Reisner
James Tinlin
Mel Wendland

Library Board

Elsie Gruenewald, President
Connie Huempfner
Amy Johnson
Kristine Reinke
Lois Renner
James Tinlin

Library Staff

Carol Luepke, Director
Janet Kamke, Assistant
Allison Schultz, Assistant

LIBRARIANS

Ann Larsen Ollman	November 1, 1934 -
Clara Forman	1938
Leona Lauersdorf	October 27, 1938 -
Elda Krueger	
Mrs. Reinhold Heinz	
Dora Luecke	1959
Edna Smith	
Mary Jo Swanson	1964
Brenda Echtner	1964 – 1967
Betty Dehn	1967-1969
Mrs. Myron Boerst	
Marlene Schmidt	April 15, 1967 – February 28, 1971
Marcy Joss	March 1, 1971 – December 31, 1980
Doretta Lehman	January 1, 1981 – September 15, 1984
Carol Luepke	September 10, 1984 - present