

Thanks! A big thanks to Betsy Spethmann and her family and Bill Gruszewski and his wife for setting up the March 13 Carnegie Centennial Celebration concert, and to them and other staff and family members for taking everything down. Many hands definitely make lighter work.

Thanks to the board for being flexible on the March board meeting, since 4 members were unavailable on the second Wednesday. We will miss Betsy and Char Carlson on March 24, but we look forward to their contributions at the April 14 retreat!

And thanks to Lynne and her staff for successfully garnering several grants to fund centennial celebration programs. Job well done!

My week at the Blandin Community Leadership Program was very valuable. One idea that came into clearer focus was that of actively building partnerships around **life-long learning**. The public schools, including Community Services, the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium and the Northfield Public Library all formally identify life-long learning in their mission statements. I can imagine that Early Childhood and Family Education, day care providers and nursery schools, homeschoolers, the Union of Youth, various book clubs, and others are informally committed to starting learning at an early age and fostering it well into old age. Hannah Puczko has offered to convene a community-wide task force to explore partnerships in life-long learning. We will be at that table.

I also learned that the YMCA has completed their **fundraising feasibility study**, having interviewed 44 influential and/or affluent individuals, families and businesses. According to Virginia Kazmarck, YMCA Executive Director and fellow Blandin participant, the response was "over-the-top positive." The most common question the interviewees posed was not about location or size of building, but about the partnerships that have been built in the past two years that support their growing number of programs. That generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm among the potential donors.

*Our* fundraising feasibility study will send letters to potential donors in April with interviews scheduled in May.

At our March meeting we will prime the pump for the **April retreat** (remember, it will come in just three weeks!). I have asked Jan Shoger to review the 2008-2012 **Long Range Plan** with Lynne and the Planning Committee in advance, so that they can lead the board through that document and update it as needed. We will also have an all-purpose **calendar** at that meeting, as per Char's request, and once I hear from each of the committee chairs about a regular committee time and date for monthly meetings.

I **appreciate the time and effort** that each of you spends reading through the board meeting materials, including written committee reports, and your willingness to lean into the issues and challenges currently facing our library.