

City support keeps library

A long history of library service in St. Bonifacius nearly came to an abrupt halt Sept. 1.

However, St. Boni's resident readers rallied and the St. Bonifacius Community Library was given a reprieve. The community has until next August to bring circulation to an acceptable level.

Hennepin County Library System officials are skeptical that St. Bonifacius library users will reach the goals that have been set, according to their comments in other publications. But library use has gone up since June when the city was notified that the library was scheduled to be replaced with five hours of bookmobile service a week.

October figures show circulation at 1,671 for the month or 20.88 circulations per hour open. Information contacts (questions to the librarian) were at 2.23 per hour in October. Those numbers show an increased usage, but more is needed, according to Bob Clifford, chairman of the St. Bonifacius Library Committee.

The Hennepin County Library Board has said that monthly circulations of more than 2,000 are necessary to keep the library open and information contacts have to be at 3.4 per hour, which is the average for other libraries in St. Boni's size category.

"We need more people to use the library," Clifford said. "It has a lot more to offer than just books, record albums, magazines, even puppets. And, if you don't see what you are looking for, ask the librarian. She is there to help library users get the most they can out of

the library system."

Library service in St. Boni stretches back to 1931 when the St. Bonifacius Community Library was opened as a Hennepin County branch library.

Edward C. Gale of Wayzata, a lawyer and the son of prominently Minneapolis residents, spent summers at Upland Farm, his summer home built in 1910 and still standing east of St. Boni on Highway 7. In 1931 Gale and his wife donated the People's State Bank building to the city. It had been built in 1916 to house the village's newest bank, but closed during the depression. In 1931 it became a Hennepin County branch library.

The town turned out for the dedication ceremony Feb. 26, 1931. People were anxious for the library to open, realizing it would be their connection to the larger libraries in Minneapolis.

The connection continues today. St. Boni has a library crowded with books, magazines, record albums, pamphlets and other information and it has access to the Hennepin County Library System's entire inventory.

Overseeing the local collection now is Jeanne Whetstone, but for many years it was Eleanor Dittrich. A St. Boni resident, she was the library assistant for 26 years. She retired a year ago, but keeps active on the St. Bonifacius Library Committee's steering committee. Serving on the committee with Dittrich are Chairman Bob Clifford, steering committee members Linda Schnobrich and Mona Neeley, and Shirley Logelin, Bonnie Thurk,



Story hour this fall brought youngsters to the library each Friday.

Margaret Maas, Agnes Thurk and Marilyn Bennett.

The library is currently open Monday 1-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Thursday 1-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Jan. 1 hours will be changed to noon-7 p.m. Monday and Wednesday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.

It is hoped that the new hours will

be more convenient for library users and will encourage residents to use the library more. A Friends of the St. Boni Library organization is also being formed to provide support for the library and increase the use of the library. The first meeting is scheduled for January.

With support from residents, the library will continue to serve St. Bonifacius.