

Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant **St. David's Society News**

St. David's luncheon on Feb. 28 provides insights into century-old disaster

By Mary Morris Mergenthal

Members of the St. David's Society of Minnesota met Sat., Feb. 28, to honor the patron saint of Wales at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Northeast Minneapolis.

The Society's Outstanding Service Award was given to David Evan Thomas from Minneapolis. He's a composer and creative thinker, often on the Society's behalf. Holly Windle introduced him with merriment. President Mary Morris Mergenthal presented the award, a cut-glass vase with Y Ddraig Goch and a daffodil etched on the sides, as well as his pen name, "DET."

A centenary commemoration in word and song of the 1915 sinking of the Cunard liner, *Lusitania*, an event that hastened U.S. involvement in World War I, was the spotlight of an interesting program. It was yet another brainchild of David Evan Thomas. The program was entitled "Time and Tide: Lady Rhondda and the Lusitania."



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The program commemorated the anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania* with musical selections linked by a narration, using the words of one of the Welsh survivors, Margaret Haig Mackworth (played by Holly Windle). She had been returning from New York with her father, Liberal politician and industrialist D. A. Thomas, who had been on a mission to procure American munitions for the the Great War. She was active in the women's suffrage movement and went on to found a weekly magazine, *Time and Tide*. She later inherited the title her father was given after the war and became Viscountess Rhondda, though she died before winning the seat in the House of Lords for which she'd fought. She is listed as one of the top 50 influential politicians in Wales.

Special attention was given to the dozens of Welsh passengers and crew aboard the ship. The presentation was buoyed by period popular songs and a performance in Welsh of Joseph Parry's 23rd Psalm, music courtesy of Margaret Williams Carr, (Lake Crystal, Minn.) now deceased. The audience joined Llaisiau o Rhondda, Singers of Rhondda, in the singing of Abide With Me and Cwm Rhondda.

The program closed with Thomas playing his arrangement of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau, premiered at the NWA Grand Banquet at NAFOW in Minneapolis in 2014. After that, all joined in singing the National Anthem yn Gymraeg and were on their way.

There was time to peruse photos and memorabilia of relatives of members who made ship crossings from Wales to the U.S. in the last century and a half.

***Lusitania...another photo
on page 2***



Program participants included: Richard Rames (Singers of Rhondda... Llaisiau o Rhondda); David Evan Thomas (program researcher, accompanist and winner of the Outstanding Service Award); Holly Windle (Margaret Haig Mackworth); Morgan Compagnon (reporter); and Sally Evans (Llaisiau o Rhondda).

Not shown: Others who sang with Llaisiau of Rhondda: Jan and Donald Barbee, Maria Bartholdi, Trilby Busch, Esmé Evans, Mary Mergenthal, and Karen Titrud.

Spring Gymanfa Ganu to be held May 17 at Westminster

The Spring Gymanfa Ganu will be held Sun., May 17, 2:00 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church Chapel. This lovely smaller chapel was also our site last spring.

Singing will be directed by Trilby Busch, Minneapolis, member of our St. David's Society. Ryan Jones, Lake Crystal, will provide accompaniment.

All are encouraged to bring something sweet or savory for the treat table. Tea and coffee will be served in the lovely Heller Commons adjacent to the chapel.

Remember, do NOT try to enter from the main doors on Nicollet Ave. **Enter, please, from the Marquette Ave. parking lot** (available for our use). That is an accessible entrance, with elevator just inside the door.

Next pub evening at Merlins Cafe Sun., April 19, 4 p.m.

Head on over to Merlins Cafe on Lake St. at 36th Ave., on Sun., April 19, about 4 p.m. or bit later. Tables will be reserved for members of our group for conversation and enjoyment of tasty food and drinks of your choice. Other Society members will be there for conversation and introductions.

Summer picnic & annual meeting NEW SITE — Sat., July 25

Mark your calendars now so you won't schedule something else on this day. We'll meet at **Rosebrook Park in Roseville**, near southwest side of intersection of Snelling Ave. & Co. Rd. B2, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. (just north of Rosedale Shopping Center, behind Sunrise of Roseville). It's a brand new building with lovely facilities, handicapped parking nearby & some more parking spots close-by...more in easy walking distance. Next issue will describe the kitchenette, potluck plans, and program plans.

Nominees are needed for some leadership positions. Please notify Mary Mergenthal, 651-644-1650, mary.mergenthal@gmail.com if you'd like to know more.



St. David' Day photos by Ilene Alexander.

Don Barbee and Maria Bartholdi sang solos during the Lusitania program, with accompaniment by David Evan Thomas.

Don sang an excerpt from "Lament" (for Catherine, aged 9), "Lusitania" 1915). Maria sang "As the Lusitania Went Down" (1915) by Lamb & Klickmann.

Membership News

Suzanne Ackerman:

New e-mail: suzyack110@gmail.com

New Society directories were available at the recent St. David's Day luncheon.

If you weren't able to attend & would like a copy, please contact Mary Mergenthal:

651-644-1650 mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

Please indicate if you prefer a paper copy or a pdf.

Paper copies will be available for pick-up at the Spring Gymanfa Ganu May 17.

Prefer to receive the newsletter online?

Notify Kay Gavin at kaywgavin@hotmail.com.

**She will notify you when the next issue is available on the Society's web page.
Help the Society save printing & mailing costs.**



North American Festival of Wales

the Welsh North American Association

Make your hotel reservation for NAFOW 2015 early to avoid disappointment. The discounted rooms are filling at a fast pace.

Headquarters hotel is **The Hyatt Regency Columbus**, 350 N. High St., Columbus, Ohio 43215. Festival rates are the same price the Hyatt offered in Minneapolis last year!

Sept. 3-6, (Thurs.-Sun.) single, double, triple & quad rooms are \$119+tax until our block fills.

Extend your stay and take advantage of Festival room rates from Aug. 28-Sept. 12. Early booking is recommended as extended stay rooms are subject to room availability.

Online registration is now OPEN and can be accessed at: <https://nafow.webconnex.com/NAFOW2015>

For those wanting paper forms, write:

WNAA International Headquarters
Box 14886
Trumansburg, NY 14886.

Phone: 607-279-7402; Fax: 877-448-6633;
E-mail: IHQ@theWNAA.org.

NAFOW is sponsored by the Welsh North American Association (WNAA) and hosted by the Welsh Society of Columbus.

Festival highlights include **Calan**, with foot-tapping tunes and a spirited performance of Welsh step dancing; the Welsh National Eisteddfod; and **Côr y Penrhyn Bethesda**, a male voice choir from North Wales. **Owain Arwel**, musical director of the choir, will also conduct the 84th National Gymanfa Ganu.

The Gymanfa Ganu will be held at the historic Southern Theatre near the hotel. Bus transportation will be available.

More info on program details at: nafow.org

Ways our Society members will be active in Columbus, Ohio, at the 2015 NAFOW:

AdaMae Lewis will receive the NWAFA 2015 Heritage Medallion at the Grand Banquet;

Kay Gavin & Kay Thomas are members of the WNAA Board planning the event;

All members are encouraged to enter the National Eisteddfod (form available on-line)

Our Society is one of the sponsors of the Welsh Poetry written in English category.



**Old Saron Church, Sharon, LeSueur County, Minnesota
Built in 1857.**

First Welsh Church in State.

Coming in Spring 2015

A new book from

Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project

**History of the Welsh in Minnesota
Foreston and Lime Springs, Iowa
As Told by the Old Settlers (1895)**

**A translation by Martha A. Davies
of the Welsh language portion of the 1895 book.**

With an Index and 118 pages of photographs

www.welshheritageproject.org

Scholarships available

The St. David's Foundation was formed to award scholarships to deserving members or children of members who wish to participate in a learning opportunity to further their knowledge of the Welsh language, culture, history, genealogy or other Welsh-related subjects.

**The St. David's Day deadline has been
extended to May 1, 2015.**

For more information or to request an application, please contact Foundation President Don Anderson, 1918 Johnson St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418, (612) 789-8923, andymae2@juno.com.

The Well-Read Dragons travel to *Y Wladfa*, the Welsh colony in Patagonia, and learn more about The Great War

December

By **Bob Minish**

The traveling at the December meeting was vicariously through the descriptive travel narrative, *Beyond the Pampas, In Search of Patagonia*, by German-born author, Imogen Rhia Herrad.



Art by Dan Proud

A Celtic Studies course while a university student led her to teaching German in schools in Aberystwyth and then to an intensive course in the Welsh language. When Imogen went to Patagonia unable to speak Spanish, she was able to converse in Welsh. The book reflects her impressions of the country, the culture, the people and the history of Welsh settlement, which began in 1865. Being a foreigner who writes about traveling in a place where Welsh was still spoken regularly reminded me of George Borrow's *Wild Wales*, a travel narrative written by an Englishman who was fluent in Welsh as he traveled in Wales in the mid-19th Century .

As a traveler writing about Patagonia, Imogen is in illustrious company. Charles Darwin studied fossils he found in Patagonia and wrote about his travels in *The Voyage of the Beagle*. Her opening sentence depicts the bleak countryside that greeted the Welsh colonists: "IT REVEALS ITSELF SLOWLY. At first there is just the land, flat as a plate under the huge blue sky. The earth is a bare, dusty brown. Not much grows here except for scrubby greygreen bushes." The book is much more than a travelogue and reveals much more than the land. She focuses on the people she meets and gets them to tell their stories. The reader follows her visits to remote farms and settlements through long bus rides and many long walks through the countryside. She reveals much of the history of the Colony and the plight of the natives for whom the land given to the Welsh had been their homeland for generations.

The suffering of the Mapuche and the Tehuelche people at the hands of the settlers and the Argentine governments echos that of our Native Americans. The Desert Campaign to exterminate the "Indigenas" brings to mind the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado in 1864.

Imogen's personal growth through her interaction with the people and the land is reflected in her acceptance of an invitation to see how people lived in the remote area of the "meseta," the high plateau country. At a community center gathering in a remote village, Esquel, where many Mapuche live, Imogen meets Juana Luz, a woman who extends an invitation: "You should come and see how we live" and tells Imogen "Come to my house, I live outside Esquel, a few hours by coach, and a couple of hours' walking after that." A couple of years after that Imogen accepts

the invitation and makes the journey, including the lengthy walk to witness a Mapuche religious ceremony, a "ngillatun." After the ceremony and the long walk back to the road, her friend, Catalina, says, "You'll come back." As one reads the conclusion to Imogen's narrative, the opening words, "It reveals itself slowly," find an appropriate counterpoint:

"We speed towards the mountains of Esquel, the car incredibly fast on the bumpy gravel road after a couple of days of moving at walking pace only.

It's the end of one journey.
The beginning of another."

February meeting

By **Austin Evans**

David Jones (1895–1974) was born in Brockley, Kent, the third child of a lower middle class late Victorian, early Edwardian couple. His mother was a governess and a gifted amateur draftsman. His father was a native North Welshman who was a printer's overseer for the *Christian Herald*, a popular weekly Christian newspaper during the first half of the 20th century. From an early age, David Jones, through the influence of his father, developed a strong affinity to his father's Welsh heritage so that at an early age his favorite stories were *King Arthur and the Knights Of the Round Table* and stories from the *Mabinogion*. He was torn in his hero worship between English Nelson and Welsh Owen Glendower. Despite his English upbringing, he felt himself to be Welsh, not a popular attitude in the London area at the beginning of the 20th century. A large part of his reading concerned Wales; by choice he enlisted in a Welsh Regiment; during his training he daydreamed that he was a soldier in an ancient Welsh division defending North Wales, the home of his father's ancestors. In a conversation during the Ypres battle about sanitation in the Army of Artaxerxes with an Evan Evans from a rural area of Cardigan, he was impressed with the difference between ordinary Welshmen who were often learned and ordinary English men who were not!

While the book is mainly an account of his experiences in the trenches during the Great War, it is also illustrated with 78 of his pencil drawings, most drawn at that time. They are a remarkable collection and can be found in many British galleries, most in the National Museum of Wales and the Tate Gallery in London. Like the Impressionists, he was determined to dedicate himself entirely to fine art and that his vocation should preclude working as a commercial artist. One of his sketches is a very realistic drawing of the assault on Mametz Woods

From preceding page

depicting British soldiers falling under intense German fire. He did not cease drawing through the war and carried in his back pack a 7 by 4.5 inch sketch book.

While being an outstanding artist he was a better poet. His epic long poem "In Parenthesis" is considered one of the foremost works of British literary Modernism and with his other works helped establish him as a writer of major importance. He won praise from such people as W.B Yeats; and T.S Eliot, who placed him in the company of himself; James Joyce; and Ezra Pound. The 187-page poem "In Parenthesis" is a detailed account of his war experiences. It is a powerful account which grapples with the carnage of the First World War.

Jones saw more active service than any other famous war writers/poets; 117 weeks in total, more than twice as long as the famous Siegfried Sassoon. It all started with a 17-mile march to Southampton docks to sail to France and endure a winter of trench warfare prior to fighting in the Richburg Sector, The Somme, the Ypres Sector, and Passchendaele.

In the Richburg Sector he learned to accept the never ending building and repairing of trenches, sometimes to precise specifications, on the instructions of fastidious officers, while anticipating enemy shelling at any moment. Casualties were high and as men died the never ending stench of decaying corpses along with colonies of rats crawling everywhere only made the ordeal worse.

In an essay for the Christian Herald he would write: "In a single file, one finds oneself trudging along a desolate road past broken ruins which stand grim and piteous. These grim ruins—these smashed, wrecked homesteads—were once, only a few months back, comfortable homes—contented and happy peasants loving every corner of them...Is it worth it? At this moment the man in front of you—your chum—drops without a sound. One had never seen a man die before, perhaps. There is a momentary halt and the Sergeant mutters "Only a stray." Again the voice: Is it worth it? The trench is knee-deep in mud and slush—the wind is biting cold—overcoat, tunic, shirt are soaked through—very little to eat. Night falls; the groans of the wounded and dying break the silence. Was it worth it for these men?" His essay ends with the sentence: "And one goes to his post to watch for marauding Huns—goes with the smile of contentment. The trench is still cold and wet; eyes still ache, and hands freeze. But it's worth it!" This sentiment seems to pervade his experiences over and over again.

At the Somme, Jones participated in the famous attack and the very few successes over the German army but at the cost of 57,470 British casualties, including, Harold Hawkins his close Art School friend who was terribly mangled and crippled for life. The troops received an announcement from General HQ claiming success with permission to cheer.

Years later gnawing thoughts would well up in Jones at this memory. At the Somme while waiting for the command to climb over the trench and advance across no man's land with anxiety reaching its peak and the smothering sound of gun-fire around him, Jones would hear on his right one of

the most moving things he would ever hear, the 14th Battalion singing in Welsh "Jesus lover of my soul." As they advanced, Lt. Rees walking ahead of him was shot dead. Jones would recreate his fall in poetic slow motion in "In Parenthesis." The advance was through a maelstrom of rifle and machine gun bullets, shrapnel, and shell-casing fragments flying at every angle—a thousand potential deaths and maimings with no protecting cover. The noise was beyond hearing, the quaking earth erupting, the air thick with smoke, chalky dirt steel, bits of flesh.

It was at this time he was injured and a Welsh corporal hoisted him on his back and carried him till Major Edwards found them and ordered "Drop the bugger here for stretcher bearers to find him, go back and fight, don't you know there's a sod of a war on?" The question amused Jones as he was being lowered to the ground. While waiting to be taken back to England for recuperation a Canadian nurse kissed him and said "You ought to be in Kindergarten". The few photos of him in the book show a man who could but be a young teenager!

In the Ypres sector the pungent smell of corpses was worse even than in the Richburg sector, but at least there were fewer rats in the trenches owing to the abundance of corpses in no man's land. There is an account of Jones sitting in a very wet and particularly bad trench with a chum. They were both very cold and very wet; their rations, such as they were, while being brought to them had unfortunately been dropped in the mud so that on the whole the situation was far from what the official report would call "satisfactory"! Being a soldier was a job. Death and mutilation had long since ceased to appall Jones, but when a close friend was killed by a trench-mortar projectile, friendship which had been his chief solace, became his sharpest grief. He mourned Reggie Allen and in 1937 he would dedicate "In Parenthesis" especially to:

PTE. R.A.LEWIS-GUNNER
FROM NEWPORT MONMOUTHSHIRE.

One can be proud of Jones' affinity to Welsh culture and the loyalty to his Welsh heritage which pervades the book. To read the many accolades showered on him for his art and poetry is impressive. However, what moves one in reading the book is his devotion to his fellow comrades, his fearlessness at the height of the battle, his concern for those around him on the battlefield, his optimism that right would win in the end and that, while the reason for fighting this war was a just one, it brought terror and sadness into lives which should have been filled with beauty and happiness.

**Next meeting will be Sat., April 4, 11:30 a.m.,
at Davanni's in Arden Hills,
3673 Lexington Ave. N. 55126.**

**If you're new to the group or to that area,
Davanni's is just south of CUB south off I-694.**

**Title for that discussion will be
Faith, Hope & Love by Llwyd Owen.**

5 Come even if you've not been able to read the book.

Dragon News

News of Society members & friends



SUNSHINE REPORT: Betty Kinsey, the Society Sunshine chairwoman, reports sending get well cards to Shannon King; Barb Morris; Elaine Dietrich; Lavonne Hayes ; and Karen Davis.

She also sent sympathy cards to Melvyn Jones and Steve Hughes (both lost brothers recently) and to Shelly and Dean Willar whose mother, Betty, died recently.

Please let Betty know when you know of a member who is ill or has suffered a loss, or is rejoicing over a birth, marriage or something else. You can reach her at (612) 871-7587. During April, please contact her substitute, Karen Titrud, (651) 647-9217.



PAM ROSE is a grandmother! Her granddaughter's name is Harper Neila Meilan Rose and she was born Jan. 5, 2015. Harper is also the great-granddaughter of JACK and ADELE DAVIS!

MYRENE JONES PETERSON's new grandson was born recently, too. Murray Owen McCausland lives in Brookings, S.D. His grandmother Peterson, a St. David's Society member, lives in Enderlin, N.D.

Books on the *Lusitania* and Margaret Haig Thomas Mackworth Rhondda

Just out: ***Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*** by Erik Larson (of *The Devil and the Dark City* fame), Crown Publishers, 430 pp. \$28.

Out last July, encourage your library system to order: ***Turning the Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda***, by Angela V. John. Brief summary of book review: "A Welsh wonder who rode the first waves of feminism." Parthian Books, 652 pp., \$30.00+ hardcover; \$25.00 paperback; \$9.59 Kindle (prices from Amazon Books....less expensive from AbeBooks.com).

A 1991 biography of Margaret Haig Mackworth, ***Viscountess Rhondda: Equalitarian Feminist*** is still available at abebooks.com and amazon.com.

Ed. note - One need not use all the names in this article's title to find books on Viscountess Rhondda, but it's kind of fun to see the whole list!

IN MEMORIAM: Betty Willar



Betty J. Willar

Longtime St. David's Society member, Betty J. Willar of North St. Paul, died March 18, 2015.

She met her husband at 3M in the late '40s (he was her boss!). She left 3M to raise their children, then returned and retired in 1992. Then she worked part-time at JC Penney and Macy's.

She enjoyed all types of crafts, sewing, reading, golf and gardening. A history lover, she volunteered for

the North St. Paul Historical Society (for over 25 years) and added 2,200 hours at the Minnesota History Center to her time.

Her parents John Walter Hughes and Bessie Crist met in Lime Springs, Iowa, where they farmed for a few years. Later the family moved to Webster, Wis. Betty was born in St. Paul, the youngest of seven children.

Her grandfather emigrated to the U.S from Anglesey, North Wales. Her mother's family were from Pwllheli. She was very proud of her Welsh heritage, traveling there to walk on the ground her ancestors trod. Until the last two years of her life she attended most of the St. David's events. She, of course, loved to sing and enjoyed the friends she made at the St. David's luncheons.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Denny. She is survived by children, Shelly and Dean (Brenda); grandchildren, Elizabeth, Laura, Sydney, and Evan; and great-grandsons, Harold, Walton, & Samuel.

Her memorial service was held March 27 at North Presbyterian Church in North St. Paul, with interment at Lakeview Cemetery.

Bryn Terfel coming to St. Paul April 20, 2016

The Schubert Club has announced that Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel will be at the new Ordway Concert Hall in downtown St. Paul for a recital on April 20, 2016. He'll be collaborating with pianist Natalia Katyukova.

Subscriptions are already on sale for the International Artist Series with prices (for the full four-concert series) ranging from \$230 to \$100.

Tickets for individual concerts go on sale August 3. For ticket information, call 651-292-3268 or visit Schubert.org.

OFFICERS & REPRESENTATIVES

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mary.mergenthal@gmail.com
cell: 612.670-8510

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Archivist — Ilene Alexander, 612.237.6121
Cards & Remembrances — Betty Kinsey, 612.871.7587
Past-President — Pam Rose
Membership Chairperson — Kay Gavin, 651.484.1778
Newsletter Editor — Mary Mergenthal

Officers of St. David's Foundation —

Don Anderson (pres.), 612.789.8923;
Mae Anderson, Betty Kinsey

Next Deadline: April 22

E-MAIL: mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

OR SEND COPY TO: Mary Mergenthal
2393 Bourne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108-1618

**Please consider a tax-deductible
contribution to the
St. David's Society
or
the St. David's Foundation.**

**Gifts can remember
or honor a Welsh friend or relative.**

**You are also encouraged to remember the
St. David's Society or Foundation in your will. For
information, please contact
Don Anderson, (612) 789-8923, or
Ron Adams, (952) 237-0506.**

Please...when attending St. David's Society
events, eschew cologne, aftershave, etc., to be
respectful of members with fragrance allergies
and to allow for their attendance/enjoyment.

**PLEASE HELP US MAKE ALL SOCIETY
EVENTS FRAGRANCE-FREE.**

Diolch yn fawr.

**Please check your mailing label.
Memberships were due July 1, 2014.**

St. David's Society of Minnesota MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

If family membership, include all names to be listed.

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

Membership category: Single Annual (\$15) _____; Couple/Family Annual (\$22) _____

Supporting Annual (\$50) _____; Life (\$175) _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____ (Make check payable to St. David's Society of Minnesota, note "membership")

Mail to: Kay Gavin
2737 Aglen St.
Roseville, MN 55113-2046

or contact Kay at: kaywgavin@hotmail.com

Membership year is July 1–June 30.

7 You may pay for multiple years in advance.

Diolch yn fawr.

Visit us on the web & Facebook:
www.stdavidsofmn.org
www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn

Return Service Requested

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Calendar



GWANWYN SPRING

COMING EVENTS

The Well-Read Dragons, Sat., April 4, 11:30 a.m., Davanni's,
3673 Lexington Ave. N., Arden Hills, 55126.

Sgwrs Cymraeg [Welsh Conversation], Sun., April 12, OR Sun., April 19,
2:00 p.m., home of Melvyn Jones & Esmé Evans, 1439 Grantham St.,
St. Paul 55108. Call (651) 645-1245 for final date choice. ANY WHO
WISH TO CONTINUE OR TRY TO USE THE WELSH LANGUAGE ARE WELCOME.

Pub evening, April 19, 4:00 p.m., Merlins Rest, 3601 Lake St. E., Mpls.
On-street parking & in lot across 36th Ave.
Visit & enjoy good food & drink at tables reserved for our group.

Spring Gymanfa Ganu, Sun., May 17, 2:00 p.m.,
Westminster Presbyterian Church Chapel, downtown Minneapolis.
Free parking lot off Marquette, with handicapped spots.
Handicapped entrance off that lot.

Summer picnic & Annual Meeting, Sat., July 25, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
Rosebrook Park, near SW corner of intersection of Co. Rd. C
and Snelling Ave. in Roseville. More directions next mailing.
Please bring food to share. (Microwave, refrigerator, freezer,
plug-ins. No oven.) Info in next mailing about program and
details for this event to be held inside lovely brand-new building.

If you need a large-print version of the newsletter, please call
Mary Mergenthal, (651) 644-1650.