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## 10th birthday party on for Estero library

By Liane Smith

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Cupcakes and lemonade are just a few of the treats in store for library patrons at the South County Regional Library celebrates their 10th year of service to the community in Estero.

The event will take place Aug. 23, all day, with an anniversary program at 10 a.m. The Friends of South County Regional Library, Inc. is sponsoring the event.

Dorothea Meldmer, of South Fort Myers, has been a member of the Friends group since 2004. She said she joined because she was enamored with the Estero library, and its staff. She moved to the area from Miami in 2003, but has also lived in Germany, Texas and Missouri.

"I've got a little bit of flavor from different libraries," Meldmer said. "From all the libraries I've frequented, this is the best bunch I've encountered."

Not only is Meldmer a member of the Friends group, she also volunteers at the library.

At the library on Aug. 23 several county commissioners, including John Albion, will present the library with a proclamation declaring Aug. 23, 2006, as South County Regional Library Day in Lee County.

The short program, which will also include words from local civic and arts organization, and officials from the Lee County Library System, will feature music by flutists Beth and Bill Larsen.

After the program and throughout the day, birthday cupcakes and lemonade will be served for as long as supplies last, according to a press release issued by Charles "Cas" Obie, vice president of Friends of South County Regional Library.

Plans for the South County Regional Library began in 1989 when the need to keep up with the rapid growth of south Lee County became evident.

The 32,000-square-foot library opened on Aug. 23, 1996, and was presented as a model of recycling and conservation, because it was originally a data processing center, and many of the fixtures were reused or recycled. The library also developed a partnership with Florida Power and Light to create an innovative air conditioning system still in use today. The system freezes ice during off hours to cool the building during peak hours.

According to Beth Nagengast, branch manager, who has been with the library since November 2005, the library has become an Estero landmark.

Registered users total more than 28,000 with a collection size of 171,710 materials comprised of regular and large type books, magazines and newspapers, videos and DVDs, books on CD and cassette, and

music CDs. Approximately 33,700 materials circulate monthly, with last year's total circulation at 405,039.

In addition to meeting room space, quiet study rooms, and computer training classes held on a regular basis, the Lee County Library has also gained a reputation for offering the community a variety of programs such as:

- Baby-Parent Rhyme Times
- Toddler and pre-school story times
- After School programs
- Puppet shows
- Summer Reading Programs including, magicians and puppeteers
- Teen cafes
- Game and craft sessions for children of all ages
- Book Discussions offered twice monthly from September through April
- Historical character enactments
- Scholar led program on the American Revolution
- Entertaining programs: Jack Benny

"We are so fortunate to have the support of the Friends of the South County Regional Library," Nagengast said. "It adds another dimension to the services we provide."

The Friends group is always looking for new members, and accepts memberships at the library's reference desk.

*For more information on the Friends of South County Regional Library, visit <http://friendsofscrl.org>. The South County Regional Library is located at 21100 Three Oaks Parkway in Estero. For more information on the 10th anniversary event, call 390-3200.*

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