



Ads by Google



## FEATURED ARTICLES

[Chicago Humanities Festival](#)  
October 17, 2004

[Fresh summer fun in familiar places](#)  
May 20, 2007

[City museum goes suburban](#)  
August 22, 2007

## Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library opens

November 12, 2010 | By Courtney Crowder | Tribune reporter

INDIANAPOLIS-- In the new Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library there is an artifact that, despite being on display, will never truly be seen.

It's an unopened letter that Kurt Vonnegut Sr., sent his son Kurt Jr. while the younger Vonnegut was serving in World War II. But the note never reached Vonnegut Jr.

At the time, Vonnegut was being held captive in a German prisoner-of-war camp and didn't see the letter until after he returned to America. For unknown reasons Vonnegut never opened the envelope and, because of that, his children have requested that the letter remain sealed.

Ads by Google

### High Resolution Images \$0

Free HD Images - Over 10 Million At The Premiere Stock Photo Network

[Dreamstime.com](http://Dreamstime.com)

### Free Electronic Library

Search the global online library on ethics. Sign up for free.

[www.globethics.net/library](http://www.globethics.net/library)

Advertisement

expiration date: 12/31/2010  
enter promo code: **CJSAVINGS**

**VONS** Try It Now ▶

This letter is one of the many artifacts that were revealed at the Thursday opening of the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library in the author's hometown of Indianapolis. Vonnegut's daughters Edith and Nanette attended.

The 1,100-square-foot library is at the Emelie Building in downtown Indianapolis. Although the library won't be fully open until the end of January, nearly half of its exhibits are on display.

One open exhibit is a gallery of Vonnegut art that includes pieces by the writer, two drawings by Vonnegut fan and "60 Minutes" correspondent Morley Safer and "Star Time," a 20-ft. timeline of important events in Vonnegut's life painted by artist Chris King and text written by William Rodney Allen, editor of "Conversations with Kurt Vonnegut."

The process of establishing the library started in 2008, a year after Vonnegut died, with a simple idea from Julia Whitehead, 39, the founder and volunteer president of the library's board.

"One night I was rocking my baby to sleep and I started wondering if there was a place that Vonnegut fans could visit and learn about him as a person and a writer," Whitehead said. "I found out there wasn't, so I called (his son) Mark Vonnegut and said I have a legitimate proposal to start a memorial to your father in Indianapolis and I would like to base it on the Henry Miller Memorial Library in California."

"To me it seems like a no-brainer that there should be a memorial to my dad in Indianapolis," said Mark Vonnegut, 63, a pediatrician, writer and the oldest of Vonnegut's three biological children. "He identified himself as a person from Indianapolis and thought that was different and special. He saw himself as a citizen of the world, but the Midwest is where he grew up."

Vonnegut spent about two years in Chicago where he studied anthropology at the University of Chicago and worked at the City News Bureau of Chicago.

Ads by Google

You are here: [ChicagoTribune.com](http://ChicagoTribune.com) > Collections

Ads by Google

### [Need Non Profit Funding?](#)

Top secret guaranteed strategies. I secured \$577K in 6 months.  
[www.candorplus.com/Sponsorship.html](http://www.candorplus.com/Sponsorship.html)

### [Terrain Models](#)

Precision Detailed 3D Physical Terrain Models  
[www.stm-usa.com](http://www.stm-usa.com)

### [19th century prints](#)

Victorian Prints on paper  
Contemporary art on paper  
[ericbuechel.net](http://ericbuechel.net)

### [Sell Your Art. Free Trial](#)

Display and sell your art online. Free Trial! Sell your artwork now.  
[www.yessy.com](http://www.yessy.com)

### [Grand Millennium Bangkok](#)

Seamless efficiency & unique style, every event is a guaranteed success  
[www.millenniumhotels.com](http://www.millenniumhotels.com)

#### FEATURED ARTICLES

[Chicago Humanities Festival](#)  
October 17, 2004

[Fresh summer fun in familiar places](#)  
May 20, 2007

[City museum goes suburban](#)  
August 22, 2007

## Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library opens

November 12, 2010 | By Courtney Crowder | Tribune reporter

(Page 2 of 2)

In addition to being on the library's board, Mark Vonnegut donated items such as his father's Purple Heart and a Nazi ceremonial saber that his father picked up when he was liberated from a POW camp in Dresden, Germany.

After receiving approval from Vonnegut's children, Whitehead gathered community members and started fundraising. One of the biggest breaks for the library came when they were offered a space at the Emelie Building, which is owned by the Katz & Korin law firm. Kipper Tew, 49, vice president of the library's board, said the firm uses the space as an incubator for arts organizations.

"The Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art had grown out of the space," Tew said, "so when the firm offered us the space, we jumped on it. After that, everything seemed to accelerate and we went into hyper-mode to get the library up as quickly as possible."

Ads by Google

Advertisement

### [Rolex Mentors & Protégés](#)

Rolex Arts Philanthropy: Talent and Potential, Meet the Artists Now  
[Rolexmentorprotege.com](http://Rolexmentorprotege.com)

### [Free Stock Photo](#)

Worldwide Stock Photo Community  
Browse and Buy 10,000,000+ Images  
[Dreamstime.com](http://Dreamstime.com)

Although the library has received funding from local foundations, Whitehead estimates the library still needs \$300,000 for operational funds to develop programming and staff the library. Until then, volunteers will operate it.

In January, the library will expand open other exhibits such as a replica of Vonnegut's writing space, which will include a rejection letter that will be switched out every two or three months and his Smith Corona typewriter, currently displayed on its own. Eventually Mark Vonnegut wants the library to grow into an institution that will support the local literary community.

"It's important to me that down the road there be a role for writers in residence and educational outreach to the local public high schools connected to the library," Mark Vonnegut said.

[cocrowder@tribune.com](mailto:cocrowder@tribune.com)

### **Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library**

340 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis

Noon-5 p.m. Friday and Saturday starting Dec. 1

Extended hours expected to begin in January

[vonnegutlibrary.org](http://vonnegutlibrary.org)

Ads by Google

### [Need Non Profit Funding?](#)

Top secret guaranteed strategies. I secured \$577K in 6 months.  
[www.candorplus.com/Sponsorship.html](http://www.candorplus.com/Sponsorship.html)