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Friends of the Knox
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THE BEST OF FRIENDS

Knoxville, Tennessee

Fall 2013

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Friends Helps Bring Author Elizabeth Gilbert to Knoxville

Friends of the Knox County Public Library, in partnership with the Knox County Public Library and Union Avenue Books, presented "An Evening with Elizabeth Gilbert" at the Tennessee Theatre on November 2. Attendees also received a copy of Gilbert's new book, *The Signature of All Things*.

In 2008, *Time* magazine named Gilbert, acclaimed author of five works of fiction and non-fiction, one of the most influential people in the world. Gilbert's 2006 memoir, *Eat, Pray, Love*, was a #1 New York Times bestseller. Published in 30 languages, the memoir sold more than 10 million copies worldwide and was made into a major motion picture starring Julia Roberts in 2010. Gilbert's novel *Stern Men* was a *New York Times* notable book, and her non-fiction book *Committed* was a #1 *New York Times* bestseller.

Gilbert lived in Knoxville as a Writer-in-Residence at the University of Tennessee following the epic journey that inspired *Eat, Pray, Love*. She edited the final draft of the book while living on Market Square in the St. Oliver Hotel. The screenplay for the movie *Eat Pray Love* was written by one-time Knoxville *News Sentinel* intern and *Glee* creator, Ryan Murphy.

Gilbert was on a national book tour with the release of *The Signature of All Things*, which marks Gilbert's return to fiction and describes the panoramic quest of the independent and intellectually curious Alma Whittaker. Born into a privileged Philadelphia family in the 19th century, Alma is strongly influenced by her parents who are both strong-willed botanical experts. Alma quickly comes into her own within the world of plants and science, but it is her association with the artist Ambrose that deepens her understanding of life.

"We were very excited to be able to bring Elizabeth Gilbert to Knoxville as part of our tradition of bringing world class authors to this community," commented Martha Gill, Friends of the Knox County Public Library president. "Our mission is to foster a love of libraries, books, and reading in the area."

"An Evening with Elizabeth Gilbert" was made possible through the generous support of the Knoxville *News Sentinel*, WBIR, B97.5 and the Tennessee Theatre.



Elizabeth Gilbert with Friends. From left: Abby Wintker Burris, Mary Pom Claiborne, Suzanne Freeman, Julie Webb, Elizabeth Gilbert, Flossie McNabb, Sheila Woods, Martha Gill

DATES TO REMEMBER

NOV

November special at Friends @ Rothrock Book Shop: Holiday books

20 Books Sandwiched In, Marshall Stair leads a discussion of *What Then Must We Do?: Straight talk about the next American revolution* by Gar Alperovitz, noon-1:00 p.m. in the East Tennessee History Center

DEC

December special at Friends @ Rothrock Book Shop: Holiday books

6, 7 Bearden branch used book sale, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

7 Burlington branch used book sale, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

10 Birthday (1851) of Melvil Dewey, inventor of the Dewey Decimal system.

9 All Over the Page book discussion, *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich, Lawson McGhee Library, community room at 6:30 p.m.

21 Empty Stocking Fund distribution day, Chilhowee Park

JAN

4 Burlington branch used book sale, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

The President's Perspective

By Martha Gill

When the Governor of Tennessee recognized National Friends of the Library Week (October 20-26, 2013), his proclamation conveyed many of the reasons why I have been a Friend of Knox County Public Library for years:



- Libraries are essential to democracy and lifelong learning.
- *Friends* advocate public funding for libraries.
- Through its support of libraries, *Friends* promote the joy and benefits of literacy and learning.
- The gifts of time and money by *Friends* members and volunteers are a true example of commitment to our community.

I feel fortunate to have been tutored in being a *Friend* by the organization's very best leaders. As a result, I want to focus on three areas during the coming year: advocacy, authors and volunteers.

Advocates for literacy and the library speak up everywhere—in our neighborhood, with friends and family, in letters to the editor, at meetings of the County Commission, even at unexpected times such as at the grocery store when we ask a young parent if his or her child is enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. These opportunities to advocate require that we know what our library offers, and the more I learn about the Knox County library system, the more my admiration grows.

Introducing our community to authors with ties to East Tennessee is a wonderful way to promote books and reading. Who will forget the September evening we spent with Dr. Abraham Verghese, the inspiring writer and educator? He said that he went into medicine because of the influence of a book, and his practice of medicine has led him to write memorable books. Bringing novelist Elizabeth Gilbert back to Knoxville is another contribution by *Friends* to the cultural life of the area.

As for volunteers, we know volunteering is truly work of the heart and our volunteers have very big hearts. Without them, the important tasks of each *Friends* committee could not be accomplished. In 2013-2014, we hope to recruit new volunteers, particularly since we offer such a variety of ways for people to support their library system. All are welcome. All are *Friends!*

Time to Recommit to Friends

As we prepare this final 2013 issue of *Best of Friends*, we look forward to reconnecting with each of you through our annual membership renewal drive. In the descriptions of our committees that follow, we have attempted to paint a picture of the work we have been able to do this year with your support. You will also see in each committee profile a listing of volunteer needs. If 2014 is the year you could become more involved with *Friends*, please get in touch at one of the email addresses or by calling the *Friends* office at 865-215-8775.

You will receive the request to renew your *Friends* membership by mail around Thanksgiving. Please continue your support of the Friends of the Knox County Public Library by sending your annual dues right away. Thank you!

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, chaired by *Friends* Treasurer Marye Rose, is impressively enriched by the experience of retired CPA Marilyn Jake, financial planner and investor John Smartt, Jr., and retired finance professor Mary Kay Sullivan. The committee meets as needed.

In addition to overseeing income and expenditures for *Friends* and reporting as required by our 501(c)(3) non-profit status, the Finance Committee has, over the past several months, taken on responsibility for educating board directors and committee chairs about various fiscal management aspects of the organization. A presentation on the status of *Friends* savings accounts and their earnings led to moving some of these assets into a fund with higher growth potential. Research into liability insurance for officers and directors resulted in acquiring this protection for the first time.

The committee has established standards for *Friends* as good stewards of member dues and used book sale profits. It has created guidelines whereby each officer and committee builds an annual budget that considers the ongoing needs of the organization as a whole. Each year whatever dollars are left provide supplemental funding for programs, projects and services offered by Knox County Public Library branches and departments not covered by the county budget.

Advocacy Committee

This committee works to remind us all that the most effective advocacy is simply about pride in being a reader, in knowing books and authors and in appreciating the public library as the place for those things. We advocate best when we share that pride with friends, neighbors and colleagues. This year *Friends* produced a digitized slide show entitled “When Library Doors Open,” which depicted the many ways in which the Knox County Public Library serves the public.

Communicating directly with elected officials during budget preparations is another important part of Advocacy Committee work. Knox County’s library system is unique in the state in that the county mayor, not a board of trustees, heads up the library. But like other metro libraries such as those in Chattanooga, Memphis, and Nashville, the Knox County system receives the vast majority of its funding from the County Commission, not the state.

The Knox County Public Library continues to win the hearts and minds of its patrons, so the Advocacy Committee hopes to see an increase in the library’s acquisition budget in 2014. Engaging with candidates running for the two County Commission at-large positions in 2014 is among the tasks this committee will undertake in coming months.

The Advocacy Committee, consisting of Chair Lillian Mashburn, Julie Webb and Bill Alley, welcomes new members who will lead our membership in communicating the value of the library to the general public, to the County Commission, and to state legislators. Anyone interested in volunteering for this important committee should email membership@knoxfriends.org.

Behind-the-Scenes Work Drives Used Book Sale Committee

Everyone loves to shop at the *Friends* Annual Used Book Sale. But before the shoppers arrive to scoop up the bargains, tens of thousands of books are collected, inspected, sorted, evaluated for special value, boxed, stored, transported, unpacked and arranged on tables, all by *Friends* who volunteer with the Used Book Sale Committee.

The Committee handles much more than the annual book sale downtown. It also offer used books for sale at the Rothrock Used Book shop at Lawson McGhee Library and at branch libraries and special events such as the East Tennessee Historical Society Fair and the Children’s Festival of Reading.

Committee members also take the mission of *Friends* into the community. They work with Shoebox Libraries, the Family Justice Center and other community groups to bring free books to the clients of those organizations. They also deliver books and tapes to stock the libraries at nursing homes. Each year the committee helps the Knoxville *News Sentinel* with its Empty Stocking Fund, aiding in the collection and distribution of children’s books which go into each basket and offering adults in the recipient families the choice of a book for themselves.

Committee co-chairs Mary Ann Merrell, Jean Idell and Suzanne Freeman coordinate the work of scores of volunteers throughout the year. Whether it’s weekly work with the sort team at Lawson McGhee, staffing the Rothrock Used Book shop or helping with setup at a book sale, there are always opportunities for *Friends* to contribute to the work of this committee. Contact Jean Idell at IdellJ@bellsouth.net to join this busy crew.

Membership Committee Strives to Recruit, Retain Members

Building on last year’s goals and objectives, the Membership Committee continues to recruit new members at all major *Friends* functions including used book sales and author events. Hortense Jones and her team also work to retain the members *Friends* already has by keeping them informed about programs and members-only perks. They have also focused on linking members who want to volunteer with projects where help is needed.

The Membership Committee is comprised of Hortense Jones (chair), Angie Flemmons, Caryl Zachary, Casey Self, Elnora Williams and Marye Rose. It meets monthly on the last Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m., rotating among restaurant sites where food and beverage combine with planning and discussion.

Hortense reports the committee would be delighted to have additional members. A volunteer with Human Resources experience would be welcomed to help define tasks and develop training tools. Also, a volunteer with telephone marketing skills could help recruit volunteers as well as set up the membership table at branch sales or help research authors who might be interested in a local speaking engagement. People who can envision ways this committee could support the work of other *Friends* committees would be awesome additions.

knoxfriends.org.



Communications Committee

The Communications Committee develops and maintains communication within *Friends* (board of directors, members and volunteers) and with the community at large. Meeting on the second Tuesday of each month, it gets the story of *Friends* out there through newsletters, e-newsletters, news releases, photography, and other means. Handling that very full agenda are committee members Peter Andreae, Maggie Carini (Chair), Bill Crosland, Beth Fisher, Martha Gill, Laura Porter, Abby Wintker Burris and Joyce York.

The committee publishes:

- *Best of Friends*—a tri-annual newsletter for members that is delivered in both print and electronic formats.
- *Friends (Heart)KCPL*—a monthly e-newsletter that is emailed to elected officials, social service agencies, schools, media groups and other community leaders as well as to all *Friends* members.
- *The Friendsider*—a weekly e-alert emailed to *Friends* officers, directors, committee members and volunteers in order to keep all informed about operational matters, upcoming meetings, programs and events.
- The Communications Committee needs volunteers to assist with its efforts. In particular it's eager to recruit writers, social media experts and website administrators. Those interested can contact Hortense Jones at membership@knoxfriends.org.

Branch Liaisons Link Libraries to Communities

Through a Branch Liaison, a volunteer who stays in touch with one branch library, we want to hear stories about the library—the day-to-day snippets that make a neighborhood branch so important to our community's quality of life. The branch is a meeting place, a resource for growth and learning and an environment of possibility where connections are created. Where can *Friends* use these little stories of advocacy? Welcome to the new face of library advocacy where we hope to have e-newsletters, a website, Flickr, Facebook and a YouTube Channel!

Volunteers have already stepped up for Powell, Norwood, Murphy, Halls, Farragut, Cedar Bluff, Sequoyah, and Bearden branches. Burlington and Karns may soon be covered. We need liaisons for Carter, Corryton, Fountain City, Howard Pinkston, Mascot, North Knoxville and South Knoxville. Here's what library liaisons do:

- Create a feedback loop between each branch and its *Friends* network
- Educate others about the mission of *Friends* in their neighborhoods
- Listen to the stories and successes at the branch
- Thank staff personally for their service to our community

If you are interested in serving in this volunteer role, contact Abby Wintker Burris at info@knoxfriends.org or (865) 215-8775.

Early Childhood Literacy Committee

Friends has consistently supported early childhood literacy. We have sponsored the Library Summer Reading Program and the Children's Festival of Reading since they began, and we've committed \$50,000 to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for Knox County between 2007 and 2017. We've also collected and channeled children's books to young readers through our used book sales, the *News Sentinel's* Empty Stocking Fund, as well as through our own Shoebox Libraries. And since 1995, *Friends* has recruited and trained volunteer readers to visit Head Start sites.

"Reports from the Knox County School system show that nearly 40 percent of our five-year-olds are below or only approaching expectations as they begin kindergarten," says Sheila Marino, *Friends* Early Childhood Literacy Committee chairman. "These statistics are alarming and my committee wants to help."

Committee volunteer readers have begun their fall session at Head Start East II on Prosser Road. Every Thursday for five weeks this team brings a fun reading experience into the classrooms of 160 four- and five-year-olds.

With just a few more volunteers, this *Friends* committee could ensure that every classroom at Head Start East II has readers. Looking ahead, the committee would like to find other ways to support kindergarten readiness in our community, such as promoting First Lady Chrissy Haslam's Read 20 program.

"We want to highlight the Knox County Public Library's partnership with education," says Marino. "It's a resource parents can tap for educational tools. Imagine every child starting kindergarten ready to succeed."

Author Events Committee

This committee has functioned without on-going leadership this year. Nonetheless, *Friends* directors, library staff, and community organizations have stepped up to manage the work of bringing a stellar listing of author presentations to town.

In partnership with the East Tennessee Historical Society, UT's Mayhew Lecture Series and the Tennessee Theater, *Friends* have helped arrange lecture visits to Knoxville by some of the nation's top authors who have a special tie to East Tennessee. These include Pulitzer Prize winning author Jon Meacham (February), and New York Times bestselling authors Abraham Verghese (September) and Elizabeth Gilbert (November). What's next? American poet, short story writer, and novelist Ron Rash will be visiting in March 2014, coinciding with *Friends* Annual Used Book Sale.

The Author Events Committee is on the lookout for book enthusiasts as well as people good at managing the many details of an event. Committee members will review and select authors, choose venues and caterers, and plan the program for each presentation. If you're interested in serving on this committee, email membership@knoxfriends.org.

*Books and Booksellers***Books and Writers: A Miscellany**

By Jeff Johnson

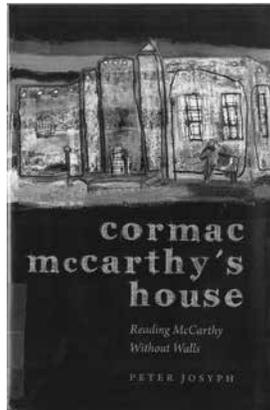
In his book, *Cadillac Jack*, Larry McMurtry has his antique and rare books scout Zack Jenks state, "Anything can be anywhere." I recalled that line a couple of weekends ago when I was staying in a rented mountain house with my wife and several friends. I always peruse the bookshelves in a house and I saw a copy of *The Little Prince*, the best-known book by the late Antoine de Saint-Exupery, a French writer and aviation pioneer. I opened the book and to my surprise saw that it was "copy number 395 of the limited first edition of 525" and was signed by the author. One is often tempted but there were two reasons that I decided not to remove the book from what may have been an unfortunate destiny as a more or less discarded book in a rented property. One, I vaguely knew the owners and knew how to contact them and two, it was the wrong thing to do. Having no internet service in the mountains, I had to wait until we returned home where I immediately looked the book up on a popular book search website. I was amazed that a copy of the same edition was for sale by a California bookseller for \$32,500. The dealer's copy had a dustjacket, unlike the one in the mountain house and dustjackets on modern first editions can be 90% of the value. However, I also learned that Saint-Exupery was killed in combat in World War II, not long after *The Little Prince* was published in 1943, so that signed copies are rare indeed. I contacted the owners of the house the next day and received a grateful e-mail back. The book will be taken off the rental house shelf and its future is now in the hands of informed owners.

Old magazines have always held a fascination for me. They are like portable capsules of a very specific time and have been around for more than two centuries. Almost any antique mall will have a least one booth that has a stack of old magazines. I recently purchased a December 1955 issue of the very British *Country Life* because I could not resist the over-masthead line, "The Edible Dormouse in England." I knew that Great Britain suffered terribly from food shortages following the end of World War II and the headline suggested the worst. I was relieved when I read the article to discover that dormice were called "edible" because the Romans esteemed them as a delicacy and raised and fattened large numbers for feasting. There was not one hint of a recipe in the article, which dealt instead with their habits and range as an introduced species in the English countryside. Besides the dormouse article, the magazine was filled with interesting studies of English china, country estates and Christmas shopping hints. Particularly fascinating were the many real estate advertisements. Had one the money, one could have purchased a "small Georgian Period residence" complete with an entrance hall, lounge, dining room, study, 7 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and an

"excellent" kitchen complete with central heating, electricity, garages and 2 acres of garden, paddock and orchard for the sum of 5,500 pounds. That's probably what it would cost you to take a cab from Heathrow into London today.

Another magazine, a June 1942 issue of *House & Garden*, was touted as the "Southern Highlands Issue" and the cover photo featured two sophisticated looking women relaxing in a "Living Room in the Southern Highlands Manner." I had to have it. To my surprise many of the articles were well written and featured contemporary photographs by famed photographer Doris Ulmann. On the irritating side were headlines such as "Furriner's Guide" and "Come Visit Mountain Folk with Me." Articles included studies of quilt patterns, speech dialects, square dancing, crafts, furniture and geography. The authors did make a distinction between the highlands and the valleys, especially in the "...bustling, modern cities: Knoxville, Chattanooga, Asheville, Johnson City, Lexington, Marion and the like. ...these people in the valley cities are not of it in any special sense. Rapid expansion and thriving commerce have brought here, as to any typical American town, influences and traditions too numerous to trace." Surprisingly nuanced writing for a 1950's decorating magazine.

There is a new book, published by the University of Texas Press, entitled *Cormac McCarthy's House / Reading McCarthy Without Walls* by Peter Josyph. Peter Josyph, writer, artist, film maker and actor, has written previously about McCarthy's work. The book is a collection of essays by Josyph that deal with many aspects of McCarthy's books and is illustrated with 30 photographs and artistic renderings that include pictures of McCarthy, scenes in and around Knoxville that deal with *Suttree* and several paintings by Josyph that are depictions of the house in El Paso, Texas where McCarthy wrote his breakthrough novels *Blood Meridian* and *All the Pretty Horses*. One essay is the transcript of a recording made as Josyph and Knoxville scholar Wesley Morgan walk around downtown Knoxville and explore places that are mentioned in *Suttree*. One such location is underneath the Henley Street Bridge and due to the reconstruction of the bridge, which had just begun when this walk occurred, the men were actually able to enter the cave-like enclosure where the bridge springs off the northern bank of the Tennessee River. The site is used in a key scene in *Suttree* and being able to examine the space so closely causes Josyph to react emotionally. The book is a treasure trove of McCarthy anecdotes and insider information and will be interesting to fans of his books but essential to scholars of literature. The book is available at the Knox County Public Library and can be ordered from Union Avenue Books or online sources.





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I wish to join/renew my membership in the *Friends*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

E-mail _____

_____ I want to learn more about volunteering.

_____ I want to receive my newsletter by email.

My favorite library branch is _____

Category of Membership

___ Library Lover (Students & Seniors): \$10

___ Bookworm (Individual): \$15

___ First Edition (Family): \$25

___ Mary Lawson McGhee: \$50

___ Calvin McClung: \$100

___ Mary Utopia Rothrock: \$250

___ James Agee: \$500

___ Business Membership: \$100

Make check payable to Friends of the
 Knox County Public Library

Renewals can also be made online www.knoxfriends.org