The Best of Friends
Knoxville, Tennessee
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Friends of the Knox County Public Library,
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Library Director Myretta Black reports on the state of the library

Friends! Committee reports! Good food! Prizes!
For the fifth consecutive year the Friends have observed Staff Appreciation Day to celebrate National Friends of the Library Week. On Tuesday, October 23rd, 2012 the Friends delivered to all 200+ staff members of the 18 branches of the library system to thank them for a job well done. “We want to recognize Library staff for the consistent, high-quality service they provide Knox County residents,” said Friends coordinator Abby Wintker. With their lunches, each staffer also received a bright yellow, custom made Friends of the Knox County Public Library tote.

Mayor Recognizes Friends

County Mayor Tim Burchett proclaimed October 21-27 Friends of Knox County Public Library Week. The dates coincided with National Friends of Libraries Week organized by the American Library Association. The event is an opportunity to celebrate Friends, promote the groups in the community, raise awareness and increase membership. The mayor’s proclamation declared:

Whereas; Knox County has enjoyed a rich tradition of library services for over 100 years; and
Whereas; Its county-wide system reaches every citizen in the community; and
Whereas; The Friends of the Knox County Public Library is a part of a nationwide network of Friends organizations; and
Whereas; The Friends of the Knox County Public Library has provided volunteers and financial support for 40 years; and
Whereas; Friends of the Knox County Public Library are dedicated to fostering a love of libraries, books and reading in the Knox County area by community outreach, advocacy and support of the Knox County Public Library System and staff; and
Whereas; Knox County wishes to thank the Friends of the Knox County Public Library for their support of the community and its readers.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIM BURCHETT, KNOX COUNTY MAYOR, do hereby proclaim October 21-27, 2012 as Friends of Knox County Public Library Week in Knox County, and urge all citizens to join me in this observance.

Book by Book To Help Fill Empty Stockings

By Martha Gill

In December 2011 the Friends of Knox County Public Library distributed books to more than 3,000 children through the Knoxville News Sentinel’s Empty Stocking Fund. In 2012, the Friends will repeat that gift of reading. And everyone in the community can help.

Through Book by Book, a community-wide book drive, the Friends will collect books for every child and teen who receives Christmas food and gifts through the Knoxville News Sentinel Empty Stocking Fund. Co-sponsors include the Knox County Public Library and Imagination Library.

Throughout the city and county, individuals and groups—like neighborhoods, churches, scout troops, schools—are gathering books from many sources. The Friends will draw upon their inventory of gently used books which will still be in great condition because they are, after all, Christmas presents for youngsters. In the past, groups have provided used or new books, and donors have supplied funds with which new materials can be purchased. The deadline for book drives and contributions is November 30.

Several local schools that held book drives in 2011 will renew their efforts this year. Webb Upper School and Knoxville Catholic High will have friendly competition for gathering the most books; the winner will be announced at their December basketball game. For the first time Webb Lower School will collect board books for younger readers. Selections for elementary, middle, and high school students are also needed, especially titles that will appeal to reluctant readers of either gender.

Books clearly marked for Empty Stocking can be left at any branch library or downtown at Lawson McGhee Library. Checks earmarked for donations should be sent to Abby Wintker, Friends Coordinator, 500 W. Church Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37902.

Friends will help distribute books on December 19 and 21 at the Jacobs Building at Chilhowee Park. In addition to helping people select books for their children, the Friends will also offer free books to all adults in the program.

To set up a mini-book drive, to have collections of books picked up, or to help with the distribution of the bounty, volunteers should contact any of the following: the Friends’ office (865.215.8775 or info@knoxfriends.org) or Jean Idell, Suzanne Freeman, and Mary Ann Merrill, Empty Stocking Book Drive co-chairs, at books@knoxfriends.org.

Friends Thank Library Staff

For the fifth consecutive year the Friends have observed Staff Appreciation Day to celebrate National Friends of the Library Week. On Tuesday, October 23rd, 2012 the Friends have delivered to all 200+ staff members of the 18 branches of the library system to thank them for a job well done. “We want to recognize Library staff for the consistent, high-quality service they provide Knox County residents,” said Friends coordinator Abby Wintker. With their lunches, each staffer also received a bright yellow, custom made Friends of the Knox County Library tote.
Finance Committee Does Work Backstage

By Martha Gill

Backstage, away from the spotlight, the Finance Committee does important work for the Friends of Knox County Public Library.

Treasurer Marye Rose works with other members of the committee, Mary Kay Sullivan, Marilyn Jake, and John Smart, Jr., to keep the organization’s finances in good order. Individual members of the committee bring impressive experience to their tasks. Mary Kay Sullivan is a retired professor of finance from Maryville College. Marilyn Jake is a retired certified public accountant (CPA), and John Smart is an investment counselor.

Chairman Marye Rose, who retired from a career as an accountant with the federal government and various banks, has an extensive record of service to Friends of Libraries. After devoting a dozen years of service to the Sevier County Library Board and to the Friends of the Kodak Public Library, she first came to work with the Knox County Friends as a Rothrock Volunteer.

Individually or in pairs, members of the committee work on their own. For example, Marilyn Jake and Mary Kay Sullivan have audited the organization’s books. Meeting whenever the need arises, usually quarterly, the committee works closely with Abby Wintker, Friends coordinator. The group’s most recent accomplishments include bringing the coordinator’s books into alignment with those kept by Treasurer Rose, who submits a report to the Board of Directors each month.

The committee has also assisted in handling a generous bequest from William Shelton in 2011 in accord with the committee’s policy of “recommending investments that will preserve long-term, real purchasing power while providing a relatively predictable and increasing stream of annual distributions in support of the Friends of the Knox County Library.”

Committee Activities Are Redefining FOL Membership

By Maggie Carini

Going far beyond the addition of new programs or events, the Membership Committee, under the guidance of Chair Angie Flemmons is actually revamping the definition of Friends membership.

The committee’s idea of recruitment focuses on why someone would want to become a Friend in the first place, and they take their message to many Friends events, answering questions and inviting participation. Committee members are also intensifying their efforts to retain current members by improving their knowledge about the Friends, and especially by increasing personal communication with new members. These strategies dovetail nicely with a request by other committees for help in identifying members with particular skills, talents, and interests and matching those with committee needs for volunteers.

In the short five months since this committee essentially reformed itself, they have accomplished an impressive list of tasks:

• Studied the antiquated system of membership renewals and recommended a change to a single annual renewal date. This change was accepted by the Board of Directors and will go into effect in January 2013.
• Implemented the continuous updating of multiple mailing lists of over 1200 members and community partners.
• Designed and purchased a light-weight, retractable, promotional sign for use at all Friends events.
• Developed a proposal for volunteer coordinator internship.
• Obtained board approval to offer complementary one-year memberships to all retired educators.
• Expanded Staff Appreciation Day to include a personal visit by a board member to each of our branches.

The Membership Committee would like to add three or four members to its ranks. To accommodate work schedules, most meetings are planned for the evening, often with dinner and BEVERAGE. Over the next few weeks, the group will undertake a telephone campaign of current and former Friends members, a task which can be done at home at any convenient hour.

“The committee is trying to reconfigure a member’s experience from the very beginning,” says Angie. “We want to revamp how we welcome new members into the fold and how we usher them along the FOL experience.”
Shoebox Libraries Embody Friends’ Mission

By Bill Alley

The case could be made that the work of the Shoebox Library Committee is the place where the Friends most closely embody the mission and spirit of the Knox County Public Library. Whether by traveling library trucks in rural areas, by bookmobiles in outlying neighborhoods, or by seventeen full-service branches throughout the county, the KCPL has always tried to reach its public wherever they were.

Chair Dottie Stamper has guided Shoebox almost single-handedly since 2007. Her objective has been to seek out sites where citizens might have little or no access to conventional library services and to set up mini “shoebox-sized” libraries for their use.

Drawing from her previous experience as a prison librarian and an elementary school librarian, Dottie is uniquely skilled in choosing appropriate reading materials for each group. Recently Jason Roberts has assisted her with book selections and deliveries.

Though well-established in concept, this committee is fledgling in structure and there are many options for new directions. More helpers could reach more groups. Restocking shelves could be done more frequently. Stronger messaging about the importance of reading could be undertaken with agency leadership.

Pending the sale of her house, Dottie is planning to return to southern California for health and family reasons. FOL treasures whatever remaining time she has for Shoebox and we are eager to find others interested in working with this program. Contact Abby Winter for more information, 215-8775 or info@knoxfriends.org. Visit our website www.knoxfriends.org/shoebox for a more complete look at the work of this committee.

Communication/Advocacy Increases Its Reach

By Katie Evridge

“Everybody can be a friend,” and “If you get five calls or emails, you know that people are concerned.” These are the ideas that Maggie Carini and Lillian Mashburn, chairs of the Communication and Advocacy Committee, are trying to instill in present as well as future members. What used to be two committees now work together to manage communication at three levels: internal, members, and the community.

At the first level the committee helps to manage communication among FOL officers so that they are able to do their jobs better. This is done through the Friendsider, as well as by phone calls and emails with up-to-date information.

The second level intends to tell members, active and inactive, about activities and events through a monthly electronic publication Friends ♥ KCPL. The committee hopes to provide pertinent and timely information which members can effectively absorb and which helps them feel involved in the Friends.

The third level attempts to inform the community about how they can relate to their libraries and how they can use their library to learn about public issues such as elections.

Maggie Carini and Lillian Mashburn are examples of everyday citizens who have come to work on making a difference in their community by increasing public awareness of libraries and what they do for the community. Maggie has been engaged with the Friends for six years, and in this time has learned that “if you are not there you don’t know to ask the questions.”

Lillian has owned her own public-relations firm and has worked in government relations for the past 40 years. She has learned that even that experience does not necessarily make her any more qualified than anyone else. She states, “It is about awareness. You have to go and learn things.” Under their leadership, the Communication/Advocacy Committee members have learned to hone their communication skills.

The accomplishments of this committee have been acquiring an updated email mailing list, learning to become better writers, and showing support at the county commission and other community meetings. One way that this has been done is by members showing up wearing stickers that say “Support Our Libraries” and “Support Our Schools.” These badges show the commission that the schools and libraries are working together and that in the future these groups will be united since libraries pick up and are educational sites in the summer when school is out.

This group does not need to take on any more roles, but members hope to fine-tune their skills to ensure that their communications are both accurate and grammatically correct.
Wilma Dykeman: A Legacy Worth Preserving

By Jeff Johnson

The Knox County Friends of the Library have an annual program entitled “The Wilma Dykeman Lecture Series.” In 2012, I wonder sometimes how many of our members know who Wilma Dykeman was and why her legacy is important to people who care about books, literacy and public libraries. The basic facts of Ms. Dykeman’s life are that she was born in Buncombe County, North Carolina in 1920, lived most of her life in Newport, TN, wrote eighteen books and died in 2006. But her life was more interesting, more colorful and more significant than those bare facts.

Ms. Dykeman (from now on I will use the more familiar “Wilma” which I think she would be comfortable with in terms of friendship and affection) first attended Biltmore College, now the University of North Carolina at Asheville, graduating in 1938 and then graduating from Northwestern University with a major in Speech in 1940. In a literary twist of fate, Mabel Wolfe, sister to well-known Asheville writer Thomas Wolfe, introduced Wilma to a young man named James R. Stokely, Jr., a poet, non-fiction writer and son of one of the founders of the Stokely Brothers Canning Company. James’s father died at a young age, and James, Jr. never became part of the corporation that became a national household brand. A short two months after being introduced, Wilma and James were married.

Wilma, now a young married woman living in Newport, Tennessee, and eventually the mother of two sons, began to write in lieu of having an acting career. Her first book was part of the famed “Rivers of America” series published by Rinehart & Company. Her contribution was The French Broad, the 49th book in the series. With a subject manner as diverse as hog-drivers and George Vanderbilt, the book has a topic of interest for almost any reader. Significantly, it has a chapter entitled “Who Killed the French Broad?” This concern for environmental topics precedes Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring by 7 years.


Wilma also wrote novels. The Tall Woman was published in 1962. A sequel, The Far Family, was published in 1966. Her most “biographical” novel, Return the Innocent Earth, was published in 1973 and was the highly fictionalized story of a Tennessee canning company.

She was equally well-known in Knoxville for her long-time column in the Knoxville News-Sentinel, which ran as often as three times a week from 1962 until 2000.

Perhaps even more significant than her writings were her constant and intense championship of Tennessee history and her realization of the significance of the story of individuals in that history. She was a tireless speaker on Southern Appalachian history and in 1981 was named the official state historian of Tennessee by then governor Lamar Alexander, a post she held until 2002.

I first met Wilma in 1978 when I was the assistant director of a National Endowment for the Humanities program, “An Appalachian Experience,” co-sponsored by the Children’s Museum of Oak Ridge. Wilma’s younger son James Stokely, III was the director. Wilma was a warm, keenly intelligent and helpful person. I especially remember one evening when Jim and I, and our new wives, were in Newport to present a program of “An Appalachian Experience” at the Stokely Memorial Library and had dinner at the Stokely’s house on the hill overlooking the small downtown. The dinner was simple and comfortable; the house filled with books. It was many years later that I realized that the family was still emotionally reeling from the death of James Stokely, Jr. in 1977.

Wilma died in Asheville in 2006 from complications from surgery.

One of her most significant legacies is the adoption by the City of Asheville and Buncombe County, North Carolina of the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan, a seventeen mile long greenway and park system with the purpose of revitalizing sustainable economic growth along the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers.

Honored in her lifetime, Wilma Dykeman deserves to continue to be known, read and remembered in the Southern Appalachian region, especially in Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina, for many decades to come. The Friends of Knox County Library are helping to remind our members of the importance of this friend to history and literature in our region.
Is One of These Jobs a Perfect Fit for You?

There are plenty of opportunities for you to become more involved with the good work of the Friends. One of these committees may have just the job for you.

**Wanted by Communications and Advocacy Committee**
- Writers for all publications
- Managing editor for Best of Friends (published 3 times a year)
- Editor for monthly electronic newsletter
- Manager for Friends’ website
- Manager for Friends’ Facebook page
Contact Maggie Carini at hometownmed@comcast.net

**Wanted for Book by Book Drive**
- Collectors or contributors of books or funds for purchasing books
- Volunteers to help distribute books December 19 and 21
Contact the Friends at info@knoxfriends.org or books@knoxfriends.org

**Wanted by the Used Book Committee**
- Volunteers to help staff mini-book sales
Contact Jean Idell at 789-9081 or idellj@bellsouth.net

**Wanted by Membership Committee**
- Three or four new members to reach lapsed members by telephone
Contact Angie Flemmons at 865-360-6337 or membership@knoxfriends.org

**Wanted by Shoebox Libraries**
- Volunteers to help select and deliver books to Shoebox libraries.
Contact Abby at 215-8775 or info@knoxfriends.org.

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**Musings On the Library**

Sandy O’Rear  
Grandmother and Library Patron  
I have always loved the library. But now in my dotage I cherish it even more. Without ever leaving the comfort of my home or the chair in front of my computer, I can search the stacks of all the public libraries in Knoxville for the book I want to read. Then I hit the hold button, enter my library card number, my pin, and check the name of the branch where I will pick up my book. I no longer have to crane my neck to look at titles on the shelves. The cost of this service? There is no cost. When I have read the book in the three weeks allotted, I return it. I don’t have to worry about storing it, donating to The Friends of the Library, or whether it was worth the money I paid for it.

Then there are the grandchildren. They live out of town so I don’t get to read to them very often. But when they come here or I go there, I make a trip to the library. I have rediscovered the children’s section. I can check out a bagful of books and entertain them with new titles. We’ll always have our old favorites which we purchase and then get to keep but what a treat it is to open the cover of a picture book from the library and explore the world of words and illustrations together.

What an incredible institution is the library. Thank you, Andrew Carnegie and others, of course.

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**Book Sale Season in Full Swing at Branch Libraries**

Three of six Fall used book sales at branch libraries have been completed with great success. Sales at the Bearden, Burlington, and Farragut, have brought affordable books to patrons at those branches and thousands of dollars for the support of libraries. Sales at Powell, Cedar Bluff, and again at Bearden are yet to come.

Proceeds from the sales are shared between the branches themselves and the Friends. Carol Swaggerty, branch manager at Cedar Bluff, expressed her appreciation for these out of the ordinary funds: “We’ve acquired a nice balance in our ‘emergency fund’ within the last year that we aren’t used to having. We do get into it regularly to purchase small supplies for Storytime use and Summer Reading—light refreshments for the kiddies, a bubble machine and bubble juice, stickers, craft supplies, etc. We would also like to book extra programs with paid performers on occasion and, perhaps, buy a few things to improve staff comfort.”

**Branch sales on the calendar:**
- **POWELL:** Fri Nov 16 & Sat 17, 10 am - 5:30 pm
- **CEDAR BLUFF:** Fri Nov 16 & Sat 17, 10 am - 5:30 pm
- **BEARDEN:** Fri Dec 7 & Sat Dec 8th, 10 am - 5:30 pm

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Families shopping at mini-sales.
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.
_____Check made to Friends of the Knox County Public Library is enclosed.

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

My favorite library branch is __________________

Renewals can also be made online www.knoxfriends.org