

Friends of Tennessee Libraries (FOTL) Annual Meeting Panel Discussion

**“Beyond Book Sales” (How does your Friends group raise money outside traditional book sales?)**

Panelists:

**Connie Albrecht** – Past president of FOTL, past membership chair and regional representative of the Upper Cumberland Region (current Falling Water Region), and original organizer and treasurer of the Putnam County Friends

**Kathy Dooley-Smith** – Current president of Friends of the Brentwood, TN, Library and president-elect of the FOTL Board of Directors

**Colleen Shannon** – Treasurer of the Friends of Seymour Libraries

**Caleb Wray** – FOTL Board member, current chair-elect of the Southeastern Library Association Friends and Trustees, and former Tennessee Regional Library employee

**Theresa Venable** – moderator, librarian in the Langston Hughes Library at the Children’s Defense Fund Alex Haley Farm, and FOTL Board member

Below are some of the fabulous fundraising ideas discussed by panelists – activities that Friends groups are actually using to generate funds for their library!

**Music & Sweets** – Citizens are invited to bring lawn chairs to listen to music groups that perform while donated baked goods are sold.

**Arts & Crafts Festival** – Streets are blocked off and vendors set up booths to sell their wares; \$25 booth fee attracts a variety of artists and crafters, including food vendors. A Silent Auction of donated items is held in conjunction with the festival.

**Bricks For Sale** – When the library was renovated, bricks inscribed with donors’ names sold for \$100 each.

**Dinner With an Author** – Local business sponsors are asked to pay \$250 for publicity for their business. This event can be held virtually or in person. This event can be given other names such as “Donuts with the Author” or “Coffee with the Author.”

**Books and Brews** – Held at a local brewery, this event is combined with an author visit. Participants buy their own brews, and the Friends group advertises what services they offer to the local library, have sign-ups for memberships, and generally advertise the library. The author’s book sales also generate funds for the library.

**Blind Date with a Book** – Participants participate in a drive-by event where books are wrapped and handed out. They have no idea with which book they will be paired for a blind date. Friends memberships and information about joining the Friends group are offered.

**Halloween Booktacular** – Gently used books are given to children instead of candy. This gets families into the library. Refreshments, story-telling, and Friends group brochures and memberships are shared.

**Art Fundraisers** – Several libraries have commissioned local artists to create original drawings of local places of interest – historic houses, the library, old churches, etc. The rights to the artwork are then secured from the artist so that notecards, datebooks, buttons, etc. can be created and sold.

**Purchase a Chair** – Citizens purchase a chair inside the library in honor of or in memory of someone whose name is then inscribed on a plate and secured to a chair in the library. The price of a chair can range from \$15 to \$299.