

FOTL Honors Sevier County Library System, Becky Allen



King Family Library of the Sevier County Library System

A library system that met a community's needs during the pandemic and the donor of thousands of books to a Friends bookstore have won recognition from Friends of Tennessee Libraries. FOTL congratulates the Sevier County Library System and Becky Allen of Paris, TN, with a certificate and \$100.

Nominating the library system, Dwight Shepherd wrote, "Even though the buildings of the Sevier County Public Library System were closed



Kodak Branch of Sevier County Library System

for a while during the early stages of the pandemic, the system director and staff carried out essential functions. They made materials available for curbside pickup, conducted storytime online, and made computer access available for many people that suddenly found themselves out of work so they could file unemployment claims. As soon as possible, they reopened with precautions in place to protect patrons



Seymour Library of the Sevier County Library System

and staff. They have resumed normal programs as much as possible. When people really needed library services, they found a way to do it. It made me proud to be a Friend of my library."

DaRcy Louer, manager of the Friends of the W. G. Rhea Library Bookstore, said of her nominee, Becky Allen, "She and her family donated approximately 3,000 to 4,000 books to the Friends of the W. G. Rhea Library Bookstore after her parents' passing.

"Local newslady Shannon McFarlin wrote an article for the local *Paris! Magazine* about the donation. This magazine is distributed around the county including the Chamber of Commerce as well as being mailed to people outside of the county/state who have subscribed. This helps get the word out of our bookstore and about the need of our library in our county."



Becky Allen (in the green mask) is seen in the photo on the left with W. G. Rhea Library Director Kathy Collins and in the photo on the right with DaRcy Louer, manager of the Friends of the W. G. Rhea Library Bookstore.



Putnam County Wins \$300 Grant

Using a \$300 grant from FOTL, Friends of the Putnam County Public Library will launch a month-long campaign in January 2021 to increase membership by 20 percent. The funds will be used to support marketing, speaker fees, and incentives to attract new members.



Members of the Putnam County Library Board, seen with J. Kile Johnson, guest writer at a past Coffee with an Author, are Shannon Auberson, Rachel Steidl, Connie Albrecht, Judy Titsworth, Johnson, Suzie Johnson (wife of the author), Wanda Jared, Elizabeth Maxwell, Jane Kissane, and Laura Clemmons.

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The FOTL Outlook

By

By Diane Johnson
President of FOTL

Dear Friends,

I hope all is well with you and yours.

At long last, 2020 is drawing to a close. Congratulations, you made it! If I could send you all an award, I would. The good news is, along with the challenges, you've also discovered some new and creative ways to support your libraries. Some of those solutions will surely remain part of our repertoire in the future. The way we always did things has been blown wide open, and that is a good thing!

With a new year looming on the horizon, Friends of Tennessee Libraries chooses to do what we have done since our beginning in 1992 — keep moving forward. This newsletter highlights our first-ever Virtual Annual Meeting, certificates of recognition, and the award of a membership grant, and we announce our 2021 FOTL Membership Drive.

Why should you join us in our mission to support and promote Tennessee libraries?

- If you are passionate about your library...
- If you want to tell your community about your library and all it offers...
- If you want to start a new Friends group or revitalize one...
- If you want to share ideas and learn from other Friends groups...
- If you remember the first time you went into a library and how you felt...

Then please join Friends of Tennessee Libraries — our collective vision, strength, and experience can make the difference for our libraries.

Thank you for all you do all the time for so many.



Diane Johnson

Put These Dates on Your Calendar

- **December 15, 2020** Deadline for nominating a group or individual for Friend of the Year. Details on Page 5.
- **February 14, 2021** Deadline for nominating recipients of Appreciation Awards. See our website: <https://www.friendstnlibraries.org/awards-grants/>
- **February 14, 2021** Deadline for applying for \$300 grants. See our website: <https://www.friendstnlibraries.org/awards-grants/>
- **Spring 2021** A virtual Annual Meeting is planned with a date reserved for an in-person meeting if possible.

FOTL's Virtual Annual Meeting October 19-22

TN Friends Remain Active during Pandemic

When the pandemic shut down libraries in March, the activities of their Friends were put on hold as well. Was the future of Tennessee Friends in doubt? That question inspired Friends of Tennessee Libraries to roll out its first virtual Annual Meeting on October 19–22 during National Friends of Libraries Week. The first presentation, “Lessons from the Pandemic,” tapped into some Tennessee Friends’ experiences. Here are highlights.

Diane Johnson reported that though Friends of the King Family Library in Sevierville closed from March through June, their bookstore customers are returning one by one.

Kathy Dooley-Smith of the Brentwood Friends admitted, “The pandemic caused us to re-evaluate everything,” but when the bookstore reopened, customers were supportive, volunteers returned slowly, and “Our fears did not materialize.” Popup sales have been popular and lucrative.

Sharon Smith reported that Knox Friends followed the recommendations of several webinars and asked their supporters to donate funds lost when the annual book sale was cancelled. The very successful campaign returned almost as much as the cancelled book sale would have brought in. A rainy-



FOTL looked into the future of Friends in its virtual 2020 Annual Meeting on October 19–22, and you can still see all four presentations on our website. In addition to “Lessons from the Pandemic,” you will find a discussion about social media in changing times with Martha Edington and Martha Gill; an update on the new Tennessee State Library and Archives building with State Librarian and Archivist Chuck Sherrill; and a conversation with author Margaret Renkl. Thanks to our webmaster Martha Edington, you can view all here: <https://www.friendstnlibraries.org/resources/after-2020-the-future-of-friends/>

day fund and income from investments also kept the Friends afloat during the shutdown. After a six-week furlough the Friends are taking “baby steps” to

resume sales of books and to explore new ways of selling books online.

Jacqueline Wallace of the Memphis Friends had an upbeat report. Drawing from some investments, the Friends maintained financial stability during the shutdown, and in the Friends’ reopened bookstore “People are buying more than ever.”

Danielle Vélez of the Knox County Imagination Library reported that a virtual fundraising luncheon arranged through a local company providing Zoom-like presentations netted more income than the actual fundraising luncheon brought in last year. In addition, it attracted 10 new sponsors for the event, and people have continued to make donations. The decision to go forward online was a great one, she said. Music, a trivia game about Dolly, and the recorded reading of an Imagination Library book were winners.

Dick Burgess of the Blount County Friends asserted, “Financially we haven’t skipped a beat.” Shut down for four months, the Blount County Friends still had access to their eBay sales, which have doubled compared to last year’s returns. Their re-invented weekly book sales at a farmer’s market on the library grounds have been popular and easier to manage than quarterly events.



Clockwise from top row, far left: Diane Johnson, King Family Friends and FOTL president; Kathy Dooley-Smith, FOTL president-elect, panel moderator, and Brentwood Friends president; Sharon Smith, past president of Knox County Friends; Jacqueline Wallace, president of Memphis Friends; Danielle Vélez, Knox County Imagination Library; and Dick Burgess, Blount County Friends.

Cultivating Gratitude All Year

By Martha Edington

Representative

Friends of Knox County Library

November is the season of gratitude, and TN Friends have much to be thankful for.

Let's start by thanking the creative and devoted staffs of our libraries across the state. During perilous times they have found new ways of meeting the needs of their communities.

We are grateful to the Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) for giving everybody access to so much material to use at home.

We are grateful that the work continues on the new State Library and Archives Building. When it opens next year, it will serve Tennesseans in new and innovative ways,

We are grateful for the creativity and generosity of Humanities Tennessee for bringing the Southern Festival of Books to everyone and for continuing to keep us informed about the arts through Chapter 16.

We appreciate Mo Willems, author of the unforgettable Pigeon books, for partnering with the Kennedy Center to share his Lunch Doodles. He also created a special Democracy Doodle for Election Night. To find links to all of his gifts to young and not-so-young fans, go to <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/mo-willems/>.

We appreciate Margaret Renkl, Nashville author of *Late Migrations: A Natural History of Love and Loss* and columnist for the *New York Times*. She stepped into the Author Spotlight for FOTL's virtual Annual Meeting, and in her *Times* column she recently revealed that, as someone who has recovered from COVID-19, she is participating in Vanderbilt's research into the treatment of the disease.

We are grateful to Penguin Random House for allowing librarians and teachers to read the publisher's books for children online during the pandemic.

And we are grateful to the many groups of Tennessee Friends for their abiding love and support of their libraries and of each other.



Library Historian Christina Wolfenbarger, Director Marcia Nelson, and Assistant Director Amy Beth Kear of the Pigeon Forge Public Library staff received college scholarships from Dolly Parton.

Dolly Parton Has Touched Lives Of Pigeon Forge Library Staff

The lives of the Pigeon Forge Public Library staff have been touched by Dolly Parton. The library's director, the assistant director, and the library historian all received scholarships from Dolly Parton when they graduated from high school.

In 1979, Director Marcia Nelson applied for and received a \$600 scholarship awarded by Dolly Parton to a few band students with musical plans. After graduating from Sevier County High School, Marcia went to Carson-Newman College where she sang in the a capella choir and played piano for voice students. She laughs when she says that before she joined the library staff in 2001 and became director in 2011, "I taught piano lessons for about 20 years and am currently in the orchestra and worship team at First Baptist Church in Sevierville, so I think I've earned that \$600."

Assistant Director Amy Beth Phelps Kear and Library Historian Christina Wolfenbarger received one of the \$500 scholarships given by Dolly in the late 1980s and early 1990s to every graduate of a Sevier County high school.

In addition, April Ramsey Rayfield, the daughter of Sara Green, who is a part-time Pigeon Forge Library employee and who works full time at the Hodges Library at UT, was a recipient of one of Dolly's scholarships in 1993.

Encouraging young people to continue their education was one of Dolly's early philanthropies. Others have followed. After the 2016 fire in the Smokies, Dolly created a fund to help families affected by that disaster, and in April she donated a million dollars to Vanderbilt University for research into treatments for COVID-19.

Today children talk about "the Book Lady" because of the Dolly Parton Foundation's Imagination Library, created 25 years ago. The Pigeon Forge Library houses a display of Imagination Library books from 2001 when the library opened. Marcia Nelson, Amy Beth Kear, and Christina Wolfenbarger work in that library every day in part because their lives were touched by scholarships from Dolly.



April Ramsey Rayfield, left, and Amy Beth Phelps Kear, right, both won scholarships from Dolly Parton in 1993.

FOTL Is Looking for Friends of the Year

In 2021, the Friends of Tennessee Libraries (FOTL) and the Tennessee Library Association (TLA) will present up to two Friend of the Year awards based on community service areas: one representing libraries serving a population of 24,999 or below and another for libraries serving more than 25,000.

December 15 is the deadline for nominations.

Recipients will be announced at the 2021 TLA conference in Memphis on April 6, but all nominees will be recognized on that occasion, and each nominee will receive a year's membership in the Friends of Tennessee Libraries and the opportunity to work on an FOTL project of their choice.

Will you nominate the person or group to receive an award?

■ The individual or group must have made a significant contribution to a Friends group and to the advancement of libraries in Tennessee. The deadline for nominations is November 15.

■ **Each nominee must be a member in good standing of the Friends of Tennessee Libraries. An individual must hold an individual membership, and a group must be enrolled as a group. (See membership categories on page 8.) Nominees not meeting this requirement will not be considered for the award.**

■ Describe in no more than 200 words the nominee's service, achievements, and contributions to a Friends group and/or to the advancement of libraries or education through libraries.

■ The description and the following information may be e-mailed to or sent by postal service to Susie Webb Ries at 3506 Richland Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205-2354 or to susiewries@gmail.com by **December 15.**

Nominee _____

Category by Size Serving a population of 24,999 or Fewer Serving More Than 25,000

Nominee's mailing address _____

Nominee's telephone _____

Nominee's e-mail address _____

If nominee is an individual, is that nominee an individual member of FOTL? _____

If nominee is a group, is that group a member of FOTL? _____

Name of nominator _____

Nominator's mailing address _____

Nominator's e-mail _____

Nominator's telephone _____

Recipients of the Friend of the Year Award

See relevant newsletters at <http://www.friendstnlibraries.org/home/newsletters/>.

Friends of the Art Circle Library, Crossville. See FOTL Newsletter June-July 2011, p. 8.

Friends of the Kodak Library, Sevier County. See FOTL Newsletter May-June 2012, p. 1.

Friends of Benton County Library. See FOTL Newsletter May-June 2013, p. 4.

Friends of the Tellico Village Public Library. See FOTL Newsletter May-June 2014, p. 1.

Friends of the Williamson County Public Library. See FOTL Newsletter Spring 2015, p. 1.

Julie Webb. See FOTL Newsletter Summer 2016, pp. 1 and 3.

Friends of the White County Public Library and Friends of Smyrna. See FOTL Newsletter Spring 2017, p. 1.

Connie Albrecht, Cookeville; and Martha Gill, Knoxville. See FOTL Newsletter Summer 2018, p. 3.

Marilyn Morrison and Meg and Ron Holter. See FOTL Newsletter Spring-Summer 2019, p.3.

Friends of Spring Hill Library and eBay Team of the Blount County Friends. See FOTL News April 2020.

What Are TN Friends Doing? They're Putting Free Books in Readers' Hands

In Franklin and in Knoxville, Friends promoted reading by giving away books this fall.

On Halloween, families in **Williamson County** came in cars or on bikes to claim Boo Books from the Friends. Each bag contained a new book, candy, gift cards from Chick-fil-A, and bookmarks. Lynn Askew and Savantha Fisher co-chaired the event. In **Knox County**, Friends gave away books at an improvised drive-in sponsored by the Knox County Library.



Lynn Askew, Savantha Fisher, Bonnie Lucas, Sheryl Brink, and Maggie Evans, volunteers from the Friends of Williamson County Public Library, distributed 350 bags of books and sweets in an hour and a half on Halloween.



When the Knox County Public Library offered free films at the Drive-In at Midway in Chilhowee Park, volunteers from Knox County Friends distributed bags full of free books to viewers. On three different occasions, Harold Gibson, J. J. White, and Cindy Gibson (top row, far right) gave away dozens of bags of books packed by members of the Friends Sales and Distribution Committee.



Friends of the Brentwood Library invited youngsters to have some spooky fun on October 31. The Friends' first Halloween Book-tacular featured candy stations throughout the library, and trick-or-treaters 12 or younger were able to select a book to take home with them. The Friends' Facebook invitation (above) served another purpose of familiarizing families with the layout of the library and sharing information about the Friends' support of the library. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheBrentwoodLibrary/posts/3188717487904475>



The Sales and Distribution Committee of the **Knox County Friends** works with agencies in the area to provide books and materials for underserved populations in the county. Throughout the year, the Books in Community project provides books to the elderly in assisted living facilities, individuals who are incarcerated, families in homeless shelters, children in subsidized after-school daycare programs, and others. A team of volunteers takes requests from agencies, selects appropriate books and materials, and arranges for delivery or pickup at the Friends used bookstore. Monetary donations also allow Friends to purchase books when it is impossible to meet the needs of agencies with donated books. In turn, agencies place the Friends' logo on their publications and maintain a cooperative relationship with the Friends. The cart pictured above offers books to students and families associated with the Paul Kelley Volunteer Academy. Source: <http://www.knoxfriends.org/books-in-the-community/>

What Are TN Friends Doing? They're Supporting Their Library in Various Ways



Friends of the Seymour Branch Library of the Sevier County Library (far right) were present at the groundbreaking ceremony marking the beginning of the library's expansion. Photos by Diane Johnson and Dwight Shepherd

On Friday, November 6, **Friends of the Seymour Branch of the Sevier County Library System** invited the community to the groundbreaking ceremony of the expansion of their library. From raising funds for the expansion to volunteering to set up the library in temporary quarters nearby, the Friends have been there for their library. During the groundbreaking ceremony, both Library Director Rhonda Tippitt and Sevier County Mayor Larry Waters remarked on the efforts of Seymour Friends to raise funds for and awareness of the library.

You can follow TN Friends on Facebook. Here are some of them.

- Blount County Friends of the Library
- Cheatham County Friends of the Library
- Friends of Smyrna Library
- Friends of Tennessee Libraries
- Friends of the Brentwood Library
- Friends of the Elma Ross Public Library
- Friends of the Fairview Public Library
- Friends of the Knox County Public Library
- Friends of the Seymour Branch Library
- Friends of the Tipton County Public Library
- Friends of the White County Public Libraries
- Friends of the Williamson County Public Library
- Memphis Friends of the Library

Did we leave your group out? Let us hear from you at info@friendstnlibraries.org

Would you like to see news of your Friends' activities here? Send us a photo and details that we can report on social media, in our electronic newsletter *FOTL News*, and/or in the pages of our printed newsletter. Reach us here: info@friendstnlibraries.org



To mark its 50th anniversary in September, Friends of the Knox County Public Library spelled out "50 Ways We Love Our Library" and put those ways on a poster for its members and for the branches of the Knox County Public Library. In addition, the Friends presented a check for \$50,000 to the library to enhance the system's collection of electronic materials, which have grown in popularity with patrons during the pandemic.

Source: Knoxfriends.org

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The Friends of Tennessee Libraries is a volunteer organization of individuals and groups dedicated to supporting Tennessee libraries and local Friends of Library groups through

- **Establishing and helping** Friends of Library groups succeed
- **Communicating** with libraries and trustees about the value of Friends
- **Serving** members as a communication network and clearinghouse for information
- **Advocating** for library funding and legislative support on a local, state, and national basis

Reaching your library from home is easier than ever through the Tennessee Electronic Library.
www.tntel.info

It's Time to Renew Your Membership or To Join

Become a Friend of Tennessee Libraries Today
(Membership year is January to December)

INDIVIDUAL or FAMILY

- Individual \$15/yr
- Family \$25/yr
- Silver \$50/yr
- Gold \$100/yr
- Platinum \$500/yr

ORGANIZATION

- 1–49 Members \$25/yr
- 50–99 Members \$55/yr
- 100–499 Members \$75/yr
- 500 Members \$100/yr

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

TN County _____

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