

# FRIENDS NEWS



The Newsletter of the Friends of the Johnson City Public Library

Spring 2008

## National Library Week

This year's National Library Week will be celebrated April 13-19. This year marks its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. To show our appreciation, the Friends will be treating the library staff to lunch.

## Book Sale Treasures

We'd love to hear your stories of gems or surprises you've found at a Friends book sale. We're rounding up stories so that we can share them with our members. Let us know if you've found something great.

Jeanne-Marie Kuerschner sent one reply:

"I have often found books I consider treasures at the sales. I can't resist old books. At your last library sale, I happily pounced on a book called "Bryson City Tales" which tells stories of the town where I was born (a long time ago). While I never knew the author, I knew the people he wrote about and thoroughly enjoyed reading his opinions of them. I'll be back for the next sale. There are bound to be irresistible books."

We'll publish more stories in our next newsletter.



## Spring Book Festival

The Friends of the Library has teamed with the library to expand our successful book sale. The Book sale itself will not change, but the library has many other activities planned, including: displays by regional authors, family crafts, and appearance by Curious George, a fun fund-raiser and more!

**See the insert for more details.**

### Schedule:

#### Friends Members Sale Preview:

Friday, April 18, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

#### Bluegrass and Books

##### Fundraiser:

ETSU Bluegrass Band, local authors, wine and cheese

Tickets \$10 for Friends members, \$25 for non-members (price includes a one-year membership)

#### Friends Book Sale:

Saturday, April 19, 9 am – 3 pm

#### JCPL Book Festival:

##### Starring Books

Saturday, April 19, 9 am – 4 pm

Bring your membership card for admittance to the preview. If you can't find your card, we will have a member's list at the door. If your membership has expired, you can renew it at the sale!

## FOL Thank You

The Friends would like to recognize the following board members for their dedication and service to the board. Your contributions and talents are already missed!

Joan Dressel  
Kay Herd  
Becky McKnight  
Jim Reed  
Robert Sawyer

## Welcome Aboard

The Friends would like to welcome the following members to our board:

Robbie Anderson  
Kevin Anderson  
Eric McDowell

## Friends Board of Directors

Charles Moore, Co-president  
Kathy Hall, Co-President  
Linda Gallagher, Treasurer  
Susan Burkey, Secretary  
Kevin Anderson  
Robbie Anderson  
Josh Archer  
Betsy Austin  
Shirley Cecconi  
Karol Lynn Johnson  
Eric McDowell

## Get-to-Know

This installment of the newsletter celebrates our new library Assistant Directors, Bobby Swanay and Cathy Griffith. Although they are not new to the library, their positions are newly created. Congratulations to you both and thank you again for being subject to these questions.

- Josh Archer -

**JA** - How long have you worked at the library?

**BOBBY** - I am approaching my 13<sup>th</sup> year at the Library.

**CATHY** - 16 ½ years.

**JA** - What do you like best about working at the library?

**BOBBY** - I love being surrounded by tons of books; to this day I am excited about all the treasure-troves of knowledge and stories and creativity we have at the Library in the form of our book collection. I like technology and feel good about being a part of an organization that helps even the playing field in terms of access to the Internet. I also like being around the diverse group of people that use the Library. It's win-win I suppose.

**CATHY** - No two days are ever the same and a day rarely goes by that I fail to learn something new.

**JA** - What are some of your new ideas for the library?

**BOBBY** - We have our first-ever book festival coming up on April 19<sup>th</sup>; it originated from a dialog I had with a local author group. I hope the festival might become an annual event that we can build on. I'm also excited about plans for providing services to homebound patrons. We're working on a plan to begin doing this starting in the fall of 2008. We're calling it the "Friendly Visitor" program.

**CATHY** - Just off the top of my head a big goal of mine is to make our Title V State-paid Volunteer Coordinator position a permanent library position. At various times during my career at JCPL I have been the volunteer coordinator, with all my other duties, I could not give the program the time it deserved. A wonderful lady, Ruby

ElBasha, is our current Title V Volunteer Coordinator. Ruby is doing a superb job and I can't imagine going back to life here without her!

**JA** - What does it mean to be an assistant director?

**BOBBY** - My title is Assistant Director of Library Services. Basically I'm overseeing our three service departments of the Library: Youth Services, Circulation Services, and Reference/Adult Services. I help these departments solve problems and try to do whatever I can to both help operations in these departments and improve the customer service experience of the Library user. I have some long range goals, such as cross-training staff members to enable them to work in more than one service area. As I handle these kinds of things, this allows the Library Director to focus outward on planning for the Library and working with contacts in the community.

**CATHY** - My new title and corresponding job description consists of everything in my old title of Business Manager, plus, plus, plus! My job here is to make sure that all the "behind the scenes" administrative work gets done so that the patron who walks in the front door can have the best possible library experience. I supervise the library's Technical Services staff, Office Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Maintenance staff, and a multitude of off-duty Johnson City Police Officers working extra duty at the library. I am the library's human resources department. I am the library's finance staff from making the yearly budget and approving purchase orders through financial statements for the Board of Directors. And, I am the recording secretary for the library's Board of Directors.

**JA** - What were some of your former duties/positions?

**BOBBY** - I've done a bit of everything here. I started as a bookshelver while I finished my undergraduate degree. I then served as a Technical Services Clerk before moving on to be a Library Assistant in

Reference. Eventually I decided this was the right career for me and went on to earn my Master of Science in Information Sciences degree from UT and became a full-fledged, card-carrying Librarian. Prior to being Assistant Director, I was Department Head for Reference/Adult Services. **CATHY** - All of my above answers and more! However, one of the best parts of being in this new position is cross training our new Office Manager, Celeste Watkins, in almost all of the accounting functions.

**JA** - Will you still be involved with your former duties?

**BOBBY** - I'm still primarily a Librarian and stay very much involved with the Library in that capacity. So far, I haven't had much of a chance to shed my former duties; I just keep piling new ones on top of the old ones. But that's OK; sleep is over-rated anyway...

**CATHY** - Yes, yes, and yes. The library has 34 employees and as I said a host of off-duty police officers working here on extra duty. There's always a bill to pay or a vendor to deal with or a contract to negotiate or another of the myriad of "forms" to fill out.

**JA** - What are some of your favorite books?

**BOBBY** - *Dark Tower* series by Stephen King, *Harry Potter* series by J K Rowling, *Cannery Row* by Steinbeck, *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser, *I Know This Much is True* by Wally Lamb, *Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien, *Lonesome Dove* by Larry McMurtry, *Dune* by Frank Herbert, *Sandman* by Neil Gaiman, And lots more....

**CATHY** - Anything by Nora Roberts and Susan Elizabeth Phillips, *Shem Creek* by Dorthea Benton Frank, *The Ballad of Frankie Silver* by Sharyn McCrumb, *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert, And the book that I pick up most often, The Bible.

**JA** - What book do you feel like you should have read - i.e. that obligatory book you haven't found the time to get to?

**BOBBY** - *War and Peace* by that Tolstoy guy. I heard that was good.

**CATHY** - *Gone With the Wind*. But I saw the movie!

**JA** - If you had ten thousand dollars, what's the first thing that you would do? Do you have an internal "wish list" concerning the library?

**BOBBY** - If I had an extra ten thousand dollars for the Library, I'd put it where it belongs: in the materials budget.

**CATHY** - If I had ten thousand dollars that I could use anywhere, hmmm, I would make the outdoor amphitheater behind youth services more "user friendly." I would make it a gated area so that it would be more secure and to allow for programs to be held at any time of the day. I would make the area an outdoor learning center with an herb garden (for programs on how to plant and use herbs) and I would make it an area to grow native plants. I would also make an arbor over the amphitheater to give the area a little shade in the summer.

**JA** - What would you say to someone who has never been to the library?

**BOBBY** - Come check out the Library and check something out! The Library really does have something for everyone.

**CATHY** - Where have you been since 1895?

**JA** - How do you suggest we generate more interest in the public?

**BOBBY** - I hope things like the upcoming book festival will help do that, but by and large, we just have to keep doing what we're doing - being the absolute best Library we can be.

**CATHY** - By continuing to support programs and projects at JCPL and by getting your entire membership involved in these programs and projects. Just the other day a young lady came in wanting to volunteer for the book sale. She was so excited because her friend, who had helped with a previous book sale, was very

excited when she was describing the event.

**JA** - With technology increasing at a phenomenal rate and the growth of on-line libraries, why is the library important/necessary for our community?

**BOBBY** - Well, the Library is needed to help with the digital divide; we make the difference for people who wouldn't otherwise have access to online sources. Plus, the Library continues to provide premium content through our web site. Library cardholders have access to content they couldn't otherwise afford or get to, such as HeritageQuest.com and the EBSCO Automotive Repair Database.

**CATHY** - I could give you an answer about the socioeconomic status of the area and how that not everyone has a computer at home and this is why the library is important. But in my humble opinion, the Internet can never replace that feeling you get when you are holding a book. I was reading a *Hank the Cow Dog* book with my nephew Dylan the other day and the kid was just so excited about holding the book and reading the words and turning the pages and saying "look Aunt Cathy, I'm on page 89 now!"

**JA** - Married? Kids? Local?

**BOBBY** - I'm happily married; my wife Donna and I tied the knot nearly twelve years ago. We have one child; our daughter Susan is 10 years old and loves being a kid. I was born in Elizabethton, where I currently live. I lived in Richmond, Virginia for a while as a child, and in Johnson City for a long while before becoming a homeowner in my hometown in 1997.

**CATHY** - Married to Ed for 24 years this year. We are blessed with a terrific nephew Dylan who will soon be eight, and we are the people of two spoiled cats (Hobo and Gracie) and two equally spoiled dogs (Duke and Lady). I was born in Johnson City and have lived in Erwin most of my life. The Asbury Center across from the library used to be the Johnson City Memorial Hospital, so I can see where I was born from my office window!

## Book Recommendations

For this edition, I asked the Friends Board members what they were reading. Here are a few of their suggestions.

### Kathy Hall:

As usual, I have a book that I'm reading and a book that I'm listening to at the same time.

I recently read *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen. It's a novel about an older man remembering his time spent with the circus as a young man. The story is gritty and sweet at the same time. I really



enjoyed it.

I'm currently listening to *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. It's a classic I've never read, but I'm thoroughly enjoying it as an audio book. I actually downloaded and burned CD's from the library's website and their link to R.E.A.D.S.

### Kevin Anderson:

Currently, I'm reading *Coal River* by Michael Shnayerson. It's a story of how a group of West Virginia residents fought back against the coal companies destroying the areas surrounding their homes. They won an important legal victory to halt the mountaintop removal mining. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the local coal mining industry and its effect on our area.

### Susan Burkey:

I am currently reading *You Matter More Than You Think* by Dr. Leslie Parrott. Parrott reveals a personal message that is sure to keep you from looking at the pieces of your life as mere fragments scattered to and fro by any impulsive tide. On the contrary, you will see that all the random fragments of your life mean something.

**Karol Lynn Johnson:**

I would recommend *Beet* by Roger Rosenblatt. If you enjoy his essays on PBS, you will have fun reading this satire of an American College Campus.

**Josh Archer:**

I've been reading two collections of short stories *The Best American Short Stories 1987* edited by Beattie and Ravenel and *The Best Short Stories of Theodore Dreiser*. These anthologies contain "the best" each has to offer, which is perfect for anyone who doesn't have the time for a novel, yet wants something more out of their reading.

*The Best American Short Stories 1987* features submissions taken from popular magazines such as *Atlantic*, *Esquire*, *Harper's*, and *The New Yorker* among others. Dreiser's collection of short stories features also offers the reader an indepth look at life, often seen through the eyes of an eccentric individual.

**Charles Moore:**

*A Scanner, Darkly* by Phillip K. Dick is a deep, almost dreary story of his life and his friends as they sunk further into the drug scene.

*Last Chance to See* by Douglas Adams is his encounters with a few of the remaining endangered species. Very witty, very caustic, as you would expect.

*The Eyre Affair* by Jasper Fforde is way too funny and imaginative to explain. You'll have to bone up on your Brit Lit to ride along with our heroine,

Tuesday  
Next.



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**FOL Spring Book Sale**

Saturday, April 19, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Special Friends Preview: Friday, April  
18, 6-8 PM

Don't Miss It!

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Friends of the Johnson City Public Library  
100 W. Millard St.  
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