

Newsletter

Volume 3

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Winter 2010

Budget Cuts Present Huge Challenge to Libraries

The first of October ushered in the 2009-2010 fiscal year with the most austere budget the library has ever seen. The Fort Lauderdale Branch on Sunrise Blvd. is now open only two days a week - Monday and Friday. All Broward libraries area be closed on Sundays, with the exception of Alvin Sherman at Nova Southeastern University. While no facilities were closed, patrons at all libraries will find longer wait time for staff assistance and fewer new books, magazines and DVDs. According to Robert Cannon, director of Broward County Library, "We have had a total 27% increase in use in the past three years, while we lost 27% in funding." And Cindy Shulman, Main Library manager, pointed

out that, "Everyone is being asked to do more. The support of the Friends is needed more than ever, both as advocates and to provide funds for supplies, equipment, programs, youth services, staff training and recognition."

The Friends proved to be a strong and effective force in marshalling public concern and communicating the need for libraries to our legislators. The Save My Library Campaign demonstrated to the County Commission not only how much people care about their libraries but the specific services upon which they have become dependent. Our message that libraries are a social safety net came through loud and clear in both the

postcard campaign and testimony at the public hearings. In an email regarding Save Our Library, County Commissioner Kristin Jacobs wrote, "There will be difficult decisions to make as we look ahead to the fiscal Year 2011 budget, but rest assured



that the county's libraries will remain available, as they represent some of the best resources we have to offer Broward County citizens." It is heartening to have that kind of support since with every aspect of the library now trimmed to the core, the possibility of more cuts next year is extremely disturbing.



Elizabeth Prior

Interview with Elizabeth Prior

Congratulations on your new position as Assistant Director of Broward County Libraries, formerly held by now retired Eileen Cobb.

Q: What does your job entail?

Prior: I assist the director with the management of the library system, particularly with overseeing the public service operations such as staff and customer service.

Q: Which of the many positions you've held best prepared you for this job?

Prior: I bring a little bit of each to the job I do today. Collection Management helped me with managing staff, working with grants and creating the county's Stimulus Office gave me broader contacts in the community, and my time in public service gave me an understanding of the daily operations of running a library.

Q: Other than doing more with less, what do you think will be your most significant challenge?

Prior: A vision for the future. With the many critical issues we are facing, it is difficult to find time for planning and being visionary.

Q: What do you think will be the biggest changes to public libraries in the next five years?

Prior: New information formats, providing services with smaller budgets and less staff and the increasing need for new technology, computers and training.

Q: How can the Friends best help you?

Prior: Act as advocates for the Library system and raise funds and awareness of the importance of libraries in the communities. Tied into this is building positive relationships with local elected officials so we can count on their support when it is needed.

Good Friends Make Great Libraries

Volunteering ... A National Movement



Sun Sentinel Reporter Dainelys Martinez interviews Friend and Consultant Lynne Bruno about volunteering

From the White House to the Broward County Commission, volunteering or community service is receiving a lot of attention. The White House envisions a vast national network of citizens actively serving their communities and solving problems, while Broward County through its new website hopes to connect local volunteers with organizations that have reduced resources or lost staff to budget cuts.

With 90 positions lost and a 30% budget reduction over the past three years, the library meets those guidelines and the Friends are hoping to benefit from this focus on community service. The Friends of the Fort Lauderdale Libraries are in need of volunteers who are interested in the library and want to become involved.

What do you like to do? We can probably match your interests and talents with our needs. A few examples of our volunteer assignments include:

- maintaining order/organization in the Book Fair
- creating signs, posters and announcements
- designing and arranging book displays
- maintaining our membership database
- managing our online sales database
- writing for the newsletter and/or website
- advocating for the library with legislators

Help keep our libraries the great cultural and education centers that our community deserves.

Call 954-357-7415 today

and let them know you are interested in becoming a Friends volunteer.

President's Message



Narda McCarthy and Caroline Seabright enroll new members



Michelle Alexis displays Broward County Proclamation

The 4th Annual Friends of the Library Week, a tribute to Friends spearheaded by the national Friends organization, ALTAFF - Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, was held in October. Activities included a membership table that gave us an opportunity not only to recruit members but also to tell more people about our Friends group and what we do to support the Main and Fort Lauderdale Branch libraries. We know from our Save My Library campaign how much the public loves and uses their public libraries but they don't always realize that becoming a Friend is a great way to translate their love into active support. And in this climate, libraries need support more than ever.

Closer to home, and upon the request of the Friends, the Board of County Commissioners designated that same date "Friends of Broward County Library Week." The proclamation applauds the Friends for setting "an example for all in how volunteerism leads to positive civic engagement and the betterment of our community..."

What a fine tribute to a year of hard work and high energy by the Friends!

- Barbara J. Correll

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Additional Information can be found on our website at www.libraryfriends-ftl.org or call **954-357-7415**

Talking Book Library Serves Vital Role In Community

One of the best-kept secrets of Broward County is the Talking Book Library at Main, according to Wayne Draper, section head. "This service enables the visually and physically disabled population to enjoy the rewards of reading all kinds of books on cassette tapes and recently digital books," he points out. Currently some 2500 people make use of the service at Main which is one of ten Florida libraries in a network funded by the Library of Congress. It is also a partner with the Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services in Daytona Beach, and the Florida sub-regional library network. Bestsellers, educational nonfiction, classics and all types of full-length books are available through the Talking Book Library.

In January the Friends will honor Louis Braille (1809-1852), the French boy who had been blinded in an accident at age three and as a teenager, eager to learn, adopted a battlefield code of night writing shared by a former soldier, Charles Barbier. Braille simplified the code to six dots and published a book of the symbols in 1829 and later added symbols for math and music. Reading by Braille began to spread worldwide after 1868 when a group of British men, now known as the Royal National Institute for the Blind, took up the cause.

Today at Main, Braille reading material has been supplemented by thousands of recordings which are mailed out postage free, and returned the same way, to customers who call in their requests. Completion of a simple application leads to hours and hours of reading enjoyment, Draper points out. Calls are handled Monday-Friday, 10 am to 6pm and those made after hours are retrieved from the telephone recorder and returned the following business day.

Customers mostly range in age between 50 to 100, says Draper, a graduate of Eastern College, St. Davids, PA, who holds a master's in library science from the University of South Florida. At the Talking Book Library he is supported by a staff of seven.

For further information call **954-357-7555**.

Shane Ferguson - readying returned books for inspection before discharge process



Judith Wilson - taking a customer's request over the telephone



Larry Freeman - rewinding returned cassette books, making sure the correct cassette tapes are in the correct case



Friends Sponsor Ice Cream Social for Library Staff



Nancy Murray, Freda Mosquera, Lynne Bruno and Katy Mullon (Youth Services / Special Events) were among the library staff who enjoyed socializing and building their own personal sundae at this staff appreciation event.

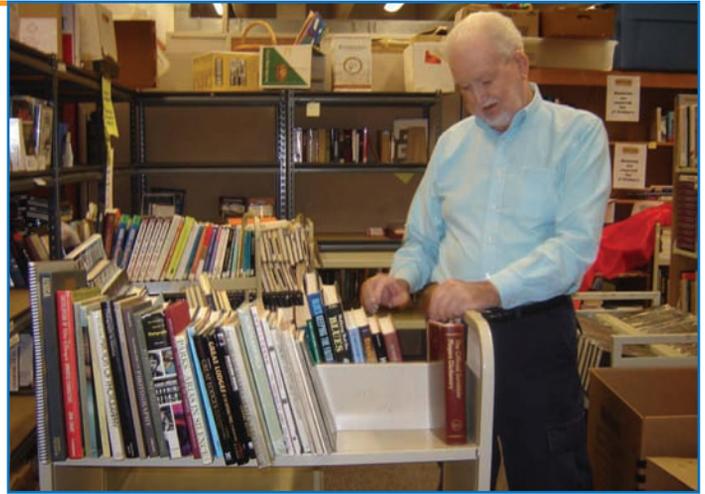
What Happens to Your Donations?

Running out of bookshelves? Moving? Tired of the constant dusting? Enjoyed the story but don't intend to read it again? All these are reasons that people donate books, CDs, DVDs or magazines to the library. But what happens to all those donations? Here's the story.

A Book Fair volunteer first examines all items and sets aside those that might be needed by the library because the title is missing from the collection or an additional copy is needed or might not have been purchased because of reduced funding. The library staff selects what they need and forwards them for processing. Next a Book Fair volunteer selects those in the very best condition and on the most interesting topics and prepares them for our Special Collection Fair on the First Friday of every month. The rest are sorted by subject and stored in the workroom until there is available shelf space at the Book Fair. Volunteers also watch for books on subjects of special interest for displays. Recent Book Fair displays have been on gardening, health, movies and theatre. Volunteers also keep a request list and frequently help people find books they have been seeking.

Members of the Friends of the Fort Lauderdale Libraries are given the privilege of shopping in the workroom whenever volunteer staff is in attendance. Both the Book Fair and the workroom are treasure troves of wonderful and inexpensive books, magazines, DVDs and CDs, and, yes, even video and audio cassettes.

We are fortunate that our community has great readers who are very generous in donating books to the library. These donations help everyone. They expand



Robert Butler, Book Fair volunteer, sorts through 400 books that were donated by someone moving out of the country. This was an exceptional collection not only because of the quality of the subject matter but their excellent condition. The harsh reality of our Florida climate is that unless books are stored in a climate-controlled environment, otherwise excellent collections cannot be salvaged due to mildew or insect intrusion.

the library collection for all of us, help the Friends provide financial support for the library and provide interesting and affordable reading for the public.

For more information about the Book Fair or donating items, please visit our website at:

www.libraryfriends-ftl.org or call **954-357-7415**

Book Fairs offer Inexpensive Treasures



100 S. Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

