2023 Annual Meeting

Friends of the Library held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, September 10th, at Library Headquarters. FOL members enjoyed a meal with other volunteers, approved the 2023-2024 budget and slate of officers, and were introduced to a number of “quirky,” less-traveled areas of Florida.

President Jean Westin-Lagotic welcomed everyone, shared the year’s achievements, and described the expensive repair work necessary for our 100+ year-old building.

Shaney Livingston, ACLD Director, highlighted the library’s many accomplishments and projects, recognized the excellence of library staff, thanked FOL for its support, and described future projects.

Bill Watson presented the year’s financial report, which included two very successful book sales. He announced that FOL has been able to reduce the balance due on the building’s mortgage and presented the budget for 2023-2024, which was approved by the members.

On behalf of the nominating committee, Mark Olson presented the slate of officers for 2023-2024. There were no nominations from the floor. The slate was approved and the following officers were elected:

- President: Jean Westin-Lagotic
- Vice President: Linda Evjen
- Recording Sec: Stephanie Olson
- Corresponding Sec: Jackie Trudeau
- Treasurer: Bill Watson
- Assistant Treasurer: Sue Harms

The evening’s speaker, author and blogger Mike Miller, entertained and informed his audience with stories and insights into quirky people and places in Florida.

We have a separate article on page 6 that tells of the awards and recognitions presented at the meeting.
Letter from the Director

Exciting things are happening all around the Alachua County Library District. We have a wonderful selection of programs being offered, including TeenTober programs, crafting workshops, genealogy classes, and local author visits. We have computer and technology assistance classes, chess clubs, movie days, and a new Story Time program at the Herlong Mansion in Micanopy.

In September, the ACLD held a monthlong series of programs geared toward family literacy. The English for Families program had over a dozen families that attended the five workshop sessions. This multi-week series of interactive English language classes was put on through grant funding from Florida Humanities. Florida Humanities works to preserve and promote the history and culture of Florida so that Floridians have a better understanding of themselves, their community, and the state. This was an ideal program for families with young children who needed hands-on English language learning. When each session was complete, every family received a free children's book along with workbooks and study material. We plan to continue this program in the fall with another month of classes.

The Library District recently reached another milestone in our history. The expansion of the Archer Branch was completed, and the branch reopened with nearly double the amount of usable space to serve the Archer community. The branch added a Quiet Reading Room, a Teen Space, a Snuggle-Up Center in the children's area and a CreateSpace. Everyone had a wonderful time attending the Grand Reopening. Community members, along with the Governing Board and Board of Trustees, came out to celebrate. Representatives from the ACLD Foundation and Friends of the Library were also on hand to commemorate the momentous day. We know the Archer community is excited and so are we.

The ACLD works hard to provide our community with opportunities to participate, connect, discover. The Library District tries to create programs and events that will educate and inform our community. We don't always brag about the work we do, but we have to toot our own horn every now and again when something special happens.

We are pleased to announce that the ACLD has been honored with a pair of awards from two prestigious organizations for programs that highlight the Library District’s commitment to community connectivity and education.

The Northeast Florida Library Information Network Board of Directors recognized the ACLD Re-Entry Simulation program as the winner of the 2023 NEFLIN Innovation Award during their annual meeting in Jacksonville. The Re-Entry Simulation is used to develop empathy and understanding in the community for what the first few months after incarceration can be like for a returning citizen.

Also announced last month, the Center for Digital Government awarded the ACLD WiFi2Go program the 2023 Government Experience Project Award for the ACLD WiFi2Go program. The Library District was the Project Experience Winner in the Special District Experience category.

The announcement was made during the annual Center for Digital Government virtual GovX Summit, which showcases the latest trends, best practices, and ideas around the evolving experience of government. Attending the GovX Summit presented a unique opportunity to glean insights and learn from those at the forefront of the government experience movement.

The WiFi2Go program was created to meet a need in the community for connectivity. The program allows ACLD card holders, who are residents of Alachua County, to check out a mobile hotspot which allows up to five devices to connect to the Internet. There are no data plan fees or data limits. The devices can be checked out for seven days. The program was launched in 2021, with 100 hotspots funded by the Alachua County Library District Foundation. We currently have 300 WiFi2Go hotspots in our collection for checkout. This program highlights ACLD’s commitment to helping our community stay connected.

The Library District would like to thank every one of our patrons for their support of their local library. We are working hard to make sure we provide exciting events, informative programs, and meaningful services that every patron can enjoy. We look forward to seeing you at the library.

–Shaney Livingston
A Busy Foundation Weekend

The Sept. 30/Oct. 1 weekend was an especially busy one for the Foundation Board and members. On Saturday, eight Board members attended the Library District’s Grand Reopening of the Archer Branch to celebrate the completion of a project that nearly doubled its size. Among the new features are a Children’s Area, a Teen Zone, and a CreateSpace, which the Foundation funded with a $100,000 contribution to the total cost of about $1,000,000 for the library branch expansion.

The next day, Sunday, the Foundation held its annual meeting at the Library District Headquarters, with a light supper for the more than sixty members and guests in attendance. Library Director Shaney Livingston gave an update on the Library District, noting that it is debt free, which received enthusiastic applause. Next was a stimulating talk by UF Distinguished Professor of History Jack E. Davis, who received the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in History for his *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*. He began his talk – “A Bird, a Book, and a Bet with Nature,” based on his recent *The Bald Eagle: The Improbably Journey of America’s Bird* – by noting that, unlike so many environmental history accounts, this particular history is a positive and encouraging one.

The formal business meeting included the Chair’s Annual Report, along with that of the Treasurer, the adoption of the 2023-24 budget, recognition of new members, and the election of officers and Board members. Serving two-year terms are Mitzi Austin as Chair, Bill Zegel as Vice-Chair, and Brian Gendreau continuing as Treasurer. Laura Berns was elected for one year to fill the unexpired term of Secretary. Mitzi Austin presented concluding remarks before the meeting adjourned.
Message from the President

I am constantly amazed at what an incredible group we are. As Friends of the Library approaches our seventieth year, we are stronger and more dedicated than ever. “... in all kinds of weather, we all stick together...,” our volunteers persevere. When summer temperatures hover close to 100 degrees, volunteers are busy sorting and pricing books in our 100-plus-year-old, mostly unairconditioned building. In winter, when temperatures dip into the 30s, volunteers are busy sorting and pricing books in our mostly unheated building (and yes, we are wearing gloves, hats, scarves and jackets). Why? We believe in our mission to support the Alachua County Library District and to promote literacy throughout our community. So when you come to our October 21 – 25, 2023, Book Sale, stop for a moment and realize it is the culmination of six months of effort ... in all kinds of weather. Again, a huge thank you to our hundreds of members and volunteers. Alachua County is a much better place due to your efforts!

– Jean Westin-Lagotic

A Distant Library

Completed in 2019, the Deichman Bjørvika in Oslo, Norway, is the most recent home for Norway’s largest library, originally established in 1785. Opened to the public in 2020, this new headquarters building was recognized by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions as the 2021 IFLA/Systematic Public Library of the Year. Mark and Stephanie Olson took these pictures on a recent trip.
Position: MakerSpace Librarian

Background: Joe Baca was born in Chicago, IL, and lived in both Chicago and Miami, FL, during his childhood and teen years. While Chicago and Miami are very different cities, one common denominator was that Joe had a lot of time in libraries during his formative years. After finishing high school in Miami, Joe was drawn to Gainesville for college and the local music scene, which he had heard a lot about from fanzines and friends.

As an undergrad, Joe worked at the Marston Science Library as a page. After graduating from UF with an English degree, Joe got a job in the Admissions Office at UF. A year later, a job became available at the Marston Science Library and he decided to apply since he loved libraries and had enjoyed working at Marston previously. Joe worked at the Marston Science Library for fifteen years. Originally hired to bind periodicals, Joe’s responsibilities constantly shifted as technological changes brought change to library services. As more content shifted online, Joe helped update the Science Library’s website and became the webmaster shortly afterward. Having worked on the website for a few years, an opportunity came to help run day-to-day operations of the 3D printing service at the Science Library. The work in the 3D printing lab helped him transition to his role at the Alachua County Library District as the Makerspace Librarian when the position was created in 2018.

After witnessing and living through the changes technology brought to library services, Joe’s main professional interests have focused on Makerspace/STEM education and innovative library programs and services. He looks forward to the ACLD opening their own Makerspace in the near future.

Spotlight on FOL Volunteer

Ellen Hulslander

Position: Table Coordinator

Military History

Background: A native of Baton Rouge, LA, Ellen Hulslander has always loved history and reading. When she was young, her favorite reads were a complete set of National Geographic magazines and a set of the World Book Encyclopedia. Her introduction to literature came from her grandmother – a schoolteacher who literally taught in a one room schoolhouse on the Oklahoma prairie. Ellen says that perhaps her love of history is, “due to my parents who were older when I was born. My father was a World War II veteran, so between reliving the Great Depression and the War, I learned a lot about 20th century American and world history.”

When Ellen retired from teaching nursing at the then Santa Fe Junior College, she knew exactly what she wanted to do: volunteer at Friends of the Library. After helping with the Religion table, she moved to the Military History table. She says, “I love looking through old books, because you never know what you will find. The people that I have met here are interesting and it is a pleasure to be around other book lovers.”

She adds, “For those who are not yet volunteers here, I encourage you to join us and find reward in working with wonderful people and those stuffy old books!”
Sue Harms recognized volunteers for milestone years of service. Honorees were:

**45 years:** Linda Connell

**35 years:** Carolyn Caracausa, Robbie Davis

**30 years:** Becky Davis, Lyn Fort

**20 years:** Peter Levine, Betty Roode, Pete Roode

**15 years:** Jonathan van Blokland

**10 years:** Karen Caraway, Mary Courtenay, Susan Dubinsky, Sue Dudley, Kenneth Johnston, Pete Winters, Kathleen Wobie

**5 years:** Linda Allen, Jamie Freeman, Monique Heathcock, Cheryl Hughes, Cynthia Karle, Eadie Schweer, T. O. Sterrett, Lisa Williams, Nancy Williamson

Ellen Smith introduced FOL’s 2023 Katherine’s Tree honorees. Recognized for their leadership and service to Friends of the Library were Michelle Benoit and Holly Prugh.
With Thanks

Friends of the Library extends a special thank you to the welders at Holt Metals and Fabrication. This company, located in Newbery, Florida, donated their time, expertise, and materials to weld our badly damaged and much needed “library carts.” Holt put back together ten metal carts – which FOL volunteers then painted and returned to our fleet of carts. Thank you all for your generosity and speed in completing the job!

Genealogy Made Easy

Trying to discover your ancestry can seem like a daunting task, but the Alachua County Library District has several classes, programs, and databases to make getting started a little bit easier.

The High Springs Branch is hosting a series of classes about uncommon techniques to help in the research of your family history. Learn how churchyards, graveyards, and cemeteries can be great starting places to locate missing family members. During this class, patrons can find out how to locate and search records at different types of burial grounds. The class, called Cemetery Research for Family History and Genealogy, will be on Tuesday, October 21st, at 3 PM.

Another genealogy class being offered will teach patrons how the history of states surrounding Florida might hold the key to finding links to their ancestors. The Territory of Florida once included parts of what is now Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. Floridians might have ancestors that once lived in these areas outside the current state borders. Learn the history of these areas during this class, called Florida Parishes, at the High Springs Branch, Tuesday, November 28th, at 3 PM.

If you are looking for digital access to genealogy research, the Library District has a wealth of online resources. Library District patrons have access to Heritage Quest Online, as well as the Library Edition of Ancestry.com. With these services, patrons can search census or birth records and lots more. We hope to make your genealogy research easier, so join us and discover just how easy it can be.

FOL Welcomes New Volunteers

In September, 2023, seven new volunteers joined FOL and met other volunteers preparing the Bookhouse for the Fall Book Sale. Welcomed by Volunteer Coordinator Stephanie Olson and Cheryl Osborn, these new members were introduced to FOL policies, learned about locating different categories of items in the Bookhouse, and studied procedures for receiving and sorting books and other community donations. They look forward to welcoming you to FOL’s October sale.

Sheila Carr is a retired electrical engineer new to Gainesville and looking for ways to engage with the community. Belinda Espinosa is retired and a 37-year resident of Gainesville and Alachua county. Kathy Krzys came to Gainesville after retiring as a theatre archivist and rare book librarian at Arizona State University. A retired Foreign Service Officer who spent her early years in Gainesville, Debbie Lingwood returned to Alachua County in 2020 with her husband and two cats. Joan McEntee has always loved libraries and what they do for their communities and now has time to help support them. Beth Smith is a retired art therapist, artist of mixed media, and collector of craft books and art supplies. A retired business owner, Steve Zidonik is
Remember - the benefits of your membership include:

- 4 newsletters per year,
- invitations to the annual meeting and special seminars,
- volunteer opportunities with the twice-yearly book sales.
- But the biggest benefit of all is that wonderful feeling you get from doing something great for your family, neighbors, and community.

Invite your friends to join FRIENDS!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New ☐  Renewal ☐  - FOL member since ______

Name: _______________________________________
   (as you wish your membership name to appear)

Address: _____________________________________

City: ____________________ State: ___ Zip: _________

Telephone: Home ____________ Work _____________

E-Mail Address ________________________________

Membership Categories

☐ $150  Life Member (65+)
☐ $15  Individual
☐ $50  Patron
☐ $10  Student/Senior (65+)
☐ $25  Family
☐ $___ Other

Volunteer Opportunities

☐ Book Sales
☐ Book Sorting (year round)
☐ Other talents, please call me
☐ I can’t volunteer, but am happy to support FOL with my membership

Make checks payable to FOL

Mail to: Friends of the Library, Attn: Membership
430 N Main Street, Gainesville, FL 32601

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