Friends of the Libraries of Towns County

"Good libraries need good friends"

P.O. Box 159
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Comments from FOLTC Co - Presidents, Barbara Hale and Marilyn Pierce

We would like to extend special thanks and a warm welcome to our new members, who joined during our August Book & Bake Sale. The total amount received in membership dues was $961-- a great help in supporting our libraries, as is your purchase of books and baked goods, and we hope that you will consider sharing your talents with FOLTC in the future. Further on in this newsletter, Donna Howell will provide details about how much the "Friends" are helping the libraries of Towns County. However, we can tell you that FOLTC is now providing over 87% of the money for new books and equipment. Next year, that figure could be even higher, so your assistance is of special importance.

We would also like to say "thank you" to all who helped set up the Book & Bake Sale, whether that involved donating books, sorting them, helping patrons find and purchase books, baking, setting out signs, etc. The work of Jan and John Roberts, our Book Co-Chairpersons, who work year-round preparing for the sale, deserves special appreciation. We would like to extend a special note of thanks to Candy Schlarb, who was Chairperson of the Bake Sale for the very first time. She did an excellent job organizing the sale and manning the table.

Members' Night was graced by the presence of Bettie M. Sellers, former Poet Laureate of Georgia and Professor Emerita at Young Harris College. As she explained, her roots in Young Harris, and the college in particular, go back a long way. Her husband graduated from that institution in the 1930's, she taught there for 31 years, and her granddaughter is presently a senior at YHC. Bettie delighted us with the recitation of her poem, "Complaint to Betelgeuse." We are so fortunate to have individuals of Bettie's stature in our community—thank you, Bettie!

Book Bunch 'n Lunch Info from Barbara Hale, Chairman

After an August respite, Book Bunch 'n Lunch will resume at noon at Moschetto's on Wednesday, September 21. Discussion of Traveling with Pomegranates by Sue Monk Kidd will be led by Patti Bransford. October's selection, The Gold of Exodus by Howard Blum, will be discussed by Gigi Smith on Wednesday, October 19. Also in October the first five books for next year's reading will be selected. A classic, a book of humor and a mystery will be chosen, along with two other books from any category. Members should already be thinking about their suggestions for next year.

New members are always welcome, and are encouraged to join the Bunch.

Officer Roster

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More Community Nights at Moschetto's

Thanks to the generosity of Andy Moschetto, FOLTC will be holding a second fund raiser at the restaurant on Thursday, September 15; Friday, September 16; and Saturday, September 17, from 6:00 – 8:30 pm. Andy will donate 10% of all proceeds to FOLTC. Prizes will include a $25 gift certificate and a home fire extinguisher, donated by Gene Vickers of Associated Fire Protection LLC. Members of FOLTC will be on hand to greet diners, and everyone will enjoy Moschetto's excellent food! Cut out the ticket below and bring it with you to be eligible for a door prize, although tickets will be available at the door. **FOLTC members,** please invite your friends!

Book Sale Co-chairs, John and Jan Roberts

Thanks to all the wonderful folks who made this book and bake sale one of the best ever!!! The members' only night was a nice party with great food and fellowship. Book sales and membership renewals were also brisk. The event kicked off a busy seven days leading to FOLTC's ability to once more supply funds to help our beloved libraries remain the very best. Although the event is now "over", it really is a year-long operation thanks to the steady flow of donated books that need sorting and storing. Sandi Vaughan is the first sorter and finds many books to add directly to the libraries' shelves. This adds quality to the libraries offerings for free, saving cash at a major level. Debbie Phillips in Hiawassee receives donated books, sorts them for her needs and contacts us when she has enough to warrant a trip. These are added to the Young Harris donations and sorted, priced and stored in the back room for the next sale. The best of these, both hardback and paperback are used to keep the sale rack stocked. Others of exceptional value are reserved for special sales efforts. Our first donations for next year's sale have already been sorted. We will welcome more books at any time at either library. These activities will continue throughout the year.

The frenetic, sale preparation activity begins about a month before the sale as we set up the room and try to remember everything that worked well in previous years and things we knew we would modify as improvements for the current year. During this time the need for many volunteers is substantial and over the past several years, as well as this one, this need has always been answered in fine form. Although moving tables, shelves and heavy boxes full of books can be tedious, it always turns out to be a fun-filled and rewarding chore. Sorted and priced books fill the tables and shelves and bright signs help our customers find their favorites. We always find ourselves near panic just before the sale starts but are somehow always ready.

The bake sale this year was highly profitable and our FOLTC chefs outdid themselves in response to our bake sale committee's requests for goodies. The bakers also recognized that our volunteers expended lots of calories and were very kind in supplying samples for the staff. The famous fried apple pies disappeared nearly instantly as did many brownies, pies, cupcakes, cakes and home-baked bread. The combined efforts of the committee and our generous members made this an outstanding bake sale!

During the sale, raffle tickets were sold for a beautiful afghan and the winner was Janice Cochran. Thanks for your contribution and enjoy your afghan.

We are always indebted to the wonderful library staff. They endure our invasion each year as we take over their kitchen and ask them a multitude of questions as we seek the pencil sharpener, rubber bands and the proper way to use the copier. These are the best, thanks to all of them for their support.

From Director Donna Howell's Desk

Congratulations Friends! What a terrific job all our amazing volunteers did to make the book & bake sale a roaring success! Thanks to one and all!

It looks like our library projects are at least on the state's radar. I had to submit "justification" documents outlining the need for the projects and our funding in August. If you have a chance to write, call, or e-mail State Representative Stephen Allison or Senator Jim Butterworth, please ask them to support our Towns County Library Renovation and Addition Projects – especially Towns County Public Library!

Since our fiscal year 2011 ended on June 30th, I wanted to share a few statistics on the use of our libraries during the year. According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the US Census Bureau the population of Towns County is 11,540. A whopping **63.75% of the citizens of Towns County have a valid, active library card** – a total of 7,357. When you consider that many of our families use a single card for the family, you can see that our county loves and uses its libraries!

Our library **users checked out 103,262 items** from our libraries – including books, audiobooks, DVDs, puzzles, computer software, park and zoo passes, and even novelty cake pans! That is about 9 items per capita – more than double the state average.

69,503 people used our libraries – or more than 6 library visits per capita.

Our **73 children's programs attracted 2,751** attendees – these included special bedtime story times, a Dr. Seuss birthday story time, summer reading program, and other seasonal and special events.

Library users used library technology resources of Wi-Fi, in-house computers, and online catalogs for 44,627 sessions. And our **library website was visited more than 1.9 million times**!

We had **19 volunteers donate more than 1,500** hours of their time to our libraries – shelving books and helping with events and fundraising.

Despite the severe budget cuts, we were able to **add 4,737 new titles to library collections** – the vast majority directly through efforts of the Friends! Between direct funding, adding materials from items donated, adoptions of authors, and donations in honor or memory of Friends members or family, the ***Friends of the Libraries of Towns County were responsible for 87.34% of all new materials added to Towns County's libraries in FY2011.***

I want to thank our amazingly wonderful library staff members who provide the kind of service that makes our libraries places our citizens want to visit. They always go above and beyond.

Thanks to all the Friends who donated their time, talents, and treasures to provide the resources our libraries need to meet the needs of our Citizens.

Thanks to our cities of Young Harris and Hiawassee for their continuing support. And to the Board of Education who despite severe budget cuts of their own and having to reduce their support level, continued to fund the library.

And special thanks to our Commissioner Bill Kendall for his support and leadership. Without his picking up the funding cut by the Board of Education in FY2011, we would have lost state funding. In addition, his Commissioner's Challenge Grant, which matched Friends funds of $5,000, allowed us to replace our 10 year old children's early learning computers at MRL. They have been really popular and were so needed.

We are so blessed to have such a great support network for our libraries and our citizens.

And finally, I want to wish one of our long-time staffers – Jean Nichols – a happy, healthy, and lengthy retirement! Her retirement was effective at the end of August. Though we called her "Mean Jean" as a joke, Jean has been a joy to our library staff and our library users and we will certainly miss her! We hope she will be back to visit us often.

From FOLTC

Friends of the Libraries of Towns County extend our deepest condolences to Doris Tilly in the death of her husband, Wally. It is with heavy hearts that we share this news. As a founding member and FOLTC's first president, Doris is always caring and doing everything she can to assist the organization as well as all who cross her path. She is always going the extra mile for our libraries and now it is time for us to remember Doris and the family in our thoughts and prayers.

~~~ REMINDER ~~~

Next Friends of the Libraries Meeting

Tuesday, October 4, 10:30 am

Mountain Regional Library, Young Harris

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Telephone _____**Email**_____

Choose one: ___ New Membership ___ Renewal Membership

Please select membership type:

___ Individual ($12.00) ___ Family ($24.00) ___ Sponsor ($30.00)

___ Business ($35.00) ___ Donor ($50.00) ____ Patron ($100.00)

Please make check payable to FOLTC and mail to Friends of the Libraries of Towns County, P.O. Box 159, Young Harris, GA. 30582.

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