



Friends of Union County Library (FOUCL)

Friends Communicator

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From the President

What a strange time we're living through! After a great start to our FOUCL year, everything suddenly closed in mid-March. Many of us still go out, but rarely and carefully. FOUCL has had to rethink how we function during this time. We did give "Cat in the Hat" books at a storytime in February and we did have a Bakeless Bake Sale in May, but most of our programs and events have been cancelled.



Jackie Volk, President

Recently, Union County Public Library asked FOUCL to provide prizes for the mostly online Children's Summer Reading Program and we are pleased to let you know we had plenty of funds for purchasing those prizes. We were also able to give the library our usual July contribution for magazine subscriptions.

Our webmaster, Robert Harford, hosted an online meeting for FOUCL on July 15 and about ten of our officers and members participated, along with Branch Librarian Susie Brendle and new MRLS Director Heath Lee. At that meeting, Robert shared that our web page activity is growing. In every month this year usage has exceeded our busiest month last year. It is gratifying to know people are staying in touch with us and we strive to keep information up-to-date for you.

As coronavirus numbers continue to rise we have decided FOUCL will go online again for our scheduled October 21 meeting. Regrettably, it was also decided to cancel this year's Everything Christmas Sale, the November Bake Sale, and the December Christmas Luncheon.

While we all navigate these unusual days, I thank you for your continued willingness to contribute and support the library through your memberships, your notes of appreciation to the library staff, and your contributions to our May fundraiser.

I encourage you to read through this newsletter for more details and photos of events mentioned in this letter as well as interesting articles, including an interview with Heath Lee.

We're working together while staying apart. Remember, this too shall pass.

Quarantine Reads

Try these recommended titles.

The Beautiful Mystery: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel – Louise Penny

The Best Cook in the World: Tales from My Momma's Southern Table – Rick Bragg

The Dutch House – Ann Patchett (nonfiction)

My Dear Hamilton: A Novel of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton inspired by the musical - Hamilton)

The Paris Architect: A Novel – Charles Belfoure (historical fiction)

The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz – Erik Larson (nonfiction)

Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey: The River of Doubt – Candice Millard (nonfiction)

Save Me the Plums: My Gourmet Memoir – Ruth Reichl (nonfiction)

This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind – Ivan Doig (nonfiction,

The Woman in the Window: A Novel – A. J. Finn (thriller)

What's Happening!

BookPages are back!

After months of the library being closed and the BookPage not being sent out, we finally have the April, June and July issues. Who knows what happened to the May issue, but it is available online at https://issuu.com/book_page/docs/bookpage_may_2020



June focuses on Audiobooks and July is Mystery/Thriller month. Feel free to pick up all three copies when you next venture out to the library.



A New Way to Access AmazonSmile

Good news for those who want to easily contribute funds to support our library: AmazonSmile customers can now contribute through Amazon's shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations on your mobile phone. 1) Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device, 2) Go to the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings', 3) Tap 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process.

Bakeless Bake Sale A Big Hit!

Because of COVID-19, our first ever Bakeless Bake Sale replaced our usual May Mother's Day sale. In lieu of pies or cookies to sell, members of FOUCL donated money for the purpose of showing their support to our library staff. Money raised from this sale was given to Union County Public Library staff in recognition of National Library Workers Week. Many thanks to members of FOUCL, Union County residents, and far-flung friends and library supporters for their support. Donations received amounted to around \$3,000 - a great success! Many people sent personal comments, but one summed it up best. *"What a wonderful idea for our hardworking staff! This is the easiest cake I've ever not baked."*



Thanks again for your great response to FOUCL's Bakeless Bake Sale. You have proven to have a great sense of humor and warm hearts for libraries and librarians.

Librarian's Spotlight!



Thank you to Friends of Union County Library for your continued support during this challenging time. The library has gone through several changes and adjustments since March 2020. We closed March 17th and worked from home until opening back up for curbside service on May 13th. On June 3rd we opened our doors to patrons again for limited hours and services. The library continues to remain open from 10 am – 4:30

pm Monday through Friday and 10 am – 1 pm on Saturdays. All staff are required to wear masks and gloves and work throughout the day to keep the library clean and sanitized. All returned materials must be put in the outside book drop and are quarantined for at least 72 hours before staff can touch them to check them back in off of patrons' records. Other than the 3-day wait for returned items to be checked in, our circulation and holds procedures have not changed.

Currently, no group meetings can be held in the library. That will continue at least through the fall. The community room is being used to house quarantined materials and extra furniture that had to be moved out of the main library to limit browsing and extended stays. To maintain social distancing, there is a limit of 50 persons allowed inside the library at a given time. Even fewer persons are allowed in smaller rooms such as the youth room and the computer lab.



This year's Summer Reading Program was a lot different. The library system used a virtual program called Beanstack to help register participants and keep track of reading statistics. The program ran from June 1 – July 20 at Union County Public Library. Miss Kaley filmed several virtual story times and

craft demonstrations that could be viewed from the library's Facebook page as well as a Drive-By Face Painting activity. Participants could also pick up craft bags at the library to assist them with the weekly crafts. We had 64 total readers; 649 books read; and 30,178 minutes read. Sixteen readers met their reading goals and 9 readers read over 100+ books. Friends of Union County Library donated the grand prize of a Contixo Kids Learning Tablet. You donated 8 coupons for an ice cream and game of mini golf at Blairsville Ice Cream & Mini Golf. You also donated a box of small prizes that were given out to each participant that met their reading goals.

The library will be open for the current temporary hours and services until further notice. We are unable to receive donations and are unable to display items such as magazines and pamphlets. Extended visits to the library are discouraged. While the library is open fewer hours, the staff are working extra hard to keep the library clean and safe for our patrons. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask.



Susie Brendle, Librarian



2020 Super Reader
Michael Flowers

Friends In Action



SRP @ UCPL June 1-July 20

Children's Summer Reading Program

Friends of Union County Library usually provide money to help pay for the Children's Summer Reading Program entertainers. Due to the pandemic there were no entertainers so FOUCL used the funds to provide most of the prizes, including small assorted toys, gift certificates for Blairsville Ice Cream and Mini Golf and the Grand Prize, a child-friendly Android tablet awarded to the child who did the most reading.



Cat in the Hat Comes to UCPL



Helen Harford hands one happy boy a copy of his own to keep.

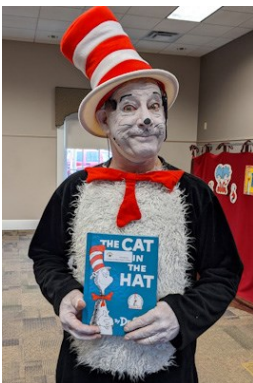


L to R: Robert Harford, Helen Harford, THE CAT, Jayne Sentell, Connie Rosenberry



On February 24 Union County Public Library presented the Cat in the Hat at storytime, to the delight of the children. Following his wonderful performance we were there to present each child with a copy of the famous book.

Even THE CAT was given his own copy!



The Friends Communicator is published 4 times a year, following the Quarterly Membership Meetings. The publication dates are February, May, August and November.

FRIENDS VIP

What We Do

Through your membership and donations, FOUCL's activities support your local library by providing materials and activities not otherwise available through local funding.

Who's Owliver?

Owliver is the Friends of Union County Library Mascot. He was named by Friends members many years ago through a naming contest.

This Wise Old Owl knows ...

Books are where you can find anything.

Books provide entertainment.

Books have the answers to questions.

Books take you places you may never have a chance to visit.

Books open your imagination.

Books make children lifelong learners.

Books challenge us to be better people, develop compassion, and open our minds.



FOUCL Welcomes Heath Lee

Director, Mountain Regional Library System

Director Lee began his new job as leader of the libraries of Union, Towns, and Fannin counties on March 16. He comes to the system with 15 years of library experience. He worked in manufacturing for 13 years before realizing he belonged in libraries, and decided to get his Masters in Library and Information Science. Before coming here he served as branch manager of the Sequoyah Regional Library in Gilmer County, where he had been since 2014.

Though not a Georgia native, Heath grew up in the foothills of South Carolina, so moving to Young Harris was like moving back home. *"The mountains are my home and comfort zone. I am happy to be back in the part of the country I know best. When I learned Mountain Regional Library System was looking for a new director, I looked at the system closely and found it had much potential. I wanted to be the person to help it [grow]."*

"MRLS is fortunate to have people who care about libraries. Our staff has such a positive attitude. Friends groups devote many volunteer hours and patrons have offered such positive comments since we've reopened during the pandemic. Our local government leaders have been open to discussions as to how we can operate differently. To thrive, libraries need the support of citizens and leaders."

"My focus will always be on our patrons and how best we can remain responsive to their needs. I will work closely with local government leadership to improve patrons' experiences."

Thomas Jefferson once said "Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading..." Heath may not be able to spend all the afternoon, but when he does have time to himself he enjoys golf (asserting one day he will be good), motorcycle riding, hiking and finding new places to eat. He has come to the right area for those pastime endeavors and we are glad he did. Welcome, Heath.

It is hoped that a reception for both Heath Lee and Claudia Gibson, who served as the interim director of MRLS from August 2019 until March 2020, can be held in the future. A reception had been scheduled to take place at Union County Public Library before the shutdown. The Friends of all three counties will work together, when it is deemed safe to once again gather, to host this reception. The public, staff, and Friends' members will be invited to attend.

Best Friend Award



Every spring the Friends of Georgia Libraries (FOGL) accepts nominations for its “Best Friend” award. FOGL’s mission is “to create an informed statewide voice for Georgia’s libraries...and to strengthen the ability of local Friends’ organizations to support their libraries. The “Best Friend” Award recognizes an individual

who has made a significant contribution to strengthen Georgia’s libraries through advocacy and supportive efforts.

In February, the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County’s Board of Directors nominated Doris Tilly, a founding member and first president of FOLTC, to be Georgia’s “Best Friend.” She was recently selected as this year’s winner of the award and FOGL plans to honor her in Athens at an awards ceremony during their annual meeting and workshop on October 2.

As a member of FOLTC, Doris applied for and received grants to enhance Mountain Regional Library: to plant a butterfly garden near the entrance, to purchase gardening books, and to purchase young adult books. When Mountain Regional Library was renovated in 2016, Doris generously donated significant funds in memory of her husband Wally and daughter Karen to help complete and furnish the Children’s Room.

Doris is currently a resident of Union County and a member of FOUCL, as well as remaining active in FOLTC. She is an avid reader (being the top winner of FOUCL’s Adult Winter Reading Challenge in 2019).

Congratulations, Doris, on this achievement and thank you for all you do for libraries!

Union County is fortunate to have a few of Georgia’s Friends Awards. In 2010 FOUCL received the first Fabulous Friends Award from FOGL and in the same year Lamar Paris received the Best Friend Award.

It is wonderful to have such a supportive community and FOUCL has reaped the benefits. Thank you to all of our FRIENDS.