

**President's Report to the Membership**  
**Delivered to the Annual Meeting of Friends of the Kirkwood Public Library**  
**Monday, June 13, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.**

This is the first President's Report given in our gorgeous, newly renovated library. I am honored to be the person delivering it.

**Officer's Support.** The assistance I have received from our Vice President Dan Cain, Treasurer Carol Sipes, Secretary Barb Dionne, and our members-at-large Pat Simpson and Judy Arnold has been invaluable. I'd like to start off my report with an expression of thanks to each of them.

**Board Member Activities.**

**Book Fair Committee.** This year's sale was somewhat smaller than past sales, but just as popular. We started with about 24,000 books, just over half the number we had at our last sale, but we sold a greater percentage of them (70%), which supports our strategy of being more selective about the books we put into the sale. The result was noticed by the patrons who commented on the quality of our books. In addition to the concurrent work being done by the Book Fair Committee, the sale engaged 121 workers who put in 630 hours on set-up, clean-up, and the sale itself.

The sale grossed almost \$25,000 with expenses of just over \$4,000, netting \$20,502.78. Our largest expenditure was for the sale site, but the location's benefits made it worth the cost.

Beyond the sale itself, the Book Fair Committee continues to process donations throughout the year. We added some new workers and are expanding our work hours to accommodate the new volunteers. We will also continue to sell books throughout the year online on Amazon, at consignment shops, and by advertising "specials" in *Chapter & Verse*. Of course, we also sell books in Books & Beyond.

Jane Bond continues to lead this effort and it is only through her dedication and hard work that our largest revenue producing activity, the Book Fair, continues to be such a success. Thank you, Jane.

**Membership and Database Management.** When I gave last year's President's Report, memberships stood at 403. It now stands at 489 – an increase of 86 memberships, or 21%. In wondering why our membership grew so much, we've noted that the renovated library has increased people's interest and Books & Beyond seems to attract new members as well. However, we have recently taken specific steps to increase membership, entailing a lot of hard work.

May was membership month with a three-prong approach to increasing membership: (1) the 432 members we had at that time received a "member bring in a friend" flyer;

(2) 200 solicitation letters were mailed to people we identified as potential members; and (3) a membership table was staffed in the library foyer for the month of May.

My sincerest thanks to Pat Soraghan, Membership Chair, who organizes and manages membership activities. She works closely with Jackie Carpenter, Database Manager, who maintains the database. Jackie not only produces reports, but also created almost 2,000 letters this year. It is through the efforts of these two women that we've been so successful in growing our membership, which is our second largest revenue producer, netting over \$18,500 through the end of May.

**Books & Beyond.** The Friends gift shop started in our newly renovated library with a new look and location, in addition to a new name. The shop offers a large selection of donated books for sale that includes a broad range of topics to satisfy everyone's interests. Two qualified and experienced buyers have scoured the Midwest to locate new, unique, and interesting gift items, and a broad array of greeting cards. Our very own craft ladies have created items for the shop to sell. We have worked to maintain an alliance with the Downtown Kirkwood Merchants by providing articles for publication, hosting (with KPL) the Halloween Walk for children, and participating in the Christmas Walk for local businesses. This year has provided us with excellent customer satisfaction and positive PR for both the library and Friends. Our sales have been strong and we work to continue to make Books & Beyond a shopping "destination."

Thanks for the success of Books & Beyond in its maiden year go to Jackie Bailey for her tireless administrative efforts and to Pat Simpson and Sandy Baker for their exquisite taste in buying and to Lois Bliss for her book selections. And, I can't leave out Dan Cain for his financial oversight. It has been a real team effort. Books & Beyond continues to be our third largest revenue producer, providing at least \$1,000 per month to the Friends.

**Special Events.** Our very first "special event" in the new library was the raffling of a Dell Inspiron Netbook computer, donated by The Miller Group. We sold almost \$600 in raffle tickets. We then hosted three special event activities for the 2010-2011 year, with each being fun, special, and a new experience for our members and the community. It is thanks to Teri Weber, our Special Events chair, that these events were such a success.

For our booth at Greentree Festival, we decided to offer something different. We made Carmel Apple Slizzles and held a raffle for his and her bikes. Hot weather on Saturday hindered our sales of the apples drizzled with caramel and Sunday was a complete rainout, but it was fun and different and we still netted well over \$500.

Our second special event was our Holiday Kickoff Party held in November at the library. Our Books & Beyond shop was open for sales, we had a "giving tree" where attendees could purchase a gift for the library, we had lots of food and drinks, and a small jazz trio entertained us throughout the evening. This event brought in \$850 to

the Friends, in addition to the sales made by Books & Beyond and the gifts purchased for the library.

The most recent event was a street party to kick off the summer reading program. It was held Saturday May 21st and the weather was fantastic. We had over 500 adults and children attend the event. There were lots of activities for the families to enjoy, and the hot dogs and ice cream were a hit. The library had over 250 patrons sign up for summer reading that day alone.

In her two years as special events chair, Teri Weber has done a terrific job not only helping us raise money, but just as importantly, she has brought to our membership events that build camaraderie and has brought our group to the favorable attention of our community. I sincerely thank her for that.

**Programs.** The Friends presented four programs this past year, open to the community at large: Bill McClellan, the well known and widely-read columnist for the St. Louis Post Dispatch; Robert Rubright, local Kirkwood author and cultural historian; John Oldani, long time professor of American Studies; and Blanche Kelly, Master Gardner, who spoke at the English Tea. Our programs were well received, with attendance numbers ranging between the mid-80's to well over 100. A fifth event and brunch is planned for later this month to recognize and honor our volunteers and our new members. It is hoped that the interaction between these two groups will encourage new Friends members to become actively involved with us. Jackie Bailey is to be commended for identifying such engaging speakers, which is the key to attracting, entertaining, and educating our audiences.

**Hospitality Committee.** Holly Washeck, our organized and efficient Hospitality Chair, began the year with a 13-member committee. They served refreshments at each of our programs and also provided Christmas "goodies" to the staff and patrons in early December. They have logged 136 volunteer hours to date, with an expectation of 160 by the end of our year. Holly tells me she is especially grateful to the committee members who have supported her during the past two years. Their talent and experience made a potentially difficult job a lot of fun. I think their flexibility and willingness to include unexpected duties among the tasks they need to perform is another indication of their dedication to the Friends. So I thank the self-identified "Cookie Lady" for all the tasty goodies we enjoyed at events this past year.

**Homebound Committee.** Jane Boal, Homebound Chair, continues to work with Joan Deuschle on the library staff and a team of Friends volunteers to deliver library materials to Kirkwood patrons who are homebound either on a temporary basis or a long-term basis. Though the names of the patrons may change from time to time, the number of patrons served remains fairly stable, as does the number of volunteers making the deliveries. I thank Jane for this service, so highly valued by the grateful homebound patrons who are visited regularly by smiling volunteers.

**Craft Group.** This group of talented ladies had been meeting in a member's home following the closing of the library for renovations. At that time, there were nine crafters working, which was all that space would allow. They have just recently moved back to the library, which generously provided storage space. They provide crafts for sale in Books & Beyond and in October had a very successful sale at Nernix Hall's craft fair. In November they held a sale for the library staff at their annual in-service Day and this year they sold jewelry, for one day, at the Annual Book Fair.

**Communication.** The six bi-monthly issues each year of *Chapter & Verse* continue to be a main avenue of communication with our membership. We also send blast emails to our email list of about 325 people when there is an upcoming event or a piece of news about which we think most folks would be interested. This year we have also used the library's newsletter, *Outlook*, to communicate with a larger audience. We have used both the printed and the electronic issues to promote membership, advertise Books & Beyond, distribute the order form for Santa Letters, and promote our programs and fund raisers. Our web pages, part of the KPL website, are another form of communication, and we have spent time providing updates, to try to keep up with frequent changes in activities.

**Santa Letters.** Three of Santa's elves created 438 personalized letters sent to boys and girls of all ages just prior to Christmas of 2010, an increase of 46 letters, or 12% over 2009. Santa Letters netted slightly over \$2,300 this fiscal year, an increase of 41% from the previous year.

### **Off Board Support**

In addition to our elected and appointed Board members, we have a group of dedicated Friends members who serve in off-board capacities.

- Mary Pat Sullivan capably sponsored Readers' Circle, the Friends book discussion group, which meets five times per year, discussing books that are a mixture of fiction, memoir and non-fiction.
- Marge Nardie organized the mailing committee each time *C&V* or any other large mailing was ready to be prepared.
- Dave Garino wrote press releases about our events, letting the public know what we were doing, and what they missed if they don't participate!
- Elinor White coordinated efforts to get volunteer assignments to members who want to become more involved with the Friends by volunteering.
- Betsy Stoll continued to be our archivist, single-handedly keeping our history alive by tracking it through photos and written documents, and keeping those organized.
- Sandy Baker was a co-buyer for the Shop, sharing with us her years of retail experience.

**Library Management.** Sarah Erwin and her incredibly capable management team and staff are perhaps our biggest fans, which makes doing our job easier and much more

pleasurable. The support provided to us by KPL staff members continues to be very important to the success of the Friends. It is a wonderfully mutualistic relationship.

I'll close this report with my second annual heartfelt thank you (as President) to each and every one of you – Board members, off board members, KPL management, Trustees, Friends members – without whom my job as President would not only be more difficult, but would also not be nearly as enjoyable.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Kramer, President,  
Friends of the Kirkwood Public Library