

## Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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## Finding Friends

Are your Friends meetings enticing people to join or are you simply inviting folks to sit in on a business meeting? The majority of FOL's I have visited that have been successful in building membership either offer dynamic events, engaging fundraisers, or informative, entertaining programming.

Some years ago, Friends of the Will Rogers Library in Claremore had become inactive. Because our officers felt that people were not interested in just attending lengthy business meetings, the executive committee (now a board) began handling the majority of the business. That allowed our Friends meetings to begin with a *brief, informative* business meeting that might include any items needing a vote, followed by a break for refreshments, and then a 20-40 minute program. It took time, but it worked.

“ Good programming can help build membership. Be creative. Assess your community's interests and what will work for you. ”

You do have to find a way to get the word out about your program. During our period of rebuilding, we would hang fliers around town in addition to putting articles in the local paper. Eventually we accumulated email addresses, as well as using a phone tree, until we could afford  
*(continued on p. 3)*

## Literary Landmark Honors Robert Conley



The next Oklahoma Literary Landmark honors Robert J. Conley, noted Native American scholar and esteemed author and poet with over 70 books published. In 2007 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas. Please

watch on FOLIO's Facebook page for the announcement of time and place in the Fall for this special Literary Landmark dedication in Cushing.

Robert J. Conley (1940-2014) was born in Cushing and was an enrolled member of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians. After finishing high school in Wichita Falls, TX, he attended college at Midwestern University (TX) where he received his bachelor's degree in drama in 1966 and his master's in English in 1968.

His first novel, *Back to Malachi*, was published in 1986. His poems and short stories were published in numerous periodicals and anthologies over the years. He was noted for depictions of precontact and historical Cherokee figures. He was known for a series of books called the *Real People Series*. The sixth of the series, *The Dark Island* (1996) won the Spur Award for best Western novel in 1995. He also won Spur Awards in 1988 for the short story "Yellow Bird" and in 1992 for the novel *Nickajack*.

Literary Landmark is a national designation through United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. Sponsors for the dedication are Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO), the Cushing Public Library, Friends of the Cushing Public Library, and United for Libraries.

## From the President. . .



FOLIO supports libraries through Friends of Libraries. We provide programs, newsletters, ambassadors, awards, programs, conference programs, Literary Landmarks, and scholarships - all to help Friends make their libraries stronger.

Help keep FOLIO programs and awards flourishing. Join this great team of library Friends helping Friends across the state to strengthen libraries. Membership information is available at <http://www.okfriends.net/membership.html>. Please renew your membership today!

National Friends of the Library (FOL) Week is October 20-26, 2019. Plan your events now. Many FOLs have used this week to have membership campaigns and programs to support the library. FOLIO sponsors two \$200 awards honoring local Friends groups activities during FOL Week. The application is available at [okfriends.net](http://okfriends.net). See p. 8 for more information.

For the latest FOLIO information, trends, ideas, library quotes, and library jokes, FOLLOW us on Facebook – Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO). We have over 900 followers. Invite your Friends to follow, too.

The FOLIO president participated in the Oklahoma Library Association (OLA) Leadership Retreat in early August. OLA is reorganizing and envisioning a new future to further advocate for libraries and improve communication for libraries. Friends are the best advocates, whether we are telling friends in the grocery line about the library, meeting with local officials, making phone calls, attending Legislators' meetings, or visiting with legislators at the Capitol.

The FOLIO Board met on June 14, 2019. Major activities included:

- The budget for 2019-20 was approved.
- The Bylaws Committee will be meeting to consider the new Award and other bylaws revisions.
- The deadlines for the Best Friends and Scholarship Awards was set at March 16, 2020.
- The Robert Conley Literary Landmark is scheduled for this fall in Cushing.
- FOLIO Ambassadors reported on their FOL visits. [If your Friends group needs assistance or moral support, contact your Ambassador, listed on p. 7.]

The FOLIO Board will meet on October 25, 2019 at The Village Library in Oklahoma City.

—Sharon Saulmon, FOLIO President

## Stilwell Kids Enjoy Summer Reading



The members of the Stilwell Public Library Friends Society (SPLFS), as well as the library's branch manager Kathleen Connelly-Brown and staff, were happy with the great programs, attendance, and participation in this year's summer reading program.

Some of the programs included an encounter with wild animals, a multi-character puppet show, a dazzling magic show, and an inspirational talk and demonstration from a Guinness World Record Holder. As always, participants enjoyed a party that included carnival games, tasty snacks, and lots of fun when the program ended. The Adair County United Way and SPLFS provided funding for all of the great performers and programs.



—Regina McLemore, SPLFS Secretary



**Q** - My friends group is struggling with membership and attendance at meetings. What can we do?

**A** - The FOLIO Ambassador Program exists to help FOLs. If you are experiencing difficulty keeping your FOL going, please don't hesitate to call or email your Ambassador for help. It is really disheartening for an Ambassador to visit a library that once had a thriving FOL only to learn that the group has become inactive and did not reach out for assistance. Contact information for the Ambassadors for each quarter of the state is listed on p.7 of this newsletter or on the FOLIO website at [www.okfriends.net](http://www.okfriends.net).

## Best Friends Awards



John Harkey Best Friends Award was presented to Becky Pauls, Branch Manager, for the Friends of the Blanchard Public Library. The Friends provided a pergola where the children could eat outdoors during the free summer lunch program. They also provided an impressive number of family and children programs, including movie nights, crafts and STEAM programs.



The Friends of the Helmerich Library received the Oklahoma Best Friends Award for their support of the escape room innovative teen and tween program. Pictured L-R are Sherry Spurrier and Margaret Bannochie.



Best Friends Honorable Mention certificates were presented to (L-R) Cletta Kinnear, Meeker Friends of the Library, and Stephanie Freedle, Branch Manager, Friends of the John F. Henderson Public Library, Westville.

## FOL Week Awards

Elk City Friends of the Library and Friends of the Grove Public Library won the Friends of Library Week Awards. Attending the FOLIO annual meeting, Brenda Newnam, library manager of the Grove Public Library, and Carla Garrison, representing the Elk City Friends of the Library, were recognized for this honor. Friends of Eufaula Memorial Library received Honorable Mention.



L-R: Brenda Newnam and Carla Garrison

## Finding Friends

*(continued from p. 1)*

to do postcard and newsletter mailings. Social media also offers an opportunity for free publicity.

Our programs have been a bit of everything: authors, educators, town officials, business owners, newspaper editors, artists, and more. While we are fortunate to be able to draw on speakers from our university and from the Tulsa area, we have also had speakers from the smaller towns around us and other areas of the state.

If you are in a small town without city or college opportunities, don't overlook the people in your area that have some type of expertise and are good speakers—someone with an interesting family history, a county extension person, a town official, etc.

*And*, authors will often travel to share about their book. Sometimes they will charge a fee; often they do not, especially if they are invited to have a book signing. Sometimes they will even donate a book to your library.

While there is no magic formula, I do believe good programming can help build Friends membership. Be creative. Assess your community's interests and what will work for you. Check with other FOL's, too. They will often share ideas. Mine (Friends of the Will Rogers Library, Claremore) will.

—Sharon Douthitt, President,  
Friends of the Will Rogers Library, Claremore and  
FOLIO Ambassador, NEOK

## Shawnee Friends Hold Poetry Contest



Winners and Honorable Mentions in the three grade categories display the certificates, presented to them by Dr. Brent Newsom, one of the contest judges.



Pictured are Shawnee Friends' members - L to R - Bill Hagen, Sue Winterringer, and Becky Donovan.

Inspired by the Wilma McDaniel Poetry Contest for Lincoln and Creek Counties, the Shawnee Friends funded several activities during April, National Poetry Month. Children's Librarian Shalla Strider led a Poetry Slam workshop and reading for lower elementary students that attracted 20+ participants. A town-wide contest for students in grades 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 garnered over 100 entries, with 56 attending the awards ceremony and reading.

Winning poets in each category and a grand prize winner were given a certificate, a cash award, a t-shirt, and a chapbook of Jim Spurr's poetry, for whom the contest was named. The late Jim Spurr was the official poet laureate of Shawnee and organizer of the Third Thursday poetry readings twenty years ago. The Shawnee library staff conducted their own contest, won by Jason Stewart.

The Friends invested in t-shirts featuring one of Spurr's favorite sayings, "Live Loud," prominently displayed. In addition to being awarded to contest winners, shirts are being sold to raise money for next year's contest.

The Shawnee Friends intend to make the Jim Spurr Poetry Contest an annual event.

—Dr. Bill Hagen, Shawnee FOL

## Love County & Atoka County Friends Extend Technology Services

The Southern Oklahoma Library System serves citizens in eight libraries across five counties. Active Friends Groups have been busy working together to help their respective libraries.

The Love County Library Friends Group recently purchased a Smart TV along with a Nintendo Switch and had it installed in the library. This was appreciated by many during the summer months as it provided activities and friendly competition in a cool and safe place. Additionally, Branch Manager Niki Powel utilized the new TV area by hosting movies for families to enjoy.

The Love County Library Friends group will sponsor the Wi-Fi Hot Spot platform, following the end of a successful grant program which provided citizens in Love County much needed Internet service. Customers can check out a mobile Hot Spot device for a week and have Wi-Fi to complete online applications, connect with family on social media, and surf the Internet.



The Atoka County Friends of the Library recently presented a check for a year's subscription for four Hot Spots for this same innovative program. With the completion of the OSU Extension and AARP grant, patrons will be able to continue to utilize these popular resources. Branch Manager JoAnn Mixon stated that the availability of Wi-Fi for citizens in remote areas is important, allowing them easy access to information.

—Gail Oehler, Executive Director  
Southern Oklahoma Library System

## FOLIO Governing Board

The FOLIO Board is an active group supporting libraries through Friends of Libraries. The members are from across the state, representing libraries with many different kinds of constituents.

The majority of FOLIO's activities are accomplished by engaged committees:

Best Friends	Seed Grants
Outreach Ambassadors	Financial Review/Audit
Scholarships	Literary Landmark,
FOL Week Award	Hall of Fame
Endowment	By-laws
Membership	History/Archives
Legislative	Newsletter
Publicity/Marketing	Special Projects
Nominating	

Would you be interested in joining the FOLIO Board to help serve FOLs and strengthen libraries around the state? We meet quarterly in central locations. Contact Nominating Committee chair Dr. Karen Neurohr, karen.neurohr@okstate.edu, for further information.

We're very happy to welcome the newest members to the FOLIO Board.

**Lynne Murnane** - I have worked as an editor for many years, the longest being a Senior Editor at Fire Protection Publications at OSU. I worked there for 32 years and retired in 1966. I still do some part-time editing for them. My job was to oversee manual projects that are used in training for firefighters. We wrote, edited, met with committee members, selected photos, supervised final production, etc.

I am an Army brat, but I have lived in Stillwater for 40 years and can't really remember a time when I wasn't associated with our library. I have served on the Friends of the Library Board there for over 20 years and was in charge of membership for a number of years. It's enormously satisfying to help with the library book sales and other activities that benefit the community.

My interest in FOLIO is an outgrowth of my natural interest in books and libraries. I am learning more about state library associations and willing to help in any way to foster support for libraries.

**Kitty Pittman** - I am retired from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries where I was the Administrative Librarian for the Library Resources Division. I wore many hats, including Interlibrary Loan, Reference, Cataloger and developer of digital collections, under Digital Prairie. One of the digital collections I helped develop and maintain was the Oklahoma Author Database. FOLIO



"Welcome" to the newest FOLIO Board members:  
l-r - Dr. Bill Hagen, Kitty Pittman, Lynne Murnane.

has always been supportive of this endeavor, and encouraged the relationship between authors and readers.

I have a Master's degree in Library Science from the University of Oklahoma. My current interest in digital collections, and access to rare and undiscovered materials, has taken me to Stillwater Public Library as a volunteer and digital projects grant recipient. I am working with library staff to expand discovery and access of their special collections.

**Dr. Bill Hagen** – I'm retired from Oklahoma Baptist University, English Department, with the rank of Professor. I taught courses in Western Civilization, Film, Fiction, Popular Culture, Literary Criticism, and, of course, Composition. My education includes a University of Iowa Ph.D. in Modern Letters.

I am active as a scholar/presenter in statewide "Let's Talk About It" programs. I have done about 250 programs since the mid-80s. I authored two themes: The Oklahoma Experience: Re-Visions and Oklahoma Private Investigations. Most of my presentations concern 19th and 20th C. novels. I regularly review recent fiction for World Literature Today (an OU-based journal). I participate and sometimes lead book discussions for two groups in Shawnee.

I have been a member of the Shawnee Friends since the 1980s, always on the Book Sale Committee--specializing in organizing book-box moves for sales. For about the third time, I am president of the Friends directors' board. I have been on panels and written articles for several Big Reads, sponsored by the Pioneer Library System. For about six years, I was on the Pioneer System's board of directors, serving one term as chair.

## Financial Fitness @ Your Library

This winter and spring great Financial Fitness workshops were held in Ada, Alva, Anadarko, Jay C. Beyers Memorial (Cleveland), Donald W. Reynolds (Durant), McAlester, Miami, Muskogee, Owasso, Piedmont, Ponca City, Gleason Memorial (Ringling), Stanley Tubbs (Sallisaw), Tuttle, Mabel C. Fry (Yukon) public libraries. Total attendance was 851 participants.

Several libraries took advantage of a \$1,000 grant to update their financial literacy materials, reporting 1,145 circulations as of the end of May.

The libraries planned to reach the needs of their communities and specific target groups. The Mabel C. Fry Library in Yukon had the workshop targeting city employees and their significant others. Some libraries had the series for teens. The Ponca City Library partnered with a mental health agency.

The library coordinators or Friends have related great stories about the positive impact the workshops are having on the participants' lives.

Margo Holmes, Adult Program and Development Coordinator at the Public Library of Enid and Garfield County, related, "One participant opened a savings account after learning about them in the class! Several others have begun tracking their spending with a commitment to making and staying on budget. Two students went online and checked their credit reports and Social Security benefits. Several said that when they started paying attention to what and how they were spending they were surprised. SMART goal making was also something that was appreciated."

Aaron Gray, Adult Services Librarian at Ponca City, said, "One lady was shocked at her credit report and the impact bad credit could have on your financial future. She called companies she owed money to and set up payment plans with them. Another lady said she started a savings account after attending the series. Another noted after the savings class that she was going to investigate long-term savings plans for herself and her children. She realized she was under-prepared for saving for the future."

In Owasso the attendees ranged in age from 20s to 60s with eight of them couples, reported Jennifer McQuade, Branch Manager. "Many of the participants were excited about the budgeting and saving portion of the workshop. The discussions were lively in the class and became more so as time went on and everyone got to know each other. Participants told stories, gave advice and tips, and asked questions. It was a great group, and I appreciated the connection I made with them as library customers. I was able to tell them all about the ways they could save



money by using the library, from checking out books, DVDs, and music to using Hoopla to watch TV shows and movies to using the seed library to grow their own herbs and food. This discussion even inspired me to write a newspaper article in our local paper about ways to save money at the library."

In Yale, Nancy Griffin, Library Director, shared about an older single woman who attended the programs last fall and holds down a night job at a convenience store. "Today she came in the library and told me she had paid off her truck. She paid off her RV that she lives in a few months ago. She is now able to buy a second vehicle. She mentioned that she was a month behind on her truck payment when she started the class. She was also relying on food banks to help get her through the month. She had to borrow from friends to make it. She did tell me that one reason that she took the class was so she could have a good meal once a week. She is now giving back to food pantries, etc. She is so excited and so am I." These workshops change lives.

This great project has provided a synergy for future programming. Several libraries have financial literacy programming scheduled this fall. Materials are free from the National Endowment for Financial Education at [nefe.org](http://nefe.org) and OSU Extension Offices have facilitators and curriculum. Please consider one or more programs to improve financial literacy for the young and young at heart.

All of the community Friends and librarians have made this a very successful project. Special thanks to the Project Evaluator Dr. Cecelia Brown and Project Director Scott Beckes. This project would not have been possible without the assistance of the Public Information Office at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries: Bill Young, Bill Struby and Fara Taylor.

Also "thank you" to our sponsors: FOLIO, the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, the FINRA Investor Education Foundation and the American Library Association (*Smart investing@your library® Financial Fitness Series*).

—Sharon Saulmon, FOLIO Project Principal

## In Memoriam...



**Kay Boies** (1941-2019) left a great legacy on Oklahoma libraries and Friends of Libraries (FOL). She began as the Oklahoma Library Association's (OLA) Executive Secretary part-time in 1983 and became Executive Director.

Kay helped FOLIO navigate the OLA maze to provide successful programs for Friends at the Annual Meetings each year in conjunction with the OLA conference. Kay was a great mentor and always had wise advice on accomplishing our goals.

Following her retirement in 2017, Kay chose to join the FOLIO Board and served as newsletter editor.



## FOLIO ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

The effort to raise funds for the FOLIO Endowment this year is underway and has currently raised \$3225 of the \$6000 goal. We have received gifts from two Friends groups and forty-four individuals. We thank you ALL!

We especially want to recognize the following who have made contributions "In memory of" or "in honor of" special individuals in their lives who taught them to read and enjoy books.

**Thank You!! Thank You!!**

Margaret Collins in memory of Betty Judkins Dobson

Peggy Cook in memory of Beth Royster

Beverly Dieterlen in memory of Vera Buchanan

Dana Flora in honor of Gerry Hendon

Cindy Friedemann in memory of Greg Faulk

Judy Haught in honor of Grace Foster

Angie Lewis in memory of Sue Long

Jeanette McQuitty in memory of Sarah Brick Archer

Barbara Pickthorn in honor of Judy Neale

Desiree Webber in memory of Grace Maddox

Laurie Williams in honor of Lynn McIntosh

## Need Help?

### Call your FOLIO Ambassador

FOLIO has Outreach Ambassadors who are ready and willing to talk or consult with your Friends' group or your officers. We want to help you be successful and strengthen your library. Let us know how we can assist you.

Ambassadors are available for each quadrant of the State.



#### Northeast

- Jon and Sharon Douthitt  
douthittsharon60@gmail.com

#### Northwest

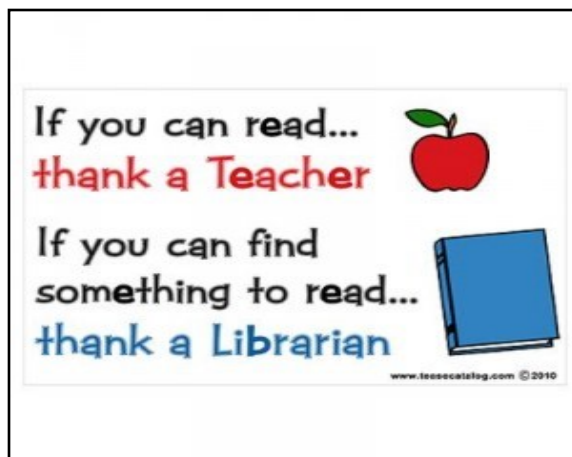
- Karen Neurohr  
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#### Southeast

- Wayne Hanway  
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#### Southwest

- Judy Haught  
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- Carla Garrison  
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**Return Service Requested**

**Libraries  
+  
Friends  
=  
Strong  
Communities**



National Friends of Libraries Week (FOL Week) is a chance to celebrate your Friends group **and** gain memberships.

FOLIO has two \$200 awards to recognize local FOL Week activities, one for Friends serving communities with under 10,000 population and one for over 10,000 population. An application is available on the web site ([okfriends.net](http://okfriends.net)) under Awards.

The entry deadline is November 15, with awards to be presented in December.

United for Libraries ([www.ala.org/united](http://www.ala.org/united)) has sample press releases, proclamations, Facebook and Twitter covers, public service announcements,

and a sample letter to the editor. Other materials, such as buttons and posters may be ordered. A webinar on FOL Week ideas is also available.

Some ideas are:

- Plan a special display, membership drive, or bookmark contest (why I love the library).
- Tell your city or campus officials how important the Friends are to the ongoing success of the library.
- Use this opportunity to convey to officials how the Friends raise money, promote the library, and volunteer in many ways.
- Have a theme: Make Friends with a Good Book, Thank you for Being a Friend, or Friends Roundup.
- Feature different library services each day of the week on Facebook.
- Have different programs each day, ending with a Staff Appreciation Dinner.

Great ideas are at United for Libraries, which also has national FOL Week awards available. Last year's winner had pre-publicity for the week and activities for each age group during the week.

**Plan your celebration now!**