



# Friends CONNECT

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**FRIENDS  
OF KENTUCKY  
LIBRARIES, INC**

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KENTUCKY**

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Spring 2014

## Meeting and Greeting 2014

By Linda Stith

Summer has arrived at last – schools are finally out, temperatures are soaring and public library Summer Reading programs are up and going. Now our planning turns to thoughts of fall and that should include a Meet and Greet event.

For many years Friends of Kentucky Libraries (FKL) has encouraged and assisted with local Meet and Greet gatherings. Having legislators and local officials and candidates meet with and hear from constituents about the value of public libraries is one of the most effective advocacy activities. Meet and Greets send the important message that libraries are vital partners and significant contributors to a community’s quality of life.

Local Friends chapters and libraries should be looking at their September and October calendars NOW. Since 2014 will feature many local and state elections, scheduling early becomes crucial. Meet and Greets don’t have to follow a formula. The time of day and format are based on local needs. Some are receptions with very simple refreshments and an opportunity to mingle. Others may feature a forum-like setting with short presentations from officials and candidates. No matter what the plan is, the objective is to provide an opportunity for library supporters to express how they feel about this community treasure!

For first-time Meet and Greet planners, FKL can assist with samples of invitation letters, templates for posters and bookmarks, and items such as sample news releases and thank yous. We know that each situation is different and local planners know what works best. The creativity that we see in library programs comes into play for Meet and Greets, too!

In addition, the American Library Association’s program, Declaration for the Right to Libraries, offers materials and ideas easily incorporated into Meet and Greets. We encourage you to look at copies of this Declaration and a helpful planning toolkit at:

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/declaration-right-libraries> or [www.ilovelibraries.org/declaration](http://www.ilovelibraries.org/declaration)

FKL asks that each library commit to holding a Meet and Greet in 2014 and that you are non-partisan in inviting legislators, local officials and candidates. We will ask for a headcount and encourage you to share your experiences and what works. Expect more communication from FKL over the next several weeks. Let’s make 2014 the most successful year for Meet and Greets ever! Our libraries are **that** important!

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### Our Mission

- to advocate for public libraries on the local, state, and national level
- to provide support for the formation and success of local Friends chapters.

**FROM THE PRESIDENT Mary Lynn Collins****National Library Legislative Day**

They told me to wear good walking shoes and by mid day, I was very glad I had taken that tip seriously! It was my first time to attend National Legislative Library Day, the second year that the Friends of Kentucky Libraries sent a representative, but it was the 40<sup>th</sup> year that library professionals, trustees, and supporters from across the nation have gathered in Washington DC to advocate for libraries.

We gathered together on May 5 and were briefed by members of the American Library Association on various issues. It was a bit like a political convention—with each state delegation holding a sign indicating their state. During the briefings, I received the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce Award from American Library Association President Barbara Stripling. This award, which pays for most of the expenses related to attending the event, is presented each year to a non-library participant of the National Legislative Library Day event. This was quite an honor for me—and for the Friends of Kentucky Libraries.

During the award presentation, Ms. Stripling talked about the legal challenge Kentucky libraries are facing and several attendees later asked me about the status of the lawsuits. Clearly, our situation is being monitored with concern by library supporters across the United States. There were eleven of us from Kentucky including State Librarian Wayne Onkst, representatives from public libraries, school libraries, and academic libraries as well as trustees. We met with some of our Congressional Delegation personally; in other cases, we met with their staff.

We talked about the critical importance of Library Services and Technology Act funding which is used in our state to support the Kentucky Talking Book Library; the Kentucky Virtual Library that provides databases for libraries, colleges, and schools; children's services support; and the interlibrary loan program. In addition this funding provided support for the 16 summer reading/summer food partnerships with local schools; bookmobiles in three counties; and 20 Prime Time Family reading programs across the state.

We asked our congressional members for their support of key issues identified by the American Library Association: preserve an open internet, include libraries in federally funded early childhood education programs, continue support of dedicated federal funding for school libraries, include public libraries in workforce investment initiatives; and support passage of the Electronic Communications Privacy Act.

I could not have had a more fitting ending to my own National Library Day. It was hot and late in the day; we were all tired but feeling good about our efforts. I went back to my hotel, got my suitcases, and flagged a taxi. The taxi driver asked me why I was in DC. When I told him, he got very excited and while driving, he whipped out his Arlington Library card and said "I love the library." He said he took his children to the library. He talked about the staff of his library being so friendly and helpful as he learned to use the computers. He said he was going to tell his "Library Lady" all about me!

## In Memory by Wayne Onkst



Kentucky libraries lost a huge Friend with the passing of Charlene Davis on June 4.

Charlene was a member of the KDLA staff from 1976 until May, 2014. She served during a time of great transition for Kentucky's public libraries. Just about the time Charlene joined the KDLA staff, technology was being developed to assist librarians in providing service. Over the following 4 decades, technology would transform library service. Charlene was in a perfect position – and she was the perfect person – to lead this transformation.

Charlene provided the first introduction of many Kentucky librarians to the new world of technology. She demonstrated to many skeptical librarians across the state that painstaking functions which had previously been handled in house could easily be handled with the new methods and tools offered through inter-library cooperation suddenly available with modern technology. Every library – from Fulton County to Pike County – benefited from her training, patient hand-holding and wise counsel. As a result of her work, Kentucky's network for interlibrary loan and materials sharing was a national example.

Kentucky sponsored many initiatives to help libraries take advantage of the opportunities offered by technology, and Charlene was at the lead every time. Among the projects in which she was deeply involved – and often fully managed – include the Kentucky Union List of Serials, the Kentucky Library Network, OCLC GAC, SharePac, FirstSearch, Empower Kentucky, the Kentucky Information Highway, and the Kentucky Virtual Library.

When the Gates Foundation became interested in providing computers for public libraries, Charlene and State Librarian Jim Nelson seized the opportunity so that Kentucky became one of the first states to take advantage, putting computers in virtually all Kentucky public libraries. Charlene then worked with the Kentucky Information Highway and Connect Kentucky to provide broadband to every public library, making Kentucky one of the first states with internet service in every public library.

Charlene became well known at the Gates Foundation as she managed numerous Gates grants for the state. As a result of her management of the Empower Kentucky project, Gates grants, and various other projects, she is certainly responsible for more computers being placed in Kentucky libraries than any other person, providing equitable access to information technology to citizens across the commonwealth.

Charlene also deserves a large share of the credit for the great resource that has become the Kentucky Virtual Library along with a delivery service to enable sharing of resources between every public library in Kentucky.

Her final big project on behalf of Kentucky's public libraries was the Broadband Technology Opportunities Project funded in 2009 by the Federal government. This project allowed 45 Kentucky public libraries to expand public computing centers. Charlene guided this project on a daily basis for more than 3 years. While it provided some 1000 additional computers for libraries, with Charlene's guidance the project demonstrated how public libraries could play a larger role in the community and become an integral resource in meeting the needs of the community.

Charlene's vision was that the public library could become an agent of change – assisting the community in realizing its aspirations for improving the lives of its residents. The BTOP grant demonstrated how librarians can provide even stronger information service and make libraries an even more indispensable service in today's communities.

Charlene was not only highly respected by the public library community, but also by the numerous partners in state government, organizations, academics, and others with whom she has built relationships. A consummate professional, always fully prepared, completely organized and totally focused – this is how Charlene Davis will be remembered by her library colleagues.

## News from the Field submitted by Ruthie Maslin

### A “Pearl” is found in Madison County!

Her name means “Pearl.” It fits.

Rita Barlow’s work for, support of, and advocacy on behalf of the Madison County Public Library over the years epitomize what a true Friend of the library really is.

Rita served on the executive committee of the Friends of Madison County Public Library for five years and served as president three of those years. During her presidency, the Friends became a more active member of the Friends of Kentucky Libraries, hosting the library’s first Legislative Meet & Greet and securing a Sister Libraries grant to support Madison County’s partnership with the Estill County Public Library. Under her leadership, the annual book sale raised thousands of dollars to support library programs. Although she has now rotated off the board, Rita remains an engaged Friends member. Just last month she could be seen hauling boxes of books in the pouring rain to help set up for the annual book sale. Rita “works” a split shift every Monday morning and evening as a volunteer at the circulation desk in the library’s Berea location.



Rita is a woman of many talents, and she uses them in supporting the Madison County Public Library year-round as a volunteer and advocate. One of her most notable talents is her artistry. Rita is well-known for her exquisite quilts and fabric art. Just stepping into her studio is like walking into a work of art itself – you are immediately enveloped in a swirl of color and textures. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibits, including “Celebrate the Feminine: Quilting for the Cure” in 2011, “Out on the Line IV” in 2010, and the annual Berea “Quilt Extravaganza.” She has used that talent in support of the library and library staff on numerous occasions. She makes quilts and wall-hangings for staff on milestone occasions (like the gorgeous book quilt she made for former library director Sue Hays’ retirement) or to raffle as a library fundraiser. Her hand-made cards feature tiny fabric art covers, and they also contain a message of support and encouragement. She even puts this talent to use by leading programs for the library, like how to dye silk scarves with Kool-Aid during last year’s “Know-It-All” Festival.

She is also a wonderful cook who frequently comes into the library bearing a basket full of something smelling warm and yummy. Since she lives right around the corner from the library in Berea, it’s not unusual for her to call up and invite a staff member over for homemade bread and soup on a chilly afternoon.

Rita was recognized in 2013 by the Friends of the Madison County Public Library as an Outstanding Volunteer. This past spring, she was named the 2014 Richardson/Conway Outstanding Library Volunteer by the Kentucky Public Library Association. The Friends of the Madison County Public Library received the 2013 Outstanding Chapter Award from the Friends of Kentucky Libraries at the annual meeting.

**SAVE THE DATE NOVEMBER 15, 2014**

**FKL ANNUAL MEETING**

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD : FKL Supports Local Friends Chapters



Friends of Logan County Library are now a 501c3 organization. Smiling faces receive a check for \$400 from FKL President Mary Lynn Collins.

FKL awarded a \$400 grant to the Elliott County Public Library/Boyd County Public Library Sister Library Project at the Kentucky Public Library Association Conference. The funds will be used to send Boyd County Public Library technical services personnel to the Elliott County Public Library to provide training and assistance in cataloguing and processing items previously donated by the Boyd County Public Library. This is the fifth grant that FKL has provided to Sister Library projects.



### FKL MEMBERSHIP NOW ON-LINE

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