

Friends Trends

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE JEFFERSON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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An early history of the Friends of the Jefferson Public Library

by Peg Phelps, with credit to Mary Muller

(reprinted from the April 2003 issue of *Friends Trends*)

They say that if you want to get a job done, you should give it to busy people, and that is just how the Friends of the Jefferson Public Library got started. A meeting, sponsored by the Library Advisory Board, was held in Gretna on July 26, 1984, to organize a Friends group in support of the Jefferson Parish Library. Charlene Wagner and Jane Chatalain served as Advisory Board coordinators for the new volunteer group, which was initially called the Friends of the Library. Its goals were to raise funds, acquire grants, and generally lobby for the library system.

The first effort of the group was to push for Jefferson Parish Council approval of the Library Master Plan, which called for the establishment of regional libraries for each bank of the Parish, and recommended the construction of parish-owned buildings for branches.

A formal organizational meeting for the group was held on August 16, 1984. Meetings were scheduled monthly, alternating between the east and



Above: 1991 book sale at Old Metairie Village Shopping Center.

west bank. The Friends of the Jefferson Public Library became a Louisiana Corporation on October 18, 1984, operating as a non-profit entity.

The Friends fell into a period of inactivity when the library system was left without a director, but Anthony Benoit revived the group after he was appointed director in July 1985. New officers were Nancy Nunn, Freda Pravata, Ann Conroy, and Elise Beron. Serving as board members were Joan Adams, Mona Freeman, Charlotte Fremaux,

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Friends General Meeting

East Bank Regional Library
February 23, 2011 at 1:00 PM
Author Earl Higgins will discuss his
upcoming book
Metairie, Ames, High: the Streets of
Jefferson Parish

Don't Miss Our Big Book Sale

Thursday - Sunday
March 17-20, 2011
Daily 10 AM - 8 PM
Sunday Noon - 5 PM
Ponchartrain Center in Kenner

We find good homes for used books.

Friends of the Jefferson Public Library

(a member of the association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations)

Officers

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Kathy Pennington, Vice President
Peg Phelps, Treasurer
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Patricia Cox, Judy Zawislak,
Sharon Bush, Lisa Conescu,
Joan Demers, Aileen Janney

Mission

The Friends of the Jefferson Public Library is an independent, nonprofit organization of civic-minded volunteers. We support the Jefferson Parish Library by promoting library awareness, providing needed unbudgeted items for all its branches through fund raising, and participating in literacy programs.

Address and Phone

P. O. Box 9391
Metairie, LA 70055
504-455-BOOK (2665)

Web Site

<http://www.friendsofjeffersonlibrary.org/>

Friends Trends

Editors: Anna Campos, Annette Centanni

Three JPL librarians take advantage of the Friends scholarship program

by Annette Centanni



Linda Spencer, top left, Sheila Bradford, top right, and Brigid Laborie, left, are current recipients of the Friends scholarship.

The Friends sponsor a scholarship program open to employees of the Jefferson Parish Library system who would like to further their education in Library Science. Three employees who are currently taking advantage of the available scholarship monies are Sheila Bradford, Brigid Laborie and Linda Spencer.

Sheila currently works as a Library Associate at the branch libraries in Metairie, and is "loving it." She has been employed with the system since 2002. She says she especially enjoys helping the patrons in their many endeavors at the library.

Sheila reports, "This is my third semester in the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at LSU. I've taken advantage of the Friends' scholarship program [since I started]. My long term goals are to obtain my MLIS and to

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Friends' Favorites

by Annette Centanni

(An ongoing feature highlighting our volunteers and the books that influenced their lives.)

Maureen Howat

One of Maureen's favorite recently read books is *House Rules* by Jodi Picoult. It is about an autistic teen, and is entertaining in spite of its serious subject matter. Maureen said that she learned a great deal about autism and what it must feel like to have an autistic child. As in all Jodi Picoult novels, there's a twist at the end; you think you have the story figured out, but you never do!

Anna Campos

Anna recommends the "Star" series by Andre Norton, who was a children's librarian like herself. At the time she discovered the series, she had never read science fiction; she found the books to be amazing! Some of the books she remembers are *Star Born*, *Star Man's Son*, and *The Stars are Ours*.

Ouida Prieur

Ouida reports that she greatly enjoyed "The Outlander" series by Diana Gabaldon. Steeped in folklore, but also history-based, it is well-done fiction that takes the reader back in time, then forward again. Some of the other titles in the series are *The Voyager*, *The Fiery Cross*, and *Dragonfly in Amber*. There are at present, seven books in the series, with more to come.

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Above: the March 1992 book sale was held at the Magnolia Shopping Center in Metairie.

Mildred Guido, Lois McCune, and Jon Rocherbaumer.

One of the first projects of the new group was to successfully lobby for a branch to be located on Jefferson Highway; the Rosedale Branch opened there in January 1987. The Friends' next task was to help find a site for a branch in Old Metairie. Mr. Benoit was soon able to announce that a branch would be built at 2350 Metairie Road. Locations were also sought for East and West Bank Regional Library buildings, and for a branch in Waggaman. Mr. Benoit's first Wish List included VHS players; 16mm projectors; a microfiche reader and printer; and materials for the summer reading program. The Friends were asked to choose an item and purchase it for the library.

At the September 23, 1986 meeting, the Library Board proposed that the Friends hold a book fair. Once the Parish Council agreed to give discarded library books to the Friends, they began to prepare for the sale. The first Big Book Sale was held April 24-25, with a preview night on April 23,

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Presidential China on exhibit at Eastank and Westbank Regional Libraries

by Chris Smith

Through February only, the East and West Bank Regional Libraries are hosting a portion of the Set Charles Momjian Collection of Presidential China from the Southern Food and Beverage Museum, New Orleans. At the East Bank Regional, the exhibit appears in the display cases leading to the Reference Section. Display items include plates from the administrations of Ulysses Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Lyndon Baines Johnson as well as State Dinner menus, photographs and a centerpiece bowl and candelabra from the Clinton Administration. The exhibit also includes old White House cookbooks. Text panels describe the history of presidential china and the importance of State Dinners as a function of American diplomacy.

At the West Bank Regional Library in Harvey, the exhibit appears in the display case in the rotunda of the library. Display items include plates from the administrations of Benjamin Harrison, Dwight Eisenhower and Woodrow Wilson. The exhibit also includes six State Dinner menus, photographs, cookbooks and explanatory text panels.

(Editor's note: Chris Smith is the adult program manager for the Jefferson Parish Library System. For notification of coming events, consider subscribing to the library system's e-mail list. Go to the <http://www.jefferson.lib.la.us/> library homepage (http://www.jefferson.lib.la.us/), click on "Library Upcoming Events Email List," and fill out the form. A newsletter, This Week in the Library, will be sent to all subscribers.)

"A good book has no ending." ~R. D. Cumming

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and on May 8-9, 1987, at the Old Metairie Village Shopping Center. Hardcover books were priced at 50 cents, while children's books and paperbacks sold for 25 cents. High school service groups, merchants, printing companies, public officials, and the library staff offered their services and support. With \$6000 from the profit of \$7300, the Friends purchased a complete library of video classics, which included Shakespeare's plays, National Geographic documentaries, and PBS specials.



Above: Groundbreaking for the Eastbank Regional Library in 1994. From left: Sally LeBourgeois, Kathleen Deao, Dolores Bryan, Patricia Cox, Lisa Conescu, Lois Krulisky, Judy Zawislak, Mark Lazarre.

Officers elected for 1988 were Evelyn Linder, Lisa Conescu, Bernell Babcock, and Elise Beron. The next book sale, which netted \$8,787, was held in September. The first bookmarks publicizing the sale were printed that year, and the Friends held their first Thank You Tea to honor book sale volunteers. In November, the Friends sponsored a gala fundraiser at the Old Metairie branch, raising \$30,000 to benefit the library system. In March 1989, the Live Oak branch opened, with the Friends providing refreshments, and a Library Staff Appreciation Day was sponsored in August. The Big Book Sale, now becoming a tradition, was held at Old Metairie Village in September.

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specialize in Reference and Public Library Adult Services.

"I'm glad to have the opportunity to take graduate courses from LSU with the help of the scholarship from the Friends of Jefferson Public Library. So far, this has been an amazing learning experience for me."

Brigid Laborie began her career as a Library Associate at Belle Terre Library in April 2009 and has been a scholarship recipient since the fall of that same year. Her goal after graduation is to secure a position as librarian in the Jefferson Parish system, working with teens. In the long term, she hopes to work her way up into an administrative position. Brigid states, "The scholarship is helping me to achieve my goal by lessening the financial burden of the constantly increasing tuition and fees at LSU."

Linda Spencer's current position is Library Associate at the East Bank Regional Library in the Special Collections department. She has worked in the system for 13 years, and hopes to be a librarian in Jefferson as soon as she completes the Master's program at LSU. After having taken advantage of The Friends' scholarship program for three years, Linda has only two classes remaining before she gets her degree. She has taken classes both through UNO's distance education and online. Linda says she greatly appreciates the scholarship help from The Friends. "It was the only way I could have afforded it." Linda further states, "The scholarship has paid for a little less than half of the total tuition bill."

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Proposals were made that year for categorizing books at future book sales, for granting partial scholarships to library staff members working toward a master's degree in library science, and for selling used paperbacks for 10 cents at the branch libraries.

From humble beginnings, the Friends of the Jefferson Public Library progressed in just five years to become a very busy group serving the library system in many ways.

This history was excerpted from two albums assembled by Mary Muller.

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