

## President's Greetings

On Tuesday, June 9, the Board of County Commissioners conducted a budget workshop at which several county departments including the public library system presented their budgets for the upcoming year. The department presenting before the library system went over their time, and the Friends representatives who were there to support the library system began to feel restless. Would system director Julie Sieg's turn to present ever come? When it did would the budget the commissioners approved for the system be the same as always—the one the county administrator had pared from Julie's original request?

At last Julie was called up front in answer to our first question. As we feared, her request for an additional \$200,000 for materials was not in the budget. We scrunched down in our seats.

Suddenly things took a right turn. Commissioner Zalak spoke about having met with the Friends of all the system libraries on June 4 and becoming more aware of system needs. He proposed a plan to attract a fully certified librarian to Fort McCoy. Then he and Commissioner Bryant stressed how important the library Friends groups are and said they would continue to listen to them and attempt to respond accordingly. Julie Sieg seconded their praise of the Friends and introduced those of us who were there from Belleview, Fort McCoy, Freedom and Ocala.

Then an unforeseen bombshell exploded. Administrator Buoyones announced that work on the Freedom Public Library expansion, would begin in 2022—that this project is in the county's five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

So, my Friends, our work is bearing fruit. For us this means an expansion that may triple the size of the Freedom Public Library and provide more service to a growing community. It also means that by working with Friends groups across the system we have gained important and effective influence. It is exciting to consider what comes next for the Freedom Friends and how we will support the expansion.

*Florence Pritchard*

## Focus on Freedom

I read an article recently suggesting that summer can be an anxious time for children when they no longer have the familiar routines of school to guide their days. Parents often quell this anxiety by sending children to a variety of camps, but camps can be expensive. This is where public libraries step in with free programs for children and youth in a familiar, comfortable and even calming environment where participants and their parents can greet old friends and meet new ones.

The Freedom Friends are proud of what they can do for the Freedom Public Library with the money they raise. High on this pride list is programming for children and youth—all of which the Friends fund. The pictures below show how much the children have enjoyed this and last summer's programs and suggest that their pleasure is outweighing any out-of-school anxiety.



Ventriloquist Mark Wade, June 5, 2019



"Libraries Rock" Dance Party July 18, 2018

As Friends, we are pleased to buy equipment for the library, but it is also very gratifying to know that the funds we raise help bring programs and pleasure to people.

## On the Horizon

As announced at our July monthly meeting, the Freedom Friends now have a fundraising planning team. Chaired by Loretta Campagna, team members include Lou Doak, Pat MacMurray, Florence Pritchard, Pat Russell and JR Smith. The purpose of the team is to develop a fundraising plan that consists of a number of projects ranging from organized donation requests to submitting grant applications to appropriate nonprofit funding agencies. Once these projects have specific fundraising targets, implementation guidelines and estimated budgets, they can be carried out by groups of Friends.

For example, the plan might include as a project a Freedom Walkathon aimed at raising \$2000. A standing committee or an ad hoc group of Friends might take responsibility for detailing the walkathon—setting date and route, determining registration costs and procedures, creating snack stations and music hot spots and generally implementing the project.

Fundraising Plan projects such as these can be proposed by team members as well as any Friend in good standing. Simple procedures for such proposals will be designed by the team and made available to all. Once submitted, project proposals will be evaluated by the team for their efficacy in involving Friends and raising an amount of money that will contribute appropriately to the team's overall fundraising goal.

Currently the team's fundraising goal was recommended by the Board and approved by the membership at \$50,000. That goal may need to be revisited in light of the good news that the expansion of Freedom Public Library will begin in 2022. Will the Friends want to reset that goal in order to help equip the expansion with furniture, equipment and materials? The fundraising team, membership and board will need to answer this question in upcoming weeks, for as the Friends new tagline says, our job is **"Meeting Future Library Challenges."**