



Freedom Friends Newsletter

January 2019

President's Greetings

As we begin the year 2019, it is helpful to assess the work of the Freedom Friends and identify areas where we want to strengthen and grow. To do that, we can use five key activities of successful Friends groups identified by Jeffry Smith in The Public Library Associations' *Public Libraries Online*. These are:

- Creating public support for the library system and/or an individual library branch
- Sponsoring programs designed to enhance the cultural life of the local community
- Taking the lead on advocacy related to library policy issues or library budget decisions
- Providing an array of volunteer assistance
- Contributing direct financial support for the library system or branch, so as to enhance the range of offerings and services available for the local community.

The Friends of Freedom Public Library do outstanding work in three of these areas, and are laying powerful plans to strengthen and grow in two of them.

We consistently sponsor excellent cultural programs, and to better promote them, we intend to provide the library with a programmable, outdoor digital sign. We volunteer help with library activities from Halloween pumpkin painting to summer reading programs. Our fundraising will make money directly available for renovation of the staff work area.

In order to create support for our library and the system and to take the lead in advocacy, we produced and broadcast videos about our mission and work with community cable partner, FiberVision. We have developed and will use in 2019 a presentation encouraging community groups and residents to join us in our work. At its December meeting our Executive Board proposed that we activate our Freedom Friends Advocacy Committee and that we work to focus the Friends Council on advocacy for the Marion County Public Library System.

The coherence and integration of our work is remarkable. It is noted by non-members and has resulted in increased donations. We are well positioned to move ahead with our mission in 2019.

Florence Pritchard

Focus on Freedom

While just one short year has passed since Ellie Goodwin became Supervisor of Freedom Public Library, her tenure with us seems satisfyingly longer. Perhaps that's because she's so actively involved with everything the library does, and works so productively with the Freedom Friends. She's really made an impression on the library culture. Thinking about that, I wondered how that culture has impressed her. I briefly interviewed her as recorded in the Q&A below.

What really surprised you about Freedom Public Library?

I'm surprised how busy this branch is. One expects high circulation numbers and foot traffic at the larger branches like Headquarters, Belleview and Dunnellon. Freedom's location near many senior residential communities, an elementary school, a middle school and single family neighborhoods means lots of patron visits all day long.

What array of staff talents and experience supports your work and serves patrons?

The Freedom Public Library staff bring their skills to enhance our patrons' experience with us. Mary, Jany and David tell stories and design crafts that delight the children and teens. David has developed a book club that reads and discusses books by new authors as well as iconic works. Marisa, Karen, Tracy and Ashley assist with programs and share their people skills at the library desks and on the phone.

What do you want to say about your first year at Freedom?

Every day is a fresh opportunity for me. My boss, Ms. Rosie Russo, is the Branch Services Division Manager. She and the more seasoned branch and division managers in the Marion County Public Library System provide invaluable information and the benefit of their experience. It's been quite the year and I look forward to more good times ahead.

Without question, Ellie is in the Freedom groove and we are very glad!

On the Horizon

In last month's newsletter, I announced with great pleasure that the Friends have developed a leadership succession plan. I stated the following: *This succession plan rests on a new requirement for anyone who agrees to serve as vice president. That person must also agree to become president when the sitting president steps down.*

I also stated that:

In keeping with the new requirement, Lou Doak will serve as vice president for 2019, and will then succeed to the presidency of the Friends of Freedom Public Library in 2020.

Very fortunately, a thoughtful reader called me to ask if this means that we will never vote for the president again. In other words, once we have a vice president, will that person become president without being voted upon?

The answer is absolutely "no!" The first statement above should be corrected to read as follows:

This succession plan rests on a new requirement for anyone who agrees to serve as vice president. That person must also agree to become a candidate for the presidency when the sitting president steps down. As a presidential candidate, the VP will be voted on for president at the annual meeting and could fail to win a majority of the membership's votes. A presidential candidate could also be nominated from the floor. This floor nominee could gain enough votes to become the president.

What this means for Lou Doak is that she (and the others on the slate published last month) are candidates for officers' positions. In order to win those positions, they must be voted on at our annual meeting on Saturday, January 26, and must successfully earn more votes than any floor-nominated candidates.

It is vital that we protect the democratic framework of the Friends of Freedom Public Library by attending the upcoming annual meeting, considering the present slate of candidates and any candidates nominated from the floor, then voting for those we believe best.