

2020 Hindsight, the Year in Review

By Ariel Woods



It's been an unusual year in Takoma Park, Maryland, and for the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library. In a year of pandemic, political reckonings, economic hardship, and high-intensity elections both local and national, many are reexamining the role our library plays in the community. The Friends, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, has sought new ways to partner with our librarians to help them continue to provide transformative services to our town.

The annual report from last year from our outgoing president Francis Nugent reads like a dispatch from a lifetime ago. In 2019-2020 the Friends sponsored star-studded panel discussions and author nights, many in-person programs from storytelling to crafting events to book clubs, and of course the WinterQuest and SummerQuest reading adventures. We held our two annual book sales in collaboration with bake sales from our local PTAs, threw a rocking fundraiser at the VFW that blew the doors off of our modest financial goals, and launched an incredible new ESOL book club in partnership with Piney Branch Elementary. We didn't know it, but these were halcyon days.

The Takoma Park Maryland Library's 85th year looked very different from the previous 84, yet it was studded with many triumphs. At the library, librarians and staff stepped up and out into the community in a remarkable way, offering curbside check-out, zoom story time (including the Spanish and French circle times, sponsored by the Friends), virtual book clubs, sketch clubs, and more. In February of this year they launched Books to You, a pilot program for book delivery. Throughout the year residents working remotely, applying for benefits, searching for jobs, and participating in remote learning came to the library grounds for WiFi services.

As for the Friends, we found our way as well. Though the Spring Book Sale was canceled, May saw Friends board member Walter Mulbry honored by the Todd H. Bol Award for Outstanding Achievement for his work building and maintaining twenty-three Little Free Libraries throughout our town. LFLs in a pandemic are a lifeline for families experiencing new challenges, putting good books into the hands of children, especially.

We continued to fund the SummerQuest and WinterQuest programs, now conducted virtually. The ESOL book club was relaunched in virtual format with the help of Dave Burbank and Rachna Rikhye and plans are in the works for a spring meeting too. Many of you shopped the Fall/Holiday Book Sale from the comfort of your homes! With the technology of LibraryThing and LibraryCat we scanned in nearly a thousand book donations (including many new and preview books donated by our librarians) into a digital catalog that readers could browse online. While it

wasn't quite the same as residents mingling and chatting as they thread their way around the book tables and boxes on the library lawn, it was a delight to see so many friends and neighbors coming to pick up book purchases from my front step. Most importantly, we raised enough money in this unconventional sale to cover the costs of WinterQuest.

This year also put a spotlight on the long-awaited and much-needed library renovation. It is a significant investment in our community's future, and will help grow our residents and our community for decades to come. While it has been the subject of much conversation, debate, and even angst in our town, I have found it inspiring and invigorating. The discussion has made us all examine what a library is, and what *our* library means to us. Whether you are chomping at the bit for the groundbreaking ceremony like I am, or feel that the library is wonderful just the way it is, or would like to make sure library investments extend to the Wards farthest from the center of town, we are in this together. We value our town and the library at the center of it—quirky, independent, and deeply rooted just like TkPk as a whole.

Our virtual Annual Meeting, on March 16th, finds us tentatively stepping out into a brave new Spring. We will hold off on bringing in a featured speaker until we can gather safely. We are gearing up for our Spring Book Sale, hoping to provide the best of all worlds with a virtual and in-person (but distanced) hybrid event. The ESOL book club is choosing its next books now, and SummerQuest is a go.

We will be honoring Ellen Arnold-Robbins for her years of dedication and innovation as our library's director. A new director is in the process of relocating to Takoma Park and the Friends cannot wait to begin working together to help develop their vision for our library. We have new programs on the horizon (reading buddies) and are on the lookout for new board members to bring new ideas. We have several open spots! If you would like to be nominated for the board, please reach out to our nominating committee, led by Deborah Nelson. You don't need to be a board member to get involved or launch a project! Please consider joining the Friends, or to renew your membership if it has lapsed. There is so much we can do, and as I have learned in my first year with the Board, so much help is available to make ideas blossom into reality.

Wishing everyone good health and a great year,

FTPML Treasurer's Report
March 17, 2020 to February 20, 2021

Income:

1. Book sales:	\$ 801
2. Membership dues and donations:	4576
3. Grants	0
4. Fundraiser	0

Total Income: \$ 5377

Expenses:

1. Event-Related, Outreach, and

Program Expenses:	(\$5776)
a. Spanish & French Programs:	\$ 3195
b. Storytelling programs:	0
c. Summer Quest & Winter Quest:	2300
d. Local speakers program:	200
e. Children's book programs:	0
f. Solstice programs:	0
g. Piney Branch Elementary ESOL club:	82

2. Resources for the library:

Children's books 0
b. French books: 0

3. Publicity and administrative expenses	(\$145)
a. Newsletter, Website & Promotional Expenses:	\$ 96
b. Sales Taxes:	49

Total Expenses: \$5921

Overall Total (\$543)

Checking Account

Opening Balance: March 18, 2020: \$ 13,116

Ending Balance: February 20, 2021: \$ 12,518 (does not include pending payments)

Walter Mulbry, Treasurer February 20, 2021

FTPML Membership Report

FTPML Membership report

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Number of households	76	96	85	67
Total membership/donations	\$ 5313	5948	6396	4576

Sonya Mallinoff & Cathy Surace. Membership

February 20, 2021