

**President's Report for the Annual Friends  
of the Orcas Island Library (FOIL) Meeting**

**October 18, 2020**

*The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men  
Gang aft agley,  
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,  
For promis'd joy!  
- Robert Burns*

The first two lines above excerpted from Burns' poem "To a Mouse" certainly describe our experience this past year: both the Winter Book sale, normally held in March, and the Summer Book Fair were both canceled. The Friends of the Orcas Island Library are, however, somewhat more optimistic than the latter two lines might suggest. This is thanks largely to the continuing support of the island's community. The support we receive is in turn a reflection of the support which the Library enjoys on the island. Book donations to the Friends are used to help support expansion of the library's collection and many of the programs which it hosts.

Donations, many of very high quality, have continued if not increased in volume during this difficult period. And, while our normal sales events were canceled, sales online and to local booksellers, such as Serendipity in Friday Harbor and Pelican Bay in Anacortes, have helped to partly bridge the funding gap. (I think it is worth noting that several booksellers in the area consider the books on offer here on Orcas to be superior to those available elsewhere, a reflection of the quality of the community's donations.)

The value of books is not just in how much we are able to sell them for. This year the Friends received a very generous bequest from the estate of Barbara Brown. A large portion of the books received concerned the culture and cultural practices of natives of the Americas, particularly in meso-America and the Pacific Northwest. Board member Robert Demarest recognized the resource which these books, collected over many years, represented. It is the Board's intention to gift these to those institutions prepared to preserve this resource and to make it available to interested parties.

While book donations are obviously important, and their sale our primary source of revenue, we would very much like to increase membership in the Friends of the Orcas Library. Anyone can become a member of the Friends, and if you are not a member yet, then we invite you to become one. For those who have supported us in the past, and perhaps have yet to renew their membership, we urge you to do so. Your support, either by contributing funds, or your time, or

both, is especially important now. Currently the Friends has just over 100 members. Why not join or renew now?

Better yet, why not join the Friends' Board. We are always on the lookout for enthusiastic supporters of the Library! The Board's main occupation right now is keeping up with the veritable deluge of book donations which islanders continue to donate: reading is definitely "in" right now. Donations are first sorted—fiction, paper and hardback, biography, arts & crafts, etc.—boxed and stored, hopefully for future sales events. Those of significant value, and there are many, are sold on eBay, and a relatively small number go to wholesalers. While the two annual sales do represent the largest fraction of Friend's income each year, and both were canceled this year, a more vigorous effort to market online, and sales to local booksellers have meant that though our income is only about one-half that of 2019.

At last year's Annual Meeting we reported a net income of approximately \$9,800 after funding grants to the Library worth more than \$17,000. In January of the current fiscal year we provided a grant to the Library of \$20,000. Due to our inability to hold the two sales events this year our net income was -\$8,354 (i.e., after the grant). Subsequently the Library's grant request for the coming year has been reduced to \$15,000 and the Friends' Board has committed to funding the Library's grant request in full. Grants to the Library are used primarily to support the Summer Reading Program; the Elementary, Young Adult, and Adult Book Clubs; and the Library's popular programs and presentations

The Board meets monthly (presently via Zoom) and members and the public are more than welcome to join in. If you want to support the Library but don't know how, the Friends Board is a great place to start!

For more information concerning the Friends' support for the Library, the following documents are available on request: the Friends "Profit and Loss" statement for the period 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2019 through 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2020 (inclusive) and a "Balance" statement as of September 30<sup>th</sup>.