Blount County’s Best Kept Secret at the Public Library

by Leigh Caldwell

Nothing baffles a retail manager more than to figure out why people don’t frequent their business. Is it price? Service? The products?

Claudia Draime, Manager of the Book Mark Café, located inside the Blount County Library, thinks she’s figured it out.

“I think there just are two reasons,” she said. “Most people don’t expect and, therefore, aren’t looking for a restaurant in a library and, because they are generally so focused on what they’re at a library to do, they used to just walk right passed us.” Claudia even wonders if people knew that the quaint little café, located right past the audio/visual section, is open to everyone; patrons, local business customers, volunteers, and friends of the library.

She shares her enthusiasm for the Book Mark Café with fresh ideas to “get the word out,” such as a “Literary Latte Club” punch card and custom bookmarks with descriptions of the café’s offerings. The menus she creates are colorful and enticing.

Upon taking control of the café, Claudia revamped the concept, reorganized the space and revitalized a welcoming atmosphere. She stated, continued on page 3

Don’t Miss the Spring Book Sale! April 15th - 17th!
Dear Friends,

Looks like spring is really here after all! That means it’s time to mark your calendar for two important events. The first is the spring book sale to be held from Thursday, April 15th through Saturday, April 16th. Lots of great reading at great prices, so be sure to join us!

The second event is our Annual Meeting, which will be held the evening of June 22nd. You will be helping elect new members to the Board of Directors and saying “thank you” to those individuals who have served with dedication that are leaving the Board. Refreshments will be served, and you’ll get to hear a great keynote speaker, too. What more could you want?

This will be my last message as president of the Friends of the Library. It has been an honor to serve with such dedicated people. All of the volunteers really care about the library and the community, and are always willing to do whatever it takes to make such a huge difference.

My thanks to all of you for your support over the past two years.

Sincerely,

Phil Baker, President

BCFOL Sponsors “Social Networking”
by Carol Trammell

When several board members attended the annual meeting of Tennessee Friends of the Library, we were impressed with one of the speakers and the information she offered. The speaker was Genny Carter from Tennessee State Government. She is the State media specialist who spoke to us on Social Networking.

Genny spoke a different language than most of us are used to hearing; things like Twitter, Facebook, Picasa, gimp and wiki. We soon found out that these are areas which we needed to start using in order to get out the message of what we, as an organization, can do to attract more readers.

Through the help of Joan Van Sickle Sloan and the Blount County Library, we were able to arrange to have Genny come talk to our board and other invited guests on the benefits of social networking. As a result of her knowledge and imparting it to us, we are now on Twitter and have a Facebook page for the Blount County Friends of the Library.

We hope this will help to reach more people and get our message out about how much volunteer effort is given for the benefit of our great library. We also hope more people will learn of our quarterly book sale and will attend and support that as well. Please visit our Facebook page and check us out on Twitter!

SPRING 2010 DONATIONS

Andrea Breeding
Helen & David Bryant
Tim & Karen Fischer
David & Laura Harrill
Charlie & Darlene Johnson
Henry & Shirley Law
Anna Mann
Marion & Norman Stokes
Warren & Marilyn Stritter
Deborah & Richard Yarbrough
Susan Walker
Bob Williams

Memorials
Bob & Marie Harris
in memory of June Porter Blevins
Bob & Patty DeRycke
in memory of Robert Heintz

Ex Libris
Sylvia Bedford
“The library isn’t just about books in this city; our library is really the social center of Maryville, a true community center. Our customers spend many hours at the library; quite a few are regulars five days a week.”

She and her staff at the charming café considers these regulars as family; if Mr. Bob doesn’t come in for a day or two they worry and call his home to check on him. Giant smiles and big hugs are an everyday occurrence at the Book Mark Café. Because it is such a family atmosphere, Claudia has had to train “multitasking” so the work can still get done while the conversations continue to flow.

Claudia said with a smile that could light up a room, “We even do catering for events being held here in the library meeting areas.” The library has a beautifully appointed executive conference room and three meeting rooms available to the public. The conference area is equipped with a spacious staging kitchen to ensure ease of serving for both Claudia’s staff and outside catering services. She was proud to announce, “In February alone, The Book Mark Café catered six events and has several lined up for the upcoming weeks.”

A typical day for Claudia means she is up and running by 5:30 every morning, hustling her ten year old daughter off to school and her husband to work. She is one of the first to arrive at the library well before opening each morning. She does an inventory of the Café every day, restocks and organizes the area from the night before; ensuring her corner of the universe is spotless and immaculately clean. Once the ovens are pre-heated, baking of the simply delectable delights begins, filling that enclave of the library with irresistible aromas.

Claudia has been with the Book Mark Café since May of last year. She said she received a call from Cathy, the director of the library, when she responded to an advertisement during the spring of 2009. Her previous experience in the hospitality business and a degree in business management made her a perfect match for what the library is trying to accomplish with the café.

For fifteen years, Claudia trained in all aspects of a family run bakery owned by her Pastry Chef father. She learned her way around the kitchen, then helped expand the bakery into a wholesale business. Ultimately her family was able to sell the business for a nice profit. The proceeds of the sale allowed her father to follow his lifelong dream of moving to Italy.

Prior to coming to Maryville she lived with her husband Kenneth, an avid gardener, and her darling daughter, Amanda, in Orlando Florida. The beauty of the Smoky Mountains was the lure to uproot her family and begin life anew in Tennessee.

All the hard work and the friendly atmosphere Claudia and her team created is now paying off. The Café is becoming known as a meeting place for a great cup of coffee and yummy, fresh baked goodies, or a place to enjoy a meal while visiting the library.

Claudia encourages everyone to stop in and say “Hi”. While you’re there you can enjoy a steamy bowl of soup, a crisp salad, a box lunch or even a Smoothie. Staff members Adam, Angela, Becka, and Brandon, will always welcome you with big smiles, excellent fare and great service.
Janetta Baker was born and raised in southern Illinois, moving to East Tennessee four and a half years ago in connection with her husband’s Dale’s job. Dale is the Quality Manager for Alcoa, Inc.

Besides being an avid hiker (she has completed all the trails in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park), she is also a self-described “voracious” reader with a profound love of the written word – especially tales of local folklore and history. Ex Libris has provided her with an opportunity to read about the Smokies, talk about her adventures hiking, and learn from the residents she encounters, many of whom have spent their entire lives here in Blount County. Friendships are very important to Janetta and the ability to reach out to people as well. Being a genuine Friend From The Library allows her to put this into action.

Janetta and Dale are the proud parents of a 16 year old son, Devin, who attends Maryville High School.

Go Figure!
by Janetta Baker

I often look back on my first visit to MorningView Transitional Care Facility, the original venue for Ex-Libris. I watched our leader, Barbara Zurl, present a program, and remember her vitality and passion. I felt the excitement and electricity in the air. After seeing what she did for those people, I knew I wanted to be part of the program. What I didn’t know was what this program would do for me. That was the beginning of my fantastic journey with Ex Libris.

Over the last four years I’ve visited various facilities. As with people, each one comes with its own energy, personality and uniqueness. Some of my experiences with Ex-Libris have changed my life, and I walk away from many of my “road shows” in awe of what these people can give me, although I had imagined it the other way around. Go figure!

I’ve shared some of my amazing stories with others, now I’ll share two with you.

One December morning I awoke to a pouring rain. Already I was dreading my trip to Wellington Place. But having committed to doing a program, I began my journey. Parking was a problem – I grumbled all the way from my car to the building.

After the staff assembled my audience, I met a new resident – a lady wearing a halo. No, she wasn’t an angel; her halo was a device designed to keep her head and neck stable. I asked her what happened and she told her story.

A drunk driver hit the car she and fiancé were traveling in. He was killed and she ended up in the hospital and then in rehab. I could only imagine her anger. But I heard no bitterness, only thankfulness for her family, her progress, and for being alive. On second thought, maybe she was an angel and God used her to show me my grumbling was selfish.

I looked at the audience as she spoke and saw a mixture of tears, smiles and looks of optimism. Our story-teller sounded excited over a simple visit to Wal-Mart with her daughter-in-law and the thoughts of removing the halo and finally going home.

I left Wellington Place in the rain and walked to my car without a complaint – more humble and appreciative of my life than when I started out that morning.

My second special experience concerns Liberty Assisted Living; one of my favorite places to visit. The people there know much about our area and its rich history. That’s one of my passions, too.

One day, as I pedaled along the greenway in Maryville near their facility, I saw two residents out walking. I stopped my bicycle to say hello. While they didn’t recognize me in that setting, both said they instantly knew my voice. That startled me and affected me more than I can explain. It was an incredible moment which told me that I was touching people.

As I have said, ExLibris has given me more than I have EVER given it. It is a joy to share stories, poems, experiences and life with these people. And it IS a SHARING! Believe me when I say I learn more from them than they ever learn from me. Many of those lessons are life lessons from which I walk away a better person than when I arrived.

Go figure!
Books for Soldiers Project Report

by Vivian Selecman

The books for soldiers project continues to support our troops overseas. Since the first of January our 9 volunteers have sent 65 boxes to APO addresses all over the world. They have included 40 CD or DVDs and 1,063 books from our supply of items for the book sale. Of the $397.00 in donations received since then, $386.45 has been spent to mail these boxes. Below are excerpts from some of the thank you notes we have received.

JAN 26: “Thank you so much for the books you sent. They were greatly appreciated by myself and fellow Airmen here at ... I am handing them out at the mailroom where I work and they are happily received. You guys are doing a great job there in Maryville TN. I applaud you for your spirit of giving back to the community. God bless you.”

JAN 28: “In God’s grace and love, I greet you and all your loved ones. Thank you so much for sending us your loving support. I received your books. It is very good for us. Since we have not had any entertainment for the recreation of our soldiers the books are a good method for them to spend their free time productively. Once I put them in the MWR center our soldiers took a book each away.

Every day here we are challenged by enemies and also heavy mission. However our troops are brave and very proud of being here to fight for the country. Our mighty God is always with us ... With your prayer and loving support I am doing my best to serve and take care of the troops here. I pray you will be surrounded by God’s great grace and many blessings”

FEB 1: “Thank you very much for the books. It was great to get some more reading items sent over there, there’s a lot of book passing back-and-forth over here from running out of stuff to read to pass the time. It’s awesome knowing that there are people taking time to support what we’re doing and making sure we’re not forgotten. It would be sweet if more public libraries in towns all over the states had an operation like ya’lls. Being able to run a book recycling program, book sales, and using profits for fixing up children’s sections and giving back to the community like that. Not to mention what you are doing for us troops over here. Ya’ll are role models for the rest of the country ... well thanks again for remembering us over here and me and the joes over here appreciate the books.”

FEB 10: “I just wanted to express my gratitude to you all for the books and dvds you sent. I am a Sergeant and I passed the books and dvds around to the others in my unit. We are two months into our year-long tour ... We all work everyday of the week monitoring our communications equipment so we do a lot of reading to while away the hours. Please pass on our thanks to everyone involved”

FEB 15: “I wanted to thank you very much for the kind gift of books......I know this gift will greatly brighten my time here in Iraq, and all my friends. I wish and hope your days are filled with the joy and happiness that you so kindly grant to others.”

MARCH 8: I’d like to sincerely thank the Blount County Tennessee Friends of the Library for their package of books, DC and DVD. I was additionally gratified as I’ve been through Maryville before when I lived in Southern Middle Tennessee and miss it terribly. Oh how I especially miss the Smoky Mountains and our condo outside Pigeon Forge.

I intend on only keeping the awesome Bible and after I’ve perused the books and recorded the CD onto my laptop I will donate them to the learning center ... Thanks again and God Bless you ... I sincerely got a lump in my throat when I received your package and felt like a child at Christmas opening the package.”
Spring Collectibles

by Penny Myers

The collectible section has received many donated books recently. Highlights include:

REGIONAL:
- Just a Little Story of Cumberland Gap
- Old Jonah’s Book of Tales
- History of the Bank of Maryville
- Encyclopedia of East Tennessee
- Terror of Tellico Plains
- Commission Books of Governor John Sevier

HISTORIC:
- Abraham Lincoln (6 volumes) by Carl Sandburg
- Jefferson – His Times (4 volumes)
- Air Organizations of the Third Reich
- Uniforms, Organizations & History of the Waffen-SS

NONFICTION:
- 2 First Editions by Martin Luther King:
  1. Stride Towards Freedom by Martin Luther King,
     *his first book*
  2. Strength to Love by Martin Luther King,
     *his 2nd book* and SIGNED BY KING
- Whole Earth Catalog

CHILDREN’S:
- Hopalong Cassidy and the Square Dance Holdup
- Seckatary Hawkins (2 rare books)
- Book of Knowledge (10 volume set)

Calling for Volunteers and Donations

“Books For Soldiers” is a ongoing project in which volunteers organize and send books to our troops stationed overseas. In 2009, the postage cost for these shipments was $1,478. We continually need more contributions. If you would like to donate, please mail to the address provided on the right. If you are interested in being a “Books for Soldiers” volunteer, please call Vivian Selecman at 379-2568 or e-mail at Selecman@msn.com.

If you wish to donate, mail your check to Friends of the Library
508 N. Cusick Street,
Maryville TN 37804.
Please designate that it is for the Books for Soldiers program.

*All photos are representational. Not the actual product.*
Friends of Tennessee Libraries (FOTL)

Ever wonder who that group was, what in the state they did, and why someone has to represent us at their meetings?

They are:
- 9 organizations of 500+ members
- 15 organizations of 100-499 members
- 8 organizations of 50-99 members
- 33 organizations of 1-59 members
- 38 families
- 100 individuals

They exchange ideas at their annual meeting:
- Recognize outstanding Friends – Your president, Phil Baker, was recognized in 2009 for donating over 3,500 hours of service to BCFOL
- Provide funding of Library Legislative Day
- Service a website (www.friendstnlibraries.org) and Facebook page.
- Provide a quarterly newsletter and give copies to state legislators.

The 2010 Annual Meeting is at the
Public Library in Crossville.

ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, June 22, 2010 • 6:30 P.M.
Sharon Lawson Room, Blount County Library

A time to appreciate your year as a Friend, elect new officers, and to just relax, enjoy the speakers, and be appreciated.
Don’t Miss the Spring Book Sale! April 15-17!

Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale

Thursday, April 15, Noon to 6 pm (for Friends of the Library Members Only)
Friday, April 16 and Saturday, April 17, 9 am to 5 pm.

The ideal recycling experience!!!

Gardening Books • Crafts Cart
Scrapbooking • Cookbooks

Friday and Saturday
April 16th and 17th
9:00am to 5:00 pm

FOL Members Only
Thursday, April 15
12:00 to 6:00 pm

Lower Level of Library