

A History of The Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library

By Jayne Kuennemeier and Barbara Merwald

The Oro Valley Friends of the Library started when Agnes Griffen, the Director of the Tucson, Pima Public Library asked Jayne Kuennemeier to get a Friends group started. They were on the Library Technical Advisory Committee to design and build the new library. Two other committee members, Henry Suozzi and Mary Ann Schumacher agreed to join. Mary Ann brought in Alisdair Innes, and Jayne brought in Marjorie Gerdes, George Heine, and Jane Roether. The first steering committee meeting was held February 7, 2001. Jerry Riggs from the TPPL Friends shared with us their strategic plan and organization materials. Many of us attended the library ground breaking ceremony on June 1, 2001.

The Friends were incorporated on June 26, 2001. The first official meeting was on June 27, 2001. Board Officers were:

President...Jayne Kuennemeier
V.P.....Henry Suozzi
Sec.....Marjorie Gerdes
Treasurer...George Heine

We also added Shirley Rochman and Carol Anderson as board members joining Jane Roether., Alisdair Innes, Jane Peterson, Beverly Van Horn and Mary Ann Schumacher.

The Town Council gave \$7,400 as seed money for us to get started. We had many activities to raise money for the library. Our first book sale was on Oct. 20 & 21, 2001, at Kreigh Park. A Kick off party for a Scottish vacation fundraiser was held on October 18, 2001. A beautiful swimming pool located at Rams Hill, as the setting along with refreshments and a bagpiper. Tickets for the raffle sold for \$25 each for a chance on 4 prizes.

In January of 2002 we put out our 1st newsletter, called the Friends Voice. Later, the name was changed to the Copper Leaf. It is now called The Newsletter. On our 1st Anniversary, Feb. 2002 we gave a tour of the library in its pre-finished stages, to Public School Library Staff and the media.

The second book sale was held March 16 & 17, 2002, at the Art Council Music Festival at Kreigh Park. We received \$10,000 from Comcast, and \$12,680 in kind, when they gave us air time to advertise our fundraisers. Thirty two people gave us \$1,000 each to become Charter Lifetime Members of the Friends.

We ended the 01 – 02 year with over 200 members, and having taken in over \$100,000. Our big expenses were the patio cover and patio furniture, and things for the children's area. We gave a check to the Town Council on April 3, 2002 for \$35,731.00.

Scottish Vacation Fundraiser – Winners of the Friends' Scottish Vacation fundraiser were announced at the Oro Valley Town Council meeting on April 3, 2002. The grand prize was a trip for two to Scotland (including a stay in a genuine Scottish castle). The Friends of the Oro Valley Library raffle met the \$30,000 goal for the event.

Congratulations to the winners:

Grand prize trip for two to Scotland, including round trip airfare and lodging at Innes House, with Oro Valley resident Alisdair Innes as personal guide: Sarah Hobart

Round-trip ticket for two on America West to California and a weekend for two at the Ritz-Carlton Laguna Beach: William Ratsch

Weekend for two at Sheraton El Conquistador: Rowland Rundle

Round of golf for four at Stone Canyon Club: Paul Gohdes

Board Election 2002 – 2003 – The annual membership meeting was held June 26, 2002, in the Town Council Chambers. The membership elected four people to board terms expiring in 2005 (Marjorie Gerdes, Alisdair Innes, Henry Suozzi, and John Wilcox.) Two vacated board positions were filled (Marcia Halligan replaced Jane Peterson and Barbara Merwald replaced George Heine). From these board members plus past president Jayne Kuennemeier and active board members Shirley Rochman, Mary Ann Schumacher, and Claire Drozd, officers for the 2002-2003 term were elected: president Marjorie Gerdes, vice president Ihor Kunasz, secretary Carole Anderson, and treasurer Alisdair Innes.

Children's Area Donation – June 26, 2002. The Friends have donated \$10,000 to the library for enhancements to the Children's Area. Purchases included a set of Folkmanis puppets, copper cactus display stands, and a portable sound system for story time and other activities.

Preview Reception – Members of the Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library were invited to a special preview reception to tour the library before it is opened to the public and to meet the new librarian. The event was held Saturday, July 27, 2002 from 10am until noon and included light refreshments. A highlight of the tour was the ability to view the as yet unfinished 10,000 square foot area that eventually housed an expanded Children's Area and Teen Area, as well as computer services, a second set of restrooms and other library services. A special invitation was sent to Life Members.

Library Grand Opening – Many members of the Friends were among the attendees at the grand opening of the Oro Valley Public Library on Saturday August 17, 2002. After some opening remarks by the mayor and other dignitaries, the ribbon was cut and the library was officially opened to the public. Music and entertainment, as well as light refreshments were served to one and all. Various special events were held throughout the day; the magic show and face painting events were particularly enjoyed by the children (of all ages!). During the week of August 19-23, a special event was held each day at the library, including harp and guitar music, balloon artistry, and face painting. Oro Valley had spent \$3 million dollars and the County, \$2 million on the building.

Patio Roof Donation – August 19, 2002. The Friends donated the cost of a roof for the library patio that adjoins the meeting room and wraps around the back of the building. This will provide shade for the meeting room and kitchen area and makes the patio a much more comfortable area.

Patio Furniture Donation – August 20, 2002. The Friends have purchased and donated several patio tables and chair sets for the library patio.

Book Donations – Beginning August 31, 2002, book donations were accepted on Saturday mornings (from 9am until noon) at Oro Valley Self Storage, unit 59.

Hughes Credit Union – In the fall of 2002, Elsa Jacklitch from Hughes Credit Union signed us up as a member sponsor. Customers would join the Friends for \$10 so they could be a Credit Union member.

“Book Store” Cart – Buy a bargain and help the library! A book cart was set up in 2002 at the front of the library to sell donated books. The inventory is constantly changing, so check back frequently to see what’s been added.

Big Fall Book Sale 2002 – The 2nd annual Big Fall Book Sale took place at the library Wednesday, October 23 through Saturday, October 26, 2002. Tuesday, October 22, was the Friends “Member Day” from 1 – 5pm. Wednesday through Saturday the sale was open to the public during regular library hours. Over 4,000 books in more than 30 categories were for sale. This event raised over \$4600 to benefit the library.

Barnes & Noble Book fair 2002 – On Sunday, October 20, 2002, from 1-5pm, the Friends participated in the Barnes & Noble Booksellers’ Book fair community outreach program at the Foothills mall store. In this program, customers present a voucher with their purchase and Barnes & Noble donates a percentage of the purchase to the Friends, to benefit the library. This event raised almost \$1400.

Charter Lifetime Member Plaque – On March 23, 2003 the Friends held a special event to recognize members who donated \$1,000 or more during the Charter Lifetime Membership drive that closed August 31, 2002. To commemorate their support and dedication to the library during its crucial formative days, a glass plaque bearing their names was installed in the library lobby.

Big Spring Book Sale 2003 – The 2nd annual Spring Book Sale took place at the library Wednesday, March 26, through Saturday, March 29, 2003. Over 15,000 books in more than 30 categories were for sale, including many rare and collectable volumes. This event raised over \$4400 to benefit the library.

Volunteer Appreciation – The Friends held a volunteer appreciation event at the home of Tammy and Ed Marshall on April 22, 2003, to thank all the Friends members who have expressed a willingness to volunteer their time toward our efforts to help the library.

Author H. Alan Day (whose sister and co-author is Supreme Court Judge, Sandra Day O'Connor) entertained attendees with stories of growing up on the family ranch in the Southwest.

Board Election 2003-2004 – The annual membership meeting was held June 25, 2003, in the meeting room of the Western Parks Association. The membership elected four people to board terms expiring in 2006 (Nicky Baker, Ihor Kunasz, Jasper Melton, and Barbara Merwald). One vacated board position was filled (Sallie Herman replaced Claire Drozd). Active board members are Linda Chu, Marcia Halligan, Alisdair Innes, Joyce Rowe, Henry Suozzi, and past President Marjorie Gerdes. Board members elected as officers for 2003-2004 are: President, Barbara Merwald, Vice President, Jasper Melton, Secretary, Linda Chu, and Treasurer, Alisdair Innes. We ended the year 02-03 with over \$42,000 of new income.

Farmers Market Book Cart – Buy a book bargain at the Oro Valley Farmers Market on the first Saturday of the month! We rolled our multicolor book cart (decorated by students and Melody Weber!) and brought a Friends information table to the Farmers Market on October 4, 2003. Now you can see us there on the first Saturday of the month for great buys and great information. Buy some books, join the Friends, or just talk to us about what's new at the library.

Fall Book Sale 2003 – The third annual Fall Book Sale took place at the library Wednesday, October 16, through Tuesday, October 21, 2003. (the member preview was held Tuesday, October 14, for 5:30 to 8:00pm.) Over 15,000 books were for sale. Over 90% of the books were donated. Monday was half-price day and Tuesday was \$5-a-bag day. This event raised over \$6700 to benefit the library. We now had a professional book sale chairperson in JoAnn Dumas, and sale income increased significantly.

EBay sales – Beginning on October 22, 2003, you can check out our special finds for sale on eBay! Sometimes we get books that are better sold online, so visit us on eBay and take a look. Search by seller and look for ovbooks1. Remember, local buyers don't have to pay shipping...you can pick up your purchase at the library. Chair Lee Marchitelli, JoAnn Dumas and Cindy Seifried comprise the online sales committee.

Libraries and Lawmakers Day – Library customers were invited to meet with state, county and local lawmakers during the first annual Libraries and Lawmakers Day, sponsored by the Tucson-Pima Public Library's Advocacy Committee, headed by Jayne Kuennemeier. On November 6, 2003, lawmakers were present at five libraries in the TPPL system, including Oro Valley, which was visited by State Senator Toni Hellon, State Representative Steve Huffman, Pete Hershberger, County Supervisor Ann Day, and Oro Valley Council members Dick Johnson, Bart Rochman and Werner Wolfe. Senior Librarian Shirley Hall led the visitors on a tour of the library, including the 10,000 square feet awaiting completion. The lawmakers then spoke to interested library customers and answered questions.

Architect's design – The Architect's design to finish the last 10,000 square feet was authorized on 12/17/03. The Friends donated \$25,000 for this construction which began May 2004 and finished October 2005.

Town Employee business Expo – The Friends participated in the Town of Oro Valley's employee business expo held at the Town Council Chambers on February 4, 2004. The expo allows businesses and groups to showcase their products and services to town employees. The Friends brought books for sale to the expo and were able to let town employees know about our mission to support the library.

Annual Spring Book Sale 2004 – The annual spring Book Sale took place at the library Wednesday March 10 through Saturday March 13, 2004. Over 15,000 books were for sale. This event raised over \$7500 to benefit the library.

Volunteer Appreciation Event – The Friends held a volunteer appreciation event at the library on March 19, 2004, hosted by Committee chair Marjorie Gerdes and the Book Sale committee co-chairs, JoAnn Dumas, Joyce Rowe, and Claire Drozd. The Friends invited all members who had volunteered their time toward our efforts to help the library and recognized the Book Sale committee and its chairs especially for all their hard work.

Chamber of Commerce Business Expo – The Friends participated in the second annual Northern Pima County chamber of Commerce Business Expo held March 20, 2004 at the Pusch Ridge Christian Academy. The Friends shared the Library's table and were able to let residents attending know about our mission to support the library.

Board Election 2004-2005 – The annual membership meeting was held June 9, 2004, in the library meeting room. The membership elected three people to board terms expiring in 2007: JoAnn Dumas, Ann Connolly, and Ellen Vellenga. Board members elected as officers to 2004-2005 are: President, Bill Austin, Vice President, Jasper Melton, Secretary Nicky Baker, and Treasurer Ann Connolly. Active board members are JoAnn Dumas, Marjorie Gerdes, Alisdair Innes, Ellen Vellenga, and Past President, Barbara Merwald. (One vacated board position remains unfilled following Keve Sankman's resignation). Also added were David St. John and Jinx Kirk. We ended the year 03-04 with over \$36,000 of new income.

Wells Fargo Grant – The Friends received a \$2,500 grant from Wells Fargo on July 30, 2004 as part of the grand opening celebration of a new branch facility. Wells Fargo has asked that this money be spent on the new Teen Room that is planned as part of the library's completion. Friends President Bill Austin accepted the check with many thanks.

AZLA dinner – On December 2, 2004, Friends helped the library sponsor an AZLA dinner and closing reception.

Annual Spring Book Sale 2005 – The Spring Book Sale took place at the library Wednesday, March 16 through Saturday March 19, 2005. Over 15,000 books were for sale. This event raised over \$10,700 to benefit the library.

Earth Day – Friends took part in the Oro Valley Earth Day Festival by having a table with membership information.

Another Volunteer Appreciation event was held in April 2005. Food was served, entertainment was provided by guitarist Chris Coates, and author Jan Cleere spoke.

With the 10,000 square feet finished and now a Teen Zone and Children's area, the Friends had to find a new area to sort and store books for future sales. On May 16, 2005 a space was rented and a contract signed with Mildred Dunn to use a home she owns. We ended the 04-05 year with over \$55,000 in new income.

On June 8, 2005, the fifth annual meeting was held. The following were elected:
President, Bill Austin
V. P. Jasper Melton
Sec. Nicky Baker
Treas. Ann Connolly (Bernie Moreen August to March)
Other board members: Marjorie Gerdes, Mahes Prasad, Ellen Vellenga, JoAnn Dumas, Jinx Kirk.

The library closed for a time so staff could move books and re-opened January, 2006.

The next book sale was January 18 – 21, 2006, raising \$10,148.

On February 6, 2006, there was a Grand Re-opening celebration with 4 ribbon cuttings, Library, Book Shoppe, Children's area, and Teen Zone. Oro Valley Historical Society, three choirs, a string quartet, and Yo-Yo entertainment all took part. Special awards were given to Millie Dunn and to Gil and JoAnn Dumas for helping to "make the Book Shoppe possible" We now have a Book Shoppe!

A fundraiser was instituted, offering to put donors' names on bookshelves. The Farmers Market cart was discontinued now that we have a Book Shoppe. The Cleere Law Offices Holiday Fundraiser donated proceeds to FOVPL for the Teen Zone. In May of 2006 we received a \$26,000 LSTA grant, matched by FOVPL.

On April 14, 2006, JoAnn Dumas and Kay Weede were honored at a Town Council meeting by the Tangerine Town Spirit Award.

On June 14, 2006 the sixth annual membership meeting elected the following officers:

President, Ellen Vellenga

V.P., Marjorie Gerdes

Sec., Nicky Baker

Treas., Doug Forester

Other members in attendance were Bill Austin, JoAnn Dumas, Lanny Jorgensen, Kendra Potter, Kay Weede.

We ended the 05-06 year with almost \$77,000 of new income.

September 30, 2006, brought the 1st Book Festival with food, author lectures, gardening tips, David Fitzsimons and Nancy Turner, Bonnie Marson, and children's authors. The Friends donated wooden replicas of the library to involved authors.

The Fall Book Sale on October 11 – 14, 2006 brought in \$6700. Money was given to the Children's librarian for youth Scholastic Program and the Kids Explorer book club.

November 16, 2006 concluded the children's Art Contest, and December 2 was the Christmas Party? On December 7, a Christmas luncheon was held for library staff, board members and volunteers.

February 2007 a Volunteer Appreciation event at the Oro Valley Country Club was sponsored by the Friends. Book Shoppe manager, Pat Blurton was named our first Volunteer of the Year and presented with an engraved crystal award. Her name is also on a plaque in the Book Shoppe. Assistant Manager and volunteer coordinator is Janice McKee. We donated money for parking lot landscape improvements.

March 24, 2007 – OV Business Expo 2007 held in the Oro Valley Library, provided business with a new opportunity to showcase their services or products in Oro Valley.

June 9, 2007 – **FOVPL Annual Meeting** was held in the library meeting room. Election: President Marjorie Gerdes ('08); Vice President Lanny Jorgensen ('08); Secretary Nicky Baker ('09); Treasurer Doug Forester('08); Barbara Ansell ('10); Bill Austin ('08); Jan Cleere ('09); Onita Davis ('10); JoAnn Dumas ('10); Carolyn Lytle ('09), Kendra Potter ('08); Ellen Vellenga ('10 Past President); Kay Weede ('09).

June 3, 2008 – **2008 Annual Meeting:**

President: Onita Davis ('10)

V.P.: Sally Innes ('11)

Sec.: Nicky Baker ('09)

Treas.: Doug Forester ('11)

David Alzner ('09)

Eris Armstrong ('09)

Jayne Kuennemeier ('09)

JoAnn Dumas ('10)

Martha Briggs ('11)

A program with staff members Nicole Sump-Crether, Lynn Sawyer and Rachel Mooney was followed by light refreshments. We dedicated \$30,000 to the library wish list fund. \$1000 donation was made for the Book Festival and Adult Services.

From 2006-2007 Friends gave or set aside, \$108,277.91 to the library. \$62,000 of new money came in '06 – '07. June 6th, 2007, the FOVPL Annual meeting was held in the library meeting room.

At the September board meeting, Cheryl McCurry, Youth Services Librarian, gave a report on the Summer Reading Program to show how our donation was spent. Cat Strong reported that the digital sign we purchased for \$10,986 was on its way, and would be used for notification of library events. The membership year was changed to January 1 thru December 31. The conference budget for OVPL was approved at \$9800.

In October 2007, FOVPL donated \$6000 for library collection enhancement and \$460 for shelving. On October 24 – 27 the Annual Fall Book Sale brought in \$10,027. The wish list was updated to give \$5000 for supplies. The Conference total was reduced to \$5800.

JoAnn requested money for a yellow page ad for the Book Shoppe. A Friends Helping Friends workshop was planned for November. A Holiday luncheon was authorized (\$500) for Staff and Board members.

November 3, 2007, the Friends participated in the 2nd Annual Book Festival, “Oro Valley Rocks”. There was a long list of prizes that we raffled. Author Richard Shelton spoke. Fifty local authors took part and 3,447 people attended. 2,752 attended in the previous year.

On November 7, 2007, a Friends Helping Friends workshop was attended by sixteen Friends from Green Valley, Kirk Bear Canyon, Sun City Vistoso, Pima County and Oro Valley. There was good communication, sharing book sale and membership ideas and a catered lunch.

A \$50,000 LSTA grant was matched for computers and Wi-Fi. A record on books placed on hold was set at 482. The 07-08 wish list came in at \$110,372.19. A Holiday luncheon was set up for library staff, board members and spouses. FOVPL participated in the Holiday Parade.

January 2008 started with the board setting aside \$2500 for the summer reading program. Martha Briggs joined the board to replace Bill Austin (08). Membership reported 50 lifetime members and 175 paid up members. A Friends Fest was planned and JoAnn offered to find someone to work on the Web site. An electronic sign for activity notices was installed. Free coffee service (by Friends) was installed in the kitchen for all library users.

The Book Shoppe celebrated its second birthday (January 5th) and brought in over \$800 with a half-price sale. Birthday cake and cider were served to all. Fifty members attended the Friends Fest with author Stella Stevens. In February, a Volunteer Appreciation event at the Oro Valley Country Club was approved.

A Friend’s Tea was held January 24th to celebrate our successful Book Shoppe and ever growing Book Sales. In February, Marjorie Gerdes resigned her position as President and board member after seven years of active service. Jan Cleere, Ellen Vellenga and Marjorie resigned from the newsletter committee.

Onita Davis became President and Sally Innes joined the board, followed by David Alzner and Eris Armstrong. On March 9, 2008, a by-law amendment was approved by the board, creating an ex-officio position of General Manager for Book Operations. The holder of this position is a member of the board by virtue of the title and has all the rights

and privileges of the other board members without any further responsibilities. JoAnn Dumas is now in this position.

The April 2nd to 5th Spring Book Sale was the most successful in our history so far, bringing in over \$11,000. To show our appreciation to Two Men and a Truck, who move our books, we have made them Life Members.

The Volunteer Appreciation luncheon was held on April 17, at the Oro Valley country Club. Our first Volunteer of the Year was Pat Blurton, Book Shoppe Manager. On May 1st we joined library staff to take new council members, Bill Garner and Salette Latas, on a library tour and gave them a Friend's membership application. On May 3rd a Pima County Library Retreat was held for Friends groups.

On June 3, 2008, the Annual Meeting took place with the following elected officers and board members: President, Onita Davis
V. President, Sally Innes
Secretary, Nicky Baker
Treasurer, Doug Forester
Members: David Alzner, Eris Armstrong, Jayne Kuennemeier, Martha Briggs, Ex-officio, JoAnn Dumas and Jane Peterson. We ended the 2007-2008 year with \$62,000 of new money.

Doug Forester initiated an FOVPL electronic forum. He reported that we have 277 members. From 2001 to 2008 \$47,243 was spent on the library wish list. We have initiated a scholarship for library staff who are working on their Librarian's degree. Sheila Beason was the first recipient. We will also be funding a computer instructor. The Book Sale committee again held a successful Annual Fall Book Sale in October. On December 11, 2008, there was a Holiday Volunteer Party for Friends and staff.

We are working with Hughes Credit Union to create book marks for the Book Shoppe. We will also partner with The Tucson Symphony Orchestra for a children's concert to kick off the Summer Reading Program. Sally Innes got a \$1000 donation from Walmart. Irma Sankman and Dick Surowiec joined the board. David Alzner, Eris Armstrong and Nicky Baker resigned.

The library held its Third Annual Book Festival on January 10. Best-selling author J.A. Jance delivered the keynote speech, followed by a talk by editorial cartoonist for the Arizona Daily Star, David Fitzsimmons. The day included book signings, programs, activities and a silent auction, with proceeds benefiting the library. The Friends financed the Festival and made \$1,000.

On February 27, volunteers were feted for giving more than 12,000 hours of service to the Oro Valley Public Library. The Friends co-hosted, with the library, the Annual Volunteer Appreciation dinner among the stacks at "The Library After Dark". Nearly 150 volunteers and guests enjoyed the Italian dinner catered by Carrabbas Italian Grill. The

Annual Friends volunteer of the Year award was presented to Doug Forester. Also given an award as our Community Partner, were the owner's of Two Men and a Truck.

The Town Council has appointed a Task Force to look into whether the library should remain an "affiliate" of the Pima County Library System and continue to be run by the Town, or be turned over to become a branch of the County System. Alisdair Innes is the Friend's representative and board member Jayne Kuennemeier has been appointed by the Mayor. They and seven others will report to the Council on June 17. We do not think being turned over to the County is a good idea. We have worked on a new strategic plan to support the library.

The March 2009 Book Sale brought in \$11,268.34, making it the most profitable sale to date. Cindy Seifried has agreed to chair the Fall 2009 Sale.

On May 30, 2009, a String Quartet from the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, together with author Susan Lowell, presented the production of Josefina Javelina Wants to be a Ballerina in the Library Meeting Room to a near capacity audience. The performance was enthusiastically received by all. Following the show, the audience was given the opportunity to purchase Josefina books and dolls which were then autographed by the author. The Friends were given 40% of the total sales.

On June 11, 2009 at 4:30pm, the Annual Meeting of the Friends was held at the Library. New officers were elected: President - Martha Briggs
Vice President - Sally Innes
Treasurer - Doug Forester
Secretary - open

Linda Golden, a new Board Member was nominated and accepted at the meeting. . Other Board Members are Irma Sankman, Dick Surowiec, JoAnn Dumas, Jane Peterson, and Onita Davis.

New money raised in 08-09 was \$90,687.

On a personal note, this is my last service to the Oro Valley Friends of the Library. It was my pleasure to start the group, with a hard working board, and I have been very impressed with the wonderful volunteers who have made it the great organization it has grown into. This is an ongoing story which will continue forever.

Jayne Kuennemeier