

Spring/Summer 2026 Newsletter



FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The President's Letter

by Wanda Scanlon – FOL Board President

I'm beginning this missive with a question. In a world with so many "Friends" groups (of wildlife, refuges, parks, museums, etc.), why did you join Friends of the JMCL Library? The vast choices are literally at our fingertips. I joined because I love our library and have visited one somewhere at least twice a month since the age of 5 (over half a decade ago for anyone interested). For me, the delicious notion of all those books just waiting to be picked up and read at my leisure is more enticing than chocolate.

Like most Friends groups, we operate independently from the actual administration of the Library's Board of Directors. We do report to the Board about our activities at the monthly Library Directors' meetings. Our purpose is to support programming efforts for the public. We fill gaps in funding, public support, and awareness. More importantly, we serve the Jackson community and our members by organizing monthly meetings and providing volunteer opportunities. Connecting with one another on First Thursdays helps us develop a community of books and arts lovers. Many times, I wish I had a gavel to corral the Board meetings! We are having a good time and animated discussions.

The Board has often discussed the fact that the Thursday Noon Review begins at noon sharp. Since this prevents many of our working members to join us, we will hold our first Evening Review on June 11 in the St. Lukes Parish Hall. Social time will start at 6pm, followed by a one-hour concert by two members of Rev. Jesse and the Holy Smokes. The band members will talk about West Tennessee's musical roots. Please plan to attend and bring a guest to recruit as a new member. We are excited about this and want it to be an annual event.

April 21st is National Library Workers Day. FOL will provide both branches with box lunches from Woodstock Bakery as a token of appreciation for the staff's hard work. Pick up a monthly program guide to get an idea of all the varied programs they provide for the public. Be sure to thank our fabulous staff the next time you are in; everyone appreciates a pat on the back.

The library has received an unassigned \$10,000 grant from the Carnegie Library that the Board of Directors elected to use to install a security system and entrance buzzer at the door closest to the parking lot on Lafayette Street. It is the door by the program center. After the security system is installed, the library staff will be able to monitor the entrance and open the door remotely. During our Noon Reviews, one of us will stand by the door to welcome you in.

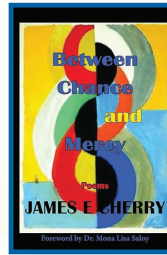
Summer Reading is just around the corner and we are awaiting requests for funding by the library's department heads. This year FOL has enjoyed robust book sale profits, generous patrons, and a large donation from St. Lukes Episcopal Church. We anticipate to fund the entire Summer Reading program again – thanks to YOU! Without the hardworking FOL members, none of this would be possible.

So pat yourselves on the back and I hope to see y'all at the next First Thursday.

SPRING/SUMMER 2026 FIRST THURSDAY NOON REVIEW

Coffee starts at 11:30 am and the meeting at 12-noon. All events are held in the conference center of the downtown library branch. Be sure to sign up for door prizes.

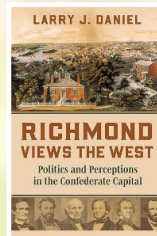
April 2 James E. Cherry



Nationally known author James E. Cherry starts National Poetry Month with powerful readings from his works. James is a local novelist and poet with many accolades, including 2016 Finalist for Fiction from Foreword Review for *Edge of the Wind* and nominations for a NAACP Image Award, a Lillian Smith Book Award, and a Next Generation Indie Book Award. James is a Jacksonian and an Adjunct Professor of English at the University of

Memphis-Lambuth. He is also a past FOL Board member. He has penned two novels, a collection of short stories, and three volumes of poetry. *Between Chance and Mercy* (2024), his latest poetry book, was longlisted for the Tennessee Book Award. James will have *Loose Change* and *Between Chance and Mercy* available for purchase at \$15 a copy or \$25 for both.

May 7 Larry J. Daniel



Bestselling author and Jacksonian Larry J. Daniel will be discussing his latest book, *Richmond Views the West - Politics and Perceptions in the Confederate Capital* that was awarded the 2025 Fletcher Pratt Award and the 2026 Richard Barksdale Harwell Book Award. In this book he shows for the first time how poor intelligence, fierce politics, and cultural prejudice affected Confederate strategy in the Western Theater. Larry is an American Methodist minister,

author and educator known for his contributions to literature and academia and featured on The History Channel. He has published nine books on historical and cultural themes and is known for his research on American history and its impact on contemporary society.

June 11, 6:00 P.M., St. Lukes Episcopal Church

FIRST Thursday Evening Review



Join FOL members in the Parish Hall of St. Lukes for social time followed by a 1-hour concert with two musicians from **Reverend Jesse and the Holy Smokes**. This event is free and we hope our members who can't come during the daytime Noon Reviews will be able to attend. If you know someone who is

interested in FOL, bring them along!

SPRING / SUMMER 2026 UPCOMING EVENTS & RESOURCES

April :Jazz Appreciation Month

The City of Jackson welcomes two Grammy winners to the Ned, Trumpeter Terell Stafford and drummer Chester Thompson. Please see the attachment for dates and tickets at: <https://www.thejazzfoundationofwesttennessee.org/> A big concert is coming up on April 11 at 7:40 P.M. at The Ned. Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door, and \$15 for students.

APRIL 19-25 – NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

This is a time to recognize your library workers and volunteers In your own community.

April 30 – Children’s Day/Book Day

The American Library Association has resources for all ages. Nurture cognitive and literacy development for all children of all linguistic and cultural back grounds in your own community. <https://www.ala.org/alsc/initiatives/dia/free-resources-0>

June-July-August – Summer Reading Program

UNEARTH A STORY™

This year, the Jackson-Madison County Library will be hosting its annual Summer Reading Program in June and July. The theme given to us by the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) is “Unearth A Story”. With that theme, we will be exploring archaeology, paleontology, dinosaurs, and much more. Join us this summer as we dig up programs that will be a blast from the past! With a packed calendar, you are sure to find something you enjoy, no matter your age. From classic game shows and nostalgic crafts, to visits to local parks and weekly children’s entertainers, there is something at the library for you. You can also track your reading and how many programs you attend to get entered for prize drawings at the end of summer! For more information and a full list of events, keep an eye on the library’s social media, website (www.jmclibrary.org), and printed program guides.

“If the library doesn’t have this book you really want. . .”

If the library doesn’t have a title that you want, they will order a copy for you. Simply let the staff know. There are a few stipulations - including price and content - but they will try their best to assist you with the request. It takes about 5 days to get the book in.

LIBRARY NEWS LIBRARY NEWS LIBRARY NEWS

WINTER FIRST THURSDAYS REPORT

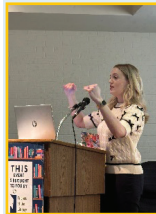


January First Thursday Noon Review Presenting Zachary Jones Sports Anchor for WBBJ. Zach is an award winning broadcaster with an enthusiastic delivery that kept the audience very interested. He spoke about the beginnings of his career as an anchor for football sports. He is one talented and congenial young man!

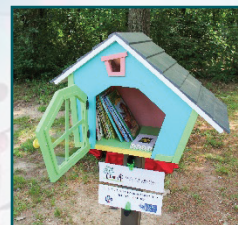


Byron Elam was our February speaker and did an outstanding job sharing meaningful pieces of local Black history. His presentation centered on the life of his centenarian great-grandmother, using her story to connect to some of the most consequential chapters in Jackson’s history from the Civil

War through the Civil Rights Movement. His forebears include Isaiah Savage, one of Jackson’s prominent leaders during the Civil Rights and post-Civil Rights era. Pictured with him are Vietnam Veteran Marshall Brooks and FOL Board member Larry Greer.



Ballet Arts Director Caroline Meinert did an outstanding job presenting the development of Ballet Arts, Jackson’s Premier dance company responsible for putting together the Nutcracker and a new ballet, *The Little Mermaid*. Caroline’s own accomplishments as a ballerina were a joy to learn about. Sharing her life’s journey in dance, Caroline explained what it takes to be a professional dancer and how she came to love teaching as well as creating and choreographing. Visit <https://www.balletartsjackson.org/academy> to learn more about spring and summer dance classes.



With summer story hours in the park, here is a chance for you to help in the development of a unique facility in Jackson, its first Conservancy located at the Liberty Garden Park. Created in the wake of the 9/11/2001 Twin Towers attack, the Garden has developed as a beloved walking venue, restful place, and safe place for children. As a neighbor to the Jackson-Madison County

North Library, the first Little Free Library in Jackson was placed in the Children’s Garden at Liberty Garden Park and is actively used by children and teens for book exchange and reading at the park. Caption: the Little Library was gifted by Elizabeth Carls-Weber who designed, built, and donated it to Liberty Garden in 2017.



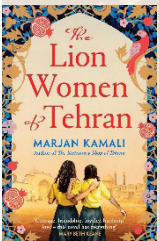
Over the years, the Children's Garden has added a maze, Aeolian harp, reading nook, play house, and play area. This year, the Liberty Garden Park Conservancy is on the home stretch to funding the Children's Garden Stage. The size was doubled, and thus the cost, to better

accommodate community programming for library, youth symphony, children and teen theatre, and the arts. This year marks the 25th Anniversary of 9/11 and America 250. The Conservancy is eager to begin construction for a dedication on Friday, 9/11/2026, to commemorate 25 years of the park presence in sharing resilience, hope, healing and sustainable growth as a living memorial to 9/11. The Liberty Garden Park Conservancy is asking the Friends of the Library to generously consider a partnering sponsorship that supports continued and expanded library programming in the Children's Garden at Liberty Garden Park. The sponsorship levels are: Congressional Medal of Honor \$20,000.00; Purple Heart \$10,000.00; Bronze \$5,000.00; Red \$2,500.00; White \$1,000.00; Blue \$500.

Thank you for your consideration for sponsorship. Sponsors at \$500 and above are named on a permanent plaque. Mail check to:

LIBERTY GARDEN PARK CONSERVANCY
c/o: Community Foundation of West TN
74 Directors Row
Jackson, TN 38305

Tammy Buchanan
Liberty Garden Park Conservancy
(731)343-0485



BETSY DEMENT IS READING. . .

Marjan Kamali. *The Lion Women of Tehran*. 2nd edition. Gallery Books, 2025. A New York Times Bestseller.

The Lion Women of Tehran is a historical fiction narrative set in 20th century Iran during the eras of the repressive Reza Shah Kabir and the Islamic Revolution/Republic headed by the fundamentalist

Ayatollah Khomeini. The story is told through the eyes of two young girls growing up in a patriarchal culture during these tumultuous times. It's a tale of friendship, family bonds, ambition, betrayal, reconciliation and the rights, strength, and women's value.

The story begins in 1950 when seven-year-old Ellie, whose ancestors are Persian royalty, goes to a new girls' school after the sudden death of her father forces the family to move to a poor neighborhood. Bold Homa, from a working-class family, befriends Ellie and they soon become best buddies. Shy, only child Ellie is welcomed into Homa's family life and loves feeling accepted there. Homa leads her friend through the streets and markets of Tehran and they dream of becoming strong "lion women" one day. The reader gets many glimpses of Persian culture during the progression of the girls' lives and friendship. The author vividly describes the Persian foods they love, family life, public and private religious observances, cultural celebrations and the things they appreciate about growing up in Tehran with the beautiful Alborz mountains to the north of the city. The insider view of political turmoil during the times of the Shah and the Islamic Revolution as experienced by girls and women is novel and insightful.

Ellie's and Homa's lives begin to diverge when Homa's father is arrested for Communist political activism by the Shah's SAVAK

secret police. Homa begins to embrace Communism and political activism while her mother embraces Islam; Ellie's world is still elitist, especially after her mother marries the well-off brother of her dead husband and the family moves back up town. At University, Ellie chooses the safe, traditional path, studying languages, dressing up, going to parties, getting engaged, marrying, and eventually accompanying her professor husband to New York City. Homa studies pre-law, and embraces Communism, and engages in protests, sit-ins and demonstrations against the Shah's 1963 White Revolution policies, which are also vehemently opposed by the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini. Homa is arrested by the SAVAK, jailed and tortured. During this troubling time, Ellie's and Homa's friendship is tested to its limits by betrayal, misunderstandings, and closely held secrets.

Islamic fundamentalism led by the exiled Ayatollah from France is growing in influence and many people are thinking, "Anything would be better than the Shah." Protests and demonstrations are growing in number and frequency. By January 1979, revolution is imminent. Ellie is living in NYC and Homa in Tehran when on January 17 the Ayatollah's followers force the Shah out of Iran. Many Iranians are happy that his repressive and elitist rule is over and portraits of the Ayatollah Khomeini begin to appear; his influence and popularity are spreading. Homa is quite troubled by this stringent form of Islam and by the idea of a theocracy. The Ayatollah returns to Iran on February 1, 1979. In the streets of Tehran are painted in blood-red the slogans "Revolution!" "Freedom!" "An Islamic Republic!" By February 11, the Shah's army declares neutrality and the Islamic Republic installs a hardline theocratic government. It is a whole new world for Iran and especially for Iranian women who didn't even get to vote until 1963! On March 7 it is announced that women must be veiled to go to the office; soon after, women's rights are stripped almost completely.

Homa is front and center at women's protests, yelling that they didn't have a revolution to go backwards. They are met with violent repression. Homa refuses to back down and she is arrested by the Islamic Republic. She continues to fight for women's rights despite her worries about her daughter's safety. Meanwhile, Ellie is safe in New York City but unable to return home to her elderly mother in Tehran. Activist Homa and conformist Ellie both have to live with the life decisions they've made. They each suffer heartaches and losses. After the Islamic Revolution, their lives and families intersect again and their bonds of friendship and kinship expand in surprising ways.

The Lion Women of Tehran has well-developed characters that the reader will want to know more about; the story is set during an interesting time in a place rich in cultural history. This book is very timely as it delivers both an appreciation of the proud Persian culture of the Iranian people and a backstory and an understanding of the socio-political realities of present-day Iran. Homa's 1979 revelation as Iran transitioned from the Shah's repressive regime to that of the fundamentalist, hard liner Ayatollah, resonates with the reader. "If the revolution succeeds, what if what follows is worse?" That same question is very relevant for both Iran and the world in 2026.

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(\$10-24)
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In Memoriam: FOL is saddened to share the loss of Patricia Hopper on March 9, 2026. Patricia was a volunteer at Second Editions, North branch, most often working aside her good friend Jeanne Coughlin. Her energy and sweet personality will be missed by all who knew her. Her obituary can be found at <https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/47519203/patricia-k.-hopper>



Friends
of the
Library

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<https://www.friendstnlibraries.org/>

ALA American
Library
Association

<https://www.ala.org/>

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Fill this form and mail it with your check to Friends of the Library, 411 E. Lafayette, Jackson, TN 38301. Or join electronically at www.jmclibrary.org / About Us / Friends of the Library / Friends Membership. Current members' dues and Book of the Month membership card will be due for renewal in October 2024.

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