

News of the **Friends** of Schenectady County Public Library

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Friends Develop New Outreach Partnerships

From the Friends to Families: Books for Easter Baskets

With the support of Friends bookstore manager Crystal Hoey, the Friends were proud to partner with The Invisible Elephant Foundation by providing books for their Easter basket initiative. The foundation, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, creates personalized Easter baskets for children in women's shelters, orphanages, and group homes across the Capital Region, many of whom are victims of domestic violence or have special needs.

Each basket is thoughtfully customized to reflect the individual child's interests and includes both essential and educational items, such as toothbrushes, socks, and books. Through this collaboration, the Friends were able to help place books directly into the hands of children, supporting both comfort and literacy while contributing to a meaningful and impactful community effort.

First Encounter with Schenectady CSD

Community Outreach has continued to expand its efforts to support a variety of organizations

in need, including Ellis Hospital, the Schenectady County Jail, and Heritage Home for Women, among others.

We are excited to announce a new area of support in collaboration with the Schenectady City School District.

Working together with the district and the Friends, specifically new volunteer Megan Case, we will be curating book selections for a First Encounter Initiative at the district registration office. The Friends will set up a "Little Library" where new families register their children for school. Families will be able to choose from a variety of books, from infant board books to adult titles such as cookbooks, available at no cost.

The space will feature the welcoming message, "If you love it, take it!" as its primary signage, along with Friends logos highlighting our collaboration and shared commitment to literacy and community support.

This new and exciting outreach effort further demonstrates our dedication to making a meaningful difference in our community.



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Contact Us

friendslibrary12305@gmail.com
www.friendsofscpl.org

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Greetings, Friends Members!

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Friends of the Schenectady County Public Library, it is a meaningful time to reflect on both our legacy and our continued growth. For six decades, the Friends have remained dedicated to supporting the Schenectady County Public Library through fundraising, advocacy, and community engagement, and

this past year has been a strong example of that enduring commitment.

Our fundraising efforts continue to thrive with our book sales, online sales, and Friends bookstores exceeding past benchmarks and demonstrating the strength of both our volunteer base and community support. These successes are made possible by the dedication of our volunteers, who remain the heart of our organization, contributing countless hours to ensure our operations run smoothly and effectively. Over the past 10 years alone, the Friends have proudly contributed more than \$1.3 million in support of the library, a powerful reflection of what this organization, its volunteers, and supporters make possible.

We have also seen a tremendous growth in our membership with new individuals joining the Friends as they visit our stores or find interest through our outreach efforts. From book sales to travel opportunities, these experiences are helping us connect with new audiences and strengthen our community of supporters.

As we look ahead, I am excited about the opportunities to continue growing, reaching new audiences, and finding creative ways to connect people with books and with each other.

Here's to celebrating 60 years, and to many more chapters ahead.

With gratitude,
Diane Wilkinson

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Visit the Membership area of the Friends website to submit updated information. Most of our promotion and event information is sent by email, especially member-exclusive events. Don't miss out! Send an email to friendslibrary12305@gmail.com if you have questions or need assistance with updating your information.

NEWSLETTER IN YOUR INBOX

Sign up to receive our newsletter by email! Reading all the news from the Friends of the Library can be just one click away. To change your delivery preference, send an email to friendslibrary12305@gmail.com or visit the Membership area of the Friends website at www.friendsofscpl.org.

VOLUNTEERS

Make it Happen

Behind every successful book sale and every organized shelf is a volunteer making it all possible. Your time and energy directly support the library and help extend our impact throughout the community.

Whether you enjoy working with books, helping customers, or supporting events, there is a place for you here. Even a small commitment can make a big difference.

Interested in getting involved? Reach out to us at friendslibrary12305@gmail.com. We'd love to welcome you to the team!

Spring **Book Sale**

Saturday, May 9, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Sunday, May 10, 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Central Library

All books \$1.00 or less • CDs, DVDs, audio books, and albums available • Bag Sale on Sunday, \$4.00 (bag provided by cashier)

**No Scanning, Large Bags, or Carts
before 12 pm on Saturday**



A BESTSELLER QUARTER: Q1 FRIENDS BOOKSTORE HIGHLIGHTS (JANUARY-MARCH)

The Friends book stores recorded a standout first quarter in 2026, demonstrating significant growth across all key metrics compared to every previous year since the opening of both locations.

Gross sales reached \$34,170.39, a substantial increase over prior years (2023: \$23,464; 2024: \$23,192; 2025: \$21,890). This represents the strongest Q1 performance to date.

Net sales followed a similar upward trend, totaling \$28,037.95, up from \$18,895 in 2025. This indicates not only higher sales volume, but continued efficiency in managing discounts and pricing strategies.

Customer engagement also saw notable growth. Total transactions rose to 3,141, compared to 2,083 in 2025 and 2,437 in 2024, reflecting a significant increase in store activity and foot traffic.

This strong performance is the result of several intentional strategies implemented over the past year. In addition to the success of members-only sales, the introduction of BOGO promotions, bundled discounts and holiday-focused sales has helped drive both traffic and purchasing volume. Efforts to expand the media selection (adding CD's and vinyl records) have broadened the stores' appeal, attracting a wider range of customers. A continued focus on actively cycling current and fresh inventory onto the sales floor has ensured an engaging and dynamic shopping experience for returning patrons.

Equally important is the dedication of our store volunteers, whose time, energy, and commitment are essential to the daily operations and welcoming atmosphere of the shops. Their efforts, combined with the strong support of our Friends members, who receive a 25 percent discount on purchases, play a vital role in our continued success. This member benefit not only provides added value to membership, but also encourages repeat visits and sustained engagement with the stores. Growth in membership and increased utilization of this benefit have directly contributed to the rise in overall transactions.

Together, these initiatives have created increased visibility, improved customer experience, and stronger repeat engagement, positioning the Friends book stores for a highly successful year ahead.

— Crystal Hoey

Membership News

NEW MEMBERS & RENEWALS

Benefactor — \$200+

- Laura Darling
- George & Joan Gould
- Ken Larsen
- Wayne & Cynthia Schneider

Patron — \$50+

- Eleanor Aronstein
- Jeff & Wonja Brucker

- Michelle Chamberlain
- Valerie Troiano
- Tina Versaci

Supporting — \$35+

- Lynn Purcell
- Haley Viccaro

DONATIONS & GIFTS

Recurring Monthly Donation

- Anthony Carota III
- Kayla Delano
- Kimberly & Samuel Gonzalez
- Hannah Kapadia
- Katy Peace
- Samhita Vupputuri

A SECOND LOOK: ALICE & THE TALKING FLOWERS

A Second Look is proud to welcome original art by Maria DeAngelo, a local artist and educator.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to create the April window installation for A Second Look. Books and art have been important to my life. My mother nurtured library visits as special adventures, and my love of reading grew. Later in life as a parent, reading to our children was a treasured part of our day. As an artist, I love to create with vivid colors and mixed media.

“The paintings included in the window were inspired by Alice in Wonderland. “You Can’t Take Less” was painted about the tea party from Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (Chapter 7) and my child, Morgan, are the inspirations for this painting. Morgan took joy in Alice and her adventures. The torn pieces of topography painted on the canvas speak to the experimentation with language in Carroll’s text. The precarious and playful forms came to mind from the action of the story and the unbalanced feelings of growing up. The flower sculptures were created in collaboration with my husband, Matt Paul, for our exhibit Our Weird & Wonderful World. Matt’s interest in whimsical creatures and my interest for bold colors in mixed media, resulted in humanoid flowers.

“The flower structures were built by breaking down and reimagining cardboard boxes for the stems and faces, while the fabrics for petals and stems came from old clothing. In a world that pushes single-use materials, we wanted to give old materials a new life.

“Each of the hanging vines contains the whimsical and inspiring drawings of the original illustration of Alice and her fantastic adventures. Sir John Tenniel was an illustrator and satirical artist who created the images based on Lewis Carroll’s dream like words. I can identify with the confusing and changing images that surface in my mind when I read the text. The fantastic forms and playful language can provoke questions about reality and self, from environment to identity.”

Maria DeAngelo is ArtyLadyMsD, an artist and educator who was born and raised in Schenectady. She studied Fine Art at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University with concentrations in painting and printmaking. She graduated with a BFA and went on to earn her MEd from Potsdam College. In addition to teaching art in the classroom setting, Ms. DeAngelo has facilitated murals, art clubs, and community art enrichment programs. Follow her on Facebook and Instagram @artyladymd or Bluesky @artyladymd.bsky.social. Visit her website, www.artyladymd.com.



FRIENDS TRIPS: DAY TRIP & LOOKING FORWARD TO 2027

May 26: Day Trip to Hancock Shaker Village & Clark Art Institute

Join the Friends of the SCPL as we travel to the Berkshires for our Spring day trip on Tuesday, May 26. We will start the day at Hancock Shaker Village and then travel to Williamstown for lunch and a visit to the Clark Art Institute.

Hancock Shaker Village is a living history museum committed to bringing the Shaker story to life and preserving it for future generations. Called the "City of Peace" by the Shakers who lived here for 179 years until 1960, this community was the third of 19 major Shaker Villages located in New York, New England, Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. Visit the gardens and animals, marvel at the world-famous round barn, meet the interpreters, immerse yourself in unique art exhibitions, and explore. We will have a guided tour and then time to explore on our own, visit the gift shop, walk a trail, etc. Learn more at <https://hancockshakervillage.org/>



We will then travel to the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, where we will start with a box lunch followed by time to explore the museum on our own. The Clark Art Institute is best known for its French Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, and especially Pierre-Auguste Renoir, with more than 30 paintings by the artist. The collection is also rich in American paintings; Italian and Northern Renaissance masterpieces; portraits and landscapes by European masters; and an extraordinary collection of silver, porcelain, and furniture. The outdoor area contains woodland trails as well as numerous sculptures. Learn more at <https://www.clarkart.edu/>

The cost is \$110 for Friends members and \$120 for non-members. Non-members can join using the bottom portion of the registration form. Price includes transportation, admissions, tour at Hancock Shaker Village, lunch at the Clark Art Institute, and driver gratuity. We will leave from the Schenectady Home Depot lot at 8:45 a.m. and should arrive back approximately 5:00. Check your email or the Friends website for registration form and lunch choices.

March 13-25, 2027: Shades of Ireland, featuring Northern Ireland

Experience Ireland in all its vibrant shades as you travel from the lively city of Dublin to the untamed natural beauty of Northern Ireland. From breathtaking nature and stunning coasts to a captivating culture and friendly locals – this is Ireland: the "Fair City" of Dublin, the modern yet traditional capital; the Cliffs of Moher overlooking the Atlantic Ocean; Giant's Causeway, formed millions of year ago by volcanic activity; evenings in quaint pubs. Start in Dublin and travel around Ireland to Kilkenny, Waterford, Killarney, Cliffs of Moher, Ennis, Sligo, Derry, and end in Belfast. Register at <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1430137>



December 8-14, 2027: Christmas Markets of Montreal & Quebec City

Enchanting winter experiences and magical Christmas markets await in Quebec City and Montreal, each with its own unique charm and character. Embark on a city tour of Quebec City, bundling up to wander through Old Quebec and among the wooden stalls of its German Christmas markets. Discover the history and landmarks of Montreal, from atop Mount Royal to the Underground City. Learn about the art and tradition behind making the iconic French holiday cake, the Bûche de Noël. Visit a traditional sugar shack in the Quebec countryside for breakfast and see the impressive Montmorency Falls. Transportation from Schenectady will be by motor coach. Register at <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1430728>

Questions?

Email us at scplfriendstrips@gmail.com if you have any questions. We hope to travel with you soon!

— Gail & Sue

May/June Programs & Events

Register for these programs and more on the Events Calendar at www.scpl.org

ONLINE BOOK CLUB: MARJAN KAMALI

Thursday, May 7, 7:00 pm

Join us for an exciting conversation with internationally acclaimed author Marjan Kamali as we delve into the timeless wonder of her New York Times bestselling novel, *The Lion Women of Tehran*, which follows the friendship of two women set against three transformative decades in Tehran, Iran.

Marjan Kamali, born in Turkey to Iranian parents, is also the author of *The Stationery Shop* and *Together Tea*. She is the 2022 recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Award.

HOOK & ZEN CROCHET CLUB

Saturday, May 9, 3:00 pm

Saturday, June 13, 3:00 pm
Rotterdam Library

Unwind your mind and escape the hustle: Join our Hook and Zen Adult Crochet Club! Our first project is a custom-fit top down sweater. You choose the yarn, the length, the sleeves, and the fit. We'll use chains, slip stitches, single crochets, double crochets, and the granny cluster stitches to make something truly your own.

Future projects — from blankets to bags — are chosen by YOU. Supplies provided, but feel free to bring your favorite hook and yarn. Adults 18+. Registration required.



FREE CONCERT: YOUNG MUSICIANS FORUM

Sunday, May 17, 2:00 pm
McChesney Room
Central Library

Young Musicians Forum's May concert will showcase two Capital District artists: cellist Laura Melnicoff, and Max Caplan, pianist. Their program will include works by Nadia Boulanger, Debussy, Tamar Muskal, Popper & Scriabin.

Laura received her B.M. degree from the Mannes School of Music in New York City. She has appeared as soloist and chamber musician in major halls in NYC, and across Europe and Israel. She is a member of Duo Envol with flutist Melanie Chirignan.

Max Caplan is a pianist and composer and received his M.M. in Composition from the Hartt School of Music. He is instructor and accompanist at Union College, SCCC, First Reformed Church in Schenectady, Congregation Gates of Heaven, and performs often with Musicians of Ma'alwyck.



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AMERICA 250 & REVOLUTIONARY SCHENECTADY

**Thursdays, June 4, 11, 18,
25, and July 2, 6:00 pm
McChesney Room
Central Library**

The American Revolution marked the birth of a new nation and changed world history as we know it. What is less well known is how the War of Independence was shaped by local people and events.



In this series of presentations by the Schenectady County Historical Society, we'll discuss how Schenectady entered into and navigated the chaos of the Revolution. We'll highlight individual stories to bring the history to life!

June 4: The Local War for Independence

June 11: The Last of its Kind: Schenectady's Liberty Flag

June 18: Villains and Apostates: British Loyalists in Schenectady

June 25: Total Destruction and Devastation: The Haudenosaunee in the Revolution

June 27, 2:00 pm: WMHT "American Revolution" Double Feature: Join us for a special screening featuring WMHT PBS's *Field Trip Visits the American Revolution* alongside selected clips from Ken Burns' documentary series *The American Revolution*.

July 2: Enslaved People in Revolutionary Schenectady

CR"AFTER" WORK CRAFT CLUB

**Monday, June 29, 5:15 pm
Rotterdam Library**

CrAFTERwork is an "after work" craft club intended to bring together patrons who enjoy trying new forms of art! Each month we will tackle a new craft. All materials will be provided. Whether you are a novice or a dedicated crafter, all are welcome.



This month's project is diamond art (photo for illustrative purposes only).

Each patron will receive a complete kit which includes the adhesive picture, diamond drills, pens, and tray. Adults 18+. Registration required.

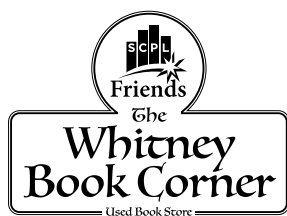


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