

President's Report 2013

Good Evening.

The year 2013 started off with a divided membership, ongoing costly litigation, and a closed Bookstore. I believe that we have successfully overcome these issues by being pragmatic, reconciling, re-organizing, and working hard .

The Board changed early in the year with the resignation of two elected directors and their replacement by the appointment of Barbara Anderson as vice-president (Bookstore), and Paul Strauss as secretary. The stated goals of the new Board was to make the Friends an accountable, transparent and democratic organization, in order to prevent what happened in 2012. To achieve these goals we needed to amend the bylaws , put in place procedures governing finances and behavior, and construct a website.

A committee of seven formed the new bylaws in plain sight of all, and the Board approved them after a General meeting in July. The bylaws created a seven man board. Open positions were filled by the appointment of Mary Bott, Bill Shepherd and Lionel Simons. The election today will result in directors having two year appointments. This will allow the board to be able to take on long-term goals. The bylaws also reduce the ability of the board to partake in spurious litigation and spending, and it explicitly places the board at the discretion of the membership.

Board meetings are publicized and open to all, the monthly financial statements are published, and the the flow of money is secure. The Bookstore is under the management of a Bookstore Manager and Committee. The Bookstore now functions as a stand-alone entity, which is answerable to the Board for its performance. This model has worked particularly well. The Board no longer meddles with decisions on book resale pricing, when book sales are held or other matters that are best left to those who know best. The Board can now pay attention to achieving greater involvement with the community and creating additional sources of revenue for our library.

The Board has concentrated on a major deficit - the shortfall of state, county and city support of the library building. This 30 year old structure needs maintenance. We decided that as our first task, the most visible improvement we could achieve is to pay for the replacement of the two large skylights in the building. We have recently had notice that this project will soon start, and should be completed by mid-year. We have already looked at additional projects amongst which are replacing the broken front doors of the library, and painting and carpeting the interior of the building. We will use our accumulated funds to meet these expenses, and we will create targets for raising any shortfall in capital.

The board that will be elected today will have its work cut out for it. We trust that the 2013 Board has made it easier for it to do this. I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Board for their services during the past year. I would also like to express my thanks to all the volunteers at the Bookstore for their dedication to their work, and our members for their ongoing support.