Welcome to 2020. It seems like just yesterday that we were ushering in the 21st century and worried about Y2K wreaking havoc with our computers.

The 2020 Friends Lecture Series is now at the Tropic Cinema, 416 Eaton Street. See page 2 for the great authors we have lined up! We will be limited to a maximum of 150 attendees at the Tropic. The Friends volunteer ushers will assist in guiding you to the theater. Doors open at 5:30 PM for the 6:00 PM Lectures. Watch for emails, Facebook posts and newspaper articles for any updated information.

Book Sales continue on the first Saturday of the month during the winter season – rain or shine. 10 AM – 1 PM in the Palm Garden or in the Library Auditorium if it’s raining. We will continue to accept donations of ALL books in good condition regardless of category. Please drop them at the Library Front Desk or in the Receiving Box outside in the parking lot.

We look forward to an entertaining year for all our members and volunteers. Your support at the Lecture Series, Book Sales, and Library events is much appreciated.

A special note of thanks to the Decimos Society. At the 2nd Annual Decimos Editors’ Choice Awards honoring local authors in the Keys, the Friends of the KW Library was chosen to be the recipient of the silent auction fundraiser. The Friends thanks the generosity of Christy Sunshine (pictured left), who donated her beautiful stained glass art piece, and JD Adler (right), Publisher Elegant Publications. Decimos – We Say is a literary magazine for the Florida Keys whose mission is to provide a platform for the creative writing voices of the community.

Happy 2020!

Marsha Williams

One of my 2019 highlights was attending the American Library Association’s Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., which was partly funded by the professional development grant provided by our wonderful Friends of the Key West Library. Here’s just a bit of what I saw at this year’s conference:

The Supreme Court Justices are often cheekily referred to as “The Supremes,” the name of the Motown icons who had twelve number one hits in the 1960’s and 70’s. While I can’t speak to any of the other Justices, Sonia Sotomayor, certainly has Diana Ross-like star power and she knows how to work a room. Her appearance at this year’s ALA Annual Conference was memorable for many reasons. Most notably, she spent most of her time in the audience while still giving speeches, shaking hands, giving a select few hugs and a chance to take a photo—seemingly to the chagrin of the armed security team handling her protection. Seeing Justice Sotomayor was extraordinary and entertaining. She spoke of libraries with great

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FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
LECTURE SERIES

by Mark Hedden

The lecture series will kick off this season on January 13 with Rowan Ricardo Phillips, poet, critic, translator, Paris Review sports columnist, and author of *The Circuit: A Tennis Odyssey*, a non-fiction book that won the 2019 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing. His appearance will be made possible by the Key West Literary Seminar. Other speakers during the season will be:

- Phyllis Rose, whose recent biography *Alfred Stieglitz: Taking Pictures, Making Painters* chronicles the life of the influential photographer and gallerist.
- Arlo Haskell, Executive Director of the Key West Literary Seminar, who will be in conversation with Mark Hedden about poet Elizabeth Bishop, her legacy, and her long term relationship with Key West.
- Meg Cabot, author of *The Princess Diaries*, whose most recent works are the novel *No Judgments* and her first comic book, *Black Canary: Ignite*.
- Mike Mewshaw, whose most recent book is *The Lost Prince: A Search for Pat Conroy*, an account of his friendship with the author of *The Great Santini* and *The Prince of Tides*.
- Ayse Papatya Bucak, whose short story collection *The Trojan War Museum*, includes stories that were chosen for the O. Henry and Pushcart prizes.
- Naomi Gordon-Loebl, a writer, educator, and fellow at Type Media Center who writes often about LGBTQ issues and has been published in The New York Times, Harper’s, The Nation, Complex, Hazlitt, and The Toast.

We look forward to seeing you at what should be an interesting, thought provoking lecture series!

UNSUNG HERO

by Mary Taylor

The Friends of the Library nominates Nancy Seidel as our unsung hero for 2019. She and her husband Allen will attend The Community Foundation of the Florida Keys annual luncheon honoring all the community’s unsung heroes.

The Seidels have been homeowners here since 1993 and Nancy has spent the last ten years volunteering at the library. She brings rich experience and enthusiasm to her volunteer activities. Nancy works the computer desk, getting patrons onto our public terminals, specifically during times of staff shortages or lunch hours. She has worked on many Saturdays when the library has the fewest staff members in the building. She also helps us with setting up snacks and drinks for programs, especially during the Café con Libros series. In short, Nancy does whatever is needed. Congratulations Nancy, we are proud that you are our 2019 unsung hero.

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tenderness, describing her local library as a sanctuary and needed escape from an uneasy home life during her childhood years.

Anytime you go to an ALA convention, you come out of it with more books than you can carry on a plane. I shipped an impressive haul back to the library before departing DC, and several of the books were added to the library’s collection. Of course, the real benefit to attending ALA is not just to see what’s happening in publishing, but what trends and obstacles libraries around the country are facing. Also, what new digital content is available and worth pursuing for our local community.

Of course, it’s the briefest moments you remember most. I didn’t even know Henry Winkler wrote children’s books, but he does and I love his HBO series, Barry, so I was thrilled to meet him. The same was true of George Takai, who noticed my badge stating my Key West location. “You’re from Key West...No wonder you look relaxed and happy,” he said then he laughed that famous deep, staccato, delicious laugh of his.

The mission of the Friends is to support, improve, and promote the Key West Library through fundraising, volunteering, raising public interest in and advocacy for the library.

PAGE TWO
The Key West Library celebrated its 60th anniversary at the Fleming Street location with a party in the Palm Garden. Speakers included Marsha Williams, President of the Friends of the Library; Michael Shields, Chairman of the Monroe County Library Advisory Board; Monroe County Administrator Roman Gastesi and County Commissioner Heather Carruthers, each of whom spoke about the importance of the Library to the community. Entertainment was provided by the Libby York Quartet.

Excerpted from an article by Nancy Klingener – This month, the Monroe County Library system is celebrating its 60th birthday at the Fleming Street location. The library, at least in Key West, calls itself South Florida’s oldest. I talked to the Monroe County Historian Tom Hambright, who runs the Florida History Room, about some of the library’s illustrious patrons and literary connections (which includes Jimmy Buffett, Tennessee Williams and Ernest Hemingway).

We know there was some kind of library in Key West as far back as the 1850s because a man named William Hackley mentions paying library dues in his diary. Hambright ran excerpts from Hackley’s diary in his “Today in History” column in the Key West Citizen and the island was enthralled by the daily doings.

The History Room has a vault where important documents and other artifacts from Keys history are stored. They include a galley copy of “To Have And Have Not,” Hemingway’s novel written about Key West in the 1930s. Locals love to quote one passage of conversation in that book:

“What they’re trying to do is starve you Conchs out of here so they can burn down the shacks and put up apartments and make this a tourist town. That’s what I hear. I hear they’re buying up lots, and then after the poor people are starved out and gone somewhere else to starve some more they’re going to come in and make it into a beauty spot for tourists.’ ‘You talk like a radical,’ I said.”

(Tourism didn’t really take in the 1930s, despite FEMA’s efforts. The agency irritated Hemingway by putting his home on a map for tourists, prompting him to build a brick wall that’s there still. But after the Navy closed down most of its operations in the 1970s, the island turned to tourism again. Now, it’s a $1.8 billion annual business, according to the Monroe County Tourist Development Council. 5 million people visited the Keys last year.)

I still use the library regularly, as a patron and as a journalist — especially the incredible online image archive. And it’s not just me, or even just people from the Keys researching their past. That site is closing in on 30 million views. If you spend a little time there, you can see why.

One of the coolest parts of that archive, and the library’s vault, is that the collection helps document and preserve the history of ordinary folks - not just the famous writers or singers but the people who made up the community. This story about a 19th century scrapbook shows what I mean.

And while the Key West branch has the vault and gets a lot of attention, the county library system has four other branches — in Big Pine, Marathon, Islamorada and Key Largo — and each serves a vital role in communities along the Keys. The county is investing in a new library building in Marathon that looks like it will be state-of-the-art. Check them out!

ANOTHER CELEBRATION! by Marsha Williams

The Key West Library celebrated its 60th anniversary at the Fleming Street location with a party in the Palm Garden. Speakers included Marsha Williams, President of the Friends of the Library; Michael Shields, Chairman of the Monroe County Library Advisory Board; Monroe County Administrator Roman Gastesi and County Commissioner Heather Carruthers, each of whom spoke about the importance of the Library to the community. Entertainment was provided by the Libby York Quartet.
Mark your calendars for Saturdays January 4, February 1, March 7, & April 4, when the Friends of the Key West library will hold their book sales for the 2019-2020 season in the library’s Palm Garden at 700 Fleming Street. Every dollar raised during the sales goes directly back to your library. And don’t forget, the Friends’ indoor book nook will be open for business whenever the library is open!

NEXT BOOK SALE
Saturday, January 4th
from 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

GO GREEN!
Receive your FOL newsletter digitally.
Email membership@folkw.org
and provide your name and email address to make the change.

* If there is an asterisk after your name on the mailing label, it means it’s time for you to renew your membership.

Key West Library
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www.keyslibraries.org

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