



**FRIENDS OF PINE ISLAND LIBRARY NEWSLETTER**

*I Opened A Book*

by Julia Donaldson



I opened a book and in I strode  
Now nobody can find me.  
I've left my chair, my house, my road,  
My town and my world behind me.  
I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,  
I've swallowed the magic potion.  
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king  
And dived in a bottomless ocean.  
I've opened a book and made some friends.  
I shared their tears and laughter.  
And followed their road with its bumps and bends  
To the happily ever after.  
I finished my book and out I came.  
The cloak can no longer hide me.  
My chair and my house are just the same,  
But I have a book inside me.

## *A History of Community Effort & Volunteers*

The Pine Island Public Library is nearing its 60th birthday and with the current pandemic altering all of our lives, now seems like a good time to reflect on our library's past. Long time Friend Dolores Granito compiled a very comprehensive history in 2009 for the 30th anniversary of the Friends of Pine Island Library. I've taken the liberty of condensing it for our newsletter.

Before the early 1960's, library service to the islands was provided by book boat and later, by volunteers who loaned out books from Pine Island Center. An "official" Pine Island Public Library was incorporated in 1962 after Mrs. Lucille Phillips Warren donated a plot of land at the Center in memory of her father, Tom Phillips, and a Library Board was formed with an appeal being sent out for books. Mrs. T.W. Wheeler, a resident, came up with a fundraising plan - "Coppers for Culture" - and pennies were collected throughout the Island. Additional money was raised from card parties, dinners, Christmas card and candy sales. Finally they had sufficient funds to begin. Some 2000 books were purchased and collected and a small building was rented. The books were sorted, processed and cataloged. Operations began in June 1962.



A headline from a Fort Myers newspaper dated 1963, announced "Pine Island Has Small Library, Seeks Building." The "Coppers for Culture" campaign continued, with a goal to raise \$7500 for the construction of the Pine Island Public Library Building. The group had the building lot, the plans, and free labor promised. Katherine Knight was appointed volunteer Librarian for the year. The original library opened in 1966 and although Lee County Library Services was founded in 1964, there is no record that the PI

Library became part of the system until the late 70's. By 1969, plans were already underway to enlarge the library, with a goal set at \$4000. This time the theme was "Raise the Roof" with plans to enclose the patio for a reading room.

By 1982, the library was very crowded and "cluttered" and in need of funds and a new building. A meeting was held early that year to form Friends of the Library, to help raise funds to furnish the new library. The group continues to play an instrumental role in our library's operation. It is a non-profit, volunteer organization that encourages literacy, strives to give children an educational head start, and fosters life-long learning and recreation for adults.

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## *Looking Ahead...*

Nancy Roark, MLIS, Deputy Director of Lee County Library System recently provided an update and a recap of library activities. Eight of the county branches are currently open with limited hours, services and staffing. The meeting rooms/study rooms/programming rooms are being used for storing furniture and other items that were removed in order for libraries to follow CDC guidelines. Five of the branches (Pine Island, Captiva, Boca Grande, Dunbar, and Riverdale) are providing contactless curbside holds pickup two days per week on Thursday and Saturday..

Currently there is no prospective further opening date for the facilities. Friends activities remain on hold and will be discussed further when the Board starts meeting again in October/November. The eight libraries that have reopened have limited services, hours and capacity. Access all e-resources for free with your library card at: <https://www.leegov.com/library>.

Since our PI Library will not be holding book discussions in the foreseeable future, you may want to participate in a virtual author series provided by the Florida Library Association featuring award-winning and best-selling authors of various genres to inform, educate and entertain. Authors will spend time chatting about various topics. The September 25th program will feature Mary Alice Monroe, talking about her newest book, *On Ocean Boulevard*. Mary Alice Monroe is the New York Times best-selling author of more than twenty novels and three children's books. She writes richly textured stories that delve into the complexities of interpersonal relationships and the parallels between the land and life. More information about her books can be found at [www.maryalicemonroe.com](http://www.maryalicemonroe.com).

Jeffrey Blount will appear on the October 23rd program. Blount is the award-winning author of three novels, including *The Emancipation of Evan Walls*, winner of the 2019 Readers Favorite Book Award, the 2019 American Bookfest Best Book Award and a Shelf Unbound 2019 Notable Book. He is also an Emmy award-winning television director and a 2016 inductee to the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame. During a 34-year career at NBC News, Jeffrey directed a decade of Meet The Press, The Today Show, NBC Nightly News, and major special events.

Both programs run from 3:00 - 4:00 EDT. For more information, go to <https://leelibrary.librarymarket.com/events>

County staff continues to create new system wide programming online, including plans for a virtual Fandom Fest the entire month of October. Check out the library website [here](#) for more information. They have also changed the mobile services model, saying goodbye to the big green bookmobile and saying hello to smaller vehicles providing deposit collections to partner agencies. They are also dreaming of spring and our 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Reading Festival which will be a virtual event. Stay tuned for more information.

Library staff appreciates our understanding during this time. They will let us know as soon as they are able to invite volunteers and Friends groups back into facilities.

## *Focus on PI Cove Book Club*

by Marion Seery

When I came to Pine Island Cove (PIC), the book club was run by Duree Evans, a longtime snowbird resident and Lillian Bradley, a Cove resident and a Pine Island Public Library employee. The book club at the Cove read and discussed the same books as the library. This sometimes caused issues with getting the books, but it was manageable.



Lillian passed away about 5 years ago and Duree moved back to her home state permanently this spring. Mary Jean Schimmel and I have taken over the duties of the book club in the Cove to keep our residents reading and discussing books.

There are 3 book clubs on the island that I am aware of - The Friends, the Cove, and SJCCC, and many island residents attend all three.

You are probably asking yourself, "How can books be discussed 3 times and not be boring?" Well, first of all, at the present time each book club has a different list and has for a number of years. Even when the Cove and the Library used the same list of books the discussions varied significantly. While some members overlapped others did not. Different perspectives were brought to each group by the attendees. Charlie Lipsen, a deceased member of all 3 clubs, remarked that it was amazing how different the discussions were and how varied the insights of the readers.

The Cove's reading list for the coming season is complete and the meetings are scheduled. We hope that our meetings will be held. Mary Jean Schimmel is our version of the Library's Larry. She leads the book discussions. My work is easy. I do the planning, paperwork, and research the author. We select the books as a group and vote on them. The votes are tallied and the 5 books with the most votes are chosen. We have five selections now - up from 3 in the past.

The following list contains our choices for this coming season:

- *The Wright Brothers* by David McCullough
- *The Lost Woman* by Gilly Stewart
- *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead
- *And After the Fire* by Lauren Belfer
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls

I have read all of them except for one and I can tell you they are wonderful choices. I'd like to share some snippets with you but I don't want to be a spoiler. Happy Reading! ~ Marion



(A History... - Continued from page 2)

Among other things, the group engages with community and Library partners to promote our Library and its services, advocates for the library needs and raises funds for programs, services, materials and equipment. It sponsors programs of community interest and provides financial assistance to the Lee County Library System. Resources are made possible through membership fees, donations, fundraising events, book sales and grants from outside organizations. The Founding Officers were Elaine Blohm Jordan, President; Barbara (Bobbi) Shanks, Vice President; Recording Secretary, Johan Waggle; and Treasurer Nora (Jerry) McFarlane.

"Today our Friends group continues to be a nonprofit organization, dependent on the time and donations of its members. Every organization has people that consistently go above and beyond and are a resource to their organization and to their community. Vicki Morrison and Pat Halvorsen are two longtime, active Friends' members who have moved off the island recently. Their contributions to the Friends (and to F.I.S.H.) are too many to count and they will be missed very much."

~ Ellen Ballard, President, Friends of PI Library

The first fundraiser held by Friends was a Book and Bake Sale held in March, 1982. It netted the group more than \$500. Additional ideas for raising money were discussed at their meetings, including Tupperware parties, an auction of movie stars' shoes, a charity dance, raffling an afghan, and autographed books from stars, a collectibles auction, renting out one's swimming pool for 50¢ per member, and having more book and bake sales. In May, they hosted a 'Meet the Author' dessert-coffee. Seventy people attended a talk by Bob Morris, a News-Press People Section columnist and over \$150

was added to the Friends fund for new equipment, shelving, desks, and other furnishings that the new library would need. But the group, besides working to add funds to their treasury, also had fun. They decorated President Elaine Jordan's 1968 Plymouth convertible with signs and banners and entered it in the Fourth of July Parade. They won second



place in the nonprofit division. They did pages of paperwork to obtain their tax exempt status, and on August 27, 1982 the IRS finally approved their charter.

The Friends' fundraising continued. They applied to the Gannett Foundation for a grant to purchase equipment and furniture for the new Library and received \$3000 from the News Press. Early in 1983, the architect's plans for the new library were shown.

Even before ground was broken for the new library, a public discussion was being held on keeping the old building

as a Natural and Community Museum. As a result of these early talks, the old library is now the Museum of the Island.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new library was held in May, 1984. By June the library construction was put on hold by the County officials because of conflict with the zoning code. By July, construction had started on the new 5000 sq. foot building, but problems prevailed and it was not until more than two years later that it was finished.

On December 19, 1986 the new Pine Island Library building was dedicated. It has 5,200 square feet and currently contains over 42,000 items. The Pine Island Public Library serves Pine Island, Matlacha, North Captiva, Useppa, Cabbage Key, Cayo Costa, and parts of Cape Coral.

Book sales have always been an important fundraiser for the library. Beginning In 1987, the sales were held often (sometimes twice a month) in the old library building instead of at Winn Dixie or the Civic Association Building.

In recent years sales have been in December and February and held at the United Methodist Church.

The latest chapter in our library's history began in March, 2020 when a world-wide pandemic forced a shutdown of all but "essential" services. Although several of Lee County's libraries have reopened, the Pine Island Library remains closed until further notice. Check out *The Looking Ahead* article for what might be on the horizon.



Artwork by Zan Lombardo

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