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## Next Meeting:

### **New Castle County Friends Invited!**

Join the Friends of Delaware Libraries and guest speaker Polly Sierer, from the Friends of Newark Public Library.

**Monday, July 13, 2026**

11:15 am- 1:45pm

Route 9 Library

3022 New Castle Avenue,

New Castle DE 19720

A light lunch and time for networking with your county library Friends will be provided.

**Registration is required.**

[delawarelibraries.libcal.com/event/16957038](https://delawarelibraries.libcal.com/event/16957038)

## Friends of Delaware Libraries meet with Sussex County Friends

Members of the Friends of Delaware Libraries met with Friends from several Sussex County Friends groups, at the Georgetown Public Library. Representative Friends from Bridgeville, Delmar, Frankfort, Georgetown, Greenwood, Lewes, Milford, Millsboro, and South Coastal were present, along with members of the FODL Board.

A presentation that was extremely well received about advocacy and gaining members was presented by Candace Vessella, President of the Friends of Lewes Library. Well appreciated was the light lunch afterwards, as well as the group discussions around five areas — biggest concerns for your Friends group, connections, advocacy, mentoring, and how FODL can help you with your Friends group.

There was plenty of time for sharing individually, as well as in the group discussions. Lots of ideas were formed and discussed, and working together was the biggest plus of the day.

It was a good day for all attendees. We look forward to our upcoming visit with Friends in New Castle County on Monday, July 13th at the Route 9 Library!

## Become a Friend of Delaware Libraries!

Join now to receive benefits from membership!  
Support | Connections | Leadership | New Innovations

Alert! Price Change 7/1/2026!

Join now and save:

- Individuals: \$ 15.00
- Family: \$ 20.00
- Business: \$100.00
- Friends of Libraries: \$ 25.00

It is easy to become a member of FODL! Just download the application PDF from the website [friends@lib.de.us](mailto:friends@lib.de.us), fill out, print and send it, along with a check to:

Friends of Delaware Libraries  
121 Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd. N.  
Dover DE 19901

We are  
excited to  
welcome you!

## Conference Spotlight: 2026 MLA-DLA Conference

We are thrilled to report on a highly successful and energetic 2026 MLA-DLA conference, held from May 6–8 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Hotel in Cambridge, MD. This year's theme, "Our Stories, Our Shelves," resonated throughout the event, fostering meaningful connections and vibrant discussions among library advocates and professionals.

Representing the Friends of Delaware Libraries (FODL), Board member Skip Dye and Treasurer Sue Gooden were in attendance, contributing to the fantastic energy that defined the gathering.

### Key Highlights and Insights

The conference featured an impressive lineup of sessions focused on the future and stability of our libraries:

- **Advocacy in Action:** The opening keynote was delivered by ALA Chief Advocacy Officer, Lisa Varga, who offered a powerful call to action. She emphasized that the most impactful advocacy happens at the local level and urged attendees to be strong, consistent voices when engaging with local government.
- **Decoding Library Funding:** John Chrastka of EveryLibrary provided an essential, deep-dive session titled, "How Libraries Actually Get Funded: Understanding Tax Policy, Budget Practices and Your Fiscal Partnerships." It was a masterclass in navigating the complexities of library finances.
- **Championing Intellectual Freedom:** Skip Dye (FODL) led an insightful presentation on "Practical Intellectual Freedom Strategies for Front Line Workers, offering tangible tools for those on the front lines.
- **Charting Our Course:** Annie Hiller Clark from the Delaware Division of Libraries gave an encouraging update on our state's progress and outlined the ambitious and exciting 2026–2027 goals for Delaware libraries.

### A Toast to Reading

Adding a touch of flair to the event, FODL contributed a beautifully curated raffle basket themed "drink wine, read books, be happy." It was a wonderful way to showcase the spirit of our organization while supporting the conference raffle.

Thank you to everyone who made this year's MLA-DLA such a resounding success. We left Cambridge feeling inspired, informed, and more motivated than ever to continue championing the libraries that hold our stories.

## Meet the Co-Presidents of the Friends of Delaware Libraries

### Vivian Erickson

Vivian was born and raised in New York, and other than a short time in the Chicago, Illinois, area she lived most of her young adult life there. She and her husband lived in both East Africa and North Africa for more than 20 years. Sometime after moving to Delaware in 2014, and facing retirement, she took a part-time position at the Milford Public Library. She worked various jobs for the library – including Computer Assistance, Administrative Manager, Director, and finally Special Projects. After retiring, she joined the Friends of Delaware Libraries. The Friends, realizing her outstanding qualities, asked her to become Co-President.

Vivian and her husband live in Milford, DE – parents of three daughters, six grandchildren, nine great grandchildren, and will be welcoming another great granddaughter in July.

### Tiffany Geyer Lydon

Tiffany is a graduate of Dickinson College and Delaware Law School of Widener University. She has practiced corporate and commercial litigation at a Wilmington law firm for over 25 years. She is a member of the National Association of Women Lawyers, multiple sections of the Delaware Bar Association, American Bar Association and Federal Bar Association. She also volunteers with the non-partisan Election Protection Coalition through the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. She is currently in her second term as President of the Delaware League of Women Voters. She is also a former member the Maryland Board of Library Trustees for the Cecil County Public Library and former board member of Chesapeake Feline Association. She lives in St. Georges with her husband, sons, and rescue cats.

The Friends of Delaware Libraries are very lucky and well represented with two such amazing women.

Thank you, Vivian and Tiffany



DRINK WINE!  
READ BOOKS!  
BE HAPPY!

## Become involved with the Friends of Delaware Libraries, Kent County!

The FODL is looking for Friends from Kent County to become involved with the statewide Friends of Delaware Libraries. Each county in Delaware is different and so are their Friends of Libraries organizations. We must know how to deal with these differences.

We need involvement from all three counties and **at least two** members from Kent County are needed! Monthly meetings — mostly via Zoom — plus sometimes in person meetings.

If you might be interested, please email us at **defriendslib@gmail.com**.

No large amounts of time or meetings. Just an invitation to become a part of the statewide Friends of Libraries!

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## United for Libraries & Penguin Random House: Grants to Rural & Small Libraries

Penguin Random House and United for Libraries announced the 50 recipients of a grant program serving rural and small libraries across the country, now in its second year.

The Friends of Seaford Public Library have been picked to receive a grant of \$1000 in cash. This award is helping to fund bi-monthly STEAM programming. Every other week the library presents a program dedicated to learning something new for ages 6-16. The funding is directly supporting those programs. Each program is built off a “curriculum” theme for the quarter; then experiments and projects are built that go within that theme.

Director Rachel Lawson and Friends President Ellen Wright are extremely pleased to be awarded the grant – the programs are very well attended with over 50 participants on average. A local homeschool teacher, Miranda Collins is the leader for the programs.

Congratulations, Friends of Seaford Public Library!

## Retirement of Dr. Annie Norman, Delaware State Librarian

Dr. Annie Norman, the epitome of what a librarian should be, will be retiring effective August 1, 2026, after over 24 years as the director of the Delaware Division of Libraries. Annie has brought so much to the scene of libraries in our state:

- The Delaware Literary Alliance
- Center for the Book Delaware
- Job Centers at Delaware Libraries
- Delaware Library Consortium (public, academic, many school and special libraries,
- sharing over four million items on behalf of Delawareans statewide)
- “What’s Your Passion?” Posters for Delaware legislators
- Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library
- Teleservice Spaces in Libraries
- Summer Library Reading Programs
- Delaware Libraries Teleservices
- Numerous partnerships with organizations statewide
- TEDxWilmington 2015 “Libraries and the American Dream”
- 2012 Public Library Quarterly: “Libraries’ Leadership for Lifelong Learning”
- The Delaware Diamond Book Cart Drill Team (Bronze World Champions 2007) - Check it out on YouTube bookcart Drill Team with “Joe Biden”

Annie was appointed to the National Museum and Library Services Board; inducted into the Hall of Fame of Delaware Women; and the Delaware Division of Libraries received, under Annie’s tutelage, the Delaware Quality Award of Merit as well as the Delaware Library Association Institutional Award in recognition of performance excellence principles and practices. Delaware has been extremely improved by the leadership of Dr. Annie Norman as our State Librarian.

The Friends of Delaware would not be in existence, except for the help of Dr. Annie Norman. Thank you for your years of service.

We will all miss you, Annie!

