

## *A Message from the President*

Excellence.

The word carries different meanings for different people, but when it comes to our great Victoria Public Library, “Excellence” is one of the words that immediately comes to my mind.

As President of the Friends of the Victoria Public Library, I spend a lot of time in the library and with the incredible staff. It came as no surprise to me when we learned the Texas Municipal Library Directors awarded the Victoria Public Library with an Achievement of Excellence award for 2022.

*Continued on Page 4*



MAY 2023

## **Library Looks to Future with New Master Plan**

Victoria City Council has accepted a master plan for the Victoria Public Library that could set into motion ways that will make the library an even stronger presence in our community.

At the FRIENDS annual meeting in April, Library Development and Partnership Coordinator Kayla Massey provided the members with an overview of the plan contents, much of which was based on the input of over 600 members of the community who took part in a survey last year.

Almost two-thirds of the community members who took part in the survey expressed a desire

to continue operating the library as a central hub, suggesting new features in the downtown location such as additional areas for quiet space, small group areas for study and tutoring, as well as special purpose rooms for arts, crafts and creativity.

The Library team has already started to work toward some of the short term projects included in the plan such as seeking grant funding for a “book locker” that could be located on or off site of the library. The locker would allow patrons to request books or materials for check out. The library staff would then place the materials in a secure, pass code protected locker where the patron can then access the materials at their convenience.

Kayla added other ideas in the plan include some new furniture that would support study pods within the existing library space, the creation of an outdoor reading porch and outdoor activity area, upgrades to technology and an eye to considering accessibility to the library by expanding library operating hours and even possibly

relocating the current transit stop to a location closer to the library entrance.

In the long term, the Master Plan, compiled by consultant Maureen Arndt of 720 Design call for a physical expansion of the library to meet the size standards for a community of our size. The current 33,000 square foot building which is nearing its 50th anniversary, was designed to be expandable for future growth.

Kayla concluded her presentation with a recap of programs from 2022. The Library offered 394 programs with over 22,600 people participating. Most of the programs and attendance are attributable to children’s and youth programming, noting programming and participation by teens is on the rise. Participation in the teen programs is up by 50% compared to 2021.

“Interactive and large-scale programs like Mini-Manga Madness and Mario Party are popular with teens and older children,” Kayla said. The number of teen-directed programs grew to 30 events in 2022 with more growth planned for 2023.

*Continued on Page 4*

Our next  
  
Book Sale  
is  
May 14-20

# Five New Members Join *FRIENDS* Board

*At the Annual Meeting on April 11, five people joined the Board. Here's a quick look at the new Board members, including what inspires their willingness to serve.*

## **Barbara David**

I grew up in the Midwest and moved to Texas 30 some years ago. Since I can remember the public library has been a special place for me; my haven, my “get away from it all” kind of place.



I have been in many libraries over the years and Victoria Public Library is one of my favorites. They have done an outstanding job of connecting to the community with their workshops for kids and adults, their wide assortment of books, videos, and CD's, and their understanding of what the community needs and wants. I am honored to serve on the Friends of the Library Board to see firsthand what Victoria Public Library does for this community.

## **Steve Dornak**

As a child, my favorite neighbor was a kind woman who retired from our local library. She introduced me to reading for enjoyment and I continue to enjoy it to this day. Over the years, my reading graduated from strictly fiction to an interest in Non Fiction Texas and U.S. history.



Since retiring, I found myself spending a lot more time at the library. It has become my oasis. An escape from the daily stresses of our post pandemic world. During these visits, I learned of the many ways our library contributes to the community. I decided to join the Friends of the Library as a means of contributing to the community. I particularly enjoy volunteering at the book sales. It is great to see the number and diversity of people who attend the sales. It is awesome to see young children so excited when choosing books to purchase. I am proud to be a member of a group that brings so much to the area's citizens.

## **Harley Fisk**

I grew up in the Hudson Valley area of New York and have always loved reading. I learned to love my school library as the public library was not close to the rural area where I lived. As an adult, I moved to Galveston and then on to San Antonio, Austin, and Yoakum before moving to Victoria 4 years ago.



I enjoy using the Victoria Public Library and see it as a great resource for all the citizens of our area. I am a frequent speaker at County Commissioner Court and City Council meetings in support of our library. I believe that an informed citizenry is essential to the survival of democracy. The Victoria Public Library is a large part of facilitating the flow of both information and entertainment in our community.

## **Robin Knipling**

I am a mostly lifelong resident of Victoria and was blessed to be raised by a librarian mother who taught me the invaluable benefits of reading. Books amazingly allow us to travel the world, learn history, cook great food, share love with others through baking, decompress from worldly stress, become a better human and so much more. Books borrowed from the Public Library allow us to do all of those things at no extra cost!



I am excited to return to the Friends of the Library Board to ensure our community has continued access to reading resources and other valuable learning activities.

The Victoria Public Library does an excellent job of providing great resources to connect our community, from little ones to our older neighbors, and I'm delighted to support their efforts. Oh, and I absolutely love the Friends of the Library Book Sales! It's my favorite way to shop for our Little Free Library at home and share books with others.

## Ashley Sisson

I've always loved to read for fun and to learn, and libraries have always helped me scratch my reading itch. The idea of a public library is amazing - a house of stories and information that anyone can access for free! How could I not love libraries, too?

The Victoria Public Library is our community's house of stories and information, and I want to give back to the institution that I hold in such high esteem. I'm delighted to be able to serve on the board of the Friends of the Victoria Public Library, to support the library's staff and mission, and to share the great things VPL provides for us.

This is me and my friend Will at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. Even my vacations involve libraries!



## UPCOMING BOOK SALE DATES

**MAY 14-20, 2023**

**SEPTEMBER 17-23, 2023**

**JANUARY 14-20, 2024**

**MAY 12-18, 2024**



### 2023 Board

**President**

**Vice President**

**Secretary**

**Treasurer**

**Diana Sneed**

**Robin Knipling**

**Zachary Wendel**

**Diane Boyett**

### Board Members

**Julie Cordova · Barbara David**

**Steve Dornak · Harley Fisk**

**Chuck Lambert · Bob McKnight**

**Bud Mendez · Carolyn Prichard**

**Ashley Sisson**

## Cole Family Donates Books to FRIENDS

*Linda Cole presents Board President Diana Sneed two of the books her brother's family has donated to the FRIENDS*



After travelling the world, Jim Cole came home to Victoria to retire and take up a new hobby. That new hobby turned into a passion that he held dear in the remaining decades of his life.

His sister, Linda Cole, recounted recently that her brother decided after retiring from a 42 year career in civil and structural engineering that he wanted to do something different. He enrolled in a creative writing class at Rice University. His instructor told him after reading one of his class assignments that Cole had the beginnings of a great novel. He turned that writing assignment into "Never Cry Again."



**Jim Cole**

The story traces the life of a young man who rose from a childhood of neglect and danger to come of age with a promise to himself that he would "never cry again."

At the time of his passing last year, Mr. Cole had published two novels and written numerous history-

based columns in the Victoria Advocate newspaper.

His family has generously donated a supply of paperback copies of "Never Cry Again" to the Friends of the Library. Every member of the Friends who attends the sale on Sunday, May 14 will receive a gift copy of the book. Linda Cole said libraries were very important in their family (She, herself, is a retired librarian.) so it makes sense to support the Friends of the Library by sharing her brother's legacy with other readers.

Opening day for the next Friends of the Library Book Sale is Sunday, May 14 from 2 to 4 for members only. New members may join at the sale. The sale is open May 15-20 to the general public in the Bronte Room of the Library.

## Library Leadership Team Announced



We send our congratulations and best wishes to Jessica Berger, the new Director of the Victoria Public Library and to Katrine Villela who is being promoted to the Assistant Director position Jessica previously held.

Jessica has devoted 22 years to the Victoria Public Library including service as the Assistant Director of VPL since 2016. Originally from Nordheim in DeWitt County, Jessica earned her Master's Degree in Information and Library Science from Texas Women's University. She has served in leadership roles in the Texas Library Association and is a library advocate who has been strongly involved in building the foundations of the Victoria Public Library as a community anchor.

Katrine received her Masters of Library Science from Sam Houston State University. Katrine began her career as an elementary teacher and School Librarian. In January of 2019, she joined the Victoria Public Library as the Technical Services Manager. In February of 2022, she took on the additional role of Access Service Manager. Katrine brings with her a passion for inspiring and encouraging others to develop new things. Recently, Katrine and her team facilitated outreach programs with senior living facility the Courtyard, the Boys and Girls Club, and Victoria College.



We are excited about the future of the Victoria Public Library under their guidance!

### *A Message from the President*    *Continued from page 1*

The statewide review process included an examination of the many connections VPL makes on a daily basis in our community.

The Library is much more than books on the shelves. In 2022, over 22,600 people participated in at least one of the 394 programs offered by the library.

And, the Friends of the Library provided almost all of the funding needed for materials at hundreds of programs that created community connections at no cost to participants. Those programs sparked creativity, learning, fellowship, and growth in a community-centered place.

I was honored to be re-elected as the President of the Friends of the Victoria Public Library at our annual meeting April 11. At that meeting, our members elected FIVE new members to our board! You can "meet" the new directors in the article on pages 2 and 3.

Mark your calendars for the start of our next sale on May 14 with the members-only presale event. Yes, it is Mother's Day. What a fun way to share an afternoon with Mom: shopping for books! And, we have a special gift for all members in attendance on Sunday, thanks to a generous donation from the family of the late local author Jim Cole. Read about that gift on page 3.

As Friends, we are proud of our great library and are truly excited to see some of the plans and dreams for the future. As you read through this newsletter, you will see the incredible opportunities we have in our community thanks to the gift we give ourselves: our Library.

### *Annual Meeting* *Continued from page 1*

She wrapped up her presentation acknowledging the Friends. "Funds from the Friends support our programming and connection to our community," she said. "And, because of your support, we received the Texas Municipal Library Director's Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award for 2022."

The Friends provides the almost all of the funding that supports no-cost to participants library programs for all ages, according to Library Director Jessica Berger.

Board President Diana Sneed reminded those in attendance at the meeting that the majority of the funds that are donated to the Library by the Friends comes as a result of book sales, but memberships and sponsorships are also critical to that support. In the last fiscal year, the FRIENDS donated \$18,206.20 to the Library. During this fiscal year, the donation is expected to exceed \$20,000.