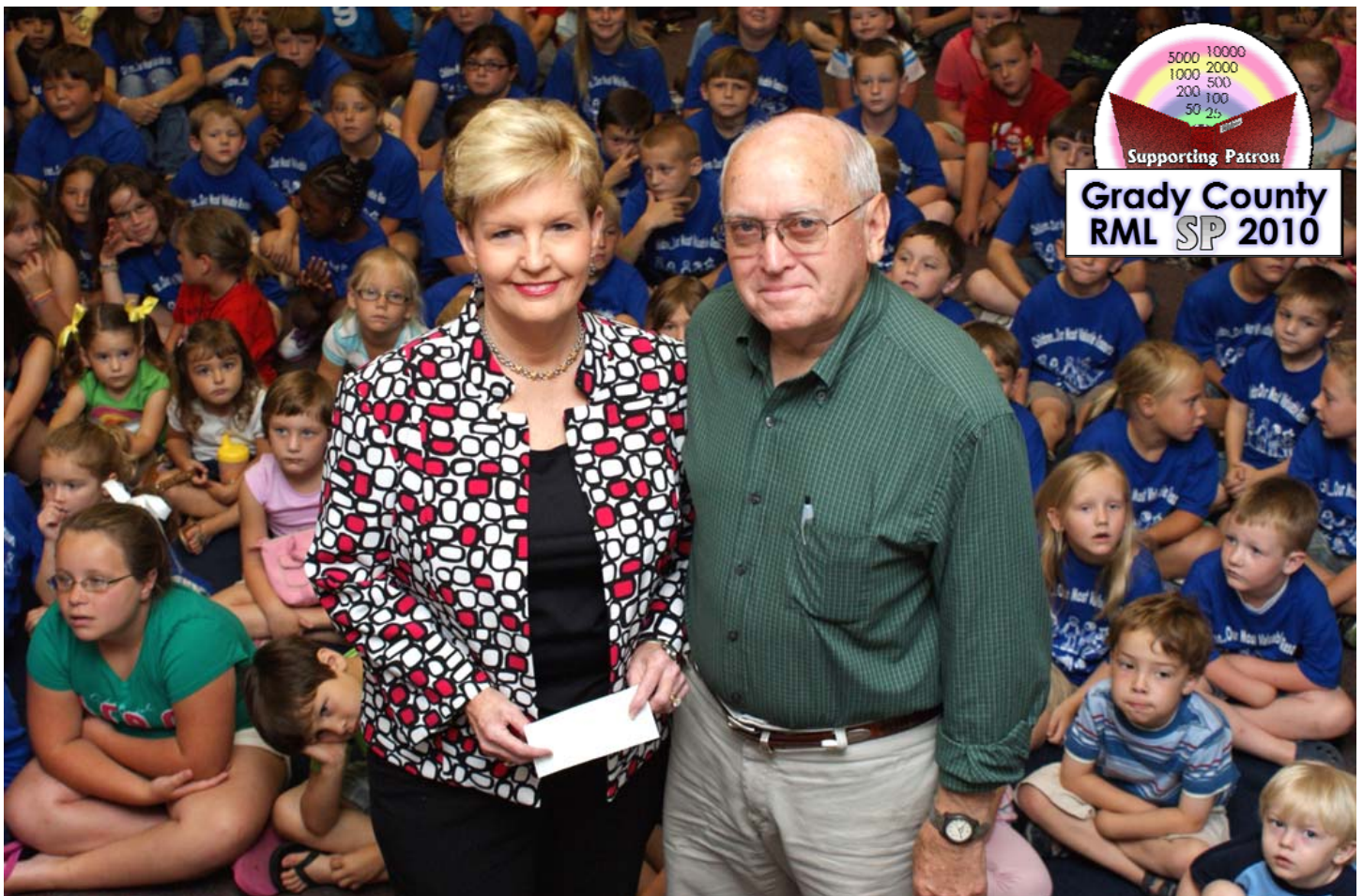


Tidings

Friends of the Library News Bulletin ☞ June 2010



Deep Budget Cuts Motivate New SP 2010 Campaign for the Library Calling on Friends, Supporters to be Donors Once Again



Brenda and Johnny Darsey, surrounded by vacation readers, offer their donation on the first day of the Vacation Reading Program, to kick off the RML SP 2010 campaign inspire everyone from Grady County to become Supporting Patrons of Roddenbery Memorial Library this year.

Two years ago an enforceable state policy said that local government could not cut library funding below previous levels. Since then the recession has pinched local governments so tightly that local funding for Roddenbery Memorial Library has been cut significantly and is down to about 64% of what it was in 2009. Last year saw the first cuts, and the people of Grady County came to the rescue with the successful SP500 fund-raising campaign, using



the initials, “SP,” to mean Supporting Patron. The campaign gathered over \$25,000 in less than a month, quite a spectacular effort to get the library through such an unusual year.

For the fiscal year that will start in July the budget is down so far that any and every amount from all sources—old and new—will help, and the library is launching an expanded campaign, still using the SP Supporting Patron theme, but with several new

categories, some above the \$500 level and some below. Brenda Darsey, who has written several children’s books, provided the spark for last year’s campaign and has been ready since the fall to start fund-raising for 2010. Money raised this summer will supplement the library budget for FY2011, which goes into effect July 1.



Johnny Mack and Monteal Butler gave two beautifully engraved granite benches last year.

Two years ago the Board of Education provided \$136,000 to the library. This year the BOE has dropped all public library funding. The City of Cairo funded \$272,000 in 2009 but dropped the library’s funding by \$37,500 last year and appears to be on track to leave that reduction in place, even in view of the decision by the school system. The County Commissioners funded \$136,000 two years ago and have dropped their budgeted amount to \$110,000 per year. The question remains among the local governments about who will take responsibility for the continued funding of the library. Meanwhile the library service and its many Grady County customers wait in hibernation.

State funding for the library has remained around \$200,000, with some cuts, but local funding has gone from \$544,000 to \$460,500 to \$347,500. At 64% of the 2009 level, the library stands alone as the agency in our community taking a bigger hit than any other department of local government. That takes the library all the way back to the 1980’s in size of budget, prior to the time when the facility doubled in size. After paying bills such as City utility bills, the library can no longer afford to pay its staff or maintain its book collection. The budget shortage is too large to pick an easily attainable gap to close with fund raising, but library supporters say that \$60,000 would be a worthy goal.

A number of donors exceeded the \$500 suggested level last year, so the Grady County RML SP 2010 campaign allows several more categories of recognition for donors. From the \$25 level all the way to the \$10,000 level, this campaign is designed to show that RML needs the money and wants to work with donors at whatever level they are able to give. Significant donations have already been made.

Ken and Lisa LeGette, upon reading in the newspaper that the Board of Education was considering no public library funding for the coming year, had their donation in the hands of the library staff before that day was over.



Ken and Lisa LeGette responded immediately this spring.

Jim and Mary Wyatt have become accustomed to remembering the library on Jim's birthday each year, and they felt the need to be so serious that they brought theirs in early, doubling it and designating that it go directly to current expenses in fiscal 2011.

Prospective business donors are encouraged to contact the library, because it is doubtful that the library staff or the Friends can send someone to call on all businesses. If anyone is interested in hearing more about how a donation will help, the library can send someone to respond to a call and show what we can do with donated funds.



Jim and Mary Wyatt doubled their usual generous donation, challenging others to give.

The library is now at a crossroads.

Hours are being reduced, staff members are receiving pay cuts, and book buying is at a virtual standstill. All of this is hurting RML in ways that will continue to be evident for years to come, as the collection erodes and service is lost.

Ann Flowers, Chairperson of the Roddenbery Memorial Library Board of Trustees, is encouraging all Grady County citizens to participate in whatever way they can to assist with the SP 2010 campaign. Mrs. Flowers commented, "We want to help continue the availability of high quality services and resources we offer to Grady County and surrounding communities. Although funding has been cut from our local government budget and hours of operation will be cut, our dedicated staff continues to give 100% daily to offer the very best of service to our patrons."



She added, "Our public library is one of the landmarks of our community, a local advantage of which we are truly proud. I encourage everyone to consider making a donation to RML SP 2010. The library has always been able to count on the people of our community for support, and we are thankful for that."

The Friends of the Library and other library supporters now join together in issuing the challenge to make a donation to the SP 2010 campaign. Once again we will recognize donors by pinning their names on the circulation desk, and by running a final list of donors in The Cairo Messenger. The time is now—the need is great. We ask for your help.

Board Chair Ann Flowers encourages donations.

If you want to be contacted personally, please call us at 377-3632, and the library staff will make an appointment to speak with you.

Recruiting Active Friends, Library Advocates

RML Needs Significant, Positive Community Support

The Friends of the Library is currently composed of about 300 families and businesses, but things have a tendency to drift over a period of years, and there are not as many active Friends members as in past years. Now the Friends and the library staff are looking for community-minded people who want to play a part in the activities of the Friends.

There are many supporters whose generosity at membership renewal time is most gracious, but there is also a need for people with a little time, talent, and drive to help run the organization. If you are such a person, please take the earliest possible opportunity to call the library and volunteer your services, or call Friends President Celeste Tyler.

As local government makes decisions on the level of library funding, there is also a need for library advocates. An advocate is simply a person who can speak well for what the library means to the community and help to make the case for keeping the service vibrant and effective in the lives of county residents. Anyone who has put in a good word for the library in recent months is a library advocate.

Some advocates are more organized and visible than others, and if your forte is to be out front representing causes that are important to you, the library needs you as an advocate.

A number of people have written letters and reminiscences to say what the library means to them and remind everyone of how important it is to those who use it. The people writing such positive statements are advocates for library service.

Some people keep a level of involvement that makes them both Friends of the Library and library advocates. It is not hard to do, so come for a visit soon and let us show you how.



Celeste Tyler says the Friends need helpers.

P.S. - Check your mailing label below to see if your Friends membership renewal is current. If the date has already passed, come for a visit and renew your membership. Renew early, and you can help encourage others to join during the annual membership drive in June. Thanks!

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