

## COLLIER COUNTY

# Friends of the Library offers events, needs through member support

By Jean L. Amodea

Friends of the Library of Collier County Inc., a nonprofit organization, has provided 65 years of service in Collier County. Its founders pioneered the effort to establish a free public library system in 1957 that has evolved into the 10-branch Collier County Public Library System.

Trish Chobrda, public relations chairperson, is a six-year veteran of the organization, who, after relocating to Naples from New Jersey, joined the organization and has not looked back since. Today, she is a board member and chairperson of the Nick Linn Author Series.

One of three lecture series provided by the organization, the Nick Linn Series, held at the Ritz-Carlton, Tiburon, is billed as an “annual winter lecture and luncheon series featuring four major New York Times bestselling authors”—such as well-known author James Patterson, considered the world’s bestselling author. The series is named for the past president, longtime board member and benefactor Nick Linn.

Other lecture series include the Nonfiction Lecture Series at Hilton Naples and two Author Spotlights held at the Norris Center in downtown Naples—one in October and one in April, said Chobrda.

“We have been trying to have the two series downtown so people can go downtown and have lunch before or after, depending on the time. They are held before and after the season since Norris Center is set up for theater-goers during the season,” she said.

Friends of the Library of Collier County provides financial support for several initiatives.

“Since the pandemic, there has been a demand for e-books. We started giving dona-

tions of \$100,000 a year for the last three years because the libraries can’t get that funding from the county since it’s not in their accounting process. So we stepped up to fill the void; there’s still a demand for adult and youth e-books that come right to your iPad,” Chobrda said.

“We also ask each of the 10 branches to give us a wish list of needs. We have fulfilled the wish lists of each one, supplying items such as rugged iPads, educational software, tables, library chairs with attached tables for adults, chairs for preteens and programmable whiteboards.”

Other initiatives include Mail-a-Book for those qualified as disabled and unable to go to the library; the governmental library standard qualifies these individuals. The library sends the books in blue nylon bags, and funding is supplied for the postage.

“For our genealogy research program, we supply the software and funding for two large databases and some resource material. The Naples Regional Library has a dedicated genealogy room staffed by volunteers from the Genealogical Society of Collier County. We also supply gifts for the library’s summer reading program and events to motivate young people and adults to read during the summer months. Special library programs with speakers are also funded during the year,” said Chobrda.

The West Wing Art Gallery, also sponsored by Friends of the Library of Collier County, is located in the North Regional Library at 650 Central Ave., and features exhibitions by local photographers and artists. The choice of the artists and photographers featured is governed by Friends of the Library.

“The West Wing is sometimes booked as much as two years in advance and has been in service for over 15 years,” said Cynde Decker, Friends of the Library of Collier County finance manager. “We have local artists, pho-

tography groups and single photographers. DPI SIG Photography Group, one of the largest photography clubs that exhibits, usually has one to two shows yearly.

“Most exhibits are scheduled for one month but sometimes booked for two months, depending on the artist. We have had local artists display with us for many years, with followers county- and state-wide who travel to view their favorite artists and collect their art. While the artwork is not for sale and does not display pricing, a price list with artist contact is available on request.”

Friends of the Library of Collier County also has an upcoming local author book fair at the South Regional Library.

“We give co-authors a table to display their work and then sit and speak with the public,” explained Chobrda. “Their work has to have been published within the last three years, and they have to be a Collier County resident.

“It’s free for the authors and the public. Two authors will be speaking about their adult and their children’s books. They have about 15 minutes each and then open the discussion to answer questions from the audience.”

The public is invited and encouraged to become members of the organization to ensure the Collier County library system remains a beacon of education, a social hub and a light that sparks curiosity and inquisitive research.

Membership is \$40 for an individual and \$50 for a family.

Benefits include:

- \* Access to members-only Signature Series Programs
- \* Friends Member Appreciation Event
- \* Discounts to Nonfiction Author Series and more
- \* Advanced access to Nick Linn and Author Spotlight Events
- \* Early access to library book sales
- \* Discount on membership to Rec-Plex at North Collier Regional Park [N](#)

## Author Spotlight Event

**When:** 2 p.m. Oct. 26

**Who:** Shelley Read, author of *Go as a River*

**Where:** Norris Community Center, 755 8th Ave. S., Naples

**Cost:** \$48 (members); \$58 (non-members)

## Local Author Book Fair

**When:** 11 a.m.- 3 p.m. Nov. 18

**Who:** 11:30 a.m. Susan Sachs Levine; 12:30 Sydney Thomas (both reading to children, with an accompanying activity)

**Who:** 1 p.m. Austin J. Bill (children’s book *Lost and Found: The Adventures of Marco the Cat* and adult book, *The Nine Lives of Florida’s Key Marco Cat*; Karna Small Bodman (children’s book *Wrigley at the White House* and the adult fiction thriller *Trust but Verify*)

**Where:** South Regional Library in the children’s section, 8065 Lely Cultural Parkway, Naples

**Cost:** Free for authors and public

## Nick Linn Lecture Series 2024

**When/Who:** Jan. 15 James Patterson, author of *Things I Wish I Told My Mother*; Feb. 19 Allison Pataki, author of *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post*; March 11 Pam Jenoff, author of *Code Name Sapphire*; March 25, Geraldine Brooks, author of *Horse*

**Where:** Noon lunch, Grand Lawn Pavilion, Ritz-Carlton Tiburon, 2600 Tiburon Drive, Naples

**Cost:** SOLD OUT. \$550-775 series tickets; \$400 lecture only

## Nonfiction Author Series 2024

**When/Who:** Jan. 22 Elizabeth Letts, author of *The Ride of Her Life: The True Story of a Women, Her Horse and Their Last-Chance Journey Across America*; Feb. 5 Buzz Bissinger, author of *The Mosquito Bowl: A Game of Life and Death in World War II*; Feb. 28 Jack E. Davis, author of *The Bald Eagle: The Improbable Journey of America’s Bird*; March 18 Amanda Fairbanks, author of *The Lost Boys of Montauk: The True Story of the Wind Blown, Four Men Who Vanished at Sea, and the Survivors They Left Behind*

**Where:** 8:30 a.m. breakfast Hilton Naples, 5111 Tamiami Trail N., Naples

**Cost:** \$350 series tickets (members); \$395 (nonmembers)

## Author Spotlight Event

**When:** 10 a.m. April 4

**Who:** Shana Abé, author of *An American Beauty: A Novel of the Gilded Age*

**Where:** Norris Community Center, 755 8th Ave. S., Naples

**Cost:** \$48 (members); \$58 nonmembers

## The West Wing Art Gallery

**When:** 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday-Saturday

**Who:** Artist and photographers’ exhibitions (visit [collier-friends.org](http://collier-friends.org) for current and future exhibitors)

**Where:** West Wing of the Naples Regional Library, 650 Central Ave., Naples

**Cost:** Free and open to the public

For reservations and event information, visit [collier-friends.org](http://collier-friends.org) or email [mhaywood@collier-friends.org](mailto:mhaywood@collier-friends.org)



The County Commissioners issued a proclamation recognizing the Friends of the Library of Collier County for their service. Back row, from left: Andy Solis; Donna Fiala; William McDaniel; Penny Taylor and Burt Saunders. Front row, members of the board of Friends of the Library, from left, Jon Zoler, Louise Franck, Connie Kindsvater, Trish Benisch, and Nick Linn. *Contributed photo*

**Editor’s Note:** Due to an error from our provider, we are unable to bring you this week’s comics/puzzles page.