



F·R·I·E·N·D·S

OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Supporting Friends of the Library Statewide

F * R * I * E * N * D * S TALK

February 2025

Hello, Friends,

Is it really February already? Where did January go? It is my hope that all of you are safe and warm. This may be one of the first times in quite a while that our state has experienced snow in both the western and eastern parts. But, since it is February, spring is closer than it was a little while ago.

This month provides a bunch of opportunities to celebrate fun events - especially Library Lovers Month! In addition, there is Black History, Canned Food (? - new to me), and a personal favorite - Spunky Old Broads month! We all know Groundhog Day on February 2nd, but there is US Feed the Birds Day (2/3), Take your Child to the Library Day (2/3 - appropriate, yes?), National Girls and Women in Sports Day (2/7), National Boy Scout Day (2/8), National Kite Flying Day (2/8), and National Pizza Day (2/9, yum!). We can't forget Thomas Edison's (2/11) and Abraham Lincoln's (2/12) birthdays or Mardi Gras (2/13). One of the best days is Valentine's Day on February 14! Start making your creative cards in time to give to all your friends. And, did you know that February 14 is also International Book Giving Day. Maybe we should think about giving books to our best friends for Valentine's Day along with cards. . . ? After that comes Presidents' Day on 2/19 and ends with Digital Learning Day on 2/29. I'll bet the creative juices are flowing in each of you. Please share your displays and events with us by sending

them to Newsletter editor, Judy Hills whose contact is listed on the last page.

We have received an interesting and wonderful request from Council Bluffs, Iowa. A young library patron is collecting books he would like to share with libraries in our state that were affected by Hurricane Helene. He has already collected monetary donations to cover the postage to ship the books. All he needs is a location that could use the books. I have talked with a couple of libraries in the affected areas. So far, their collections are in pretty good shape, but they are facing budget cuts which will impact their collections in the future. I have more feelers out but would appreciate your help in locating a suitable library that would be in need of this young man's generous offer and able to accept it.

This newsletter is intended to be informative and helpful to Friends groups across our state. You can help by forwarding each issue to others in your organization, community, or interested friends. If you have suggestions or questions you would like to see addressed, please feel free to let us know. Judy and I would love to hear from you.

Happy February to All,

Joyce Speas, President

Sparta, NC

Library Budget: Now is the Time to Advocate for More Funding

While Regional, County and Municipal budgets are officially approved in June for the new fiscal year which begins July 1st, now is the time when boards are finessing the departmental budgets. **Advocating for funding for your Friends' library or libraries is, or should be, one of your roles.**

What do you know about your library's budget? You can begin by asking your Director for a presentation on the topic. It helps to understand the process and important to know where your library stands with regarding to the funding it needs both for operations and for capital needs.

What is an operational budget? This is the amount of money allocated by the government for routine expenses—to run the library and its programs. You can better understand these by reviewing the line items on the library's budget.

What is a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)? Many governmental budgets will include a separate budget for capital improvement projects called a CIP. This is where a costly project has money put aside for several budget years until there is enough money to proceed with the project. This is akin to saving up to do a major home project. If your library has a major improvement need, you might want to ask why it is not included in the government's CIP.

Now that you understand the library's budget, you might want to know what needs

and wants are not met in this budget year. That is where the Friends can help fill the gaps OR where you can advocate for more funding from the concerned government. Remember the difference between supplanting and supplementing funding. When Friends step in and provide funding for expenses that the government should be providing, this is called supplanting. Keeping the building in good repair, paying for staff, paying for books, paying for licenses and software are examples of things that the operational budget should cover. We do not recommend that the Friends supplant these funding needs. The outcome might be that in future budget years, the government will expect this level of contribution to continue. Friends funding is best used to provide the extras. Examples might include supplies needed for a new STEAM program, replacement furniture for the children's library, or refreshments and giveaways for the summer reading program.

So if the funding shortfalls are related to things that the government should provide or do, this calls for advocacy. If the funding needed is for extras, that is where the Friends can help.

Talk to your Library Director for a better understanding of the library's needs and desires. Decide whether your Friends should advocate for more funding and/or supplement the library's budget.

“That Librarian” Submitted by Karen Robbins

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone has been kind to themselves and not made too many hard-to-keep resolutions. But I have one that is easy and will benefit you in so many ways.

This month I want to encourage you to buy and read Amanda Jones' book *That Librarian*. It is an eye-opening journey into the turmoil she faced and is still facing, along with the backlash when people used social media to harass and vilify the author mercilessly because she had spoken against censorship at a local library board meeting. It is also a testimony to her courage in the face of hate and her strength in response to fear and anger.

Amanda is an award-winning middle school librarian in Livingston Parish, LA, who loves middle schoolers, books, and teaching. When she learned that there would be a discussion about book content by the library board, she knew she had to go, and to speak, even though she was nervous. After she gave her speech that night, which was about why censorship deprived marginalized people from finding books that were important to them, her life was upended by accusations and even death threats.

It was especially meaningful to learn about the way she navigated the world, her community, and her school library despite the attacks posted about her online. As she writes in her book, the writing itself helped her to survive the vitriol of strangers and former friends in her community.

Jones discusses the people and political movements behind the censorship push, and she courageously writes about the chilling effect it has. “It is marginalizing and erasing cultures and groups of people, it is about defunding public institutions, it is about using libraries for political gain.” (p. 60) She sued online social media critics for defamation. The court case has cost a lot of money, time, and emotional upheaval. She is not suing because of censorship attempts, but rather the maligning of her, the lies about her, and the public hate speech about her posted online.



She believes that staying silent is a “kind of complicity.” (p. 197) Despite the harassment, the death threats, and the upheaval to her life, she continues to speak out and stand up to the censors. She is critical of people who want to dictate to others what they may display, read, or study, thus taking away the rights of other people.

Jones makes an eloquent plea for politicians to stop attacking librarians and teachers in the guise of protecting children. She notes that over 600,000 children are abused each year. These are the children that law makers should be trying to protect, according to Jones.

Please find time to buy and read this book. And for a good look at the mess in her parish, go to [The Advocate](#). Read what is transpiring right now!

Spoofting By Judy Hills

According to the FBI, "spoofing is when someone disguises an email address, sender name, phone number, or website URL—often just by changing one letter, symbol, or number—to convince you that you are interacting with a trusted source." Both my husband and I are on Boards of several organizations. We suspect that this is where our names and email addresses get picked up along with others from the organization whose names appear on the group's website. We do not advocate removing names and email addresses from the website as this can be a real turn-off to someone seeking to connect to your organization. Better just to get good at recognizing spoofing when it occurs.

During the holiday we both got several of these types of messages from a person whose name we recognized. When viewed on our phones, only the person's name appears so one can't tell if the message is real or not. Here are two hints about how to ferret out a fake from a real email: 1) if you view the email in your in-box on the computer you will see the person's name, but not their email address. Look at the message in the preview pane. You will see both the name and the email address. If you don't recognize the email address, delete the message without opening it. And 2) look at the message itself. Most of the messages I've seen have a more formal closing (e.g., "Regards" or "Respectfully"). People I know don't use these closings. So, be careful responding to emails like this. Below is an example of a message I supposedly received from an FONCPL Board member (now FONCPL President), Joyce Speas.

Message as it appeared on my phone and in my in-box:

Joyce Speas Request
Hi Judy, How are you today? Are you accessible right now? If you're free at the moment, I'd appreciate a quick chat via email. Regards, Joyce Speas <end>

Message as it appeared in my computer pre-view frame (note email address):

Request



Joyce Speas <ppresidentt9832@gmail.com>
To jahnbc@gmail.com

Hi Judy,
How are you today? Are you accessible right now? If you're free at the moment, I'd appreciate a quick chat via email.

Regards,
Joyce Speas

And just another spamming reminder, if you get a letter in the mail about renewing the domain name for your website that looks official, it is also probably bogus. I just received one for the FONCPL website domain name—the same one I get every year, and I know that is not who we pay. BE VIGILANT!

Random Things/Ideas/Grants

- Do you subscribe to the **free newsletter "Let's Move in Libraries"**? It has some good ideas and articles. [Click here](#) to see the January edition.
- If your community does not have a **Kentucky Derby Event (May 3rd)**, this might be a good **fundraiser** for your Friends. There are loads of ideas on the internet. Find ways to collaborate with the library and with other groups in your community.
- 60 of the 100 NC counties have North Carolina Community Foundation affiliates that provide **small grants** to local nonprofits. We encourage you to explore these grants. [Click here](#) to access the pull down menu for your county. Then go to the "apply for grants" tab.
- If your community has a **CSX** railroad line running through it, it may be eligible for a community **grant from CSX**. [Click here](#).
- **Target GiftCard** donations: Our local stores care about the communities they serve. If your organization is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), accredited school or public agency, you may go to any of our stores to request a Target GiftCard donation. To be considered, please fill out the [GiftCard request form](#) completely, print it out and bring it into your local Target store. You will need to provide a Government Affirmation letter or other IRS-provided letter for verification of your nonprofit organization or public agency (i.e., public school, public library) status. Target GiftCard donations are available February through December, as funding permits. An average donation is \$25-50 with the maximum donation of \$500 per year, per agency. Target does not donate merchandise. Stores typically take up to 30 days to review a request and respond with an approval or decline.
- List of **STEM grants**. [Click here](#).
- **Rural Technology grants**: [Apply for Grants - Rural Technology Fund](#)
- [Click here](#) to learn about **WalMart's Spark Good Local Grants**.
- [Click here](#)—International Paper Foundation grants—one focus is literacy birth to 3rd grade, must be in a community where they operate—lots in NC—check their online map.
- [Click here](#)—Dominion Energy grant—if they serve your community. Deadline 2/24 and 9/15. Two areas of focus: education (STEM) and community vitality (cultural endeavors).
- Want to know if your group's dues were paid? [Click here](#) to check the FONCPL website. The group's name is in bold if they have paid for 2025.

Trivia Competition

You may recall that the Friends of the New Bern-Craven County Library issued a challenge to the New Bern-Craven County Library Trustees which they accepted to form a team to compete against the Friends at Trivia on January 6th. Here is the email they sent to the Trustees after the competition

Members of the New Bern-Craven County Public Library Board of Trustees,

"The Friends of the Library had the most points and won last night's trivia competition. It was sad that only one trustee came to play and promptly left when he realized his teammates were no-shows. The trustee team forfeited the game and our

team won by default—not what we would have liked as we were looking forward to a real competition.

'As per our agreement, the loser must 'do something sweet' for the New Bern-Craven County Library staff and the regional staff on February 14th, Valentine's Day. Please send me pictures of the event so that we can put them in our March newsletter.'

The Havelock library is part of our regional library and their Friends tried to do something similar, but were unsuccessful due to a lack of interest. But don't let that dissuade your Friends from trying to engage your trustees and other groups in a friendly competition for a good cause.



Trivia Team L to R, back to front: Thomas Flori (Colleen's husband); Colleen Flori (President of the Friends of the Havelock-Craven County Public Library); Pat Wright (New Bern Friends Director); Ellie Toombs (New Bern Friends Director); Judy Hills (New Bern Friends VP); Alan Hills (Judy's husband); Lisa Keesen (New Bern Friends Secretary); and Joanne Straight (New Bern Friends President).



Swansboro Friends Hosts Regional Grant Writing Workshop

Submitted by Paula Patselas, President.

Friends of Swansboro Library got the New Year rockin' by hosting a workshop titled Exploring Grant Opportunities for Friends on Friday, January 17, 10am - 12 noon at the Swansboro Library, one of four libraries in Onslow County. The program was presented by Senatra Spearmon, Adult Information Services Librarian at the Onslow County Main Library in Jacksonville, NC. Senatra has held this position for a number of years, where she works intensively seeking grant sources and opportunities which may benefit Onslow County Public Libraries, including the four Friends non-profit organizations within the county. Senatra is a vital resource for the county's library system and is devoted to assisting Friends in locating appropriate grants and educating our members on the preparation and application process involved. She is available to provide assistance with editing, focus areas, contemporary grant trending and additional feedback. Senatra spent time during the workshop introducing the Foundation Center Directory and navigating the Foundation Directory online to locate potential grant opportunities. She urged attendees to become familiar with the Candid website, candid.org, to create a free account allowing access to a vast listing of grants which may be compatible with your Friends organizational mission and pursuits. Since the Candid website offers access to view literally hundreds of potential grants, it is helpful to utilize the website filter to narrow the search as part of the navigation of the site.

Other recommendations include forming a dedicated committee within your Friends group who have a vested interest and even previous experience in grant writing to get things started. Con-

duct some baseline preparation including review of Friends and associated library needs, mission, goals, resources, all ahead of seeking a grant. Start small and local and work up to larger, perhaps more complex grants. Maintain a continual strong network in the community including with local educators, businesses, leadership of officials, elected officials, and neighboring town or county Friends groups. Consider the mantra, work smarter, not harder and collaborate to share the workload to accomplish goals. It is not always necessary to reinvent the wheel, ask for help and share ideas.

The grant workshop was delightfully interactive and we learned a lot from each other as we engaged with our speaker, Senatra, and benefitted as well from the input of several attendees who have worked rather extensively with writing grants. We rounded out the two-hour workshop with a bee hive level of conversations, sharing phone numbers and emails. The take away was a palpable, enthusiastic interest in pursuing additional funding prospects through grants to benefit Friends and associated libraries within what I informally refer to as the "Coastal Friends Coalition". The 15 attendees included Friends members from Swansboro, New Bern, Vanceboro, Havelock and Western Carteret in Cape Carteret. We enjoyed the fun networking opportunity as well as a great lunch, sponsored by Jersey Mike's of Swansboro.

Friends of Swansboro Library President, Paula Patselas may be contacted at swansborofriends@gmail.com

Swansboro Friends Hosts Regional Grant Writing Workshop Photos



Candid.

Foundation Directory



Value of a Volunteer's Time

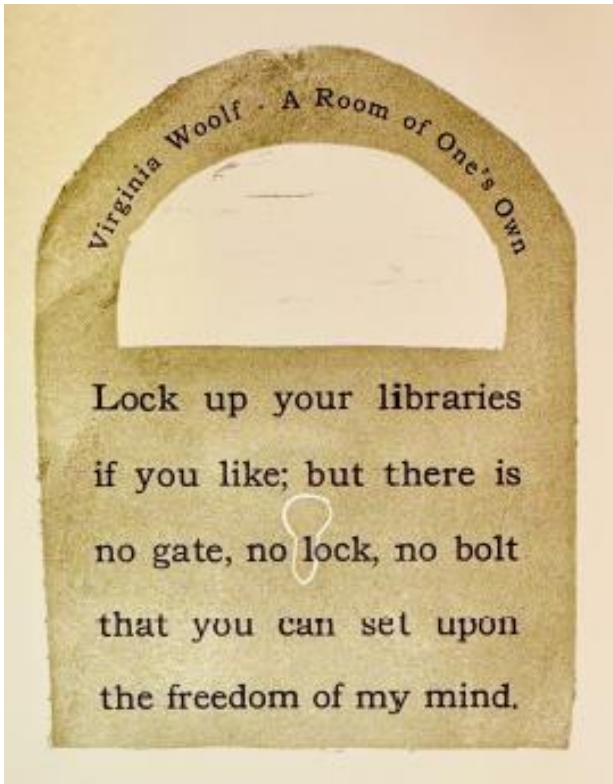
Each year the Nonprofit Leadership Center calculates the value of a volunteer's time. Independent Sector gathers data and conducts research to determine the value. As of April 2024, their estimated national value of each volunteer hour is currently \$33.49, a 5.3% increase from 2022.

It is important for nonprofits to determine the financial value of what is perceived to be "free labor." Dr. Akilah Watkins, President & CEO, Independent Sector says, "No dollar estimate can fully reflect the value of volunteers to the well-being of our communities and our nation, but organizations use this number to quantify the importance of volunteering."

So how might the Friends utilize this information? First, Friends need to be diligent in tracking the hours for each volunteer. Nothing impresses a funder more than knowing the number of community people who volunteer and the number of hours those individuals work. One organi-

zation gives certificates to their volunteers at a luncheon to honor them. On the certificate they write the number of volunteer hours and the value of that time. They read this information out loud at the lunch.

See the example below.



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"If all printers were determined not to print anything till they were sure it would offend nobody, there would be very little printed."

– Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin: His Life as He Wrote it

"Censorship is the child of fear. the father of ignorance. and the desperate weapon of fascists everywhere."

– Laurie Halse Anderson, SHOUT

"When you tear out a man's tongue, you are not proving him a liar, you're only telling the world that you fear what he might say."

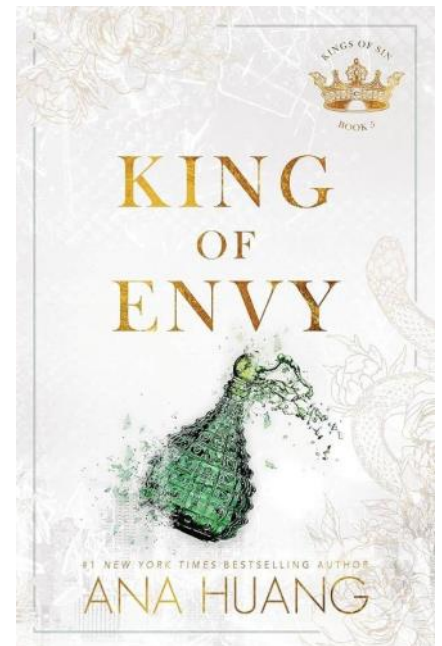
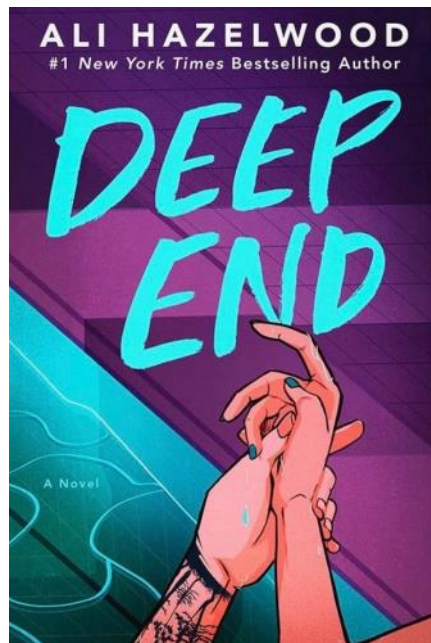
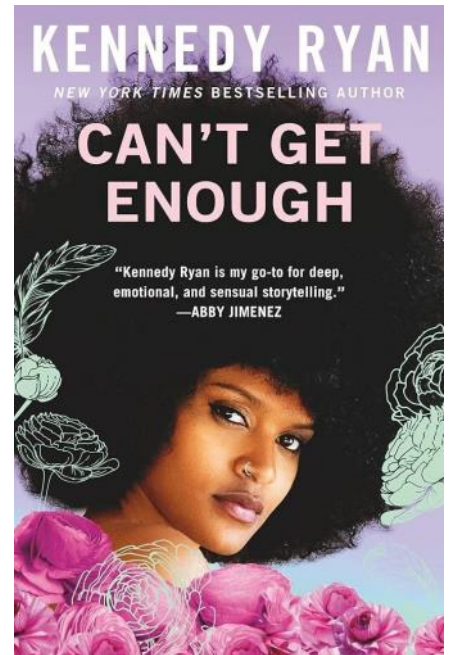
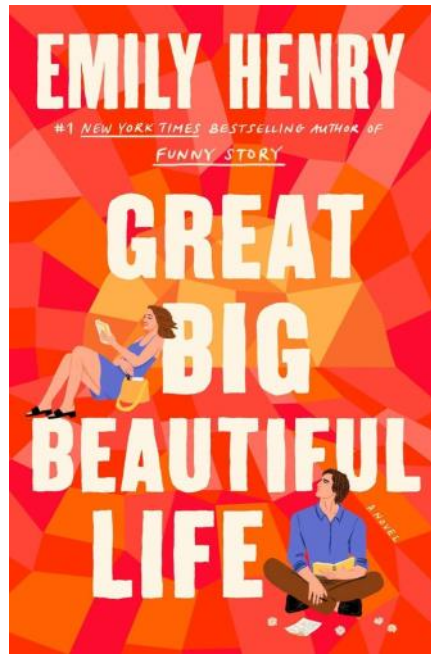
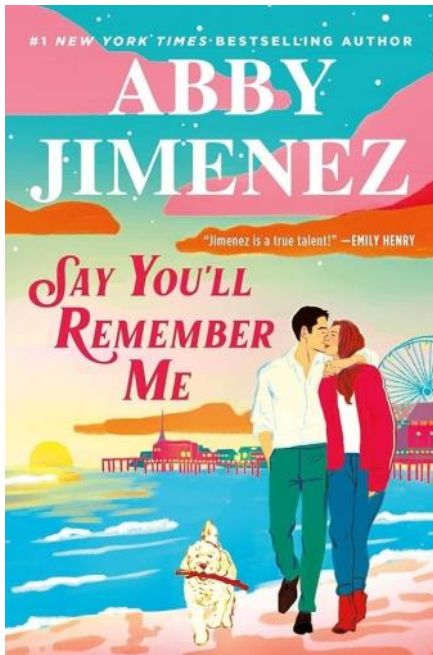
– George R.R. Martin, A Clash of Kings

If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none."

– Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451

Love is in the air!

Most Anticipated Romance Books of 2025



FONCPL Newsletters Published in 2024—In Review

The FONCPL Newsletter editor, Kathy Lambe did a marvelous job putting together informative and fun newsletters this past year. They are all posted on our website. Click here: <https://foncpl.org/newsletter/>

We invite you to peruse the back copies of the FONCPL newsletters for ideas and guidance. Make a note of things that are useful and make every attempt to incorporate them into your plan of work for 2025.

Here is a list of some articles and ideas to consider:

February—Christmas Drive Thru Event, Black History Month events, Winter Reading Challenge.

March—Gift cards sold by Friends Bookstore in Hendersonville, Easter event ideas, March Madness ideas, Censorship article, FONCPL Advocacy Kit, Friends organizational Structure.

April—National Poetry Month, National Library Week, bring Play Day to your community, testimony: how FONCPL has helped Friends of Rourk, Branch Library, StoryWalk week (Oct) ideas .

May—How to Host a Friends' Workshop FAQ, Children's book swap idea, Friends of Walkertown Library Tea,.

June—Understanding LGBTQIA2S Acro-

nyms, How to get Free Kindle Books with Libby, Friends paid for activity bus to transport Mt. Pleasant first graders to library to get a library card, idea: Friends collaborate with schools to fund book fairs,

July—FONCPL report on legal status of NC FOL groups, Challenge of Book Challenges, Spamming and Phishing.

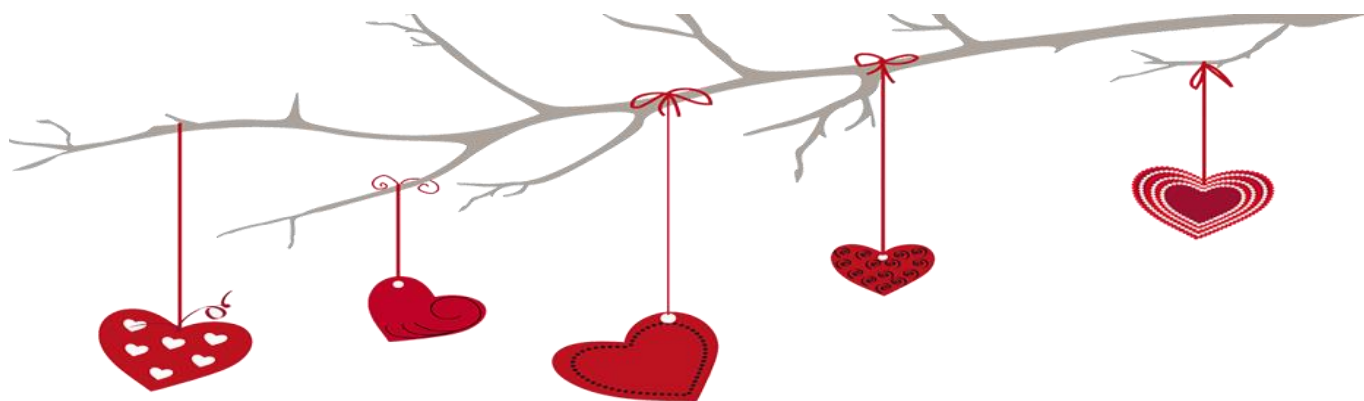
August—Fiscal Controls (1 of 4), back to school ideas, recipe for book club success, idea: free little art gallery,

September—Banned Book Week, Fiscal Controls (2 of 4), Cleaning your book collection, Let's talk about dues,

October—FOL Week, Fiscal Controls (3 of 4), ideas from Swansboro FOL, Reinstatement of books banned by libraries, Halloween book displays.

November—Fiscal Controls (4 of 4), idea to celebrate Chicken Soup for the Soul day with library staff, using national calendar of events for FOL planning, hurricane assistance needed by Hot Springs Library, display ideas for Veterans Day and Thanksgiving, book folding craft idea, '

December—2024 Legal Compliance Update, Banned and Challenged books in NC, Christmas Book Censorship, December library decorating ideas, giving FOL membership as gifts,





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Public Libraries**

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CALENDAR

All material for the newsletter is due to editor Judy Hills by the 25th of each month.

Click here for the 2025 Calendar of National Events—use these to plan your activities.

FONCPL Board Zoom Meetings 10 AM on: 2/8, 5/10, 8/9, with annual meeting on 11/15.

Here are a few dates of note for this month:

FEBRUARY

February is Library Lovers' Month

2/8 FONCPL Virtual Board meeting 10 AM

2/9 Super Bowl Sunday

2/14 Valentine's Day

2/14 International Book Giving Day

2/17 Random Acts of Kindness Day & Presidents' Day

MARCH

3/2 Read Across America Day

3/2-8 Return the Borrowed Book Week

3/4 Mardi Gras

3/8 Genealogy Day

3/9 Start of Daylight Savings Time

3/16 Freedom of Information Day

3/20 Spring Equinox

3/21 World Poetry Day