

Friends of the Ellsworth Public Library

NEWSLETTER

2026 is off to a great start for the Friends. We are excited to see a vibrant mood at EPL. It's amazing to see patrons filling up the library. That and the sound of children at play indicate that EPL is an important part of the community as a source for those seeking knowledge, entertainment, and connection in rural Maine. The Friends are happy to be able to fulfill higher funding requests from library staff:

- 2021: Introduction of Free Museum Passes (1 option) | Cost: \$250
- 2023: Expansion to offer 5 Culture Passes | Cost: \$1065
- 2024: Access to the NYT online | Cost: \$800
- 2026: NYT access extended due to popularity | Cost: \$2237
- 2025: Friends sponsored Frogtown Mt Puppeteers during the holiday season | \$650

Why I Am Involved With the Friends of EPL

I look back and I have to credit three women in my life as responsible for my love of libraries. First, was my mother who drove me and my sisters to the library in the next town, and who read to me before I could read.

Second, was EPL's children's librarian, Dorothy Wisbeski. She was responsible for building the Children's Room collection from 500 books to more than 20,000 during her 40-year tenure. Her most special gift to the library was the incredible exhibits she created with the help of her talented husband. It was magical how she transformed the basement children's room into far-off places. Holland appeared complete with a windmill and beautiful tulips; Japan came with a pagoda and step bridge; Christmas time became Germany with an 8 foot by 8 foot gingerbread castle, complete with edible candy treats. She also had a river otter, Okee, as a pet, who was the subject of her books, and frequent library visitor.

Third, Betty Hoegstedt, a neighbor and librarian at Rutgers University used to share books with me. The one I remember best was *The Phantom Tollbooth*. As a member of the USCG moving every few years, I joined local libraries as both a source of books and in later years, entertainment, checking out movies and music for nominal charge. As my own children grew older we regularly took them to the Ellsworth Public Library. They got books and attended programs. I think the best program was when Ashley Bryant came to the library to read from his books. He captivated the whole audience from the youngest to the oldest.



**DRAGONS LOVE TACOS
PARTY ON THE LAWN**

My direct involvement with the Friends started when the past library director, Pat Foster, was looking to revitalize the Friends after a disagreement brought the group to a halt. Pat personally asked patrons to join up so we could keep the organization alive. We quickly learned the meager money the Friends raised was vital to the Library so we banded together to bring the Friends back from near collapse to the thriving organization it is today.

Donations to the Friends as dues, money raised at book-sales, and as memorial donations **allow the Friends to fund the yearly requests from the library for programs, \$12,600 for 2026.** Our payback is the smiles we see on children's faces when they are at the library, feedback from library patrons and staff. Friends' funded programming helps achieve the goal of the Library being a valued community resource. Please help us keep EPL thriving with needed programs to serve all patrons. **If you are aware of a family who would love to use the library but are from a non-funding town and cannot afford a non-resident card, the Friends fund a scholarship program to cover the fee!**

The 2026 Book Sales, results and scheduled future sales

March 21st, One day Spring sale, raised \$433

May 14-16 3 day sale, raised \$1924

August 20, 21, 22

October 23, 24

Our ongoing book-sale is by the circulation desk, all by sale for donation! No cash? We now have a QR code posted on the bookshelves, when you scan it with your phone's camera, it will take you to a payment page where you can pay with a Credit Card.

Dues

The Friends have a new payment system, Zeffy, for credit cards. We still take cash or check if you would rather do that; renewal cards are available at the Library Circulation desk. Our dues cycle renews January 1, and dues are at the following Levels:

Friends \$20
Booklover \$50

Best Friend \$100
Champion Friend \$200

QR code: scan with
phone camera

Zeffy
Membership
Dues



Friends' meeting are usually the first Wednesday of the month at 3PM; we do skip July. New members are welcome to join our meetings. Not a meeting kind of person, but want to help the Friends? Please leave your contact information at the circulation desk and we will contact you to assist at our next book-sale.

Thanks, Gene Pellerano editor



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