

# FRIENDS

SAFFORD CITY GRAHAM COUNTY LIBRARY

[saffordlibraryfriends.org](http://saffordlibraryfriends.org)

Spring, 2026

## President's Message

It's time for the Spring newsletter! Where does the time go? As I reflect on the past 4 months, I am in awe of what the Friends and the library staff have accomplished. You are going to read about the See's Candies Drive, the holiday bake sale, Santa's visit, children's and teens' programming, cooking classes, Friends' Night Out, Open Book Club, etc., etc., etc.

What amazes me about the accomplishments is the realization that they are hosted by two separate entities: the library and the Friends. This includes the publication of this newsletter. It has two authors. Our goal is to make it appear as seamless as our relationship. I write for the Friends and Victoria Silva and her staff write for the library. Wait, we can't forget Bonnie Briscoe's installments which inform you of the annual DAR Constitution Day presentation in September. It's the magic of AnnJi Craig-Wooten, working behind the scenes, who lays out the final singular product. Thank you, AnnJi!

We receive many compliments on our newsletter. That tells us it gets read. Thank you, readership, for your interest in what we do. It encourages us to keep this good thing going. Enjoy our Spring issue!

Respectfully,  
*Paulette LeBlanc, SAGLIF President*



## Upcoming Fundraiser

The Friends are always in fundraising mode! This spring is no exception. We are hosting a raffle during April and May with the drawing to be held at the Friends board meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The raffle features a variety of prizes: Dessert of the Month,

two kachina prints by native artist, Nathaniel Wright, a



corn hole game donated by Double R Communications, and a patriotic quilt donated by Lynnae Merrell. Here's the best part. You can purchase \$5 tickets for the specific prize(s) you want to win. We've come up with a sophisticated sales approach. It's all about printing tickets in different colors. How clever! Don't be surprised if a board member approaches you. Or, feel free to purchase at the circulation desk. Good luck!!!

## Holiday Bake Sale

Our annual holiday bake sale held in early December was another "sweet" experience. How much money can you make in 8 hours? The answer is \$1000 (rounded up, once again, by a Friend



who can't tolerate uneven numbers). First of all, it can't happen without the talents of our bakers. They deserve recognition because most have been doing this for years. Thank you, Darlene Montierth, Donna McGaughey, Mindy Wilson, Lesley Talley, Tonya Himelfarb, Deborah Gibbs, Gloria Short, Annji Craig-Wooten, Elizabeth Henley, Paulette LeBlanc, Donna Harrison, Sue Rasmussen, Neoma Pack, Nancy Schauman, and Corbin Estes (our first teen baker.) And, a special shout-out to the Cooperative Extension Cooking Class, who donated all sorts of goodies, from peanut brittle to reindeer chow.

We couldn't have done it without shoppers. You will notice from the accompanying photo, we attracted customers of all ages. This also included Santa and Mrs. Claus. Thank you ALL for your support.

### See's Candies Drive: A Success!

Many people have asked us how lucrative a See's Candies Drive can be. Is it worth the investment? Is it worth the work?



From our perspective, the answer is a resounding "yes".

Our 2025 holiday sales were testimony to that. We took a conservative approach this year and *only* invested \$12,603 in products.

As with every year, it was a nail biter. But we ran out of inventory by December 20<sup>th</sup>. Can you hear that sigh of relief? And, here is the best part. It rendered a profit of \$4,123.28. For those of you who are mathematically inclined, that is a 33% profit. Was it worth it? You betcha!

Thanks to all who supported the candy drive by shopping at Ginaveve's. We are so fortunate to have that retail location to our avail. That is due to the long-standing partnership we have with Jenny and John Howard. We appreciate them and their wonderful staff. And, kudos to Cheryl Soto who sells our lollipops and candy bars at the Safford Gin. Truckers have a sweet tooth!

See you in November!!!

### Friends Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was held on January 28th. During this session, we reviewed the Friends' accomplishments of 2025. Of course, it is too lengthy to include in the newsletter. However, it is published on our website. **PLEASE** go to **saffordlibraryfriends.org**. Click on **More** on the top ribbon. Then, on **Newsletters**. The Annual Report is waiting for you. It is worth the time. Many of the projects, fundraisers, and programs we host are viable because of the people who participate in them. If you attend Friends Night Out, thank you. If you attend Gila Valley Arts Council afternoon performances or Open Book Club meetings, we appreciate you. And, if you participate in our fundraisers, we love you! It's a joy to be a part of the workings of our wonderful library. We couldn't do it without you.

### Friends Night Out (FNO)

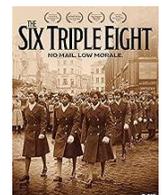
We hosted our first Paint and Take at **January** Friends Night Out.

Tabetha Aranda led 11 hesitant artists through 90 minutes of encouraging instruction to create a winter scene of white birch trees and a cardinal. She was



terrific! Patient and encouraging! And her daughter kept us supplied with paints, water, brushes, etc. To the surprise of us all, the final products were wonderful. We decided to dedicate future January Friends Night Out sessions to Paint and Takes. What fun!! See you in 2027!!

The **February** FNO was a movie night. In recognition of Black History Month, we featured **Six Triple Eight**, a Tyler Perry film in which 855 black women joined the war effort to address a three-year mail backlog. Despite discrimination and war-torn conditions, they sorted over 17



million pieces of mail ahead of schedule. This is a must-see movie!!

**March** is Women's History Month. This year's Friends Night Out observance is based on the book, **Gutsy Women**, written by Hillary and Chelsea Clinton. Eleven gutsy Graham County women led by Bonnie and Paulette LeBlanc will share stories of some remarkable women who made a difference in our lives through science, the arts, education, athletics, politics, and more. Join us for an evening of celebration! **Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m. at the Library Annex.**



In **April**, we'll be hosting a special 2-hour AZ Speaks program, *The Ark of Taste* focuses on Arizona food heritage. Amber Sampson will treat us to a tasting experience of foraged tea. In *The Gift of Hunger*, Mario Etsitty will speak on Dine' foods based on corn, beans, and squash. It is sure to be a delectable evening. Save the date: **April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Library Annex from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**



### A Bit of Culture!



Through a partnership with the library and Gila Valley Arts Council, the Friends sponsored four afternoon mini-concerts for community members which offered a broad range of musical expression in 2025-26. We kicked off the season with the Kristyn Harris Band and western swing. This was followed by romantic and gypsy tunes with Quartetto Gelato, chamber music with Beo String Quartet and a different twist to chamber music with Encore Saxophone Quartet. We are sorry to see the performance season end but look forward to its

return in the fall; kicking it off with some Flamenco!! See you in September. (Hmmm. Isn't that a song?)

### Open Book Club

Our book club members continue to enjoy each other's company every month; **3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 5:30**, unless bounced to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday for a holiday. **This club does not assign a book** but tried something different in January. We assigned a theme: children's and teens' literature. It was interesting to see how each member interpreted the assignment; from beautiful publications of George Washington to a doll of the Revolutionary War period, to teen sci-fi, to picture books written for middle schoolers, to dog-eared children's classics. There is so much wonderful children's literature out there now!! **Remember, our meetings are open to anyone who has interest in the printed word. Feel free to join us!**



This newsletter goes out to our members and many others in our community. If you have a **number** (for example, 4/26) **after** your **name** on the address label, **you are a member.** The number indicates the month and year your membership needs to be renewed. The 4/26 means you would need to renew your dues April, 2026.

The Friends of Library newsletter is published 3 times a year. Friends, 808 7th Ave, Safford, AZ 85546. President-Paulette LeBlanc, Vice-President-Sue Rasmussen, Secretary & Newsletter Editor-AnnJi Craig-Wooten, Treasurer-Donna Harrison. Website – [saffordlibraryfriends.org](http://saffordlibraryfriends.org)



# Library News

## New Staff

Born in Burnaby, British Columbia, **Shari Burnett** grew up in the lush rain forests of Canada before moving to the United States, where she built a family, a career, and a deep appreciation for community. She has volunteered in schools, libraries, and the Boy Scouts of America, along with being a store manager for Big 5 Sporting Goods and Five Below. Shari holds an Associate's degree in Communication from Eastern Arizona College and a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership from Arizona State University. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, gardening, learning new things and spending time with her family, friends and dog.



## Upcoming Programs

### Early Literacy Concert Series

Red Yarn will be coming to the David M Player Center for the Arts on **Thursday, April 9th at 10 am**. The program is for children ages 0-5 and their caregivers, with doors opening at 9:30 am.



Red Yarn adds music and puppetry into his shows, which feature traditional and original songs that

blend folk, rock'n'roll, country, and blues.

The library would like to thank all of the sponsors who make the Early Literacy Concert Series possible including City of Safford, First Things First, the Friends of the Library, Gila Valley Arts Council, United Way of Graham and Greenlee

Counties, Graham County Superintendent's Office and Greenlee County Superintendent's Office.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual GED Graduation

GED graduation will be held on **Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm** in the Library Program Room. This ceremony is to recognize all past and recent GED test graduates. All community members who have passed one or more of the five (5) GED tests required, along with their families, are invited to attend the celebration.



**RSVPs are required** for ceremony preparations including caps and gowns and a graduate slide show. Please email [kapodaca@saffordaz.gov](mailto:kapodaca@saffordaz.gov) to RSVP or stop by the library to **sign up by May 14, 2026**.

## Summer Reading

Summer Reading will be from **June 1<sup>st</sup> to July 16<sup>th</sup>**. There will be programs and activities for all ages, including a live animal show, and weeklong camps for Elementary and Teen audiences at the Library Annex. Check the library website, Facebook or Instagram for more information later this spring.



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**Our Safford City – Graham County Library** is noted throughout the country for having an exceptional staff who are innovative, imaginative, grant writers, and create partnerships who work to make our rural library a special place that enhances the community.

## Past Programs/Events

### Education Classes with the Cooperative Extension

The library hosted the Cooperative Extension at the beginning of February for a Super Bowl Snacks cooking class. The 63 participants were able to watch and sample snacks such as cowboy caviar and figs stuffed with goat cheese.



On March 4th, the Cooperative Extension presented Yellow Pie Plate, with information about how to divide possessions after a loved one has passed away. Participants in

both sessions also learned how to make a blueberry pie.

### STEM Festival

Library staff attended the annual STEM Festival on February 27th and 28th. On the 27th at Discovery Park, library staff and volunteers presented the Owl Pellet lab, in partnership with Freeport McMoRan. The 131 participants were able to dissect an owl pellet and learn about their diet.



On the 28th at Eastern Arizona College, library staff partnered with First Things First to provide early childhood resources and activities for 383 participants of all ages.

### School Tours and Field Trips

The library hosted several school field trips during February. Thatcher's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade students came for their Love of Reading Week on February 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Students listened to books relating

to the Pirates theme, along with learning about the library and then going on a scavenger hunt to find books and materials. For the two field trips, 136 attended.

The library also hosted schools for Bubble themed field trips where students learned how bubbles were made and then made their own bubbles to complete various challenges. For five field trips in February, 114 students attended.



### Winter Reading Challenge



In addition to the Get Booked Reading Challenge for Adults, the library also encouraged all ages to begin the New Year reading with the Winter Reading Challenge. From January 1 – 31st all ages were able to earn cozy winter prizes by reading 20 minutes a day, for a total of 600 minutes for the month. For the challenge this year, 66 participants read a total of 49,970 minutes.

### Teen Program

The library has three teen programs each month, on the first, second, and third Thursdays from 4 – 5 pm. On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Teen Program had its version of “Chopped.” The 13 participants formed three groups and were given the same ingredients and



challenged to make an entrée and dessert. After each challenge, the groups presented their creations to a small panel of library judges, with the overall winners given prizes provided by Five Below.

## Elementary Programs

The library had several programs from January to February for Elementary audiences. Programs included learning about wind turbines and pointillism, as well as Legos, Chalk Art and the monthly Tween Book Club. The Book Club's most recent book, *Wild Robot*, was discussed on March 11<sup>th</sup> and participants picked up the final book of the school year, *Amulet*. This year the group has also read *Cardboard Kingdom*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, *The One and Only Ivan* and *My Life as a Potato*. Spring Elementary programs are at 4 pm for grades K-3 (Tuesday) and 4th-6th (Wednesday) and will end in April.



1st and will end April 30<sup>th</sup>. There are twelve squares that are a mix of learning about Arizona and reading. There is a prize for each Bingo as well as the opportunity for larger prizes through raffle tickets. To register, go to the library's Beanstack page.

## Get Booked 2026

A New Year means a new Get Booked Reading Challenge!



As with prior years, participants aged 18 and older are challenged to read 12 books from 12 categories from January to December 2026. Those who complete that challenge will be entered into prize drawings in January 2027.

For those who would like an additional challenge, there are an extra 12 categories that can be completed throughout the year, for a total of 24. Those individuals who complete 24 books are entered into the grand prize drawing, provided by the Friends of the Library, to be drawn in January 2027. **To sign up**, visit <https://saffordgrahamlibrary.beanstack.com/reader365> or download the Beanstack app and search for Safford City – Graham County Library.

## Holiday Open House



The library hosted its annual Open House on Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Participants were able to visit Santa, make a Christmas craft, and watch a Christmas classic

throughout the event. About 380 attended the open house.

## Ongoing Programs/Services

### AZ Read 250 Book Bingo



The online reading challenge for all ages, AZ Read 250 Book Bingo, began March

## GED Preparation Classes and Testing

The library has in-person GED Preparation Classes available for Graham and Greenlee County residents thanks to a grant from the United Way



and generous funding through the Friends of the Library! Whether you are brushing up on your skills to prepare for the test or taking the first steps toward your future, this program is designed for you to succeed! Assistance is available Tuesdays through Thursdays. If you would like more information, please email the **Adult Education Instructor, Kristi Apodaca**, at

[kapodaca@saffordaz.gov](mailto:kapodaca@saffordaz.gov). You can expect a response within a week.

Additionally, the library is an official GED testing site, with in-person testing available **Mondays from 3 - 7 pm** and **Thursdays from 10 am – 2 pm**. **Testing** can be **scheduled** through **myGED.com** with tests costing \$41 (Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies) and \$9 (Civics). Please contact the library with any questions at 928-432-4165.

## Library Annex Programs

The Library Annex hosts **Educational Classes** provided **by the Graham County Cooperative Extension**. Future offerings will include Elderly Care Resources, Tacos and Salsa, Garden Tips and Salad Recipes. Classes are on the **first Wednesday of each month at 10 am and 5 pm**. For information about upcoming classes contact Cindy Pearson [cpearson@arizona.edu](mailto:cpearson@arizona.edu).



This **May** there will be **Gardening 101 classes** through the Graham County Cooperative Extension. If you would like more information about the gardening classes, please contact Richard Cluff [richardcluff@arizona.edu](mailto:richardcluff@arizona.edu).

**Makerspace Open Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays 5 – 7pm**. The Makerspace includes 3D printing, a Cricut machine, recording equipment and a Glowforge. Training is required before being able to use the Makerspace equipment,

## Seed Library

The library has added new seeds to its seed library! The program is a partnership between the library, the Graham County Cooperative Extension, and the local AmeriCorps program.



Over forty fruits, vegetables, beans, herbs, and flowers are currently available for checkout for the community. Those with a library card can check out up to five (5) seeds per week, per household, with a limit of two seed packets per seed type per year.

## Act One Culture Passes

The library participates in the Act One Culture Pass Program. A Culture Pass provides library card holders with two free tickets to participating cultural institutions and theater performances. With recent additions, there are now over 20 participating institutions throughout Arizona. For a list of available locations, please visit the library's website, <https://cityofsafford.us/858/Act-One-Culture-Passes>. For additional questions, contact the library at 928-432-4165.



## Monthly Library Newsletter

The library sends out a monthly newsletter via email highlighting programs for the upcoming month, along with other library services. If you would like to subscribe to the newsletter, please go to



<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/puA4I8h/MONTHLYNEWSLETTER> and signup or scan the QR code.

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**Libraries provide invaluable resources for education, community engagement and personal development, making them essential institutions in society.**

**SAGLIF**

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**April starts the  
Friends Raffle  
with a choice of  
prizes! Drawing  
May 20**

**Safford Graham Library Friends (SAGLIF)  
808 S. 7th Ave.  
Safford, AZ 85546 – 2944**

**Please use this Membership & Donation Form.**

*Support your library. Become a member of the Safford Graham Library Friends!*

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Annual membership per person      \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Annual Family membership

I would also like to make a donation to be used for one choice or split among the choices:

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Use as needed for the library      \$\_\_\_\_\_ SAGLIF Investment Fund

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Early Literacy Concert Series (ELCS) \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total payment: \_\_\_\_\_ Please make your check to SAGLIF.**

**Please mail to the address above or put in an envelope and drop off at the library circulation desk.**

**Please print clearly.**

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