

Friends of

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

TOWSON BRANCH

February 2026 NEWSLETTER

A peek behind the scenes as our Book Sale approaches

By Jan Davies

Every spring the Friends of the Towson Library hosts a mammoth book sale. What goes into making this highly profitable fundraiser a success?

Part 1 - Sorting

Many months prior to the sale, a group of dedicated volunteers spends several hours each week sorting and organizing the donations generously given for the sale.



Hidden in a galley space in the library offices is a sorting area featuring towering shelves labeled with genres of books. Donated books arrive in bags and boxes. They are first wiped down to remove dust and dirt, then labels and stickers are peeled off.

The first level of sorting: Is the book fiction or nonfiction, children's or adult? Within these categories are approximately 25 sub-categories, including Military History, Horror and Science Fiction, to name just a few. Once there are enough books in a sub-category to fill a box, the books are packed and moved to another hidden closet in the library.

Some of the fun of sorting is finding treasures that people donate, sometimes inadvertently and other times inexplicably. A set of knives was donated. Bootleg CDs and DVDs find their way to us. Many “bookmarks” are left in half-read books, such as postcards, utility bills, letters from Great Aunt Edna, and even money! The largest bill found years ago was a \$100 bill! We’ve also had well-used cookbooks with notes from the donor on favorite recipes. One of my favorite donations was a book that was passed between friends and family members, where each reader left a comment, their name, date and place where it was read on the inside front cover of the book. The novel traveled around the world for several years. I just may start that tradition with the books I share with friends.

The Friends are looking forward to receiving your book donations through March 31. Just remember to remove that bookmark!

Donations for the Book Sale are much appreciated!

We still have plenty of room to sort and store more of your donated books! Please bring gently-used books to the information desk during regular library hours (Monday-Thursday 9-8, Friday and Saturday 9-5, Sunday 1-5). Most popular with our customers are children’s books, like-new hardbacks (with dust jackets), biographies and military history.

NEWS AND NOTES:

- If you haven’t yet, please renew your Friends membership for 2026. You can easily renew online at towsonfriends.org/support . We’re also sending renewal forms via snail mail.
- Book Sale Reminder: Dates are Wednesday, April 15 through Saturday, April 18. We accept cash, checks or credit cards (minimum charge is \$5). Bargain day is Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., when all of the remaining books are priced at \$5 a foot
- We’re always looking for Book Sale volunteers, especially folks with strong backs to help with setting up on Tuesday before the sale. If you’re interested, please email towsonfriends@gmail.com.

Check out our website: www.towsonfriends.org