

July Friends File:

Karen Johnson, an appreciation... And an appreciation in poem-form of volunteers.

Karen Johnson, Secretary for the Friends of the Week's Public Library, is stepping away as secretary. I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank her for her years of service.

Karen, we so appreciate all that you have done on behalf of the Friends in particular and for the library generally.

Anyone who has ever attended one of our Friends meetings knows this: Karen produces phenomenal minutes. I'm not sure how she does it, but she produces excellently detailed and clear descriptions of the aspects and elements of each of our meetings. She gets the particular's right. And while it is undoubtedly not the case, she makes it look easy. On behalf of our entire Friends community, thank you, Karen, for your service as our Secretary.

As part of this appreciation, I turn to the poet, Peter Cole, who wrote the poem (excerpted) *Quatrains for a Calling*. In it he asks the question "Why are you here?" -- which can be asked and answered of volunteers. And I, not particularly poetical, offer a response.

*Quatrains for a Calling*

Why are you here?  
Who have you come for  
and what would you gain?  
And you've volunteered.  
Why are you here?  
when it could take years  
to find out — what?  
It's all so slippery,  
and may not cohere.  
And yet, you're here  
And what do you hear?  
Is it what you revere?  
Is that why you're here?  
Do you have a good ear?  
For praise or for verse?  
Can you handle a curse?  
Define, persevere.  
Why are you here?  
It could be a career.

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*Response:*

Thank goodness you're here.  
In our bibli-o-sphere  
Our "ship" helping steer  
Through the months and the year.  
You supporting so clear  
So glad you drew near  
Done all in good cheer  
Our Weeks Public Library  
good Friends volunteer.

As I shared at a recent meeting nonprofit organizations, like our Friends group, are not always the best at appreciating their volunteers. Not to say that that's the case here. But nonprofit organizations depend on the generous efforts of volunteers. Accordingly they should be thanked and deeply appreciated - which we do. Our thanks go out not only to Karen, but to all who volunteer on behalf of the library and on behalf of and for the town of Greenland.

~David Phreaner, Friends Chair