

BERKELEY BOOKMARK

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WWW.BERKELEYLIBRARYFRIENDS.ORG

FALL 2017

How Are We Doing?

Editor's note: We asked FOL President Sandy Bails to share some of her remarks from this year's membership meeting. They provide a good overview of where we are as an organization.

When putting together the agenda for this meeting, I came to realize how many changes there have been over the last year—new Director, a new Deputy Director in place after a long stretch with no one in that position, and four new members of the Board of Library Trustees. Our own Board will see four members go off, some in key positions, and three new members come on. But in the main, things at the Friends are comfortingly familiar. We're a bit like the Little Engine that Could and the U.S. Postal Service put together—doggedly plugging on through rain, sleet, and dark of night. Over hills. Not flashy, but absolutely dependable.

What is remarkable if not flashy about the Friends is the fact that it is a community enterprise through and through. Our staff—our volunteers, really—comes from the community, banding together in an effort to support an institution we love. And what's not to love about a library? When we look around at a world that often seems to be heading for hell in a hand basket and institutions we've come to take for granted on shakier and shakier ground, the library remains a beacon of sanity, and increasingly a community center. No longer the reverential depository of books and stern keepers of them, but a bustling focus of community life. Books for sure are an important part, but so are classes, workshops, lecture series, study groups, story hours, computer portals—tax and legal advice!! You name it, one way or another the library is likely to provide it.

The Friends enterprise, the sale of books, is made possible by community involvement. We are the vendors, of course, but our entire inventory comes from the community, and so do our patrons. In a way,

we function as middlemen to facilitate the reshuffling of books. After that reshuffling takes place we're left with a little pot of gold. Not a big pot, but a big enough pot to be able to respond to requests for funding from both the Library and the Foundation to the tune of \$150,000+ a year.

One of the Library-related changes the Friends will sort through this year is where the money we raise will go. For a number of years, we have described ourselves as the group that funds Library programming—summer reading programs, adult literacy, special workshops and presentations. We've

liked that, and it's made it easier (not easy, but easier) to differentiate ourselves from the Foundation. They do hardscape, we've said, we do softscape—they're the hardware guys, we're the software. This year the Library has asked us to fund discretionary collection allowances at each branch and at Central, so that staff can respond more easily to the needs and interests of each community and develop

collections accordingly. Books are a good thing, we like books, and we will still fund some programming, but this is a considerable shift in focus for us, and we're still in the process of trying it on and checking for fit.

If all of you here ask one friend or neighbor to become a member of the Friends (a mere \$25 annual contribution), if you make a point of coming into the stores—but especially Channing because it remains a well-kept secret—and bring a friend or neighbor with you—or anyone, a stranger off the street, we're happy to sell books to all comers—then we could do it all. We could do the Postal Service one better, turbo-charge our sturdy little engine. We could fund programming *and* book collection and go to bed each and every night knowing we've contributed to this community's common weal. And in these trying times, that's a worthy goal for us all.



Supporting the Friends = Supporting the Library

Editor's note: *I hope you don't skip the introductory paragraph below. Yes, it appears in every issue, but it's also an important reminder of why we are Friends and why we support Berkeley's beloved library.*

Creating a great public library requires support from many sources, The Berkeley Public Library is fortunate to have many community supporters who firmly believe in the power of libraries. Your individual donations help keep Berkeley's library system vibrant and responsive.

New Members

Eunice Baek	Nicholas & Sue Jones
Morgan Baum	Will Marston
Karen Bird	Peter & Frances Nurkse
Jillian Clark	David Olson
Basha Goddard	David R. Russell
Deborah Hersh	Breanne Slimick
Donna Hiraga-Stephens	Abdi Soltani & Grace Kong

Membership Renewals

Ana Albul	Robert Ke vess
Beverly Allphin	Jerry Long
Barbara Bibel	Laura Miller
Nigel Blair-Jones & Elisabeth Watson	Andrea Moss
Eloise Bodine	Mary O'Neill
Gretchen Brosius	Cheryl Palmer
Murray & Betty Cohen	Harriet Patton
Robert & Judith Davis	Andrea Pearlstein
Valerie Doyle	Norma Perlstein
Marsha Feinland	Marilyn Pew
Mary Goldstein	Mara Plekss
Susan Goldstein	Anna Presler
Miriam & Philip Gross	Harry Robertson
Rosemary Hardy	Bettina Roth
Henry Hecht	Margot Schevill
Janet Homrighausen	Patricia Solnitz
Jean Johnsen	Johanna Stigter
Carolyn Jones-Weinberger	Janet Turman
	Claire Yskamp

Donations \$26 to \$50

Barbara Blake	Betty Olds
Deirdre Cerkanowicz	Katherine Pope
Mary Ellen Fine	Nancy Rhoda
Andrea & Bill Foley	Zona Roberts
Anne Foley	Anne Schulster & Fred Kellogg
Kate Frankel	Victoria Shoemaker & Richard Friedman
Veronika Fukson	Abdi Soltani & Grace Kong
Trish & Tony Hawthorne	Stan & Andrea Washburn
Robin Kaer & Nancy Park	Christine Williams & Keith Skinner
Gerda Korner	Ruth Wittman
Linda Maio	Hildred Yost
Margaret McGarrahan	
JoAnn Minner	
Anita Navon	
Peter & Frances Nurkse	

Donations \$51 to \$200

Rachel Anderson & Sarah McCoy	Martin & JoAnn Lorber
Mr. & Mrs. David Bradford	Kathleen & Tosh Maestas
Roger Chretien	Will Marston
Linda Schacht Gage	Martha Rabkin
Donna Hiraga-Stephens	Ronald Rioux & Marianne Gaspy
Thomas & Elizabeth Jones	Sondra & Milton Schlesinger
Judith Justice	Marilyn Willats
Josh & Nancy Lawrence	

Donations \$201 and above

Sandy Bails Diane Davenport

Donations in Honor and in Memory...

In honor of Morgan Baum
from Abdi Soltani & Grace Kong

In honor of Barbara McPhail
from Margi Stromberg

In memory of Jody Bush
from Claudia Morrow

In memory of Ruth Gordon
from Bessie Chin

In memory of Anne Grodzins Lipow
from Suzanne Calpestri

In memory of Nicole O'Hay
from Barbara O'Hay

FRIENDS MISSION

The Friends of the Berkeley Public Library is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to support and expand the educational, cultural, and outreach programs of the Library. The Friends work with Library staff to build collections and stimulate interest in the Library.

Thanks to the Friends Board!

Editor's note: These kudos, slightly edited for length, are from FOL President Sandy Bails and were part of her remarks at June's Annual Meeting.

This year Ruth Grimes, Peggy McGarrahan, and Barbara McPhail are going off the Board. Diane Davenport, newly appointed to the Board of Library Trustees, is leaving the Board as well. We could spend the entire meeting singing their praises.



Ruth Grimes has been a steady, thoughtful presence and has provided crucial institutional memory at Board meetings, and is in the thick of every activity we engage in—the Book Festival, the Annual Sale, this meeting. Perhaps her most important contribution—and one

we hope she'll keep on making—is to lead a team of sorters at the Channing Bookstore on Mondays, when the store is closed....

Peggy McGarrahan set a standard for recording Board minutes that is tough to duplicate and a little intimidating—which makes replacing her a hard sell. Early on in her volunteer career with the Friends, Peggy made sense of our large children's book section at Channing, and she has been key in the planning and preparation of children's books at the Annual Sale. [*Editor's note:* And Peggy continues shepherding the children's section at the Central Library Bookstore.]

Barbara McPhail has been the treasurer for the Friends for as long as I can remember. She not only has kept track of our finances—not always easy when working with an all-volunteer group—but she has provided wise counsel and sage advice as well as long-range perspective.... She has been our good cop and our bad cop, a kind of uber mother for us all.

It is foolhardy to even try to list everything **Diane Davenport** has done and has meant to the Friends. She is the poster child for “plays well with others” and has steered our Board, whether as president, *ex officio* member, or regular member, with the voice of reason, on a safe and steady course. The Board of Library Trustees is fortunate to have her.

And some additional thank yous: Thank you to **Roz Hardy**, a particularly can-do member of our Board who organized us to get this meeting together.

Thank you to the **entire Friends Board**, not only for baking cookies and washing fruit and setting up these tables—and for cleaning up afterward—but for being the thoughtful, helpful, engaged group you are all year.

If someone had asked me a couple of years ago if I would want the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends, I think I would have said, “No thanks, I have enough friends.” But if I had said that I wouldn't have met these people, and I would be the poorer for that. If you're looking for a good reason to become involved with the Friends, consider the possibility of coming on the Board and getting to know this group—Bob Baty, Claudia Berger, Lucia Blakeslee, Andrea Foley, Roz Hardy, Judith Justice, Peggy Kirihara, Toni Klassen, Amy Roth, Yvonne Shawver, Kristin Stromberg, and Marilyn Willats.

Meet Two New Board Members

Editor's note: Time to meet the two newest members of the Friends Board of Directors: Jeri Ewart and Harry Robertson. I asked both of them to write a little about themselves and their thoughts about the Library and the Friends. [We'll hear from Margi Stromberg, who has rejoined the Board, in the next issue of the *Bookmark*.]

Jeri Ewart writes: I'm a New York native born and raised in Harlem. I received my BA from the City College of New York and my MLS from Columbia University, both located on the border of my neighborhood. I wanted to see a world beyond the East Coast so I decided to “escape” to someplace far away, but just as fantastic, so where else but the Bay Area. Although I live in wonderful Oakland, I have always spent 65% of my time in Berkeley working, socializing, and shopping.



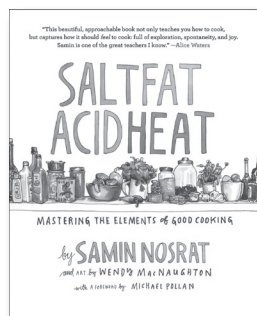
In the early years of the '90s, I was an on-call librarian [at various local libraries] ... and continued working on-call at BPL until I was hired for the branch manager position at Berkeley's South Branch. I held that nearly perfect position for fourteen years until retiring three years ago. Two years ago, after a one-year adjustment to retirement, I became a volunteer at the Channing Way Bookstore. Working with books and interacting with the public is my life, and I appreciate the opportunity provided by the Friends to continue my life's (cont'd p. 5)

Friends Don't Let Friends Miss Good Books

Editor's note: Here are five recommendations of good books from two of the Library's most fervent patrons. If you'd like to alert Friends to interesting, intriguing, captivating books, let me know. Your brief, pithy reviews are always welcomed!

Kristin Stromberg (Friends Board member and current Board treasurer)

I highly recommend *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking* by Samin Nosrat, with illustrations by Wendy MacNaughton and foreword by Michael Pollan.



I first learned about Samin from Novella Carpenter's *Farm City* (one of my all-time favorite books). Samin was then a chef at Eccolo on Fourth Street, and Novella was feeding her

backyard pigs out of Eccolo's dumpsters. Long story short, Novella was invited into the Eccolo kitchen, where she met Samin and Eccolo owner/head chef Christopher Lee.

So a few years later, when Samin started offering cooking classes at Pizzaiolo, I was all in. Those classes completely transformed my cooking, and, as it turns out, were the testing ground for *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat*. Everything I loved from those classes, and more, is included within. Plus Wendy MacNaughton's amazing illustrations.

If you like to eat, I highly recommend this book. Even if you don't like to cook, or if you don't think you can cook, this book might change your mind.

Kristin also suggests *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative* by Florence Williams: After reading this book you will have a better idea of why it feels so good to go up to Tilden Park and breathe deeply. And you will make a point of doing it more often, because you will have learned how good it is for you. The author travels all over: Idaho, West Virginia, Scotland, Korea, to study the effects of the outdoors on the brain and one's general well-being. There is a waiting list for this book at the library, and for good reason!

Kathy Huff (longtime Friend and Library Foundation Director)

If you love books, people who love books, and stories about those who are changed by books, this is the book for you. *The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommends* by Swedish novelist Katarina Bivald is about a young woman who leaves her Swedish home and

job in a bookstore to meet up with her long-time literature pen pal, an older woman from Broken Wheel, Iowa. A surprise beginning sets off this original tale about what happens when a small town embraces their Swedish guest. Bivald's charming debut novel with its cast of interesting characters goes nicely with a summer vacation or a cup of coffee on a day with reading on your mind.



Kathy also recommends *Behold the Dreamers* by Imbolo Mbue: This engaging debut novel reveals the complexity of immigration, race, class, and the American Dream through the lens of marriage. A couple from Cameroon and their young son make Harlem their home and each have their own unique experiences of work and daily life. The backdrop is the failure of Lehman Brothers, and nothing is ever quite as it seems. This extremely engaging novel touches on nearly all of today's immigration issues without being overly self-conscious. Named "Best Book of 2016" by several sources and it's easy to see why.

And Kathy has yet another favorite to recommend: Ever since reading Fredrik Backman's *A Man Called Ove*, I've been a fan of his quirky, heartwarming books. *Britt-Marie Was Here* goes on the list as another curious and humorous novel that stays with you long after the last page. Sixty-three-year-old Britt-Marie can't stand messes and tries to fend for herself after a long marriage. The book is more than about a disorganized cutlery drawer, something counted among the list of "unforgivable sins." It's a story about love and soccer, and how to find yourself in a world that can be isolating and lonely.



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Staff Photographer: Yvonne Shawver

The *Bookmark* appears quarterly; we welcome your letters and your ideas for articles. Contact us at *Friends Bookmark*, 2090 Kittredge, Berkeley 94704, or by e-mail at svanyoung@earthlink.net.

A New Volunteer Reports on Her Experiences

Over fifteen years ago, I was a member of the original Authors Dinner Committee. Also on that committee were Diane Davenport and Sayre Van Young, so it should be no surprise to anyone who knows them that I was soon a member

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

— attributed, falsely it turns out, to Winston Churchill... but still a nice quote

What We Like about the Library

As usual at the Friends Annual Meeting, we asked everyone what their favorite things were about the Berkeley Public Library. Many library users answered with more than the usual terse “Books!” or “Everything!” Here are some of those more unusual—or unexpected—replies:

- That there are books for every interest and a place for everyone and they are always welcome
- It’s always there when a quiet spot is needed
- The Quilt Show, the astronomy helper, and the contemporary portion of the collection
- The people and the stories they tell
- Meditation at North Branch
- Love my library card!
- Seeing our community gather over learning
- The programs, the arts department, the librarians
- The diversity of people and materials
- Hours, variety, the Friends!
- Friendly staff
- Also well-loved: Central’s Children’s section, Reading Room, and History Room; North Branch; Link+; periodicals; and the electronic hold list.

Finally, one answer was more of a question: “What don’t I love?!!”

of the Friends. For over a decade, I have honestly done nothing more for the Friends than pay my dues, donate books, and help to finish off the lemon bars at the annual meeting. It was a lovely arrangement.

Last year I felt the need to try something new. I took an “Emeritus” title and left the Authors Dinner Committee, but just couldn’t abandon contributing to the library. It was suggested that I might enjoy learning how to list books on Amazon. I would work at the Central Library in the Friends Workroom and participate in the business of selling online some of the amazing books that this community donates. Last year those efforts raised over \$50,000, and I was indeed interested.

After expert and patient training from Barbara McPhail and John Spitzer, I have been happily working with the Amazon team for several months. I really look forward to my time there. It’s such an adventure to examine and evaluate the wide variety of books. The environment is bibliographically pleasing, my time commitments are very flexible, and the rewards are great. So, if you’re someone in the lemon bar category and are looking for something new—I would recommend looking into what the Friends might have to offer you!

—JoAnn Lorber



Two New Board Members, cont'd

(from page 3) work, and I hope to bring something to the table as a Board member.

Harry Robertson writes: Well... I grew up just outside of Detroit, Michigan, but have lived in Berkeley for the last almost fifty years. I retired nine years ago after working forty years in the transportation industry—mostly as a computer programmer—for Southern Pacific Railroad and then Matson Navigation. I’m a big fan of Berkeley’s fine library and have used it pretty intensively since moving here. Lately I volunteer at the Channing Way Bookstore which I enjoy very much and come home every week with armloads of books.



Don't You DARE Read That Book!

Banned Books Week starts September 24 this year; it celebrates the freedom to read—the freedom to seek and express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular. Seems like it's worthy of more than a week!

Banned Books Week was launched in 1982 in response to a surge in the number of challenges to books in schools, bookstores, and libraries. More than 11,300 books have been challenged since 1982, according to the American Library Association. You've probably read some of them—think *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, *Fun Home*, *Kite Runner*, or the *Bible*.

Appropriately—in these fraught political times—this year's slogan is “Words Have Power.” This year's Top Ten list of banned books explores a range of

genres (young adult, fiction, memoir) and formats (novels, graphic novels, picture books), but they have one thing in common: each book was threatened with removal from spaces where diverse ideas and perspectives should be welcomed.

The American Library Association has a number of web pages on this topic; for lists of books challenged from 2002 to the present, by year, check out www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks

The Central Library Bookstore
will feature an in-store sale of

BANNED BOOKS

throughout the month of September.

Unsung Behind-the-Scenes Hero

Once more, we salute one of our Friendly volunteers who works behind the scenes. John Spitzer isn't one of the smiling faces you'll encounter at the bookstore, but he's essential to the smooth running of two aspects of our bibliographic endeavors—Amazon sales and book donation pickups. I asked John for some biographical details and he



sent the following—too good to rewrite!

“A Berkeley native, John Spitzer taught music history at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, then at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Retiring in

2012 and seeking to dispose of his now superfluous collection of academic tomes, he wandered into the Friends bookstore where Sayre Van Young introduced him to the mysteries of online book sales. Since that fateful day, he has worked every Tuesday morning listing books for sale on Amazon. John also drives his Toyota truck around Berkeley picking up donations too large for people to bring to the bookstore themselves.”

Editor's note: Incidentally, John actually sent *two* biographical paragraphs, and the original version is another reason John is an Unsung Hero—he keeps

us laughing. It read, in part, “John Spitzer grew up in Berkeley, was convicted in 1965 of a gruesome ax murder and spent the next 40 years in San Quentin. He was paroled in 2005 and returned to the streets of Berkeley, where he slept in front of the Library staff entrance. He was discovered there one morning by Sayre Van Young, who recruited him to join the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library. Entirely rehabilitated by the wholesome environment of this admirable organization....”

Two of Our Favorite Library Quotes

“It's funny that we think of libraries as quiet demure places where we are shushed by dusty, bun-balancing, bespectacled women. The truth is libraries are raucous clubhouses for free speech, controversy, and community. Librarians have stood up to the Patriot Act, sat down with noisy toddlers, and reached out to illiterate adults. Libraries can never be shushed.”

And the corollary:

“You aren't a real librarian until you've been shushed by a patron.”

Note: The first quote is from comic Paula Poundstone, who is an outspoken supporter of libraries; the second quote appeared on the Facebook page “Fake Library Statistics,” a site always good for a hearty bibliographical chuckle.

Letters, We Get Letters...

Editor's note: The Friends Annual Book Sale, held in mid-June, is the subject of all three letters this issue.

Dear Sandy and Sayre—

I just wanted to share my congratulations with you and other Friends volunteers on a successful book sale! As a one-time bookseller, I have fond memories of attending such sales. As a librarian, I have learned how much hard work, sweat, and muscle goes into preparing for and conducting each sale. Beyond the money raised, Friends sales provide an opportunity for community members to affordably develop their own personal libraries (for themselves and their children), and I believe this is an invaluable service you all do. Please share my thanks with your volunteers and board!

—Elliot Warren
Deputy Library Director

Dear Book Sale Volunteers,

You are one amazing group of people! On behalf of all of the Friends, I want to thank you for everything you did to make sure that our Annual Book Sale was a success—which it certainly was, in large part due to your efforts.

You sorted, set-up, organized, “roved,” “counted,” “cashiered,” ran errands, answered questions, guided patrons, restocked tables, cleaned up, boxed up—in short, you did everything and anything that was needed, and all with smiles on your faces. Watching all of you this past weekend at the sale, I was, and continue to be, in awe of your energy, commitment, initiative, and constant cheerfulness. Many patrons commented on how wonderful the sale was and how helpful all the volunteers were.

So thank you. As usual, you make my job easy. With great appreciation,

—Lucia Blakeslee
Volunteer Coordinator, and Sale Co-Manager

Hello one and all,

I finally got the final figures together for the Friends Annual Sale as well as the Bay Area Book Festival and I must say they're very impressive. We made a total of \$5,162.50 at the Annual Sale, a thousand dollars above last year. Amazing.

We also topped our all-time record for the Bay Area Book Festival, making \$1,287. Last year we made \$957 and thought that was great! Wait until next year!

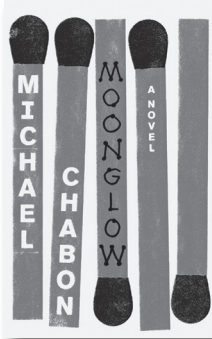
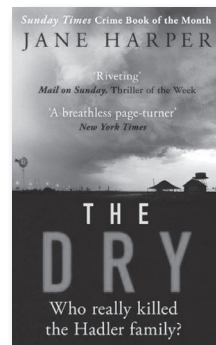
My hats off to all of you all!

—Barbara McPhail
[Previous] Friends Treasurer

What We Read

Here are some reading suggestions, as submitted by attendees at June's annual membership meeting.

- American Gods: A Novel*, by Neil Gaiman
Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire, by Peter Stark
Coleridge: Early Visions, 1772–1804 and Coleridge: Darker Reflections, 1804–1834, by Richard Holmes
Company Town, by Madeline Ashby
Dave Barry Does Japan, by Dave Barry
Dinner with Edward: The Story of a Remarkable Friendship, by Isabel Vincent
The Dry: A Novel, by Jane Harper
FDR's Funeral Train: A Betrayed Widow, a Soviet Spy, and a Presidency in the Balance, by Robert Klara
The Gene: An Intimate History, by Siddhartha Mukherjee
A Gentleman in Moscow, by Amor Towles
The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism, by Edward Baptist
Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis, by J. D. Vance
Independent People: An Epic, by Hallidor Laxness
The Lost Sketchbook of Edgar Degas, by Harriet Scott Chessman
A Man Called Ove: A Novel, by Fredrik Backman
The Master and Margarita, by Mikhail Bulgakov
Moonglow: A Novel, by Michael Chabon
Obelisk Gate, by N. K. Jemisin
Poldark, by Winston Graham
The Story of My Teeth, by Valeria Luiselli
Theft by Finding: Diaries (1977–2002), by David Sedaris
This Fight Is Our Fight: The Battle to Save America's Middle Class, by Elizabeth Warren
Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson, by Mitch Albom
The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America, by George Packer
War and Peace, by Leo Tolstoy
When God Winks at You: How God Speaks Directly to You Through the Power of Coincidence, by Squire Rushnell



Friends of the Berkeley Public Library Board of Directors, 2017-2018

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Margi Stromberg (2017) Marilyn Willats (2016)

Stay in touch with the Friends:

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Advisory Committee Chairs: Membership, Mara Melandry
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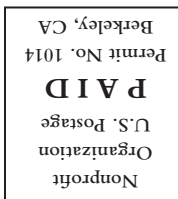
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Be a Friend! Join the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library.

YES! I want to support Berkeley's public libraries and the Friends of the Library. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 other \$ _____

Dues—New Friends Member Donation I would like to volunteer at the Friends' bookstores. Please contact me.
 Dues—Renewal Donation in honor/memory (circle one) of _____

Name (Please print) _____

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Checks, made payable to Friends of the Berkeley Public Library, may be mailed to the Friends at 2090 Kittredge Street, Berkeley, CA 94704. Contributions are tax deductible under IRS 501(c)3. Tax ID # 51-0193030