



BERKELEY BOOKMARK

VOL. XXII, NO. IV WWW.BERKELEYLIBRARYFRIENDS.ORG SEPTEMBER 2023

President's Annual Report by Cathy Brown

In my inaugural address last year (has it really gone that fast?), I expressed the wish for the Friends to have a normal year of open bookstores with regular hours and lots of volunteers, steady sales (stores and Amazon), in-person meetings, and increased presence at literary events and at Friends-sponsored Library programs. With the exception of the Annual membership meeting, we have more than met expectations. Here are some highlights of our activities over the last year:

- **Robust store and Amazon sales.** Yes, both stores reopened well over a year ago, and Amazon never quit during the pandemic. None of this would be possible without our stalwart and enthusiastic volunteers. Most of our volunteers came back after the pandemic layover, and we recruited new folks, and the success of the stores and Amazon is due entirely to their tireless efforts. (see the income statement on page 5 for amazing financials.)
- **Return of the Annual Big Sale.** This hugely popular event was held over two days in the Community Room of the Central Library. We almost ran out of books to sell!
- **Bay Area Book Festival.** Berkeley's premier literary event was a great place for the Friends to socialize, sell, and drum-up publicity for the Big Sale and our well-stocked stores. Our booth never lacked for browsers and customers.

- **In-person Board meetings.** In September, we resumed meeting in-person. Although there



Board members Sayre Van Young and Cathy Brown at the Bay Area Book Festival.

are advantages to Zoom, our members agree that ideas and conversation really flow when we're in a room together.

- **BPL Staff Scholarships.** The Friends are particularly proud of our contribution to Library staff who are pursuing the master's degree in library science, and we expanded our support to staff who are working on an AA or BA or who need particular courses to augment their library specialization. This year the Friends awarded \$16,300 in scholarships to library staff.

- **Participation in Friends-sponsored Library events.** We're funding most of the Library's public programming and it has been gratifying to participate in the Summer Reading Kick-off, Benvenue Beats, End of Summer Celebration, and National Afternoon Out. Our table always gets a steady stream of visitors eager to share their library story and hear about the Friends.

For the second year in a row, we were thrilled to be able to contribute \$150,600 to the Library for FY 2023-2024. If you subscribe to the Library's electronic newsletter or grab the paper copy, you'll notice that there are multiple events going on all the time at all branches. The range of offerings is nothing short of amazing! The popularity of art, cultural, and literary activities is the surest sign that people are (cont'd page 2)



Former Board presidents Sandy Bails and Roz Hardy at Benvenue Beats.

Supporting the Friends = Supporting the 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.

Welcome to New Members

Judith Thomas

Donations in Honor of...

In honor of Susan Huish from *Claudia Morrow*
In honor of Barbara McPhail from *Virginia Erck and David Petta*
In honor of Father's Day for Dan Manheim from *Nancy Manheim*

Donations in Memory of...

In memory of Mary Ellen Fine from *Trish and Tony Hawthorne*
In memory of Eva Konrad from *Anita Navon*
In memory of James Larson from *Robert Banfiel*
In memory of Shiok Lim from *Patricia Nagamoto*
In memory of Betty Olds from *Susan Wengraf*
In memory of Bob Warden from *Beth Edelstein, and from Emily Warden*
In memory of Regina Minudri and for the scholarship in her name from *Carol Starr*

Membership Renewals (\$25) and Donations at \$25

Beverly Bense	Candace Khanna
Lawrence Cotter	Linda Maio
Evelyn Gahtan	Preston Maring
Charlotte Gray	Anne-Marie Miller
Rachael Hall	Bridget Scadeng
Janet Homrighausen	Judy Shih
Tienne Jewelry	Ann Singer
Elizabeth Jordan	Margaret Sparks
	Ranko Yamada

Membership renewals (\$25) with additional donation up to \$200

Beth Benjamine	Jim Novosel
Peter and Nancy Bickel	Martha Rabkin
Dwight Bissell	Marion Wolfe and
Gary Brown	Scott Scheffler
Ellen Feldstein	Marty Schifffenbauer
Robert Fojit	Gene and Roz Seltzer
Terry Gillen	Patricia and Merrill Shanks
Lee and Patrick Hackett	Tedi Siminowsky
Charlene Harrington	Larry Simon
Trish and Tony Hawthorne	Sheila Singleton
Thomas Jones	Neil and Karyn Smith
JoAnn and Marty Lorber	

Renewals plus donations above \$200

Suzanne Calpestri	Martha Ramsey
Judith Justice	Katinka Wylie



Editorial Meanderings, Maunderings, & Mumblings...

In which your editor confides, educates, resolves, and generally chats about many interesting and diverse items pertaining to the friendliest bookstores around, the bookstores' renowned volunteers and esteemed customers, the services and nuances of Berkeley's beloved Public Library, plus ever so much more.

Gee, Thanks! We really have the nicest customers. A guy stuck his head inside the bookstore at Central, handed over a \$10 bill, and said, "I found this on the ground, and it must mean someone here needs money. So here."



Big Book Sale Redux. We were still recovering from May's Big Book Sale when a bookstore customer asked "So...when is the next Big Sale?" Sigh...no exact date but sometime in late Spring 2024 is likely. The sales have been going on since the

1960s, so we'll be continuing the tradition.

Speaking of Sales, we regularly hold themed "table sales" (weekly at Central, monthly at Channing). No, we're not selling tables; just covering a tabletop with low-priced books, CDs, DVDs, etc. If you'd like sale alerts, sign up at either bookstore or go online to our website. My favorite sale: "Books You Didn't Know You Wanted to Read."

Did You Make a Recent Donation to the Friends?

Several members have been renewing their membership or making donations through online charitable platforms. Often, these groups will not tell us who made the donation! If you give money to the Friends through a charitable program with a no-tell policy, please email us to let us know it is coming and that it's from you. [berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com]

And thanks to the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association for providing the concise wording above in the latest *BAHA Newsletter*. Apparently, this has been a problem for more than just the Friends!

Attention Volunteers: All our Friendly volunteers will be honored at a volunteer Appreciation Party on October 16, to be held at the Central Library. It's time to cheer on those who lug, sort, clean, price, shelve, and sell, donated books, plus those who Amazon-ize hundreds of books a week. Board members volunteer too ... Really, it takes a village.

Looking Ahead: According to Foundation Director Kathy Huff, there'll be some new and different things at the next Authors Dinner, starting with the date. It's scheduled for March 3, a Sunday, not a Saturday.

If you haven't been to an Authors Dinner before, it's definitely time to consider it. The Dinner is truly a unique cultural event that honors local authors and spotlights the Bay Area's literary tradition. Plus it's great fun.

Sigh... One of our members died earlier this year and her family wrote us: "If you would be so kind and remove her name from your donation and any additional mailing lists it would be most appreciated. She adored public libraries and your bookstores and was pleased to support you over many years." Thank you; we love hearing kind words.

My Favorite Bookstore Story, and if I've told you before, my apologies, but I think it's so darned clever: A young couple came into the Central Store and began eagerly scanning the shelves, pulling out and piling up books to buy. "Wow, I" said. "I'm glad you're finding so many good books to read. "Actually," the young woman replied, "we're getting married, and at the reception, we want to have one perfect book at the table for each guest."

Other Donation Possibilities

Thanks to all who have donated books to the Friends, dropping them off at either the Library Store or the Channing Store. But if you didn't have a chance to actually come inside the bookstores for a look around, you might be unaware that we sell more than books. Here's a list:

Friends T-shirts (great gift idea), road maps, greeting cards, postcards (used and unused), pamphlets and other ephemera, canvas tote bags, complete jigsaw puzzles, blank journals, new playing cards, and of course media: audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and yes, even LPs.

(cont'd p. 7)

President's Annual Report, cont'd

(from p. 1) getting back into the community and using the Library.

The Friends are also supportive of the Library's Racial Justice Advisory Group, an all-staff book group.



YouthWorks workers Maria and Ja'nee putting a Friends sticker inside books for the staff-read.

This past year, RJAG initiated a staff-focused communal read of Heather McGhee's *The Sum of Us*, culminating in a conversation with the author at the Northbrae Church in May – standing room only! Now, the group is undertaking a staff-read of *Just Action*, written by Richard and Leah Rothstein. The Friends purchased the books for staff.

In addition to Library programming and staff development, the Friends are pleased to support No More Summer Slide, a BUSD program designed to help kids who are at risk of losing reading skills over the summer break. This is a very effective program, and we are happy to partner with the Berkeley Public Schools Foundation to make it happen for K-5 students.

There's a lot going on! Please continue to support the Friends by donating quality used books and media, buying quality used books and media at our stores and on Amazon, volunteering in our stores and backstage, and renewing your membership. With gratitude.... ❖

—Cathy Brown, Friends President

Pithy Reading Suggestions from Friends Board

Editor's Note: In past newsletter issues, we've included the column "Friends Don't Let Friends Miss Good Books." After many years, though, I found Friends—and friends—avoiding me around press time. Oh Hi, they'd mumble, as they carefully backed away from my requests for a written review. "I love that column/ It's the best, really enjoy it/ but I'm not a writer/ I don't have time/ I haven't read anything good lately/ So sorry/ Bye."

So, for this issue at least, I'm lowering my expectations...or at least my suggested word count. I've asked Friends Board members to provide pithy (i.e., short) comments about a recent good read.

Sandy Bails recommends *The Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka. "It's an illuminating and heart-breaking account of the experience(s) of being a Japanese immigrant to the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. A slim and elegant novel with a unique "collective" voice."

Lucia Blakeslee raves about *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese, "a powerful, evocative story of three generations of a family in southwest

Letters, We Get Letters

Here's what Library staff have to say about the Friends: Hint—It's a BIG "Thank You!"

- Sheila Lew, Children's Librarian at North Branch, writes: Thank you all for supporting the End of Summer Celebration at North. We had about 250 people stop by and enjoy the event. We greatly appreciate the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library for participating in our community celebrations and offering free book giveaways.

- North Branch Teen Librarian Robyn Brown writes: Thank you all so much for a fun and successful Wellness Planting program yesterday! Attendees got to take home beautiful plants and pots. The creativity was flowing and when it was time to clean up everyone wanted to keep going! Big thanks to our amazing Friends of the Library for funding the event.

- Channing Branch Manager Shani Leonards writes I am really happy the Friends could join us at the Benvenue Beats: LatinX Heritage Street Party and I was thrilled to see you making connections. I think it is important for our patrons and neighbors to understand the work of the Friends and that the Library is able to put programs like that on with the support, hard work, and generosity of the Friends. ❖

India plagued by a mysterious affliction...a literary masterpiece filled with the trials, tribulations, humor, grace, pathos, and love of this extended complex family. If you listen to books, this one is read masterfully by the author."

Cathy Brown stepped back in time: "*In Zanesville* by Jo Ann Beard captures the silliness, self-consciousness, and emotional roller-coaster of teenagers in a small town, when cheerleaders ruled, and the wall phone was the lifeline to your best friends.

Diane Davenport is relieved after reading *The Marriage Portrait* by Maggie O'Farrell (author of *Hamnet*). "Thank goodness I wasn't born a woman of marriageable age in Florence in the 1550s."

Terry Gillen really enjoyed the novel *Mercury Pictures Presents* by Anthony Marra. "Wonderful cast of characters whose lives are connected by World War 2 and Hollywood."

Ruth Grimes was entertained by Graham Greene's *Travels with My Aunt*. "I was encouraged to read this by another volunteer, and it was not at all what I expected. He claimed that it was the first book he wrote just for fun."

Kristi Kenny was enthralled by *Morgan is My Name* by Sophie Keetch. "Remember *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley? This is a new, feminist retelling of the life of Morgan le Fay, focused on her early life, and from her own point of view."

Mara Melandry recommends *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder* by David Grann. She writes: "Add in terrible weather, starvation, murder, conflicting descriptions of events, courtroom drama...a fascinating story."

Vivian Pisano raced through *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard. "An engrossing, harrowing account of Roosevelt's scientific expedition down an uncharted and dangerous tributary of the Amazon. A nonfiction thriller and a page-turner!"

Sayre Van Young was royally entertained by *The King: The Life of Charles III* by J.R. Ward. "Engrossing, even though we know how it ends; you'll love him you'll hate him, you'll miss his mother."

Rob Walker suggests: *Super Infinite—The Transformations of John Donne*, by Katherine Rundell. "Sparkling and very modern biography of John Donne: the poet of love, sex, and death." ❖

Evelyn Gahtan

Longtime Friends member and beloved Reference Librarian Evelyn Gahtan died in her nineties, at home, in mid-August.



After serving as a riveter in the Douglas Aircraft Assembly Plant during the latter war years, she started working in the Library's Cataloging Department in 1950; she moved to the Reference Department in 1953 and worked there for the next 57 years.

She was a tenacious researcher who always, *always* found answers to even the most arcane or involved questions...even if it took days. An old-fashioned librarian, she nevertheless took to the computer gleefully, using it to compile an extensive directory of all the periodicals the Library owned. She rarely argued; most discussions ended with a shrug of her shoulders and "It will be what it will be." That laid-back quality was not in evidence, though, in 1965 when she fought the City and became the first City employee to request and be granted a maternity leave upon the birth of her daughter Maia, thus paving the way for future mothers pursuing careers.

Evelyn was a wonderful artist who for many years was in charge of library exhibits and displays, including the wall of posters she annually designed for Friends book sales in the library garden. She could cut out letters for displays backwards and upside down!

Her husband was an architect, her daughter is a renowned art scholar. Evelyn Gahtan had a steel-trap mind; she knew more than the rest of us, especially about Berkeley and Library history, and was always willing to share. She was hard working, focused, a joy to work with... simply one of the BPL's finest reference librarians.

—Sayre Van Young,
former BPL Librarian

Friends of the Berkeley Public Library Fiscal Year End 2022-2023

INCOME	
Book Selling (Bookstores, Amazon, Big Book Sale, etc.)	\$230,017.88
Memberships	8,497.03
Donations	25,344.03
Regina Minudri Scholarship Fund	1,000.00
Savings Account Interest	139.94
TOTAL INCOME	\$264,998.88

EXPENSES (Operational and Gifts)

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	
Book Selling	\$52,960.50
Administration	4,384.16
Newsletter	5,134.82
Membership	1,630.52
Publicity	69.98
TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	\$64,179.98

GIFTS	
Foundation Authors Dinner	\$33,500.00
Library Gift Fund	150,600.00
Library Scholarships	16,300.00
No More Summer Slide (BUSD)	24,600.00
TOTAL GIFTS	\$225,000.00

TOTAL OPERATIONAL/GIFTS EXP.	\$289,179.98
-------------------------------------	---------------------



Editor: Sayre Van Young
Layout/Design: Ann Higgins

The *Bookmark* appears quarterly; we welcome your letters & your ideas for articles. Contact us at *Friends Bookmark*, 2090 Kittredge, Berkeley 94704, or via e-mail: berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com

Welcome to New Board Members!

Editor's note: Summer means a change in the Friends Board, as various people are termed out or are just ready to retire, and another group has been elected in their place. It's a turnover annually of about a third of the Board.

We're saying goodbye to Board members Jeri Ewart, Roz Hardy (as president), Harry Robertson, Gene Seltzer, and Margi Stromberg, with grateful thanks for your hard work. Lucia Blakeslee has been termed out but remains an ex officio member, as she is a great notetaker... and no one else volunteered. Here are the new (and newish) Board members (and we'll have a photo of the entire Board in the next issue).



Scott Barshay

I was a long-time customer of the Channing bookstore, and I knew I wanted to volunteer there when I retired. My instincts were right on target. I have enjoyed getting to know and work with my fellow volunteers and we have had great discussions about some pretty

obscure books. I also love helping to sell great books to nice people at the best prices around.

I grew up and went to school on the East Coast, but after finishing law school, I moved out to Berkeley because I loved the beauty of Northern California, and I thought it was cool that Berkeley had a tool lending library. I raised my kids in Berkeley and worked for close to 40 years as a lawyer representing nonprofit housing developers, and I am still on the board of Insight Housing, a local homeless housing and services agency.

I love to swim at the Berkeley Y and I often head over to the Central Library to check out the Lucky Day shelf. I also like watching football and basketball.



Diane Davenport

I worked at Berkeley Public Library from 1986 to 2004, first as West Branch supervisor and then as manager of the Reference Department and the Art and Music Room.

I joined the Friends while working, and I joined the Friends Board when I retired. I served a term or two as president of the Friends, then joined the Board of the Library Foundation. I was on the original Authors Dinner Planning Committee and have been to 20 Authors

Dinners. I applied to the Board of Library Trustees and was selected and have just completed two terms.

I think libraries are one of society's most essential institutions and. I love being in the Friends because we raise money to help our library thrive.



Ruth Grimes

I'm starting my third tour on the Friends Board. It's such a wonderful organization, with some of the best folks around, and it's an honor to be associated with such a group.

I retired from the City of Berkeley in 2004 and became a Channing volunteer later that

same year. My current shift, which I love, is with the Monday morning sorters...we work hard and have a great time while doing it.

I moved to Berkeley when I was 8, and I'm still here. I went through the public schools here, to Cal

as an undergraduate, and then a graduate student here in City and Regional Planning. After several years, and the birth of my son, I went to the City of Berkeley for a "regular" job. It was a great place to work, and I was able to work in many different departments, including Codes, Housing, the Fire Department, and of course the Planning Department, where I led the effort on the Downtown Plan. After 30 years I was ready to retire and volunteer in the Channing Store....and I seem to have found my home as I still enjoy it. My son is now married, and I am a grandmother of three, and I have made sure that they grew up loving books and the Library. In my ever-shrinking free time I also work with colorful art glass, creating plates, bowls, jewelry, and other fun and practical items.

I've always had a soft spot for the Berkeley Public Library—my first volunteer efforts in middle school were in Central's Reference Room, alphabetizing the large collection of phone directories, and typing cards for the card catalogs. I still don't type well, sadly. But I'm delighted to be back on the Friends Board.



Judith Justice

I grew up in the Northeast (Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Boston) and came to Berkeley in 1975, by way of India where I was working with UNICEF on health and nutrition. Graduate study at UC Berkeley was a transition to

medical anthropology, including research on health and development in Asia and Africa, and a special interest in leprosy, beginning in Bhutan in the early 1980s. After retiring from UCSF (where my focus was on global health and health policy), the Berkeley Public Library offered the perfect opportunity to be more involved locally—first serving on the Library Foundation Board, followed by an earlier term on the FOL Board. I continued on the Board in an ex-officio capacity as Chair of the Scholarship Committee, which has provided an opportunity to work with Library staff and learn more about the Library and the type of supplemental study and training with the potential to benefit staff and library patrons. Serving on the Board has been a special experience, and I look forward to again working together with the many committed Board members, who also donate endless hours volunteering in the FOL bookstores, resulting in increased funding to be used for the Library and Berkeley.



Vivian Pisano

I'm delighted and honored to have been appointed to the FOL Board! I'm also very happy to be involved with libraries again, after having retired from a 40-year career in librarianship way back in 2010. I've worked

in many Bay Area libraries over the years—including Berkeley Public Library—and in various capacities, such as Reference, Outreach to Spanish-Speaking populations, Technical Services, Management, and, in my final post at San Francisco Public Library, in Information Technology.

I was born in Chile to a Chilean father and an American mother. At age ten, I came to the U.S. with my mother, sister, and brother to live in Sacramento, California. After graduating from UC Davis and after a three-year stint in South Lake Tahoe, in 1977 I moved to Berkeley to pursue my master's degree in library and Information studies. I found my home here in Berkeley, where I live with my husband.

There are a number of interests and activities that keep me grounded in this vibrant Bay Area community: theater, writing, reading, hiking, swimming, educational activities, interest groups, and more. In 2022, I published my memoir, *Living in Two Worlds*. I currently dabble in acting, having taken classes at Stage bridge for several years. And now, I'm a happy Friend of the Berkeley Public Library! ❖

More Editorial mumblings... cont'd

(from page 3)

But what Do I Have to Do? If you've gotten this far in the *Bookmark*, and if you're a new Friend, you may be wondering what's involved in being a Friend of the Library? You've paid your annual membership fee, and you're rather enjoying reading this newsletter. (I picture readers on a couch, feet up, holding the newsletter in one hand and a glass of wine fine in the other.) Now what?

First off...there is no secret handshake. There are no required meetings. Financial investment? Paying annual dues is all; larger donations are welcomed but not required.

Do I have to volunteer? Nope, though that too would be welcomed. Every Friendly volunteer I've talked to in the last decade has said volunteering was one of the smartest things they've ever done. Books...other book lovers...bookstores...libraries...what's not to like? And it's fun. As an organization running two bookstores, we almost always need additional volunteers. If you're interested, drop by either bookstore for a volunteer application, The application is also available online at our website: berkeleylibraryfriends.org.

Where Can I Donate Books? If you have just a few books to donate, you can take them to any of the Library's branches. They have limited storage space, so can accept only a handful or so at a time. Larger quantities can be taken to either of our two bookstores. We appreciate mid-sized boxes or sturdy bags. The bibliographical tidal waves tend to ebb and flow, so if you have more than 5 boxes, please call first to be sure we'll have space in our workrooms for them. Phone numbers are on the next page.

A reminder: we are not a recycling site. We can accept only books in good condition. Take a look at our website (see paragraph above) for a list of what we can and cannot accept. Or you can call either bookstore, and a friendly volunteer (see second paragraph above) will tell you what the bibliographical parameters are. ❖

Friends of the Berkeley Public Library
2090 Kittredge Street
Berkeley, California 94704

Address Service Requested
If your membership has expired (see label), please renew!

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oakland, CA
Permit No. 8014

Friends of the Berkeley Public Library
Board of Directors, 2022-23

President: Cathy Brown
Vice President: Terry Gillen
Treasurer: Barbara McPhail
Recording Secretary: Lucia Blakeslee, *(ex officio)*
Immediate Past President: Rosemary Hardy

Directors-at-large: Sandy Bails • Scott Barshay • Ed Cullen
• Diane Davenport • Ruth Grimes • Judith Justice • Kristi Kenney •
Marilyn Pew • Vivian Pisano • Carole Schloz • Sayre Van Young
• Rob Walker

Advisory Committee Chairs and Coordinators:
Publicity/Outreach, Sandy Bails
Membership, Mara Melandry *(ex officio)*
Scholarship, Judith Justice
Bookmark Editor: Sayre Van Young

Stay in touch with the Friends:

email: berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com

Channing Way Bookstore (510) 841-5604 2433 Channing Way
Central Library Bookstore (510) 981-6211 2090 Kittredge St.
Central Library Workroom/Office (510) 981-6152

Follow Us Online!

Web: www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org



Instagram: [friendsbpl](https://www.instagram.com/friendsbpl)



Facebook: [BerkeleyLibraryFriends](https://www.facebook.com/BerkeleyLibraryFriends)

Visit our online Amazon store:

amazon.com/shops/berkeleylibraryfriends



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) _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

e-mail _____ Phone _____

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