

BERKELEY BOOKMARK

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AUG 2025

President's Annual Report

By Cathy Brown

The Friends Annual Membership Meeting was held on June 18, in the friendly confines of Haver Hall of the Northbrae Community Church. Volunteers showed up with flowers, sandwiches, cheese, cookies, drinks, books, and the welcoming energy that characterizes these gatherings. Upwards of 65 members and special guests filled the seats, seeming to resume the conversations started a year ago. We were pleased to



host Tess Mayer, Library Director; Beverly Greene, Board of Library Trustees; Kathy Huff, BPLF Executive Director; and our Channing store City property managers Dionne Early and Guillermo Campos.

The Friends financial situation was presented to awe and applause. For the fourth consecutive year we exceeded \$250,000 in gross revenue (see the complete Fiscal Year summary on page 5). Expenses were high due to a record gift to the Library (our mission) and gifts to No More Summer Slide, BPLF's Authors Dinner, the Storytime Band, and the Measure X Campaign. As noted, revenue comes from membership dues, donations over and above membership, interest, and mostly from book and media sales at two bookstores and through Amazon. The prodigious effort to earn this money is the result of thousands of hours of volunteer labor, selling used books that generally range between 50 cents and three dollars. Impressive!

We conducted the election of officers and board

members for 2025-2026 (see the full list of directors on the address page of the newsletter). Marion Abbott and Jim Novosel are the new incoming at-large director and Vice President, respectively. Marion's bio appeared in the last newsletter; Jim's is on page 2. The nominations were confirmed, a hearty welcome was extended, and a grateful farewell was offered to outgoing directors Scott Barshay, Terry Gillen, Mara Melandry, Marilyn Pew, and Rob Walker. Without a doubt we will see them around!

Judith Justice and Kristi Kenney then announced Grace Chung, DeMareon Gipson, Pedro Perez, and Molly Stellino, recipients of the Friends scholarships. See the article on page 6, recognizing them and profiling the program.

Guest speaker Jennifer Lyons, (UC Berkeley's "first lady" and an educator/businesswoman in her own right) gave a thoughtful and personal talk on the deleterious effects of smart phones and social media, particularly as they affect young people. Considering AI to wide-spread dissemination of false information, she posed the question: how do we guide our children



to recognize and separate the wheat from the chaff and put the damn phone down?

One solution, of course, is engaging with the library, where kids and young adults can rediscover the love of reading for pleasure. Parents, educators and librarians are all critically important in fostering the love of reading, encouraging social interaction, (cont'd p. 6)

Letter from the Editor

Greetings Friends,

In this issue we have a lot of news to share. Here are some highlights:

BPL Director Tess Mayer has announced her departure August 15 to become the Director of the Pima County Library in Tucson, Arizona. Mayer took over during the pandemic, hired dozens of new staff and opened two branches on Sundays, among other achievements. "I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such a fantastic staff, leadership team, and BOLT plus the Berkeley Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library," she said. "The creativity and care with which our library community approaches public service is an inspiration! While I will miss this place and these people, I am heartened by how much we've been able to achieve." Deputy director Henry Bankhead will lead the library during the search to replace her.

Our annual Big Book Sale will take place Friday, September 19 & Saturday, September 20, 10-4 at Central in the Community Meeting Room, 3rd Floor. Mark your calendars! It's never too late to make donations. See our website for specifics: www.berkeleylibrary-friends.org

Jim Novosel has rejoined the FOL Board as Vice President. See his remarks at right.

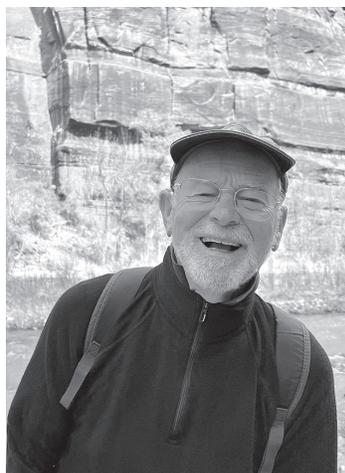
We note the passing of one of Berkeley's notable elders. Betty Crews, literature student, photographer, gourmet cook, competitive runner, Tilden Park Botanical Garden docent, knitter, mother (Gretchen Detre and Ingrid Crews), grandmother, great grandmother, and widow (Frederick Crews) died in February. Her obituary concluded: "No donations are requested, but for anyone who wants to know, her favorite charity was the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library." Thank you, Betty.

And a personal recommendation: The PBS documentary "Free for All: The Public Library" tells the story of the quiet revolutionaries who made a simple idea happen. From the pioneering women behind the "Free Library Movement" to today's librarians who service the public despite working in a contentious age of closures and book bans, meet those who created a civic institution where everything is free and the doors are open to all. BPL has a cameo. See the film at pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/free-for-all/ ❖

—Marion Abbott

Jim Novosel Returns to FOL Board as Vice President

My first memory of libraries was of a narrow, high ceilinged storefront in Visitation Valley whose quietness and friendly librarian made me feel at home and able to enjoy the unique pleasure and enlightenment of reading. Years later I worked at SF Main Library's reading room and then worked my



way through UC at the Moffat Undergraduate Library. These jobs gave me insight into the workings of libraries and increased my love of what libraries offer to the public.

I first joined the Friends 25 years ago, following in the footsteps of an architectural hero, Gene Angell. He had been a Board member and encouraged me to join. I have also served on BOLT (Board of Library Trustees) in the mid-teens, participating in two selection processes for Directors. After a much-needed change of thinking, I helped rename the south branch for Tarea Hall Pittman which was greatly desired by our Black community. Those were exciting and cathartic times for me and the library.

I have lived in Berkeley since 1964. After graduation, a brief sortie to Ohio, and apprenticeships with SF offices, I started my own firm, The Bay Architects, in 1982. We have obtained several local historical and design awards for our work. I am still practicing with interesting historic and residential projects but on a smaller scale and at a more leisurely pace.

My wife Celia and I have three grown sons. We live in a Queen Anne Victorian built 40 years after the Gold Rush which we remodeled and preserved for ourselves and future generations. Its oversized lowland lot has spacious garden areas, fruit trees and room for many beehives. Beekeeping and gardening are my great pleasures.

I appreciate being asked by Cathy Brown to rejoin the Friends Board and hope that I can do as great a job as performed by her and current Board members. ❖

—Jim Novosel

Not a New Cookbook—but a Goldmine of Old Ones!

Adapted with permission of the author from *Edible East Bay* | June 2, 2025

By Kristina Sepetys

A trove of gently used cookbooks awaits new owners at the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library bookstore. (Photos by Kristina Sepetys)

This recommendation isn't for a particular cookbook full of tempting photos and must-try recipes, or a food memoir, or even a novel with a delicious plot. It's for a destination. If you're a cookbook lover, make your way to the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library bookstore in downtown Berkeley!



Not far from the main Central library, this cozy used-book haven offers one of the best and most delightfully unpredictable selections of used cookbooks in town, most priced at an incredibly reasonable \$2 for paperbacks and \$3 for hardcovers. There are also sale racks and carts full of free books outside. All proceeds support the beloved Berkeley Public Library system, so your purchases fund everything from children's story times to tech literacy workshops, food-related programming, scholarships, capital campaigns, and many other excellent causes. Buy a stack and feel virtuous while doing so.

And oh, the treasures you'll find! Shelves and shelves of well-organized books in good to great condition. You might get lucky and find favorites like Deborah Madison and Alice Waters classics; obscure spiral-bound commune potluck collections (some with surprisingly great soup and granola recipes); forgotten gems like *The Silver Palate Cookbook*, Julia Child's *Menu Cookbook*, or Martha Stewart's *Entertaining*; and many virtually new volumes. There are often some impressive international offerings. I recently discovered a Moroccan tagine book, a guide to Georgian khachapuri, and three different volumes on Japanese home cooking.

The selection is always changing, and you never know what you'll find, which is half the fun and reason to visit often. It's also a smart stop for anyone building a cookbook collection without spending a fortune, or looking to replace that splattered, sauce-stained paperback from 1983.

And if you're doing a little spring cleaning of your own shelves? They take donations, too. Drop off your gently used cookbooks (or any other books in good condition) during store hours and help the next generation of home cooks find inspiration. Donations are tax-deductible; ask for a receipt when you drop off.

So no, it's not a new book. But it's a wonderful place to meet old ones and maybe bring a few home. Happy hunting!

The Friends of the Berkeley Public Library bookstore, 2433 Channing Way, close to the Cal campus, is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 4pm. The shop is located at the bottom of a parking structure. Parking is free for the first hour. Donations welcomed, but call first to confirm they have room, 510-841-5604. More info available at:

www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org/bookstores ❖

FRIENDS OF THE BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

BIG Book Sale



September 19 and 20, 2025
Friday and Saturday 10 am-4 pm
3d fl. Community Meeting Room
2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley

Teen Activities Supported by the Friends

By Mara Melandry

The Friends supports teen programs at the library in important ways: providing funds to purchase items needed in teen activities and helping to pay fees for speakers and experts to discuss specialized topics of particular interest to teenagers. I started investigating the topic of teens at the library by going to the library's website and looking at the monthly schedule



of programs and activities. There are an impressive 13 activities for teens (with a few crossovers that also attract adults).

To find out more, I talked with Robyn Sweet at North Branch, Kirstin Mandalay at South Branch, Will Marston at West Branch and Stephanie Torres at Central. Some programs are ongoing, week after week, such as Teen Hangout and Dungeons and Dragons, and some are one-time events such as a particular speaker. One of the goals of the teen librarians is to get kids comfortable coming to the library, feeling safe and cared for, with the ultimate goal of continuing coming to the library as adults. The teen librarians also interact with school librarians to publicize programs.

Because the Central Library is close to Berkeley High School, the Teen Room is enormously popular as a hangout space, according to Stephanie Torres, the teen librarian. During the school year about 40 teens show up every day. They know they'll get snacks, access to games and computers, and friendly guidance from librarians. 40 kids is a lot to handle, and Stephanie hopes to have a colleague soon.

The #1 need is food. Teens are constantly hungry and one way to encourage their participation in programs is to provide food. Nothing gets kids more motivated to attend than snacks like popcorn, dried

seaweed, dried fruit, drinks, popsicles, candy and cookies.

The second category of help funded by the Friends is materials needed for teen activities. One of my favorites took place at South Branch in September 2024: a Taylor Swift Sing-Along and Friendship Bracelet Crafting Event. It garnered a great turnout: 36 kids, teens and adults of all genders and backgrounds attended not only because well, yeah, it was Taylor Swift, but also because the library, using funds from the Friends, provided the materials to make the bracelets. These bracelets are very hot items at Taylor's concerts and her fans want them. The teen librarian said this event will repeat due to its great success.

Another popular teen activity is button-making. The Friends provided the money to buy a button machine. Kids love this because they can make personalized buttons of their own design.

The Friends also provides the money to purchase many items used in teen activities; some are used for adult activities as well:

- Chess boards and chess pieces

- Board games for family board game nights

- Video games

- Craft supplies such as paper, markers, and glue used in collage workshops

- Ukuleles, with lessons taught by a knowledgeable library aide, to kids, teens and adults

- Planters for decorating

- Telescopes for star-gazing and bird-watching which can be checked out for these activities. The Friends



pay a staff member of the Chabot Planetarium to come with a portable planetarium for programs. (Who

(cont'd next page)

Inbox: Letter from Patron Ann Longren

(slightly edited for continuity and clarity)

Hi you wonderful people who support our libraries and everything which that means!

I'm of Swedish descent, as is my sister who also found a happy new home in America. In Sweden we have something called death-cleaning, meaning to get rid of as much stuff as possible like books, clothes, and shoes, so the survivors will have as little as possible to deal with afterwards. I don't necessarily agree with my sister or the Swedish population at large regarding that. When our parents died some years ago, the four of us grown children had what I considered a very good time remembering and reminiscing and asking each other things like: Why do you think they saved this? And what on earth is it?! I think we actually saved all their books (!), especially the ones with their names in them. The rest, unless of important sentimental value, we simply gave away.

The other day, my sister reminded me that my three kids, living in three different countries, are very worried about me (I'm 83). "Do you really think your kids will leave their families and their careers and come here and deal with your stuff which will take a very, very loooooooooooooooooong time?!"

Teen Activities, *cont'd*

knew that there was such a thing as a portable planetarium?)

Speaker fees are also funded by the Friends: individual speakers and specialists such as tarot readers, astrologists, mindfulness coaches, and experts to talk about body literacy including puberty, menstruation, and other sensitive issues. At North Branch last summer Caro De Robertis presented her latest novel *The Palace of Eros*, a bold and subversive feminist and queer retelling of the Greek myth of Psyche and Eros.

The Friends provides the funds for all these activities but we leave the decisions about distribution to the library branches. We absolutely trust them to distribute the funds to great uses.

Even though this is not an activity funded by the Friends I just had to include it here: Cat Café! The librarians coordinate with Berkeley's Animal Services: kittens are brought to the library for kids and teens to play with.

I was so impressed with the teen librarians' devotion, enthusiasm and understanding of teenagers. Berkeley teenagers are lucky to have them. ❖

So she is trying to help me sort through things. The other day we found:

For Packrats Only: How to Clean up, Clear Out and Dejunk Your Life Forever by Don Aslett.

My dear sister told me to read it! (She is usually very skeptical about why I much prefer to sit down and read rather than death-clean!) Stuck inside was a[n issue of the] *Bookmark* dated Early Spring 2019, with an article called "Sparking Joy" by [then] Friends President Sandy Bails, which I read right away, and that's why I write to you now.

Please carry on what you wonderful Friends volunteers are doing! It's very important!

—With deep respect and LOVE and JOY!, Ann

Editor's Note: Now is always a great time to clean out and donate to the Friends! For guidelines, see www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org/book-donations/ ❖

Friends of the Berkeley Public Library

Fiscal Year End 2024-2025

INCOME

Book Selling (Bookstores, Amazon,	\$210,453.54
Memberships	7,325.00
Donations	41,019.58
Interest on CD	2,694.42
Saving Account Interest	4.65
TOTAL INCOME	\$261,497.19

EXPENSES (Operational and Gift)

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Book Selling	\$50,953.50
Administration	6,301.99
T-Shirts	1,466.33
Newsletter	2,611.05
Membership	505.40
Publicity	1,097.93
All Volunteer Meeting	388.94
TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	\$63,325.14

POLITICAL DONATION \$31,801.63

GIFTS

Foundation Authors Dinner	\$30,000.00
Library Gift Fund	174,999.00
Library Scholarships	9,000.00
No More Summer Slide (BUSD)	10,000.00
TOTAL GIFTS	\$223,999.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$319,125.77

Friends of the Library Awards Four Scholarships

By Judith Justice

The Friends of the Library began offering scholarships for BPL staff in the late 1990s to help them pursue degrees or certificates to further their careers in public library work. The Scholarship was founded in memory of Gina Minudri, former Director of the BPL and later of the SFPL.

Through the program, more than 50 employees have received scholarships and gone on to library careers in Berkeley or other area libraries. The criteria for scholarship support includes studies towards broader educational advancement, for example, to improve language skills, marketing or design work, computer or social media—and studies towards an AA, BA, MLIS, etc.

In 2025, the Friends awarded four scholarships, all for the MLIS (Masters Degree in Library and Information Science) at San Jose State. Each awardee received \$3000. (Library staff can apply for and receive two scholarships.)

This year's Scholarship recipients are:

Grace Chung: Library Specialist 11, Central Reference

DeMareon Gipson: Library Assistance, West Branch

Pedro Perez: Library Assistant, North Branch

Molly Stellino: Library Specialist 11, Central Reference

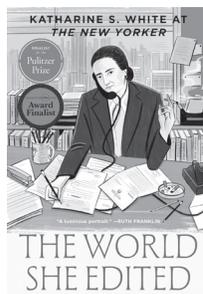


Morning crew at Bay Area Book Festival June 1

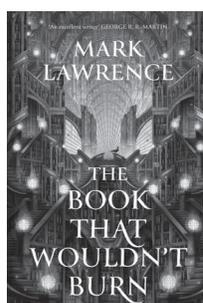
President's Annual Report, cont'd

and steering students toward verifiable sources. Jen recommended two particularly relevant books and left us with plenty of food for thought. Although she probably has many Cal Bear sweatshirts in her closet, she was the lucky winner of one of the door prizes – the coveted BPL sweatshirt – and left with that, a jar of honey from Jim Novosel's bees, and a bucket of flowers from his garden. ❖

Back by popular demand: What We're Reading

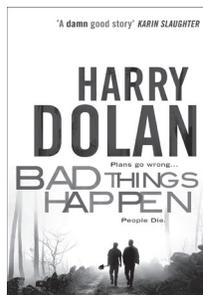


The World She Edited: Katharine S. White at The New Yorker by Amy Reading. Nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, an entertaining biography of the trailblazing editor who helped build the magazine's prestigious legacy and transform the 20th century literary landscape for women. —Marion Abbott

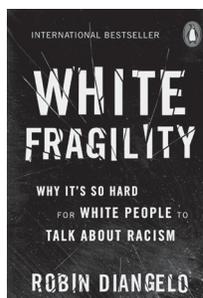


The Book That Wouldn't Burn by Mark Lawrence. The first book in a trilogy centering around a seemingly never-ending library that traverses and links time, species, empires, and even worlds. It features two very different but interesting and likable main characters and how their lives intertwine through the library. I'm currently reading the second book, *The Book That Broke the World*, and the third, *The Book That Held Her Heart*, is on hold at BPL.

—Kristi Kenney



Bad Things Happen by Harry Dolan. Set in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the first in the David Logan series, a delightfully interesting mystery drama about a small town publishing company whose writers and members get knocked off one by one. —Jim Novosel



White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin Diangelo. Tough reading about how Blacks have to live and deal in a society infused with white superiority/supremacy which makes them feel they don't belong. Very tough reading for sure but worth receiving and understanding the perspective she provides. —Jim Novosel

If you have a book to recommend for future *Bookmark* issues, please send it in! 75 words or less, please. ❖

Supporting the Friends = Supporting the Library

Maintaining a great public library requires support from many sources, particularly at this time of drastic federal cuts. The Berkeley Public Library is fortunate to have many community supporters who firmly believe in the power of libraries. Your individual donations help keep our library system vibrant and responsive. We are so grateful!

If you have renewed/donated in the last three months and do not see your name below, please accept

Welcome to New Members

Christa Aboitiz Suzanne Riess
Deepti Doshi Joy Steidel
Susan Gardner

Renewing at \$25

Elizabeth Amberg Judy Malamut
Mike Bradley Vicki Oswald
Karen Branson Harriet Patton
Barbara Braun Thomas Reilly
Murray Cohen Elizabeth Sklut
Susan Hampton Jane Scantlebury
Seena Hawley Douglas Smith
Christine Johnston Charlotte Toothman
Patricia Wood

Renewals and/or donations from \$26 up to \$200

Marcia Anderson Thomas Jones
Sharon Anderson Carrie Kahn
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 Michael Frank Dickran and Ann Tashjian
Nancy Graham Neda Tomasevich
Kristina Grondahl Charles Wollenberg
Rachel Hall
Janet Homrighausen
Phyllis Isaacson

our apology and help us update our records. The membership has passed from the capable hands of Mara Melandry to a new chair, and she's learning the ropes. Contact us with any aspect of membership at berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com. Finally, please add your email address to your renewal – you'll receive an email invitation to the Annual Meeting next year! Thank you!

Renewals and/or donations from \$201 up to \$500

Mariana and David Beatty
Donna Hiraga-Stephens
Bob Stern

Renewals and/or donations over \$500

Karen and Warren Bird Judith Justice
Cathy Brown Larry Simon
Beth Edelstein

Donations in Honor of...

Barbara McPhail *from Emily Warden*
Democracy *from Joseph Curran*
Sayre Van Young *from Heo Park*
Sayre Van Young
from Karen and Robert Holtermann

The Wonderful Berkeley *Bookmark* and all its editors!
Thank you Sayre and Marion
from Joan Collignon

Donations in Memory of...

Robert Allen *from Gertrude Allen*
Betty Crews *from Lucia Blakeslee*
Milton Schlesinger *from Sondra Schlesinger*
Barbara Witte *from Reed Schmidt*
Regina Minudri *from Therese Pipe*
Nicole O'Hay *from Barbara O'Hay*



Editor: Marion Abbott
Designer: Annie Higgins

The *Bookmark* appears quarterly; we welcome your letters & your ideas for articles. Contact us at *Friends Bookmark*, 2031 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704, or via email: berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com

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Central Library Bookstore (510) 981-6211 2090 Kittredge St.

Central Library Workroom/Office (510) 981-6152



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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 2031 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704. Contributions are tax deductible under IRS 501(c)3. Tax ID # 51-0193030