



BERKELEY BOOKMARK

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WWW.BERKELEYLIBRARYFRIENDS.ORG

MAY 2026

Lights! Camera! Action! Channing Gets Its Close-Up

By Sandy Bails

“Quiet on the set!”

It must be said that this is not a command we ever expected to hear ringing top of voice at the Channing bookstore. But hear it, we did, over and over again on



Sunday, March 8 when the bookstore, for six hours, was transformed into a movie set.

The backstory: The Friends received an inquiry by email from a student at Cal who was working on the production of a short film—with hopes of entering it, upon completion, into the festival circuit—and wanted to know if we were willing to allow the Channing bookstore to serve as the location for one scene. The

description of the film, “a subtly queer experimental/horror story,” in which a character experiences “strange interactions with interdimensional moon creatures” gave us pause. Somehow the notion of a zombie apocalypse was conjured up, but once we were assured that no fake blood would be spattered, nor glitter sprinkled, we agreed.

Members of the FOL Board volunteered to oversee unobtrusively during the filming. We seriously underestimated the scale of the production, imagining that a handful of students armed with smart phones would show up. But no, serious film equipment was unpacked from padded boxes, cameras, sound equip-



ment, dollies, tripods, and maybe fifteen to eighteen students. The director, cameramen and soundmen (women also assumed these roles), actors, assistant producers, the aforementioned “Quiet on the set!” woman (maybe an assistant director?), everything and everyone you could imagine—and more—for a professional endeavor.

We were happy that the no-fake-blood, no-glitter part of the bargain was faithfully observed. What we hadn’t understood was that, for purposes of these scenes (three, not one, as it turned out), the bookstore would be transformed into a library. This particular set design included no glossy dust jackets. To that end the minions scurried all over the store in search of “old” books. (Aside: Do students go into

(cont’d p. 6)

SAVE THE DATES!

Sunday, May 31
Bay Area Book Festival
11am-5pm
Downtown Berkeley



Wednesday, June 17
Friends Annual Meeting
& Luncheon
11:30am-1:30pm
Northbrae Community Church
(see next page for details)

Letter from the Editor

Greetings Friends,

It's been a full rich spring so far, and it's only just begun. Coming up we have two great events:

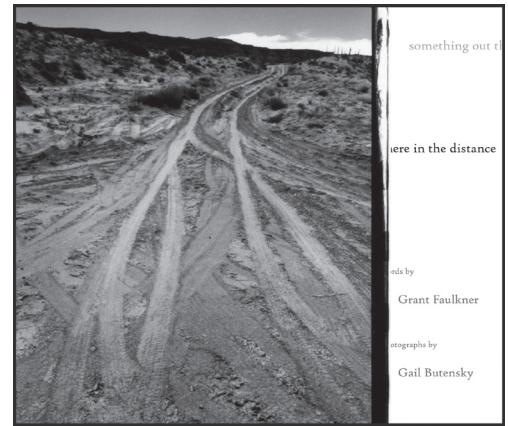
Sunday, May 31 the Friends will staff a booth at the 12th annual Bay Area Book Festival from 11-5 in downtown Berkeley. We've been saving and stockpiling special books for months, so come on by. To learn more about the festival, which runs from May 29-31, see baybookfest.org/bay-area-book-festival/.

Wednesday, June 17 from 11:30-1:30 the Friends will host the Annual Meeting that includes a tasty lunch and features the engaging and prolific writer Grant Faulkner.

Grant will address the art of writing with brevity, introducing one of his many books, *The Art of Brevity: Crafting the Very Short Story*, to illustrate the use of economy in art and communications. Then, get ready for a fun writing exercise as he challenges us to create a 6-word story. He will also talk about his just published

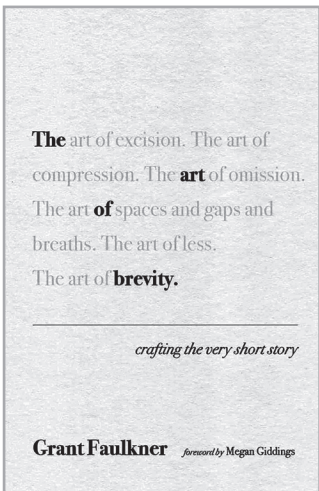
“flash novel,” *Something Out There in the Distance*, (with photographs by Gail Butensky). His books will be available for purchase.

The author of numerous books, Grant Faulkner is the cofounder of 100 Word Story, the cofounder of the Flash Fiction Institute, and the cohost of the podcast *Memoir Nation*.



Lastly, dear book-lovers, as you're preparing for these great events, it's also time for spring cleaning! We welcome your donations of good quality books. Check our website for guidelines: berkeleylibrary-friends.org/book-donations/ See you in the shelves!❖

—Marion Abbott



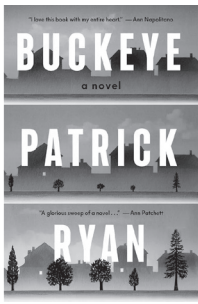
Restoring Ukrainian Libraries—An Update and a Request for Help



Last November, Matvii Petrov, a 4th grade student in Pleasanton, emailed the Friends and asked if we could contribute children's books for a project. His goal was to collect English-language books for children in Ukraine whose schools and libraries have been destroyed by war. The Friends contributed many books for this cause, as did other Friends organizations and schools—over 5,000 books! But shipping is expensive and now the effort is focusing on raising money for shipping. ❖ To support this worthy project, here's a link: gofundme.com/f/help-matvii-send-books-to-children-in-ukraine-vv3q5

What We're Reading

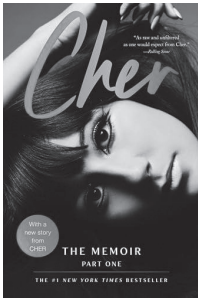
Buckeye, by Patrick Ryan



This novel has everything! Marvelous characters that you'll come to love dearly. A plot that moves effortlessly as one of the characters "tries to make right" a mistake that he's made. Sentences so well written that you'll read them over and over again. The wish, as you finish the last page, that the story would go on and on. While we're only through about a third of the year, I'm ready to say that this is surely the best book I'll read in 2026. Reserve it at the Library now!

—Diane Davenport

Cher: The Memoir (Part One), by Cher

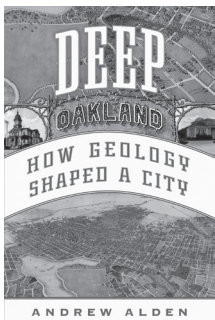


Okay, admit it: you also like reading about pop stars. One of my favorites is Cher, whose memoir (Part One) I read voraciously. She has always fascinated me: her hardscrabble upbringing with a mother who married eight times (twice to the same man), and then her phenomenal success as one half of Sonny and Cher. I loved their TV show, with their hilarious monologues at the beginning, their comedy sketches, and her solos with the fantastic costumes of Bob Mackie. I love her contralto voice.

Part One takes us through her childhood, dropping out of high school at 16, marriage and divorce from Sonny and her next, disastrous marriage to Gregg Allman, musician and heroin addict. She is such a remarkable woman. The book ends with her first attempts at acting and I cannot wait for Part Two (out this November).

—Mara Melandry

Deep Oakland: How Geology Shaped a City, by Andrew Alden

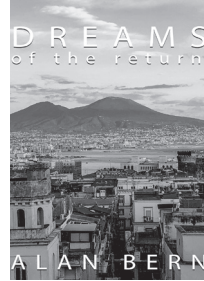


Here is a wondrous book about the ground beneath our feet that we take for granted. Rock quarries, road building, water wells, cemeteries and resorts in the Berkeley hills existed before housing buried the land's graceful and sensuous contours. Did you know that before asphalt roads, Oakland had a multitude of macadam roads created from quarries in the Berkeley hills, mainly from the Piedmont block that exists west of the Warren freeway, south of 24 and north of Park Blvd.? Several are now

parked, like Dracena Park. Oakland's downtown area is truly a flatland with its ground formed from sand dunes blown over in geologic time from San Francisco. A significant native American village existed on the southeast side of Lakeshore Avenue. These and other geological and human settlement stories offer the reader a deep look at what made this metropolis we know today as the East Bay.

—Jim Novosel

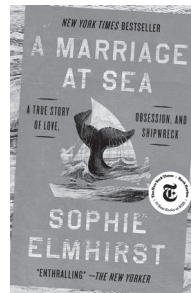
Dreams of the Return, by Alan Bern



Alan Bern provides us here with a rich, delicate, bountiful bowl of minestrone. Combining photography, poetry, prose, and translations of classic Italian poems as well as Italian translations of his own poems, he invites us to feel the essence of his Naples, and Italy. Via memories of his high school year in Naples, his visits over the years, and now what may be his final return, Bern portrays the best of Naples, its poets, its food, its landscapes. He recounts his own youthful loves and gives us glimpses of his long friendship with poet and educator Marco Rossi-Doria who accompanies him during this return. What a treat to savor this beautiful tribute to Naples!

—Vivian Pisano

A Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck, by Sophie Elmhirst



Could you imagine being stuck with your spouse on a life raft in the middle of the ocean for 117 days? Maurice and Maralyn Bailey chucked their humdrum lives in Britain and sailed for New Zealand in 1973. Nine months into the trip a whale destroyed their little boat and in the space of 10 minutes before the boat sank, they off-loaded as much water, food, and supplies as they could fit on a life raft the size of a queen bed. Maurice, who had been the undisputed captain of the boat, was in despair much of the time, while Maralyn industriously turned safety pins into fish hooks, rationed water and food, and devised menus for future dinner parties. She never lost hope, even as it became obvious that they were dying of starvation and exposure. They were rescued, and with their celebrity status made enough money to build another boat and take another voyage across the ocean. The marriage survived, an astonishing testament to love between opposites. (Note: Maralyn couldn't swim—that blows my mind!)

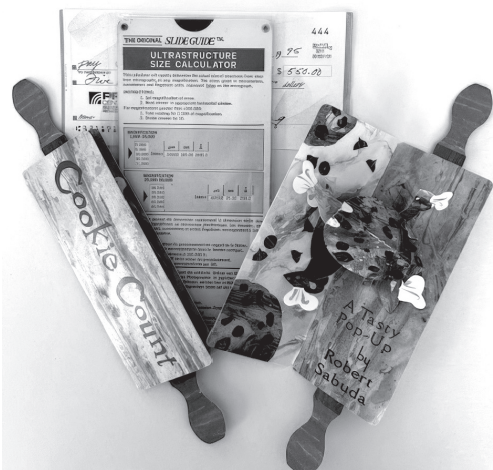
—Cathy Brown

Ephemera 3

By Sandy Bails

At the two bookstores, Channing (big), and Central (little) we seldom know when donations will roll in. An exception is late spring, when people graduate, relocate, retire. Other than that, we wait to see what happens. When we're particularly low on books we begin to wonder if this is the beginning of the end, if people have stopped reading, if the long-predicted death of the printed book is finally upon us. But we have learned not to express these concerns aloud; the forces that be out there, wherever they are, pick up on our worry, and suddenly we are so slammed with donations that we are hard-pressed to find places to stack boxes and bags of books.

One thing we can count on, rain or shine, any month of the year, is that inside the books in those boxes and bags, we will come upon remarkable stuff, which we have been describing in past *Bookmark* articles. One constant, predictably, is bookmarks. Most we put in a box on the counter to offer free to customers. There are sometimes beautiful bookmarks,



embroidered, embellished with pressed flowers, in tooled leather. In this particular batch of stuff collected over the last six months there is a bookmark (at least we think it's a book-

mark) in the shape of a rolling pin. It opens up, like a card, to reveal a pop-up: four little chef mice surrounding a chocolate chip cookie.

Sometimes we find foreign currency in what seems like extravagant amounts. Not so this time, but we do have a check for \$550. Sarah Hawthorne, have you been looking for this? And Tracy, did you ever get around to paying that \$338.40 bill from Macy's Movers?

Photos—some formal and staged, like the one labeled Christmas 1963 featuring the perfect Ozzie and Harriet sort of family: two girls in bouffant hairdos, two boys in white shirts and narrow ties just like their dad, and a proud mom overseeing this brood. Or the

couple, newly engaged, maybe newly married? She has been posed, probably seated, beside the man next to her, but just above her, on a shelf is a large flowered urn, which seems to be balancing on her head. An infant, perhaps named Edgar, looking calm but slightly suspicious, printed on the diagonal by G.



W. Varney of Chicago (1860-1925). Curiously, we have, over the years, come upon other photographs from the studio of Mr. Varney. Two featuring men's bare derrieres showed up, not entirely to our delight. Only one bears description in this family publication. Taken from a distance, a man stands on a rock. He holds his trousers in one hand (but has kept on his cowboy hat), and seems to be looking across a broad river or lake. His bare bottom gleams in contrast to his tanned back. We also have in our possession a glossy photo of Walter Pidgeon next to Ginny Simms put out by CBS to promote a two-hour radio show during WWII "in salute(s) to our fighting men [no women then in the armed forces] on Thanksgiving and Christmas." An aside: Walter Pidgeon, among other accomplishments, succeeded Ronald Reagan as president of the Screen Actors Guild.

We often come upon recipes cut from newspapers or magazines or written by hand. None in this batch was particularly interesting, but we were intrigued by the two "Menus of the Evening," one from October 1988, at the Mansion on Turtle Creek. The chef, Dean Fearing, was apparently renowned for creating haute-cuisine, Texas-style. How about "sautéed sea scallops with spicy southwest cole slaw, pecan-smoked onion hushpuppies and cilantro tartar sauce"? or "oven-roasted pheasant on sweet corn purée with poblano chili 'ranchero' sauce and sweet potato confetti"? We would order this just to get a gander at sweet

potato confetti. The prices, \$23.50 and \$28, are cheap by today's restaurant prices, but 38 years ago that was a considerable sum for dinner in Texas, or probably anywhere. A sudden thought occurs: could this in some way be connected to the man in the cowboy hat (and nothing else) standing on the rock? Is that body of water the Rio Grande?

What about the sticker we found, its paper backing still in place, black lettering on a bright yellow cowboy hat—LBJ. Very small lettering on the band of the hat tells us this piece of campaign paraphernalia was distributed by the Retail Clerks Union ABC. All linked in some way? The mind reels.

Cards, of course, plenty of cards. Postcards and notecards. Plenty of thank-you cards. We particularly liked the one from Ned to his grandmother, thanking her for the book she sent, and recommending to her a book he was sending to her (the second in a sci-fi trilogy), and quite earnestly asking for her opinion. This does not seem like standard-issue grandma fare, but maybe she's not a standard-issue grandma. We have in our possession a lovely letterpress notecard, simply printed on the front: "Dear People of the World, I don't mean to sound slutty, but please use me whenever you want. Sincerely, Grammar." And then there's a typed message on a 3x5 index card: "The only positive way of knowing that you will receive anything I give you in the spirit of friendship is to send it...Am hoping we will be able to have at least a short conversation very soon....Please take care of your affluent and apparently happy self." We would give a lot to know the backstory to this missive.

It's not surprising, in this university town, to find bits and pieces of academic work; in tiny writing, a Roman numeral list

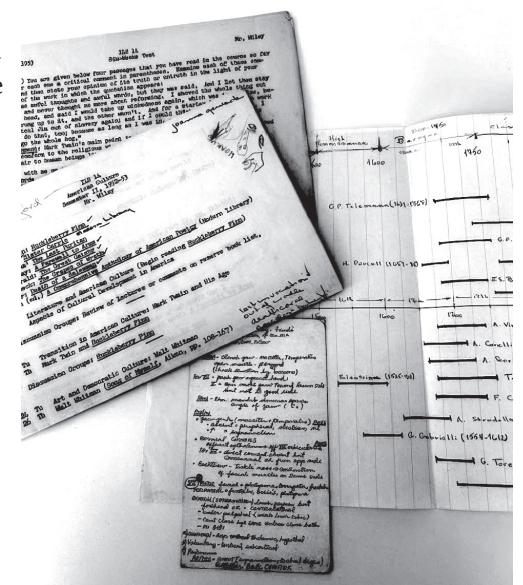
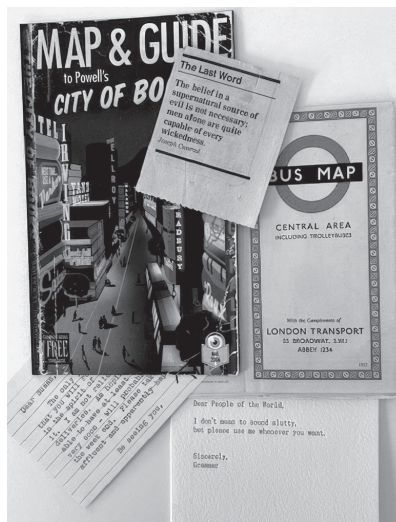
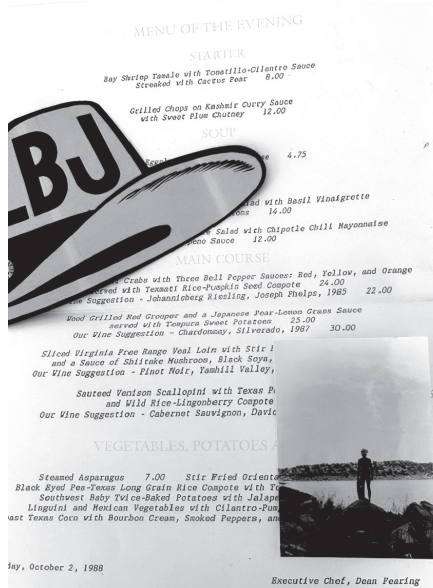
of the cranial nerves (we had to ask someone what this was) supplemented by a separate card—a home-made flashcard system—the explanation for what those nerves do.

Also, a beautifully, carefully constructed timeline of the major composers. Seems most of the heavy hitters did their stuff in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If you signed up for Mr. Wiley's course in American Culture in 1952, you had your hands full; Mr. Wiley was not one to lower the bar. The midterm, in March, asked students, in 50 minutes, to 1) respond to four quotations with short essays; 2) choose between Mark Twain and Walt Whitman to show how other works by these authors reflect back on *Huckleberry Finn* and *Song of Myself*; and 3) compare how Huck Finn and Carrie Meeber reacted to their ordeals in light of their own temperaments and environment. Phew! We also have an Ultrastructure Size Calculator from 1971, an apparently handy slide-rule sort of thing to "rapidly determine the actual size of structures from electron micrographs."

A bus map of Central London, 1957, made its way to us inside a book, as well as a map of Powell's bookstore in Portland—a bookstore which might have a slight edge on us when it comes to the Best-Bookstore-in-the-West competition. (Ed: did you know old maps make great wrapping paper? Check out our supply.)

We could go on, but we'll close with a quote from Joseph Conrad, clipped from a now yellowed section of newspaper (which one we cannot say, but there is an ad on the reverse side for a shop in Ventura): "The belief in a supernatural source of evil is not necessary; men alone are capable of every wickedness." This from a man who stared into the heart of darkness

and knew what he was talking about. ❖



Candidates for the Board of Directors

The following is the slate of candidates that the ad hoc Nominating Committee is presenting to the membership at the annual meeting of the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library. The term of office for directors is three years, with an option to extend for three more years. Officers may serve a maximum of nine years. Dates below indicate when Board service began.

Officers

President – Jim Novosel (2025)

Vice President – TBD

Treasurer – William Hausle (2024)

Recording Secretary – Lucia Blakeslee (2024)

New Members-at-Large

Fran Sheppard (2026)

Peggy Kirihara (2026)

Kristin Sepetys (2026)

Continuing Members-at-Large

Cathy Brown (2020)

Sayre Van Young (2021)

Ed Cullen (2021)

Sandy Bails (2022)

Diane Davenport (2023)

Ruth Grimes (2023)

Judith Justice (2023)

Vivian Pisano (2023)

Marion Abbott (2025)

Advisory Committee Chairs/Coordinators

Volunteers – Lucia Blakeslee

Online Sales – Barbara McPhail

Bookmark Editor – Marion Abbott

Membership – Cathy Brown

Scholarship – Judith Justice

Coming off the Board this year are Barbara McPhail, Carole Schloz, and Kristi Kenney. Barbara heads up the Amazon sales team and was Treasurer for many years. When asked for her thoughts on leaving the Board, she said with a smile “I’ll miss you!” Carole joined the Board during the challenging Covid years and has been a solid Channing bookstore shift manager, shirt counter, and steady hand all around. Kristi Kenney is stepping off the Board (temporarily, we hope) due to work commitments, though she will continue to co-manage the Channing Saturday morning shift and wrangle children’s books. We are grateful for their years of involvement, commitment, opinion, and devotion to the mission of supporting the Library. And no need to miss us, Barbara, we’ll see you around the bookstore and the workroom, like, tomorrow. ❖

President’s Report Thank you, Friends!

As I conclude my term of office as President I’d like to thank all of you for helping me guide the organization. Truly, I take no great credit—I’m volunteering with folks who know what they are doing and do it day after day, year after year. Store volunteers, the Amazon sales crew, sorters, flippers, treasurers, notetakers, website and newsletter editors, volunteer coordinators, and Board members—what an amazing group! All volunteer and all dedicated to supporting the Friends and the Berkeley Public Library. I said it when I took on the leadership: this is an organization that gets its hands dirty. My gratitude extends to the membership at large. So many of you have renewed faithfully and generously for as long as we have kept electronic records, more than 25 years. When you find kindred spirits you are truly lucky! ❖



Lights! Camera! Action!

(continued from p. 1)

actual libraries these days? Do worn, older books with dull cloth covers shriek Library?) The students made valiant efforts, with cell phone images and by arranging horizontally the books adjacent to those they were taking, to mark places to return to their rightful spots on the shelves. It was revealed later to have not been an entirely foolproof scheme.

We can attest to what you may have heard or read about the tedium of filming a movie. For the maybe two or three (at the most) minutes of film this crew took away, there were at least four hours of set-up, first in the store itself, then in the workroom. And there were endless takes. The “Quiet on the set!” announcer was kept busy throughout. After listening to the fourth or fifth take of each scene we thought we had some useful suggestions: intonation, emphasis, pregnant pauses. That sort of thing. But we did wonder if unsolicited advice from women of a certain age would be well received, so we kept our mouths shut. We don’t know if *When the Moon Wore My Face* will make it to a theater near you (is there a theater near you?), but we were happy to play a small part in this project.

That’s what Friends are for. ❖

Supporting the Friends = Supporting the Library

The Berkeley Public Library is fortunate to have many community supporters who firmly believe in the power of libraries. It is your generosity that helps keep our library system vibrant and responsive. There are so many worthy causes, and we are grateful that you value the Friends as an all-volunteer, mission-driven supporter of the Library!

Contact us with any aspect of membership at berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com. We deeply care about change of address, misspellings, inaccurate or incomplete info. If you are renewing by check, please add your email address to your renewal – you'll receive an email invitation to the June 17 Annual Meeting this year! Thank you!

Welcome to New Members

Natasha Beery and Sandy McCoy	Nancy Litton Libby Hadzima Perkins
Charley Cowens	Stewart Samelson
Claudia and Stu Fishler	Carla Schick
Kenneth Hughes	Jennifer Tang

Renewals at \$25

Nancy Bissell	Tienne Lee
Eloise Bodine	Judy Malamut
Deepti Doshi	James Nelson and Margery Eriksson
Catherine Dower	Harriet Patton
Susan Goldstein	Ray Shiflett
Ann Higgins	Judith Thomas
Michael Katz	

Renewals and/or donations from \$26 up to \$199

Marcia Anderson	Priscilla McNeary
Sharon Anderson	Joseph Morganti
Natasha Beery and Sandy McCoy	Patricia Nagamoto Suzanne Riess
Benevity America Online Giving	Thomas Sager Linda Schacht
Joseph Curran	Scott Scheffler and Marian Wolfe
Leslie Easterday	Carla Schick
Sandra Emerson	Renata Polt Schmitt and Frederick Schmitt
Geraldine Ewart	Cindy Shamban and Marge Sussman
Claudia and Stu Fishler	Christine Staples
Ellie Goldstein-Erickson	Jennifer Tang
Judith Lara	Ranko Yamada
Thomas Lynch	
Linda Maio	
Daphne McCarley	

Renewals and/or donations from \$200 up to \$499

Gary Brown
Suzanne Chun
Helen Marcus

Renewals and/or donations over \$1,000

Ellen Wood Barth
Cathy Brown
Marian Lever and Art Berliner
Carol Starr

For the Regina Minudri Memorial Scholarship

Carol Starr

Donations in Honor of...

Marion Abbott
from Marian Lever and Art Berliner

Barbara Alesandrini
from Cathy Brown

Sandy Bails
from Linda Schacht

The Friday afternoon Channing volunteers
from Ellie Goldstein-Erickson

The Monday and Friday Central volunteers
from Cathy Brown

Sayre Van Young
from Patricia Nagamoto

Donations in Memory of

Sidney Guthrie
from Nancy Bissell

Rae Allen McMenamin
from Marcia Anderson



Editor: Marion Abbott
Layout/Design: 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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Barbara McPhail, Vivian Pisano, Carole Schloz, Sayre Van Young

Advisory Committee Chairs and Coordinators

Membership: Cathy Brown
Scholarship: Judith Justice
Volunteer Coordinator: Lucia Blakeslee
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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 _____

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