

BERKELEY BOOKMARK

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It's a Long Story....

By Cathy Brown

But what a happy ending! On June 3, the new Story Room at the Central Library had its grand opening. The renovation was spearheaded by the



Berkeley Public Library Foundation. Major funding was provided by the Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation, the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library, and hundreds of Library Foundation donors. The space was designed by Anderson Brulé Architects for very young readers, on a scale and with

whimsy tailor-made for the stroller set. "What a magical space where families can discover new experiences," exclaimed Henry Bankhead, Acting

Director of Library Services. "The design reflects an inviting forest glade where people can relax and enjoy what the Library has to offer." Kathy Huff, Executive Director of the the Foundation noted: "This project is a wonderful example of what a community can achieve when we come together with a shared vision



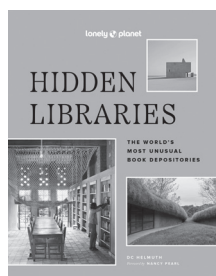
to support children's literacy." The re-design started several years ago, but it has proved to be worth the wait. The next time you're at Central, wander to the end of the 4th Floor and check it out. *



Volunteers at our Bay Area Book Festival booth May 31

What We're Reading

Hidden Libraries: The World's Most Unusual Book Depositories, by D.C. Helmuth



We all enjoy the special qualities of our own extraordinary public library system. I suspect we all have a good idea of the many unique qualities of extraordinary library systems. *Hidden Libraries* introduces us to fifty such libraries on all seven continents. Did you know that there is a Little Free Library at the South Pole? That there was a 24-hour-a-day donation-only library in a tent during the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement? That there are mobile libraries in Ethiopia and Kenya that rely on horses and camels for delivery? Or that a garbage collector in Bogota, Colombia, created a neighborhood library of thirty thousand volumes from books he found discarded in wealthy districts? This is a fabulous book.

—Barbara Alesandrini

Loved and Missed, by Susie Boyt

A whip-smart, incisive, and mordantly witty novel, set in England, about love's gains and missteps that

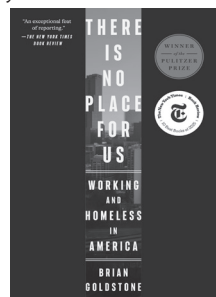


follows a woman who is trying wholeheartedly to support her drug-addicted daughter (from a distance) and raise her daughter's child. Ruth is a woman who believes in and despairs of the curative power of love. You will laugh, you will cry. It will break your heart and mend it again. If you are a mother, grandmother, sister, daughter, or granddaughter, you will relate especially.

—Marion Abbott

There Is No Place For Us: Working and Homeless in America, by Brian Goldstone

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this work of narrative journalism, in the mold of the great J. Anthony Lukas,



follows five individuals and families in Atlanta, all with children. Despite working multiple jobs and getting help from multiple social service agencies, they cannot manage to afford stable housing and end up bouncing from one depressing, unsafe and inadequate housing situation to another. Beautifully and sensitively written, it's a must-read for all those who care about housing and social justice--and about people in general.

—Bob Martin

Welcome, New Board Members

Peggy Kiriara

Libraries have always been a part of my life. I grew up in the Central Valley town of Dinuba, which had a beautiful classical revival Carnegie library built in 1917. I got my first library card at age five and became a frequent visitor. That card took me from classic children's books to getting research done for papers during high school.



At UC Santa Barbara, I majored in history and anthropology, and received a secondary teaching credential. After one semester of student teaching high school seniors, I moved to Berkeley. I landed at Berkeley City Hall and worked as an analyst in several departments, including Planning, Transportation, and the City Manager's Office. My fondest memories are my years at the Library in the early 1980s, where I met Diane Davenport and Sayre Van Young, among other Friends. It was a great place to work.

I joined the Friends after retiring in 2010, and served on the Board from 2014 to 2018. Also, I served on the Downtown Berkeley YMCA Board from 2008 to 2010. Currently, I volunteer at the Prison Literacy Project, a most rewarding program that sends books requested by prisoners from around the country.

Fran Sheppard

Born in 1955, I am an identical twin raised in Southern California. Lucky enough to have met the



right person at a young age, I have now been married to Chip for 50 years. Together we have traveled far afield—to remote game parks in Africa and jungles in northern Thailand, but we still need to get to Alaska. Moving to Berkeley in 1984, we live in the same house in which we raised our two daughters, many cats, hamsters, and a few dogs. I taught middle school for more than two decades. I loved teaching about ancient civilizations and introducing students to good books and the fun of writing. Upon retiring, I have taken up ceramics, and can often be found with clay on my hands (and sometimes my face), listening to a book on Libby while throwing a bowl on my wheel. (cont'd next page)

New President's Report

It has been well over twenty years since Gene Angel, a fellow architect, introduced me to the Friends of the Library and encouraged me to join. He knew I was an avid reader. And in the bookstore, I found Gary Brown, my Cal architecture professor who was instrumental in my becoming an architect. With these friends and my love of books, my joining was inevitable. I served on the Board, substituted, and flipped books during the teen years. Later, I served on the Board of Library Trustees (BOLT).

I come back after my hiatus to find the Friends busting with books, volunteers, and an enlarged agenda supporting many Library programs and activities. The Board is full of strong, committed members who take on the many tasks it takes to run such a large operation. Though our main bookstore (Channing) is not as large as some local stores, it is an amazingly thriving business.

My comeback was at the invitation of our immediate past president, Cathy Brown. If you know Cathy, you'll know it wasn't exactly an invitation; more like an edict to "get back here, you're wanted." Little choice was available here so I am getting ready to take over her role. She'll be a hard act to follow. Everyone knows of her deep devotion to the Friends and to the Library. She even seduced her husband into flipping books between Central and Channing. I dearly thank her for her contribution and hope to carry on with her good work.

New Board Members (from p.2)

As a volunteer at the Channing store, I have met lots of kind, interesting book-lovers, both other volunteers and donors, as they bring in their boxes of treasured books.

Kristina Sepety

I am a writer, book critic, and longtime North Berkeley resident. A regular at the North Branch



Library for decades, I raised my two children with the help of its stacks and programs, and helped local youth with reading and writing homework. In addition to my work with the New Literary Project, I volunteer on Thursday afternoons sorting donations at the Channing bookstore.

I am honored to join the Board of the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library to support the staff, programs, and public access that make the library system such a vital part of our community. ✨

It has been a real pleasure learning about the activities that we sponsor. In June I attended the opening ceremony for Central's new Story Room. The children's area was spruced up with new carpeting, bookshelves, and some artistic hangings on the ceilings and walls. A storage area was converted into a storytelling room. Although not yet finished, it will be a cozy addition to the children's floor. Don't miss taking your children, grandchildren, and young friends there.

Another delight to experience was a Story Time Band performance at the South Berkeley Senior Center. I took my granddaughter. It was a celebration of music and story reading with a live band. This was my second time attending a Band event, having accompanied her to the Freight last year. It was impressive and joyful to find how many children, parents, and grandparents frequent these performances. It's a tradition I'm happy we support. For their schedule, check the Events for Kids page @ berkeleypubliclibrary.org.

Meanwhile, I am busy playing catch-up with the bookstore operations. I want to better understand how the bookstore operates and to get to know its numerous volunteers. I've attended and will continue to attend the monthly shift managers' meetings. I have had the benefit of meeting with Bob Martin several times to gain knowledge from his many years of experience. Understanding the dot system for regenerating books on the shelves has been fascinating and I think I have it down; maybe. It is an ingenious system, sort of like calculus. I am also offering to substitute on Fridays which is my day off from work.

Let me mention some upcoming up events:

*As everyone knows, we have a new Library Director, Rebecca Alcala Veraflor. Our Board will meet with her soon. We want her to know of our presence and what we do for the Library. Yes, our financial contributions are a great resource but also significant is our overall moral support for the Library.

*There will be a volunteers' appreciation day in November. Get ready for some treats and social time.

*With Sandy Bails stepping down from overall bookstore management, the Board is looking for a manager or two co-managers. We have assembled a small group that will work to define how and what the duties are. Interested parties should contact Jim Novosel, Cathy Brown, or Sandy Bails through berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com

It's great to be back among so many wonderful people. I thank all of you for this gift of rejoining the Friend's Board.

—Jim Novosel

Letter from the Editor

Change is in the air. The big news announced July n is that we have a new Library Director. Approved unanimously by the Board of Library Trustees (BOLT), veteran librarian Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor is a Bay Area native and Cal graduate. Her last position was Chief of Branches for San Francisco Public Library. She will begin her tenure August 16. The Friends look forward to working with her.

We at the Friends have a new President: Jim Novosel, who most recently served as Vice President. (See New President's Report, page 3). Our own Board welcomes three new members: Peggy Kiriara, Kristina Sepetys, and Fran Shepherd. (See their profiles, page 3).

Meanwhile, it's been a busy Spring and early Summer. In May we participated in the Bay Area Book Festival. In June, we held our Annual Membership Luncheon, at which author Grant Faulkner spoke on brevity and led us in a related writing exercise (see page 4), and we announced our ten scholarship winners (see page 5 for the list).

What will the Fall hold in store? We'll keep you posted.

–Marion Abbott

FRIENDS OF THE BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY: FISCAL YEAR TO DATE
JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

INCOME:	FY to Date 2025	FY to Date 2026
BOOK SALES		
Channing Way Store	\$ 104,609.74	\$ 112,378.62
Central Library Store	21,874.65	18,968.34
Amazon	73,768.81	66,525.83
Special Sales		
Vintage books	9,395.00	6,217.85
Big Sale	-	3,218.49
Other Special Sales	805.34	943.23
Total Book Sales	210,453.54	208,252.36
MEMBERSHIPS	7,325.00	5,700.00
DONATIONS	41,019.58	99,185.94
INTEREST	2,699.07	2,688.34
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 261,497.19	\$ 315,826.64
EXPENSES:	FY to Date 2025	FY to Date 2026
BOOK SALES EXPENSES		
Channing Way Store	\$ 27,647.73	\$ 27,435.66
Central Library Store	255.40	52.45
Amazon	21,931.72	18,915.43
Special Sales	1,118.65	1,373.95
Total Book Sale Expenses	50,953.50	47,777.49
ADMINISTRATION	6,690.93	5,882.62
NEWSLETTER	2,611.05	5,853.56
MEMBERSHIP	505.40	814.71
PUBLICITY	2,564.26	1,113.53
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	63,325.14	61,441.91
POLITICAL DONATION	31,801.63	-
GIFTS		
Foundation	30,000.00	33,500.00
Library Gift Fund	174,999.00	155,000.00
Scholarships	9,000.00	25,434.00
No More Summer Slide	10,000.00	10,000.00
TOTAL GIFTS	\$ 223,999.00	\$ 223,934.00
TOTAL GIFTS & EXPENSES	\$ 319,125.77	\$ 285,375.91
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ (57,628.58)	\$ 30,450.73

A Word about Anonymous Giving via Silent Donor

By Cathy Brown

Silent Donor is the largest donation platform in the world, enabling people to easily and securely send fully anonymous, tax-deductible donations to non-profit organizations.

In May of this year, the Friends were contacted by Tim Sanders, Founder and CEO of Silent Donor.

He asked for some information to send to a prospective donor. We swiftly sent our brochure and the latest *Bookmark*—then began our own research to get a reference from an organization that had received a donation from them. (One can't be too careful these days—scams abound.) Long story short, everything checked out. In a matter of weeks we received a handsome electronic transfer which helped facilitate this year's scholarships (see "Friends Grant Record Number of Scholarships to Library Staff for Professional Enrichment, this page). We will never know the identity of our generous benefactor, but we're very grateful to the directors of Silent Donor for their patience with us as we performed our due diligence. From our end, the process was simple, and we appreciated the ongoing communication that assured us of financial security.

So, why might individuals or companies choose to remain anonymous? Tim Sanders explains: "At Silent Donor, we believe privacy is a fundamental right that enhances the true spirit of philanthropy. Donors choose to be anonymous for a variety of deeply personal and practical reasons. Many simply prefer to keep their financial matters private, while others want the spotlight to remain entirely on the mission of the organization rather than themselves."

Silent Donor facilitates tax-deductible donations, while ensuring the privacy of the donor. If you have ever thought, Gee I gave that organization \$10 and I'm getting a ton of paper and email from them and from groups I did not contribute to, that's also a good reason to maintain a firewall between you and the recipient. {For more information on Silent Donor, see silentdonor.com). By the way, you'll never receive excess mailings from the Friends; we give most of our funds to the Library and we do not share our address/email list. You are welcome to donate to the Friends in whatever way suits you best and we are grateful for your donation, anonymous or not. ✨



Silent Donor
SEND AN ANONYMOUS DONATION

Friends Grant Record Number of Scholarships to Library Staff for Professional Enrichment

By Diane Davenport

The Friends started awarding money to library staff attending library school in the 1990s. The fund was named for Regina Minudri, the Library Director who encouraged up-and-coming library workers to get Masters Degrees in Library Science and who taught at both UC Berkeley and San Jose State library schools. We have continued to award scholarships ever since.

This year the Friends awarded more than \$20,000 to ten Berkeley Public Library employees asking to help fund library school or to take other courses to enhance their library skills. This represents the largest amount of money ever requested by library workers and the largest amount ever allocated by the Friends, made possible partly due to a sizable and unexpected anonymous gift received this spring (see "A Word About Anonymous Giving via Silent Donor," previous page).

Staff receiving scholarships this year:

Michelle Chen, Neens Goldman, Lisette Gonzales, Avery Heard, Pedro Perez, and Christopher "Sou" Saechao are receiving tuition assistance toward Masters degrees in Library Science; Emily Joelle will take a Fundamentals of Cataloging course; Joy Marston plans to learn new sewing skills with workshops tailored to expanding her program offerings; Dia Penning will attend The Embodiment Institute's certificate program; Elaine Tai will improve her Mandarin Chinese speaking/listening skills.

The Friends allocated all of the monies requested as an indication of our support of library staff, their excellent work, and their imaginativeness in public programming.

If you would like to make a donation to support the Friends' Scholarship Fund just write a check to The Friends of the Berkeley Public Library and put

"Scholarship Fund" in the note field at the bottom of the check. Then send it to the Friends in the membership envelope included in this newsletter. Help us support staff who are improving their skills to better serve our library users. ✨



Recipients Elaine Tai, Joy Marston, and Lisette Gonzalez flanked by scholarship committee members Diane Davenport and Judith Justice

"Over twenty years ago the Friends helped pay my tuition for Library School. And now the Friends are supporting my work again. Since being hired as a Librarian on the Reference Staff at Central three years ago, I've been doing programming. A former Librarian had purchased a dozen sewing machines which were parked in the back hallway. I took those sewing machines and started a drop-in sewing program that meets three times a month. Sewers gather together to learn from each other and to share ideas. The program has grown and participants have requested more frequent and more specialized programs.

Thanks to the Friends, I have received the financial backing to pursue classes at Sewing Skills Workshops at Studio Sessions in Berkeley. I will learn new techniques that I will, in turn, teach to others in our sewing workshops. Thank you for supporting me and my professional goals."

—Joy Marston, scholarship recipient, on the importance of her financial assistance

Annual Membership Luncheon Report

By Cathy Brown

The Friends welcomed members and guests to our annual membership luncheon on June 17 at



Northbrae Community Church. Each table was graced by incoming President Jim Novosel's freshly-picked flowers, with sandwiches from Cheese 'n Stuff accompanied by soft drinks, cheeses, fruit, and home-baked cookies. Carefully curated books were offered for sale, the

formal business was mercifully brief, the election of new board members certified on the spot, and guest speaker Grant Faulkner, author of *The Art of Brevity: Crafting the Very Short Story*, not only entertained but challenged us to write a story in six words. He clearly read the audience! (That's five words plus punctuation.) Here's a sampling:

*Pedantic by choice, neurotic by nature.
Climate change means life is going.
Five years later, Gina's still dead.
My brother died. Nobody told me.
My iPhone is dead. Now what?
Re-tired? No! Renewed, live-wired.
Caught too late. Eggshell's broken.
Feral cat seeks grocery store position.
Grabbed pencil. Lead broke. The end.
I came, she left, lost cause.
I came, I saw, I left.
I ate it all; sorry now.
Grow up, grow out. Fly home.
Grateful for life...then...now...evermore.*

Because we are now converts to brevity, here's the takeaway from the meeting:

The Friends are doing well—donations of books are continuous, sales at the stores and Amazon are strong (see Fiscal Year summary for 2025-2026, page 6);

Membership is holding steady—our base mem-

bership dues are \$25 per year, and we receive many donations in excess of that. (Abundant gratitude for your generosity.);

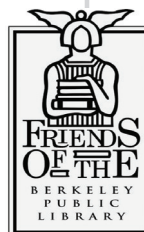
More than one hundred faithful and reliable volunteers staff our stores and Amazon sales but we are always looking for specialists in technology, and people with strong backs and large vehicles to transport books between Central and Channing;

Recruitment for new Board members has brought back a veteran, and two new members (see "Welcome New Board Members," page 3) who will work with continuing Directors and duly elected President Jim Novosel;

Due to all of the above, we were able to support the Library with a gift that funds the majority of public programming, provide the Foundation with major support for the annual Authors Dinner, and give a record amount in scholarships to a diverse group of qualified BPL staff (see "Friends Grant Record Number of Scholarships," page 5).

We are grateful for your support, and remain

Your Friends, all-volunteer, and dedicated to the Berkeley Public Library. ✨



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

Supporting the Friends = Supporting the Library

We are happy to recognize the Friends who firmly believe in the power of libraries. It is your generosity that helps keep the Berkeley Public Library system community-serving through programs that are funded by the Friends. 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 Annual Meeting next year! Thank you!

Welcome to New Members

Megan Bates	David Hammer
Morgan Baum	Brooke Mason
Jennifer Flanagan	Theresa E. Smith

Renewals at \$25

Elizabeth Amberg	Nancy Lawrence
Karen Branson	Catherine McAuliffe
Bessie Chin	Christine Orr
Connie Clausen	Marilyn Pew
Rose Ginsburg	Debbie Potter
Barbara Goddard	Tom Reilly
Roz Hardy	Jane Scantlebury
Martha Hartzell	Elizabeth Sklut
Henry Hecht	Sophia Skoda
Carolyn Kolka	Elizabeth Sojourner

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

Barbara & Carlo Alesandrini	Bill Mayer
Morgan Baum	Daphne McCarley
Elizabeth Benjamine	Sheila McCormick
Deidre Cerkowicz	Priscilla McNeary
Zipporah Collins	Ann Marie Miller
J. Kevin Donahue	Claudia Morrow
Freya & Jake Fuchs	Andy Morse & Nancy Galloway
Deene Goodlaw	Andrea Mullarkey
Lee Hackett	Eric Naiman
David Hammer	Wendy Polivka
Seena Hawley	Sondra Schlesinger
Karen & Robert Holtermann	Douglas Smith
Janet Homrighausen	Theresa E. Smith
Kathy Huff	Richard W. Stevens
Carrie Kahn	Neda Tomasevich
John Kenny	Zan Turner
Bob Martin	Emily Warden

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

Karen & Warren Bird	Thomas Jones
Dwight Bissell	Barbara & Jack McPhail
Michael & Sabine Frank	Vivian Pisano
Karen Hobbs	Reed Schmidt
Ann-Marie Hogan	

Renewals and/or donations from \$500 up to \$999

Therese Powell	Bob Stern/
Amy Roth	Winelander Fund
Larry Simon	

Renewals and/or donations over \$1,000

Silent Donor/Anondo Fund
Carole Leita

For the Regina Minudri Memorial Scholarship

Carole Leita
Vivian Pisano

Donations in Honor of...

Gary Brown from Bob Martin
Debbie Carton from Claudia Morrow

Donations in Memory of

Bob Baty from Ann Marie Miller
Adelia Lines from Ann-Marie Hogan
Mary O'Neill from Karen & Warren Bird
Contee Seely from Barbara & Carlo Alesandrini



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Ed Cullen, Diane Davenport, Ruth Grimes, Judith Justice,
Peggy Kiriara, Vivian Pisano, Kristina Sepetys, Fran Sheppard,
Sayre Van Young

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Scholarship: Judith Justice

Volunteer Coordinator: Lucia Blakeslee

Bookmark Editor: Marion Abbott

Amazon Sales: Barbara McPhail (*ex-officio*)

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



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

