



Foreword

The Newsletter of Friends of the Palo Alto Library

Spring 2021

Palo Alto City Library Weathers Covid-19 Challenges

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented set of challenges globally and locally. Like many organizations impacted by Covid-19, the Palo Alto City Library has been working diligently to adapt to many operational challenges. Furthermore, due to Covid-19, the Library experienced a 18.4% budget cut. These operational and fiscal challenges have made it necessary for the Palo Alto City Library to reimagine many of the library's core services.

Following a local shutdown, the Palo Alto library closed to the public on Friday, March 13, 2020 and quickly set up a curbside pickup service for the weekend. The plan was to have staff come to work to provide curbside service, present virtual events and work on various projects until the Library could reopen. However, with the state shutdown on Tuesday, March 17, all City staff were deployed to work remotely until further notice. Library staff had a few days to set up their at-home workstations, and were given assignments, online training and weekly meeting check-ins with supervisors.

While working from home, Library staff were able to make some substantial contributions to keep the Palo Alto community engaged and informed during the shutdown. Significant changes to services included moving all programs to a virtual setting, setting up a safe curbside service to open in late June 2020, and an increase in purchasing online resources. Some of the highlights include:

Call Center

When the County issued the shelter-in-place in order in March 2020, the City quickly mobilized a Community Service Call Center to provide updated public health information to the community, staffed by the Library and Community Services Departments. The Call Center mobilized during rapidly changing circumstances, bringing the Library's information expertise to a fast-paced critical environment.

Besides providing trusted information to the community, the Call Center provided daily analysis of community information needs that informed better outreach services and City response to the health order. The Library has continued to manage and staff the Call Center since fall 2020.

Collections

Customer usage for digital online resources has increased by 27% since March 2020, so FOPAL funding was used to bolster the Library's most popular online resources, including Hoopla, Overdrive, RBDigital and Kanopy. Since March 2020, pandemic-related changes to library service compounded with the City's budget reduction have led staff to continuously review and adjust practices regarding our collection development strategy. While the Library has continued acquiring physical materials in addition to digital materials, staff has experienced an ever-increasing demand for eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming videos and music.

Sidewalk Service

(<https://library.cityofpaloalto.org/current-library-services/>)

Perhaps the most significant offering to the community, was the launch of Sidewalk Service, our curbside library service for picking up requests and returning items, which started on June 22 at the Mitchell Park and Rinconada Libraries. The work has been labor-intensive, requiring staff to retrieve, check out, and release all materials directly to customers at their allotted appointment time. Up to 1500 items have been checked out daily; and more than 1000 items have been returned and quarantined for 96 hours, before staff check in, sort and shelf. All of this has been done without the benefits of automation or customer self-service, in order to keep staff and customers safe during the process. The

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President's Message

Most organizations today are reimagining their future post-Covid-19. FOPAL is no different. This is FOPAL's 83d year supporting the Palo Alto City Library (PACL). That support, though greatly reduced because of our inability to hold monthly large sales, has been even more important this past year as PACL's budget was cut along with other City departments and is facing further cuts (see page 1). FOPAL has tried to manage paying expenses through individual "Friends and Family" and online sales. We were most fortunate to receive a large donation of art books from Frank Graff that went far in fulfilling our grant to PACL (see article at right).

Many volunteers found ways to support FOPAL from home. Our online sale listers brought boxes of books home to research and list for sale online. Online sales accounted for 45% of FOPAL's gross sales income for the first six months of this fiscal year ending in December. Some of the section managers also researched books from home. Advertising, website, memberships, treasurer activities were all managed remotely. Our director of Volunteer and Community Engagement divided her time between being on site and working at home. Many volunteers have worked on site according to a schedule that keeps them socially distanced. Some of our new ways of working may extend into the future and bring new efficiencies to how we accomplish this work. But we all want to get back to the camaraderie of exchanging reading tips and the enjoyment of working together.

The February 1973 FOPAL newsletter advertised the "Annual Book Sale" while also noting it was looking for space for the "oldest floating book sale in Palo Alto." Space has been a problem for decades. The first children's book sale was held in the Secret Garden of the Children's Library in May 1977. We now have a module building housing a separate children's sales area. Our three dedicated sales areas are spread across the Cubberley campus requiring constant moving of book boxes from donation area to sorting to sales spaces including high value. The Concordia plan for the Cubberley site brought cheerful anticipation to FOPAL as it would bring all of the FOPAL work into one vastly more efficient space as well as providing improved facilities for many other nonprofits and sports activities. Unfortunately that plan has received very little attention. A new group, Friends of Cubberley (www.newcubberley.com), is dedicated to

supporting and advocating for the redevelopment of Cubberley for the benefit of the entire Palo Alto community and our neighboring cities through education, community outreach, and advocacy with public officials. Please support this effort, not only for FOPAL but for all the activities that are in need of community space.

Nancy Mahoney Cohen

The Graff Collection



Loading in the Graff Collection

Last September 25th, former FOPAL President Nigel Jones delivered the last truckload of an enormous donation to FOPAL. It took three days with a 17-foot rental truck and several day workers in both San Jose and Palo Alto to bring approximately 960 bankers' and moving boxes to the H1 lecture room at Cubberley Community Center. Nigel served not only as the truck driver but more importantly as the facilitator of one of the largest book donations FOPAL has ever received.

The gift was made by Frank Graff of San Jose, who had been collecting books for at least 35 years. His primary field of interest was Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, but the collection was very wide ranging. He had an early interest in Versailles and collected many early 20th-century guidebooks to the chateau and gardens; he was also very interested in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. He had many guidebooks and catalogues for museums in America and Europe. He had a large number of sets of very small art books published in the early and mid-20th century, which are

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Challenges *(Continued from page 1)*

Children’s, College Terrace and Downtown Libraries remain closed; however staff are scheduled there a few days a week to shelve returns and pull holds. The book drops at College Terrace and Downtown Libraries are open on weekends, and Mitchell Park and Rinconada Libraries have recently opened a 24/7 book return at their locations. Several videos were created to illustrate how Sidewalk Service works and what staff are doing behind the scenes.

Virtual Events & Services



The Library quickly moved all events online and was able to provide some unique services to customers, including:

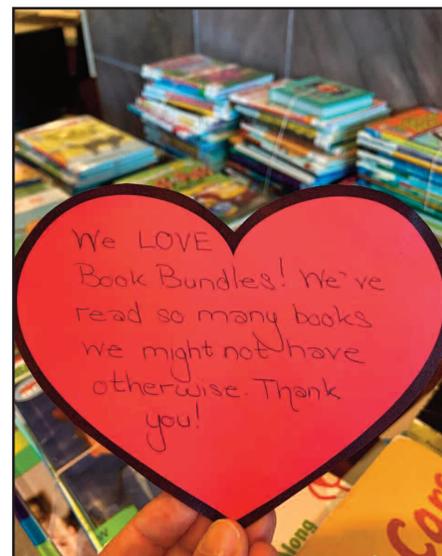
- Providing an online and all-virtual Spring & Summer Reading Program
- Moving existing in-person programs online through Zoom, including book clubs, ESL classes and various Teen programs
- Re-vamping the Library’s YouTube channel to feature videos of librarians sharing songs and rhymes, reading stories and chapter books, making crafts, and robotics training and online gaming
- Leveraging the Library’s Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts to share news, library updates and

engage the community

- Fulfilling the grant-funded Book to Action series on dementia and modifying to include information on loneliness during the pandemic.
- Working with the City Manager’s office to launch Palo Alto Reads, which included a series of author talks and supplemental programs around the City’s Race & Equity initiatives. The Library partnered with Stanford’s Bill Lane Center for the West to host an author event with Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color Of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, on August 27. Another joint event was held on December 3, featuring Stanford Professor, Jennifer Eberhardt, discussing her book *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudices That Shapes What We See, Think and Do*. The Library plans to continue working with partners to feature more events in 2021.
- Starting Shelf Made, and Creating Book Bundles for families
- Redesigning the Library’s website

As the State and the County are moving towards red and orange tiers, Library management has been planning to safely re-opening branches. The Library is grateful to FOPAL for their continued support of our services, and looks forward to working together to keep our community engaged and informed as we reopen.

Library Management including Gayathri Kanth, RuthAnn Garcia, Diane Lai and Alex Perez



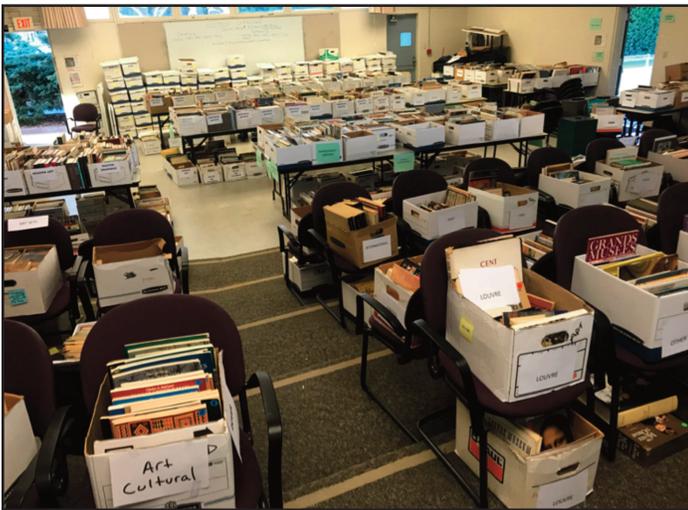
Graff *(Continued from page 2)*

quite rare. There were hundreds of mid-century art books from publishers well-known for beautiful production values and exquisite color reproductions.

Mr. Graff made the donation to FOPAL at the suggestion of Faith Bell of Bell's Books in Palo Alto. We were very happy to take them, if a bit overwhelmed at first. [see photo] There were more than 550 boxes of art history books, 300 boxes of children's books, and 100 boxes of auction catalogues from Christie's and Sotheby's. Andrea Lozano, the art section manager, organized the art material and Carolyn Davidson and Lisa Heitman organized the children's material. It took Andrea and her team (primarily Nancy Cohen, Melinda Parry,



Customers perusing the art books



Ready for sale

Bill Jones and Vickie Evans) working seven days a week for six weeks to sort and price the art material. It took almost that long for the Children's Room team to sort its material. A significant number of the art books and the Children's books were sent to our online store at Amazon.

A large art sale was held the weekend of November 13th, with online appointments and social distancing. [see photo] The cashiers sat outside shivering, fortified by the several boxes of donuts brought by an ecstatic buyer the first day. A smaller sale was held one Sunday in December and several private "Friends and Family" sales were held in late December and early January. In late January, we received the offer from Fiona Wang (see accompanying article on page 5) for the remainder of the books, which provided a very happy end to the art sale. A sale of the pop-up books will be held March



Nigel Jones greeting customers

27-28 from 10-3 in H1 next to the Bargain Room.

We are enormously grateful to Nigel Jones, who arranged the entire donation, as well as to Andrea Lozano and Carolyn Davidson and Lisa Heitman for the challenging job of organizing all the material. Money from the sale of this donation will account for one half of FOPAL's grant to the Palo Alto Library this year. Many, many thanks to Frank Graff for making this possible. His collection will be cherished by numerous recipients around the world.

*Melinda Parry
FOPAL Secretary and Classics Section Manager*

Donation to Art Institute

I am Yingying Wang, currently living in Palo Alto and am a big fan of Impressionism. When I heard of the large art book sale at FOPAL, I booked a slot on the 1st day of the sale so that I would not miss any popular books. I took almost forty books back home, including a set of Skira Art Books, and large prints of Renaissance painters by Abrams Art Books. I enjoyed the books so much that they are all over my house –the living room, by the dining table, at the bed stand, even in the bathroom. I can pick up a book and read for a few pages anytime, anywhere.

Then I came to FOPAL for the 2nd time, and then the 3rd. The more I bought the books, the more I enjoyed the books, the more I wondered– who collected the books, and why they had to be sold. So when I heard the story that the owner who collected these wonderful books for over 30 years had to give up all his collection because of loss of storage space, I was touched and burst into tears.

When I went back, I could not help thinking of this story. How I could help? I imagined If I were the collector, I would be very happy to know that these books could be enjoyed by people who really love them as much as I do. It is even better if these books could be kept in one place where they would receive good care. A thought slipped into my mind.

From my view, this collection of art books not only provides the width of the art subject, from Renaissance to Impressionism, from old Greek to modern American Abstracts, it also provides depth of the art subject. I bought a series of Metropolitan Seminars In Art written by John Canaday, and I like the academic depth it provides. I was also amazed to see the vintage books - how they looked in the past, by different art book publishers, in different print sizes. For me, it was the first time I saw vintage art books with separate beautifully printed, large color plates in the book which is very different from the books nowadays. I thought that many people like me don't have the chance to enjoy these beautiful art books. Having this in mind – I wondered how I could find a group that would really treasure the books, and where the books would bring a lot of academic value to them. I remembered the China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing. This top art institution in China could make this collection of art books available to a large group of art lovers as well as maintain the collection well. Having

the collection at CAFA would also enhance the understanding of western art and culture .

I reached out to CAFA to see if they would like to have this collection in their library. The answer was yes! FOPAL kindly agreed that I could buy all of the remaining art books from the special Graff collection and donate them to CAFA. There will be a special collection from FOPAL in the top art academy in China. Thanks to Nancy, Melinda and Nigel for packing about 300 boxes of books and arranging the transport to my house. That's a lot of work ! Really appreciated. When the COVID-19 is over, I will ship the art books to China Central Academy of Fine Arts. I am sure this gift will enhance their library for all there to treasure and enjoy.

Yingying Wang

Editor's note: Yingying, also known as Fiona, became so impressed with this collection and with the art section in FOPAL's Main Room that she agreed to take over management of that section since the prior manager, Andrea Lozano, who was instrumental in preparing the collection for sale, is moving out of state.



Fiona Wang and art books on first stop before moving to China

Process for donated books



Book donor arrives.



Books out of quarantine in Sorting Room.



Donated books going into red tubs before quarantine.



High value books awaiting research and online listing.



Quarantined books with date received.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE! VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Contact Janette Herceg, jherceg@FOPAL.org for more information.

Help Process Donations!

Greet donors, monitor and assist with the donation process, offer receipts, and “thank you” to donors! Donation Monitors/volunteers are accepting donations, 6 bags/boxes or less, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays 1:45- 4:15 pm, outside FOPAL’s Bargain Room/H2. Sign up to help donors dropping off boxes/bags at FOPAL-Cubberley Community Center, using social distancing. Meet friendly donors; get free body-building exercise! Let us know if you are able to do on another day.

Are you online seller savvy?

List books brilliantly!

Help keep our online sales strong, support your city library, and give our customer’s great books at great prices!

Help our online sales by:

- Researching and listing.
- Listing on eBay.

Online sales are FOPAL’s growth area and we’d love to have you join our team.

Feel fulfilled, help with FOPAL fulfillments!

Learn the fulfillment process of FOPAL’s successful online sales (the buying and selling of products or services conducted over the Internet) enterprise. With FOPAL’s online book sale business busier than ever, we need volunteers to help prepare orders for packing and shipping done in two person teams.

Super sleuth book researchers needed!

Find money hiding in our books. Help research books, decide on Amazon list price and prepare listing description for the book. Train to do: Basic research for High Value /Low-Value triage. Splitting out the common/recent books, following specific guidelines. More advanced research to determine edition, price, etc.

Move Materials

Help move our materials from donations to quarantine to sorting to our sales rooms. We have an electric cart that requires very little instruction.

Volunteers@Booksales! When we Return

The Friends of the Palo Alto Library’s/FOPAL book sales is one of the largest of its kind in the country. The money generated from FOPAL book sales is donated to the public libraries. To date, FOPAL has donated over 3 million dollars! Buyers come from hundreds of miles around and even other states. Everyone has a great time and about a quarter-million books, a year find new readers instead of going into landfill!

For FOPAL’s monthly book sale when we are able to open, we need cashiers, floor supervisors, and donation monitors (meet hundreds of fellow bookaholics and experience the Thrill of the Marketplace!)

Look for more information about us at [Facebook.com/FOPAL.org](https://www.facebook.com/FOPAL.org).

Welcoming new volunteers!

Acme Chi-Feng Ho – Main Room Section Mgr Asst
Horence Chi-Hong Ho – Main Room Section Mgr Asst
Anika Manjesh – Sorter & Main Room Section Mgr Asst
Mandy MacCalla – Main Room Section Mgr & Sales
Virginia Martin – High-Value Researcher
August Rodriguez – Main Room Section Mgr & Sales
Lillian Fong – Main Room Section Mgr Asst
Fiona Wang – Main Room Section Mgr
Sven Geddes – Bargain Room Section Mgr
Neila Mezynski – Main Room Section Mgr Asst
Mimi Vo – Main Room Organizer & Vacuuming
Arjun Shah – Main Room Section Mgr Asst
Linda McAllister – Main Room Sorter & Sales
Renee Fleury Johnsen – High-Value Fulfillment, Donation Monitor & Sales
Federica Belli – Children’s Room Section Mgr & Sales
Doris Hartmann – Bargain Room Section Mgr Asst & Sales



Friends of the Palo Alto Library
PO BOX 41
Palo Alto, CA 94302-0041

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Friends of the Palo Alto Library Membership Form

“The Friends of the Palo Alto Library is a tax-exempt organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your donation is tax deductible.”

Join / Renew	1 Year	2 Years
_____ Student/Senior	\$10	\$18
_____ Individual	\$20	\$35
_____ Family	\$30	\$50
_____ Sponsor	\$100	\$175
_____ Lifetime	\$500	
_____ Corporate	\$1000	

_____ Name

_____ Address

_____ City / State / Zip

_____ Phone

_____ Email

Matching Funds: Many of our members and donors can increase their donation to FOPAL if their employers have a Matching Funds program for registered charities. Please contact info@fopal.org for more information.

Make checks payable to:

Friends of the Palo Alto Library

Return form to:

Friends of the Palo Alto Library

P.O. Box 41 Palo Alto, CA 94302

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