

# FOREWORD



Quarterly Issue No. 70

Winter 2006

## Poems, Prose & Plays

### Check This Out!

In our last Foreword you read that a number of Jane Staley's friends donated to FOPAL to honor her memory. Now we want to tell you all the wonderful items that those funds provided our library.

But first: years ago Jane, a librarian, was curator of the



*Robert Frost*

Robert Frost Room at the Amherst, Massachusetts Public Library. The elderly Frost, himself, came to the room from time to time, so Jane knew him. According to her husband, Ross, Jane had a lifelong love affair with Robert Frost—or at least with his writings. So he requested that the Jane Staley

Fund be used to acquire Frost's works and related items.

Accordingly, Sharon Olson, who is the senior librarian and selector of humanities books for libraries did identified the titles to be acquired, saying, "it is wonderful to be able to purchase a large selection of collected works by American authors. We have chosen to concentrate on editions from The Library of America, as well as several editions of Norton Anthologies that we have missed, that will add a great deal to the core study collections for American poetry and fiction. We are happy to honor the memory of Jane Staley in this way. Her love for Robert Frost's poetry and American poetry in general, is a love that we share."

- Robert Frost: Collected Poems, Prose & Plays: Complete Poems 1949, In the Clearing, Uncollected Poems, Plays, Lectures, Essays, Stories and Letters.

- James Agee. Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, a Death in the Family, & Shorter Fiction.
- James Baldwin. Collected Essays: Notes of a Native Son, Nobody Knows My Name, The Fire Next Time, No Name in the Street, The Devil Finds Work, Other Essays.
- Willa Cather. Early Novels and Stories: The Troll Garden, O Pioneers! The Song of the Lark, My Antonia, One of Ours.
- Kate Chopin. Complete Novels and Stories.
- Stephen Crane. Prose and Poetry: Maggie: A Girl of the Streets, The Red Badge of Courage, Stories, Sketches and Journalism, Poetry.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson. Collected Poems and Translations.
- Reporting Civil Rights: American Journalism 1941-1963, vol. 1.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne. Tales and Sketches.
- Theodore Roethke. Selected Poems.
- Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832-1858 and 1859-1865.
- Poets of the Civil War.
- John Muir. Nature Writings: The Story of my Boyhood and Youth; My First Summer in the Sierra, The Mountains of California, Stickeen, Selected Essays.
- Eugene O'Neill. Complete Plays 1932-1943, 1920-1931, and 1913—1920.
- William Carlos Williams. Selected Poems.
- Walt Whitman. Selected Poems.
- Edgar Allen Poe. Poems and Poetics.



*William Carlos Williams*

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Thoughts from the Library Director



The New Year brought big changes to the Main Library. With the advent of children's services at Main, you'll now see people of all ages browsing for books, reading magazines, selecting DVDs and CDs, using computers or studying. In December, the Children's

Library closed for a two-year renovation/expansion project, and until Children's reopens, the Main Library will host collections, programs and services for kids as well as adults.

A children's services area has been created to the south of the fireplace, featuring shelving for books and other materials in the collection, seating and a small program area. Children's librarians and other staff will be on duty to help kids, parents, teachers and others who work with kids – they can help find great books to read, or assist with finding information for reports or homework. A variety of ongoing programs will be offered at Main, including:

- Family storytimes for all ages, the second Wednesday of each month at 7pm
- Toddler (18 months to 3 years old) storytimes on Mondays at 10am and 11am
- Preschool ((3 to 5 yrs old) storytimes on Tuesdays at 10am

In addition, watch for special afterschool and evening programs as well. You can always find up-to-date information about Library programs, at Main and at the other locations, on the website at [cityofpaloalto.org/library](http://cityofpaloalto.org/library).

The Library had originally planned to shift about 1/3 of the Children's Library collection to Main, and put the rest into storage until the Children's Library reopens. However, when all the shelving was installed at Main, and

when we accounted for the number of items in circulation, we actually ended up putting less than half the collection into storage. Over 56% of the Children's collection is now available at Main, and another 1,500 items have been relocated to the Downtown Branch and other locations.

It's really exciting to welcome kids and their families to the Main Library. It's great fun for the staff at Main to have the indescribably delightful experience of putting just the right book into the eager hands of a young child, and seeing his or her face light up with a 500-watt glow. Thanks to the staff from Children's for providing so much great training to the folks at Main. And many thanks to the gracious customers at Main, who are accommodating the oftentimes boisterous youth invasion with patience and understanding.

And speaking of programs for children, a special family storytime series was launched at the Downtown Branch starting at the end of January. Please join children's librarian Maya Spector on Thursday afternoons at 3:30pm in the new and enlarged children's area at the Downtown Branch, from January 26 through March 2.

I always welcome your comments and questions about the Library. Please contact me at 650-329-2403, or at my email address.

*Paula Simpson*, Library Director  
[Paula.simpson@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Paula.simpson@cityofpaloalto.org)

## From the President

2005 was a fantastic year for the Friends, with our booksale bringing in an amazing \$209,611. That's up 26% from just the year before and more than nine times our size in 1995, when we earned less than \$23,000 for the entire year.

For an operation that began back in 1959 and sells mostly a very old-fashioned product, namely books, it's an incredible track record.

2006 has already begun with a bang, or perhaps that should be a splash. Despite a rainstorm that drenched many who waited in line, our January sale was our biggest ever, bringing in \$21,685. In other words, we raised in just one month about as much as we used to in a whole year.

There are many reasons for the booksale's ongoing success. We do everything we can think of to please our throngs of customers. Our growing corps of volunteers continues to work feverishly to keep each sale bustling, friendly, and fun! As more people hear about the sales, book donations have increased and we've made it easy to drop off donations when you visit the sale. The sale has expanded into three rooms and an outside patio, allowing us to display over 50,000 books. Unsold books are efficiently channeled to a variety of eager non-profits. We're now open on Sundays and we publicize via fliers, handouts, newspaper ads, community notices, ours and other web sites, monthly e-mails, and neighborhood association, PTA, and our own quarterly newsletters.

We're always eager for new customers too. Invite a friend or two visit the booksale with you and watch them thrill at all the books and great bargains to be found.

Thanks to the great success of the booksale, we've been able to increase our funding to the library, although the needs there never cease. We're excited that the City Council has designated libraries as one of the top three city priorities this year and hope this will move improvement plans along. Since the efforts dating

back to 2003 to expand Children's Library by about 2,600 square feet, no plans have been adopted to provide additional space for other library users and the collection. In fact, the recent \$352,000 project by the City to reorganize Main and Downtown will actually result in about 500 fewer square feet of public space.

Many other cities have recently replaced older libraries while upgrading and even adding branches, including Redwood City, San Jose, and San Francisco. Palo Alto might too by providing more library space in South Palo Alto, which now has only the very-crowded Mitchell Park branch, while preserving space and services in North Palo Alto. Mayor Kleinberg has also suggested having additional locations in the city for people to drop off and perhaps pick up books, such as at public schools.

As we enter 2006, we'd like to thank our outgoing board members Patricia Sohl, M.D. and John Burt. John is a longtime booksale volunteer and continues to help us in many ways. Special thanks go to Wendy Akers-Ghose who steps down as our Vice President after two years but continues both as a board member and editor of this newsletter.

Have a great 2006!

*Jeff Levinsky, President*  
jeff@friendspaloaltolib.org

## Introducing Dr. John M. Gill

As part of the Foreword's continuing series of profiles of Book Room volunteers, we sat down for a few minutes with Dr. John M. Gill, who has been in charge of our poetry section for the past six or seven years. Our team is blessed to be able to have someone of Jack's knowledge and background to sort, arrange, and price the many donations that make up the poetry books that are offered each month. The FOREWORD caught up with Jack in a leisurely moment in a Palo Alto coffee shop last month.

**FOREWORD:** Tell us something about your background and how it fits in with your work in the poetry and literature sections of the Book Room.

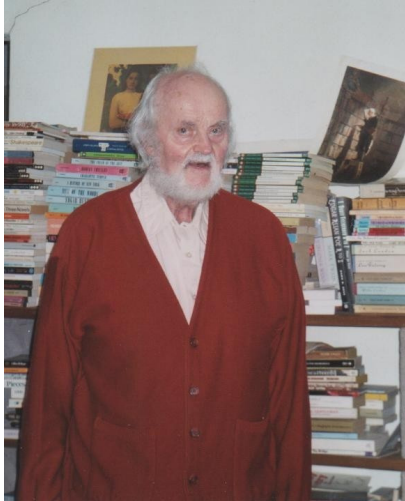
**Jack:** Like all of us who work in the Book Room, I have always been a reader and cherished books. I remember my first visit to a library; my dad took me at age six to the Seattle Public Library and told me I could read any of those books there I wanted. I was awestruck. I guess I have remained so ever since. I am one of the fortunate ones who, in Robert Frost's phrase, have been able to link my avocation with my vocation. After receiving degrees from the University of Washington and New York University, I taught English in universities and colleges, discussing for almost forty years a wide array of books with my literature students. At the same time I have amassed a huge personal library through my hobby of book scouting. Now in my glorious retirement years, I have continued my reading programs (for example, rereading all the books I taught over the years, a humbling and enlightening experience!) as well as writing about literature. For example, my article "E. E. Cummings: New York Poet" has just been published in the Cummings Society journal *Spring*.

**F:** So literature, and poetry in particular, have a special meaning in your life?

**J:** Indeed. Consequently, it is a joy and an inspiration working in the poetry and literature sections in the

Book Room to come across so many old favorites as well as to explore new authors and topics.

**F:** Jack, what is it about the volunteer work with the Friends that gives you the most satisfaction?



### Our Resident Expert

**J:** I would say it is the friendly and collegial atmosphere of working with so many other book lovers. All the volunteers are enthusiastic about their work; we all pitch in in our various ways with our variety of talents to make the book sales a success. Also, I enjoy being part of a process of connecting readers with books significant to them, allowing them to own these interesting and stimulating books at very reasonable prices. Further, I feel the book sales each month play a significant community role, bringing together folks with similar interests, allowing everyone, whatever his or her budget limitations, to own some books. I am glad to have a part in all this; to me, volunteering for the Friends in the Book Room is much more than just helping to make some money for the library. Our monthly book sales themselves help define the quality of life in the City of Palo Alto.

**F:** Is there anything you don't like about working in the Friends' Book Room?

**J:** I was chagrined last spring around the time of Poetry Month to see over five hundred books of poetry and poetry criticism that the Palo Alto Library had deaccessioned come into the Book Room. What a sad way to celebrate Poetry Month! Many of these books are truly indispensable references that should be kept as resources for readers but apparently have been withdrawn from the collection because they have not circulated enough. Like other reference works, these are often consulted in the library and consequently do not appear in the statistical surveys. It saddens me to see the classic works of poetry and criticism, long out-of-print and virtually irreplaceable, removed from the library shelves and made inaccessible to readers who need and want them most. The argument that such books are available "elsewhere" is completely unconvincing. I recognize the library's space problems (I have two commercial storage rooms of my own crammed with overflow books), but I cannot agree with the debilitating deaccession decisions our librarians are making. Our library's withdrawal of more than one hundred poetry and poetry criticism books in one fell swoop is a scandal that the Friends of the Palo Alto Library should vigorously investigate.

**F:** Any last words, Jack?

**J:** Yes. The love of reading is a blessing. Fostering reading and the love of books, our monthly book sales are a treasure. I am glad and grateful that in my retirement I have been able to add my small bit to this inspiring and most enjoyable endeavor.

- John Burt

## Introducing the Book Lady

One of FOPAL's most industrious volunteers is known as the Book Lady to many delighted shoppers in her area of expertise – foreign languages. To her, French, German, Slav, Spanish, Hebrew, Yiddish, Flemish, Italian are not *foreign* languages. They are merely *other* languages or sometimes, merely different lithographies.

Her facility with many of these languages was acquired first-hand: Flemish, as a very young adult working with diamonds in Antwerp, and other European languages by absorption during travels in Europe. Spanish, however, is a passion fostered by Palo Alto Adult education programs and conversation groups and subsequently nurtured by both travels and TV Argentinean 'soaps.' By now, there aren't many "foreign" languages that stump our Book Lady.

But let's back up a bit. Our Book Lady grew up in Belgium. Then early in WW II everyone watched apprehensively as Hitler advanced into Belgium. When *the day* arrived, her father was away from home; she, her mother and two sisters boarded the last train to leave Belgium. She remembers that the train doors were nailed shut from the outside. They reached Vichy France with a signed invitation from the U.S., but officials informed them that the rules had changed and two signatures were now required. There wasn't time to get another signature. After an unsuccessful attempt to cross the Pyrenees into Spain, their mother insisted the girls head for Switzerland on their own and she would follow later.

They reached Switzerland and were interned until the war ended; they

never knew what happened to their parents. In time, the Book Lady returned to Belgium, married a British officer and moved to England. They emigrated to Canada and then to the United States. We're lucky to have her in Palo Alto.



### A Volunteer Extraordinaire

The Book Lady's lifelong dream was to have her own book store/coffee shop but since that somehow never happened our Friends book room seems to be a good substitute. With almost daily attention to "her" language section, she is indeed a "Volunteer Extraordinaire." When her specialty area is tidy, she joins the hard-working group of volunteers who sort the mammoth influx of newly-contributed books into the categories that make shopping at our book sales such a rewarding (and thrifty) experience.

A 1-o-n-g time volunteer, (the Book Lady began with Friends years before we left Terman), she used to manage the hardback book section. This is a huge section and consequently a never-ending job. She gets extra credit for being our most regular worker as she shows up nearly every day to be sure her section is in order.

Her personal satisfaction for her many hours of work is the "joy of the recycle and reuse," of seeing books continue to live full lives in new homes. When she is asked for advice on what to read, non-fiction is her choice. Her guarantee is that she won't recommend any book unless she has read it to the very last page. (An oddity of books is that anyone can write a 'beginning', often a 'middle' but getting to a vital closing is very very hard.)

When she's not here, she's apt to be in Cambridge, England or in Basel, Switzerland, in Peet's Coffee Café around the corner or on a VTA #35 bus.

- Ellen Wyman



## Treasurer's Report – Fiscal Year 2004 – 2005

Booksale sales and net income again set new records. Sales at Cubberley, Downtown, online, and at auctions were \$193,610, with net booksale income of \$142,622, thanks to the dedication and hard work of our many volunteers. Contributions and gifts were \$20,059.

FOPAL began disbursing significant funds from the \$422,000 Cable Co-op Legacy Grant to the five Palo Alto and four San Mateo County libraries. Technology-related purchases included computers, monitors, laser printers, laptops for Palo Alto libraries, and online subscriptions to resources such as the New York Times and Rosetta Stone. In mid-2004, FOPAL was asked to pay \$50,000 additional for adding more space at Children's Library, which we agreed to.

### Income 2004-2005

Book Sales at Cubberley and elsewhere	\$193,610
Memberships	\$39,490
Library Lovers' Fund Gifts	\$3,020
Other Restricted Gifts	\$6,551
Unrestricted Gifts	\$10,487
Investments	\$26,841
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$280,001</b>

### Expenses 2004-2005

Grants to the Palo Alto Library	\$104,077
Cable Co-op Grants to Other Libraries	\$38,113
Book Sales Operation	\$50,988
Membership	\$2,324
Newsletter	\$4,185
Events	\$206
Management & General	\$3,513
Fundraising	\$321
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$203,727</b>

**Net Revenue 2004-2005** \$76,273

### Assets on June 30, 2005

Cash and Checking	\$1,857
Certificate of Deposits / Investments	\$1,242,889
Prepaid Expenses	\$586
Accounts Receivable & Accrued Interest	\$13,332
Furniture and Fixtures	\$4,980
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,263,645</b>

### Liabilities on June 30, 2005

Immediate Grants Payable	\$10,051
Long-term Grants Payable	\$530,217
Cable Co-op Grants Payable	\$289,657
Other Accounts Payable	\$1,394
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$831,319</b>

### Net Assets on June 30, 2005

Endowment	\$246,939
Fund for the Future	\$2,246
General Operating Funds	\$183,141

Amounts may not sum due to rounding.

*Robert Moss, Treasurer*

*(Continued from page 1)*

- John Greenleaf Whittier. Selected Poems
- The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature: The Traditions in English.
- The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Middle Ages Through the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century.
- The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period Through the Twentieth Century

As you can see, this is a wonderful collection of material that the library, FOPAL and the entire community is very grateful to have. Ross Staley, Jane's husband, has been very interested and supportive in all this, and it is heartwarming to know that Jane, herself, would indeed be very grateful.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all the donors!



## Book Sale

Two Days, 3 Rooms, Over 50,000 Books!

### 2006 Dates

March 11 and 12  
April 8 and 9  
May 13 and 14  
June 10 and 11  
July 8 and 9  
August 12 and 13

### Open Saturday

Children's and Bargain Room  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Main Sales Room  
11:00 am to 4:00 pm

### Open Sunday

All Rooms  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

## Donate Books

Don't Throw Books Away

We find new readers for your old books and other items, raising \$100,000's for the Palo Alto Library.

### We Accept

Books (paperbacks and hardcovers),  
Movies (DVD's and Video's), Software, Games,  
Music (CD's, Cassettes, Records, Sheet Music)  
Other (Artwork, Posters, Pamphlets, Collectibles, Magazines)  
and You Get a Tax-Deduction for Your Donations

### Drop-off Times

Tuesday—Saturday  
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

You can also drop off up to one bag or box (per day) at any Palo Alto library.

### Information and Pickups

(650) 213-8755  
(650) 493-5672

Book Sale Room and Book Donations Accepted  
FOPAL Book Sale Room, Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, (North Entrance)

If you have changed your email address please let us know. Some of the messages we have sent out have been returned as undeliverable. As a member of FOPAL we want to be able to keep you informed regarding current activities. Please email me at gambitts2004@yahoo.com so I can update our records with your current email address.

Thank you, Gloria Reade (Membership)



## Friends of the Palo Alto Library Membership Form

I/We would like to  join or  renew at the following level:

- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Student \$10
- Senior, 62+ \$10
- Supporter \$50
- Sponsor \$100
- Patron \$250
- Lifetime \$500 (No dues reminder!)
- Corporate \$1000

We are a public-benefit 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your membership is tax-deductible.

- Please don't send me the monthly email news
- Please do not send me the quarterly newsletter

Please return form to:  
Friends of the Palo Alto Library  
P.O. Box 41  
Palo Alto, CA 94302

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

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City/State/Zip

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Phone

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Email—please print

Please make checks payable to Friends of the Palo Alto Library. For credit cards:

Visa  Master Card \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card Number Expiration Date

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Signature

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Name on Credit Card if Different than Above

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**Web Page: [www.friendspaloaltolib.org](http://www.friendspaloaltolib.org)**

**Email: [info@friendspaloaltolib.org](mailto:info@friendspaloaltolib.org)**

**Monthly Book Sales: Second Weekend**

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd.

**Saturday**

Main Room: 11 am to 4 pm

(Free tickets to reserve place in line available at 8 am)

Children's (Room K6) & Bargain (Room K7): 10 am to 4 pm

**Sunday**

All rooms: 1 pm to 4 pm

See [www.friendspaloaltolib.org](http://www.friendspaloaltolib.org) for details

**Board of Directors Meeting: Second Wednesday**

Cubberley Book Sale Room  
4000 Middlefield Road 8:30 to 10:30 am

**Book Discussion Group: Second Thursday**

Lucie Stern Community Center Fireside Room

1305 Middlefield Road 7:30 to 9 pm

For information, call Crystal 961-1528 or see

[www.fopalbookgroup.homestead.com](http://www.fopalbookgroup.homestead.com)

**Great Books: Second Wednesday**

Oak Creek Apartments Club House

1600 Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto. 7:30 to 9:30 pm

For information, call Elsie Taboroff at 493-8629

**Library Commission: Fourth Thursday**

Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Ave. 7 pm

See [www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/clerk/schedule.html](http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/clerk/schedule.html)  
to confirm meeting date and time.

Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) Board of Directors: Jeff Levinsky, President; Martha Schmidt, Vice-President; Margarita Quihuis, Secretary; Bob Moss, Treasurer and Bob Otnes, Assistant Treasurer; Marty Paddock, Book Sale Manager. Members: Wendy Akers-Ghose, Betsy Allyn, Althea Andersen, Rudy Batties, Gretchen Emmons, Gerry Masteller, Gloria Reade, Jim Schmidt, Barbara Silberling, Steve Staiger, Ellen Wyman, and Tom Wyman. Library Representatives to the Board: Paula Simpson, Library Director. Foreword Staff: Wendy Akers-Ghose; Webmaster: Jeff Levinsky; Circulation: Post Haste Direct