

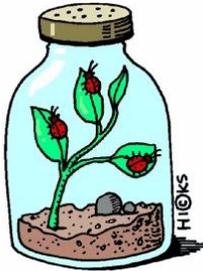


FOREWORD

Issue No. 79

Spring 2009

Looking Ahead—The Downtown Library



As the City begins plans to remodel the Downtown Branch Library (starting next spring, using \$4.1 million from the recently passed bond measure), the Group 4 Architects conducted a focus group meeting last month to listen to neighborhood residents' comments and suggestions. Interestingly, there was near unanimity on a number of major points and concerns, and the general conclusion was that, as now proposed, the branch will not be significantly improved.

The main concern of the focus group was that the proposed collection size would be inadequate, as would be the amount of public seating and the number of computers available for public use. Also, City statistics show that with the projected growth of population in that part of the city, the library collection will decline per capita. All three of these parameters seem inadequate now, and thus were major concerns of the focus group.

Those present also raised questions about the need for a program room, recalling that in the city-sponsored opinion poll, residents rated the program room as the least of their "features desired." It was also pointed out that there will be new program rooms at both the Mitchell Park and Main libraries. The Focus Group members urged that if there were to be a program room Downtown, the space should be used only for traditional public library functions.

Those at the meeting also questioned the proposal to move library administration/ staff from the east side to a new larger area on the northwest corner thereby preventing direct access from the library to the west patios, the most popular areas in which to read, eat lunch, hear a lecture, etc.

There were other suggestions from the public including re-establishing a reference room, offering specialized collections (such as business), and developing a better balance between public and staff space. It was suggested that this could become an adult library, since the new Children's Library is close by and offers children so many more opportunities.

The residents who spoke at the focus meeting most want to increase the size of the collection significantly, ensure that it remains reasonably current, and provide ample seating, computers, and space for the public in the downtown library. The group hopes it opened up topics for a wider discussion—to continue at the next Library Advisory Commission meeting.

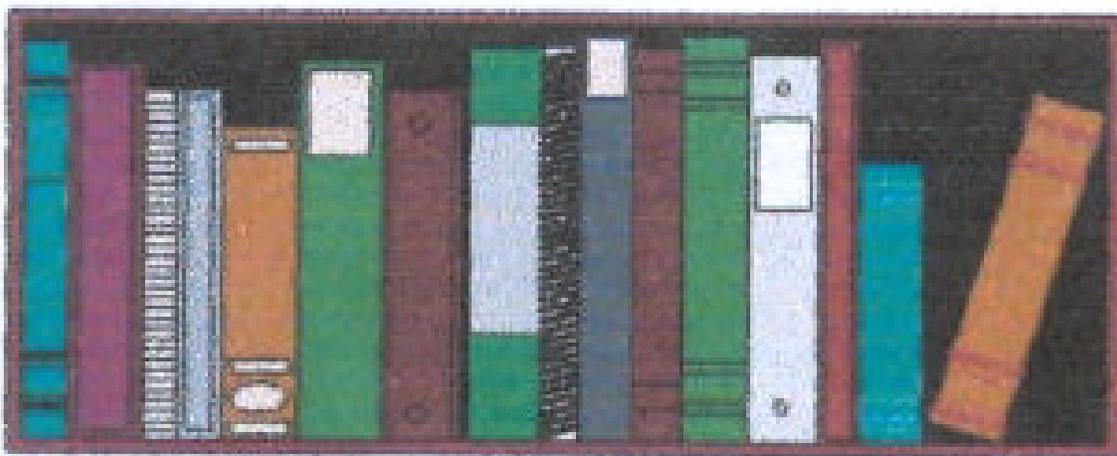


Have You Discovered Our Five Different Sections of Fiction?

See the article on pages 4-6 and meet the FOPAL volunteers who manage these sections.

“Exceptional Books” Something New for Our Customers!

We continually ask ourselves how we can better serve our many loyal book sale customers. Each month we receive an avalanche of books, ephemera, CDs, and video materials, and each month our volunteers screen and sort these donations to prepare them for our next sale. This process includes price checking many items, a number of which prove to be of exceptional value. Some of these “Exceptional Books” are sufficiently valuable that they can be sold on the Internet, usually at prices considerably higher than those FOPAL could ordinarily realize at our monthly sales.



However, before listing these high-value items on the web we have decided to offer them to our regular book sale customers at a discount from the online price for which we would list them. It's a win-win. Our customers benefit because they get the first chance to see these books and to purchase them for less than the online market price.

Our “Exceptional Books” can be found in a new bookcase with glass doors near the entrance of the main sales room. Each month between 50 and 100 books will be on display, but once the sale is over, the books remaining in the glass case will be removed and listed on the Internet at higher prices. The monthly email newsletter announcing the sale includes an inventory and photos of the contents of the glass case, so customers can preview the month's offerings. To be included on the distribution list, send an email address to signup@friendspaloaltolib.org



Do let us know what you think of this new service.

~John Burt

How Has Friends Fared in the Recent Market Downturn?

These are trying times, and it is difficult to figure out how to manage and protect our funds. The Board of the Friends of the Palo Alto Public Library feels a keen responsibility for the funds it receives through our book sales, contributions, memberships and grants.



Our fiscal policy is conservative. Over the years we have sought out the most secure investments available. We make certain that all investments are insured up to the federal limit \$250,000. With the lower interest rates that now prevail, it is not surprising that our return on investments has dropped off, but more importantly our principal is still intact.

We can now get only a paltry .3% or .2% on our money—that's point 3% or point 2%. However, our principle is still intact! The payoff is that our treasury is in much better shape than it would have been if we had invested our funds in market-based securities or with financially shaky institutions.

~Enid Pearson, Treasurer, FOPAL Board of Directors

Fiscal Year 2008 Gifts to the City

On April 6 the City Manager provided an informational report (CMR 179:09) to the City Council listing significant gifts received by the City during fiscal year 2007-2008. FOPAL's gifts are listed as follows:

Amount of Gift	Use of Gift
\$29,023	Programs all libraries (children's, teens, adults)
10,380	Electronic books
9,994	DVD collection
44,320	Library books
9,984	New service desk, Downtown Library
8,423	Cable Co-op Grant, Online data bases*
8,226	Cable Co-op Grant, public use equipment supplies and repairs*
8,423	Cable Co-op Grant, subscription to online resources*
Total \$128,773	* Grants received as a result of FOPAL's applications to Cable Co-op.

In recent years FOPAL has been one of the largest donors to the City. In addition to the funds that FOPAL contributes to the library, it must also pay to the City rent of over \$39,000 per year for space it uses at Cubberley. Because rent payments go to the City's General Fund, they directly reduce the amounts that would otherwise be available to our libraries.

~Tom Wyman

College Terrace News

College Terrace Library closes this summer for a major renovation. Improvements will address issues concerning mechanical, plumbing, and electrical system inadequacies, accessibility, and seismic stability. Air conditioning will be installed, the roof repaired, and drainage around the perimeter of the building improved. Interior spaces will be reconfigured to create an attractive collection area that meets neighborhood needs. The library will be closed for approximately one year. More details will be posted on the Library's web site as they are available.

~Cornelia van Aken, Assistant Director, Palo Alto City Library

Our Surprising Fiction Sections

For people who love to relax with a good book of fiction, Marty's Book Room offers a huge selection of fiction of all kinds. There are short stories in Language and Literature and books to tickle the funnybone in Humor. But there are five large sections of fiction that draw customers every month. "Historical Fiction," "General Fiction," and "Science Fiction and Fantasy" are located in the southwest corner of the room. At their opposite in the northeast corner area are the many shelves of "Mysteries and Thrillers" and down the same aisle is the large section of "Classics and Modern Literature." Every month, section managers fill their shelves with paperback and hardback books of every vintage, alphabetizing by author or presenting in chronological order, organizing featured books, and arranging appealing displays.

Historical Fiction

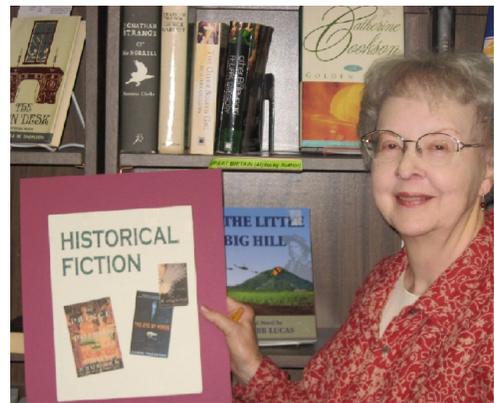
A few years ago, as the Manager of the History and Politics section, I noticed that the sorters were sending books to "history" that were actually fiction. So I started the Historical Fiction section! This coincided with the recent growth in popularity of historical fiction which, although very popular in the past, had fallen out of favor. From a small end case on the history aisle, historical fiction has grown to be a large and quite popular section.

England is the largest section in historical fiction with writers such as Bernard Cornwall, Ken Follett, and Phillipa Gregory leading in popularity. Another popular section is military or war related historical fiction. Included in this section are the historically accurate thrillers by Alan Furst. Sea related books such as those written by Patrick O'Brien are favorites of many readers.

The United States section has a substantial number of books each month, while books set in individual countries in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, etc. tend to be fewer in number. There is also a section on the "Ancient World" which includes Rome, Greece, and Egypt, as well as books with Biblical themes. Recently a small historical romance section has been added. Each month there are also "classic" older historical fiction books in all geographic areas.

Reading historical fiction is a pleasant way to learn about the past with a bit of drama, romance, or mystery thrown in to make the events come to life more vividly for the reader.

~Suzanne Little, Section Manager



General Fiction



Welcome to the General Fiction Department, where we offer up to 400 books (hard cover and trade paperback) each month. These are primarily contemporary novels, published since 2000, and arranged on shelves and tables in alphabetical order by authors' last names.

We also feature separate sections of works by authors who have received the most prestigious national and international prizes for fiction: the Man Booker prize; the National Book Award; the Pulitzer Prize; the Nobel Prize.

One of our most popular displays is of "Books Selected by Book Clubs." These are of interest to all readers of fiction, and of special interest to those who belong to a local book club or who are thinking of joining—or starting—a club.

~Marian Knox, Section Manager

Science Fiction and Fantasy

For readers with a soaring imagination, whose dream is to skim the stars in a spaceship, or perhaps to ride a unicorn or slay a dragon or two, the Science Fiction and Fantasy section is where they find books to fuel that imagination.

On the Science Fiction shelves are many books written by the early classic authors of Sci-Fi: Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur Clarke, Ray Bradbury and H. G. Wells. Current authors Orson Scott Card, Lois McMaster Bujold, Neil Gaiman and many others are continuing the saga of space exploration and adventures on other planets, a subject that continues to fascinate authors and well as readers. A new section on Cyberpunk features authors who focus on high tech, hacker and info technology, often dark in tone and usually set in the near future. Some surprising discoveries are authors, well-known in other genres, who also wrote Sci-Fi. Edgar Rice Burroughs, the creator of Tarzan, also wrote many science fiction novels, and a recent surprise was a book by Jack London.



For readers who prefer the world of wizards and dragons, the Fantasy shelves are full of books about magical kingdoms and mythical monsters, from humorous adventures to great sagas. Authors, once they create a complete fantasy world, often use it in many books of a series so the readers can follow their favorite characters in further adventures. One shelf of Fantasy features vampires, werewolves and horrors - and sells very well! Fans of Alternate History (what if the South won the Civil War) will find a section for them, as well as players of Dungeons and Dragons!

~Betty Moore, Section Manager

Mysteries and Thrillers

Classic Mysteries: There is always a good selection of classics. I have most recently been reading Josephine Tey, Helen MacInnes and Dorothy Sayers and there is currently a good selection of all three. And, of course, Agatha Christie is always a good choice. I find them a bit more challenging than some of our modern writers but well worth the time.

Modern Mysteries and Thrillers: Henning Mankell, a Swedish author, is a current favorite of mine. His stories are a bit gruesome but well written and with a good Detective—Kurt Wallender. PBS will be debuting three of his mysteries beginning in May. I'm eager to see how they fit so much story into a few TV hours but I will be glued to the tube for each of them.



You can always find a good selection of thrillers from authors such as Lee Child, Lisa Scottoloni, and James Patterson. John Connolly's Charlie Parker novels are always exciting and there will be many to choose from. And have a look at the newly published mysteries, shelved by 2009, 2008, and 2007.

The selection varies from month to month, but you're sure to find something to your liking at a price that won't break the bank.

~Judy Wagstrom, Section Manager

Classics & Modern Literature

The section containing Classics and Modern Literature can be described as the place to find books that are assigned reading (sometimes called the western canon) in high-school and college.

Classics are books written in the 19th century and earlier. The authors' names and the book titles are familiar: *Beowulf*, Jane Austen, *Jane Eyre*, Cervantes, *The Red Badge of Courage*, Charles Dickens, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Henry James, *Moby Dick*, Jonathan Swift, *Vanity Fair*, Mark Twain, and *The House of Mirth*.

Modern Literature contains works from the 20th century (and 21st). Among these authors are a handful who have received both a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the Nobel Prize in Literature: Sinclair Lewis, Pearl Buck, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Saul Bellow, and Toni Morrison.



In addition to these award-winning American authors, we have a remarkable variety of books from writers of different nationalities (all translated into English). National flags and appropriate shelf labels identify subsections that include French, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, and Hispanic/Latino authors. These international selections are sorted in alphabetical order by authors' names—however, the 19th and 20th centuries are merged. For example, in the French literature subsection, you can find Balzac, Camus, Flaubert, Sartre, and Zola. Among the Russian Authors, you can find Tolstoy, Bulgakov, Turgenev, and Solzhenitsyn.

The sophistication of Palo Alto book lovers and our donors' generosity enriches the quality and variety of fiction we offer. For recognized masterpieces of world literature, come to Aisle 4, sections D & C (facing). You'll be amazed at what all you find!

~Scottie Zimmerman, Section Manager

Local Communities Love Their Libraries

The Bay Area can be proud of its library systems and the enthusiastic readers who visit them. The information in the table below came from "California Library Statistics 2009" for the 2007-08 fiscal year, in which there were 181 public library systems in the state of California.

Library System	Circulation Per Capita	Visits Per Capita
Los Gatos	13.2	6.6
Mountain View	17.9	9.7
Oakland	5.3	7.4
Palo Alto	24.3	13.9
San Francisco	10.1	7.2
San Jose	14.6	7.8
San Mateo County	14.5	8.3
Santa Clara	22.2	12.0
Santa Clara County	24.1	8.1
Sunnyvale	16.9	5.8
Statewide Mean	5.8	4.4

~Courtesy of the San Jose Mercury News

So-Long, Liz

Liz Davis has decided to move from the area, and at FOPAL we'll be much the less for her departure. She plans to travel for several months, and her destinations include Peachtree City, GA; Sanibel, FL; Farmington, NM; Bluff, UT and Tucson, AZ. Longer term plans are less defined, but Tucson is a possibility as also is the Bay Area.



Liz joined the bookroom volunteer team in July 2003. She was dropping off a donation when Marty, always a good judge of character and talents, asked her if she would like to volunteer.

In the subsequent nearly six years, she managed General Nonfiction including African-American, Memoirs, Popular science, and True Crime; Travel Narratives; Nature; Classics & Modern Literature; and The West, California, and Native American. Additionally she helped out at one time or another in Mystery, Biography, Fiction, Art, Children's room,

Bargain room, and Religion. One quickly notices that there aren't many sections that she didn't have a hand in at one time or another.

She has a nose for high value books. She has the ability to walk around and spot valuable books anywhere, anytime. Once she found a couple of valuable books in the bargain room on Sunday. Recently, Liz has been working with John Burt to set up the high value book section at the sale and all the processes necessary to manage the sale of exceptional books. The success of this effort is very apparent since we sold over \$1000 in books from the locked cabinet in just the second month.

Obviously, like most of our volunteers Liz loves books. She says, "Books are not only containers of information for me, but also beautiful objects. I love the fact that every book you can think of seems to come through our sorting room at one time or another."

Her abilities and knowledge aside, what most of us will miss is Liz's wonderful personality and willingness to help out anyone no matter how much work it involves or how busy she already is. She has a great ability to size up situations and find ways to make improvements. We all have been made better volunteers by having Liz around.

All her friends at FOPAL wish her well and want her to know that if events bring her back to the area, we'll keep the light on in the bookroom for her. Thanks so much, Liz, for all your hours and hours of service and for being such a great person to be around.

~Dick Grote

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Web Page: www.friendspaloaltolib.org

Email: info@friendspaloaltolib.org

Book Sales: Second Weekend Every Month

Cubberley Community Center
4000 Middlefield Road

Saturday

Main Room: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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

Children's Room (K6) & Bargain Room (K7): 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday—New Hours

All rooms: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For details, see www.friendspaloaltolib.org

Book Discussion Group: Second Thursday

Lucie Stern Community Center Community Room
1305 Middlefield Road 7:30 to 9 p.m.

For information, see

www.fopalbookgroup.homestead.com

Great Books: Second Wednesday

Oak Creek Apartments Club House
1600 Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto. 7:30 to 9 p.m.

For information, call Elsie Taboroff at 493-8629

Library Commission: Fourth Thursday

Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Ave. 7 p.m.

To confirm date/time, see

www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/clerk/schedule.html

Friends of the Palo Alto Library Membership Form

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

Join/renew	<u>1 Year</u>	<u>2 Years</u>
<u>Individual</u>	\$15	\$27
<u>Family</u>	\$25	\$45
<u>Student</u>	\$10	\$18
<u>Senior</u>	\$10	\$18
<u>Supporter</u>	\$50	\$90
<u>Sponsor</u>	\$100	
<u>Patron</u>	\$250	
<u>Lifetime</u>	\$500	

Name (Please Print)

Address

City / State / Zip

Phone

Email

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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