



Foreword

The Newsletter of Friends of the Palo Alto Library

Spring 2023

President's Message

After some much needed rain and unusually cold temperatures (for us, not for most of the country), I think we are all happy that spring is upon us. Despite some showers during the January and February sales, we had lots of customers and sold many, many books, CDs, DVDs, games and puzzles.

In January the special High Value sale was very successful.. The total income for the January sale was \$22,000, almost \$4,000 of which came from that special sale.

In February we brought in \$17,000, almost as much as the \$18,000 from the 'regular' part of the sale in January. Thanks to Nigel Jones and Nancy

Cohen for putting a great deal of time and effort into making the High Value on-site sales possible. They are already planning another High Value sale for July.

The on-going High Value part of our operation, which involves selling books on-line and at the Pacific Book Auction typically earns us about \$4,000 a month, but in January brought in over \$14,000, (including our on-site sale). It has become one of the most important and profitable aspects of FOPAL's operation, thanks to the fourteen dedicated volunteers on the High Value team who spend countless hours looking up book values, pricing books and finding the best way to sell each item.

During my first year as FOPAL's board president I have

enjoyed working with wonderful, dedicated volunteers and FOPAL's supporters in the community.

Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Jenny Munro

Donation Monitors and Sorters - Our Unsung Heroes

I want to give a 'shout out' to the wonderful volunteers who take in our donations and the equally brilliant sorters who get the books into the right sections in FOPAL's main room. Taking in donations is one of the most challenging jobs at FOPAL. First comes the task of greeting donors, helping pack their books in banker boxes and placing the boxes on the cart.

This takes good humor, patience and must often be done quickly (sometimes frantically) when we are busy. Pushing carts loaded with heavy boxes up the ramp, and then lifting and stacking the boxes in the sorting room is hard physical labor. I want to say a big thank you to everyone who takes on this difficult job.

And now to just two of our wonderful sorters:

Geoffrey Rocca is a regular sorter, working every Monday and Wednesday afternoon. He is pictured on page 8 in a rarely-seen sorting room almost devoid of boxes. Jeff is much beloved not only for his sorting expertise, but also for his strength and willingness to move boxes, push carts and generally help out other volunteers.

Susan Strain, another sorter extraordinaire, is pictured (Continued on page 8)



Jenny, Nigel, and Nancy



Sometimes donations arrive just piled in the back of a truck!

Our New Assistant Treasurer



As the incoming Assistant Treasurer, I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Michele Kasper. I grew up and went to college in the Midwest. After college I moved to San Francisco, where I enjoyed working as a physical therapist. I'm married, have three kids, two dogs and a snake. In my free time, I foster dogs, bake, knit and volunteer at FOPAL. I love books and have always enjoyed libraries. Sometimes on date nights, my husband and I used to visit libraries in neighboring cities. So much fun exploring the treasure of knowledge stored on the shelves of the library. Knowing that the work I am doing benefits my local libraries and my greater community gives me great joy.

Technology Committee Report

As technology continues to evolve, many of the hardware and software systems that FOPAL uses have become harder to maintain and are limited in their ability to address current and future needs. Efforts to implement technology upgrades have been hampered by limited documentation and a dearth of volunteers with the appropriate skills. To address these issues, a new Technology Committee was recently formed to provide oversight in identifying and resolving technology-dependent problems and issues.

The top priorities of this committee are to document existing processes that rely on technology, evaluate web apps that could make FOPAL's operations more efficient, and assemble a corps of volunteers who can take on regular or one-time tasks such as updating the web site, maintaining email lists, evaluating new software, inventorying equipment, and/or creating Google forms for various purposes. Interested volunteers should contact John Wang (jwang@fopal.org).

A Year on eBay

What was I thinking in February 2022 when I listed *History of the 89th Division, U. S. A. : From Its Organization in 1917, Through Its Operations in the World War, the Occupation of Germany and until Demobilization in 1919*? Why did I think this book would sell? Who would buy it?

How surprised was I to see that the book sold in a few weeks? What really made it worthwhile was receiving an email from the buyer explaining that his grandfather had been part of this division and how much this book meant to him.

That's when it clicked: as much fun as it may be working as a cashier at the monthly sales where members of our community enjoy buying books at Cubberley, there are millions of people who go on eBay and are willing to pay large sums for rare books.

Just as with sorting books, the variety of these high value books is extraordinary, and provides an opportunity to learn about a multitude of subjects. The high value medical books end up on my shelf and I enjoy listing the tech ones, but for me the real thrill is in the photography and art books. The biggest challenge is to not buy some of these books myself.

My highest value sale was for *Medical Jurisprudence, Forensic Medicine And Toxicology, Vol 1 - 4 1894 - 1896*, which sold for \$275, but the most "rewarding" sales were the times I sold and hand delivered books to people in our community.

How many times a day (or an hour) do I check the high value gmail account? More than I'd like to admit (and yes, I do get notifications, but I'm not a very patient person). Part of having this shared email is that even if my book hasn't sold, I can share the excitement when someone else's book has.

And then last, but not least, is the help and community from the high value team whether it's about a specific item, or needing to have a book mailed when I'm out of town. As with FOPAL overall, it's all about the people.

Susan Light

FOPAL's Children's Room

encyclopedias. We have books in English, of course, but also in a multitude of European and Asian languages. (*Harry Potter* in Japanese, anyone?) We have shelves and shelves of beautiful picture books that you can wrap up and give as gifts, they're in such pristine condition. Books on religion or parenting



Mary Bender unpacks donated books



Lucy LaPier gets ready to price new items

concerns? We have them. Award-winning school-age novels? We have hundreds. Science kits, math flash cards, crafts materials, American Girl books? The Children's Room has them, too. We also sell DVDs and CDs, books on CD, jigsaw puzzles (all with pieces counted so you know you're getting a complete one), and toys. Even the occasional kid-size stepstool or riding horse, depending on donations.

It's almost miraculous that every month we reorganize our room after the recent sale, send to the Bargain Room any books that haven't sold in four months, and process the thousands of newly donated books that come in every

week. By the time the next sale rolls around, we've transformed the Children's Room into a well-organized, attractive bookstore, with prices that can't be beat!

Carolyn Davidson and Lucy LaPier

The Children's Room, housed in a large portable at the south end of the Cubberley campus, is where to go for books, games, puzzles, and toys for kids from infants through teens. Everything at our monthly sales is a terrific bargain, priced from 50 cents to a few dollars—and mostly in like-new condition!

Do you have a tireless reader in your family? Someone who wants to read an entire series, or who is fascinated by graphic novels? Bring them to our sales on the second weekend of each month. Our room is full of books that will keep them busy and happy. And we love it when students who are avid readers decide to volunteer at our sales. They are invaluable at helping customers find the books they are looking for, and at recommending new titles. Keep us in mind as a great way for students to give back to their community.

Every week our crew of a dozen volunteers sort through, clean, price, and shelf about 100 boxes of children's books, from board books to teen fantasy and sci-fi, from math workbooks to graphic novels, from picture books to dictionaries, thesauruses, and Star Wars character



Suzanne Cholko and Ed Shikada volunteer at a sale

Library News

FIVE-STAR LIBRARY

Palo Alto City Library was recently recognized by the Library Journal's Index of Public Library Service, as a 5-star library, the highest possible recognition and an elevation from last year's 4-star rating.

Ratings are based on per capita library use for materials circulation, visits to the library, event attendance, and use of public computers and WIFI. The 2022 scores and ratings are based on FY2020 data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services Public Library Survey of libraries. The Library is one of 13 California libraries to receive a star rating, and one of only 5 libraries to receive a 5-star rating.

The library was recognized by the City Council on Monday, February 13. The recognition was attended by many staff, Teen Advisory Board members and FOPAL Board members.

LIBRARY ADDS MORE HOURS

The Library recently made yet another major push towards restoring hours lost during the pandemic budget cuts. In February the Children's, College Terrace, and Downtown branches added an additional service day each. Children's is now open Tuesday through Thursday, plus Saturday. College Terrace and Downtown are now both open Wednesday through Saturday. Also, in late January, the Rinconada Library added Sunday hours (10am to 6pm). The Library is looking to open the Mitchell Park Library on Sundays sometime in late spring or early summer. The Library is actively rebuilding from the loss of staff due to the budget cuts of 2020 and hopes to continue to increase staffing to support expanding hours.

LIBRARY EXPANDS CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS PASS PROGRAM

Just in time for spring blooms and wildflower season, the Library now has more than 70 passes available to visit our California state parks for free! In response to high community demand, the Library recently secured many more passes, now allowing for little to no wait time for customers who want passes so they can explore the wide variety of California state

parks. Customers can keep passes for up to two weeks. Passes can be reserved online and are also typically available same day and in-person at any of our five branches.

EVENTS HIGHLIGHT:

SUMMER READING PROGRAM:

Sponsored by FOPAL, the library's 2022 "All Together Now!" Summer Reading Program was our first "read for a cause" initiative, and we had 1665 signups with 777 completions. We donated \$1 to for every participant who completed the program to the Palo Alto Community Fund. This Summer Reading Program was also our big step into bringing back in-person events, and we had a total of 146 events (46 of them were virtual) and an attendance of 6180.

LUNAR NEW YEAR:

(1/28/23): Over 500 attendees came out for the Library's first in-person LNY event since February 2020. We had several performers (including an opera singer, kids' dance group and the TaeKwon Tigers) and crafts for attendees to enjoy.

NEW EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

- Musicians in Residence Series: Local HS jazz band, Nathan's Fearless Five! are playing every 4th Saturday of the month at Rinconada Library.
- Palo Alto Reads: This year's community reads series will feature events around the book *All That We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*. Events will include a virtual author talk with one of the book's essayists, and two resource fairs during the month of April.
- Community Threads: The Library received a CA state grant to purchase sewing machines in order to provide workshops for teens and adults through June 2023.
- Norooz New Year Celebration: On March 11, the Library hosted its first in-person Persian New Year Celebration at the Art Center. This event included traditional dance performances by the Shadan Dance Group, Norooz Musical Performance by Mo Ebrahimi and a storytime and crafts for children.

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Pizza Party and Quiz Day

Now that we are almost back to (post-Covid) normal, we look forward to 2023 being a year when we can resume in-



Amanda and Clark



Janette and Dan



Michele and friends



3215 Frank and John, our tech gurus



Quiz Winners: Susan, Ann, Bob, Charlotte and John



Ashley and Celia with friends

Dear FOPAL Supporters,

2022 was an exciting and challenging year and the donation monitors and sorters have been working extra hard. We continue to need more help with these front-line jobs in our organization. It's lots of fun for book lovers to see the wide variety of our donations while they sort, and a good work-out for those taking in the donations.

The Main Room saw some section manager changes as well as some changes to a few section locations. The Children's Room had a mini-makeover, opening up space to offer more books to their customers. The Bargain Room was a busy as ever, especially with the not-to-be-missed Free Book Giveaways on Monday evening after the sale.

With an emphasis on growing our E-commerce operation, we enlisted more volunteers to work on FOPAL's eBay book listings.

We held monthly all-volunteer zoom meetings as a way to keep the volunteers connected and informed.

We held two FOPAL social events, one with a presentation by Steve Staiger, the Palo Alto Historical Society historian. We also attended the Palo Alto Library's appreciation lunch, given to thank all the library and FOPAL volunteers.

And FOPAL sponsored a Cubberley Community Center Free Library envisioned and created by a FOPAL student volunteer for his Eagle Scout Project.



Arjun Shah and friends

All this was accomplished while FOPAL processed about 40,000 books each month and generated over \$15,000 per month in sales.

As we start 2023, we are encouraged by the commitment of the FOPAL volunteers, members, and customers. Through our ever-popular monthly book sales, through our financial

donations to the Palo Alto Public Library, and through our book recycling program, FOPAL continues to make an impact in our community. Thank you all for your support.

Warm regards, Janette Herceg

FOPAL Library Bookstores

In November 2014, there was excitement in Palo Alto as the new Mitchell Park Library was finally going to open after many delays. FOPAL was particularly happy as we had been given a space for a long desired bookstore. There was a sales kiosk in the Downtown Library but sales were minimal given the small selection.

Some people were skeptical that a large store could be successful. They wondered why people would buy books when they could just get them on loan. However, opening sales at MP went so well that in 2015 another kiosk store was opened at the Rinconada Library. Now we have three venues where people can purchase our merchandise.

The Downtown, Mitchell Park, and Rinconada Library stores each stock what we have found best matches the varied interests of our shoppers. We also often have unusual books. Our FOPAL Section Managers select the books, CD's, DVD's and puzzles. We request that the items they send are in excellent condition. Prices are \$2 for softcover books, DVD's and CD's. Hardcover books are \$3 unless priced otherwise. We also sell \$1 items (primarily children's books) and puzzles and cards are priced as marked. Sales are based on the honor system.

When we initially opened, payment was "cash only" but now customers have the option of paying with cash or PayPal.

The stores receive a delivery of new books no less than once a week. Our volunteers shelve new books as soon as possible and they regularly cull the shelves so that no book is on a shelf for more than two months. The volunteers are always happy to answer questions and assist you if you happen to be in a store during one of their shifts.

We get lots of feedback from our customers with remarks such as: "I just love this store, I always find something to buy." If you haven't visited one of the stores we think you'll be pleased when you do. Perhaps you will leave with a purchase for yourself or as a gift.

Suzanne Little

FOPAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

You can make a difference. Won't you consider contributing a few hours a week to help keep our five Palo Alto libraries up-to-date and thriving? FOPAL's monthly sales of donated books and media raise much-needed funds to purchase new books, technology and special programs for Palo Alto public libraries. These sales happen through the efforts of many individuals just like you. Please join us – flexible scheduling is available.

CHOOSE A JOB TO SUIT YOUR TIME, TALENTS, AND INTERESTS

High Value online e-business team/volunteers needed!

Learn how to research, describe, price, and prepare our most significant high value books on eBay and for Amazon through our partner Forest Books. Books can range from antiquarian to modern, art to technology, and media from CDs, DVDs, to games and software. You can work on all these materials at FOPAL or at your home; your hours are up to you. We will provide detailed training and mentoring. We need volunteers right now to join our successful and supportive high value team. For additional information contact Nigel Jones, nigelgj@gmail.com.

Help FOPAL with its technology needs!

FOPAL needs volunteers to take on regular or one-time tasks such as updating the web site, maintaining email lists, evaluating new software, inventorying equipment, creating Google forms, and occasional troubleshooting. Many of these tasks can be done remotely.

Enjoy a first look at an amazing assortment of books!

Donation monitors greet donors, monitor the donation process, offer receipts and thanks. Using social distancing, you will be accepting donations (6 bags/boxes or fewer) Mondays- Saturdays 3- 5pm. Donation monitors will offer to assist donors dropping off their books and moving those books into FOPAL's sorting room. Meet friendly donors and get free body-building exercise!

Section Managers needed!

Bring your love of books in areas like: the west, art, vintage books and large format, to name a few of the sections available. All books are pre-sorted and ready to be priced and shelved.

Volunteers @ book sales!

FOPAL book sales are held on the second weekend of every month. Monthly needs: cashiers, floor supervisors and set-up & break down volunteers. Meet many fellow bookaholics and experience the thrill of the marketplace.

Bargain Room/H2 book shelving area opportunity

By volunteering two hours a week, bargain room/H2 volunteers are able to take ownership of a specific section or two. Flexible schedule! No pricing needed, as all books sell for 50 cents or \$1.00.

Children's Room Tuesday Team opening

Sort and price children's book donations. A friendly group of volunteers meets in the Children's Room each Tuesday afternoon, or work on your own schedule.

To volunteer for any of above opportunities please contact Janette Herceg - 650-494-1266 or at jherceg@fopal.org. If you have any questions regarding the type of volunteer opportunities FOPAL offers, please check out our website www.fopal.org

Library News

(Continued from page 4)

- AI Storytelling: The library will hold its first AI Storytelling workshop where participants will create original stories using AI tools. Participants will gain hands-on experience using AI to generate short stories or poetry, narrated by AI-generated voices and depicted with images also generated by AI. We will then patch everything together into short videos which will be published to the Library's YouTube channel.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Donations (Continued from page 1)



with boxes stacked five-high in multiple rows, a much more typical sight. Susan sorts books several days a week in the late afternoon or early evening.



When I get a book that is classified as “psychology, gender, social trends, and conceptual thinking” I just ask Jeff or Susan where to put it. They usually know!

Geoffrey Rocca (top) and Susan Strain (bottom)

Friends of the Palo Alto Library Membership Form

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
_____ Senior	\$10	\$18
_____ Student	\$10	\$18
_____ Individual	\$20	\$35
_____ Family	\$30	\$50
_____ Sponsor	\$100	\$175
_____ Lifetime	\$500	
_____ Corporate	\$1000	

_____ Name
 _____ Address
 _____ City / State / Zip
 _____ Email
 _____ Phone

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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