

LIBRARY LEAVES

President's Corner continued from page 1

Friends of the Marin County Free Library

Summer 2020

Message From the Director

Sara Jones
Director of County Library Services

I wish I was announcing that libraries are close to opening our doors and returning to in-person services. Unfortunately that isn't the case. As you know, COVID-19 has increased in Marin, in positive cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Not news anyone wants to hear. I'm a member of the Marin Recovers Advisory group and the announcement by Governor Newsom has rolled back some openings and paused on some planned in the near future—such as in-person library services. We do not know when that will be approved but in the meantime we are preparing. This includes installing sneeze guards, outline social distancing markings, cleaning for computer and other patron uses.

We are required to quarantine books for 72 hours regardless of how they re-enter our system. We heard loud and clear people had great need to return books so we provided over three weeks to do this at our South Novato location. We believe nearly 12,000 materials came in, which is 10% of the 120,000 that were checked out. The actual fact is we don't have room for most of our collections to be in libraries—we depend on a substantial portion being in homes. This has and continues to be a huge challenge for us. In MARINet 2 million items check out so 2 million check in moving 4 million items per year—300,000 a month, so huge logistics that have now been deeply disrupted for almost half a year.

This spring, the library has partnered with school districts and Marin Promise and many other funding sources to provide Wi-Fi hotspots to over 800 students throughout Marin. All students were selected by schools as

having no internet connectivity in their homes. The hotspots were purchased to go through next school year. We didn't know the schools would be online in fall again so it's good they are in place.

The community has been very excited and appreciative about curbside services. They want more and we hope the virus will allow it! Summer Challenge is moving along. I'm hearing there is online fatigue by kids but our online programs and free books are really appreciated, and Friends funds made that happen so HUGE thanks for that support.

We also continue to have about 20% of total employee time continuing work as County Disaster Service Workers, taking significant and responsible roles, like pop-up childcare management and coordination of hotels as housing for vulnerable populations, participating in contact tracing, food distribution, EOC scheduling and many more needs. This is a county requirement and is first priority for all workers, who must complete county work first before library work, which we know is difficult for our patrons to understand.

I hope by next newsletter there is considerably more good news!



President's Corner

Virginia Schultz, President
Friends of the Marin County Free Library

Each year, the Friends of the Marin County Library funds a Wish List of programs and materials presented by library staff. The biggest item is always the Summer Challenge for children and youth. In recent years, families enjoyed a variety of storytelling, art, science, and nature programs at the libraries. Children received prizes for minutes of reading logged.

This summer our libraries are not open for in-person visits. Under the leadership of library staff, the emphasis of the Summer Challenge this year is engagement and activity rather than prizes. The summer program focuses on preventing the summer slide and closing the opportunity gap through targeted outreach to partner agencies. The Friends have used Summer Challenge money for give-away books for children, especially those in underserved communities, to read and keep. The program supports the Marin County Free Library's focus on equity in education. Both adults and children can sign up to participate at <https://marinlibrary.org/summerchallenge/>. My thanks to library staff for adapting to uncertain times and providing resources to the community, including expanded digital resources and curbside services.

Your membership donations are especially important now to keep programs such as the Summer Challenge in place. I encourage you to renew or donate at www.marinlibrary.org/join-renew-donate.

Our largest source of funds is through sales at the Book Place, which was closed for months due to the Shelter in Place. We are now open on a limited basis, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from

President's Corner continued on page 2

President's Corner continued from page 1

10 am to 2 pm. Watch social media and our website for any changes. The community response has been heartwarming. We are setting one-day sales records, and customers are very appreciative. The store has a happy vibe. Special thanks to Book Place manager Barbara Madrid and her crew including Valerie Hill, Carol Teller, Marcie Burley, and Betty Breeze for opening the store and making it welcoming. Wear a mask and use the hand sanitizer when you drop in.

I look forward to seeing you all when our libraries reopen!

Welcome New Members!

Sandra Greer
Ally Mengarelli
Emily Regalia

Are you a current member of the Friends of the Marin County Free Library? You can easily join, renew your membership, or donate to the organization online!

Go to: www.marinlibrary.org/join-renew-donate

If you prefer, you can pick up a membership envelope at your local library and mail it in with a check.

Library Leaves is published quarterly; the next issue will be in October. The deadline for submission of copy is September 25. News of library activities, updates, photos, ideas, and suggestions for improvement are welcome.

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Hess949@comcast.net

To contact the Friends of the MCFL:
Website: www.marinlibraryfriends.org
E-mail: mcflfriends@gmail.com

To contact the Marin County Library:
415-499-6051
www.marinlibrary.org

Notes from Novato

Gail Jackson, Correspondent
Friends of the Novato Libraries

Every fall, we show our appreciation for our Friends of the Novato Libraries members with a special event. This year, on September 20, 2020, we will hold a virtual Zoom event with local author and journalist Katherine Ellison. Ellison received a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting in 1985 for a series of articles on Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos.

Ellison's latest book, *Mothers & Murderers*, is an intense psychological thriller that weaves together the story of an outrageous murder mystery with a mysterious woman at its center and Ellison's roller-coaster love life and career. It takes readers from San Jose, California, before it was Silicon Valley, to Pakistan, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and the Philippines.



Author Katherine Ellison.

We're sorry we can't offer members a glass of wine or sparkling water and a wedge of Marin French Cheese brie, but we'll offer incentives to members who join or renew. You may join or renew at www.marinlibraryfriends.org/join-renew-donate.

Meanwhile, curbside service is now available at Novato Library Tuesday through Thursday from 11am to 5pm. Patrons can pick up holds and return materials only during those hours. How does curbside service work? Patrons can place holds on materials either online anytime, or by phone at 415-473-2272 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm). Patrons will be notified by email or online that their item is available. Call (415) 473-2050 during curbside service hours to schedule a pickup time.

All MCFL branches have launched an online Summer Reading Challenge June 15–August 8. We're doing things a little differently this year and opened up our Challenge to all ages. There is still time left to be a part of our community of readers and keep a log of what you read, watch, and listen to and earn badges: marinlibrary.beanstack.org. Early July statistics showed that adults over 50 were really enjoying Beanstack; of the 250 readers enrolled, 192 of them were adults over 50 and of the 63,052 minutes logged, 43,215 of them were from adults. Collectively, Novato and South Novato Libraries so far have 132 kids participating and 89 teens and adults.



Jessica Onick picking up her curbside book order at the Novato Library.

Friends and Foundation to Honor Diane Rosenberger with Emeritus Status and Scholarship

After serving on the Board of the Friends for 41 years, Diane thought it might be time to step down. We talked about it. Happily, she quickly agreed to stay on as an emeritus member and attend our meetings. We greatly value her participation.

The Friends and the Library Foundation will establish a scholarship to recognize Diane for all the years she contributed time, money, and enthusiasm to the Marin County Library System. Since the Rosenbergers focus their philanthropy on education, it will be an annual scholarship available to a Marin County high school senior pursuing a degree in education or librarianship. Applications and details will be available in the spring.

Tony Arnold's 2004 History of the Friends shows that Diane has been a member since 1979. She served as Vice President in 1981, President in 1984-1985, Treasurer with a few breaks since 1988, and as Secretary between 2015 and 2017. She received the Anne T. Kent Volunteer of the Year Award in 1990. She volunteered at the Book Place for many years. Tony described her as a "library legislative activist, and a volunteer for all seasons."

Diane was also a founding member of the Library Foundation. She held numerous Board positions, mainly Secretary. She did the thank you letters to donors for at least 15 years, and she wrote reports on the Foundation happenings for *Library Leaves*.

We give Diane our heartfelt thanks.



Annual Meeting Friends of Marin County Free Library

As our members know, the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Marin County Free Library usually occurs in mid-June. We hear reports from our officers; we hold an election of officers for the coming year, and a speaker delivers a wonderful presentation.

This year is different, of course. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were not able to have an annual meeting. Our election was held by mail. We had no speaker, and no delicious snacks. Several annual reports are on this page.

We all hope for a return to more normal life next year, but we're going to have to wait to see exactly what that will mean. In the meanwhile, we hope all our members have a safe and healthy year!

Friends of the Marin County Library Board of Directors 2020-2021

President Ginny Schultz
 Vice President Julia Noble
 Secretary Lesley Chapman
 Treasurer Lynn MacDermott

At Large Members Patricia Hess
 Valerie Hill
 Barbara Madrid
 Cindy Swift
 Rachel Weinstein

Emeritus Diane Rosenberger

Chapter Representatives
 (chosen by the local chapters)

Civic Center Penny Wells
 Corte Madera Julia Noble
 Fairfax Susan Brandborg
 Marin City Suki Sennett
 Novato Carol Teller

Year End Treasurer's Report 2019-2020

Cindy Swift, Treasurer
 Friends of Marin County Free Library

County Friends 7/1/19 – 6/30/20	
Beginning Balance	\$171,859.25
Income:	
Membership/Contributions	\$54,708
Book Sales	\$104,697
Investment Income	\$782
Other	\$25
Total Income	\$160,213
Outgo:	
Library Support	\$30,590
Youth Summer Challenge	\$42,127
STEAM	\$200
Give-away Books	\$703
Equipment	\$7,000
Community-wide Programs	\$200
Measure A Renewal Savings	\$12,500
Book Place Related (rent, etc.)	\$76,413
Chapter Share of BP Sales	\$6,408
General Mgmt & Admin	\$8,333
Total Outgo	\$153,883
Ending Balance	\$178,189

Note that this treasurer's report does not include financial data from our five chapters (Friends of Civic Center Library, Friends of Corte Madera Library, Friends of Fairfax Library, Friends of Marin City Library, and Friends of Novato Libraries). Their data will be incorporated later in the year for our filings as a 501(c)3 with the IRS and FTB.

This year has been challenging. Libraries have been closed as well as our Friends bookstore, The Book Place. Our income this fiscal year is down 22% from last year. Despite the challenges we continued to support Marin County Free Library, in fact our funding support increased 39% over last year.

Book Reviews

by Penny Wells

One of our long-time board members, Suki Sennett, comments on life and books during this pandemic.

Reading While SIP

by Suki Sennett

Not being able to visit my library during the Covid-19 pandemic is a major loss. Reading during SIP has become essential for my mental health more than ever. No longer having access to reading material through my library (although curbside service is a great help!) I decided to patronize my local independent book store, Sausalito Books By the Bay who, according to our Sausalito Village web site was offering to deliver purchased books to our homes.

Since I live on a houseboat in Richardson's Bay in my case it was books IN the Bay! I bought four books in the first 100 days of SIP. I rationalized my extravagance. Not only was I supporting a locally-owned independent book store, a new small business threatened with extinction by the coronavirus, but after all, I would have spent the same money going out to restaurants. Although I enjoyed all four books that were duly delivered to my boat, two books were stand outs: *The Splendid & the Vile*, "a Saga of Churchill, Family and Defiance during the Blitz" by Erik Larson (Crown \$32) and *The Glass Hotel* by Emily St. John Mandel (Knopf \$26.95). Please note I paid full price, no discounts from you-know-who.

The Splendid and the Vile is the intimate chronicle of Winston Churchill's first year as Prime Minister (May 1940-May 1941). It provides a fictionalized historic account of Churchill's leadership during Hitler's bombing campaign against England, known as "the Blitz". Larson is the author of several best sellers including *Devil in the White City* and *Dead Wake*.

The Glass House, set on Vancouver Island, Manhattan and a container ship is "a captivating novel of money, beauty, white-collar crime, ghosts and moral compromise." The white-collar crime is based on the Madoff Ponzi scheme.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Set in the Channel Islands off the English coast in 1946, this novel chronicles, through letters, the lives of Guernsey residents during and immediately after World War II.

Guernsey was cut off from communication with the outside world for five years under German occupation. Life for the villagers was considerably constrained and controlled by the military, yet the characters in this novel are able to maintain their sense of dignity and humanity through reading and discussing books at regular meetings of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. How the Society came into being is itself a testament to the wit and resilience of the English people. Through letters to a writer in London, each character reveals his or her private thoughts, concerns, and dreams. One can't help but engage with the whole community and pull for a brighter future.

If one needs encouragement to make reading a habit, this is the book. Great writers such as Seneca, the Bronte sisters, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Lamb are introduced and read by Society members. Their regular meetings and literary discussions offer distraction from the war and a venue for establishing more intimate friendships. It is this connection—this person-to-person respect—that keeps their spirits afloat.

While this novel is fiction, the impact of World War II on the British people, especially those in the Channel Islands, is real. It is a story told with warmth, wit, and compassion. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to be captivated by a people rising above hardship through ingenuity, determination, and hope.

• Book Review by Gretchen Leavitt

The Body: a Guide for Occupants by Bill Bryson

Bill Bryson's latest book, published in 2019, takes the reader on a tour of the human body. Organ by organ, bone by bone, function by function we get to learn little known histories of discovery and much more. This could be dry reading but Bryson reveals scandals and factoids you've never heard of before. All this is done with Bryson's wonderful wit and humor. *The Body* is lengthy, almost 400 pages, and the Notes and Bibliography add almost another 100 pages. It is obviously well researched and much more fun than sitting through an anatomy class in Med School. While there are a number of copies in our library system you will probably have to wait in line for this popular book. It is well worth the wait.

• Book Review by Penny Wells

Oil! by Upton Sinclair

If you are an Angelino (i.e. born and raised in Los Angeles) you might enjoy reading this expose by that old muckraker, Upton Sinclair, and published in 1926. This is supposed to be a novel but is actually a thinly veiled revelation about the Getty family's involvement in the development of the oil industry in L.A. The names of people and places have been changed to avoid litigation but it is fun to figure out who was who and where was where. Like I said the veil is very thin. Perhaps of more interest is a look at what Los Angeles was like in the 1920s. Although as a novel it falls a little flat it is an interesting and entertaining look at southern California history. It's a quick read and available at several Marin County libraries.

• Book Review by Penny Wells

Write a review!

What have you been reading? What books have you really enjoyed? (Or not enjoyed, for that matter.) Please write up your reviews, and email them to Penny Wells, at Kayakqueen@msn.com. We are looking forward to your thoughts!





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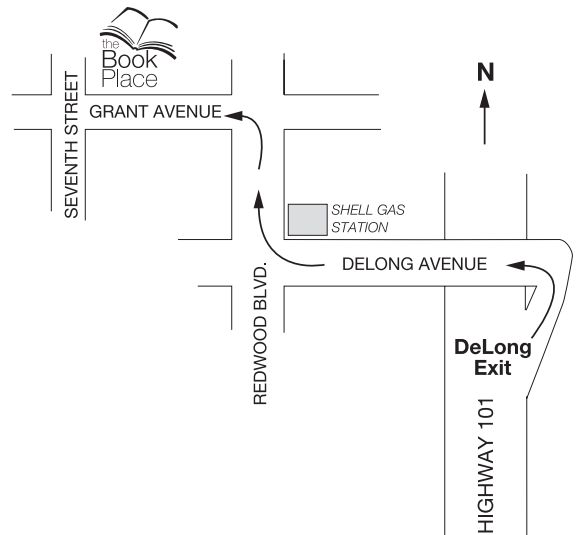
Temporary Hours:
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 10–2

Book Place News *Barbara Madrid*

The last few months have certainly been an education for us all, and we continue to serve as best we can. We're happy to report that The Book Place is doing relatively well during this pandemic.

After two months of closure, we reopened for curbside pickup in mid-May. We rearranged the front door area for a pickup station, put new books in the window, and implemented a request system via our email/telephone. We were definitely "feeling the love" from our customers who were so happy to have access to books again! We also noted a lot of new customers who discovered us.

Some people continue to request books, so the service will continue as an option, although we are now open for indoor browsing/buying three days a week. Too busy to browse? Don't feel comfortable with indoor shopping yet? Maybe you want recommendations for your child. A simple request via our email, mcflfriends@gmail.com, or by telephone, 415.209.0212, will start the process. We DO ask that you provide the full, accurate title, the author, and the type of book (Psych, Fiction, etc.). We'll do the searching. If we don't have it, we'll keep it on our Request Listings, and hunt periodically.



Donations have been steady and we appreciate everyone's understanding as we look through the books and only accept what we know may sell. Drop off is in the back parking area, which keeps it separate from the regular customers out front shopping for everyone's safety. A review of our donation guidelines on our website will smooth the process. We're also grateful for phone calls to let us know how much you have and we can direct you to the back lot area.

We are especially thankful for your cooperation, wearing masks, keeping your distance and generally just being courteous—we've had some BUSY days, and everyone has been great!

Because we can't have a full-blown book sale (too crowded!), we continue our monthly sales and impromptu specials when categories suddenly balloon out of control. Stay current by checking our website which we change frequently, and follow us on Facebook at "The Book Place: Friends of Marin County Free Library;" Twitter "@friendsmarinlib;" and/or Instagram at "thebookplacenovato."

Corte Madera News

Julia Noble, Correspondent
Friends of the Corte Madera Library

Mid-summer greetings all.

Although our branch remains closed, your dedicated Corte Madera staff offers curbside service on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11-3 and on Thursdays from 3-7. Staff are happy to be back serving patrons even at a 'social distance.' We hope you have been able to stay connected and reading in this way.

Check out the branch event calendar on line. There are many opportunities for young ones, families, teens, seniors and other curious learners.

Some good news to share. A new branch manager has been hired and will begin her post in September. We are very excited to welcome Stephanie Hartwell-Mandella to the Corte Madera Library.

Of note—our delightful facility must undergo needed repairs. To that end it looks like work will begin in August. Until we see each other at the library—be well and stay safe.

Volunteer of the Year!



Our Volunteer of the Year is Marcie Burley, Scheduling Coordinator for The Book Place. Marcie has been with us about four years, and although scheduling our volunteers is her main task, she also helps with training and special projects. She says her favorite job is working the occasional shift at the store to keep current with customer wants/needs, customer service issues, and just checking in with fellow volunteers to look for ways to keep making things better. Her preferred genres are Mystery and History. Congratulations, Marcie, and thank you for your service!



Friends of the Marin County Free Library
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IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Director	1
President's Corner	1
Notes from Novato	2
Welcome New Members	2
Corte Madera News	2
Diane Rosenberger	3
Annual Meeting	3
Treasurer's Report	3
2020-2021 Board of Directors	3
Book Reviews	4
Corte Madera News	4
Volunteer of the Year!	4
News from The Book Place	5

CALENDAR

Friends Scheduled Meeting Dates:

- Friends of the Marin County Free Library: 2nd Saturday of every month, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM; Corte Madera or Novato Library.
- Friends of the Civic Center Library: For information, contact Penny Wells at Kayakqueen@msn.com.
- Friends of the Corte Madera Library: 2nd Wednesday of the month in January, April, July, October, 10:00 AM; Corte Madera Library.
- Novato Friends of the Libraries: 2nd Wednesday of every month, 5:00 PM; Novato Library or South Novato Library.
- Friends of the Fairfax Library: 2nd Monday of every month, 7:00–8:00 PM; Fairfax Library.
- Friends of the Marin City Library: 3rd Wednesday of every month (except July and August), 5:00–6:00 PM; Marin City Library.
- Tomales Bay Library Association (TBLA): Meets as needed; West Marin School.
- Bolinas–Stinson Beach Library Improvement Society (BSBLIS). Quarterly meetings at Bolinas Library or Stinson Beach Library.