Changes Coming to the Children’s Area, the Friends Quarterly Meetings, a New Rainy-day Policy for Donations

In the Main Library, the Library District is remodeling the Children’s Area

L to r: Empty shelves in the Children’s Area, the removed books at the Friends Book Sale, a playspace at San Jose King library

The Santa Clara County Library District is creating a new library play space in every main library in the District. To make room for this renovation, the Los Altos Library has evaluated the use of the current collection and donated some of the least circulated children’s materials to the Friends. The new interactive play spaces are intended to support positive early literacy language experiences, as well as fostering family engagement, encouraging more frequent library visits, and strengthening connections among children, their caregivers, and patrons. While all will contain the same facilities and capabilities, each library will have its own theme: the theme at Los Altos will be, appropriately, The Orchard.

The Friends Quarterly Meetings: The Friends have 4 General Meetings a year, typically the week following each book sale. Recently, the general meetings have been preceded by a social hour and refreshments have been available. Our February 22 meeting, featuring a report by Pierre Bedard about Library Commission efforts to improve the physical structure of the library building, attracted close to 50 people. (The pizza was an incentive for some.) For upcoming meeting dates and locations: info@losaltoslibraryfriends.org

The 2024 Annual Meeting: Sunday June 23 from 4-7 pm on the patio of the History Museum. Our 4th general meeting of our fiscal year is our Annual Meeting. This meeting includes a potluck dinner and is usually held on a Sunday evening in June. At that meeting members mingle, eat, drink, recognize our new volunteers and vote for new officers for the 2024-25 year.

Changes to the Donations Process: On rainy days, donations may now be dropped off in the Main Library lobby during the regular scheduled sessions (Wednesdays from 2 - 4pm and Saturdays from 10am to noon). Up to 4 boxes per donor will be accepted. In another change, Foreign Language books are now accepted.
The Woodland Branch Library is open for self-service use on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 8 to 11am. This successful pilot program may soon be implemented in some other Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) libraries. At Woodland, 400 people have already registered; their library card is their entry into the library. Early access brings out a variety of patrons and while most are dropping by for a few minutes to pick up holds, there are other things to do. People come to use the library computers or bring their laptops for an online meeting in a quiet corner. Parents bring their children for a one-on-one storytime or to help with a crayoning project (using the library's crayons). Retirees out on an early morning walk stop by to sit and browse a book. And when a storm takes out power, quite a few of the neighbors have found that the empty library is a good place to charge their devices!

Woodland is located to the east of the Main Library, beyond Grant Road and Foothill Expressway. Anyone with an SCCLD account can sign up; one-time registration is required and consists of a short tour of the library as well as filling out a form to provide name, library card number, phone and email addresses. A staff member is always present, although not to provide assistance. (Above left, checking in for early access; right, children's area tables).

Book Recommendation from a Librarian: The Half Known Life by Pico Iyer. "A journey through competing ideas of paradise to see how we can live more peacefully in an ever more divided and distracted world". It came out early last year and has starred reviews from both Kirkus and Publishers Weekly.

Quote: "A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counselor, a multitude of counselors." – Charles Baudelaire

Old Friends: We are sad to report the passing of two of our hardest working, long-time Friends of the Library. Hardin Smith joined the Friends shortly after retiring from his dental practice and quickly became irreplaceable. Hardin was one of our first Bookmovers, moving donated books from the Donation Room in the library to be sorted, priced and stored in our space in the old Community Center. He was a Book Sale chair and was indispensable during all the sales, always helping with setup and cleanup. He held so many jobs with the Friends it is hard to remember them all. Sally McGrew joined us after retiring as a nurse. She was our biology specialist in addition to serving in almost every job from Book Sale chair to Vice President. Hardin and Sally's spouses Darlene Smith and Paul McGrew were also longtime active members. We remember all four of them very fondly.
The Silent Auction at the Book Sale: The new silent auction at our February sale was a success. We presented 31 books, prints and other items which sold for as little as $1 and as much as $100. There were a few glitches that we’ve addressed for the May sale; we also expect to have a longer list of items. Check the Friends’ web site a few days before the sale for a partial list of our new selection of unusual, valuable, or rare books. The auction items will be displayed in the Art and Specials room just to the left of the lobby in the Community Center. Come in and take a look.

Exciting New Donation at the May Book Sale: An entire collection of books on China & other Asian Studies from a local professor's library can be found in the Sale categories of History, Travel, Foreign Language, Politics, Economics, Sociology, and Vintage books.

Next Book Sale: May 3, 4, 5 in the Los Altos Community Center in cooperation with the City of Los Altos. Cash or credit cards are accepted. Volunteers are needed in all areas to help with the sale. Details at: volbooksales@losaltoslibraryfriends.org.

Friday May 3rd, 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Members Only pre-sale event. Membership entitles admittance for 2 adults and their minor children. (Use the tickets printed in this newsletter to gain admittance.) Membership may also be purchased at the door for $10/calendar year. Empty boxes and bags allowed.

Saturday May 4th, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Book Sale open to all. Empty boxes and bags allowed.

Sunday May 5th, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM Book Sale open to all. Books sold by the bag (our bags only, $5 each). Our thanks to Draegers for always donating the bags for the Sunday Sale.

The Books4Schools Fund enables teachers from publicly funded schools, grades K - 12, to acquire books at our quarterly book sales: the Fund picks up the expense. See the Friends website to register or donate to this program.

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