



# BERKELEY BOOKMARK

VOL. XXIII, NO. IV WWW.BERKELEYLIBRARYFRIENDS.ORG DECEMBER 2024

## Whew...and Thanks!

Thanks to Berkeley voters who enthusiastically supported Measure X in the November election, approving a small parcel tax increase to continue sufficient financial support for the Library. The original parcel tax of 1980 (44 years ago!) was no longer providing enough funds in our very pricey world.

78.55 percent of Berkeley voters voted Yes on Measure X; That's 41,788 library-loving voters!

Two factors ensured X's passage—the Berkeley Public Library is deeply beloved in this community...



*Just some of the devoted volunteers who worked to pass Measure X*



and a cadre of about 20 volunteers did everything short of parachuting from the Campanile to spread the word about X. Members of the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation walked precincts, wrote letters, greeted folks at the Solano Stroll, delivered lawn and window signs to hundreds of supporters (see photo above), and generally talked up the measure wherever they went.

All in all, the passage of Measure X was a positive note in a difficult election year. Grateful thanks to all who voted and all who worked so hard.



## Supporting the Friends = Supporting the Library

Creating a great public library requires support from many sources. The Berkeley Public Library is fortunate to have many community supporters who firmly believe in the power of libraries. Your individual donations help keep Berkeley's library system vibrant and responsive.

### Welcome to New Members

Elizabeth Amberg	Catherine Dower
Susan Blank	Seena Hawley
Connie Clausen	Naomi Pete
Cook (no first name given)	Nancy Yep

### Membership Renewals at \$25

Dahlia Armon	Candace Khanna
Judy and Dave Chadwick	Kathy Kosinski
Elizabeth Crews	Robbin Lou
Jacklyn Garcia	Jeanne Marecek
Marcia Flannery	David and Mary O'Neill
Barbara Goddard	Vivian Pisano
George Gorman	Betty Schinnerer
Martha Hartzell	Bridget Skadeng
Heather Hernandez	Deborah Sperber
Ann Jennings	Andrea Washburn

### Renewals and/or donations from \$26 up to \$200

Elizabeth Benjamine	Ralda Lee
Lucia Blakeslee	Laura Miller
Michael and Traude Buckland	Andrea Mullarkey
Judith Calder	Vivian Pisano
Susan and Ronald Choy	Katherine Pope
Sandy Emerson	Terry Rillera
Margery Ericksson and Jim Nelson	Nancy and Ted Rodriguez-Bell
Ellen Feldman	Linda Schacht
Hope Friedman	Ray Shiflett
Marilyn Garcia	Gene and Roz Seltzer
Ann Y. Goldman	Tedi Simonowski
Scott and Katie Hambly	John Spitzer
Trish and Tony Hawthorne	Marge Sussman and Cindy Shamban
Kathy Huff	Elsa Tranter
Naomi Janowitz and Andrew J. Lazarus	Sayre Van Young
Carol Lashoff and Bill Newton	Marilyn Willats
	Ranko Yamada

### Renewals and/or donations above \$200

Diane Davenport	Barbara McPhail
Fredrica Drotos	Mara Melandry
Patricia Kates	Therese Powell
Kristi Kenney	Bob Stern
Elizabeth Mayer	Thomas and Jan Vargo

### Donations in Memory of...

- **Mike Lara**  
from Andrea and Bill Foley
- **Adelia Lines**  
from Kevin James
- **Marti Morec**  
from Pat Mullan
- **Nicole O'Hay**  
from Barbara O'Hay
- **Martha Shogren**  
from Debbie Carton

### Donations in Honor of...

- **Morgan Baum**  
from Abdol Soltani and Grace Kong
- **Sayre Van Young and Diane Davenport**  
from Lois Schwartz and from Cathy Brown

### Gift Memberships

**For Dianne Leonard**  
from Cathy Brown



Editor: Sayre Van Young  
Layout/Design: Ann Higgins

The *Bookmark* appears quarterly; we welcome your letters & your ideas for articles. Contact us at *Friends Bookmark*, 2090 Kittredge, Berkeley, CA 94704, or via e-mail: [berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:berkeleylibraryfriends@gmail.com)

## No More Summer Slide 2024

By Friends President Cathy Brown

*Editor's Note:* We've mentioned the "No More Summer Slide" grant before, and our support and delight in the project continues. Giving away books to kids that need them— it's a heartwarming no-brainer. Here's an update on the latest news.

No More Summer Slide serves Berkeley Unified School District K-5th grade students who have difficulty accessing books during the summer break. The program is focused on providing new books to students and alleviating summer learning loss for this population. Students get to "shop" for books at a school fair and take them home.

Joal Arvinigian, BUSD's Reading Recovery Teacher Leader, coordinates the program and reported to the Friends that the program served over 740 students in 2024. Test results show that the grant is most effective with 2nd grade students and older. Regardless of age, owning books, and having access to books at home, is an important predictor of success in school.

Erica Glenn, BPL's Children's Services Senior Librarian, agrees, "This has truly become a joint effort by the schools, the Friends, and the Library, all with the shared goal of helping children succeed and to love reading and learning. Berkeley's children's librarians work tirelessly to support the schools, including springtime visits to classrooms and, of

course, the beloved Summer Reading Program (directly funded by the Friends). We are all enthusiastically in favor of getting books into children's hands, and by working together we can ensure that happens."

The Friends have been supporting No Summer Slide since 2017. We do not normally fund separate programs that aren't directly associated with BPL, as



our mission is specifically in support of the Library, but No More Summer Slide, and this unique alliance, working together, is the exception.

## Thank you, Bob Stern!

By Friends President Cathy Brown

We don't know you, but we're grateful for your generous donation that came to the Friends via the National Philanthropic Trust. We've scoured our membership list, queried our Board, and even called the grants team that issued the check, but we could not elicit any information about you. If you're reading this, please accept our sincere thanks.



Occasionally we receive a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from a brokerage or financial institution where we recognize the donor and can write a proper thank you letter. A QCD allows

individuals who are 70½ years old or older to donate up to \$105,000 total to one or more charities directly from a taxable IRA instead of taking their required minimum distributions. As a result, donors may avoid being pushed into higher income tax brackets. Consult your financial advisor (obviously). If you are in this fortunate situation, the Friends will put your money to good use!

We have kept our annual dues to a minimum for many years to encourage broad membership and continued renewals, and we are particularly appreciative when members send a little extra our way.

## Editorial Maunderings....

In which your editor confides, educates, resolves, and generally chats about many interesting and diverse items pertaining to the friendliest bookstores around, the bookstores' renowned volunteers and esteemed customers, the services and nuances of Berkeley's beloved Public Library, plus ever so much more.

### YET MORE ABOUT LITTLE GOLDEN BOOKS

Several issues ago I lamented that there is now a Little Golden Book about Betty White (complete with not very appealing graphics).

I've since discovered there are also Little Golden Books about Oprah Winfrey, Dolly Parton, Simone Biles, the Golden Girls (from the TV series), Barack Obama, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. As yet none of these have been donated to our Friendly bookstores but—especially at Central—we do have plenty of more traditional titles like *Scuffy the Tugboat*, *The Animals of Farmer Jones*, *Dumbo*, and *Pinocchio*. If you need a trip down memory lane, do drop by.



customers—especially new customers—want to comment on the store itself. Here are several recently heard comments at the Central Library store. “I can't believe I've lived here this long and didn't know about your big store” [i.e. the Channing Bookstore] “I always love coming to this store.” “I'd better stand outside before I'm tempted to get more.” “This store is *too good* of a deal.” “I think Half-Price Books is ripping me off!”

### MORE THAN BOOKS

A reminder: both bookstores sell other items than books...like maps, picture postcards, small notebooks and blank journals, greeting cards, etc. And we always welcome bookmarks: several customers come in regularly to sift through the bookmarks we find in donated books; and no, we don't sell those...we give them away.

### BOOKMARKS

We also give away our very own Friendly bookmarks, beautifully designed by volunteer Harry Robertson. Stop by either bookstore to pick up one (you'll want several).



### GOT CALENDARS?

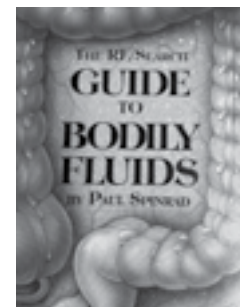
And if you've been inundated with free calendars for the coming year and are wondering what to do with the extras, we'd welcome your overflow. calendars are another item we give away free to customers.

### OUR CUPBOARDS ARE BARE

Book donations have recently dropped, what with burdensome election malaise, wet weather, and multiple holidays. In the coming year we look forward to your New Year's resolutions, spring cleaning, and bibliographic downsizing. All we ask is clear one bookshelf a week.

### SAD NEWS

Sadly, Channing volunteer Susan Huish has died after a long illness. Susan was a Supervising Library Assistant at the Library for many years, and when she retired she headed right up the hill to the Channing Bookstore to volunteer. She was one of the kindest and most thoughtful people around, and she will be missed by volunteers and library friends alike.



### UNUSUAL BOOK DONATIONS

A new feature for the newsletter: a brief listing of unusual book titles donated in recent weeks:

- *The Joy of Nursing Home Clowning*
- *Guide to Bodily Fluids*
- *Mindful Drumming*
- *How Elders Will Save the World*

We'll set these aside and save them for a few weeks, in case one of you readers might be interested in purchasing.

### LETTERS...WE GET LETTERS

It's always a pleasure to get letters from *Bookmark* readers, even if they are close Friends and you work with them every day. Right after the last issue landed in members' mailboxes, Cathy Brown (AKA Madam President) sent along this: “Dear Editor—from ballots to babies, the Fall issue was just packed with news and entertainment! A little heavy on the President's message, but great job fitting it all in.”

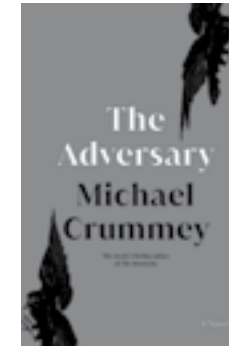
### CUSTOMER COMMENTS

Lately, conversations with bookstore customers have focused on the weather (sigh), holiday stress (another sigh) and the election (major sigh) But just as often,

## Friends Don't Let Friends Miss Good Books

Read a good book lately? We regularly feature comments from Friends about their latest bibliographical finds. If you've enjoyed a book, fiction or nonfiction, bestseller, or hidden treasure, for adults or children, let us know (preferably in 75 words or less!).

Friends president Cathy Brown suggests *The Adversary*, a novel by Michael Crummey (2024).



“It takes two to tango: a brother and sister in coastal Newfoundland (circa early 1800s) compete, conspire, and ultimately destroy each other and other poor souls of the hardscrabble frontier mercantile fishing and shipping community. Yes, there are moments of human kindness, but more often there are pandemic, lies, drunkenness, and brutality. There are also more Anglo-Saxonisms for male and female parts than imaginable. No wonder the author credits Francis Grose's *A Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*.”

Friends Board member Vivian Pisano recently enjoyed *Enter Ghost* by Isabella Hammad (2023).



“The author has written a thoroughly captivating story of two Palestinian sisters: Sonia, an actress living in London and Haneen, who lives in Haifa, Israel. Haneen's friend Mariam persuades Sonia to take a part in her production of *Hamlet*; and thus begins Sonia's political awakening. The tensions and hardships in the West Bank from the Palestinian perspective provide a personal view and an understanding of a long-standing situation which is so relevant today. Hammad's brilliant and powerful prose pulled me into this moving novel.”



## Celebrating Our Wonderful Volunteers

The Friends annual Volunteer Appreciation celebration took place mid-November, and once more it was a blast, with terrific food (especially the homemade cookies), no lengthy speeches (other than brief heartfelt thanks from Volunteer Coordinator Lucia Blakeslee and



**“Volunteers do not just do the work; they make it work.”**

President Cathy Brown), and as always... balloons. Instead, it was a chance to gather together to chat, laugh, and share stories... what the thesaurus assures

me could be called an old-fashioned “chinwag.” Over 50 bookstore volunteers, Board members, and

**“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”**

Amazon team members attended, and most took a moment to read the encouraging cards on the tables extolling the worth of volunteers. If you would be interested in joining our jolly bunch, please pick up a volunteer application

at either bookstore. We can always use more “chin wagers.”

## It's That Time of Year

**Editor's note:** Once again here is our Friendly "holiday column." If you haven't read it before, now is the time.

If you have read it before, now is the time again. I was talking to a friend recently about how the Friends depend on memberships and donations to provide the bedrock foundation for our organization. I bemoaned the unease of always having our organizational hands out, asking for funds, so we could help the Library. Said friend e-mailed me the following suggestion: "Perhaps you could present it this way: I know that times are tough and that donating to a good cause might be the furthest thing from your mind right now. I also know that most people dislike mailings, notices, pleas, where someone is asking for money. "But if for a moment you could put all that aside and instead think of this: Think about how you've probably been meaning to do something charitable for a while now. Next think about how you never seem to have the time to do the volunteering that your Berkeley progressive-lefty-liberal conscience tells you that you should be doing. And then, imagine how it might feel to read just this one paragraph, and donate to just this one local, tangible, and meaningful good cause and then instantly have all that liberal guilt washed

### AUTHORS DINNER

Mark your nice new calendar: February 23, 2025: the Library Foundation will celebrate what the San Francisco Chronicle has called the "beloved and brainiac" Authors Dinner.

For just one night, the library is transformed into a beautiful literary salon and fine dining room. Authors are still being selected but you can bet they'll be people you'd want to have dinner with. This unique cultural event that honors local authors and spotlights the Bay Area's literary tradition.

Proceeds from the gala support innovations, building improvements, and literacy projects at the Berkeley Public Library. Need more info? Check out the Foundation's website at [bplf.org](http://bplf.org).

**[Editor's note:** *The Friends are an annual sponsor of the Authors Dinner. And can assure you: It's a grand and lovely evening!*]

away like the dust on your windshield after a heavy rain. Sounds pretty good huh?"

Gee, and she didn't even mention that the end of the tax year is approaching. If the "clean and clear windshield" theory of gift-giving works for you, please use the enclosed envelope, and mail us your kind and thoughtful donation.

You can also donate online, with credit card or Paypal, at [www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org](http://www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org). Then click on "Get Involved" to donate, join, or renew.

And many thanks. —*Sayre Van Young, Girl Reporter*

## Staff Scholarships

By Judith Justice, Committee Chair

The Friends of the Library began offering scholarships for Library staff in the late 1990s, to an effort provide financial help for those wishing to pursue a degree or certificate that would further their careers in public library work. The Scholarship was founded in memory of Gina Minudri, who was Director of the BPL and later of the SFPL.

Over 50 employees have received funds and gone on to library careers in Berkeley or other areas. At least 4 of them are currently working in the Berkeley Public Library!

Until 2021, the scholarships were primarily for the master's in library and information sciences (MLIS) at San José State University.

In 2021, the FOL Scholarship Committee, in consultation with the Library Director, expanded the criteria for scholarship support, to include studies towards broader educational advancement, e.g., to improve language skills, marketing or design work, computer or social media, etc., and studies towards an AA, B,A, MLIS, etc. The Scholarship award is up to \$3,000, depending on tuition cost and expenses.

In 2024, seven applicants were awarded funding for the MLIS and one for a Certificate in Translation.

Recipients, and their current library positions, included:

Grace Chung, Library Specialist II  
Micaela Clark, Library Aide  
Opie James, Library Assistant  
Robyn Jasper, Library Aide  
Denise Leo, Library Assistant  
Maverick Ng, Library Aide  
Oona Okragly, Specialist II  
Molly Stellan, Library Assistant

**Congratulations to them all!**

## Our Book Acceptance Guidelines, and How You Can Save Yourself (and us) a Lot of Effort

**Whether it's full-scaled Downsizing, or just a few items...**

If you're thinking about donating books or media to the Friends but are a bit hesitant to do so because... well... would the Friends really want them? Here are a few guidelines; by following them, you'll have helped the Friends and the Library, and have cleared some space in your home. Win-Win-Win!

**First of all, and you probably know this already...**

We sell *gently-used* donated books and media to provide funds to support community programs at the Berkeley Public Library. We are a non-profit organization, and we are all volunteers. We run two used bookstores that re-sell your donations of books and media.

And we are so grateful for people who donate books and media to us. But sadly, we just cannot accept everything. We're not a thrift store or a recycling site.

**Here's what really matters:**

Condition, condition, condition. And that's something *you* can determine. As you select books to donate, you may be thinking "I'm sure *someone* will like this." Well, no, someone won't...not if it's dated, damaged, heavily underlined, musty smelling, or yellowed. And if you can't read the spine, nobody else can either. Please recycle these items on your own. Your curbside blue bins are a good place to start.

**So for books, what does "dated" mean?**

It's older books on a topic that changes rapidly: law books, medical or health books, textbooks, travel

guides, business books, computer manuals, stock market guides, etc. Really, does anyone want a book on divorce law that's 18 years old? Or even 8 years? You don't, and no one else does either. Back to those blue bins!

**Below, some donor comments we have heard over the years:**

**Donor: "15 years isn't really so old for a travel book."**

**Be safe!** Please don't hurt your back (or ours) lugging in large sets of Time/Life books. Or any multiple volume set. It seems as if everyone bought them and now, they're a glut on the market. We have no storage space (or market) for them. Ditto for older encyclopedias and dictionaries.

**Donor: "That's a classic... it doesn't need a cover."**

**Donor: "It's just a little yellowed."**

**What's "dated" mean for media? Mel Tormé?**

For media, "dated" refers to the equipment, not the individual playable item. CDS, DVDs, and audiobooks are all ok, but we no longer accept VHS tapes or cassettes. There just isn't a market for them.

**Donor: "There's just a little underlining and highlighting."**

**Donor: "Well, yes, our basement is kind of damp."**

**Taxes:** Book and media donations to the Friends are deductible on your taxes, if you itemize. Just ask us for a donation receipt. We'll gladly give you one.

**Donor: "Sorry about the crayon marks."**

**Donor: "Lots of people still use that program."**

**Finally,** If you have any questions about whether your donation would help or hinder the Friends, please just call us and explain what you have. See the phone numbers on the back of this newsletter.

**Donor: "Really, they say cassettes are coming back."**



Friends of the Berkeley Public Library  
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YES! I want to support Berkeley's public libraries and the Friends of the Library. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution:

\$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Dues—New Friends Member  Donation  I would like to volunteer at the Friends' bookstores. Please contact me.

Dues—Renewal  Donation in honor/memory (circle one) of \_\_\_\_\_

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