



May 10, 2023

Dear President McConeghey and Members of the Library Board,

This letter is to bring you up to date on activities during the months of March and April 2023 and to provide a look forward to some of the activities, programs, future plans and contingency plans we are working on.

Our first hybrid Zoom/In-Person Library Board meeting seemed to go well, so we will be moving forward in this same format. We are working on upgrading the technology in the conference room to use a smart TV rather than a laptop. The equipment has arrived but our turn on the installation calendar has not so you will see a bunch of boxes in the conference room when you come for the meeting on May 10.

The May Library Board Meeting will be the last “official” meeting for Library Board President Joyce McConeghey (four years) and Library Board Member Kathleen Kearney (8 years). Both will have completed their terms at the end of June. It will be up to the Mayor to decide who she wants to nominate for the Library Board vacancies and she has not made any indication if she would like to conduct Board interviews with the current Library Director, with the Interim Library Director, or with both. If the two vacancies are not filled by the July meeting, then both Joyce and Kathleen can continue as members until their replacements are selected, although the Board has a quorum if the three remaining Board Members attend the meeting(s). I would like to thank both Joyce and Kathleen for their service on the Library Board, each for their leadership as President, and as Vice President, as Board representatives during our strategic planning process, for volunteering to represent the library at community events, at city functions, and at the library information desk or with the Friends of the Library. They will be sorely missed and we wish them the very best in the future. We fully expect them to be regular customers of our libraries and continue to give valuable input when we reach out to the community. They will always be advocates for the Alameda Free Library.

**Modified Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda).** I had hoped that the March meeting would be the last “Modified Activity Report” but unforeseen circumstances crowded my calendar and the modified report continues, as least in May. I think everything will be settled in July.

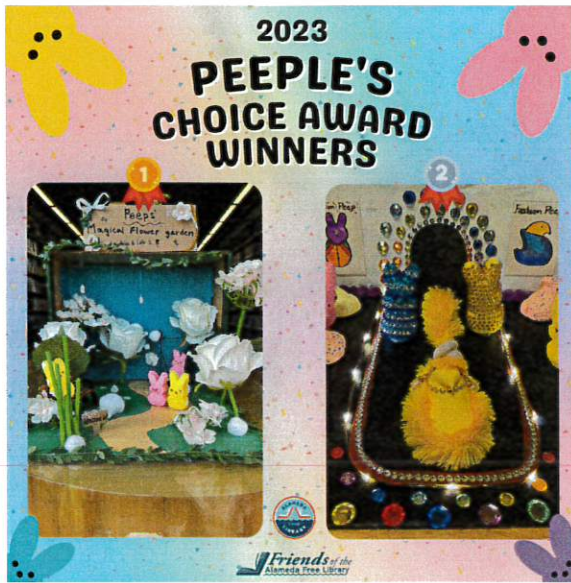
**Library Staffing.** Happy to report that we are fully staffed with our full time employees and, at least for now, have an adequate number of part time employees to be comfortable with all library activities.

#### **Main Library Update.**

Spring Shindig. Senior Librarian Giuliano Costantini, Library Specialist Jenny Weston, and Library Board President Joyce McConeghey attended Alameda Recreation and Parks Spring Shindig at Alameda Point on April 15. This event was also in place of the annual Earth Day Festival normally held at Lower Washington Park. From all reports it seems that it was a good day to be outside, chat with people about the library, offer information about library services and meet & talk with other Alameda non-profits. Thank you, President McConeghey for spending the day with the staff and advocating for the library.

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Peeps Diorama Contest. And we have winners! This year we had over 30 entries on our annual Peeps Diorama Contest. About 25 kits with craft supplies were given away in the first two days of availability and some entries provided their own supplies. Hopefully you had the opportunity to see the entries online and were able to vote for your favorites. Congratulations to our 2023 People's Choice Award Winners, "Peeps' Magical Flower Garden" and "New York Fashion Peep"! The creators of "Peeps' Magical Flower Garden," Helen and Leto, have been coming to the library since they were babies. We are so happy that they were voted winners! We are already looking forward to next year! Many thanks to Teen Librarian Aireana McDade for coordinating the contest.



**Coding with Legos Grant.** Library Technician Fernanda Nunez was successful in being awarded an Innovation Grant from the State Library to purchase our own Lego materials, lap tops and other associated equipment for a Coding with Legos program, and to offer library staff a Train the Trainer session. The library has received the grant funding and Fernanda has ordered supplies.



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**De-Escalation Training.** Staff attended an excellent De-Escalation Training on Wednesday, April 26. This training has been highly praised by others who have attended and it was presented by Joey Harrison from The Village of Love. Village of Love is one of the service providers the City contracts with to offer services to the Unhoused in the community. Social Services Manager Marcie Soslau Johnson (some of you may know Marcie as she is also an active member of the Friends of the Library and is a key organizer for the BFF bookstore) or Amanda Olson, both from the City Community Development Department, gave a short presentation on the Unhoused Resources offered by the City: who to call, a summary of services, location of our warming shelter, etc. This was a very informative and useful workshop for all of us who work with the public. Staff had very positive comments after the training. We also invited volunteers from the Alameda Food Bank to join the training if they are available to be here. There were a little more than 50 people in attendance.

**Seed and Tool Lending Library.** I am excited. Sad that this will be completed after my departure but extremely grateful in the knowledge that it will happen for Alameda. Thank you to Board Member Amarasiriwardena for taking the lead on this project. It may take a little time to get all the infrastructure pieces in place but we had a good meeting and he has a lot of excellent ideas. I love the enthusiasm. I am hopeful that some of the “found money” can be spent on this worthy project for our community.

**Access Key Card Project.** This project continues to creep forward. We were informed that the vendor would expedite our new system given the fact the card readers are continuing to fail around the building. The Access Key Card Project is in the budget requests from the Public Works Department so at a minimum, the Library must wait until the budget is adopted. We continue to push to get this project completed with assistance from Public Works but it is very slow going.

**American Red Cross Blood Drives.** The Library’s next quarterly Red Cross Blood Drive is Tuesday, May 9. Nearly all reservation slots are filled and both the Red Cross staff and Library staff are prepared for the May blood drive.

**Budget.** So good news and good news and maybe not great news but it’s not too bad. The good news is the library budget looks fine. The new full time librarian position requested is still in our budget ask along with all the small line increases. The next good news is that through a minor bookkeeping snafu, a CD with funds from the original Measure O bond monies (to build the Main Library and provide improvements to the two neighborhood libraries) was found and it has rolled over for another two years. That funding should have been spent years ago so Finance and the Library is in the process of closing that CD and putting the funding into a Capital Project so it can be spent, sooner rather than later. Found money! Then the Finance Department found that the Library Fund has grown larger than it should have and needs to be spent down. Although it’s great the Library has over \$6M in the Library Fund, it’s more than it should be, that fund should be maintained at about \$1.2M to \$2M. So, for only this two year budget cycle the Library will be funded with only Library Funds and not take a draw from the General Fund. It will be made clear in the budget presentation that this is a one-time occurrence and in the next two-year budget, the Library will again receive funding from the General Fund, it is NOT a new ask.

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What types of projects can this funding be spent? Mostly one-time, capital projects, building improvements. We are investigating if new construction, i.e. Alameda Point or Seed & Tool Library, would qualify. We don't have an answer for that yet. Some possible projects (partial list) might be:

- Modernizing the AV in the community meeting room
- Modernizing the AV in the computer lab
- "Refreshing" the Teen Room
- Repurposing the Quiet Reading Room
- Update the signage at the Main Library
- Replace table tops that have been vandalized
- Replace furniture in the Study Rooms
- Update the Main Library lobby space
- Install higher quality/more reliable people counters at all locations
- New neighborhood library at Alameda Point
- Seed & Tool Library at Jean Sweeney Open Space
- Replace damaged floor in the staff/computer server room at the Bay Farm Island Library
- Purchase an Automated Materials Handling machine (AMH)

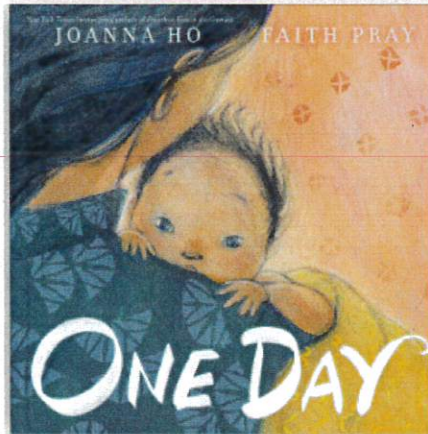
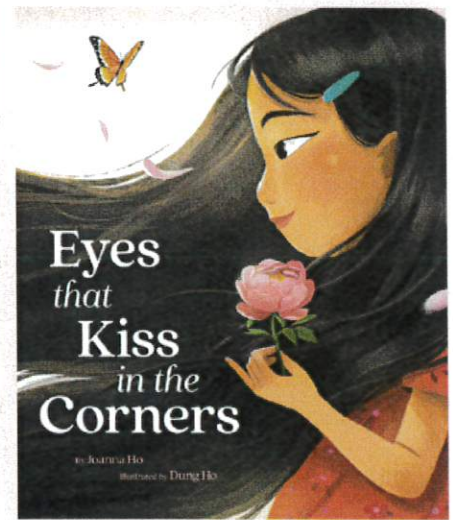
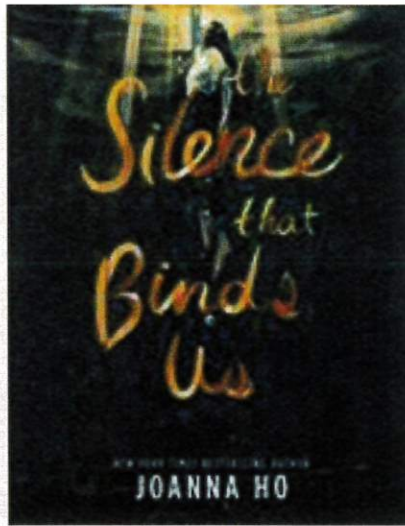
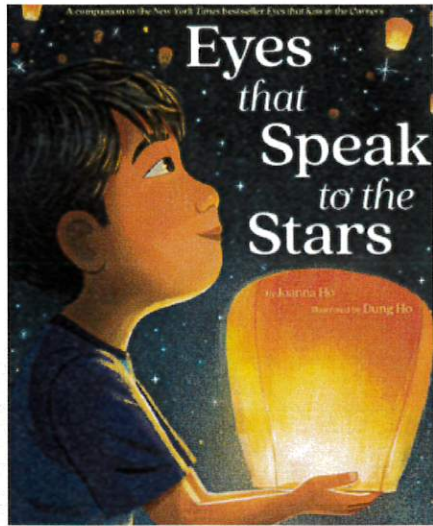
The City Council will hear the Finance Director Margaret O'Brien and Budget Manager Jennifer Tell present a Budget Overview at the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, May 2. The Capital Improvement Project Budget will be presented by Public Works Director Erin Smith on the same night. Then there will be a special Budget Workshop with the City Council on Thursday, May 4 at 6:00p.m. in the Council Chambers. Finance will open the evening, then each city department will make a pitch with our budget "asks" and answer any questions the Council may have for each department. Hopefully there will not be too many questions that cannot be answered that evening and the entire Budget for FY23-24 and FY24-25 can go on the June 6 City Council agenda for adoption.

**City Strategic Plan.** The City is in the process of completing a City Strategic Plan. Currently this effort only includes input from the City Council and the Department Heads. The workshops were open meetings and a few members of the public were in attendance. The broad draft vision and goals for this City Council are in process and the next step will be to get input from the wider City Staff and then it will go to the public. There will be several ways to view and give input for the Plan, there will be a gallery of boards that can be viewed and commented on and there will also be a survey available for all community members to give input. It is hoped that this Strategic Plan will give a "road map" of sorts to the City Manager and the City Council with priorities and direction for projects that city departments will work on. More information will be forthcoming in the near future.

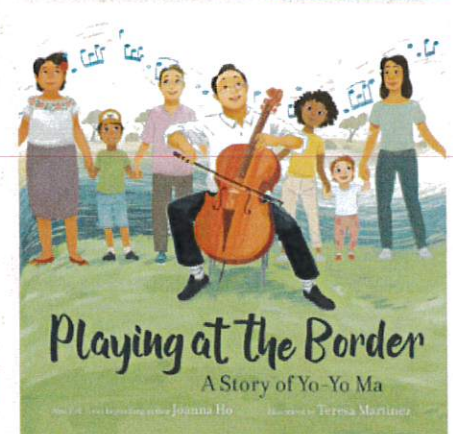
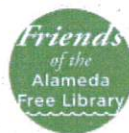
**Bay Area Author & Educator Joanna Ho.** Due to the weather, mostly extremely rainy and windy, the Joanna Ho program was rescheduled for Thursday, May 11. Nearly all of the classes who attend these special programs either walk or take the public bus & walk from school to the library. The teachers were very grateful not having to walk their classes in the rain. The program will be Thursday, May 1, from 3:30-4:30pm, in the Stafford Community Room, Joanna Ho will speak about her books for children and young adults, her writing journey, and the importance of diverse representation in books. Her books are

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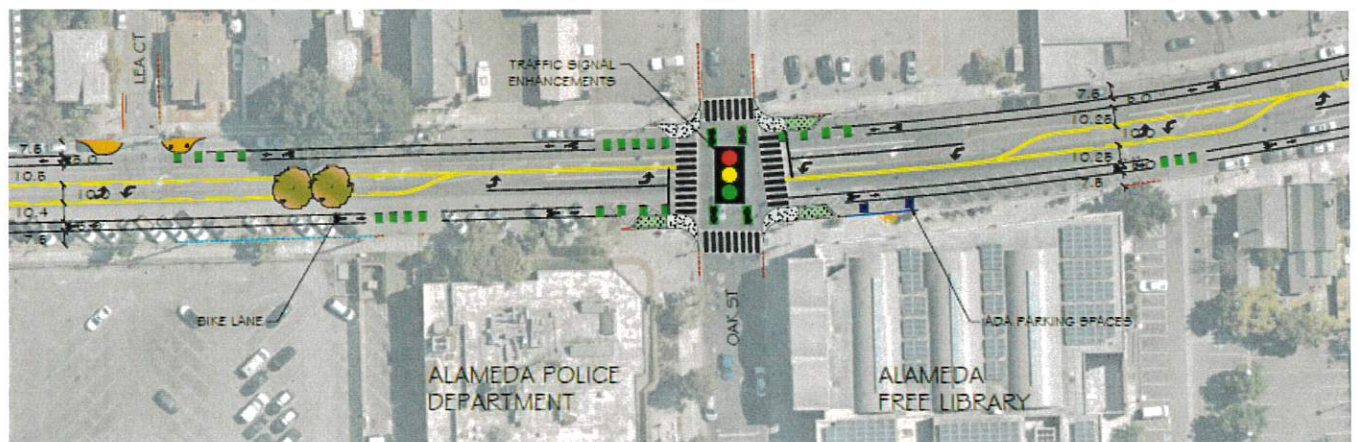
lovely and they really do speak to the audience. *Eyes that Kiss in the Corners* will make you cry it is so lovely. This free presentation is best suited for children in grades K thru 12 and their families.



MEET BAY AREA AUTHOR  
**JOANNA  
HO**



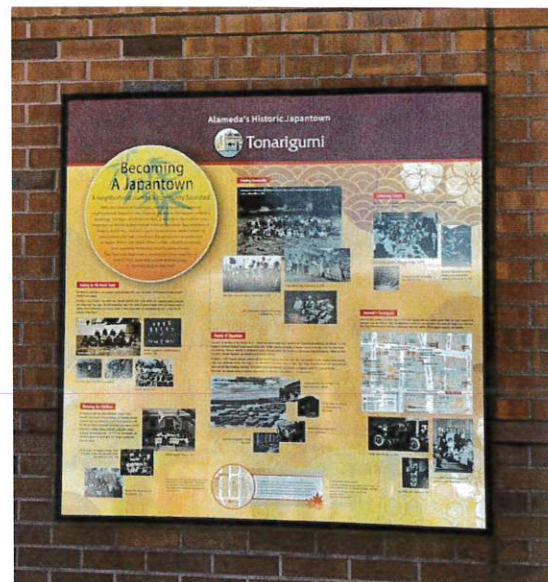
**Lincoln Avenue at Oak Street.** The transportation concept pictured below was selected and adopted by the City Council at their April 4 meeting. The actual design still has to be completed so the actual construction would not begin until maybe 2024.



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**Tonarigumi Japantown Historical Markers.** This project is complete! The markers for the Buena Vista United Methodist Church and the Library were installed on April 19. Personally, I think the marker on the Library is the most beautiful and informative. Consider arriving early to the meeting in May and take some time to look at it.

The first picture below shows our Creative Consultant & Designer Kaz Naganuma, and two of our hardworking committee members Jo Takata and Judy Furuichi. Then second row of pictures show the Marketplace marker, the Buddhist Temple of Alameda marker and the Buena Vista United Methodist marker.



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Sadly, I had to miss the installation of our final two markers as I was called to report to jury duty. Jury selection took about a week and fortunately I was not selected for this, potentially, four week criminal trial. (Yes, I tried to defer until after my retirement but the Judge would not consider it.)

**National Park Service Japanese American Containment Site Grant Project.** Included in your Board Packet is the press release for the Exhibit and Opening Reception for our culminating exhibition. The Opening Reception will be held on Wednesday, May 17, from 4:00 p.m. in the Stafford Community Room at the Main Library. There will be many more items on display on the opening day, only the exhibit material that can be put on the walls will remain until July 15. This is because the room and tables, need to be available for other programs throughout the summer, especially with summer reading beginning on June 1. There are already several of our video interviews and encyclopedia articles available on the Densho website. This is the link to the project oral histories so far: . <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-ajah-1/> This is the link to the twelve oral histories the library had conducted with a previous State Library grant that we rolled into this project: <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-ajah-8/> There will also be several encyclopedia articles written and included in the Densho archive, they are currently in draft form and are in final text editing, we hope to add a few photographs to make them more interesting. This has been a very interesting project and if you have interest and the time, please consider coming to the Opening Reception or viewing the materials on display before July 15.

**Friends of the Library.** The Friends of the Library continue working on their proposed relaunch of Dewey's Friends Café. They are working on setting up their Square to begin accepting credit cards at the café. There has been no significant change to the menu at this time and the fix for the hot water situation still has not been schedule although I have signed the agreement for the work (the city is paying for this correction). Library Board Member Sara Strickler is working with the café team to get a survey out to the public regarding their thoughts and wishes for the library café. Sara is working with the library to get the survey posted on our social media channels as well.

All three Live @ the Library concerts hosted by the Friends of the Library have concluded for the spring. Each concert had a slightly different "jazz" flavor and each were outstanding in their own way. The third and final spring concert was Suzanna Smith singing her "Peggy Lee Project" music. Her friend and also a previous Live @ the Library headliner, Kenny Washington, came to watch her perform and was enticed to join her on stage so they could perform together. Magic! Suzanne also donated two copies of her CD to the library collection for circulation. The Friends are seriously considering hosting another round of three concerts in the fall to get back on a fall concert schedule. No firm decisions have been made but if it comes to be, and you enjoy jazz, you won't find a more affordable concert with such amazing musicians.

The Friends continue their online programming, "Friends @ Home". The Docent Talks and Author programs continue to be popular and given the virtual format, they have been able to host some significant authors in various time zones. All but one of their author talks so far have been recorded, and can be viewed through their website <https://alamedafriends.com/category/past-events/> They surveyed attendees and spoke to others in person to inquire if they should continue this format or go back to only in person and overwhelmingly, people have asked for the virtual programs, so they will continue. While I was on break from jury duty I stopped in at the Martinez Friends of the Library bookstore for a look around. I talked to their volunteers and they never considered doing programs on Zoom and were quite

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impressed with the activities of our Friends group. I gave them my card with the contact information for our Friends so they could get in touch and exchange ideas.

The Friends of the Library very generously recognized the library staff during National Library Week (April 23-29). They provided a staff appreciation lunch for each staff member (who came to work on Wednesday, April 26. We had box lunches from Togo's Sandwiches. Many of our newer staff members commented that this type of recognition rarely, if ever, happened at their previous library. Alameda has the best Friends ever!

The Friends Executive Board has decided to meet in-person every other month and via Zoom on the "other" month. The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, June 24, 2023 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. The Friends have decided to continue the Zoom / In-Person format for the time being. If you would like to attend their virtual meeting, you may contact Friends Secretary David Beall at [bealld@alamedafriends.com](mailto:bealld@alamedafriends.com) and he will send you the zoom link for the meeting. In-person meetings are held in the Stafford Community Room at the Main Library in the same time window, fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

**Alameda Reads.** Alameda Reads has busy with new tutor trainings and small group classes. The City had completed Lead Removal and Stabilization at the Veteran's Building, home for Alameda Reads. A few of the tutor/learner pairs were displaced from working in the AR offices so they came to the Main Library to use the small study rooms until work was completed. All Analytics for the Veteran's Building has come back negative for lead so we are much more comfortable using the space. Program Coordinator Barb Papik and Program Assistant Red Lustig have multiple pairings working together and they have a constant stream of interested volunteers and learners. They do a terrific job of offering many life-skills to the participants of Alameda Reads.

If you have any questions about the items to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you would like to discuss these or any other items, please email me at [jchisaki@alamedaca.gov](mailto:jchisaki@alamedaca.gov) or if it is not urgent, please leave me a message at 747-7747.

I will close with a personal note, it has been a pleasure to work with each of you on our Library Board, to work with the City of Alameda and the Library. Over the years the support I have received from the Mayor and City Council, City Staff, and most importantly, the Library Staff has allowed our Library to grow and change and adapt to the changing times. I will be forever thankful for these opportunities and challenges and I know that you will continue to support and advocate for our Library to be an essential service to the members of our Alameda community. Thank you for everything.

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki  
Library Director