



January 11, 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 November and December, 2022 and to provide a look forward to some of the activities, programs, future plans and contingency plans we are working on.

As of the January 3, 2023 City Council meeting, City direction is for the Library Board to continue to meet virtually, at least until March 2023. The Governor's order for a modified Brown Act expires at midnight on February 28 so our plan is to go back to in person meetings in March. The City is currently studying whether or not to require all Boards and Commissions to provide a hybrid format which might mean moving our meeting from the library to the City Hall Council Chambers and employing staff to work in the TV studio to record and help with the hybrid zoom pieces. It may not be required for this Board but we will see. Testing of the hybrid format and the training of staff, will be occurring in Council Chambers over the next 6 weeks or so. In the meantime, the Alameda City Council continues to have Zoom Council meetings, Council approves the teleconferencing of meetings every 30 days. I will notify you when the Library Board has specific direction for any changes to our meeting format.

Modified Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda). I will continue to send the "Modified Activity Report" as long as we continue to meet virtually. At the suggestion of Board Member Amarasiriwardena, I am adding the number of unique library card uses by location for each month. I have not yet received it from staff but will include it at the meeting. This is in addition to our relatively new Link+ (interlibrary loan) service. The Expenditure Reports and Check Registers for July and August are also included in this packet.

New City Manager. Alameda has a new City Manager! City Manager Jennifer Ott began work here on Tuesday, January 3 and she hit the ground running. CM Ott returned to Alameda after working for the City of Hayward as their Assistant City Manager and Development Services Director. Prior to working at Hayward, Ms. Ott worked for the City of Alameda as Redevelopment Manager, Acting Assistant City Manager, Chief Operating Officer of Alameda Point, and Base Reuse and Transportation Planning Director. Those of us who were on staff in Alameda during Ms. Ott's tenure with our City are thrilled at her return. I think she will be excellent for our city, has many established relationships, is forward thinking and she knows this community. She has already announced that the recruitment for an Assistant City Manager will open shortly, in the meantime Recreation and Parks Director Amy Wooldridge will continue as Acting Assistant City Manager. The City Council was sworn in on December 20 and are ready to get to work with our new City Manager. Alameda should be very excited to have new, stable leadership.

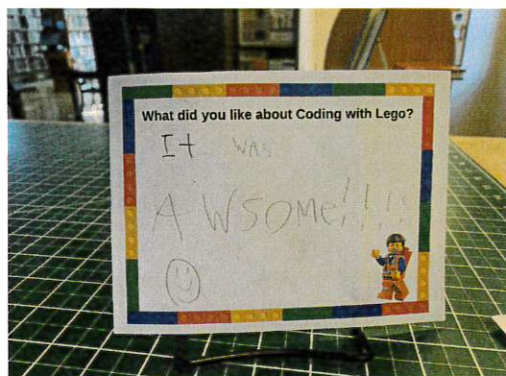
Library Staffing. When it rains, it pours. At the September meeting I reported that we had two full time vacancies and two part time vacancies. In November, we still had two full time vacancies and four part time vacancies. I'm happy to report our full time Teen Librarian position was filled and Aireana McDade began work on December 5. So far, she is learning our library and is doing a great job. The Senior Librarian position originally did not garner an adequate applicant pool so the recruitment was held open longer sadly with no real significant change in applicant pool. The City Employee bargaining units j new

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contracts were adopted by the Council on November 1, a new increased salary range is part of that contract. The Senior Librarian recruitment was reopened with hopes the new pay scale would attract a larger applicant pool. It only slightly increased the number of applicants. In the meantime we are also looking for part time librarians and interviews were set to interview 10 people. On December 1 Supervising Librarian Sierra Campagna announced her resignation. Sierra left us before the holidays leaving us again, extremely short staffed and in the middle of several recruitments. I am proud of our staff as they soldiered on and we will be starting three new PT librarians on January 17. We have completed the first round of interviews with the small applicant pool for Senior Librarian and hope to schedule the second interview shortly. Covid has also run its course through the staff as well as end of year vacations. We only had to close one branch one day due to staffing shortages. We are still a “house of cards” but we have a plan and now can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Main Library Update. Craziiness is the name of the game and staff have to be commended for staying strong. Faced with staff shortages and constant changes we have maintained service to our community. We did not add any new programming in December and do not offer a lot of extras during the winter holidays for school. Prior to Christmas we area traditionally busy with people in the building then a couple of days of quiet before the panic that homework was not completed and school is starting up again. The ebb and flow of checkouts remains the same, around the holidays circulation of materials drops as people try to clean house of their library materials so library materials don’t get lost among the wrapping and ribbons, then after the first of the year will slowly increase again.

Thanksgiving week the library hosted our first Coding with Legos workshop. LEGO Education SPIKE™ combines the well-known playful blocks with easy-to-use hardware and an intuitive coding software to create hands-on purposeful play. Participants collaborated with others in using their creativity, critical-thinking and problem solving skills in this 45-60 minute activity led by Jesse, a Lego Education Representative. It was very popular and every seat in the class was filled. Library Technician Fernanda Nunez was our lead and has applied for a grant to purchase our own Lego materials, lap tops and other associated equipment for this program, is being trained by Jesse and we hope to be able to host additional sessions at the neighborhood libraries in the future, if our grant is successful. Feedback was very positive.



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The Teen "Exam Cram" was moderately attended, in spite of quite an array of free snacks. Dungeons & Dragons continues to be popular with the teens as was the online cooking class for adults & families.

All three libraries were closed November 24-25 for Thanksgiving; closed early at 3:00PM on December 15 for the City Employees Holiday Party; closed early at 4:00PM for Christmas Eve; Closed December 25 and 26 for Christmas; Closed early at 4:00PM for New Year Eve; Closed January 1 and 2 for New Years Day.

Storm Update: Thankfully the libraries did not have any storm damage, a few leaks but overall we came through well. Our custodian, Das Peabody, continually checked the drains around each library and kept them clear to avoid flooding. He also obtained sandbags and placed them in our problem areas. With the new drainage project completed at the Bay Farm Island Library a couple of years ago, we did not have a drop of water under the back door! The ceiling is another issue but the emergency door flooding did not occur. West End Library and the Main Library only have minor issues. I obtain permission to close any library location should there be a power outage but thankfully, it did not happen and we hope it will not happen with the upcoming storm series.

Access Key Card Project. This project moves forward with the speed of snails but it is moving forward. Unfortunately the access reader by the Books for Friends door on Times Way was ripped off the wall so their reader is gone. We don't know if it was vandalism or if someone walked with a large parcel and knocked the reader, either way, it was barely hanging by its wires prior to removal. Rather than replace it we are waiting for the new system to put in a reader for their use. Replacing it now would require a lot of back of house circuit panel replacement that would have to be changed out with the new system. For now we gave the Friends volunteers with access cards access through our staff entrance but they do not have building alarm codes so they can only enter when staff are in the building. This seem fine for the short term and everything seems secure and the doors with the card system are working as it should so we will continue to wait.

American Red Cross Blood Drives. The Library's next quarterly Red Cross Blood Drive is Tuesday, January 10. Nearly all reservation slots are filled and both the Red Cross staff and Library staff are prepared for the January blood drive.

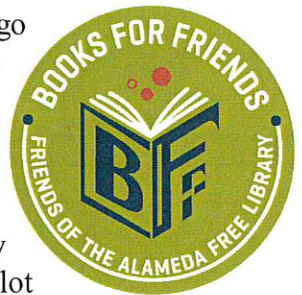
National Park Service Japanese American Containment Site Grant Project. The project is progressing with a summer end in sight. The project team is pinning down the last few interviews and focus on the materials already collected. We have, I think, the final video interview scheduled on January 14, then there is time for editing before it is sent out to Densho for inclusion in our collection. The culminating exhibit will have the opening reception on May 17 in the Stafford Room.

Tonarigumi Japantown Historical Markers. The first two markers were installed in November. The unveiling of the marker on the Marketplace was Thursday, November 17. The program was very well attended and had reasonable media attention. It was a very short program, only about 30-45 minutes, with a small number of speakers; Mayor Marilyn Ezzy-Ashcraft, Council Member John Knox-White, retired Buena Vista United Methodist Church Reverend Michael Yoshii representing the Japanese American community, and myself as the program host ~ doing acknowledgments & introductions. We will uncover the marker after the speakers then TaikoPeace taught and lead a community dance to celebrate and we were be done. 45 minutes from start to finish. Thank you to everyone who came out

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and helped with the setup and cleanup and for attending a very happy community event. The Library and the Church markers are still at the fabricators and hopefully will be installed by early May. There will not be any special programs for those installations. This a link to the article that ran in the Alameda Sun: <https://alamedasun.com/news/first-alameda-japantown-historic-marker-unveiling-takes-place-thursday> This is the link to the Alameda Post story: https://alamedapost.com/news/tonarigumi-dedication-historic-markers-honor-alamedas-japantown/?mc_cid=31392d7aa6&fbclid=IwAR08J5jOlgoSXYryTm9ON2hrJ95Krn7ZnaX9XYM1PNW5qmXC6R1Bja5Kzww Included in your Board Packet is a copy of the article that ran in the Nichi Bei News which is a biweekly English newspaper dedicated to keeping the Japanese American community connected, informed and empowered – primarily through this community newspaper. IF you are Facebook, the City of Alameda page live streamed the entire program and can be found in their videos collection.

Friends of the Library. Last Board Letter I mentioned the Friends had a new logo to go with their used bookstore, Books for Friends (BFF). The Alameda Sun ran a very nice article about the creation of the logo. Here is the link: <https://alamedasun.com/news/free-library-bookstore-selects-logo> BFF also has gift cards available for purchase! You can purchase a gift card in any amount and it can be used at BFF or at any of the Friends' pop-up sales or the big sale at the O Club. Several were purchased or donated to the City Employees' Holiday party and I fielded a lot of questions about it and received a lot of compliments that the Friends have established the book store.



The Live @ the Library Concert series will be returning this February. Tickets should be available shortly, they are changing from Brown Paper Tickets to EventBrite. I will send the entire Board information when I receive it.

- February 18: Tamir Hendelman on piano with vocalist Tierney Sutton
- March 25: Mimi Fox Trio with Mimi guitar, Brian Ho on the Hammond B-3 Organ and Lorca Hart on drums
- April 15: The Peggy lee Project with Suzanna Smith

I know organizers would like occupancy restrictions lifted but I have not yet agreed to that. With the rise in the COVID rates and RSV, I am hesitant to increase the occupancy. There will be a fall concert series to get the concerts back on track as a fall music series, most likely September, October, November but the dates are not yet set.

The Friends continue their online programming, "Friends at Home". The Docent Talks and Author programs continue to be very popular and given the virtual format, they have been able to host some significant authors in various time zones. January 18 is a Docent Talk about California Pop Artists; and January 25 is an author webinar with Daniel A. Olivas and his book "How to Date a Flying Mexican". 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/>. The recordings have had over five thousand views. Check them out if you missed the live programs.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, January 23, 2023 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. The Friends have decided to continue the Zoom format for their Board meetings for now although it may be a topic for discussion at the January meeting. If you would like to attend their virtual meeting, you may

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contact Friends Secretary David Beall at bealld@alamedafriends.com and he will send you the zoom link for the meeting.

Alameda Reads. Alameda Reads has been mostly quiet through the holidays but will be gearing back up with new tutor trainings and small group classes. We are currently working through contracts with our small group instructors.

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 or if it is not urgent, please leave me a message at 747-7747.

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki
Library Director