



## City of Alameda • California

November 14, 2018

Dear President Silva and Members of the Library Board,

This letter is to bring you up to date on activities during the months of July, August, September, and October, and to provide a look forward to some of the projects which will be coming up and a few we were working on. This packet has double the reports as we did not have a September Board Meeting.

Congratulations to our incoming President Cynthia Silva and Vice President Dorothy Wismar! We are very pleased with our new leadership and look forward to continuing doing good work for our library.

We are saddened to announce that Library Board Member Travis Wilson has resigned his position on the Library Board as his family is moving out of Alameda. We wish Travis and his family the best with their move and their future adventures.

The City Clerk's office advertised the vacancy on the Library Board and with the applications on file and the newly filed applications, we had 7 prospective Board Members. I met with the Mayor to discuss the vacancy & applicants. We conducted phone interviews, those who did not pick up their phone were left messages to call the Mayor back on her cell phone. In the end, we spoke to all but one person. After more deliberation the Mayor will nominate one person at the November 7 City Council meeting and if there are no objections, that person will be sworn in at the November 27 City Council meeting. They will join the Board at the January 9, 2019 meeting and finish out Travis' term which ends June 30, 2019. They would be eligible for reappointment to the Library Board.

**Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda).** The June, July, August, and September 2018 Library Services Reports are included in your Board Packet. The Expenditure Reports for July, August, September and October are also included.

**Main Library Update.** Thinking all the way back to summer, the Library Summer Reading programs were deemed a success this year. Last year the numbers dropped off a bit but Staff think that the public has now learned how to manage the reading programs online with our BeanStack app, so they are signing up and tracking their progress with less assistance required. New statistical information available to us via the online app is the number of completions at the three "levels" of the program(s), not just the number of signups. For example, the Boys & Girls reading program had 1,861 signups, 1195 readers got to stage one, then 911 completed stage two, while 712 finished the program at stage three. That is a 38% completion rate. This is information we never had before! Teens had a 20% completion rate and Adults had a 22% completion rate. Not sure what we are going to do with this new information but it's interesting! We are very pleased to see so many teens signed up for summer reading! A few years ago we'd have been happy with 10-15 young people, thanks to the hard work of Teen Librarian Hallie Fields & her team, this year there were 321 teens signed up to participate! And finally, thank you to new Board President Silva, Board Members Kearney, Bales, and Wilson for attending the end of summer reading celebration at the O Club in August. It was a lot of fun!



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The upgrade of AV technology in the Regina Stafford Community Room is complete, with just a few bugs. The projection is great, we think the “going to sleep” on the part of the laptop causing the system to shutdown has been corrected. We continue to tweak the frequency for the wireless microphones, occasionally they pick up police radio transmissions (not enough to know exactly what they are saying but enough to know it’s a police call!).

Our two Alameda Poet Laureates now have a presence at all three libraries. There are “fanci-fied” clipboards on each floor of the Main Library and at each neighborhood library for the “Poem of the Week.” Poet Laureates Gene Kahane and Cathy Dana write their poems and take turns posting them at the various locations. I understand there is the original poetry board at Julie’s Coffee and Tea. Stop by and read a poem, poetry is good for the soul!

The neighborhood libraries will soon have their bike repair stations installed! The two new bike repair stations, identical in style and color to the one at the Main Library, have arrived at the Main Library and are awaiting delivery to the West End Library and Bay Farm Library where the Public Works Department will get them installed, just in time for the rainy season. Oh well, the best laid plans....

In July the West End Library and the Friends of the Library hosted an afternoon of Samba dancing for children and families. Lots of merriment for all involved that day.

Bay Farm Island Library was yarn bombed! Thanks to Librarian Dawn Boyer and her knitting/crocheting gang, the library sign at the Bay Farm Island Library is colorful and attracting a lot of attention. See this marvel in its new coat!



Banned Books Week was September 23-29 and the Library hosted our banned books read aloud marathon on Thursday, September 27. All open hours that day people read aloud from a banned book for about 30 minutes. It is always surprising to some what books were banned or were threatened with banning.

Halloween came in on the wind in October, as per tradition, the children’s Spooky Night program was held the Wednesday before Halloween. This year the children paraded through the library including through the back of house areas like Technical Processing and the Reference Workroom. Kids in costume are always a treat and they were wide-eyed walking through the “secret spaces” in the library. Then they settled in for games and crafts with the Boys & Girls staff, ring toss onto a witch’s hat, putt into a pumpkin, decorate trick-or-treat bags, and other spooky fun. They all left with their ghost pops

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with smiles on their sticky faces! Some staff dressed for the day and it was pretty cool to have staff who jump in and participate with the spirit (including some of our ghostly volunteers! Thanks, Kathleen!)

Although you don't know her, the Library lost one of our own on October 25. Mary Catherine Blackshere was a fixture in the Boys & Girls Library from June 1973 to December 2012. She loved children and children's books, she was a kind and patient heart who treated every child to visit as if they were the only one who mattered. Her family held her service at Greer's Family Mortuary and then "Mary's Story Time" was held in our Stafford room with people telling stories about Mary and reading some of her favorites to the assembled audience. The Mayor came and presented a proclamation in memorium to Mary's daughter Wendy, proclaiming November 4, 2018 as Mary Blackshere Day in Alameda. Not a dry eye in the house, we miss her terribly.

And the less than great news continues, the City's longest tenured employee, who is an employee at the library, Carol Roth, will be retiring at the end of this year with 54 years of service. Carol started here as a teenager in a cooperative City / School District first job work program for students. She began full time at age 18 in our Technical Processing department and never left. Supervising Librarian Marlon Romero will oversee the recruitment for Carol's replacement but she leaves big shoes to fill. We wish Carol and her husband Craig the best in their retirement together.

**Emergency Plans.** At the May Library Board meeting, the emergency plans for Fire, Power Outage, Earthquake, and an Employee Manual were approved by the Board. A side piece of our preplanning for emergencies was to get a pre-disaster agreement in place with Belfour Property Restoration to handle our materials recovery. I am pleased to report that the pre-disaster agreement is in place so if the collection is compromised in a disaster Belfour has the right to bid and immediately work with our collection(s). For example, they could show up with a freezer truck to freeze wet materials that might have been damaged in a fire until we figure out where to move the collection and to halt the growth of mold. Belfour also has the capability to dry out the frozen/wet materials. There are only two companies in California who do the work that Belfour offers, we are fortunate they are "local" in Hayward and with the pre-disaster agreement in place, they would have to work with us before other libraries who do not have an agreement in place.

The City is working on city-wide disaster training utilizing the new Emergency Operations Center on Grand and Buena Vista. There was a full day training on October 30 and there will be a two-day training in January 2019 for those (mostly department heads) working in the EOC. I am hopeful there will be training for the line staff once the leads have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

**New City Web Page.** The City is moving towards a new the City Web page. The Library will have our own sub-site linked to the city page and the Library Web Team, led by Supervising Librarian Marlon Romero is comprised of, our resident web expert, Trina Dikitannan, Cosette Ratliff, and Dawn Boyer, are working away to develop the content for the library page that makes sense. Most if not all, of the current content will move over to the new site but the navigation will hopefully be more intuitive for the user. We hope to integrate the events calendar more seamlessly and make frequently requested information more easily discovered. There are still parameters we must work within but they are less restrictive than the past two iterations of the library's web presence. The expectation is that the new City web page will be launched after the first of the year and for a short while, have the old page running concurrently.



**Student Connect Code.** You may have noticed a large uptick in the number of new adult library cards added in August. This is due to our Student Connect Code project. This summer, with the assistance of a couple of interns, all the high school students at Alameda High and Encinal High have now been added to our Connect Code project. Hallie and her team, Library Specialist Ari Nussbaum and Jill Russell have been attending the Back to School Nights at AHS and EHS to talk up the Connect Code project with parents and students. Teens are starting to come into the library to use their Connect Codes to access the computers. Staff knows that the teachers have started using the library databases as well so we hope to see an increase in use with this new school year. Working with the art teachers, they hope to hold an art contest with the students to design a new Connect Code Library Card, increasing the cool factor in having a card and hopefully promoting the option to upgrade this card to a full service library card. Further down the road with everything is running smoothly, staff would like to look at incorporating Island High and ASTI into this program.

**Friends of the Library.** Thank you, to the Friends of the Library for hosting a lovely Volunteer Recognition event at Dragon Rouge on Thursday, July 19. It was a beautiful day in the Alameda with the sun shining and the cars rattling over the Park Street Bridge overseeing the reception on the patio at Dragon Rouge. Food was delicious, wine & non-alcoholic beverages (no-host bar inside for anything more), a keepsake thank you magnetic clip, and speeches. It was nice to have President Silva, Board Members Kearney and Bales in attendance. The Friends were kind enough to have the library volunteers, who are managed by Library Technician Ken Yuen, included their recognition event.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Live @ the Library concert series is off to a great start! Rave reviews for the September 15 with Paula West & Mads Tolling Quartet. Everyone I have spoken with have nothing but the highest praise for the music presented that night. Next up will be on November 17 with Tamir Hendelman on piano, he is a Yamaha Master Pianist. Then to wrap up the season, on December 8, it's an all-woman show!! Tammy Hall on piano, featuring singer Kim Nalley, Ruth Davis on bass and Ruth Price on drums. The series is already sold out so if you want tickets, you are already out of luck (although I might have one or two squirreled away). Join us, it will be a great time for a great cause!

The Book Sale storage warehouse continues to have break-ins and things are going missing. The Friends are actively looking for a new storage location, anyone know of about 1,000 sq ft. of open, dry, secure, space? I am doubtful the City has any space available, as I have asked Recreation, Public Works, Alameda Point, Alameda Municipal Power, and all the other departments who have spaces. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Carnegie Library and the accompanying Foster House rehabilitation/reuse was recently released but we have asked if TEMPORARILY the Friends could store their book sale supplies (hand trucks, lamps, "brain box", adding machines, etc.) and the DVDs (& other media) in the Foster House before the contract is awarded while the search for a permanent location continues. In the meantime, the fall book sale took place on October 19-20-21 at the O'Club. There were high hopes that the Wi-Fi would be working and the Friends could accept debit & credit cards. Good thing the Friends advertised "Checks & Cash only" because the Wi-Fi was not working or was weak & spotty at best. City IT was made aware but roofing work was being done and the antenna on the building was damaged and repairs could not be made until well after the sale. We will test again before the May sale. The October sale did pretty well, about 200 less boxes of books, slightly increased pricing, a plan for a big media sale on Saturday, and they grossed about \$17,000 over the two days. Many, many thanks to the hard work put into the sale preparation by Peg Rosen, chair, and her team of intrepid volunteers.

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Thanks to those who volunteered during the weekend and thanks to the hundreds of shoppers who are still readers and buy to support our cause. On to the next one!!

“Friends of the Library” appreciation week was October 21-27. The Friends were the recipients of a proclamation from the City for the excellent work they do! Thank you to Board Members Bales and Kearney for attending the City Council meeting to help us appreciate our Friends.

In recognition of Filipino American History Month, the Friends of the Library and several Filipino American cultural organizations are sponsored a very well-received program on October 17 featuring Filipino food and music along with a panel discussion about Filipino Americans in Alameda and the life and work of labor organizer Larry Itliong. This program was overflowing with folks at close to 90 in attendance. Several of the presenters are authors and will be donating their books to the library collection.

The Friends are the moving force behind the Art Docent programs held at the library. They hold, almost monthly, docent talks about current or upcoming exhibits at the Asian Art Museum, Museum of Modern Art, or other bay area venue. These programs are very popular and usually draw an audience of 50-60 people. The next program will be on November 12. The excellent docent, Marsha Holm, will be our docent exploring “the cultural and material exchanges between India and Europe through jewelry and precious objects from the seventeenth century to the present.” This exhibit is showing at the Legion of Honor Museum from Nov. 3, 2018 to Feb. 24, 2019.

The Friends are embarking on their own strategic planning process and have done some SWOT analysis at previous board meetings these last few months. In November they are moving on to visioning. Their November meeting will have an earlier start time, a short business meeting and include a light dinner. Please let me know if you are interested in assisting the Friends with their planning process, we will discuss this briefly at our meeting on November 14.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, November 26, at the Main Library in the Stafford Room at 6:00 p.m. These meetings are open to all. The Friends do not meet in December.

**Alameda Reads.** Literacy Coordinator Barbara Papik made a few changes to the way things are organized at Alameda Reads. They’ve installed some colorful new bookcases, tidied up the storage in the meeting room and storage area, increased their capacity for displaying reading materials for the learners, created a Citizenship/US History/Voting area, and made some lovely changes to the classroom/meeting room. Small group study continues to be popular. They have a core group of learners who attend the small groups very consistently. The group learners are very supportive of one another. Two of the learners consistently arrive 30 minutes early for the Wednesday evening writing series so that they will have that time together to visit and practice their English speaking skills. The members of the learner Book Club spontaneously had a pot luck at their meeting in June. Even though they had not discussed it ahead of time, several members of the group were inspired by the book that they were reading (*Esperanza Rising*) and brought food and drink. One was a learner from Mexico and she brought Jamaica...she used the recipe that was mentioned in the book (though Barbara is sure she had her own recipe). In addition to discussing the book, there was much discussion of recipes and cooking and the importance of food in our social rituals. With that in mind, Alameda Reads has started the planning process for their next book project. It will be a collection of stories and recipes written by

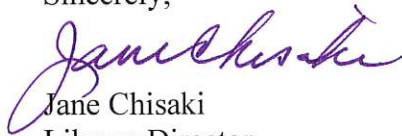
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the learners. They have chosen to focus on recipes for several reasons. First, it connects nicely with the 2018 International Literacy Day theme of Skill Building. As learners write their recipes, they will be practicing many skills including organizing information (creating lists, sequencing), measurement, math skills, and providing step-by-step instructions. All of these skills are valuable in the work place (as well as in their personal lives). The second reason that they chose recipes is that Alameda Reads has learners from so many different cultures and food is often the way that people share their culture with others. This is particularly true when language barriers threaten to keep us separate. It should be a wonderful opportunity for all to share and learn from one another. They are hoping to launch the project in September and, with a little luck, have the published books available in early 2019.

A Learner Success Story. One of the Alameda Reads learners, who has been working diligently with her tutor on pronunciation and grammar, applied for a new job. She worked with her tutor to craft a cover letter and was pleased to advance to the interview stage of the selection process along with 17 other highly qualified candidates. She worked hard with her tutor honing her interviewing skills and she got the job! What more can we ask for? Alameda Reads is changing lives!

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) I will have limited email access or if it is not urgent, leave me a message at 747-7747.

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki  
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