



January 9, 2019

Dear President Silva and Members of the Library Board,

This letter is to bring you up to date on activities during the months of November and December 2018, and to provide a look forward to some of the projects which will be coming up and a few we were working on.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Joyce McConeghey as our newest Library Board Member. Joyce will be joining us at the January meeting and I will let her introduce herself to the Board.

Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda). The October and November 2018 Library Services Reports are included in your Board Packet. The Expenditure Reports for November and December are also included.

Main Library Update. The Library has been a hive of activity through the holiday season. Teens have had a variety of themed Study Halls as the term was coming to a close. My favorite was the “Hogwarts Library” study hall...”come study to the sounds of the Hogwarts Library...” What?! Apparently there is a YouTube video that shows the Hogwarts Library and the sounds are pages turning, students practicing spells in hushed voices, minor explosions from spell mishaps, etc. There was also a Gingerbread Study Hall, with gingerbread flavored snacks. Those were some very popular study sessions.

Lots of crafts were made by children and adults alike in the various programs offered. A new offering was when the Library hosted a yarn and craft supply exchange. People were encouraged to clean out their yarn and craft supplies and bring them to the library in hopes of exchanging them for “new-to-them” supplies. Similar to the Halloween costume exchange, for each item donated, the donor receives a ticket to pick from the assembled supplies. After those with tickets have their picks, then people without tickets can pick supplies. Leftovers were donated to local schools or other locations that could use them. This was a very popular activity with positive feedback, another program we will do again in the future.

November was “NaNoWriMo” translated means “National Novel Writing Month.” We hosted open sessions for aspiring writers to come and put pen to paper. Their goal is to write a novel, approximately 50,000 words, in one month. I’m not sure if any of our writers succeeded but they seem to enjoy the company of others pursuing the same goal.

The Tinker Bus came to Alameda three times, once at each library. The Tinker Bus is a mobile maker space. Reservations were required and thanks to the funding from the Friends of the Library, there were a lot of imaginative projects made by children.

In December we hosted our first Drag Queen Story Time. Supervising Children’s Librarian Eva Volin worked with Alameda’s own drag queen, Carissa AKA Queen Snaxx. Snaxx has over 10 years of experience working in early child education and she was a delight. Understanding it could be considered a controversial program, Boys & Girls only advertised the story time with one poster in the Main Library Boys & Girls Department and one Facebook (FB) post. The post generated a lot of buzz and a few

negative comments. One commenter posted very negative comments, we found that the commenter was not in Alameda, nor even in California. The commenters were doing well to contain the discussion until someone posted the home address and phone number of the out-of-state individual. We removed the entire discussion and posted that the library encourages respectful discussion but this particular discussion stepped over the line. By the program date, hundreds of people had commented or “liked” the post encouraging their friends and family to attend. The program was moved from the children’s program room to the larger community room, the stage was used to put Queen Snaxx up higher so people could see her and Eva scanned the books to be read so the pages could be projected on the screen for people in the back of the room to see. Over 150 people came to the story time and Snaxx ended with a dance party for the little ones, then the Boys & Girls staff provided crafts. Very successful and the library may host another one in the future.

There have been game days, a “sitcom-a-thon”, and Polar Express pajama party. So many activities for the community during the holidays, a little something for everyone.

New Services. Beginning in early January, our Library will begin offering Kanopy, Hoopla, and Mango Languages. Staff worked hard to rearrange our budget and eliminate some things that will be duplicated by these new streaming services to find the funding. A press release is being prepared for release. It’s very exciting to be able to offer streaming video of films, graphic novels, audio books, and online language learning.

- Kanopy is an award-winning video streaming service providing access to more than 30,000 independent and documentary films — titles of unique social and cultural value from The Criterion Collection, The Great Courses, Media Education Foundation, and thousands of independent filmmakers.
- Hoopla is a digital streaming service offering access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, eComics, music, movies, and TV shows.
- Mango Languages is an online language learning resource. Mango Languages has 64 foreign language courses. Additionally, the service offers English lessons in 17 languages and specialty courses to teach cultural differences.

Air Emergency. In November the air quality in the bay area was severely compromised by the Camp Fire and other fires in the North Bay. Fortunately, the library has charcoal filters on the standby in the HVAC penthouse for such emergencies, a lesson learned after the fires last year. On November 9 the filters were installed and after one cycle, you could not smell smoke in the library. The Main Library became the City’s filtered air center for those needing respite. Later in the following week the air quality became so bad that schools were closed and staff prepared to offer additional activities in the library for students of all ages. The City handed out N95 masks and the Library again had a role as a distribution site, handing out almost 900 masks over two days. The Library extended open hours and opened early and closed a little later in order to offer the filtered air. The City also distributed masks at the fire stations, the police department, Mastick Senior Center, Alameda Point Collaborative Offices, and the Animal Shelter on that Friday. Saturday on the fire stations and the Main Library were distribution points. A center for the unsheltered was opened at Washington Park and a few hotel vouchers were handed out to families, the police gave out masks to the homeless on the street, and the fire department transported patients as needed. There were many lessons learned and Alameda will be even more prepared the next time because air emergencies may be the new normal.

New City Web Page. The City is launching a new the City Web site on January 3. The Library has been working hard on our own sub-site which will be linked to the city page. The Library Web Team, led by Supervising Librarian Marlon Romero is comprised of, our resident web expert, Trina Dikitannan, Cosette Ratliff, and Dawn Boyer, have done a great job moving the vital content from the old page to the new sub-site. The Library's web site will be functional but is still a work in progress. The Library was not given much more than 3 months to work with the new site and move content. Here's a link to the pre-live site: <https://alameda.prelive.opencities.com/Library/Home> Take a look and feel free to bring comments to the Board meeting. The basic framing of the navigation is complete, most content is in place, but we are still working to develop additional content and tweak the wording of some of the existing content. We know there are still some minor issues and plan on having some library patrons view the web page to provide feedback prior to the launch.

Student Connect Code. Teen Librarian Hallie Fields provided a short update on the Connect Code project. Her team of part time librarians Ari Nussbaum and Jill Russell and herself attended the Back to School Night events at AHS and EHS and spoke with parents and students. Teens are starting to come into the library to use their Connect Codes to access the computers. They also know that teachers are starting to use the databases as well. They're hoping to continue to see a rise in teens coming to the library to use their codes. Their short term goals are to work with the art teachers at AHS and EHS to introduce the idea about the card design art contest. Create promotional materials for the art contest and implement the contest in early 2019. Their long term goals are to promote the option for students to upgrade their Connect Code card (e-access only) to a full service library card and to begin planning to add Island High School/ASTI to the program.

Retirement. As was mentioned in the last Board Letter, long time employee Carol Roth has retired. Carol worked for 52 years for the City/Library, beginning as a teenager. Mayor Trish Herrera Spencer came and presented Carol with a proclamation for her contributions to the Community, proclaiming December 6, 2018 as "Carol Roth Day" in Alameda. A lot of cake, cookies and ice cream was consumed in the afternoon and a lovely party was held at Dragon Rouge with small plates and staff gifts. We will miss having Carol working in the Technical Processing Department and all the collective memory she takes with her. Her last official day with the City is December 30. We wish her the best in her retirement with her family. In the meantime, the recruitment for Carol's replacement is open and we hope to have the position filled by the end of January.

City Changes. The City has a new City Council who were sworn in on December 18. Congratulations to new Mayor Marilyn Ezzy-Ashcraft. We look forward to getting to know new Vice Mayor John Knox White and reacquainting ourselves with Council Member Tony Daysog, and continue to work with Council Members Jim Oddie and Malia Vella.

One other change, Assistant City Manager Liz Warmerdam will be leaving Alameda to become the Assistant City Manager in San Leandro, effective the end of January. She is already out of the office taking earned time. It was a pleasure to work for and with ACM Warmerdam, few Assistant City Managers knew the names of so many line staff and they appreciated being recognized by name, she offered wise guidance to the library and will be missed. Alameda's loss is a huge gain for San Leandro.

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No new news regarding the hiring of a new City Manager. It is my understanding that the (new) City Council will interview the finalists in the coming months. In the meantime, Interim City Manager Dave Rudat continues to lead the City.

The City Council selected Michael Roush as the Acting City Attorney. The recruitment for a new City Attorney after the retirement of Janet Kern is currently open.

Friends of the Library. The 10th Anniversary of the Live @ the Library concert series was a huge success. The Friends received rave reviews for the September 15 with Paula West & Mads Tolling Quartet. The November 17 with Tamir Hendelman on piano was masterful! And if you listen to the comments from the concert-goers, then the December 8 show with Tammy Hall on piano, featuring singer Kim Nalley, and an all-woman quartet, this concert was the best show yet! The series continues to be very popular and the concert committee has it running almost like clockwork! The addition of the backdrop curtains and the borrowed up-lights (thanks to Billy Reinschmiedt), the staging looks amazing and really professional.

The Book Sale storage warehouse continues to be an issue and have break-ins nearly every weekend. Although the Friends are actively looking for a new storage location, nothing affordable has been located. Alameda Police offered space in the old jail, very convenient location and very secure but it is really too small. We may have a lead on sharing some space with another city department in a different warehouse at Alameda Point but I am not sure how long it will take to come to some type of agreement if it is possible. I also will be talking to the Alameda Unified School District about possibly renting space at one of the schools, for a nominal rental fee. Dealing with the constant break-ins and not being able to move the boxes of materials ready for the next sale out of the book sorting room at the Library is frustrating.

The Friends are co-sponsoring a film titled, "Dark Money," with the Association of University Women on February 13. The program will be held at the Main Library in the Stafford Room, time to be decided.

The Friends have no new news regarding their strategic planning process. They did some visioning in November and are now waiting for their next steps in the process.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, January 28, at the Main Library in the Family Study Room at 6:00 p.m. These meetings are open to all. The Friends did not meet in December.

Alameda Reads. Alameda Reads is working on their third book project. This time, a collection of recipes & stories from the Learners! Most of the recipes and stories by the Learners have been submitted. They are planning to hold a couple of writing workshops specifically for Learners who are not currently matched with tutors who wish to work on a submission for the book. They hope this will maximize the opportunity for all of our learners to share their stories. Since most of the submissions are in, they are beginning the editing process. The cookbook project is a lovely way to explore the beautiful and complex relationship between food, culture and family. It also provides a great opportunity to connect other activities in the Alameda Reads program to the theme, so they have selected The Hundred Foot Journey for their next Movie Night.

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One learner, who works for a hotel in SF, received a promotion at work. She is now in a supervisory position! The current focus of her tutoring is preparing for her citizenship interview. More proof that literacy is life changing!

The Alameda Reads office was closed November 19-23 for Thanksgiving Break (corresponding with the public school schedule). In December they will continue that pattern and close for Winter Break December 24-January 4. Feel free to drop by their offices and introduce yourself to Literacy Coordinator Barbara Papik if you'd like to see the program in action.

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

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki
Library Director