



November 13, 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 September and October 2019, and to provide a look forward to some of the projects which will be coming up and a few we were working on.

**Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda).** The August and September 2019 Library Services Reports are included in your Board Packet. The Expenditure Reports for September and October are also included.

**Main Library Update.** For your information: Due to the smell of heavy smoke in the air on Thursday, October 24, the Main Library prepared to switch out the air filters in our HVAC system for our HEPA filters. The decision was made on Friday, October 25 to switch out the filters and notification was made to the public that the library was a filtered air facility available to the public during normal business hours. We were preparing to extend hours if the air quality deteriorated but fortunately that did not happen. Alameda is fortunate that there were no pre-planned power outages on the island. (Personally, although I was out of town at the library conference, my home was part of the planned outages and when I arrived home, my power was out for a day and a half. Not fun.) Monday, October 28, the city was preparing possible mask distribution and activated the Emergency Operations Center at a low level to monitor the situation. Fortunately, the winds which cause some of the problems, also blew the smoke out to sea and we are back to normal. A new set of carbon HEPA filters will be purchased and placed in reserve up the mechanical penthouse for the next emergency.

Alameda's new Assistant City Manager Gerry Beaudin, took a tour of the two neighborhood libraries. It was nice that he took time out of his schedule to drive out with me to see the two branches. Senior Librarians Lynda Williams and Karin Lundstrom gave tours of their respective libraries. He was impressed with the libraries and those librarians.

The full time Librarian I (School Resource Services) services position is filled! This recruitment was overseen by Supervising Librarian Eva Volin. We are very excited to announce that Andrea "Andie" Cultrera is our new full time School Resource Services Liaison. Andie was our part time employee and are so happy that she is now on staff full time. She is already working hard to expand the services we offered under this program and has plans for new offerings.

Part time recruitment for Library Specialists was open. We have hired two; Peter Palath will work all three libraries and Corinne "Eny" Calvert will work at the Main and Bay Farm Island. They both began on October 9 and are doing well in their work locations.

Just when we thought we had our staffing settled we received a resignation letter from Librarian Dawn Boyer and PT Library Associate Caroline Li. We promoted one of our library aides to Library Associate so that position is now filled but the full time librarian position will require a full recruitment.

Library Board  
November 13, 2019

Supervising Librarian Sierra Campagna will be in charge of that recruitment and we have already started the process. Dawn's last day will be November 18.

The Library had applied for a mini-grant from the Pacific Library Partnership Innovation Grants to fund the purchase of five portable hotspots and five tablets to allow staff to do more outreach with Pop-up Libraries. I am pleased to say they received this grant and are currently working to procure the hotspots and tablets, get them configured to be able to check materials in/out and issue library cards. Staff is also working on locations to visit, beyond the high schools.

October 20-26 was National Friends of the Library Appreciation Week. The Friends declined another proclamation so staff did an appreciation display on the first floor of the main library. The effort was led by Supervising Librarian Sierra Campagna. There was a tri-fold board with factoids about the Friends, some photographs of the Friends at various events and of our programs funded by our Friends. Then there were "talk bubbles" with words of thanks and appreciation for the Friends from staff, teens, and members of the general public. Talk bubbles and pens were made available at the table for people to add their own appreciation ---and the Friends really appreciated being able to read what was said about them and their support for our library. We will do a proclamation every other year in appreciation of the Friends, so next year.

The West End Library hosted their annual Costume Exchange on October 12. People dropped off gently used costumes and received a ticket for each costume donated. Then on Saturday the 12, those with tickets had first pick of the donated costumes neatly arranged on clothing racks. Then drop-ins were allowed to browse the remaining collections. This has been a very popular event and is gaining popularity with each passing year. Teens had their last minute DIY costume workshop where they made simple costumes with assorted craft supplies and lots of Internet ideas. Children were invited to enjoy the spooky puppet stylings of Puppet Art Theater who brought one of our favorites, Winnie the Witch, for a glow-in-the-dark puppet spectacular. Some staff dressed up for Halloween, it was a very fun month culminating with a great and spooky Halloween!

The Public Works Department is having our Main Library building power washed and the brickwork re-sealed. The work began on Monday, October 28 and might continue for about 3 weeks. It is only a minor inconvenience, they need to use spaces in the parking lot, along Lincoln Ave, Oak St. and the block Times Way, with their cherry picker lift to spray the upper parts of the building. The sealer will not only seal the brick but applies a coating which will make graffiti removal a little easier and also if someone were to urinate against the building, the coating sheds the liquid and possibly splashes back on the offender. The company has also offered to remove the gum off the sidewalk in the front of the building, so if the cost is reasonable, Public Works said they would pay for that work as well. Yay!

Thanksgiving is approaching and the City is giving full time employees a half day off the day before Thanksgiving in addition to Thanksgiving Thursday and the Friday after. Since Wednesdays are the Main Library's late day and open hours are noon to 8:00 p.m. we will be changing hours at the Main Library to 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to accommodate full time employees ability to work a half day before leaving on holiday. The two neighborhood libraries are normally open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays so no adjustment to their schedule is required. The afternoon will be staffed with a supervisor and part time staff. This minor schedule change has been approved by the City Manager and notification to the public has been posted.

**Strategic Plan.** The Strategic Plan is moving forward nicely and we see the “finish line” ahead of us. The October and November Strategic Planning team meetings went well, many thanks to Board Member Joyce McConeghey for chairing the Planning Team and to Board Member Kathleen Kearney for participating. Both of our Board Members were in touch with our planning team members to remind them of the upcoming meetings and encouraged participation by all our team members.

The Library Staff discussed the strategic plan at the Staff Development Day on October 14. Staff was presented with the work of the Strategic Planning Team from the first two meetings, the vision and broad goals. Staff were extremely engaged when asked what the library currently does, what they do as staff, and what they could do in the future. One of the “products” from this planning process will be a small, pocket-sized, guide book or passport for the staff to remind them of our mission, our values, and asking them how they are advancing those ideals every day they come to work.

In this Board packet you will find the DRAFT Strategic Plan content and the Strategic Planning background data and performance and resource trends, and a DRAFT of the Director’s Letter which will preface the completed Plan. Our consultant, Ruth Metz, will join us at the November 13 meeting to talk about our work so far and what we have left to do. At the meeting you will be provided with an updated (corrected typos) and expanded goals, which were worked on by library staff after the November 2 meeting.

**Fine Elimination.** I am pleased to report that going “fine free” has been very well received by the community. I did receive one letter of objection to which I have responded. I will bring both letters to the Board meeting to be read to you. That is the only negative response received thus far. We still need to work on getting the word out because at the Friends book sale, I was talking to one of the teachers and he didn’t know we had eliminated fines and was very excited to go back and tell his class and fellow teachers.

Here are the Circulation comparisons by month between the current FY and last. In September we started fine free and you can see the numbers increased over a double digit percentage.

	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Percentage Increase/Decrease
July	37,674	38,286	2%
August	34,152	33,391	-2%
September	31,990	38,970	22%
October	33,285	44,807	35%

Last meeting Board Member McConeghey inquired about how much food was collected for the Food Bank with our last “Food for Fines” drive prior to going fine free. Circulation Supervisor Kevin Tam reports that the Alameda Food Bank said that approximately 1,500 pounds of food was donated during our Food for Fines drive.

**Friends of the Library.** The 2019 Live @ the Library concert series is going well. The last concert of the season will be on Saturday, November 16 with Dimitri Matheny. The prior concerts were very well received, the City Manager and his family attended the October concert and really enjoyed themselves.



Library Board  
November 13, 2019

The concerts were so good this year that the Friends already have a handful of individuals who have made donations to be sponsors for next season's concert series!

The Friends Fall Used Book Sale was October 18-19-20 at the O Club at Alameda Point. Another successful endeavor by the Friends. New Book Sale Committee Chair Sita Peddada may have a new record in gross sales! They increased the prices and were more selective in the books added to the sale. The fall sale grossed a little less than \$22K! The volunteers from Wind River didn't pan out and the Coast Guard had something come up at the last minute and were only able to send five members instead of their usual 15 people. Sita and her committee (& spouses) worked very hard to get the tables set up and the boxes out of storage to the O Club. Lots of solid volunteers through the weekend and fewer boxes of books were discarded after the sale than in the past. Much appreciation to Sita and her committee, it ran like clock-work.

Friends Board Member Luzanne Engh will be honored as the recipient of the City of Alameda's Community Service Award in the Non-Profit Board Member category. She was nominated jointly by the Friends and Girls, Inc. Luzanne is currently the president of the Girls, Inc. Board and is terming out and off the Friends Board at the end of December. The selection committee could not have chosen a more deserving member of our community! Please congratulate Luzanne when you see her.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, November 25, at the Main Library in the Stafford Community Room at 6:30 p.m. These meetings are open to all.

**Alameda Reads.** The month began with the annual International Literacy Display in the lobby of the Main Library. The display was up from September 7th-21st and in addition to raising awareness in the community about the depth and breadth of the problems faced by low-literacy adults in our country, it also generated a few new volunteers for the program.

Program Coordinator, Barbara Papik had the opportunity to attend the bi-annual ProLiteracy Conference which was held in San Diego. This 3-day conference gave Barb the opportunity to participate in 11 separate hands-on workshops as well as exchange ideas with literacy professionals from across the country, including those working in library based programs, public sector (non-library) programs and private non-profits. It was very beneficial and Barb feels it was time very well spent.

Alameda Reads served fewer learners during 2018/19 than they did in 2017/18, but the average number of instructional hours per learner rose from 41.2 in the previous year to 48.6 in 2018/19. Barb believes that this reflects a much greater level of learner engagement and that this engagement level is also reflected in the number of learners retained. 84 learners received instruction during 2017/18 but only 50 continued with the program in 2018/19 (56% retention). They provided instruction to 69 learners in 2018/19 and 49 continued in the current fiscal year (71% retention).

One of the English Language Learners (ELLs) received a promotion at work. He moved up from being an Assistant Waiter to Waiter at an Italian restaurant in town. This new position required a much greater command of English so that he could communicate effectively with the customers as well as understanding a whole new set of vocabulary. Through working with his tutor, he gained confidence in addition to expanding his vocabulary and they are now working on developing his expertise in wine!

Library Board  
November 13, 2019

The writing class spent one of their sessions working on letter writing. One of the learners, who regularly attends the class, had a situation with her neighbor (involving the neighbor's tree growing over onto her property). Using the skills she had learned in class, she was able to send a polite letter to the neighbor and successfully resolve the situation!

**California Library Association Annual Conference.** I attended the California Library Association Annual conference October 25-27 in Pasadena. The conference is always enlightening to hear what other libraries are doing and to chat with peer libraries across the State. The State Librarian gave an overview of the State's budget in regards to libraries, projects and partnerships, and funding opportunities. The US Census will be big in 2020 and there were some useful ideas but it seems Alameda is ahead of the curve with a City team working on getting the word out about the census. The conference is always a good time to network, talk to a few vendors, and in a warped way, and relax with my peers.

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.

Sincerely,

  
Jane Chisaki  
Library Director