



January 2018

OPL Seeking Ballot Measure in 2018; Here's Your Chance to Help

By Kathryn Sterbenc, President of Friends of the OPL

No one knows more than Friends of the OPL members that safe, welcoming and well-resourced libraries are essential to our neighborhoods and city. Our libraries provide crucial reading and storytime programs for young children; a safe place for children and teens after school; computer access for students and adults, and language courses for adults who are not native English speakers. Unfortunately, the current city budget makes it increasingly challenging to provide these essential library services. As in the past several years, OPL faces a projected annual deficit of \$3.5 million to \$4 million. A budget gap of this size could lead to branch closures.

The good news? In 2018, library supporters can do something about it. In order to maintain, protect and improve library services throughout Oakland, OPL is working to place a parcel tax on the June 2018 ballot. And we can help – by working to gather YES votes.

The measure would:

- Prevent library closures and extend evening and weekend hours to better serve students and working families.
- Provide safe places for children and teens after school.
- Maintain youth reading programs and services to seniors.
- Keep libraries safe and welcoming.
- Provide literacy services for families and adults.

The ballot measure is being drafted now, so no final decisions have been made, including the per-parcel cost of the measure and its duration. Any measure would need to be placed on the ballot by the Oakland City Council and approved by two-thirds (66.7%) of voters. Library advocates across Oakland are gearing up to support the VOTE YES campaign. A new tax measure would help address capital needs as well as operations.

If you want to support the Measure to Protect Oakland Libraries, please complete the form inserted in this newsletter and mail it to the address provided as soon as possible.

To provide feedback or request more information, please contact ProtectOaklandLibraries@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendars!

The Bookmark Bookstore's **Semi-Annual Sale**
April 5-8 (Thursday-Sunday)

Our **Annual Appreciation Brunch** for Bookmark Volunteers and Friends of OPL Board Members was held at The Bookmark Bookstore on December 9th. What a great venue for a party! Thanks to our 60+ Volunteers, the store succeeds.

Want to Help Out at The Bookmark?

There are shifts available, and other short-term needs. Call 510-444-043, or email bookmark_bookstore@yahoo.com



New Board Member



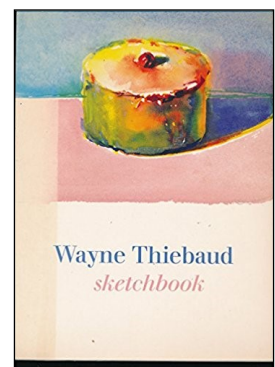
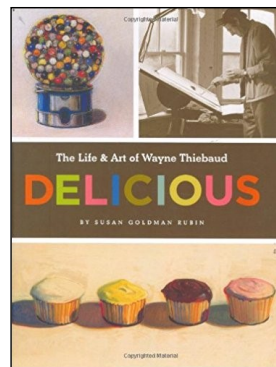
Valerie Villanueva joined the Friends of the OPL Board in May 2017 and also started to volunteer at The Bookmark on Wednesday mornings. She is very excited about both opportunities and honored to be involved. Libraries have played a large role in Valerie's life. She vividly remembers the day she received her first library card and was told that she could check out all the books she could carry. It turned out that was quite a lot of books! The library was a safe place for her as a child, especially during the summers when her mother would drop her off to spend the day there, while she went to work. She has always lived in the Bay Area, except for 3 years in Chicago for law school. She settled in Piedmont seventeen years ago. Her two children, ages 14 and 11, are proud users of the Oakland Library, providing them with a wealth of resources over the years. She is impressed by the Library's programming and staff, as well as by the books on its shelves. And she is happy to give back as a way of thanks. Valerie spent years working as a corporate attorney. She loves using her small business background volunteering at the Bookmark. Every week she is amazed at the treasures she finds on the shelves, the generosity of donors and the work ethic and great sense of humor of the managers and volunteers. Not to mention all the great discussions about books!

The Bookmark Re-Donates Books

Every week the store donates 2-3 boxes of paperback books to the **Prisoners Literature Project** (tinyurl.com/y8rksxg4). Topics of interest include social justice, history, politics, sociology, psychology, ethnic studies, philosophy, dictionaries, science, art, and how-to books. The store also donates 2-3 boxes of picture books and beginning reading books to the **East Bay Children's Book Project** (tinyurl.com/y73nrzwp; re-opening January 9th at 2501 Harrison Street). Elementary and middle school teachers also use this resource, so teaching aids are also included. Store volunteer Annette Wood delivers the books and also volunteers at EBCBP.

Life is Short, Eat Dessert First

If you are still full from the holidays, why not look at paintings of desserts instead? *Delicious, the Life and Art of Wayne Thiebaud* (a children's book), for \$35, or the *Wayne Thiebaud Sketchbook*, for \$155, are two of our 1874 books for sale at amazon.com/shops/the-bookmark-bookstore. Remember, if you are local and would like to buy these or other listings, you can do so directly at the store – no need to pay shipping. The Shrem Museum of Art at UC-Davis will have a show of his earlier works, *Wayne Thiebaud 1958-1968*, from January 16 to May 13 (tinyurl.com/y97pako8 for details).



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The Board Recommends Books and DVDs

Gen Katz: The Way to the Spring – Life and Death in Palestine, by Ben Ehrenreich. A book to read if you believe that everything is hunky-dory in Palestine. And yes, Ben is Barbara's son - the injustices of the world drives both of them to write. He reports on the daily life of Palestinians. Ben lives with these people, gets arrested, experiences retaliation for throwing stones and is an observer to the humiliation. He documents the spirited resistance and the wearing down, and the acceptance of life as it is under the Israelis. The period is from 2015 and he goes back and forth from the US to Palestine. The action begins in Nabi Saleh, known for its resistance, where the townspeople march down to a spring that is technically theirs. While much of the book relates the stories of those families, he also spends time in Hebron and Ramallah and captures the urban style of occupation. Informative but somber.

Sheila McCormick: My So-Called Life, TV series from 1994-1995. Watched it then, still wonderful. If you were, or have a teenager, well worth checking out. A current movie, *Ladybird*, is along the same lines, but I think *My So-Called Life* is better.

Kathryn Sterbenc: Stamped from the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America, by Ibram X. Kendi. In this fast-paced, deserving winner of the National Book Award for Non-Fiction, Kendi explains how anti-black racist ideas have been cultivated and maintained by white Americans throughout U.S. history. Kendi uses the biographies of Cotton Mather; Thomas Jefferson; William Lloyd Garrison, W.E.B. Du Bois and Angela Davis as his backdrop.

Holiday Mixer at AAMLO

On December 3, the Library Advisory Commission and Friends of the OPL co-hosted this fun event, featuring a powerful performance by 2017 Vice Youth Poet Laureate



Leila Mottley.

Board Updates

The Friends of the OPL Board thanked **Ellen Moyer** for her service as Board President at the November meeting. Ellen joined the Board in 2007 and served as president from November 2009 to November 2017. We presume she is not looking happy in this picture because her term is



over! Fortunately, she will continue her service to the Oakland Public Library as a Board member and as a Books for Wider Horizons story reader.

Thank you, Ellen!

Kathryn Sterbenc, Board member since 2016 and former chairperson of the Oakland Library Advisory Commission, was elected Board President at the November meeting. Read more about Kathryn in the April 2017 *Off the Shelf* at fopl.org/newsletter/.

The Board also warmly thanks **Susana Morales** for her service from 2015-2017, and previously from 2001-2003.

Untangling Oakland Myths & Legends

Special edition of the monthly podcasters' meetup featuring Liam O'Donoghue of **East Bay Yesterday** (tinyurl.com/y8wwfbne). After covering the origins and mission of the show, Liam will discuss myths, legends and misconceptions of Oakland History with Librarians **Dorothy Lazard** and **Kathleen DiGiovanni**. Main Library, Bradley C. Walters Community Room, **Wednesday, January 31, 7-8 pm.**

Baby Cafe

By Kristen Smeal, Community Member

Bleary-eyed and barely slept, I rushed out of the house with my then 3-month old daughter, Rosemary, tucked in her carrier. We had a rough start to the morning. As I walked down the street, a woman stopped me and handed me a flyer. She said “You have a baby, we have a Baby Cafe.” She introduced herself as Margaret Rodriguez, the Children's Librarian at the Piedmont Avenue Branch. She said two magic phrases: “FREE COFFEE” and “meet other new parents.” Admittedly, it was hard for me to get out of the house. I suffered from postpartum depression and anxiety, yet I yearned for adult conversation and new parent connections. The casual and unstructured nature of the Baby Cafe was a perfect opportunity to do just this and quickly became a genuine highlight of my week.

The Baby Cafe features a soft play structure, age appropriate toys, music, puzzles, and games. It is held from 10:30 am to noon on Saturdays at the Piedmont Branch, except for the second Saturday of every month, when the group livens up Piedmont Gardens, a senior living facility on nearby Linda Avenue. At Piedmont Gardens, residents and guests enjoy a musical sing-a-long, musical instruments, and bubbles. The babies have an opportunity to interact with the residents of the center, including those in the memory care facility. Margaret said the inspiration for holding the event at Piedmont Gardens came from taking her own daughter to visit her grandmother. She noticed the residents would “light up” in the presence of her infant daughter.

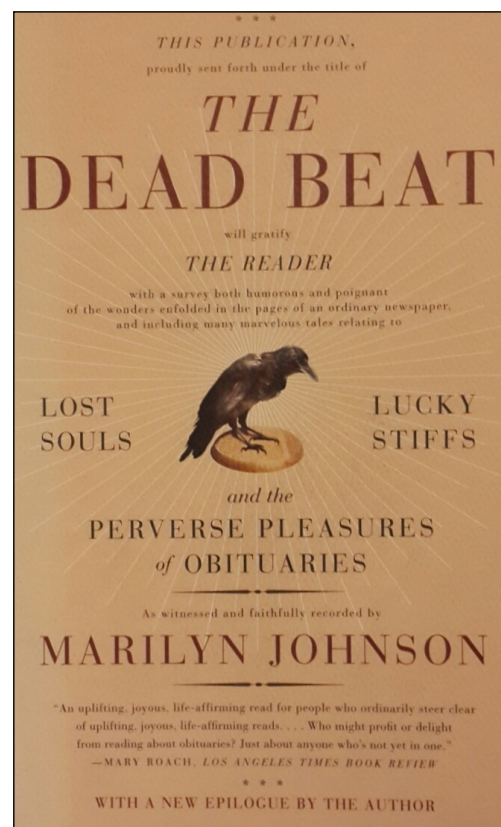
The Baby Cafe has been a success, with 5 to 15 families per week. It is a fantastic offering for parents who work full-time jobs during the week and do not often get to experience a play group setting. The unstructured play time gives parents and caregivers an opportunity to socialize while babies play together. Free coffee and toddler snacks are offered courtesy of Friends of Piedmont Avenue Branch. Older siblings are also welcome to join in the fun.



Found at the Bookmark

By Sheila McCormick, Board Member

I bought this book in 2007, for \$2.80 (with member discount). I love reading obituaries, and this is one of several books I own about them. Who can resist sentences like this? “The retired parish housekeeper routinely walked around the dining table in the rectory, offering coffee to each priest. “Would father like regular or decaf?” Regardless of the priests individual preferences, she filled all their cups from the same pot. The coffee drinkers silently accepted what they got, as though she really could turn regular coffee into decaf, much the way that the biblical Jesus turned water into wine” (by Alana Baranick, shortened here). The recently released documentary “Obit” is also a great entry into the “Dead Beat”.



Presentation by Author *Jackson Fahnestock*

Shu Wei's Revenge: A Young Man's Journey into the Depths of the Underworld. This historical fiction adventure, set in 1898, features an orphaned Chinese immigrant teen cub reporter who risks death to regain his honor. **Asian Branch, 388 9th Street, January 20, 2:30-3:30 pm.**

Book Giveaway at Oakland's Thanksgiving Lunch

By Mana Tominaga, OPL

The City of Oakland hosted its 26th annual Thanksgiving Lunch on Tuesday, November 21. This festive event at the Oakland Marriott served ~2200 people: Oakland senior citizens, low-income families, and folks experiencing homelessness. For the first time ever, OPL staff were on hand to distribute free books. While some of the books were donated by OPL staff, most were from a generous contribution by The Bookmark Bookstore. We distributed 364 adult books, 286 children's books, and 50 DVDs for all ages. In addition, more than 43 clients were given library access: staff created new cards, issued replacements, and resolved fines and fees. Volunteers, clients and many others we spoke to loved that the library was there, and appreciated the wide variety of available books. The library hopes to participate again next year. We are very grateful for the support of Friends of the OPL and The Bookmark Bookstore in making this first effort a huge success!



Store Volunteer Profile

Cedric Fortenberry started volunteering in October 2017, mainly because his sister Nicky, who also volunteers there, thought he might enjoy it, as he is an avid reader. He says it is a great opportunity to learn about books, while helping people or doing tasks around the store. After trying out a variety of tasks he decided he most likes to sort donations. It's very relaxing and interesting to figure out which donations go with which genre; some books can fit in several genres, so he looks at the whole process as solving a puzzle, making it a fun experience. The coolest book he found (so far) was *The Chronicles of Vladimir Todd*, which he enjoyed in high school.

Scholarship Winners

By Dorothy Lazard, Oakland History Room Librarian

Congratulations to **Andrea Guzmán** and **Lynda Letona Rodriguez**! The OPL Scholarship Committee awarded them each \$1,500 scholarships for the 2017-2018 academic year, to support their library science education. Ms. Guzmán is a student at San Jose State University and Ms. Rodriguez is a student at the University of North Texas (Northern California cohort). Their enthusiasm for and commitment to OPL and to the library profession is to be commended. Please join me in wishing them success in the year ahead! And many thanks to the Friends of the OPL for making this important program possible.



Help for Potential Authors

Indie Writing Workshop

The Mystery Writers of America, NorCal Chapter, will present a workshop on independent and self-publishing, that will cover how to get your writing career moving, even if you've already been traditionally published. Topics include a comparison of publishing options, editing and copyediting considerations, promotion and social media tools, and retail logistics. **Rockridge**, 5366 College Ave., **January 27, 10:30 am-3:30 pm**. See tinyurl.com/ybhgc3p to register.

Demystifying the Path to Publication. Laurie Ann Doyle, Lily Iona MacKenzie & Lori Ostlund will talk about how they got started, obstacles they faced, the themes in their work, and each will read briefly from their books. The event will end with a question and answer session so bring yours! The event is open to fiction writers, bloggers, poets, and memoirists of all ages and levels. **Dimond**, 3565 Fruitvale Ave., on **January 23, 6:30-8 pm**. See tinyurl.com/y8wyy5bd for details.

The Saddest Summer at the Brookfield Branch Library

By Sandra Toscano, Librarian

Latchkey children at the library throughout the summer is nothing new; libraries have been dealing with this issue for years. It's problematic and very complicated in communities served by Brookfield. Gentrification is hitting the City of Oakland hard, displacing families, and children are suffering the consequences. Being born and raised in East Oakland, I have never seen anything like what I witnessed in the Brookfield community this summer. People are more and more desperate than ever. Children were in the Library from the moment that we opened, often until closing time. We had children who said they were hungry. As a human being one wants to help, but we also want to respect people's sense of dignity, and must consider liability issues in terms of we can personally do. It's important to note that libraries are often a place where people on the edge of society find refuge.

More and more homeless encampments are surfacing in East Oakland, as people are being pushed further and further out of Oakland. Brookfield has several encampments within a 2-mile radius of the library. What's heart-breaking is that some of our children patrons told us that they are, or have been homeless, or have lived at the Motel 6 down the street. Families are being separated from each other as parents are struggling to stay afloat and keep their children off the streets and out of homeless encampments.

As people get pushed this far out into the edge of East Oakland, the resources and services start to diminish, with very little help or support for families at risk. The Library is a beacon of hope for most people, especially children, who use us as a safe place to spend time, free from the dangers of the streets. They have free access to restroom facilities and we reminded the children, daily, of the summer lunch program at Brookfield Recreation Center, so they could get a bite to eat. We offered them free swim passes to the Brookfield Sports Center in hopes that they could use the facilities to engage in some fun and as an opportunity to shower, if desired.

Another social issue that has hit the Brookfield Library particularly hard this summer has been the political climate of this country. Our immigrant community is not using our services in the way that they have in the past. For three, or more, months our circulation statistics were down; not only from the previous month, but from the previous year. Some adults stopped attending our Easy English class, despite being inspired and encouraged by the opportunity to learn English. Our Spanish-speaking families have stopped taking their kids to after-school tutoring offered by Alfred Luk, our Library Assistant. As a Latina, I have spoken to our immigrant patrons who have serious concerns about "ICE sightings" in East Oakland and are trying to minimize any need to be out and in public. They shared that they go to work, and to the grocery store when necessary, but are not out like they used to be. People are afraid of being deported and separated from their families. Many have worked and lived in our community for decades.

The support we receive from the Friends of the OPL has been priceless. Our patrons are so appreciative of the new furniture throughout the Library, the new vibrant-colored rug in the teen area, and are happy the library looks cleaner and more welcoming. It means a great deal to people to have a clean, colorful place to go to in their community. As we seek new ideas to reach our community during these troubled times we are grateful for the financial support from the Friends of OPL, which continues to make many programs and services possible for our patrons.

OMCA Collaboration

By Scott Nanos, Co-manager, The Bookmark Bookstore

Friends of the OPL is excited to announce a collaboration with the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) for an exhibit opening in March. "RESPECT: Hip Hop Style & Wisdom" (tinyurl.com/y8n2lc9s), by international artist Satch Hoyt, will explore how much Hip-Hop has changed the world, with a focus on the enormous impact of the West Coast and Bay Area music scene on this global phenomenon. The exhibit will feature a massive 7 foot sculpture made entirely of books, all donated to the Museum by The Bookmark Bookstore. The store managers, Museum curatorial team, and artist-in-residence are currently discussing selling the books to OMCA after the exhibit, in order for the sculpture to be moved to a permanent home in New York City.

Color versions of this and previous newsletters can be found at fopl.org/newsletter/

Get to Know your Grants

By Sara DuBois, OPL Coordinator, Grants and Volunteers

In early 2017, the Friends of OPL provided the library a unique opportunity: mini-grants (up to \$1,500) to implement new library services or programs. Applications were welcome from any Oakland Public Library (OPL) employee at any location, and the goal was to inspire and fund creative, innovative, and community-minded ideas.



As reported in the April edition of *Off the Shelf*, there was a terrific response: 17 proposals were submitted. The Friends Board chose nine of these for funding. The Junior Carpenters Club, at the Eastmont Branch, was proposed by OPL staff Nichole Brown, Remy Timbrook, and Carlon Yoder. This Club provided patrons at Eastmont with the chance to learn about basic tools and to practice useful skills like hammering, gluing, sanding, and painting. Carlon, a skilled carpenter, led the workshops. Open to all ages – but most popular with youth – this three-session program was truly hands-on. Participants built and took home their own storage boxes, tool boxes, and bird houses. Learning these new skills built confidence and created a lot of joy at Eastmont. Thanks to the talented OPL staff and the funding from the Friends of OPL, this mini-grant made a huge impact.

Each year the library submits a “wish list” of grant requests to the Friends of the OPL. This list comprises projects that library staff would like to pursue, but which simply aren’t possible without extra funding. The library is very grateful for the possibilities that these grants create. For more information, sdubois@oaklandlibrary.org.

Poetry Time at West Oakland

Please join the **28th Annual Celebration of African American Poets and Their Poetry**. Community members of all ages are invited to participate by reading poetry, performing, dancing, or/and displaying works of art. This year's theme is **Resilience**, although all themes are welcome. If you're interested in being featured in this program please call 510-238-7352 to register.

Light refreshments will be served.

**West Oakland, 1801 Adeline St.
Saturday, February 3, 1-4 pm.**

Giving

In memory of **Tina Wong** from Eugene and Akiko Makishima, Richard and Linda Lum, Victor Lum, Gil and Grace Jone and family, Cousins – Taks, Terry Yokoyama, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dong, Michael Lowe and Sara-Jane Measor, Serena M. Joe, Pat, May and Carol Louie, Ed and Maureen Kamei, Lorraine Seiji, Kathy and Patrick Baggett, Dale Hom, Joyce and Ted Iijima, Rod Kondo, Candace and Eugene Yano, June Wong, Steven Wong

In honor of **Marcia Wowak’s birthday** from Wendy Simon

In memory of **Dean Johnson** from Anonymous, Ann Ehrhardt, Stuart & Jean Brown, Omega Investment Club

In honor of **Sue Pon** from Lawrence Joe

In honor of the **Bookmark Bookstore’s 25th Anniversary** from Virginia and Wade Sherwood

In honor of **Laurie Marker** from Anonymous

In memory of **Linda Ann Follette** from Marjorie O. Follette

In honor of **Amy and Andrew Racle** from Edward Lee

In honor of **Paul Long** from Charlene Okamoto

In honor of **Sheila McCormick and Paul Herzmark** from Anonymous

In honor of **Jens Von Der Linden** from Stephen Garcia

In honor of **Genevieve Katz and Winifred Walters** from Anonymous

In honor of **Winifred Walters** and her 10 years of service to and retirement from the Oakland Public Library from Deborah Kahane Rego and Pam & Roy Webb

In honor of **Blair Bergsteinsson** from Sheila Syracuse

In honor of **Sarah, Jon and Robin** from Anonymous

When I got my library card, that’s when my life began. Rita Mae Brown



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If the date on your mailing label is 12-01-2017 or earlier,
PLEASE RENEW TODAY!

Our mission is to advance the role of the Oakland Public Library as a vital community resource and as an institution critical to the culture, education, and welfare of our diverse community.

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is the only organization that provides support to all Oakland Public Libraries.

In addition to that great feeling that comes with supporting the library, members receive our quarterly newsletter that includes a special feature highlighting grants to the library.

The Bookmark Bookstore operates on volunteer power and is a community resource for anyone who loves books. The Bookmark has been in Old Oakland since 1992. Proceeds benefit the Oakland Public Library. Members receive a discount on purchases.

Your support is crucial:

Your annual dues help fund grants to the Oakland Public Library. In the past 10 years, Friends of the OPL granted over \$1.5 million for library programs and projects.

More ways to support Friends of the OPL:

- Ask a friend to become a member
- Leave a legacy by naming Friends of the OPL in your estate plan
- Donate your gently-used books to the Bookmark Bookstore
- Volunteer! www.oaklandlibrary.org/volunteer
- Shop online at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases when you select Friends of the Oakland Public Library.

Thank you!

To learn more, visit fopl.org or call The Bookmark Bookstore at (510) 444-0473.
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