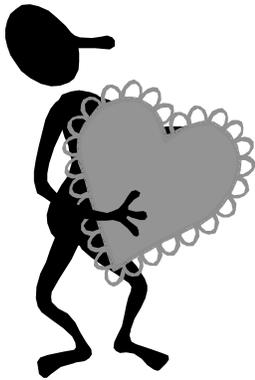


FOREWORD



Quarterly Issue No. 66

Winter 2005



February is Library Lovers' Month

Each February, for the last several years, we have had displays of valentines from library users to their favorite libraries and/or librarians. This year, please stop by your favorite library branch, and sign a valentine of thanks for library staff and our volunteers! Valentines will be provided for you to sign.

You may also wish to help with the library collection by picking up one of our lime green Library Lover's Fund coupon books. The Library Lovers' Fund was established in 1992 by the Friends of the Palo Alto Public Library in response to a reduction in the Library's budget. Through 2004, the fund has raised almost \$200,000 for additions to the collection. Your tax-deductible contribution of \$35 or more assures the purchase of at least one new item to be chosen by library staff. In each book you donate, a bookplate will name you or others you wish to honor or memorialize.

Giving to the Library Lovers' Fund helps the library immensely and benefits the community through a better collection. If you wish to donate online, go right now to www.friendspaloaltolib.org/librarylovers.htm or return the coupon below with your contribution.

So please look for the Library Lovers' display in each library, and sign a valentine thanking the library staff!



The Library Lovers' Fund of the Friends of the Palo Alto Library

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____

Bookplate wording (e.g. "Donated by Chris Jones", "In Memory of Frances Vu") _____

For credit cards:

Visa Master Card _____
Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Name on Credit Card if Different than Above _____

I wish to donate for additional material to the library collection.

Enclosed is a gift of:
_____ \$ 35 _____ \$70 _____ Other

Gifts of \$35 or more insures purchases of at least one new item to be chosen by library staff with a gift plate inside. But all amounts help the library enhance the collection.

Please make checks payable to:
Friends of the Palo Alto Library
P.O. Box 41
Palo Alto, CA 94302

FOPAL is a public-benefit 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible.



Thoughts from the Library Director

By the time this issue of the Foreword comes out, the Library will have migrated

from its decades-old computer system to a brand new one. You'll find a more user-friendly interface, more powerful search capabilities, and what we call "enhanced content", meaning the results of your searches, for many titles, will include photos of book covers, tables of contents, reviews, and more. Over the next few months, we'll be rolling out additional features of the new system. You'll hear about them as they appear. If you have trouble using the new system, or you have questions about it, please contact me. You can find my phone number and email address at the bottom of this article.

The PC management system will also be well on its way to completion. This product automatically handles access to all the public PCs in all the libraries. It doesn't manage activity -- in other words, it doesn't monitor where customers go on the Internet, or what they do online -- but rather it makes sure that people don't exceed their maximum time limits. Once it's fully implemented, it will also manage printing. You can find more information about both computer systems at the Library's website: cityofpaloalto.org/library.

These two projects are among the final elements of a Library Technology Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project funded by the City Council in 1997. The Library CIP also provided more express (self-serve) check-out stations, new and upgraded PCs in all the libraries, and other

improvements. Congratulations to the Library staff for their hard work in implementing these complex systems so smoothly and successfully!

Of course the big question continues to be...whether the Palo Alto City Library? For the past few months we've been engaged in a lively community debate about the best course to set for the Library's future. There's been no consensus on the best course, and in fact the only consensus around the Library issue is that everybody agrees there's no consensus!

The Library Advisory Commission and the Friends of the Library Board of Directors have called for a full-service library for Palo Alto, and I applaud that decision. Once we achieve that model, we'll be able to make the City's library dollar go further, because we won't be duplicating materials, services and staffing three times over (as is currently the case with the system's three resource libraries: Main, Mitchell Park and Children's). Having a single full-service library instead of three, doesn't mean Main, Mitchell and Children's Libraries would cease to exist. Rather, one, two or all of them would become satellites of the full-service library, depending on where it is located. *Note: The Friends of the Palo Alto Library Board of Directors supports the Library Advisory Commission recommendation, which does not propose reducing services or hours at any of the existing five libraries. Since the Children's Library has different materials and services from Main Library, we do not believe there is threefold duplication.*

The FoPAL Board and the LAC have also recommended to the City Council that the five existing libraries be maintained in their current locations. The Council, in turn, voted in favor of a single, full-service library (hooray!) but they also committed to (and I'm paraphrasing here) neighborhood facilities in a distributed manner. Does this mean branches in the traditional sense? Can distributed services be redefined to meet neighborhood needs and reduce overhead, particularly staffing? Can we do quality *and* quantity? And if so, how will we pay for it?

The Library Advisory Commission, the Friends and the Council have been clear in saying it's imperative to maintain the five libraries in the Palo Alto system. At the same time, all three bodies have acknowledged the worsening deficiencies in the Library. They rejected my recommendations, which would have fixed many of the problems without requiring more funding for operations, but at the untenable cost of two beloved branches. They don't have alternative solutions yet. But I pledge to work with all three groups, to find the best answers and implement them. I look forward to a productive collaboration. And as always, I welcome your comments, suggestions and complaints. You can reach me at 650-329-2403, or paula.simpson@cityofpaloalto.org.

Paula Simpson
Library Director

From the President

No to Closures, Yes to Better Libraries

2004 ended with our libraries very much in the news, since Salinas and Palo Alto were the two California cities contemplating library closures. As you may know, our City Council ultimately voted unanimously on December 13 to keep all five branches open rather than having a single central library, adopting a position also supported by the city's Library Advisory Commission, the Board of the Friends of the Palo Alto Library, and numerous community members from across our town.

Of equal importance was another vote that evening, directed at the future of our libraries. By a 7 to 2 margin, the Council asked the Library Advisory Commission to explore ways to make our branch library system even more useful, address our collection needs, and expand one library into a full-service facility. The Library Advisory Commission will no doubt take some time to work on these tasks, but it's exciting to consider what might happen.

Improving our Branches

Large cities such as San Jose and San Francisco have branch libraries, but so do many smaller towns. Palo Alto currently has five library branches, having lost the Terman Park branch a few years ago when the site was reclaimed by the school district. Menlo Park, with about half our population, has two branches, as does Los Altos. San Mateo has three at present, as does Redwood City, which recently was awarded a state grant to build a fourth. Berkeley has five (plus a sixth that checks out tools, such as

power saws) and Pasadena, home of Cal Tech, has ten. If you adjust for population size, Palo Alto has somewhat more branches than these other cities but still falls way short of the City of Commerce, southeast of Los Angeles, which has about one fourth of our population and yet four very busy branches.

Branch libraries have disadvantages and advantages. Splitting up a collection across multiple locations means you're less likely to find any specific book at the location you go to. Each branch must own its own copies of essential items such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, subscribe to popular newspapers and magazines, and perhaps have research librarians on its staff. On the other hand, with more branches spread around town, you are closer on average to a library and thus more likely to go. Libraries aren't the only organizations that think this way. For instance, Palo Alto has three Longs Drugstores and Round Table Pizzas, four Citicorp bank branches and Subways sandwich shops, and five Starbucks. It's probably no coincidence then that Palo Alto and City of Commerce both have very high library usage.

Whether the convenience of branches and thus greater library use is worth the extra cost was very much part of last year's debate over closing them. From statistics provided by the library, we calculated that the College Terrace and Downtown branches, our two smallest, accounted for 10% of the items circulated and 16% of the visits to the library in the most recent fiscal year. Yet, those branches account for only around 6% of personnel costs, the overwhelming expense of our

library system. Hence, it appears that the two branches are actually quite cost-effective, generating significantly more usage than they cost to run.

Some press accounts on the closure issue suggested that closing the two branches would save significant amounts of money and improve service at the remaining ones. Our studies found this wasn't the case. Palo Alto would have lost 63 open hours each week in exchange for adding just six hours at the remaining branches. In addition, library statistics show that if dislocated College Terrace and Downtown users went to the Main Library, its use would go up 52%, overflowing its parking, public computers, study carrels, and even regular seating. The closure proposal would not have increased the number of staff members at Main at any given hour, so there would be more delay in having questions answered. These are just some of the reasons why we felt the present branch structure is much more effective for Palo Alto.

By relying more on technology, branch costs may also come down. For instance, encyclopedias, dictionaries, newspapers, and magazines are all available via the Internet (the Friends subsidizes some of the costs for these) so perhaps fewer physical versions are needed in the branches. Our library already offers AskNow, by which you can query a reference librarian online from any branch or at any hour from home, and tutor.com, an online homework help service. By referring more people to these online services, our branches

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should be able to concentrate on providing convenient hours, popular books, and Internet access.

Branches could also provide quiet study, group study, and meeting facilities. The Downtown branch certainly has adequate space for all of these needs, especially if the building is returned fully to library use. There are ways to reorganize the Main Library to get more space as well.

We might also consider having more library branches. Terman Park served the southwest part of the city, which now has no nearby facility. To better serve that community, the council discussed whether to reconsider the idea of a shared-used library with the school district, perhaps at Gunn High School.

Another idea is to put automated library kiosks around town, similar to how banks distribute ATMs. A kiosk would hold books that you had previously requested and dispense these to you after you insert your library card. You could also return items at the kiosk. This isn't just science fiction. The Menlo Park Safeway already has a machine that dispenses DVDs that you take home to watch and then return back into the same machine. Existing facilities or businesses might serve as library distribution sites as well. Of course, kiosks and distribution points probably can't provide comfortable seats, study tables, and Internet terminals and thus can only augment rather than replace our present branches.

Addressing our Collection Needs

We've all had the experience of finding too few books at the library on some subject of interest to us, or of being disappointed to find the library doesn't have a title we've just heard about. Even when a

book is in the collection, there are often many people in line to get it. For example, there are 62 people with holds on Phillip Roth's *The Plot Against America* as of this writing, even though the library has 17 copies.

Right now, our libraries don't have room for additional books, so buying more generally means discarding as many. That's another reason we opposed branch closure, because our collection would have had to shrink by about 36,000 items. It's also expensive to expand our collection: adding just 50% more books would cost over five million dollars, not including the enormous cost of the extra building space and shelving required.

We are excited instead about a different way to enhance our collection called Link+, which is a vast interlibrary loan service far better than what we could afford ourselves. It's worth an entire article of its own, which I urge you to read on the next page.

An Expanded Facility

Whenever we think about which library facility to expand, Mitchell Park inevitably comes to mind. It's only about one third the size of the Main Library, yet it checks out more items and has more visitors. Amid the narrow aisles in the building, many books sit piled on carts because there are no shelves to hold them. Long lines of people often wait for the Internet stations. Almost 2/3 of Palo Alto voted to build a much larger library at Mitchell Park as part of Measure D, and the City Council revisited the idea when directing the Library Advisory Commission on December 13.

Since major building projects cost tens of millions of dollars, a combination of private and public funding probably makes sense. To

get the 2/3 majority, it's imperative that any new library project be attractive to all of the community. In other words, we should think not only about enlarging and improving a full-service library but also about how this can enhance the other four branches too. Hence, it's encouraging that both the expansion and the role of branches will be considered together.

All in all, there are many exciting ways to improve our library system, and we look forward to having the Library Advisory Commission look at the possibilities. Be sure to send your suggestions to them at P.O. Box 10250, Palo Alto, CA 94303 or by e-mail at Library.Commission@CityofPaloAlto.org. You can also attend and speak at their monthly meetings or watch on cable from home.

Finally, thank you all for your ongoing support of our libraries and of the Friends. As you'll read in this issue, our recent fiscal year was an amazing success in raising funds for the library. Our Cubberley booksale now fills three large rooms, is open on Sundays as well, and raises about twice as much money as just a few years ago. Our busy 137-plus volunteers put in over 16,000 hours during this past fiscal year. Meanwhile, Palo Alto libraries checked out a record number of items, no doubt maintaining our lead as among other California cities of our size. If you are a fan of libraries, Palo Alto is and will continue to be a great place to be!

Jeff Levinsky

President

jeff@friendspaloaltolib.org



Link+: Millions of Books at your Local Library

Once in a great while, a truly fantastic idea comes along for libraries. Here is one of those ideas.

To encourage book sharing, 30 university and public libraries from California and Nevada have formed a consortium called Link+. The consortium's libraries house a total of about 18 million books, or about 72 books for every one that Palo Alto has in its five branches combined.

You select books from Link+ just as you do from our present catalog. Indeed, you can try it for free right now at www.friendspaloaltolib.org/linkplus.htm. Once you spot a book you want, you request it and it will generally be delivered to your local library within a few days. You go in, check it out on your regular library card for three weeks, renew for another two weeks if no one else is waiting, and then return it. There is no charge whatsoever!



Perhaps the best feature of Link+ is that many universities are part of the consortium, including San Jose State and San Francisco State. Thus, you gain access to vast university collections that are miles away and generally not open for the public to even look at. This includes academic and advanced technical books that public libraries do not normally purchase due to the high cost and relatively low demand.

Having access to university collections is particularly important for our high school students. Right now, many take advanced and college-level courses but find few helpful books in either the Palo Alto libraries or the cash-strapped Gunn and Palo Alto High school libraries. Link allows them to use the very same books as university students, professors, and researchers. For example, a search on Samuel Adams (the revolutionary fellow) throughout all five Palo Alto library branches finds seven relevant titles, while all seventeen Palo Alto school libraries combined have a dozen. The same search at Link+ finds 117 different titles, including a number of original source documents.

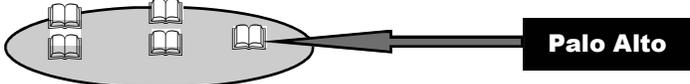
Palo Alto doesn't currently offer the Link+ service, so we're advocating that our city library make it a priority. Mountain View's public library does offer Link+, while East Palo Alto and Menlo Park plan to soon as well. If you already have a Mountain View library card (freely available to all California residents), you can actually use Link+ today and have the books you selected in your hands a few days from now.

Barbara Silberling, who lives in Palo Alto, has been researching her father's World War I service for several years and found that the books in the Palo Alto library simply don't offer the level of detail she's looking for. About a year and a half ago, she turned to Link+ and quickly became an avid user. For example, Link+ provided her with a detailed history of the U.S. Army's 77th Infantry Division, whose Lost Battalion was sought by her father's 50th Aero Squadron. Although housed in the San Jose State University Library, the book was delivered for free to her at the Mountain View Library. Barbara says that it gave her "shivers" to read the original source material, which was printed in 1919. "It's just like walking into a huge library and having access to everything on the shelf. The possibilities for research are limitless because you have an enormous variety of primary and good secondary sources available to you in just two or three days." In fact, Barbara found that checking out six books at a time from Link+ was just too many to read in three weeks, so she now requests at most three books.

Needless to say, Link+ is quite popular. Kent Pettey, Library Services Manager for Mountain View's library, says many types of books are requested rather than just technology or history or mysteries. "It complements the public library collection, because a lot of the books are ones we wouldn't have," Kent observes, but adds that many popular materials are requested as well that then come from other public libraries. The service is still relatively new and obscure on Mountain View's library website, and many more people would likely use it if each catalog search automatically checked Link+ as well. Even so, 7,063 items were delivered to Mountain View library users via Link+ in 2004, compared to just 226 interlibrary loans by Palo Alto library users in 2002-2003, the most recent 12-month period for which statistics are available. Palo Alto also charges \$7.50 for each interlibrary loan while Link+ is free.

Why don't Palo Alto libraries offer Link+? The primary problem is that our new library catalog system has yet to be interfaced with the software used by the Link+ consortium. Our system comes from a company called Dynix whereas Link+ consortium members use a

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(Link+ continued from page 5)

different one from Innovative Interfaces, Inc. The two companies have not gotten their catalogs to work together and neither may have sufficient incentive to do so soon. Innovative says that its system follows industry standards and already works with catalogs from a number of other manufacturers, while Dynix claims that Innovative doesn't support the correct standards. Although both companies express hope that these technical problems will be solved within a year, by not using Innovative's software, our library system may be a day behind in reporting to others whether our books have been checked out. Many other library systems around us already use or are switching to Innovative's catalog system and thus do not have these obstacles.

Link+ uses a courier to transfer books between the consortium members, but the courier only visits one site per city. It may take some clever scheduling to get books on the same day from that site to our other branches and perhaps to Gunn and Paly High as well. Otherwise, you'll have to wait an extra day to get your Link+ books at those locations.

Finally, although Link+ is free to users, each consortium member must pay for software, a share of the courier service, and the staff time to take books off the shelf that are being requested by other libraries. Mountain View's library estimates the costs at \$24,000 per year and about half time of one library aide or page. We'll have to pay some extra fees because of the extra software to connect in, but that's still an incredible deal when you consider that buying, shelving, and housing 18 million books would cost around a billion dollars (that's not a misprint). Given our many students and researchers and tight library budgets, Link+ seems like the ideal choice for Palo Alto's libraries.

Jeff Levinsky, President

Here are the current universities and public libraries
that participate in Link+:

Alameda County Public Library	Occidental College
Alliant International University	Pleasanton Public Library
Azusa Pacific University	Point Loma University
Claremont College	Santa Clara University
Cal Poly (Pomona)	Santa Clara Public Library
Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo)	San Diego State
California State University – Fullerton	San Francisco State
California State University – Hayward	San Jose Public Library and San Jose State (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library)
California State University – Long Beach	Saint Mary's University
Hayward Public Library	Sonoma State
Livermore Public Library	University of Nevada, Reno
Loma Linda University	University of San Francisco
Loyola Marymount	University of La Verne
La Sierra University	Whittier College
Mountain View Public Library	West Valley Mission Community College

Welcome to New Book Sale Volunteers

WE ARE PROUD TO introduce you
to the newest members of this special
group:

Moti Barkan
Charles Burd
Bonnie Chandler
Jenise Fuess
Torben Gronning & Patricia Sohl
Jim Dean
Deborah Grizzard
Katie & Dick Grote
Emmalynne Hu
Anne Huynh
Amy Kapp
Jeffery Lindberg
Frank McConnell
Paula McFarland
Katy Obringer
Stacy O'Leary
Martha & Jim Schmidt
Vishnu Sekhar
Arun & Sonica Thakur
Robert Trainer
Anna Wiersms
Kaela Fine and Carolyn Liedtke
Elvia Garwood
Elaine Meyer
Tina Kass

EVER WONDER how the miracle of
FoPAL's Second Saturday/Sunday
book sales happen? Stop by any
Tuesday through Saturday between 2
and 4 pm to see how it's done. If you
love looking for treasure, volunteer to
join a crew that opens and
sorts new boxes of donations.

For more information call the
Cubberley Book Sale room at
650-213-8755 (call anytime
and leave a message).

SPECIAL THANKS
to SCOTT UNDERWOOD
manager of Friend's Book Sales at the
Downtown Library. He has been
stocking and arranging these shelves
for a couple to years; unpacking and
arranging books chosen by volunteers
at the Cubberley Book Sale room.
Scott works nearby at IDEO which
gives him quick access to the
Downtown Library.

Barbara Silberling

FRIENDS OF THE PALO ALTO LIBRARY
P.O. Box 41
Palo Alto CA 94302-0041

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 108
Palo Alto, CA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Web Page: www.friendspaloaltolib.org

Email: info@friendspaloaltolib.org

Monthly Book Sales: Second Weekend

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd.

Saturday

Main room: 11 am to 4 pm

(Free tickets to reserve place in line available at 8 am)
Children's (Room K6) & Bargain (Room K7): 10 am to 4 pm

Sunday

All rooms: 1 pm to 4 pm

See www.friendspaloaltolib.org for details

Library Commission: Fourth Thursday

Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Ave. 7 pm

See www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/clerk/schedule.html
to confirm meeting date and time.

Board of Directors Meeting: Second Wednesday

Cubberley Book Sale Room
4000 Middlefield Road 8:30 to 10:30 am

Book Discussion Group: Second Thursday

Lucie Stern Community Center Fireside Room

1305 Middlefield Road 7:30 to 9 pm

For information, call Crystal 961-1528 or see

www.fopalbookgroup.homestead.com

Great Books: Second Wednesday

Oak Creek Apartments Club House

1600 Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto. 7:30 to 9:30 pm

For information, call Elsie Taboroff at 493-8629

History Book Discussion Group

For information, call Floyd Gardner (9 am to 7 pm)
at 328-8855

Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) Board of Directors: Jeff Levinsky, President; Wendy Akers-Ghose, Vice-President; Martha Schmidt, Secretary; Bob Moss, Treasurer and Bob Otnes, Assistant Treasurer; Marty Paddock, Book Sale Manager. Members: Betsy Allyn, Althea Andersen, Rudy Batties, Gretchen Emmons, Gerry Masteller, Gloria Reade, Jim Schmidt, Barbara Silberling, Patricia Sohl, Steve Staiger, Ellen Wyman. Library Representatives to the Board: Paula Simpson, Library Director. Foreword Staff: Wendy Akers-Ghose; Webmaster: Jeff Levinsky; Circulation: Post Haste Direct