



Among Friends

A Publication of the Friends of the Chula Vista Library

Summer 2013

Friends, partners enhance library sites

It takes a village . . . to maintain an aging and cash-strapped library.

The Civic Center conference room, which is used for dozens of meetings and classes, got a facelift this spring, courtesy of the Friends and several community partners.

The Friends executive board underwrote the cost of extending Wi-Fi into the room, while the Civic Center chapter replaced the 1970s-era brown carpet. New furniture was provided through a grant from SDG&E.

Then Chris MacMaster, a 9th grader at Olympian High School, took on the painting as a project for his Eagle Scout award with Troop 853. Chris rounded up a work crew that spent an estimated 220 man-hours on the project, spiffing up some old whiteboards and refinishing the chair rail as well as covering the dated orange walls with 11 gallons of fresh white paint.

Chris and his father, Jim, also secured donations of paint from the local Sherwin-Williams dealer and supplies from Dixieline, Home Depot and Lowe's. As a final touch, they hung photos on the walls that showcase Chula Vista's history.

The result: a community room that was truly a community effort.



Senior Scout Chris MacMaster paints the Civic Center conference room as a project for his Eagle Scout award.

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Meanwhile, at the South Chula Vista branch, a courtyard garden had been essentially abandoned after staff

and program cutbacks left the nearby rooms vacant.

Library board member James Balnis, who is also a member of the Chula Vista Garden Club, decided it was time to bring the garden back to life. He contacted fellow gardener Betsy Cory, who in turn presented the project to members of the California Native Plant Society-San Diego.

"They swooped on it," Balnis says, and provided a grant to purchase an array of native plants that the garden club installed during a "monumental planting event" last fall.

The triangular space is now a true "fragrant garden," with a variety of sages, plus tarragon, pennyroyal, mock orange and a particularly odoriferous plant known as bladderpod.

The South Friends chapter plans to add patio furniture, and the library will install a series of window "clings" with information about each of the plants. Cory hopes the garden will help educate the public about native plants, which she says most people see as a "green blur."

Also on her wish list is a collection of scent boxes so that visitors can appreciate the plant aromas while leaving the leaves intact.



Betsy Cory and James Balnis inspect a sage plant in the newly revitalized "Fragrant Garden" at the South branch.

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FCVL Goals for 2013

The Friends executive board has set the following goals for 2013:

- Recruit 45 new members;
- Raise at least \$45,000 for the Book Fund;
- Partner with the library on a grant application to the Chula Vista Charitable Foundation;
- Host one or more community lectures/presentations;
- Advocate for City funding for library books and materials;
- Establish an Otay Ranch chapter of the Friends.

We need just two more volunteers to make the Otay Ranch chapter a reality – a secretary and a vice president or member-at-large. The board will set its own agenda, meeting times and volunteer efforts. If you are interested, please contact me through the Friends’ website.

– Shauna Stokes, President

From the Director

Hello, library supporters:

Happy new (fiscal) year! The FY 2013-14 budget for the City of Chula Vista passed on June 11 for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Thanks to the effective advocacy of the Friends of the Library, an additional \$20,000 was allocated for library materials as a year-end addition to the 2012-13 budget, a much needed boost to our very meager materials budget.

Another feature of the budget for FY 2013-14 is the re-establishment of a separate Recreation Department with its own director, effective July 1. I’ll resume the role of Library Director at that time.

The past year has been a great opportunity to identify collaborative opportunities with the Recreation Department, including literacy

activities at Tiny Tots classes and summer camps, the “Empower Hour” mobile recreation van visiting libraries for active fun and crafts, and joint press releases on other Library/Recreation partnerships.

We’re looking forward to a great summer made possible in large part by the Friends. Without your help we could not offer the great array of

summer enrichment opportunities that we do. The library’s time-tested Summer Reading Program is a critical element in the effort to avoid learning loss and keep reading skills up when school is out. The Friends’ hard work and constant support enable us to offer cultural and educational programs that spark the imagination, appeal to the whole family and keep learning alive.

– Betty Waznis, Director
Department of Library and Recreation



Betty Waznis

Friends membership drive on track for a record year

We’re more than halfway there!

In January, the Friends executive board set a goal of 45 new members to mark the organization’s 45th year. And, six months into the year, the rolls include a total of 24 new Friends, with half of those joining at the Sponsor level or above.

The board is offering a copy of the book *Chula Vista Centennial* to new members who join at the \$25 Sponsor level and to current members who renew at the \$100 Benefactor level. The book, written by Friends member Steven Schoenherr to mark the city’s 100th year, originally

sold for \$40 and is now available at the Friends bookstores for \$25.

“We all know someone who values the library but isn’t a member,” said VP Imozelle McVeigh. “This is the year to make that extra effort to boost our membership.”

Board member Christy Albon took a stack of membership applications to a meeting of another community organization and came away with three new members. Former librarian Maureen Roeber recruited three from her Altrusa Club. And the Friends booth at the Village Street Faire in April netted four more.



Friends who refer a new member will be entered into a drawing for what the board is billing as a “major prize” at the end of the year.

Are you current?

Not sure when you last paid your membership dues? Check your mailing label on this issue of *Among Friends*, which shows the month and date of your last donation. To save on postage, acknowledgements are mailed only to those who renew at the \$50 Patron level or above. If you require a receipt for a smaller donation, please indicate that on the renewal form. (If you give us your e-mail address, we can send it electronically.)

Collection builds a bridge between coasts

The library receives thousands of donations every year, but a collection of covered bridge memorabilia was one of the largest single donations and among the most unusual. Because the donation did not fit in the library's collection, the goal was to find a home for it. Luckily, librarian Iris Nelson volunteered for the project.

First, she organized 45 albums of photographs of covered bridges taken from the travels of the late Chula Vista resident Conrad Nagengast and his wife, Dale. There were also three binders of newsletters from covered bridge societies, slides and 8mm films of various national parks, Christmas cards with covered bridge illustrations, photographs from friends and family, and old books on covered bridges.

Then the library contacted the National Society for Preservation of Covered Bridges and was referred to the recently opened Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center, housed in the Oxford Memorial Library in New York. The curator was ecstatic to hear about the Nagengast collection and eager to acquire it. The \$208.79 in postage to mail 17 boxes – more than 400 pounds – was shared, with the Chula Vista portion paid for by the Friends.

"This East Coast-West Coast cooperative project is a good example of ways libraries and museums work together to build collections and preserve valuable resources," Nelson said. Now the Nagengast collection is appropriately housed in the former home of Theodore Burr, a pioneer in designing and building covered bridges.



He pitches books, too

San Diego Padres pitcher Clayton Richard had a captive audience for story time at the Civic Center library in June. See more photos from this and other Friends and library activities on our website at www.thefcvl.org.

Volunteer Spotlight

When Bob Laska takes on a job, he tends to stick with it. He worked at North Island for 34 years, retiring at the age of 68 only after being offered a buy-out he couldn't refuse. And he volunteered at the Civic Center library for 19 years, ending that career this spring only when his health made it too difficult to continue.

For that dedication, he has just been honored as a Life Member of the Friends, joining Gretchen Evans, Selma Harris and Joan and Frank Roseman.

Bob signed on as a volunteer in 1994, before he actually left his job, because his wife, Anna, was worried he would be around to "dirty up the house." Although most volunteers work a couple of hours a week, he signed on for four days, bundling magazines for the Civic Center bookstore and maintaining the bus schedules in the Civic and South branch lobbies.

Anna died of cancer in 1996, but he continued to show up at the back door of the library at 7 two mornings a week. "I always have to have something to

do," Bob explains.

A proud Navy veteran of World War II, he also volunteered for five years at the Chula Vista Veterans Home, "pushing guys in their wheelchairs" for community



Bob Laska

outings and a weekly Bible class.

He still gets up at 4:45 every morning, but now it's time to slow down and say goodbye to his library co-workers. "You can't believe how I miss it," he says. And for his Friends, toiling away in the Civic Center basement, the feeling is mutual.

Fragrant garden: Continued from Page One

Two more community benefits: The garden won the statewide first prize award for civic landscaping from the California Garden Clubs, Inc., in June. And Native American tribal elder Randy Edmonds came to the garden to bless and dedicate the space. Library staff hope to bring him back in August in conjunction with a Native American powwow on the Chula Vista bay front.

These two efforts prove that the library isn't just the community's living room. It can be the community's workroom as well.



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Museum exhibit tells history of CV police

The 100-year history of Chula Vista's police force will be on display at the Chula Vista Heritage Museum beginning this month. Created and sponsored by the Chula Vista Police Historical Foundation, the new exhibit features uniforms, badges and equipment used by police during the past century.

Former police chief Bill Winters spearheaded the effort to bring the exhibit to fruition and will volunteer with other members of his organization to staff the Museum during the year.

The police display follows a yearlong exhibit on the history of Chula Vista's Japanese community, which drew a record 2,756 visitors, the vast majority of them first-timers.

Many visitors also had a personal connection: Some were Japanese

Americans who related their own experiences in the internment camp at Poston; others were longtime Chula Vistans who recalled their friends' sudden disappearance in the months after Pearl Harbor.

During the exhibit's run, the Museum also hosted tours of several school and community groups, including 90 third-graders from Casillas School and 20 grad students from the USC school of social work.

A focal point of the exhibit, a map created by Steven Schoenherr and showing the location of Japanese homes and farms before and after World War II, has been donated to the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego and will be a part of that group's future exhibits around the county. The JAHSSD provided many of



Former police chief Bill Winters with some of the vintage uniforms featured in the new exhibit.

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 the artifacts and photographs included in the Museum exhibit.