



Among Friends

A Publication of the Friends of the Chula Vista Library

Winter 2015

Library's focus is on the community

In the old days, libraries were mostly about words. But nowadays, libraries are in the thick of the action, too, often bringing the community together to address common issues.

That mission has been the impetus for the library's recent civic engagement activities, funded by a grant from the Chula Vista Charitable Foundation, with additional funds from the Friends.

About 50 Chula Vista residents and city officials turned out in October for an "Ideas to Action" evening as participants were asked to identify specific tactics for improving their community. The workshop was the inaugural event in The Hub, the library's new community space at Otay Ranch Town Center. And it allowed attendees to build on the the goals that came out of a similar "community conversation" in May.



Engaged: Denise Berrian, a member of the Friends and the Chula Vista Woman's Club, reviews action plans developed at the fall civic engagement event. (Photos by Steve Wood.)

"This is an opportunity for the people who run the city to listen to you and to get your ideas," then-Mayor Cheryl Cox told the group.

Rick Richardson, a Foundation board member, noted that the goal of the evening was simple: "To bring people who are interested, people who care about their community, together to tackle the tough issues facing Chula Vista."

Participants were asked to brainstorm action plans for three of the goals set at the spring session: Rebrand and market the city, clean up Chula Vista's neighborhoods, and restore community events.

To boost the city's brand, one group proposed a series of events "to promote pride and beautification"

while "capitalizing" on good news and "managing" the bad. The community events team had a plan, too: a citywide 4th of July celebration or a one-day series of block parties designed to bring the east and west sides together. And the round tables focused on cleaning up the city had a two-word solution: code enforcement.

Workshop moderator Carl Luna, who heads the newly formed Institute for Civil Civic Engagement,

called the evening a success, noting that it represented "people working



together in a civil manner." "Our politicians could learn from you," he added.

Library director Betty Waznis plans to present the forum results at a City Council meeting later this year.

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Her birthday gift: books for the library

Selma Harris, a longtime Civic Center library volunteer and former treasurer of the Civic Center chapter of the Friends, recently celebrated her 90th birthday at the Olive Garden.

Family members from out of town, friends (and Friends) and library staff helped her celebrate this special occasion. Selma's family donated \$275 for children's books for the library in her honor, which was matched by the Friends' Civic Center chapter. These funds will be appropriated to the library budget at a City Council meeting in January.

Other Friends donations will also be appropriated at that meeting. A \$12,000 grant from the Friends' endowment fund at The San Diego Foundation and \$3,000 from the Book Fund campaign will underwrite e-books for teens, children's board, chapter and picture books, and expanded Tutor.com services.

The Civic Center chapter has donated \$2,000 for new furniture in the teen section of the library.

Hello and Happy New Year to all of you! What a great time to reflect and look back on the hard work and success of the Friends of the Chula Vista Library.

Major contributions from the Friends have enabled the library to open The Hub, our new community space at Otay Ranch Town Center. It's already a popular venue for community meetings, events and gatherings of all kinds.

The successful Book Fund campaign once again led to a significant contribution to the library's books and materials budget. The Friends are enabling the library to complete a Teen Focus project to upgrade our teen collection of print and e-books, provide more capacity for our online live tutoring service and add appealing teen reading and study furniture.

The Friends supply much more than



Betty Waznis

money, important as that is. You've been vital to Paths to Civic Engagement, the noteworthy, grant-funded project that brought citizenship classes back to the library, added more than \$10,000 worth of print and digital books on current affairs

and social issues, and staged two well-attended discussions on civic engagement: "Chula Vista: The Good, the Bad and the Just Plain Wrong" and "Ideas to Action."

You should all be very proud of the difference you're making in the lives of the many deserving children, students, seniors and families who love the library and depend on it for a better quality of life.

Thanks again for everything you do. Here's looking forward to another productive year of progress and achievement in 2015.

– Betty Waznis, Director
Chula Vista Public Library

KPBS 'Words' host will keynote annual meeting

Martha Barnette, co-host of the KPBS public radio program "A Way With Words," will be guest speaker for the Friends' annual meeting on Sunday, January 25.

The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. at the Civic Center library with a brief business meeting and a summary of the Friends' accomplishments for 2014 and goals for 2015.

Those attending the annual meeting will also have an opportunity to hear vocalist and guitarist Raymond Ornellas, who will perform from 1:30 to 2 p.m. and again during the social hour at 3 p.m.



Martha Barnette

During the one-hour program, Barnette, who appears on the weekly radio show along with last year's speaker, Grant Barrett, will talk about regional dialects and will explain how where you (or your parents) grew up has shaped your vocabulary.

A former reporter with the *Washington Post* and an editorial writer for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, Barnette has been co-host of "A Way With Words" since 2004. The Kentucky native has also written three books on word origins.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

The Hub: Another way to serve the community

The official opening of The Hub is in the works, which will coincide with the start of passport services in the new library space at Otay Ranch Town Center.

Once the service is up and running, probably early this year, residents will be able to book appointments for passport services online or in person; walk-ins will also be accepted.

Passport services will be offered Tuesday through Saturday, with hours still to be set. The library will boast the only passport facility in eastern Chula Vista and the only facility in the city with evening and weekend hours.

The Hub is already open for story times, drawing large groups of children and parents six times a



Opening night: The open, flexible space at The Hub made it ideal for the fall civic engagement workshop.

week for sessions that incorporate Core Curriculum skills, “Read, Think, Build.”

The library also plans to use The Hub for summer reading programs, art shows and performances. The Hub has been selected as the venue for National Engineering Day in February.

Located in the former Geppetto’s store just around the corner from the library, the space can be reserved at no charge for events that are free and open to the public. Booking is available online through the library’s website.

The Friends executive board allocated \$15,000 toward renovation of The Hub, and the Chula Vista Public Library Foundation donated \$50,000, thanks to proceeds from that group’s very successful Bon Appétit fund-raising events.

Library brings Joy to Otay Ranch

The Otay Ranch branch now has its first full-time manager, Joy Whatley, who has been branch manager of the South Chula Vista library for the past seven years.

Joy started her career at the Chula Vista library in 1997 as an hourly circulation assistant, while also working in special collections at the San Diego State University Love Library and as a barrista at a local Starbucks. She became a full-time employee in 1998 and was promoted to senior circulation assistant and circulation supervisor before becoming a senior librarian. Joy was named the Library Employee of the Year in 2004.

Joy received a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from SDSU and a master’s in library science from San

Jose State. She hopes to complete an MBA from Brandman College, part of Chapman College, in March, just needing to finish her thesis. Joy and her extended family are huge SDSU men’s basketball fans – a passion that began pre-Steve Fisher.

Joy is married to Mike, a juvenile probation officer and fellow criminal justice major. They have two boys, Devin, who is 14, and Noah, who is 9, and one girl, Avery, 12.

Joy sees the opening of the Otay Ranch branch as one of her major accomplishments. Her goals for 2015 are to open the passport office and get it running five days a week. She also hopes to expand library hours to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

“There is no other library system I



Leaders: Otay Ranch branch manager Joy Whatley, left, and director Betty Waznis.

would rather work for,” Joy says. “We are so creative and do so much with so little. Also, this is a great community.”



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Join, donate, stay informed: Visit the Friends' website at www.thefcvl.org

Online services open the library 24/7

The library now offers more than 100 popular magazines online, through an agreement with the Serra Library Cooperative and Zinio, a digital newsstand.

Digital magazines may be downloaded for free to your computer, smart phone or other mobile device. There is no limit on the number of digital magazines you may check out at a time, and no limit on how long you "keep" them. The e-magazines are kept current, and back issues are available for most of the titles. Zinio also offers access to magazines that are no longer available in print format. (The library will continue to provide a limited number of print magazines of local interest.)

E-books are also available to download through an agreement with the Serra Library Cooperative. The

library continues to add new titles for all ages.

Another new online service is Pronunciator, a fun and free way to learn any of 80 languages on your computer or mobile device.

And, finally, the library offers live, online homework help for students via Tutor.com. Every session includes one-on-one assistance tailored to the user's subject and needs.

A Chula Vista 9th grader who used the service wrote: "My tutor was awesome! Even though it was already after 10, he stayed and helped me out. Now I understand this lesson a bit more than I used to. Thank you!"

All you need is a Chula Vista library card and an e-mail address to access the above services. Go to the library's home page and click on the appropriate icon.

Are you a current Friend?

Check your mailing label to see the month and year of your last membership contribution. Your support makes a difference!

Civic engagement grant

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In addition to the two community conversations, the Foundation's Pathways to Civic Engagement grant funded a yearlong series of citizenship classes for 467 attendees at the South Chula Vista and Civic Center libraries.

Grant funds, supplemented by a \$2,000 donation from the Friends, were also used to purchase books and materials on current affairs and social issues. Before the grant, books in that category had an average publication date of 2001. The library was able to refresh that collection, resulting in a 78 percent increase in circulation.