

HLF News



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It is different today. Like you, HLF has been hunkered down, sheltered in place, yet continue our work to support the Library. We cancelled the dinner party, but not the reason we gather each year, which is to recognize an individual who carries the torch of the indefatigable Helen Everett. We are enormously pleased to recognize Susan O'Connor, an HLF Board Member of 23 years, a community advocate, volunteer and inspiration to many.

2020 Helen Everett Award Honoree **Susan O'Connor**

"It's a dream job," said Susan O'Connor, about working as a volunteer in the Serendipity Book Store at the Library. And for me, it was pure delight to hear Susan's unrestrained enthusiasm when we spoke about what drives her passion for the library.

"The library has always been an important part of my life, a direct link to how I measure the quality of life," she said. "You can walk into the library and look at a display of books on important topics of the day or fiction books organized by theme. The displays are eclectic and prompt your interest. Or you can follow my favorite pastime: browse the aisles until a book jumps out."

Susan hails from Massapequa, Long Island, New York. The eldest of four children, she recalls warmly her first introduction to the magic of the public library, which was the summer her mother went to work outside of the home. Susan was 12 years old and put in charge of watching the younger brood. She tenderly recalls how they all held hands and walked the tree-lined sidewalk to the open doors of the neighborhood library. The pleasure and enchantment of that moment set in motion a lifelong affection for rooms full of books.

The family moved to California in 1967. Susan graduated from Ygnacio Valley High School in Walnut Creek in 1969 and went on to San Jose State University to earn a degree in Business, with an emphasis in accounting. In 1979, she visited a friend in Humboldt County and knew immediately this was the place she wanted to call home. It didn't take long to find work at the local CETA office, where she rose to fiscal officer. What inspired her, however, was the desire to work with people to provide personal financial planning in a relatively new field at the time, as a Certified Financial Planner. After a four year program, she achieved her license in 1986. She opened the doors on her own business in early 1987 and retired twenty-eight years later. Susan's thorough, thoughtful and trustworthy qualities helped to establish a very successful business. She speaks glowingly of the opportunity to meet and work with so many wonderful people, many who became friends and family.



1986 was also an especially important year for Susan and her long-time partner Tim Crlenjak, for that is the year they were married; a very happy union which remains soul-satisfying, lively and very book-rich.

(Continued on Page 7)

From the President's Desk by Elizabeth Murguia



"A nation born in contradiction will fight forever over the meaning of its history. The past is an inheritance, a gift and a burden. It can't be shirked. There's nothing for it but to get to know it."

Jill Lapore

This day, the smoke hangs heavy over our beautiful landscape and for me the atmosphere seems to reflect this moment in our history. The pandemic, the state of race relations, the divisiveness and political theater in the shadow of the upcoming election, all make it difficult to envision a clear way forward, which is perhaps why of late I've been so drawn to books

which reexamine history.

First, Jill Lapore's *These Truths, a History of the United States*, is astonishing and painful at once. This would be a massive undertaking for any scholar, but Lapore is up to the task. She examines 400 years of our history with an unflinching eye, from the first European encounter with Native Americans to the 2016 Presidential election. Lapore, ever the polymath, explores the full sweep of the great American experiment in governing, with all its brilliance and failure explored. Abrogated treaties, women's rights, the struggle for racial and economic justice are fully examined, not simply dealt with as a footnote. Like all of Lapore's writing, the book takes you deeper inside history with stories of real people and cultural trends that might otherwise be overlooked. It is a remarkable reading journey, one you may want to encourage your friends to join, because my guess is you will emerge and want to have a conversation.

I also recommend David Blight's *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, a fairly recent biography of one of the most significant political voices of the 19th century. Douglass, the escaped slave who became one of the greatest orators of his day and one of the leading abolitionists and writers of the era, speaks and writes in a voice that resonates today. In addition to previous works and Douglass's own memoirs, Blight drew on a trove of original materials from a private library collection to illuminate the many facets of Douglass's life. The long struggle to abolish slavery and the bitter disappointment of reconstruction laid the groundwork for the very conversations driving public discourse in 2020. In our household, it has led us to re-watch the Ken Burns *Civil War* series, where Douglass figures prominently.

On the fiction front, if you've enjoyed the first two volumes of Hilary Mantel's Thomas Cromwell series, then you are ripe for the third and final: *The Mirror and the Light*. The writing is superb. This is perfect historic fiction based on exhaustive scholarship and exhibits Mantel's exquisite skill at filling in these historic figures as she delves into the nature of human power and frailty and explores the complex facets of friendship, loyalty and betrayal. As a bonus, you may come away with a deeper understanding of the Reformation and surely greater sympathy for Thomas Cromwell as he navigates his own journey toward the inevitable denunciation by King Henry VIII. A very good read that I hope you will enjoy.

"The books that help you most are those which make you think the most. The hardest way of learning is that of easy reading; but a great book that comes from a great thinker is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth and beauty."

Pablo Neruda

Donor Spotlights

We've started a new trend – check out our Facebook page where we regularly feature HLF donors. Their stories inspire. Stay tuned for more. Thank you donors!

Barbara Peters

HLF Donor Barbara Peters is a retired Career Counselor from HSU. When asked why she supports HLF, she responded, “ I have always loved books, reading and libraries! My mother was a Junior High School English Teacher and Librarian. My older sister worked on the local bookmobile and I worked in a Children's Library and as a “neighborhood storyteller” when I was going to college in Idaho. My husband, Tom, and I are always reading a book and know that books can open our worlds to new experiences & adventures, and broaden our imagination and knowledge of the world we live in. We both believe very strongly that people who read also make better writers. I saw this all the time when I worked with students at HSU.”



Bill Pierson

Bill is the owner of Pierson's Building Center and Pierson's Garden Shop and Nursery. Bill has long been an ardent supporter of HLF and was the Helen Everett Award Honoree in 2016. When asked why the library is important to him, Bill said, “In times like these, it's important to support our most revered institutions. Our beautiful Humboldt County Library is one of those. It's free to all and the knowledge of mankind is contained within its walls. It is truly the people's university and a Humboldt County treasure.”



Pam Cavanagh

Former HLF Board member and donor Pam Cavanagh says, “I donate to HLF and support the library because it's imperative that every person learn to read and have access to accurate information. The library is FREE and open to everyone. Fiction is a good way to escape these days. I bring my grandson Eli to the library to foster the love of reading.” Eli loves the Children's Author Festival and author visits to schools. He says, “Reading is good for you and you need to read to become smarter.”



Buy a Book

Library buildings may be shuttered but the library is open for business through curbside pick-up and its booming e-resource circulation. Buy a book or an E-Book today just because you can, as a gift or in honor of or in memory of a loved one.

Help Build the Collection.

Give a Book to Honor a Friend or Family Member

1 Book ~ \$25

2 Books ~ \$50

3 Books ~ \$75

4 Books~ \$100

Buy A Shelf ~ \$500

CONSIDER A RECURRING DONATION

It's Easy! Go to the HLF website and DONATE

BUY A BOOK A MONTH

Help people of all ages enrich their lives and open the world. It's important and it may be tax deductible (see page 6).

From the Director's Desk

by Chris Cooper, Acting Director

We have been reinventing library services for Humboldt County residents during the past several months. At every step, we are mindful of how best to support our community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as help individuals navigate this unprecedented public health crisis.



Library staff have a deep commitment to public service and a strong desire to provide a full range of library services to our community. The safety of our patrons, our staff and the community at large guides our decisions and continues to be our highest

priority.

As circumstances change, our creative and talented library staff are providing essential roles in our communities while doing our best to ensure community health and safety. Staff across the system are learning the facts about this public health crisis, informing the public and adapting services and programming to meet changing community needs. We have shifted programs online, continue to share local information and resources and diversify the ways that we connect with communities through telephone, social media, our website and email.

We have seen a steady increase in our curbside service since implementing this program in late May. Curbside service allows customers to pick up library materials through a contact-free process. Each Humboldt County Library has a designated curbside pickup location clearly marked by signage for service.

The Humboldt Library Foundation has been extremely generous in advancing the library's strategic plan goals with grants totaling \$140,000 to support the library's collection of books, movies, databases and e-books. The grant also supports library staff development, StoryWalks, and efforts to promote merchandising the library's collection.

Through the Humboldt Library Foundation's vision, leadership and magnanimity the library is able to pivot and provide services and resources differently and proactively. The Foundation has stepped up and made it possible for the quick transfer to digital and curbside service. We are not closed. We are still open and providing services even though the buildings are closed to the public.

Meet New Team Member Violet McCrigler

During the onset of the pandemic we welcomed the newest member to our library team, Supervising Librarian Violet McCrigler. Violet will provide leadership and support to the Fortuna, Ferndale and Rio Dell Libraries. Born and raised in Fortuna, Violet is thrilled to be back serving the communities of the Eel River Valley.

One of Violet's earliest memories is getting her very own library card at the Fortuna Branch. As a student at Fortuna High, she spent many afternoons volunteering at the library and learned how much she enjoyed the work. While earning her bachelor's degree at Humboldt State University, Violet began a 13-year career at the university working in catering, administrative support and, most recently, as the user accounts coordinator for the Humboldt State Library. While in that role, she was a part of many new library initiatives -- developing student-staff training, revitalizing the children's literature collection and organizing special events such as banned books week. Violet is currently completing her MLIS from San Jose State University with a focus on public librarianship and youth services. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, crafting and spending time with her family. Violet looks forward to this exciting new chapter in her hometown.



Classic Library Programs Make the Move to Online

By Corin Balkovic

Some of our most popular programs have been the Humboldt County Historical Society's monthly lectures about the special people, places and events from our region's past. We are excited to now offer these lectures online, where they can continue while patrons and staff practice social distancing! Our first Zoom lecture was on Saturday, September 12th at 2:30, when local historian and high school history teacher Sean Mitchell presented information about the rise and demise of the Northwest Pacific Railroad. The lecture series will run throughout the year, with topics covering the history and continued development of the Sequoia Park Zoo, a look into the movies filmed in Humboldt County and more.

Another long-running program that has made the jump to online is the Friday Afternoon Book Club. Meeting on the second Friday of the month, this book group has found a way to move their lively discussions to Zoom. As an added bonus, by meeting online the group has been able to occasionally discuss the book of the month directly with the author! This happened on Friday, September 11th where they discussed "The Island of the Sea Women" with the author Lisa See. This online book group is a great way to discover new books and meet new people while safely sheltering-in-place.

The weekly Call to Yarns knitting group that met weekly in Arcata has also made the move to Zoom. Now meeting at noon every Friday, this program is a fun way to connect with fellow knitters (or crocheters!), show off what you are working on and have a relaxing moment together.

If you are interested in joining these or any of the online programs offered by the Humboldt County Library, signing up is easy. You can find a calendar of all of our events on our website www.humlib.org; click on the event you are interested in to find the sign-up link. You can also find out more information and links to programs on our Facebook and Instagram accounts (@HumColibraryEureka) or give us a call at 707-269-1915 and we can sign you up over the phone.

"Go ahead, and fear not. You will have a full library at your service."

Doris Kearns Goodwin

Library Now Offers Curbside Option

By Ronda Wittenberg

If there were ever a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of the Library to our community. Repeatedly, we hear from our patrons how much they miss the Library and how they long to come in, say hello and mosey over to browse in their favorite genre or new book section. What used to be a given is no longer so. As much as our patrons appreciate the enhanced, expanded on-line resources, they also express an eagerness to come in and browse, missing the tactile sense of holding a book, the enjoyment of finding the next unsuspected good read. Whether their desire comes from a business need, their next book club read or screen fatigue one thing is clear – they want to hold a physical book!

To meet this need, staff went to work researching and developing the best and safest of contact-free Curbside Services we could offer to our reading-starved public. The Library launched Curbside Services from all Branch sites at the end of May. Since, we have expanded Curbside Services to more than just reserved titles. We now offer Grab Bags – you let us know what type of books, magazines, audiobooks or movies you like, and our experienced, skilled staff will select them for you. All you need do is call the Library, and then arrive curbside to pick up your carefully selected items! Visit www.humlib.org for more details.

Library staff has been nimble and innovative. This new method of library service delivery, while a challenge, has been rewarding for staff. To remain relevant, it is important to keep our public well stocked with library materials. Curbside Service has supported our continued purpose – meeting the needs of those who need us most.

Give us a call - we will meet you curbside!

"A childhood without books – that would be no childhood. That would be like being shut out from the enchanted place where you can go and find the rarest kind of joy."

Astrid Lindgren

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HLF Legacy Circle

The HLF Legacy Circle comprises a special group of individuals who have remembered the Humboldt Library Foundation in their wills or estate plans. Their gifts will grow the HLF Endowment Fund, a long-term strategy to provide enhanced funding for the library in perpetuity.

For every new HLF Legacy Circle member added during 2020, Ed Olsgard and Michele McKeegan will make a contribution to HLF of \$500. So please consider today – your planning will provide immediate and long-term support for the public library.

Tom & Roberta Allen • Jim & Judy Anderson • Jon Michael Asmundson • Barbara Barratt • Mona Beaver Patty Berg • Norma Bohrer • Kathrin Burleson • Pam Cavanagh • Marge & Max Custis • Sandra Corcoran Nancy Frost • Bill & Grace Greenwood • Susan Hansen Catherine Hart • Thelma & Ted Ingebritson • Connie Kaiser • Allan Katz • Tom & Judy Klapproth • Peter & Nancy LaVallee • Leslie Lollich • Barbara and Joseph MacTurk • Dennis & Satoko McCarn • John & Sara Moore • Elizabeth Murguia • Ed Olsgard & Michele McKeegan • Bruce Neidorf • **Susan O'Connor** • Kelly & Neal Sanders • Richard Stanewick • Jane Stein • Angus & Joan Stewart • Judith Stoffer • Sara Traphagen • Vis & Sally Upatisringa • Valera Vierra • Edward & Judy Webb

*Join Members of the Legacy Circle
Remember HLF in your Will or Estate Plan*

New Information Regarding

Charitable Tax Deductions for the 2020 Tax Year

With the 2018 federal *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act*, a majority of people who were itemizing tax deductions no longer found it financially beneficial to do so. This has changed for the 2020 Tax Year. The recently enacted CARES Act allows households to take up to a \$300 deduction for donations to nonprofits, even if you are not itemizing deductions.

Consult with your tax advisor for more information.

Helen Everett Honoree—Susan O'Connor

(Continued from Page 1)

Susan has been on the board of HLF since 1997, she serves as Board Treasurer and, until recently, chair of the Planned Giving Committee. “The Humboldt Library Foundation has been the perfect cause for me -- I believe in the mission and don't mind asking others to help bring the wonders of the library into the arms of young children, families and individuals who want to access its wonders. In 2020, HLF stepped up during these pandemic times to grant \$131,500 to fund creative ideas from our fabulous library staff, all because of our fabulous supporters,” she added.

It is with genuine admiration and affection that the board of the Humboldt Library Foundation bestows the 2020 Helen Everett Award to Susan O'Connor – our champion!

By Elizabeth Murguia

HLF Holiday Gala 2020

Honor Susan O'Connor and help the library meet these challenging times. We're counting on you! Dinner or not, please help us reach our Goal of \$75,000. Mail a check to PO Box 440, Eureka, CA 95502 or go to our website www.humboldtlibraryfoundation.org and use the DONATE button.

PATRON LEVELS

Platinum \$1500 Gold \$1200 Silver \$900 Bronze \$600 Friend \$300 Other

HLF Receives \$2500 PG&E Grant

The Humboldt Library Foundation recently received a \$2500 grant from Pacific Gas and Electric Company to expand e-resources at the Humboldt County Library. HLF will direct the funds to meet the dramatic increase in demand for e-books, audio books and other electronic materials as a result of libraries being shuttered during the COVID-19 crisis.

“PG&E supports building stronger communities across California, and building stronger local libraries helps to meet that goal,” said local PG&E spokeswoman, Alison Talbott. “We have been proud to support the efforts of the Humboldt Library Foundation over the years and are pleased to partner with them again to expand learning opportunities right here in Humboldt County,” she added.

According to county librarians, e-resource circulation has grown by nearly 66% since the lock-down occurred. Library use is up and curbside delivery is popular. The Library's electronic resources can be accessed through a variety of devices using your library card — if you don't have one, you can sign up for a free e-account.

“Though libraries are closed to foot traffic, online activity at the Humboldt County Library has surged,” said HLF Board President Elizabeth Murguia. “The library has met the challenge of the pandemic by making online access easier and by beefing up the electronic and audio collection. HLF has been able to make direct grants to the library to support this effort. We couldn't be more thrilled by PG&E's response to our request to fund these additional materials,” she added.



Alison Talbott, PG&E representative, presents check to HLF President Elizabeth Murguia



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Arcata Branch
500 Seventh St. 707-822-5954
Blue Lake Branch
1100 Greenwood Ave. 707-668-4207
Ferndale Branch
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But We're Still Honoring the
Memory of Helen Everett
And the Library Still Needs Your Support

Please Help Us Meet our Gala Fundraising Goal

For more information see Page 7 or go to our
website and hit DONATE

www.humboldtlibraryfoundation.org