

BOOKENDS

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

FALL 2020

FOL ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Someone observed that living in the age of the COVID-19 virus is like being extras in a bad science fiction film in which an alien force has taken control of the entire globe, and there's no place to run. Be that as it may, our very first thought must be that all of you and your family and friends are enjoying good health at a time when the world seems as if it were knocked off its axis in unprecedented ways. It requires no stretch of the imagination as I write this in mid-May to anticipate a continuing time of upheaval—medical, social and economic—not only for Americans but peoples on every continent.

The Friends of the Library was in the middle of a rebuilding year when the virus struck, a year in which the board of directors was hard at work revitalizing the organization and devising new ways in which to engage its membership. Our efforts like so much else were brought to a rude halt on March 10 when on the day of the event we had to cancel our first Spring lecture literally as the speaker was on her way to the campus in her car from Berkeley. Within days, much else was cancelled as well, including the second FOL Spring lecture. The Library was closed, including the FOL Book Bin, the campus shut down, instruction moved on-line and campus activities from sports events to graduation ceremonies were affected.

As for the FOL, in addition to the temporary closing of our major revenue producer, the Book Bin, our membership drive was cut short, the awarding of grants to library staff suspended, and a membership tour of the new planetarium, a special collections lecture, and planning for a FOL-sponsored summer tour to France were all postponed until further notice. Still, some things can be accomplished, including this, our annual report of the FOL for 2019-20.

Our board of directors is now at full strength with 16 members, including those who were recently re-elected by mail ballot, Michaeline Veden, treasurer, and James Fox and Lisa Woodard-Mink, members. In the Fall Semester before the Coronavirus hammer fell, the Author Lecture Series featured two well-received speakers, San Francisco author Randy Shaw, speaking on the housing crisis that confronts us, and U.C. Davis Prof. Andres Resendez, speaking on Indian enslavement in the Americas. Planning was completed for the planetarium tour, and other special events for 2020-21, and speakers selected for the 2020-21 Charles Martell Author Lecture Series, all of whom have accepted our invitations to speak.

At our first on-line virtual meeting earlier this month, we learned that our campus venue for the lecture series, the Library Gallery, cannot be

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used for events such as ours during the Fall Semester nor can other similar campus locations. The same may well hold true for the Spring semester. Given the most vulnerable demographic of many of our audience members, we weren't surprised, but we are looking into alternative means of presenting the lectures on-line. Whatever the outcome of our exploration, the Author Lecture Series for 2020-21 is postponed until further notice. We will keep you posted, of course, either by email or by future issues of *Bookends*. The same holds true for the reopening of our Book Bin, which offers quality used books at bargain prices. - Bill Dorman, Board President

SEPTEMBER UPDATE TO ANNUAL REPORT

When I originally wrote the annual 2019-20 report for the Friends of the Library in May, the situation was grim. In the United States, there were more than 1.3 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and more than 81,000 deaths. Though most countries observed considerable drops in new cases one month after reaching their peaks, the United States was still seeing disturbing increases. Today (August 16) the death total (estimated) is around 170,000. It's obvious that the situation today is even more grim.

In its August meeting, the FOL Board made certain to avoid wishful thinking or staring blankly into a rear-view mirror. Amy Kautzman, Dean of the Library, began our deliberations with a detailed report on the state of the library today and for the foreseeable future. She noted that President Robert Nelsen had just issued two updates on whether Sacramento State in the Fall semester, pointing out that within the past few weeks 21 students, faculty and staff who were on campus for legitimate reasons have tested positive. There are a number of university and college presidents in the U.S. who have decided to gamble on opening to various degrees both their campuses and their libraries. Chancellor White is not one of them. President Nelsen has approved 5% of campus classes that will be held in person for pedagogical reasons. The library will serve students and faculty under a strict protocol to ensure their safety. The library building will not be open even as the faculty and staff continue to serve our students, faculty, and staff. Members of the public are advised not to come on campus except for official and authorized business.

As for the Friends of the Library, there will be no on-campus lectures, no hosted tours to France, no tours of campus facilities, nor will the Book Bin be open until further notice. That said, the Board decided to actually expand its outreach to FOL members and the community-at-large in other ways using on-line Webinars that permit audience interaction with speakers. The traditional Author Lecture Series is being transitioned into a Speaker Series that will continue to include published writers, yes, but in addition will also draw on the impressive talents of Sacramento State Faculty speaking on timely topics or subjects of broad interest. (In terms of presenting authors, incidentally, this approach will free us of author travel expenses and scheduling restraints that have severely limited us in the past.) In sum, we're changing from our two-authors-a-semester format to a multiple event semester schedule. As these plans develop, we'll notify our membership of events as well as publicize them to the community. Of course, should the future permit, we'll resume in-person outreach activities as well.

A closing note. We have no idea when the campus can safely reopen, but we are of a decided lemons-into-lemonade frame of mind. The Friends of the Sacramento State Library has every intention, as does the entire campus, of remaining a vital part of this community. Reinvention is in no way the same thing as submission! - Bill Dorman

VIVE LE BOOK BIN!

Who remembers *The Life of Riley*, maybe the first "sitcom" on radio? If you do remember, then you are familiar with his characteristic reference to a bad situation: *What a revoltin' development this is!*

The sentiment sums up our present predicament nicely enough. As you all know the Book Bin was closed with the Library in March. That closure was extended through the spring semester and now through the summer AND FALL of 2020. Most likely the University's curriculum will be offered "virtually" in the fall, with the extended future to be determined.

I write to inform you all of this and to exhort you all not to forget us. One hopes we will be able to observe another new beginning around the same time.

Meantime please stay well. Thank you all for your loyal service in the past and let's look forward to more in future! - Jean Torcom

FOL PROGRAMMING EXPANSION BEGINS FALL 2020

The Friends of the Library will greatly expand its community outreach this year beyond the *Charles Martell Author Lecture Series*.

In addition to continuing to feature authors discussing their books and the writing process, the FOL is adding a separate *Town and Gown* (TAG) program that draws largely on presenters from the Sacramento State faculty whose expertise has bearing on the topics of the day. We also expect participation from performing arts faculty, especially in music, who will share in practice what they preach in the classroom. The TAG series will open with a panel on October 28 anticipating the November election. Prof. Kim Nalder (left) of the CSUS political science department, and Director, Project for an Informed Electorate will lead the discussion.



As for the Author Lecture Series, the topics will range from one of history's greatest woman athletes (of whom you've never heard) to a historical novel about Russia's ill-fated Romanov Family. The Author Lecture Series will include:

- October 8, 1:00 P.M. - Sasha Abramsky (right) - *Little Wonder: The Fabulous Story of Lottie Dod, the World's First Female Sports Superstar*
- December 9 (time TBA) - Nancy Kho - *The Thank You Project: Cultivating Happiness One Letter of Gratitude at a Time*
- February 9 (time TBA) - Lauren Markham - *The Far Away Brothers: Two Young Migrants and the Making of an American Life*
- April 15 (time TBA) - Jennifer Laam - *The Tsarina's Legacy: A Novel*.



Additional programs are in the planning stages. Each program will be presented on a Zoom/Webinar platform that accommodates audience questions and is open to the public. FOL members will receive advance notice of each presentation, and all participants, who RSVP including community members, will receive a link and instructions on how to access it online.

- Bill Dorman

FRIENDS GRANTS 2019-2020

Due to the pandemic and resulting campus closure, the 2019-2020 Friends grants application and review process, which usually would be completed during Spring 2020 was delayed this year. Subsequent discussions by the Board of Directors explored the idea of a general grant to the Library this year and it was unanimously decided to allocate \$14,000 for this purpose. In consultation with Dean Amy Kautzman, it was suggested (and the Board agreed) that the best use of

this grant would be to allocate it toward collection development in areas supporting new faculty. Yes, indeed, the campus has been able to hire 34 new full-time faculty who are starting this fall.

Library faculty subject specialists and David Gibbs, the Head of Library Collection Development, will consult with the new teaching faculty members and develop "wish lists" of additional library resources needed. It was suggested that Library Faculty

determine the needs of new faculty from the past two years. Fortunately, Amy was able to identify some additional money to supplement the \$14,000 from the Friends, which will increase the impact of this program. She also said that if there is a strong need she will look for more funds to better support new faculty.

We are looking forward to hearing about the resources selected and what the impact will be! - Roz Van Auker

FORMER SPEAKER HONORED AS PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST

Ms. Nigel Poor, a CSUS Professor of Photography, attracted a standing-room-only crowd for her 2019 Charles Martell Author Lecture series presentation, *Telling Stories from Prison*. Her talk described her podcast *Ear Hustle*, which deals with life inside San Quentin Prison. Professor Poor serves both as co-producer and interviewer. She has since been honored as a Pulitzer Prize finalist in the recently added category of audio recording along with her fellow producers, Earlonne Woods and Rahsaan Thomas.

According to a CSUS press release, Poor began her association with San Quentin in 2011 when she began team-teaching a history of photography course at the prison. Poor noted, "We know so little about what actually happens in there." She went on to say, "So I feel like we all have a right to know, and the best way to know is to hear the story from the person who is experiencing it." Thus her teaching led to the beginnings of the podcast in 2016. *Ear Hustle* was a hit from the beginning, attracting some one million downloads in the first month of production. Poor estimates the average episode now is downloaded between 300,000 and 400,000 times within two weeks of the first streaming.

-Bill Dorman



LIBRARY REOPENING PLAN DEMONSTRATES UTMOST CARE FOR SAFETY AND JUST AS MUCH INNOVATION

A carefully thought out, nine-page Library Reopening Plan that's only slightly less detailed, say, than the one to resume the NBA playoffs is the work of Amy Kautzman, Dean of the Sacramento State Library, and her talented staff, including administrators and frontline librarians. Throughout the plan, the central concern is with how to guarantee the safety of those who depend on the University Library for academic purposes and those whose profession it is to serve their needs.

The document sets forth 14 principles for operational planning, of which four cast a bright light on the overall philosophy. The first principle is to protect student, employee and public health. Another is to deliver fair and equitable service to users, especially in terms of bridging the digital divide and accessibility. A third is to develop creative service models that maintain a high degree of convenience yet don't depend on person-to-person contact. The fourth is to commit to compassion and flexibility, recognizing the "need to pivot rapidly between service models in response to shifts in...public health guidance."

Of course, the plan lays out specific health protective measures that must be taken by anyone who physically returns to campus in general and those who work in the Library in particular. What is most interesting, perhaps, are some of the means the Library has come up as alternatives to open stacks. One example is the use of lockers for distribution of physical materials similar to those employed for Amazon product pickup in stores. Another is adding additional online data bases. There is also an eight-step plan for if and when public access will be permitted in keeping with Stage Three of California's Pandemic Roadmap.

In sum, a phased reopening of the Library has been carefully conceived that ranges from best practices at every one of the three stages. For now, the Library will be off limits except under strict guidelines that require prior written authorization at several levels, and the public is discouraged from coming on campus at all unless on official university business. Clearly, though, the Library is doing everything possible not to interrupt or interfere with the education of Sacramento State students or the teaching of their faculty. While some CSU campuses have experienced enrollment drops of up to 20%, remarkably Sacramento State will be at or slightly above its enrollment figures of last academic year. Pandemic or no, It is reassuring to realize that they will have the Library at their service, one way or the other.

- Bill Dorman



Board members Roz Van Auker and Linda Goff model the new Library face masks that will be used by Library staff and faculty.

AGE IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

One of the things that Covid-19 has intensified by a factor of bazillion is the dismissal of my age cohort. Here's an excerpt from *The Atlantic* magazine's blog the day after a debate between contenders for the Democratic nomination, Biden and Sanders: [*The Atlantic* "Politics Daily: Remember the Election?" March 16, 2020]

"The types of Americans at high risk in this raging outbreak look a whole lot like the two major presidential contenders (and incumbent): Biden, Bernie and Trump.

"To paraphrase my colleague Derek Thompson, these candidates are *really freaking old*: (sic.) We have now before us three candidates divided by ideology, but united in *dotage* (sic). All three white men were born in the 1940s, before the invention of Velcro and the independence of India and Israel."

May I point out, actually, that Velcro was invented in 1941, the year I was born, and both Biden and Trump were born several years *after* that momentous event. it's also true, according to *Business Insider*: [Mar 13, 2014]

- At 70, Cornelius Vanderbilt began buying railroads.
- At 71, Katsusuke Yanagisawa, a retired Japanese schoolteacher, became the oldest person to climb Mt. Everest.
- At 72, Margaret Ringenberg flew around the world.
- At 73, Larry King celebrated his 50th year in broadcasting.
- At 74, Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps began an attempt to construct the Suez Canal.
- At 75, cancer survivor Barbara Hillary became one of the oldest people, and the first black woman, to reach the North Pole.
- At 76, Arthur Miller unveiled a bold new play, *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, free of the world-weary tone of his previous works.
- At 77, John Glenn became the oldest person to go into space.
- At 78, Chevalier de Lamarck proposed a new theory of the evolutionary process, claiming that acquired characteristics can be transmitted to offspring.
- At 79, Asa Long became the oldest U.S. checkers champion.

While I don't happen to like checkers that much, I see nothing wrong with applauding Mr. Long's accomplishment. Furthermore, if it's now generally accepted that today's 60 is yesterday's 40, why then is it illogical to assert that today's 80 is yesterday's 60, although I will concede that for a person in their 80th decade, yesterday's midnight is today's 9 p.m. I'll also acknowledge that Sanders is seven months younger than I, and Biden almost two years younger, which may be a factor in my sensitivity. On the other hand, perhaps there's a spot for me in the Cabinet.

I understand that people don't mean to be malicious when they use "freaking old" or use such terms as "dotage" to describe a person's age, but I would argue the tendency to denigrate age tends to be a singularly American characteristic as opposed, say, to an Asian one, where elders are venerated for their wisdom. After all, I believe it was a wholly American expression to assert the put down of the 1980s, "Dude, you're history."

FOL President Bill Dorman is professor of political science and journalism, emeritus, at CSUS. He is a graduate of the Sacramento State Class of 1964, and joined the faculty in 1967, retiring in 2007.