

FOAL Focus

A Quarterly Newsletter from Friends of the Auberry Library

Mardi Gras at the Library



King Kevin and Queen Alana show their spirit!

Auberry library was hopping on Fat Tuesday! In keeping with FOAL tradition, Jem and the Lunatics played lively Zydeco music to set the mood. The king and queen of Mardi Gras (program director Kevin and his wife Alana Hill) tossed beads to the enthusiastic audience, and all ages danced and enjoyed the music and festivities.

A crowd of about 40 revelers attended to enjoy the festivities, and a great time was had by all!

Book Sale March 28-29

Come shop for your next book, or for a gift for someone you love! The FOAL office will be open for a book sale Friday the 28th and Saturday the 29th from 10 am to 4 pm with a wide variety of treasures from children's books to spy thrillers to inspiring cookbooks.

New FOAL Office Manager

If you visit the FOAL office, which is open on Tuesdays for public business, you will see a new face. Cheryl Thompson has taken on the role of office manager from Jeanette Welton, as Jeanette moves on to new adventures with her family.

Cheryl has had quite the journey, balancing a successful career in accounting with her love for animals and the great outdoors. Born and raised in Bakersfield, California, she earned her Bachelor's degree in Accounting from California State University, Bakersfield, and became a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in 1988. Since then, she's worn many hats—owning businesses, working with CPA firms, and supporting non-profits. Most recently, she spent the last ten years lending her expertise to Sierra Veterinary Hospital in Auberry.

Cheryl has always been drawn to foothill and mountain living. After spending 23 years in Squaw Valley, she made the move to Prather three years ago, where she's been enjoying the peaceful surroundings with her two beloved animals—Ilina, a Morisian horse, and Fara, her Standard Poodle.

Fara isn't just a great companion; she's also a bit of a star! Over the past two years, Cheryl and Fara have worked together to earn multiple American Kennel Club (AKC) titles. So far, Fara has racked up four: Novice and Intermediate Rally, Farm Dog, and Canine Good Citizen. Cheryl jokes that Fara now has more titles than she does!

We are excited to have Cheryl as a part of our leadership team and look forward to serving this community together.

Chat From the Chair



Jamelie Taylor, FOAL Chair

It's been a good winter. Extra time for reading, planning fun activities for the warmer months and reflecting on intentions for the rest of the year. FOAL is doing several of the same things.

Thank you to all of you who donate gently-used books to us for resale. Our book wrangler, Aaron, now has several volunteer helpers making that task more manageable. When your books are left at the library the 'wranglers' sort them for Vault resale, Amazon/EBay resale, or save them for our own book sale. Books

are moved around several times, packaged as needed, or stored. These efforts provide necessary funds for FOAL's programming needs and share reading materials with those who want them.

Our program director, Kevin, has already planned interesting speakers and entertaining musical evenings for the next few months. He has also designed flyers for the first few of those events that are posted by volunteers throughout our community. His job involves lots of pre-planning and coordinating with the high school staff to arrange outreach visits in the hopes that these free programs will be well-attended and popular. The programs often generate donations that provide necessary funds for FOAL's continuing needs as well as opportunities for evening socializing when the nights are long.

As mentioned on page one FOAL's newest office manager comes to

the organization with bookkeeping experience. She also brings enthusiastic ideas for our fiscal sustainability through more fundraising. It is our intention and hope to balance the FOAL budget this year which may be possible with more small grant funding and sponsorships.

Did you know that you could sponsor a concert or speaker by contacting FOAL and funding it? That's how the Tower Quartet were brought to the library and high school last month thanks to Chris and Tina Galfo. Our intention is to increase awareness of FOAL's needs in hopes of generating more programming funds.

Please continue to support FOAL's mission of providing a gathering place for literacy in our community. Attend, participate through volunteering and donate to keep this organization healthy.

FOAL First Grade Book Program

One of the programs that FOAL is very proud of is shared with some of the youngest members of our community. The LoWayne Kittinger First Grade Book project was begun by this energetic volunteer when our organization became a 501c3 non-profit many years ago. Each first grader at Sierra Elementary, Auberry Elementary, Pine Ridge and Big Creek received a bag with library swag such as a pencil and stickers as well as a book to celebrate their year of reading as they transition to second grade.

Since 2017 this program has been funded and expanded by a generous grant from Valley Iron, Inc. FOAL now visits Foothill Elementary, Pine Ridge, Big Creek and Sierra Online first grade students in spring with a bag of three books. A generous discount from Petunia's Place, the grant funding and goodies from the Fresno County Public Library have enabled FOAL to celebrate the teaching and learning of reading through our schools.

"Few things leave a deeper mark on the reader than the first book that finds its way to his heart."

– Carlos Ruiz Zafon

Anne Neal Speaker Series: David Aus and his Journey in the Arts



Musician David Aus speaking on his personal journey in the world of arts (Henson photo)

On February 21st, FOAL hosted local musician, composer, and radio host David Aus. He presented a comprehensive look at his life experiences and journey in the world of arts to attendees.

David Aus was born in Baltimore in 1965 and developed an early appreciation for music through his parents' record collection, which included Van Cliburn's performance of Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 and the Dave Brubeck Quartet. He began playing piano at the age of eight, influenced by Duke Ellington and Steely Dan. A jazz appreciation class later introduced him to musicians such as Coleman Hawkins, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, and Thelonious Monk, with Bill Evans and McCoy Tyner having the most significant impact on his music.

Aus earned a degree in economics from the University of Texas and spent five years in Washington, D.C., working for an economics consulting firm. During this period, he had limited access to a piano but remained engaged with the arts, serving as a docent at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Relocating to California, Aus spent ten years in San Francisco, where he resumed playing piano regularly and began performing jazz gigs. He later moved to Fresno, where he waited tables at Parma while participating in jazz jam sessions at Tokyo Gardens. He also became a volunteer

host for KFSR and worked in marketing for Pelco until an economic downturn led him to focus entirely on music. He played with the Benjamin Boone Quartet, contributing to *The Poetry of Jazz* project featuring poet Phil Levine. Over time, he began teaching piano and hosting programs on KVPR, including *Clearly Classical* and *Sunday Night Jazz*.

Currently, Aus is the host of *Sunday Night Jazz* and other KVPR programming, a performer with multiple groups, a piano teacher, and the musical director for the monthly Jazz Mass at Bethel Lutheran Church.

According to attendee Chris Henson, the audience, while small, was appreciative and attentive to this fascinating guest's life story.

Next Speaker: Celebrating the Drum with John Martin

Join us for the next edition of the Anne Neal Speaker Series on Friday, March 21st, featuring John Martin.

Martin is a professional percussionist based in Fresno for over 35 years. John teaches at Fresno City College, Orange Center Elementary and Fresno State University. He is also a central figure in the musical group Cerro Negro, a Flamenco group in which John has been the percussionist and lead vocalist for 20 years and five albums.

Martin has travelled the world playing and studying throughout his travels. Specializing in Flamenco, Latin and Brazilian styles as well as Jazz and Middle Eastern music, John brings a breadth of understanding and a gift for explaining to the task of bridging cultural divides. Come experience some of the many exotic instruments from all over the world and bring your percussion-related questions to share and learn at the library.

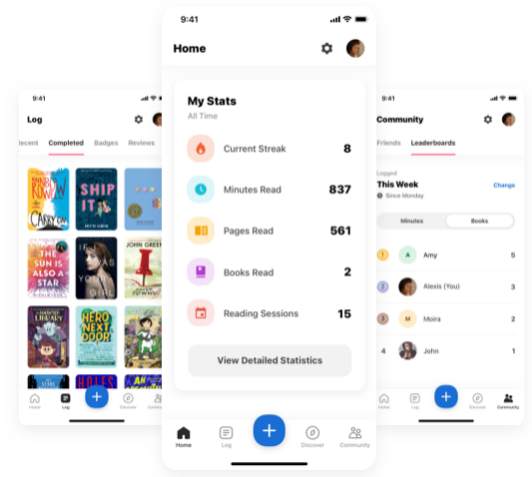
Library Link: Auberry Branch Update

A new programming session has begun at the Auberry Branch Library, and with it, a few ways that can inspire you to continue reading throughout the year.

First, we have the return of the In-N-Out Cover to Cover reading challenge. This challenge is for kids, ages 4-12. The program will run until April 12. For every five books (or 300 minutes) read, children can come to the library to receive one Achievement Award, which is valid for one free hamburger or cheeseburger. Each child can earn a maximum of three Achievement Awards. All you have to do is visit the library to sign up.

We are also into our third month of FCPL's Genre Reading Challenge. This is a year-long reading challenge that allows participants to discover new reading genres and authors. This month's genre is biography/autobiography. We encourage you to keep track of your progress on the Beanstack app. To register, visit <https://fresnolibrary.beanstack.com/reader365>.

If you are still looking for ways to challenge yourself through reading, grab a Library Bingo card at the branch the next time you are there. Auberry staff have come up with a clever and fun way to help you select your next read. Have you read a fantasy book, read a book that has a cat in it, or even a book set in the 1920s? If so, then you're already on your way to bingo! And if you need recommendations to complete your bingo, we're always more than happy to help you meet that goal!



The Beanstack App helps track and connect readers

- Submitted by Jamie Kurumaji, FCPL

FOAL's mission is to

- *Support the Auberry Branch Library as it strives to encourage literacy and lifelong learning*
- *Provide a vibrant cultural gathering place;*
- *Enhance the Library's resources and services;*
- *Increase community access to information and knowledge.*

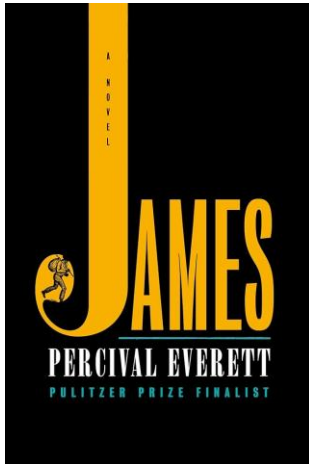
Community Shred Event on May 3rd

Back by popular demand, FOAL is hosting a shred truck to help the community dispose of those sensitive papers that you really don't want to put in the recycle bin. This is a community service effort co-sponsored by Community West Bank in Prather. We would welcome any additional sponsors or donations!

Community members are invited to bring boxes or bags of their papers, which volunteers will help offload. You can even watch the documents go into the shredder, if you like! This is a free event, but of course, donations are welcomed and appreciated.

Hint: Past experience shows that the first hour is quite busy with a line of cars, but the second hour is lighter, with a much shorter waiting time. Whenever you choose, we look forward to serving you on May 3rd!

A Friend Recommends: Book Review



James by Percival Everett (2024)

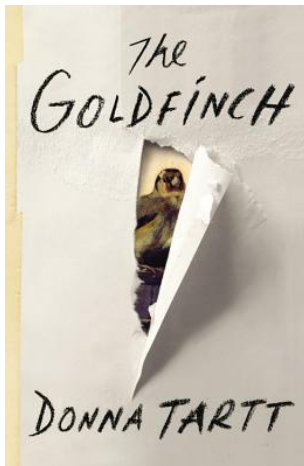
Genre: Historical Fiction

Reviewer: Anne Neal

Imagine Huckleberry Finn as told by the runaway slave Jim. This time Jim is a well-read and self-educated man, still intent on rescuing his wife and child. He has to monitor his speech when he lapses into proper English from the “slave talk” he uses with fellow slaves as well as whites. This is a picaresque novel of adventure and danger where time and again Jim has narrow escapes from villains intent on selling him back into slavery.

Not only is it a compelling river adventure story but an exploration of the meaning of slavery, freedom, friendship, and honor.

I highly recommend this book.



The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt (2013)

Genre: Fiction

Reviewer: Connie Schlaefer

I’m always late to the game in reading current books. But for anyone who is of the same ilk, I would recommend this one. Yes, it won the Pulitzer Prize in 2014, but if you missed that wave, check it out. I will also confess that I am a mostly digital reader, and that I am a big fan of Libby, the library app. I chose this book without recognizing that it was a very long one, but I am so glad I did.

This story winds its way in a young boy’s narrative through a tragic bombing, resulting in the loss of his mother, a haphazard connection with a victim, and the concealment of a famous work of art. The journey of this young man through many misadventures and continued tragedies was gripping and riveting. I read this a year ago and I think about it still. This is a classic case of storytelling at its best, where you are shocked and intrigued to find out what happens next. The connection that is built with the storyteller is the key. He is a flawed but relatable character who is trying to do his best in a crazy set of circumstances, some self-inflicted. Read this one if you want to be thinking about a book a year after you read it. In fact, here is a quote from the book that I think captures that feeling: “You can look at a picture for a week and never think of it again. You can also look at a picture for a second and think of it all your life.”

“Once you have read a book you care about, some part of it is always with you.”
- Louis L’Amour

Spring Calendar

Friday, March 21st. Anne Neal Speaker Series: John Martin on “Celebrating the Drum”. Indoors at the Auberry Library. 7:30-9:00 pm.

Friday and Saturday, March 28 and 29th. Book Sale. FOAL Office, 10 am – 4 pm daily.

Saturday, March 29th. Children’s Concert: Evo Bluestein. Indoors at the Auberry Library, 2-3 pm.

Friday, April 4th. Student Outreach: Celtic Alchemy. Sierra High School Music Room, 12:30-3:10 pm.

Friday, April 4th. Concert: Celtic Alchemy. Indoors at the Auberry Library, 7:30-9:00 pm.

Thursday, April 24th. Anne Neal Speaker Series: Jared Aldren and Curtis Lee present on the Sierra-Sequoia Burn Cooperative. Indoors at the Auberry Library, 7:30-8:30 pm.

Saturday, May 3rd. Community Shred Event. Auberry Library parking lot, 10 am – noon.

Wednesday, May 28th. Concert: Long Forgotten String Band. Indoors at the Auberry Library, 7:30-9:00 pm.

About Us

Friends of the Auberry Library (FOAL)

A registered non-profit since 2005

Jamelle Taylor, Chair

Chris Henson, Vice Chair

Anne Neal, Secretary

Connie Schlaefer, Treasurer

Beth Linder Carr

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Library Liaison

Jamie Kurumaji

Program Director

Kevin Hill

Office Manager

Cheryl Thompson

FOAL Focus Newsletter

Connie Schlaefer, Editor

The Friends of the Auberry Library would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support:

The AHS Foundation

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TWO BROTHERS
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