



# CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Friends of the Castro Valley Library

August 2020

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Kay Wetherwax

**During this challenging time**, it's good to connect with you and update you on the status of the Friends of the Castro Valley Library. First, the good news! We're still here and still supporting library activities! Our wonderful library has been closed for several months, but readers can still access books by placing them on hold and picking them up using the no contact pick-up service. Many on-line programs and services are still available, and library staff members are working hard to plan for a reopening whenever it is possible. And we continue to provide financial support for these programs.

**Our Friends of the Library BookStore** and other activities have also been on hold since March. We do not know when we will be able to again carry out the Friends' usual activities. Our August Book Sale is cancelled and the BookStore will not be able to open any time soon. During this time, we cannot to accept any book donations. Thank you for respecting the posted notices that no books should be left at the library for us.

**Our Board of Directors** continues to meet regularly via Zoom. We have discussed several options of ways we can safely continue our work during this time. We're exploring a number of ideas and hope to be able to begin some activities within the next few months. We'll certainly keep you all posted as soon as we have some specific plans.

**In the meantime**, one of the positive aspects of Shelter in Place is that we all seem to have a bit more time to read. Some of our Board members and volunteers are excited to share with you some books we've been enjoying during our Shelter in Place in this newsletter. I hope you find a few suggestions that tempt you. And remember, you can request books on line from the library and pick them up when they are available.

**Thank you for your continued support** of our activities through your membership in the Friends. Together we have made it possible for our library staff to carry out many terrific programs that benefit Castro Valley. We do not know exactly what our future will look like, but we know the Friends will still be here working together to once again provide on-going support to the library and our community.

**Stay well** and keep reading!

To contact the Friends of the CV Library while the BookStore is closed, email us at [Friends.CVL@gmail.com](mailto:Friends.CVL@gmail.com), or visit our website at [FriendsOfCVLibrary.org](http://FriendsOfCVLibrary.org).

## MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY MANAGER

By Dawn Balestreri, Branch Manager

**This past spring and summer** have been everything but normal, and we are all still struggling to manage this crisis, our mental health and the needs of our families and community. Everyone at the library has been touched by the pandemic in varying ways. We all want to get back to normal, open the branch, welcome our members back to our beautiful community library. Of course, we won't be able to open until it has been deemed safe by our public health professionals.

**Our entire staff was sent home to wait and see**, management exempt. Our Assistant Manager and I worked with Administration to create and manage teams to get staff back to work, serving our community. Online Content, Book Match, Chat, and Inventory are a handful of the teams created. In May we began providing contact-less pick-up to our members. You can call the branch directly or place holds online and we'll let you know when your items arrive, and set up an appointment for pick-up. We are adding hours all the time, and currently offer pick-up appointments Tuesday thru Saturday from 12-4:30pm. Staff is available by phone to answer your questions Tuesday thru Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm (510.667.7900).

**We were forced to cancel** so many programs, and we know how difficult some of these losses are to the community. There are lots of new online programs to enjoy. It's not the same, but we're coming up with new ideas every day. We are still offering a Summer Reading Game, and you can pick up a board and journal at the Castro Valley library during our pick-up times above. Twelve Castro Valley Reads programs were canceled. Chris Selig, Adult Librarian, and I were devastated. Castro Valley Reads is our favorite program of the year, something we work on all year long. We knew we would have to find a way to bring closure to the program and provide our members with a special event during the pandemic. Zoom to the rescue (what else?), and a small contact-less southern meal for our participants.

**We held our third annual Community Reads finale** on July 23 with a virtual event. Author Attica Locke met with over one hundred participants to discuss her book *Bluebird, Bluebird*, the story of Darren Mathews, a black Texas Ranger who is deeply ambivalent about growing up black in the Lone Star State. An eruption of long-simmering racial fault lines occurs after two racially motivated murders, and Darren must solve the crimes, saving himself in the process. A rural noir suffused with the unique music, color, and nuance of East Texas, *Bluebird, Bluebird*, is an exhilarating, and truly timely novel about the collision of race and justice in America. It was more timely than we could have ever imagined.

**Thanks to all the** Castro Valley Library staff who are always available and eager to assist with this yearly program. In addition, we need to thank: **Cindy Chadwick** our County Librarian for leading an online discussion group; **Deb Sica**, our Deputy County Librarian for leading an online discussion group; and **Chandra Lee**, one of our great patrons, who volunteered to help us lead multiple discussion groups.

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## Looking For Your Next Favorite Book? Ask Book Match!

By Chelsey Roos, Children's Librarian

Summer is always a great time to kick back and relax with a book, but this summer even more so. As we all work to stay healthy at home, reading can provide a much-needed escape. You may not be able to enjoy a summer beach read on the actual beach, but you can still travel the pages of a well-written story.

But if your shelves are looking a bit bare, library staff are here to help! The library provides a service called Book Match, which helps you find your next great read. By simply visiting the library's website, you can fill out a short questionnaire about your reading preferences. A librarian will then recommend five or six titles, tailored directly to your interests. Looking for the next great thriller to keep you up at night? We can recommend that. Love a good memoir? We'll find you one you haven't read. Our Book Match team can find great reads across all genres, for all ages, and we can customize your list to include print books, eBooks, audiobooks – whatever you prefer! Because the library currently offers a no contact pickup service, library members are able to put their preferred books on hold and make an appointment to pick them up safely.

Here are some recent recommendations our own Castro Valley librarians have been making:

Matchmaker Patty M. recommends: *Eat, Drink, and Be From Mississippi*, by Nanci Kincaid. "This book is about Southerners in CA, who are still Southern through and through. A black teenager, Arnold, who appears in their lives, brings the story together in a sweet way, with all of them becoming a family. Definitely a feel-good read, but not sappy or romancy at all."

Matchmaker Chris S. recommends: *A Study in Scarlet Women*, by Sherry Thomas. "I found this series when I was looking for an escape from the pandemic. Imagine if Sherlock Holmes was a woman...and a feminist! This series has complex mysteries, an interesting cast of characters, and the indomitable Charlotte Holmes. Start with the first book, but I think book four in the series (*The Art of Theft*) is the best!"

The library building may be closed for now, but library staff are still here to help you find books you'll love this summer.

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But most of all we need to thank the Friends of the Library. When we ask for funding for Castro Valley Reads, they never hesitate. The Friends fund nearly all our programs. Without the Friends, the Castro Valley Library would be unable to offer the range of programming we do. Thank you!

Take care of yourselves, neighbors and loved ones, and complete your Census so our communities receive the funding they deserve! We hope to see you soon at the library. We have a way to go, but we will get through this and imagine how wonderful it will be to enjoy our old lives again! Until then, we will be creating new engaging opportunities for our library community. Please feel free to reach out to the branch/staff with any ideas or questions.

## SHELTER-IN-PLACE READING LIST

Like most of you, our volunteers have been sheltering in place. Here are some of the books we've been reading.

**Sue Choquette:** *The Giver of Stars* by JoJo Moyes—based on the true story of the pack horse librarians of Kentucky. It tells the story of love and loss and strong women during hard times.

**Debbie Masin:** A selection from C.S. Lewis—*Mere Christianity* and *The Great Divorce* with meaningful content and short chapters. *The Chronicles of Narnia* were written between 1943 and 1956; many issues are as relevant as this morning's news.

**Elizabeth Rinehart:** *A Year in Provence* by Peter Mayle: Peter Mayle and his wife left dreary London and bought a 200 year old stone farmhouse. He chronicles their life from January to December in this witty, funny, laugh out loud memoir/diary.

**Stephanie Dorward:** If you miss traveling to exotic locales, I recommend *The Widows of Malabar Hill* by Sujata Massey. Set in Bombay and Calcutta in the period 1917-21, the novel provides rich descriptions of daily life and probes the differences based on sex, religion, and economic class. This is the first of the *Perveen Mistry* books.

**Kay Wetherwax:** I especially liked *The Other Bennett Sister* by Janice Hadlow. This recent novel tells the story of Mary Bennett, the middle sister from the family of *Pride and Prejudice*. I also enjoyed *Mastering the Art of French Eating*, a memoir by Ann Mah, telling about a year she lived on her own in Paris while her diplomat husband was away on an assignment in Iraq.

**Joan King:** If you like the type of historical fiction that makes you want to grab a map and google a few events, you might enjoy *New York* by Edward Rutherford and *A Long Petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende. *New York* is the history of the city from Indigenous fishing village through the 9/11 attacks. *A Long Petal of the Sea* starts in the 1930's in Spain, moving to current day Chile.

**Barbara Kissling:** *The Secrets We Kept* by Lara Prescott. It's always an adventure when I read an author's debut novel and this one turned out to be very pleasurable. It's a refreshing historical novel about a little-known chapter of literary history, that of the details behind the publishing of *Doctor Zhivago*. Look forward to her next venture!

**Carol Lyke:** *The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Upending Who We Are* by Libby Copeland, which is a thoroughly researched and comprehensive new release about the development of home DNA test kits and how the results may positively or negatively affect those using them. Also *The Wild Muir, Twenty-two of John Muir's Greatest Adventures*, is a compendium of some of Muir's escapades in the West. Favorites are "The Tree Ride" and "Stickeen."

**Elizabeth McCune:** *The Book of Lost Friends* by Lisa Wingate. This novel follows dual timelines of 3 young women on a journey to search for family amid reconstruction of the postwar South in 1875 and a modern day teacher in 1987. The actual "lost friends" ads appeared in Southern newspapers after the Civil War as newly-freed slaves desperately tried to find loved ones who had been sold away. Copies of the actual ads appear between chapters, and they are a heartbreaking reminder of our dark past.

**Ginger Russell:** *The Keeper of Lost Things* by Ruth Hogan (2017) is the delightful story of a man who spent his life collecting items that were dropped or left behind. When he dies, he leaves his home and all the things to his assistant, who is then tasked with trying to return them. The cast of characters is absolutely wonderful!