



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Friends of the Castro Valley Library
May 2026

THE NEXT BOOK SALE IS JULY 31-AUGUST 2



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Scott Morgan

Happy Spring, Friends! By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have had another one of our large book sales from April 10th to 12th. I hope you were able to visit us and get great deals on books, DVDs, CDs, audio books, puzzles, etc. We had over 400 boxes of items to sell, and all proceeds go back into library, literacy, and community programs.

We also just concluded the 9th annual Castro Valley Reads program, which was a great success. It was the first time I participated from beginning to end. I got a lot out of reading the book, participating in a discussion group, and attending the finale with author Sally Tisdale. Death and dying can be difficult to learn and talk about, but it was heartening to see people grapple with their thoughts and feelings and engage in the discussion groups.

We had a very enjoyable experience several weeks ago when we reconvened the "Friendlies" group, which is comprised of Friends representatives from across the East Bay. Our Friends of the Castro Valley Library emeritus president Ned Lyke led this group from 2006 to 2020, but meetings were curtailed during the pandemic. Current circumstances supported re-starting the group, organized by our volunteers Kay Wetherwax and Claire Coelho. Friends groups attending spanned from Pleasant Hill to Albany to Livermore, and included Berkeley, Oakland, Hayward, and Dublin representatives. It's fascinating to share information about our similarities and differences. Hosting future meetings will rotate between the participants, with the second meeting to be held in May at the Livermore library.

Last, we have been honored to participate in a project led by a Pleasanton fourth-grader named Matvii, who was born in Ukraine, to donate 10,000 children's books to replenish damaged libraries in Ukraine. Many Friends groups and individuals contributed books (we provided 10 boxes) and the goal of 10,000 was met in late March. Now the project needs help with shipping costs. While I hope this worthy effort has been funded by the time you read this newsletter, if you want to help, search "Help Matvii Send Books to Children in Ukraine!" on [GoFundMe.com](https://www.gofundme.com).

COMING EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY!

Ongoing Events:

Homework Help Center: Monday through Wednesday 3:30 to 5 p.m. when school is in session. For primary and secondary students.

Advanced Math and Science Tutoring: Mondays from 5:30 to 7 p.m. when school is in session. High school and college level tutoring in math, physics, and chemistry.

Computer Crew: Saturdays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Young at Heart Book Club: First Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Registration required.

Page Turners Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Registration required.

Mystery Book Club: First Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. Registration required

Practice Your English: Sundays 2:00-3:00 p.m. Registration required.

Genealogy Study Group: First and third Wednesdays of the month at 10:30 a.m. (registration is not required)

Read the World Middle Grade Book Club: Second Thursdays 4:00-5:00 p.m. (registration required).

Coming Events (check the library website for a complete list and description of events):

May 2 1:00-3:00 p.m. Android Phones, the Basics (reg. req.)

May 6 10:30-11:30 a.m. Signing and Music Storytime (ongoing)

May 7 10:30-11:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime (ongoing)

May 7 4:00-5:30 p.m. Youth Sewing Workshop (reg. req.)

May 10 2:00-4:00 p.m. Finding Your Chinese Roots

May 16 1:00-3:00 p.m. Android Phones 201 (reg. req.)

May 17 1:30-4:00 p.m. Film Screening *Kintsukuroi*—also Loyal Americans lobby exhibit from May 17 to May 24.

Events are subject to update or change. Some events require advance registration. Please check the library website for the latest information or registration requirements.

Upcoming Holidays:

The library will be closed on the following days:

May 25th for Memorial Day

July 4th for Independence Day

MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY MANAGER

By Dawn Balestreri, Branch Manager

Our 9th annual Castro Valley Reads is officially over. Our theme this year, Death and Dying, is always an important topic that impacts every one of us. We had a well-attended finale/interview with the author, Sallie Tisdale, in person. We are grateful to Sallie Tisdale for meeting with us, having a stimulating conversation about her book and our beliefs and fears about death and dying. We also enjoyed some lovely refreshments from local Blue Heron Catering.

The programming around Castro Valley Reads was thought provoking and relevant. We offered programs on Planning Your Digital Legacy, Writing your Family History with AI, End of Life Cleaning, and a stimulating presentation with Jessica Ferri, author of *Silent Cities: San Francisco* about the cemeteries in the SF Bay Area and beyond. We also managed to squeeze in two art classes, one where participants made memorial frames and another made mini Ofrendas. We honored those we have loved and lost and reflected on our own deaths and what it truly means to live. The Death Café was my favorite program. The concept was developed by Jon Underwood and Sue Barsky Reid in 2011, based on the "Café Mortal" ideas of Swiss sociologist Bernard Crettaz. Since its inception, more than 23,000 Death Cafes have been held in over 80 countries. Death Cafes provide a safe place to discuss death with no agenda. The sense of community was alive and well.

Our 4th annual Earth Day event with ForestR took place on Saturday, April 4th. It was a beautiful day filled with great information and demonstrations about gardening, woodworking, the environment, free fruit and seeds!

AARP was back in person to provide Tax Aide this season. The AARP provided tax assistance for over 400 participants. This is such a great example of what libraries can provide for our communities. We really appreciate our AARP volunteers!

We had princesses visit for Valentine's Day, a Lion Dance for Lunar New Year and a film screening of *The Apology*, a 2026 documentary by Mimi Chakarova investigating the 1960s destruction of Russell City, California. Our Genealogy class is ending. May 6 is the last date. Special thanks to Wayne Ainsworth for his dedication to sharing his genealogy knowledge over the years with our members.

This June we will show the film, *The Librarians*, on June 7th. Obviously near and dear to our hearts, *The Librarians* is a documentary directed by Kim A. Snyder that highlights the escalating, often hostile,

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS COMING UP!

By Leo Liang, Children's Librarian

We're excited to share some of the amazing events happening at the library! Our recent K-Pop Demon Hunter program was a huge success, drawing over 320 members. It was especially meaningful as this was our intern Willow Faust's very first program, and they did a fantastic job bringing everything together. Many attendees experienced VR for the first time and had a blast exploring the virtual world, while families loved seeing their kids so engaged in such an exciting experience. It was truly a day to remember!

We're also thrilled to announce our new Pokémon Club for kids! This program offers a welcoming and engaging space where young trainers can learn how to play the game, build their skills, trade cards, and connect with fellow Pokémon enthusiasts. Library staff are on hand to help guide beginners through the basics, while more experienced players can practice strategies and share tips with one another. Whether your child is just starting their Pokémon journey or is already a seasoned player, the club provides a fun and supportive environment that encourages learning, socializing, and creativity. It's a low-stakes setting where kids can build confidence, make new friends, and enjoy their shared love of Pokémon.

For our youngest library members, we're introducing Bilingual Music & Movement Storytime. Children and their caregivers can develop early literacy skills through music, dancing, and creative play in both English and Spanish. This program encourages language development, coordination, and a love of learning from an early age. And there's more! Our new Toddler & Me Dance Fitness classes offer toddlers and grown-ups a fun and interactive way to explore music and movement together. Little ones will build coordination and listening skills while trying out a variety of dance styles, including Latin, Ballet, Ballroom, Hip Hop, and more.

We're so grateful to all our Friends of the Library for supporting these events and helping us create a space where kids and families can learn, explore, and have fun together. We can't wait to see you at our upcoming summer events!

battle over book bans in U.S. schools and public libraries. It follows librarians on the front lines defending intellectual freedom against censorship, particularly in states like Texas and Florida.

Of course, the Friends have played a primary role in providing funding for most of the events we offer. As usual, this library wouldn't be the vibrant community gathering place without the funding of our Friends. Thank you for continuing to support their efforts.

I hope to see you at the library!

DONATIONS ALWAYS NEEDED!



The Friends of the Castro Valley Library depend on your generous donations of books, CDs, and DVDs. We are happy to receive your donations any time the Bookstore is open. If your donation is more than a few bags or cartons, we will appreciate your contacting us ahead of time to make sure we have staff available to receive it. We are happy to lend you a cart or help you bring your donation inside. Bring your donations directly to the Bookstore office door. **Please do not leave donations elsewhere in- or outside the Library.**

At this time, we are accepting donations of most types of books, DVDs, and music CDs as well as magazines that are **no more than 4 months old**. We may also accept jigsaw puzzles, board games, unused greeting cards, and stationery items. We **do not accept** sets of encyclopedias or similar books, condensed books, older textbooks, or books that are dirty, moldy, smoky, or otherwise damaged. We also **cannot accept** VHS or cassette tapes (music or audiobooks) or vinyl records. A good rule of thumb on condition: if you would purchase the item yourself, we will most likely accept it. Please feel free to call us if you have questions about acceptance of specific items.

Your donation is tax-deductible. We are happy to give you a receipt for your donation. The receipt will specify the number of cartons or bags of books or other items received (so you don't have to stand there and wait for them to be counted).

Funds received from the sale of these items pay for many library programs and amenities that would not otherwise be available.

If you have questions about donating or how the donations are used, please let us know! **Donation guidelines** are available at the Bookstore or on our website.

JOIN US! 2026 Memberships Available

Your Friends of the Castro Valley Library membership is renewable as of January 1st each year. Even if you are already a member, we still need a new application form filled out in order to verify that your information is correct. You may renew at the Friends Bookstore office inside the library, by mail, or through our website. When renewing by mail, if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope, we will mail your membership card to you; otherwise, please arrange to pick it up from the office. Please allow a couple of weeks for processing time before picking up your card.

Scan the QR code for more information. Individual memberships are only \$10, and you receive the following:

\$7 in discounts for the Friends' Bookstore. (\$14 in discounts for Family memberships.)

\$2 discount for each of our 3 book sales. (\$4 discount for Family memberships.)

Our quarterly newsletter *Circle of Friends* (e-mailed or snail mailed). The newsletter contains timely announcements, library news, book reviews, and more.

Remember that your dues support library programs that wouldn't otherwise be possible.



JUST A REMINDER— PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR REUSABLE BAGS WHEN SHOPPING AT THE BOOKSTORE OR OUR BOOK SALES. THANK YOU!

I want to join the Friends of the Castro Valley Library as a new renewing member (IMPORTANT—so that we have accurate information, PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Make tax-deductible check payable to
Friends of the Castro Valley Library
3600 Norbridge Ave.
Castro Valley CA 94546

I do do not wish to receive the newsletter and other Friends' information by e-mail

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

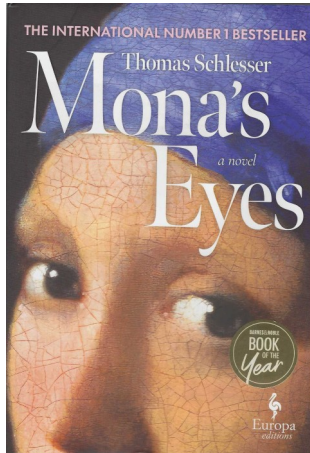
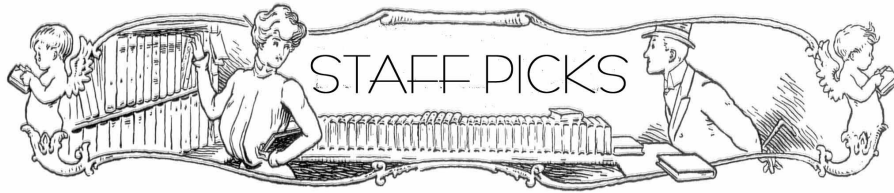
\$10 Individual \$20 Family \$5 Youth \$35 Corporate Sponsor
 \$50 Benefactor \$200 Lifetime—Individual \$300 Lifetime—Family
Membership renewals are due January 1st.

I would like to be an active Friend and help with:

Bookstore Sales events Membership Publications
 Information Technology/Website Public Relations/Advocacy

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Card Issued
By _____
Date: _____

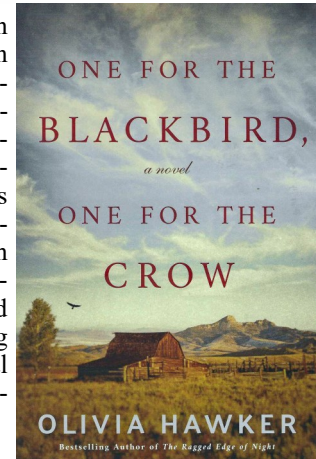


Mona's Eyes by Thomas Schlessler (2025 fiction): One day, seemingly without warning, ten-year-old Mona loses her vision. On the way to the doctor, she regains her sight, but thereafter she undergoes a plethora of medical tests and procedures, with the warning that the same thing could occur again, perhaps permanently. Once a week for the next year, her grandfather Henry takes Mona to see a work by a great artist, so that in the event her vision is permanently lost, she will have

something of import to remember. And thus begins a series of chapters, each of which describes an artwork in detail and then tells a story about the artist and what the artwork possibly means. Mona's story and that of her family continues – her father who struggles with alcoholism and lack of income, her mother who barely tolerates their situation and worries constantly about Mona's health, Henry, who desperately misses his wife Colette, whose life and death are a mystery to Mona. The greatest part of the book, however, consists of the outstanding stories of the 52 works of art. These are all well-known artists, from the Renaissance to the present-day, although the works chosen are not always their most famous. All of these works are illustrated on the book jacket so the reader can take a look (or several) at what is being described. To me, this is a book that one will read through and then go back to some of the chapters later to revisit a description or a philosophy. Fans of art history will love it, but so will fans of mystery and family drama. As to what happens with Mona's eyes, you will have to read the book to find out. (Ginger Russell)

One for the Blackbird, One for the Crow by Olivia Hawker (2019 fiction): At 479 pages, this seems like a long book, and when I first started reading it, I was not sure I would finish. However, the more I read, the more fascinating the story became. I did read the author's notes first, and I discovered that Olivia Hawker wrote about her own family, which makes the story even more interesting. It takes place in Wyoming in 1876. The Bemis and Webber families have adjacent farms that are far from the nearest town. When Ernest Bemis finds his wife Cora in a compromising position with neighbor Substance Webber, he shoots Webber and is arrested and put in jail. This leaves Cora alone with her four children. Likewise, Nettie Mae Webber is also alone with her teenage son Clyde. For ob-

vious reasons, the women want nothing to do with each other, but with winter approaching, it becomes apparent that they and their children will have to hang together or perish. I found this to be a mesmerizing and entertaining book, not only in terms of the family dynamics, but also in the detailed descriptions of the farming operations and the natural surroundings. (Ginger Russell)



Intermezzo by Sally Rooney (2024 fiction): The fourth novel by the Irish author of *Normal People* revolves around the relationship between two brothers and the women important in their lives. Ivan is the 22-year-old younger brother, introverted, awkward, and an accomplished chess player who used to win competitions. Peter is 32 years old, a lawyer, and has close relationships with both a former girlfriend and a girlfriend who is Ivan's age. The book starts with the funeral of the brothers' father and things are tense between them. They both have built-up grievances and resentments with each other. Ivan starts a relationship with a 35-year-old woman he meets when he hosts a chess exhibition in which he plays 10 opponents simultaneously. Peter harshly criticizes Ivan about having a non-



traditional relationship, even though he is in two such relationships himself. Not to provide too much of a spoiler, but through a series of crises and encounters, they generally finally get to work to clear things up between themselves as well as their partners. Rooney has a knack for weaving together characters' internal and external dialogues revolving around grief, guilt, relationships, and sibling conflicts. (Scott Morgan)

BOOK REVIEWS can be submitted by anyone. If you'd like to send us one, please email it to the Friends address on page 8 or drop off a copy at the Bookstore office. If you read something wonderful, share it with your Friends!

WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR!

Are you creative? Do you enjoy writing and putting words together? The Friends of the Castro Valley Library are looking for an editor for *Circle of Friends*. This is a quarterly newsletter that includes regular columns by Friends and Library staff, book reviews, a calendar of events, and various other articles as needed. Each issue is posted on the Friends' website, sent out by email, and about 70 copies need to be printed and sent by snail mail. The emailing is done by our membership staff, but arranging for printing and folding and labeling the mailed copies are part of the editor's scope of work. The current printing company is located in Dublin, but the provider could be changed if needed.

Tasks include sending out deadline reminders and then receiving the columns and articles (usually by email) and assembling them into the newsletter format. Software in use at this time is MS Publisher. A software change needs to occur before October, however, due to Microsoft's planned elimination of Publisher, so the new editor would need to choose a different program. Because of the number of volunteers using the Friends' office computers, it would be helpful for the newsletter editor to be able to use his/her home computer to assemble the newsletter. The time needed for each quarterly newsletter is estimated at 5 or 6 hours total once the new format has been set up.

The editor may be asked to write some of the articles, and a good command of grammar and spelling is required. This does not need to be a one-person task; a team or committee would be welcome also. If you are interested in helping us with this project, please call or email us (see page 8 for contact information) or stop by the Friends' office at the Castro Valley Library.

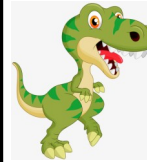
CHECK OUT OUR BOOKSTORE MONTHLY THEMES!

By Marie Blackmon

Our special theme books are found on the center of the Honesty Shelves.

May: Mother's Day, Asian-American + Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Mental Health Awareness Month.

Happy Mother's Day!



June: Dinosaur Day, International Children's Day, Flag Day, Here Comes the Bride.

July: Our Country's 250th Birthday, International Joke Day, National Ice Cream Month, Wild About Wildlife Month, National Day of Rock & Roll.



August: Homemade Pie Day, Back to School, American Family Day, National Aviation Week, Summer Sun Safety Month.

September: Labor Day, National Letter Writing Day, National Preparedness Month, National Sewing Month, National Read a Book Day, Hispanic Heritage Month.



NOW SELLING ON eBay

The Friends of the CV Library are now selling books, DVDs, and CDs on eBay. Many selected unusual, rare, and higher-value items are offered at reasonable prices. We have many listings.

Our seller name is *friendscvlibrary*. Some of the items we currently have listed are: American Girl History Mysteries set, The Astral Library, History of San Diego County, Street Art in San Francisco, Boxcar Children set, Day of Judgment, The Last Zero Fighter, Alexander and Some Other Cats, and more. You can see our entire online store by scanning this QR code, using the link <https://www.ebay.com/usr/friendscvlibrary>, or by searching one of the titles and then clicking on our name when you reach that page. More items are added every week. We are happy to have these items available for you. Please let us know if you have any questions.



THANK YOU CORNER

By Scott Morgan, President

Sheila Jones has been volunteering for the Friends since 2009! She has had many different responsibilities at the Friends in that time. Since I've known her, she's overseen handling of the great volume DVD and audio book donations. She cleans and checks them all to before they are put up for sale! Last year, she also started sharing office manager duties with Sue Choquette, responsible for supplies and many other tasks. She is committed and caring, including adoption of houseplants as they find their way into the office. Thanks for all your hard work, Sheila!



Our terrific eBay team is led by Amy Fain and has a group of package mailers in Wayne Ainsworth, Anna Koch, and Megan Kuon, but also has a couple of folks whose recent commitment deserves a special thanks. Nancy Gee has been our twice-a-week mailer for over a year, regularly providing Wednesday and Saturday duties. An avid walker, she often carries the packages from the bookstore to the post office to get in those steps. Tara Peterson started last year and has become a powerhouse lister of books on eBay, as well as helping with mailing. Thanks Nancy and Tara! We really appreciate you!



HOW TO CONTACT *CIRCLE OF FRIENDS*

If you have any comments or suggestions for regular columns or features that you would like to see in *Circle of Friends*, please let us know.

We also welcome brief news items or articles. Deadlines are typically about three weeks prior to the issue dates: the first of February, May, August, and November. Keep in mind that time-sensitive items must fit within the publication schedule.

Please call 510-733-3285 or e-mail us at Friends.CVL@gmail.com if you have any questions or want to submit an item.





Mark your calendars now—the Summer Book Sale is

JULY 31 - AUGUST 2

As always, the sale will be at the following times:

Friday night Member Preview—6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday—10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday Bag Sale—1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (\$5 per bag)

We will have our usual selection of fiction, nonfiction, and children's books, as well as audio books, CDs and DVDs, all at bargain prices. We may also have jigsaw puzzles, board games, journals, and other educational and stationery supplies.

Look for our \$2 coupon in the July 29th Castro Valley Forum (good on Saturday only).

We anticipate having over 300 cartons of books at the sale. You will be glad you came!

Prices for most books and media items are as follows:

Hardback and Large Paperback	\$1.00
Small Paperback	\$.50
Harlequin Romances	\$.25
Children's & Young Adult Books	\$.25
Comic Books	\$.50
DVDs (per disc)	\$.50
Music CDs (per disc)	\$.50
Sheet Music	\$1.00

There may be a limited selection of gift quality, antiquarian, and special price books that are priced as marked.

Volunteers will be needed for all sale days as well as for the set-up and clean-up days. Contact us at 510-733-3285 or Friends.CVL@gmail.com if you can volunteer or if you have any questions about the work or requirements. A signup sheet will be available in the Friends office approximately one month prior to the book sale date.

Planning to attend?

Please remember to bring your current Friends of the Castro Valley Library membership card in order to take advantage of your \$2.00 discount. You can join or renew at the door or purchase a membership ahead of time.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Book Sale Dates for 2026 are:

July 31—August 2

December 4—6



We may have pop-up sales of certain types of books from time to time. Follow us on Facebook to get timely notice of pop-up sales.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, PAGE 8

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday & Tuesday 12 noon to 8 p.m.
Wed. & Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday Closed
Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Please call 667-7900 or visit the Library website at www.aclibrary.org for more information.

BOOKSTORE HOURS

Monday 12 noon to 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday 12 noon to 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Thursday 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Friday Closed
Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Please call 733-3285 or e-mail Friends.CVL@gmail.com for more information.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD

Scott Morgan, President
Amy Fain, Vice President
Barbara Kissling, Recording Treasurer
Elizabeth Rinehart, Operational Treasurer
Rose Kish, Secretary
Stephanie Dorward, At-Large Director
Roger Caswell, At-Large Director
Sue Israel, At-Large Director
Joan King, At-Large Director

Board members may be contacted by calling the Friends office or emailing us as noted under the Bookstore information to the left. You may also contact us through our website or by visiting the Bookstore during normal operating hours.

MEETING SCHEDULE!!!

Board Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month, January to October, at 5:00 p.m. in the library.

Our annual meeting is held in November. The date and time will be posted in our Bookstore two weeks before the annual meeting.

Circle of Friends is published quarterly.

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Select Imaging

6398 Dougherty Road Suite 27, Dublin CA 94568
925-803-1210

Friends of the Castro Valley Library
3600 Norbridge Avenue
Castro Valley CA 94546
www.aclibrary.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

