



### Friends of LBPL Celebrates 60 Years at Annual Meeting and Luncheon

The Friends of the Library celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary founding on Saturday, May 20, at the annual meeting and literary luncheon, held this year at the Grand. The event featured author Janice Munemitsu and a look back at the founding of the Friends with special guest Renee Simon.

Author of the book **The Kindness of Color: The Story of Two Families and Mendez, et al vs. Westminster, the 1947 Desegregation of California Public Schools**, Ms. Munemitsu told the story of how two immigrant families facing the same segregation issues joined forces to battle discrimination in public schools in post-WWII Southern California – how the families became friends, and how they were helped along the way by a myriad of other like-minded people. Enlarged photos of the Mendez Historic Freedom Trail and Monument in Westminster, which opened in December of 2022, were on display.



Author Janice Munemitsu and LBPL Director Cathy De Leon were featured at our Annual Meeting.

After a brief meeting to reelect Barbara Sosa President and Lisa Moore Vice President Programs, and elect Carol Quinlan Corresponding Secretary, Director of Library Services Cathy De Leon spoke for the first time since her appointment last July. Ms. Sosa then provided a brief history of the founding of the Friends, and introduced Renee Simon, an original Friends member and founder, calling her a “trailblazing woman we all know and love,” and asking her to speak.

Mrs. Simon’s inspiring words follow:

*“I can’t believe that we are again learning that libraries, both school and public, are being badgered to rid their shelves of books some others fear we or our children might learn something they feel it’s unsafe for readers to know. Or as the prominent 20th century poet Wallace Stevens wrote:*

*“Each man resembles all other men, each woman resembles all other women, this year resembles last year. The beginning of time will no doubt resemble the end of time.”*

*So it goes with banned books and those who feel they have a right, even an obligation, to control what others read.*

*Sixty years ago John Birch Society members in Long Beach, of which there were many, were so fearful of ideas author Nikos Kazantzakis had written in his award-winning novel **The Last Temptation of Christ** that they were determined to protect all of Long Beach from reading them. The Birchers insisted to the Mayor and City Council that the city library remove all copies from its shelves. By then, city hall had already been through another banning issue — fluoride treatment of LB water, recommended by the Dental Association as an important health issue, but threatened by the banners as a tool where we might catch communism.*

*Now they were after books and ideas. In 1963 we had no organized group to counter the book banners. The City*

*Council had scheduled a public hearing in the council chambers, essentially putting our city librarian Blanche Collins on trial for her refusal to deny readers access to books she had shelved. To his remarkable credit, our city manager John Mansell sat beside his librarian, supporting her professional judgment.*

*On short notice, members of the League of Women Voters, our PTAs, and others, got organized. We met one morning in Veronica Tincher's family room to plot a course. Several attendees were familiar with communities that had established what were called Friends of the Library. We contacted one such group in Palos Verdes and met with their members and president to get a road map we could follow. A couple of local lawyers, Marvin Tincher and Harry Simon, drew up our bylaws and any other legal documents we might need. We were ready.*

*At the hearing we spoke up as representing for the first time the LB Friends. We offered well-researched testimony. By day's end, the City Council approved Blanche's judgment, she kept her job, she was honored for her courage under fire, and the library was free to keep its doors and shelves open to all. Book banning was, we thought, behind us. The Friends of the LBPL emerged as our library's true friend, as it has ever since continued to be.*

*Here's to another 60 years!"*

### Director's Message

Long Beach Public Library is bustling with programs, programs, and more programs for the public, truly fulfilling our mission of being that third place where everyone is welcome outside of work and home. April, May, and June are a very busy time for LBPL as library staff roll out programs for all ages uplifting the themes of Earth Day, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, and Pride Month.

We kicked off April with Earth Day programs at all 12 of our libraries, then quickly transitioned to celebrating the Cambodian New Year. Parks, Recreation, and Marine Director Brent Dennis read *The Lorax* aloud at El Dorado Library. Mark Twain Library hosted author Katya Cengel who wrote *Exiled: The Killing Fields of Cambodia to California and Back*. Bach Library promoted a Khmer bingo game for families and other traditional games.

In May, our libraries celebrated AAPI Heritage Month through story times, crafts, and author talks. LBPL, along with independent bookseller Bel Canto Books, hosted the second Festival of AAPI Books at the Billie

Jean King Main Library on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. The event welcomed over 35 authors and 400 guests to celebrate and honor AAPI stories and voices.

LBPL is proud to celebrate Pride Month this coming June. We got an early start on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> with our second Paw Walk with Pride event, a resource fair and doggie parade at the Bach Library and Heartwell Park. On Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm, all ages are welcome to Los Altos Library to play Pride-themed Loteria, a popular Mexican game similar to bingo. On Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm, Billie Jean King Main Library will host Dr. Jennifer Abod to discuss the life and contributions of Dr. Angela Bowen and the documentary, "The Passionate Pursuit of Angela Bowen."

More than ever, the public library is about more than just books. Thanks to the support of our generous Friends, we're able to deliver wonderful, community-focused programs and offer much needed opportunities for enrichment and connection.

*Cathy De Leon, Director of LBPL*

### President's Message

Dear Friends,

Have you read **To Kill a Mockingbird**? How about **The Bluest Eye**? Or the **Captain Underpants** series? Good for you! You are a 'banned books' reader!

Unfortunately, the Banned Books movement has gained increased traction in the United States over the last few years. According to the American Library Association (ALA) "library staff in every state are facing an unprecedented number of attempts to ban books. ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom documented 1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022, the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling data about censorship in libraries more than 20 years ago. The unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022 nearly doubles the 729 book challenges reported in 2021."

Preventing censorship of the library is one of the primary missions of the Friends of the Library. The book that started it all for us, **The Last Temptation of Christ** by Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis, was challenged by a city council member egged on by an Arcadia resident affiliated with the John Birch Society. The Friends

organization was formed 60 years ago to support City Librarian Blanche Collins as she stood up against the attempt to censor the library's book choices.

We are lucky to live in a diverse and tolerant community that believes in "Let Freedom Read". That is the theme for this year's Banned Books Week, scheduled for October 1-7, when we will celebrate the freedom to read and prevent efforts to ban access to books. The Friends will host events during that week to highlight the most challenged books, and encourage readers to get involved with the movement. I know I am preaching to the choir – if you believed in censorship, you would not be a dues-paying Friends member. Personally, the lists of challenged titles never cease to amaze me; I mean, **The Great Gatsby? The Glass Castle?** I would never have expected to see those titles on a banned book list – but they're there.

If you are interested in joining us for Banned Books events, please feel free to contact us. You can visit our website, [lbplfriends.org](http://lbplfriends.org), or send an email to us at [lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com). We are still in the planning stages and would appreciate the help, particularly from students and parents.

As I start my fifth year as president, I thank you all for your continued support and encouragement, particularly my Board of Directors. Have a great summer – see you at the library!

### Super Friends of FOLBPL

We would like to thank our new and renewing Super Friends since January, 2023. We appreciate your generosity and support.

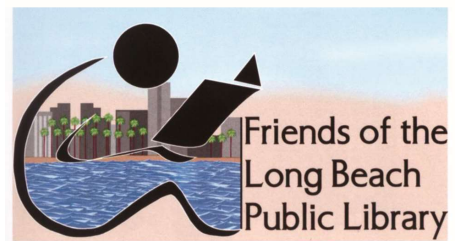
*Elizabeth Andrew  
Ann Buchanan  
Sandra Caulfield  
Trudi Curan  
Margaret & Charles Durnin  
Patrica Essington  
Annette Gordon  
Rosemary Harks  
Julia Huang  
Jan Jackson  
Willa Kay*

*Susanne Milkes  
Gloria Perry  
Sean Reilly  
Renee Simon  
Beverly Stunden  
Greg Wade  
Glenda Williams*

### Welcome New Members

We are delighted to welcome many new friends since January. Please check out our web site for more information, or contact us if you have any questions.

*Diane Anglin  
Rachel Berger  
Cirstyn Chun & Siena Phan-Chun  
Veronica Garcia Dávalos  
Julia Huang  
John Matthews  
John & Dianne McGinnis  
Liz Munzer  
Joshua Norton  
Catherine Parr  
Barbara Schwerin  
Ruth Stewart*



**President: Barbara Sosa**

**Editor: Diane Riska-Taylor**

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*The Friends of the Library newsletter is usually published three times annually for members in good standing.*

**Visit our website at [www.lbplfriends.org](http://www.lbplfriends.org)**

**Contact us at [lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com)**

**Annual Meeting & Luncheon Gallery**



*Patricia Benoit, Mary Payne, Marie Treadwell, and Mildred Whissenton*



*Renee Simon, a founding member of the Friends of LBPL, shares the story of how the organization began*



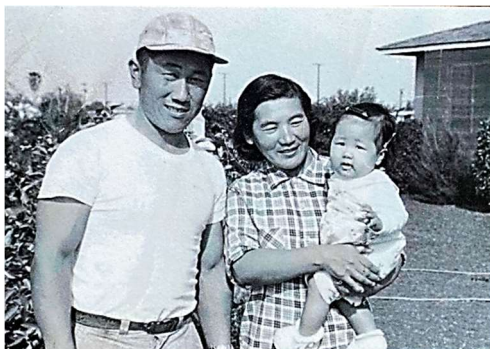
*Donna Artukovic Phyllis Sands, and Patricia Leary*



*Our Silent Auction raises funds for new books*



*Rick Alsagoff and Mary Lamo*



*Our guest author, Janice Munemitsu, and her parents on their family farm in Westminster*



*Eleanor Schmidt, and Cordelia Howard, both former Directors of LBPL, and Stella Datu*



*Leslie Wiberg, Paula Loftus, and Arlene Gale*



*Patricia Benoit, Joan Van Hooten, Mary Hinds, Cordelia Howard, Susan Redfield, and Veronica Garcia Dávalos*



*Barbara Sosa, President of Friends, and Ryan Ballard, President of LBPL Foundation*

### **Barbara Egyud Memorial Scholarship Applications**

Applications for the Barbara Egyud Memorial Scholarships, sponsored by the Friends of LBPL, are available to those who are employed by, or volunteer at, any Long Beach Public Library. Volunteers and employees beginning or continuing their college education are encouraged to apply. Printed applications are available at any branch library, or online. You may email [bescholarship@hotmail.com](mailto:bescholarship@hotmail.com) with any questions. Applications are due by midnight on July 31.

### **Second Annual Asian American Pacific Islander Festival of Books at BJK Main**

Billie Jean King Main Library hosted the second Annual AAPI Festival of Books, on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. Vendors, music performances, poets and authors graced the library's outdoor terrace and indoor spaces to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander books and culture.

The outdoor Terrace was the stage for dance performances from Millikan High School and Whitney High School students while the enthusiastic audience watched from the grounds of Lincoln Park. On the terrace, library patrons browsed books available from Long Beach's Bel Canto Books, Kubo LB, Native Sol, Bitty Bao, and Books and Bao. Young adult and teen authors were featured at writing workshops and panel discussions.



*Whitney High School dancers at the AAPI Celebration on the BJK Terrace*



*Millikan High School musicians at the AAPI Festival*



*Bamboo dancers from Millikan High School*

Inside the library, poetry readings took place in the Miller Room; meeting rooms hosted adult author presentations; and the Story Theater hosted children's reading groups.

Along with other Long Beach organizations, the Friends of the Library sponsored the event for the second year.



*Miller Room Celebrates AAPI Poets at BKJ Main*

## Memorial Books

You may honor friends and family with Memorial Books donated in their name and selected by the library staff. Since last newsletter, there have been many donations for Bay Shore branch to receive children's books in memory of Vicki Shoop. Donors through April are: Nancy Long, Marjean Dubrock, Bill and Agnes Davis, Jenny Uyboco, Carole Wizezorek, and Kathlene Miglin. Richard and Kathie Jo Schwartz donated in memory of Samuel Joseph Luti.

## National Banned Book Week and Freedom to Read October 1-7, 2023

The Friends are organizing several events to call attention to the issue of censorship. The increase in the banning of books doubled in 2022 with 1,269 attempts (source: the American Library Association).

From Pen America, April 20, 2023: "Again, and again, the movement to ban books is driven by a vocal minority demanding censorship. At the same time, a 2022 poll found that over 70% of parents oppose book banning. Yet the bans continue. Many public-school districts find themselves in a bind. They face threats and political pressure, along with parental fears and anxieties surrounding the books on their school shelves. School Boards, administrators, teachers, and librarians are told in some cases to "err on the side of caution" in the books they make available. Too often, they do just that.

"These efforts to chill speech are part of the ongoing nationwide '[Ed Scare](#)' — a campaign to foment anxiety and anger with the goal of suppressing free expression in public education. As book bans escalate, coupled with the [proliferation of legislative efforts to restrict teaching](#) about topics such as race, gender, American history, and LGBTQ+ identities, the freedom to read, learn, and think continues to be undermined for students."

We welcome you to help us plan and/or attend any or all these events on our calendar at this time.

- Fourth Friday on Fourth Street, Sept. 22
- Sunday, Oct.1 (location to be determined, but possibly in front of Chase bank on 2nd)
- First Fridays in Bixby Knolls, Oct. 6
- Wrap-up event, Bixby Park, Saturday, Oct. 7

We are looking at sharing information, having an open mic, music, and art activities related to book banning. Because we are still in the planning stage, we cannot yet give you exact times or activities. If you are interested, please join us to help plan. We would love to have you! And we need you.

For information, or to get involved in the planning or to participate this fall, please contact Ellen Butler, [LNBLBC@gmail.com](mailto:LNBLBC@gmail.com) or text/call 562.396.2251.

For more information on this topic, visit <https://bannedbookweek.org> or

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks>

## Essay Contest is Here: "Find Your Voice"

Once again, The Long Beach Friends of the Library will sponsor its annual essay contest to coincide with the library's Summer Reading Program. "Find Your Voice" is this year's reading program theme. The essay topic will be "What is Your Favorite Book About Growing Up?"

The contest is open to students 6-18 years of age. It begins with the Summer Reading Program kickoff on Saturday, June 10, 2023 and ends Saturday August 5.

Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place in four different age categories. Fliers will be available at all Long Beach libraries by June 10, 2023.

An awards ceremony will honor winners on Saturday August 26, 2023 at 10:30 am at the Mark Twain Library.

So summon all the young ones you know and tell them this is an opportunity to find their voices, show off their writing skills, and perhaps win a prize.

## Haiku Leaf

Your newsletter editor welcomes occasional submissions of book-related haiku for consideration. Please feel free to email your **original** haiku to me at [Folbpl.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:Folbpl.newsletter@gmail.com) For information on writing haiku, please visit: [www.Thehaikufoundation.org](http://www.Thehaikufoundation.org)

*library shelves---  
my story  
is missing*

-Carrie Wujek

*imagine  
no libraries...  
now...choose your book*

-Terra Macdonald

*resonant haiga  
on the pages  
and between them*

-Tammy Mader

## National Library Workers' Day, April 25

The Friends of LBPL celebrated National Library Workers' Day on April 25 by delivering fruit, cookies, scones, muffins, and other treats to our wonderful library staffs at each of the branches and BJK Main. We appreciate everything they do for our community every day of the year. Long Beach is very fortunate to have our exceptional library system, and each one of these professionals make this happen. Thank you.



*Treats for BJK Main staff*



*Los Altos staff are always fun to visit!*

Friends of the Long Beach Public Library  
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Our annual membership year is from June 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023. Have you renewed your membership? *The date above your name on your mailing label shows when your membership expires.*

Your membership is important. Your contributions enable the Friends to purchase books and support other library programs and activities. As a member of the Friends, you show your concern for maintaining the resources and services of the Long Beach Public Library. You will be informed of the vital issues that affect the Library. We welcome contributions of any amount: both dues and contributions are tax deductible. A book will be donated to the library in the name of each Super Friend. Thank you for your support.

Please use this form for your renewal or give it to an acquaintance who might wish to join. Thank you for joining the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library. Or visit our new web site at [www.lbplfriends.org](http://www.lbplfriends.org)

- New Member or .....  Renewal
- Senior Membership ..... \$10                       Student Membership.....\$15
- Individual Membership..... \$20                       Family Membership.....\$25
- Super Friend ..... \$100 or more                       Patron Membership.....\$75
- Business Membership ..... \$200 or more                       Lifetime Membership.....\$1,000 or more

I want to participate in the following way:

- Serve on the Friends of the Library Board of Directors
- Volunteer in the Book Store

Name.....Address.....  
Zip.....Phone.....Email.....

Please join online using a credit card at [www.lbplfriends.org](http://www.lbplfriends.org) or by mail: make checks payable to the *Friends of the Long Beach Public Library*, and mail to: Friends of the Long Beach Public Library, 200 Broadway, Long Beach, CA 90802-4433. Either way, our membership card will be mailed to you.