



Friends of the Long Beach Public Library Newsletter

Spring 2025

Friends Annual Meeting and Literary Luncheon

Community activist Justin Rudd and photo-journalist Cristina Salvador-Klenz were the featured speakers on Saturday, May 17, at the Friends Annual Meeting and Literary Luncheon, held at the Grand.

About 60 members sat down to a luncheon of lemon rosemary chicken or roasted butternut squash. Special guests included Director of Library Services Cathy De Leon, Manager of Branch Services Cynthia Bautista, and new BJK Main Librarian Jessica Framson.

Friends President Barbara Sosa welcomed the members and conducted a brief meeting to elect a slate of officers recommended by the Friends Board. Unanimously re-elected to a two-year term expiring in 2027 was President Barbara Sosa, Program Vice-President Lisa Moore, Corresponding Secretary Carol Quinlan, and Director of the Blanche Collins Forum Jess Baker-Shimabukuro.

Justin Rudd spoke about growing up in Alabama and how he found a home in Southern California. He came to the luncheon straight from the beach clean-up that he and his team of volunteers perform monthly. He shared the history of his efforts to create our now-famous *Rosie's Dog*

Beach, named after his first bulldog. He also told us how he uses the library's online Libby program to access books; he just finished his 430th book since COVID began!

Photojournalist Cristina Salvador-Klenz shared breath-taking photos from her latest projects – *Intersections in Time: Photos from My Car, Long Beach, California*, and a sequel to her international award-winning book, *Hidden: Life with California's Roma Families*. She answered questions and provided the audience with her insight to a very insular people.



Speaker Cristina Salvador-Klenz shares photos she takes from her car as she drives to and from work in Long Beach.

More Scenes from our Annual Meeting and Literary Luncheon



Director's Report

As the library continues its mission to reflect, serve, and celebrate our diverse community, this spring has been a vibrant season of cultural learning and connection—thanks in large part to your support as Friends of the Library.

In May, we proudly honored Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month with a full slate of events and resources.

Highlights included:

- * A Kickoff Event featuring Cambodian dance troupe Modern Aspara and the film screening of the Tribeca Film Festival, award winning documentary, *New Wave*, about how a young woman's rebellious youth led to her learning about her family's Vietnamese refugee experience.
- * Author Talks featuring AAPI writers sharing their stories and creative journeys.
- * A curated display of books, films, and digital collections showcasing AAPI voices in literature, history, and contemporary thought.
- * The launch of the Filipino American Heritage Collection at the Bret Harte Library.

These programs drew hundreds of participants and sparked important conversations about identity, resilience, and representation.

Now, as June begins, we're kicking off Pride Month with a celebration of LGBTQ+ history, creativity, and advocacy and also the annual Summer Reading Program (SRP). This year's theme for SRP is "Level Up at Your Library."

We are proud of the library's role as a welcoming space where every story matters. Your ongoing support as Friends help make these programs possible!

Cathy De Leon, Director
Library, Arts, and Culture

President's Message

Aren't we lucky to live in Long Beach? Especially at this time of year, I love the cool mornings and the warm afternoons and evenings. My neighbor and I joke that we're "living the life!"

And I especially love our libraries in the summer. They are always cool and quiet; my first experience was at Alamitos when I was 10 years old. I loved the old linoleum floors and cool respite from the outside heat. I signed up for the Summer Reading Program – that year, you had a game piece that moved on a road with every book you read. I was so proud when I got to the end of the road and earned my prize!

A few years ago, the Friends decided to partner with LBPL's Summer Reading Program (SRP) for our annual essay contest. We choose an essay 'prompt' that is reflective of the theme, and the contest kicks-off the same day. This year's program kicks-off on Saturday, June 14th, and the theme is "Level Up at Your Library!" A special program at BJK Main Library will feature the Alley Cats, a Doo-Wop group that blends their musical performances with comedy, and family crafts.

(By the way....that same day at BJK Main, the Friends will have our BIG BOOK SALE! Come see all the gently-used books and media (DVDs, CDs and more) for sale at rock-bottom prices!)

This year's essay contest prompt/question is "How has the library helped you grow?" Library patrons ages 5-18 may submit entries, either on paper to one of the neighborhood branches, or online to the lbfriendsessaycontest@gmail.com. The deadline for entries is August 9th, and the awards ceremony will be held at Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library on Saturday, August 23, at 10:30 am. Flyers with complete details are available at all branches.

The essay contest is one of my favorite annual events. We receive over 100 entries, and I love reading them all. The younger patrons sometimes

include pictures with their essays, and the older patrons are always thoughtful and inspiring. It is hard to choose the winners in each age group – the judges (volunteer members of the Friends Board) do not always agree. And we have seen repeat winners as they grow out of one age category into the next, and lots of brothers and sisters submit entries.

Please encourage your children, teenagers and grandchildren to submit an essay this summer. They could win a gift card to Barnes & Noble and receive an award certificate at our ceremony in front of their family and friends. It's another reason to visit our libraries this summer – and aren't we lucky?!

Have a question about the Friends or want to volunteer for one of our outreach activities? Please feel free to contact me at lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com. And visit our website at lbplfriends.org

New Board Members Bring Fresh Ideas and Expertise to the Friends Team

The Board of the Friends of Long Beach Public Library are delighted to welcome two new energetic members to our group of volunteers: Samantha Aviles and Jess Baker.

Samantha, a self-described dog and plant mom, grew up in a family of readers. Her first public library was in Nyack, New York, and she credits her brother, Tony, for her early love of reading. Her grandmother, Velma Stewart, helped start the Tappan Free Library in Tappan, NY. Her mother, Susan Moon, read to her and her siblings a lot and took them to do crafts at their local library. Her favorite books growing up were: *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *The Bobbsey Twins*, *The Magical Bicycle*, and *The Boxcar Children*.

The first group she joined when she moved to Long Beach was a book club! Her most recent favorite books are: *The Water Dancer* by Ta Nehisi Coats, *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles, *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, and *Hidden Potential* by Adam Grant.



Samantha Aviles

Samantha's day job is *Director of Human Resources* at Burlington Stores. She is the President of the Professional Women Toastmasters of LA and a member of both The Junior League of Long Beach and The Assistance League of Long Beach. She loves the beach, food, crafting, and playing American Mahjong.

Jess grew up between Okinawa (she personally doesn't call it part of Japan due to colonization, but usually refers to it as south of Japan) and Southern California. The first libraries she had access to were various libraries within American military bases and the Uruma Municipal Central Library in Uruma, Okinawa. The former were nice reprieves, because kids weren't allowed to leave the military base without an ID, and it got pretty boring when you're a kid. The latter was a library to which her mother took her and her brother often. That library's collection is mostly in Japanese, which her mom mainly speaks and reads. She and her brother weren't fluent, but they always had a lot of fun in the kid's section looking through books or manga. She has fond memories sitting at the tiny tables with the light refracting through the library's

stained glass windows. The library helped her feel connected to her Okinawan culture because the library displayed materials related to it, particularly around certain cultural holidays such as Shimi or Obon.

When Jess was a teenager, she identified as part of the LGBTQ+, or as an adult working with LGBTQ+ youth. Libraries serve as vital safe spaces within communities that might otherwise be hostile towards the LGBTQ+ community. After doing LGBTQ+ community-based serving work for several years, she now works at a LA County Library. She understands how vital libraries are to its local community---it is by far one of the few free spaces and resources that aims to create equitable access to information and services.



Jess Baker- Shimabukuro

This led her to become part of the Friends of the LBPL as the Blanche Collins Director. She believes that groups like the Friends are beautiful as a grassroots effort consisting of people who love libraries and ensure that libraries can continue their important work.

Jess loves to read, sew, play video games, watch movies, and take long walks at cemeteries throughout Southern California. Her favorite is Hollywood Forever Cemetery. She and her husband have also trained their two cats to walk on leashes!

Both Samantha and Jess have brought so much energy and many new ideas to the Friends Board, and we are fortunate to have them with us. They recognize that grassroots efforts like the Friends make consistent, real changes via advocacy and fundraising work. As Jess Baker says, "The more people who join, the more collective power we can have to continue advocating for our libraries."

Use This QR Code → Friends Website

Have you visited our new website? We can still be found at lbplfriends.org, but now we have a fresh look and feel. It's even easier to purchase or renew a membership using the QR code below. Keep an eye out for more features and functions to come this year!



President: Barbara Sosa

Editor: Diane Riska-Taylor

Contributors: Samantha Aviles, Jess Baker-Shimabukuro, Ellen Butler, Jan Jackson, Caroline Martin, Lisa Moore, Barbara Sosa, and Diane Riska-Taylor

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

Visit our website at www.lbplfriends.org

Contact us at lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com

Welcome New Library Friends

Welcome to our new Friends of the Library! If you have any questions, please email us:

lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com

Jessica Framson

Livia Griffin

Evelyn Scollick

New and Renewing Super Friends

We would like to thank our new and renewing Super Friends since March 2025. We appreciate your generosity and support.

Linda Bagwell

Wendy Catron

Leslie Deck

Margaret & Charles

Durnin

Annette Gordon

JoAnn Kuroda

Camille Lenhert

Gloria Perry

Patricia Essington

Patrons Take Long Beach Transit to Libraries

The first thing Talia, a member of the Friends of LBPL, did when she moved to Long Beach was join a book club. Books and libraries have always been an important part of her life, and she has been bringing her first-grade son, Logan, to libraries all over Long Beach since he was an infant. I met up with Talia and Logan at the Alamitos Neighborhood Library to highlight an important part of visiting the library: they visit all the branches to participate in different programs by Long Beach Transit.

Logan, now in first grade, still remembers Toddler-Time at BJK Main, and he enjoys learning about different cultures as they attend cultural programs offered at different branches. He attends science events, Lego clubs, and other activities, and he likes going somewhere different each time. When asked which library was his favorite, he answered, "My

school library." As a retired school librarian, his answer underscored to me the importance of libraries in the every-day lives of children. Long Beach bus routes are bridges to other libraries and cultural events, from school to the wider community.

Talia finds taking the bus with Logan to be an important time for them together. She can focus on him rather than have to concentrate on traffic and parking. They can talk about what they see on their way. Logan has her undivided attention, unlike in the car.



Talia and Logan at Alamitos Branch

Logan likes the fact that there are plenty of seats and interesting things to read, such as signs about safety and proper behavior on the bus. He says the drivers are polite and keep them safe, particularly if a person does not behave properly. Talia echoes this and adds that the busses are clean and on time. Yes, on time.

I agree with them on all of this, which is why I encourage other library-users to consider taking

the bus to enjoy all of our very special libraries in Long Beach. Our transit system also leads to CSULB from every part of Long Beach where other cultural events are available.

Talia volunteers for some of the programs, and over the years she has come to know many of the staff members at various branches. She says that the Long Beach Library system, along with its multicultural community, are reasons why she wants to remain in Long Beach.

Long Beach Transit helps all of us stay connected across our city...and avoid traffic and parking issues at the same time. How pleasant is that?

For detailed bus routes and schedules, visit <https://ridelbt.com> There you will also find information on fares, service alerts, maps and more. You might also use the bus to visit branches outside your neighborhood.

Freedom to Read and Banned Book Celebrations October 5-11, 2025

Protecting the Freedom to Read is one of the many important missions of Friends of LBPL. Freedom to Read and Banned Book Week will be held during the week of October 5-11 throughout the country., as well as here in Long Beach. If you would like to be involved in planning this year's events, please contact Committee Chair Ellen Butler at lnblbc@gmail.com or by text or phone at 562-396-2251. For details about our local events, check our website as we are closer to the October dates.

www.lbplfriends.org or click on our QR code to find our website.

For more information about this movement nationwide, visit the following:

<http://pen.org/banned-books-week>

<https://www.ala.org>

Board Members Attend Conference Supporting Library Friends and Foundations

Since 2013, *Serving with a Purpose* has hosted an annual conference to provide training, resources, and inspiration to the board members of Friends of the Library, Foundations and Library Trustees and Commissioners. Each year, a few members of our Board attend to learn new strategies and share ideas on how to better serve our library communities. The key element about this conference is that it is a volunteer and grassroots effort, begun by members of library staff from various libraries in Southern California.

In addition to speakers and a delicious lunch, breakout sessions on a wide array of topics allow attendees to network with others over issues of interest. Two of our attendees served as co-moderators of a session on *Public Relations, Social Media, and Newsletters*. Connecting with library advocates from around the state is one of the most valued outcomes of attending.



From left: Diane Riska-Taylor, Samantha Aviles, Lisa Moore, and Carol Quinlin at this year's convention in Ontario, CA.

Each year, members of our Friends board eagerly volunteer to attend. For more information on *Serving with a Purpose* visit

<https://www.servingwithapurposeca.org/>

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Our annual membership year is from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. 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

- 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 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, PO Box 15733, Long Beach, CA, 90815-0733. Either way, our membership card will be mailed to you.