

**Friends of the Long Beach Public Library Newsletter** **Spring 2026**

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Thank you Supporters!

# Author Lindsay Ellis to Speak via the Friends' Blanche Collins Forum

Join us Saturday, March 14, for our Blanche Collins Forum's Author Talk with New York Times Bestselling Author and Video Essayist, Lindsay Ellis. Ellis creates online content about media, narrative, literature, and film theory. Her debut novel, *Axiom's End*, was an instant New York Times bestseller. Her video essays can be found on Nebula and Youtube. There will also be a book sale and signing.

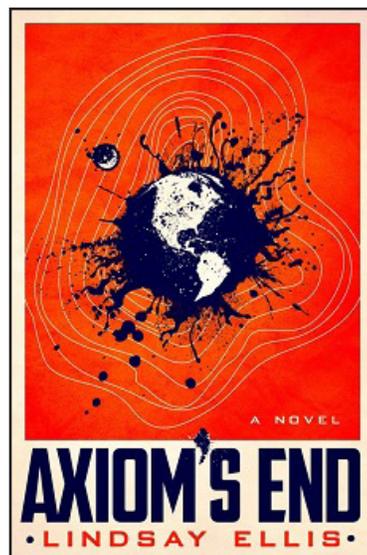
Reserve your seat for this free event by clicking on the QR code below. Looking forward to seeing you there!

**Saturday, March 14**  
**3 - 4:30 pm**

**Billie Jean King Library**  
**200 W Broadway**



This event is underwritten by the Blanche Collins Forum, a special fund of the Friends of the Library that honors the Long Beach city librarian who successfully battled censorship in 1962.



**Check our New, Refreshed Website**  
**lbplfriends.org**

- Join the Friends
- Learn about Programming
- Find out about Events
- Read Past Newsletters

## President's Message



Change – it's hard, isn't it? And yet it's constant in our lives.

The Friends Board of Directors is going through a period of change that I think will result in more successes for the future of the organization. Instead of being afraid of change, we are embracing it wholeheartedly!

First – did you see our new logo? Isn't it great? Our 'city reader' logo had served us well for over 25 years, and it will still be visible for a while, but it was time for a refresh. I love this new logo of the Long Beach skyline rising from the pages of a book; to me, it represents how accessible our Library is to all city residents. It won't be long before you start to see our new logo on our website, our brochures, and even some new Friends merchandise like tote bags and T-shirts.

Our Board of Directors is changing too. Last spring we introduced you to Samantha Aviles and Jess Baker- Shimabukuro, two vibrant women who are directors of the Helen Fuller Cultural Carousel and the Blanche Collins Forum, respectively. This year we are happy to welcome Martha Guzman, a marketing professional and long-time Long Beach resident who is helping us develop a marketing plan to increase our membership and our visibility in the city. We are so happy to have her!

And have you noticed our newsletter looks a little different? Our new editor is Dawn Mendelson, a professional mosaic artist and teacher with experience in artistic non-profits all over Southern California. We thank Diane Riska-Taylor for her many years as newsletter editor and are happy she is remaining on the Board as chair of the Barbara Egyud Scholarship.

One more change that excites me this year. Instead of our annual meeting being held as a luncheon, this year we're going to have a cocktail party! Save the date - Thursday, May 14, 2026, at the Lakewood Country Club. More details to come, but the price will be less expensive, and live entertainment will be featured!

Change can be a good thing! Take care – see you at the Library!

## Director's Report

Dear Friends,

Congratulations on the launch of your new logo and website! The typewriter font is so appropriate to our shared mission of promoting a love of literacy and the freedom to read. The logo and rebrand really do a wonderful job of balancing tradition with an eye toward the future.



At Long Beach Public Library, we've been working on continuing to find new ways to engage our patrons. Have you heard about our new Lucky Day Collections at some of our locations? The books in the Lucky Day Collections are high-demand titles, i.e. books with lots of holds, that are just ready and waiting to be checked out by whomever walks in the door! Perusing this collection allows you to bypass those long waiting lists and serendipitously find that bestseller you've been waiting for. Lucky Day Collections are currently available at BJK Main, Alamitos, Bay Shore, El Dorado, Harte, Mark Twain, and Michelle Obama Libraries.

Another initiative we're excited about is the debut of the library's new 2026-2031 Strategic Plan! Crafted over the past year with lots of community and library staff input, our new Strategic Plan will guide our programs and services for the next five years. I want to extend a big thank you to the Friends for being an integral voice during the process. Be on the lookout via our website and social media for the plan to go live sometime in March.

--Cathy De Leon

## Friends Celebrate MLK Day 2026

The Friends of the Library were one of many vendor groups on Saturday, January 17, participating in the Martin Luther King Celebration at MLK Park. We talked to library patrons of all ages and gave away boxes of children's books, while promoting our event with Lindsay Ellis on Saturday, March 14. The park was packed and



the books were appreciated by many young readers.

*Left: President Barbara Sosa greets emeritus board member Marie Treadwell at the event. Right: Board member Diane Riska-Taylor welcomes visitors with president Barbara Sosa.*



## Save the Date. . .

**March 14** Blanche Collins Forum's Author Talk with Lindsay Ellis -- 3 -- 4:30 pm (see page 1)

**March 21** Music Theater West event in Belmont Heights (see page 7)

**April 11** Book Sale -- 10 am - 3 pm at the Billie Jean King Library (see page 5)  
**April 19 - 25** National Library Week

**May 14** Annual Meeting and Cocktail Party (details soon!)

**June 13 - August 8** Helen Fuller Cultural Carrousel sponsors the Essay Contest (details soon)  
**August 29** Award Ceremony for Essay Contest

**October 4 - 10** National Banned Books Week, multiple events in planning stages

## We Need You!

Want to Volunteer?

We are always looking for help at our events.

Contact Corrine Magdaleno at [corinnemagdaleno@yahoo.com](mailto:corinnemagdaleno@yahoo.com)

## Freedom to Read: Friends' Advocate and Educate about Banned Books

**Protecting the Freedom to Read** is one of the many important missions of the Friends of LBPL. Freedom to Read -- Banned Book Week will be held during the week of October 4-10, 2026 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](http://www.lbplfriends.org) or click on our QR code to find our website.



*Thank you to the Long Beach City Council members and Mayor Rex Richardson for recognizing Banned Books Week, with the Friends of the LBPL and the LB Library Foundation.*

For details about our local events, visit our refreshed website at [www.lbplfriends.org](http://www.lbplfriends.org) or click on the QR code below.



### Groundlings Donate Books to Friends for Third Year

The Groundlings summer camp program conducted another book drive of new and gently used books. The program is part of Being the Church collaborative ([beingthechurchlb.org](http://beingthechurchlb.org)), which is composed of four local Methodist churches. Counselors Cynthia Navarrette and Drew Wilson helped campers load about 300 books that were sold at Friends' book stores or shared via programming in our community. Thank you, Groundlings!



## Summer Essay Contest

The Helen Fuller Cultural Carousel, on behalf of the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library, was proud to host the 2025 Summer Essay Contest, inviting young writers ages 6–18 to share their creativity, insight, and love of learning. This year's contest celebrated the power of libraries to inspire imagination and open doors to new ideas. The writing prompt, "What was your favorite thing about the library?" encouraged students to reflect on their personal experiences and the meaningful role the library plays in their lives.

Participants showcased impressive talent, thoughtfulness, and originality in their responses. Winners were recognized at a special awards celebration held at the Michelle Obama Library,

highlighting the remarkable work of our local young writers. We were inspired by the heartfelt and creative entries and are grateful to everyone who helped make the contest such a success. See photo below.



*Winners of the 2025 Summer Essay Contest.*

## Don't Miss Our Big Book Sale in April!

Our Big Book Sale is coming up **Saturday, April 11**, at the Billie Jean King Library. Tables, boxes and carts will be filled with books (nearly new and gently used) - history, art, fiction, self help, poetry, science fiction, biography, travel, sports, cooking, health & exercise, classics, short stories, comics, CDs, DVDs, children's books and more. Most items priced \$1 or less. Children will receive one free book.

Parking is free next door at the City Center Garage (332 W Broadway) for 30 minutes. If you need another 30 to continue going through all the fabulous books, it's only \$2. Put it on your calendar today because you don't want to miss this!

**Saturday, April 11 • 10 am -- 3 pm**  
**Billie Jean King Library - 200 W. Broadway**







# Big Book Sale!

**Saturday, April 11 - 10am -3pm**

**Billie Jean King Main Library @200 W Broadway**  
 Free parking for 30 minutes at the Civic Center Parking Garage  
 @ 332 W Broadway





## Meet New Board Member Martha Guzman



Martha Guzman grew up in a home where books, newspapers, and magazines were always to be found. She credits her love of reading to her parents. Her mom read to her at bedtime throughout her childhood and her dad would create stories based on fairy tales that she liked.

As a child she spent a lot of time at the library and loved going through its bookshelves. Her favorite book was *Born Free: A Lioness of Two Worlds* by Joy Adamson. Although her love for books runs deep, she has always appreciated storytelling in all its forms and believes that literacy, along with access to books and education, is fundamental.

Martha studied journalism and wrote briefly for a newspaper before going on to graduate school where she received an M.A. in English literature.

She is a communications and marketing strategy consultant. Her background includes in-house roles at leading cultural institutions such as The Broad, The Music Center's Gloria Molina Grand Park, and the Museum of Latin American Art, where she led storytelling, campaign planning, and audience development.

Martha brings this perspective to the board of the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library and to her work as a member of the PBS SoCal Community Advisory Board, contributing a strategic lens shaped by 20+ years of experience working in arts and cultural organizations and ongoing partnerships with mission-driven teams.

When she is not working or volunteering, Martha enjoys traveling, visiting museums, going to concerts, and learning different languages. In addition to English, she speaks Spanish and French, and is currently learning Italian and Swedish.



For details about our local events, visit our refreshed website at [www.lbplfriends.org](http://www.lbplfriends.org) or click on QR code.

Find us on social media:  
@friendsoflbpl



**President:** Barbara Sosa

**Editor:** Dawn Mendelson

**Contributors:** Samantha Aviles, Barbara Sosa, Ellen Butler, Caroline Martin, Martha Guzman, Jess Baker-Shimabukuro, Diane Riska-Taylor.

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

## Friends Partner with Musical Theater West

The Friends will be a community partner with Musical Theater West on Saturday, March 21, for their upcoming Community Connects event: In The Belmont Heights, a free, family-friendly block party celebrating Long Beach Latinx and Chicana cultures. Inspired by MTW's spring production of *In The Heights* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, the event at MTW's home will be a lively gathering filled with music, dance, art, history, and hands-on activities for all ages. The Friends will be there handing out free children's books.

Learn more at [musical.org/community](https://musical.org/community).

**Saturday, March 21 • 2 -- 5 pm**  
**4350 E. 7th Street**

CULTURE. COMMUNITY. CONNECTION.  
A FREE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY BLOCK PARTY  
INSPIRED BY OUR UPCOMING PRODUCTION, *IN THE HEIGHTS*.

*In the Belmont Heights*

MARCH 21, 2026, 2-5PM  
4350 E. 7TH STREET  
LONG BEACH, CA

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [MUSICAL.ORG/COMMUNITY](https://musical.org/community)

## Thank You to Our Supporters!

Welcome to our New and Renewing Members!

We appreciate your generosity and support of the Friends and our local community libraries.

We are grateful for our two new **Lifetime members.**

**Liliana Roman**  
**Sharon Weissman**

### Thank new and renewing Super Friends since mid-May 2025.

Paula Bawden	Cheryl Hebestreit	Lisa Moore
Jeanne Brooks	Lorrie Hutton	Liana Morishita
Marlene Brown	Linda Mele Johnson	Timothy Mountain
Claudine Burnett	Janet & Richard Katz	Sylvia Navari
Judith Camerron	Willa Kay	Diane Riska-Taylor
Ann Cantrell	Agnes & David Knight	Phyllis Sands
Adriene Cardan	Sandy Kroll	Diane Schmitz
Sandra Caulfield	Monica Leff	Renee Simon
Deborah Chankin	Herman M Long	Sydney Simon
Jo Anne & Scott Charmack	Barbara Mais	Donna Sobel
Diedre Cox	Stephen & Julie Darling	Beverly Stunden
Patrick & Trudi Curran	Denise Mann	Marie Treadwell
Kathy DeSilva	John & Dianne McGuinnis	Pamela Tuck
Amy Essington & Ian Welke	Phyllis Metzger	Glenda Williams
Jay & Pease Glaser	Susanne Milkes	Gerald Wright
Irene Graff	Mike & Rosann Monaghan	
Jane Hansen	Liana Morishita	

### Welcome to our new Friends of the Library!

Jane Benjamin	Clarie Nelson
Colleen Bently	Cynthia Roberts
Tom Child	Tiffney Sanford
Susan Coutin	Alejandro Sanchez-Lopez
Judy Dambrosio	Brittany Scholten
Stephanie Espinoza	Kelli Stratton
Alberto Gonda	Katy Strong
Martha Guzman	Nikki Thomas
Leslie Hammond	Cecil A.H. Walters
Pam Kossek	Talia Watts
Christine Lorenzetti	Mathew Winefield
Ruth McGree	Dominique Thieu
Pauline McMahan	
Silvia Nakano	

If you have any questions, please email us at [lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:lb.libraryfriends@gmail.com)

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Long Beach, CA 90802-4433

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Have you renewed your membership? Our annual membership year is from July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027. The date above your name on your mailing label shows when your membership expires.

**Your membership is important!** Dues and contributions enable Friends to purchase books and support community library programs and activities. As a member of the Friends, you show your concern for maintaining the resources and services of our local neighborhood libraries, and you will be kept informed of vital issues that affect our libraries. Super Friends will have a book donated to the library with their name on a special bookplate. We welcome contributions of any amount. Both dues and contributions are tax deductible. Our tax ID # is 23-7006247. Thank you for your support.

To join or renew your membership go to [www.lbplfriends.org](http://www.lbplfriends.org) to use a credit card OR use this form to mail a check. 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. Feel free to share this with a friend or neighbor. Thank you!

- New member    Renewal
- |  |               |  |                 |
|--|---------------|--|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Membership     | \$10          | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership  | \$15            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership | \$20          | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership   | \$25            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Super Friend          | \$100 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron Membership   | \$75            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership   | \$200 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Membership | \$1,000 or more |

I want to participate in the following way:

- Service on Friends of the Library Board of Directors    Volunteer in the Bookstore

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_