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The Artistic Responsibility of the Library

by Ashley Simpkins

Art is associated with creativity and leisure, often considered a thing of fancy; art isn't something we typically think of as a *responsibility* for anyone. But Senior Librarian Jennelise Hafen makes a strong case for why it is the responsibility of Oceanside Public Library to promote the arts, citing our isolation and segregation from our own neighbors in the modern world. She passionately conveys that everyone in the community deserves a voice, and that the arts are the essential ingredient for creating that space: "The Library makes art accessible because there should be high-quality art for *everyone* to experience."

A real-life illustration of art bringing together the Oceanside community would be the 2015 collaborative project between writers' groups at the Library and Mira Costa College photography instructor Christina Ree and her students, called "Loose Translations," subtitled "A Public Experiment in Poetry + Photography in which 74 Artists and Writers Play a Giant Game of Telephone." Writers wrote a response to poetry they read, photographers then read the writers' responses and photographed something in response to that, and the two groups went back and forth thusly. In effect, creators of the written word interacted with visual artists they would not have worked with otherwise, and created something totally new. The whole project was then unveiled at Art Walk - not coincidentally, yet another building block for the burgeoning, responsible, art-accessible community in Oceanside. *(Continued on next page)*

News Bulletin: Oceanside City Arts Commission to Develop Master Plan

"The Oceanside Public Library oversees the City of Oceanside Arts Commission, a group of eleven commissioners whose skills range from architecture, murals, music, academia, public arts, museums and more. This experienced group has issued a Request for Proposals for a consultant to develop a Master Plan for the Arts in Oceanside. The plan will determine ways to develop the arts, cultivate funding for and more actively use the talent in Oceanside to solidify arts as an economic driver.

"The Library and the burgeoning arts scene in Oceanside go hand in hand and through the Library and the commission's work, connections are being created and collaborations strengthened."

- CJ Di Mento, Principal Librarian

Art Responsibility, continued

Walk into either Library branch, any day they are open, and you'll see photography and paintings adorning the walls. The featured work changes constantly. This has been true for years, and this ethos seems to have exploded outward from the Library and into the Oceanside community at large. You only have to cross the street from Civic Center Library on foot before you're in Artists' Alley, or drive down Coast Highway a bit to see quite a few fantastic murals.

The Library often has its own twist on these visual arts, connecting them with literary and educational programs. You may have noticed tintype photography workshops organized around the *True Grit* Big Read, or that the featured artwork during the "War Comes Home" programming was all created by veterans.

Many of the Library staff speak with pride of one the Library's biggest art projects to date: the community mural at Mission Branch Library. Library users submitted photos through social media until one was chosen, judged by Library staff. The photo (a very thoughtful submission by a local amateur photographer of the Mission San Luis Rey) was then blown up and filled in using a mixed media mosaic, much of it painted by Library users. The completed project resembles a quilt, evoking the rich tapestry of the Library-using community.

The Friends of the Library exist to support the programs of Oceanside Public Library, so we have our own part to play in the Library's promotion of the arts. From helping to finance the beautiful ocean themed mural in the Children's Storytime Room at the Civic Center Library to providing refreshments for Art Walk events, we are always there. Jennelise notes that many Friends members have often been the people that suggest

which artists' work to display!

Art Inquiry Contact Information:

CJ Di Mento: Mission Branch Library art contact

cdimento@ci.oceanside.ca.us

Jennelise Hafen: Civic Center Library art contact

jhafen@ci.oceanside.ca.us

Would you like to get involved with the arts at the Library? If you know an artist whose work should be displayed, you may contact Jennelise or CJ Di Mento - their contact information is listed on this page. Don't forget to purchase a new or renewal membership to the Friends of the Oceanside Public Library, starting at just \$10 annually, because our expenditures support these special Library programs!

Ashley Simpkins

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3861-B Mission Avenue
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Spotlight On: Cheri Noel

by Suzanne Williams

When I first joined the Friends in 2004, I had a lot of questions. The legendary Esther McCord had recruited me, and she was very patient. Working in the Mission Branch Library Bookstore, I asked “Where do we get the forms to use when patrons donate books and want to deduct them on their taxes?”

“Ask Cheri Noel for them,” Esther replied.

“Where can I find her?” I asked.

“Oh. You haven’t met her? She’s the one in the Administration Office with the big smile.”

“Okay,” I replied. So I went to the Administration Office and found Cheri with both the forms and the big smile.

“How can I get our Publicity Director’s phone number?”

“Ask Cheri Noel.”

“Just ask Cheri” was the answer to almost every question I had. It wasn’t an echo.

“What would we ever do without Cheri?” continues to be a common refrain after Friends Board meetings and after almost any situation that goes awry.

Apparently, no one has yet figured out what we would do without her, because Cheri has become more and more invaluable as a resource. She has supported both the Friends of the Library and the Library Board of Trustees for over 15 years and knows more about how we have done things than anyone, except Library Director Sherri Cosby herself. Cheri is also one of those people who can come up with a fresh perspective on complex issues and is quite adept at finding the humorous side of things.

Cheri is proudly a local product. She was born in Oceanside, moved to San Diego and graduated from Mira Mesa High School. Her family owned local Texaco gasoline stations. In 1985, she moved to Michigan and married. She has two sons and a daughter (and now has lively grandchildren!). Michigan was too cold, so she returned to Oceanside in 1997 and promises never to leave again. (We will hold you to that promise, Cheri.)

Upon her return to our fair city, Cheri began working at the Library as a volunteer in the Technical Processing Department. She has energetically worked her way up to Administrative Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator in the Library Administration Department. She is in charge of booking the Civic Center Library Community Rooms, takes care of memorial and other Library donations, bears the brunt of administrative reception duties, and generally just helps out with whatever is needed. As Volunteer Coordinator, she evaluates the volunteer needs of the Library, screens and places new volunteers, presents a sumptuous volunteer recognition event every year, manages the volunteer database, and keeps track of volunteer hours. Cheri happily relates that “I love my job and love the Friends.”

Many of us know that Cheri has a wonderful look-alike daughter, Cecelia, who is a high-ranking associate at In-N-Out. Her 25-year-old son, Kyle, now resides in California with his 18-month-old son, Dominic. Her oldest son, Bobby, 29, and his wife Maggie, have presented Cheri with two gorgeous granddaughters, Madeleine Loree Noel and Kennedy May Noel. Cheri is a *little* bit proud!

Cheri and Cecelia are ensconced in a charming home, decorated abundantly with red and white Coca Cola mementos. What many of us do not know is that Cheri won \$50,000.00 in the 90’s as a contestant in the Michigan State Lottery’s television game show.

“Another thing you don’t know about me,” explains Cheri, “is that I traveled the NASCAR race circuit for a whole summer and consequently spent most of that \$50,000.00.”

The things you learn reading the *See Gull...*



TEEN ZONE

Van Gogh used paints to portray what inspired him. Me? I like words. I invest in writing not only because I love the art of weaving

words together to tell a story, but also because, in doing so, I find myself looking more deeply for the beauty in life, and consequently finding it in more places.

Writing is a creative output and just like every other form of output, there has to be creative input first. A plant with no water or sunshine will wither and die. When I feel creatively blocked, I go looking for inspiration. This always leads me to the Library, where I read books, take walks, spend time observing and taking in the patrons, initiate good creative conversations with my friends, evaluate my daily habits, etc. I like a variety of writing styles, many that are different from mine, and reading a broad spectrum of writing genres helps me strengthen my own style. The Library is a creator's paradise, especially in instances when we need to be reminded of why we love art. I use those words, "create" and "art," in reference to writing, but they work for anything: photography, painting, dancing, singing, cooking, reading. Anything that makes you come alive. The great thing about the Library is that virtually anything that inspires you can be found within its walls.

There's no doubt that there is a wealth of things to write about—that river never runs dry. But equipping ourselves with the things we need to get to that river is another story. Move the river roadblocks—the bad habits, the distractions, the things that obscure our creative vision. I also have to remind myself that not everything I write has to be tidy or make grand conclusions or be good enough to publish. In

between writing symphonies, I'm sure Beethoven practiced a lot of scales and plunked out notes that weren't

composed on sheets or put into great works. But they were important, played heartfelt as a form of expression when he felt overwhelmed or sad or joyful and needed to get to a piano to let it all out. The symphonies couldn't exist without those sessions.

Similarly, writing has made me more aware of everything—not only the world around me, but my own feelings and judgments and opportunities for improvement as well. I think much more deeply, my thoughts often slipping into prose even when I'm not writing. Reading books at the Library is what planted my love of writing -- reading incredible things inspired me to write incredible things. Good begets good, and the Library was the reason for that two way street.

Like all art forms, there are two components of writing; the art and the technical. The latter (grammar, structure, spelling) can be intimidating. The art though—the voice, humor, and emotion of one's words—is what is most important. Sometimes, my writing isn't good. And sometimes, I love how it comes together. Regardless, I keep going—as freely and true to myself as I can be, because I do not write to be good, but to be happy. The Library has given me the tools and the space to put pen to paper, and countless pages of my storytelling and novel writing have come when I've sat within its walls, and it is for that reason that I, as an artist, will cherish it forever.

-Naomi Schnorenberg (age 16)

Membership Corner

Although the date and place of the first Friends of the Library group has not been verified, it is known that public libraries and their friends were inspired by Andrew Carnegie's generosity to communities across America. The number of public libraries in the United States grew from 637 in 1898 to 3,500 by 1919, the year that Carnegie made his last grant. Half of the new libraries were funded by Carnegie, and his philanthropy stimulated fundraising and library development by community members. "Citizens who changed laws, persuaded city and town leaders to fund operations, and raised money were in spirit, if not always in name, quintessential Friends of Libraries."

Blake Kern, Membership Committee Chair



OPL Foundation Funds TZ Refurbishing

by Suzanne Williams

The next time that you're in the Mission Branch Library, be sure to check out the awesome new furnishings in the Teen Zone. Located in the far rear corner, the Zone formerly contained furniture that had been well-used and lacked many of the technological conveniences our students have come to require.

Last Fall, the Library Foundation considered the problem, conferred with Amy Kleman, Senior Librarian for Teen Services, and began a fund-raising campaign. Teen furniture was budgeted at \$14,500. Donations came in and covered about half the required amount. The remainder of the cost was funded by our Foundation.

The teens themselves held fundraisers to support the refurbishing of their space. Ms. Kleman coordinated a teen library club with the Oceanside High librarian in organizing the teens' efforts. Charlene Williamson, President of the Oceanside Public Library Foundation, stated, "I am so pleased to see all the cooperation and support of the teens."

The result is a bright, uncluttered, and very functional space, containing four sturdy armless chairs (two with power outlets), connected by a 90 degree bench with a power dome, movable folding tables, six low stools, a large reading pillow, a power bar with USB and A/C outlets, and four high stools. Magazines and flyers are organized on stylish racks. The Zone can be arranged for large groups or for private study.

Amazingly, after all was done, the project came in under budget!

Words are inadequate to describe the full effect of this collection. The best part is seeing it being filled with happy, industrious teens.



Memorial, Honorarium and Gift Book Donations November 2016 through January 2017

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Mary McGrory: The First Queen of Journalism

Cathie and Larry Hatter

Cathie and Larry Hatter

Alma's Things Considered

Pondering the Links of The Tree of Life

*by Alma Sisco-Smith, President
Oceanside Public Library Board of Trustees*

On a quiet day this past December, I just let my body be still. My intent in being still was to prepare to write for this column. Reflections of the previous months flittered by like a cinematography sweep; a fast moving soft cloud of varied images. What an incredible year.

While these images connected to my personal experiences over the year, the variety of experiences kept bringing forth a sense of awe. In short, the totality of those images seemed to convey to me The Tree of Life.

Would this be what I would write about; such a complex entity. Recognized by many cultures as a religious symbol of eternal life, which has been sought, even in present time. Well, I certainly did not intend to expound upon theology herein, but there is more. As Wikipedia notes: The Tree of Life symbolizes our past (roots, ancestry), present (tree body and branches) and future (fruits of labor and posterity). Now I could see how my earlier reflections conveyed to me the image of The Tree of Life.

Even more, in researching it was interesting to note that The Tree of Life has, not only been symbolic in our cultures and theology, but also in the forms of art, music, movie, poems, jewelry, crafts, even tattoos. Indeed The Tree of Life seems to be a constant that will endure with us forever. Forever, did I say? Like in eternal life?

Well, let us think of eternal life as captured in the wonderful tale of A Dog's Purpose, now flying off our bookshelves, and poised to please us on the cinema screen. Every living being has a purpose; endowed with a past, present and future. We must take stock of that as we move along our branches of our trees, sometimes entwined with others in a temporary or permanent way unforeseen. We must nurture our tree and seek to help nurture others through these entwining relationships.

A poem by David Maddison captures the wonder of the Tree of Life this way:

*I think that I shall never see
A thing so awesome as the Tree
That links us all in paths of genes
Down into depths of time unseen;
Whose many branches spreading wide
House wondrous creatures of the tide,
Ocean deep and mountain tall,
Darkened cave and waterfall.
Among the branches we may find
Creatures there of every kind,
From microbe small to redwood vast,
From fungus slow to cheetah fast.
As glaciers move, strikes asteroid
A branch may vanish in the void:
At Permian's end and Tertiary's door,
The Tree was shaken to its core.
The leaves that fall are trapped in time
Beneath cold sheets of sand and lime;
But new leaves sprout as mountains rise,
Breathing life anew 'neath future skies.
On one branch the leaves burst forth:
A jointed limb of firework growth.
With inordinate fondness for splitting lines,
Armored beetles formed myriad kinds.
Wandering there among the leaves,
In awe of variants Time conceived,
We ponder the shape of branching fates,
And elusive origins of their traits.
Three billion years the Tree has grown
From replicators' first seed sown
To branches rich with progeny:
The wonder of phylogeny.*

-David Maddison

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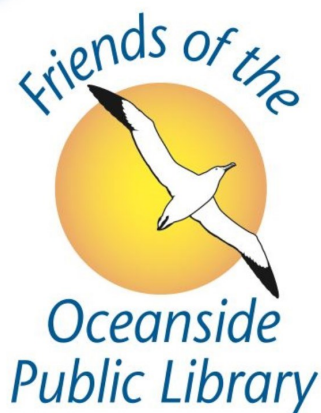
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Founded in 1971 as a non-profit organization, the mission of the Friends of the Oceanside Public Library is to support and promote the services and resources of the Oceanside Public Library through community involvement, volunteer activities, and fundraising. The organization maintains a membership of persons interested in the Library, sponsors special programs and cultural events for both children and adults, and works to enhance the Library's collection and facilities.

The See Gull Scuttlebutt: Upcoming at the Library!

- The Friends' Annual Membership Meeting will take place at in the Civic Center Library Community Rooms at 3 PM on February 14. All members and the general public are welcome. Please join us!
- Also on 2/18 at 3 PM, the Civic Center Library is proud to welcome award-winning author **Natashia Deón**, author of *Grace*. Reserve your free ticket at oceansidelibrary.eventbrite.com.
- A Living Library event, on 3/25 the Library will host **Californians: Community Conversations About Immigration**, a dialogue about the experience of local families at various points of the immigration process.
- If you're a poetry lover, you'll want to keep 4/15 open on your calendar. The Civic Center Library will host a **Poetry Festival**—details to come!
- The **BAM! Sale** (Books and Media Closeout Sale—formerly known as the **Big Book Sale**) will be held on **February 18**. Take advantage of deep discounts on books, magazines, DVDs, and so much more! All proceeds support the Oceanside Public Library. (Please consult the flyer in this issue of the *See Gull* for more information.)

PURCHASE OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!



Annual Membership:	Individual — \$10 Family — \$25	Booster — \$50 Patron — \$100	Business or Organization — \$250 Benefactor — \$500
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