



Library Reader

Ojai, California

Spring 2020

Message from the President

Judy Oberlander

It is unimaginable that our public libraries could be closed and empty, not available to anyone, not even the staff. But that is what has happened because of the current pandemic crisis. During the Great Depression when our country was at a very low point, the public libraries were there as centers of learning and hope. It is frustrating to know that at the very time our community needs the library the most, it is not able to be open.

The Ventura County Library System is working hard to keep people involved with the libraries with online story times, ebooks and other resources. But it's not the same. And with the closure of the libraries came the closing of Twice-Sold Tales and the community room behind the bookstore. What is usually a vibrant spot of activity on Ojai Avenue has gone silent.

At the end of February, just before it all started, the Board held a retreat to discuss the future and how we can best serve the library and community. We had made a substantial donation to the Ojai Library for improvements to the children's area, and our plan was to celebrate the refurbished space with a party. Instead we are now meeting via Zoom to discuss what we can do at this difficult time for our community.

OVLFF has made a contribution of \$1000.00 to the Ojai Unified School District Family Fund as the District operates supporting programs for Ojai families and children. Among other things this fund is used for, is purchasing "hot spots" for families that do not have access to the internet (to be used with the Chromebooks provided by the district for homeschooling). We have also discussed how we will coordinate the opening of Twice-Told Tales with the gradual re-opening of the libraries. Wendy Bonvechio, our bookstore manager, and Liz Beaty, volunteer coordinator, are having discussions with volunteers and the board about how to best manage this.

Some of the bookstore volunteers have erected a Little Free Library

See "President" on page 2

Your Ojai Library at Home

**By Ron Solórzano,
Regional Librarian**

By the time the governor of California issued a statewide stay home order, followed closely by Ventura County's own "Stay Well at Home" order on March 20, it was clear that the situation unfolding around the world was changing the way people interacted with one another. Library staff had already adopted new habits relating to hand washing, sanitizing surfaces, and a certain amount of social distancing, and our leadership was discussing what the development of a pandemic emergency would mean for our employees, our customers, and our communities.

The outlook was far from certain. Historically, libraries have been an important part of a community's response to an emergency, serving as a hub for information, resources, supplies, and comfort. During the Thomas Fire our libraries in the Ojai Valley, along with the other branches of the Ventura County Library, helped individuals impacted by the fire by providing access to the internet, connecting customers with disaster relief programs, and

See "Library" on page 3

“President” from page 1

on the bench outside Twice-Told Tales. In addition, volunteers have been making sure that the 34 Little Free Libraries in our valley are well stocked during this time. The yearly Memorial Day Weekend Book Sale has been cancelled, but we are prepared to hold our outdoors sale as soon as it is possible to do so. Everyone involved with the Ojai Valley Library Friends and Foundation is hopeful that we can soon be back serving the Ojai Valley. In the meantime, it is important that we all stay safe and well. ❁

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The Board welcomes anyone who is interested in its activities to the Board meetings, fourth Tuesday of each month- 6 pm in the Twice-Sold Tales meeting room. Enter through the Ojai Library.

OJAI VALLEY
LIBRARY
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pocket... powerful enough to change your life.

In a world that's information rich, your
librarian is information smart.

The Library:
Here is where people,
One frequently finds,
Lower their voices
And raise their minds.
Richard Armour

**The most powerful gift you'll ever
give your child- a library card. ❁**

“Library” continued from page 1

distributing N95 masks. People came together looking for support, and we did what was in our power to provide it.

The current emergency is different, most significantly in that coming together—at least physically—is precisely what we should not do. When the time came, our libraries shut our doors in the interest of public health. Any N95 masks we still had on hand were donated to help the medical professionals who are on the front lines of this crisis. At this point our library staff faced a critical challenge: if we were unable to fulfill our typical role as a place for the community to meet and connect, what could we do instead? How could we best support our customers in the face of this new environment?

I could not be more proud to say that our library staff, and in particular several members of the Ojai, Oak View, and Meiners Oaks library teams, stepped up almost immediately to begin implementing innovative new programming for people who were sheltering at home. Within the first full week of our closure our Children’s Services department began producing the first of our virtual Storytimes, using social media and other online resources to give families a way to interact with the youth librarians they were so familiar with. Our Web Librarian began working with

staff from across our system, many of whom were now working remotely, to update our website and provide new online services for our customers. These efforts have culminated with the launch of our newly-designed home page at www.vencolibrary.org, which features resources for folks who are seeking information, education, and entertainment from a distance.

Our closure has disrupted much of what we had planned over the last couple of months at the Ojai Library, and when we are able to open our doors again things will undoubtedly look different from before. What remains the same, however, is our commitment to serving our community in whatever way is needed and whatever way we can. Our library director is in close communication with county leadership regarding this pandemic, and we are making plans that will ensure that when we are given clearance to open again that we can do so safely and with the health of both our staff and customers in mind. In the meantime, I and all of my staff in the Ojai Valley hope that those we serve are able to stay safe and well.

For more information on the status of the Ventura County Library, or to check out our eBook collections, virtual Storytimes, Spring and Summer Reading contests, and other online resources and offerings, visit www.vencolibrary.org ❁

RETHINKING SUMMER SLIDE:

Megan Kuhfeld –

Phi Beta Kappan, June 6, 2019

In the last 10 years, new insights on summer learning loss in early elementary school have become available thanks to nationally representative data collected by the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K), which follows one set of students who started kindergarten in 1998-99 and another who started in 2010-11. Using both of the ECLS-K studies, Paul von Hippel, Joseph Workman, and Douglas Downey (2018) found near-zero levels of growth during the summers following kindergarten and 1st grade, which they note would be “better described by a phrase like ‘summer slowdown’ or ‘summer stagnation’” (pg. 337) rather than the more common “summer loss” terminology. Additionally, the researchers did not find much evidence to support prior findings that socioeconomic and racial/ethnic inequality widens during the summer.

In short, what we know about summer learning loss is more limited and contradictory than many realize, with varying findings about whether summer setback occurs at all and whether inequality widens during the summer, particularly for students in upper elementary and middle school.

[Ed. Note- if you would like a PDF copy of this article send an email to: contact@ovlff.com with the words “Summer Slide” in the subject line.]

What's Coming? Coronavirus and our Library

An Opinion Piece from the Editor

Our everyday life has been upended by the emergence of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. So many of the structures that underpinned our world and our place in it have been suspended, challenged or disappeared.

Our ability to look forward to plan has an overlay of uncertainty that increases with every new discovery about this virus and its invasion of our bodies.

Stores, transportation, health services and so much more have been frozen by the need to self-quarantine and the pervasive fear that the “invisible enemy” is waiting. Our community has, by-and-large shut down. So has the income for both families, retail outlets and our City. As we depend upon employment our City and County depend upon sales and transient taxes. No one is visiting, few are spending – our governmental organizations are in the same place as we are, running low on current and expected cash.

What happens when income flows diminish and governmental entities have to make adjustments? History shows that what are considered as “non-essential” program budgets come un-

der the bureaucratic microscope. As resources become scarce it is important to look at our library- its place and importance to our community. In Ojai it has become an integral nexus of cultural and educational programming, as well as a safe and informative haven for children, teens and adults. There is a growing possibility, in this writer's opinion, that the near future may see our libraries in a budgetary squeeze created out of the income reduction being faced by our City, County and State governments.

In every issue this Newsletter has pointed out the wonderful range of services provided by and through our local public libraries (and this edition is no exception). What is coming may be uncertain but it will provide all of us who love our library the opportunity to become more involved in charting its future.

The Library Friends mission is to support our public libraries, and it will continue to do so. As we move out of the current restrictions, take some time to think about your local library. I believe that the time is approaching in which we all may be called upon to make our voices heard, to assist our library continue to innovate and serve our community.

Jon Lambert ❁

A Little More about Little Free Libraries

There are now 34 Little Free Libraries in the Ojai Valley. Under the stewardship of OVLFF board member Kris Humphries, the Ojai Library Friends has constructed and installed 13 of these community libraries (utilizing a generous grant received from the Ojai Women's Fund), and Kris has brought them together with numbers of privately sponsored LFLs in our valley. This project has been so successful that we understand that this effort is being considered for national recognition.

“Take a book, leave a book.” Celebrate this Ojai feature- visit one or, even better, several of these LFLs. You can find a map of their locations on the OVLFF website (www.OVLFF.com) and at this link: *Little Free Libraries in the Ojai Valley - Google MyMaps* (for those who are receiving this Newsletter electronically.” ❁



New, Free On-Line Tutoring Program

The Ventura County Library is excited to announce the launch of Brainfuse – on demand, anytime, anywhere eLearning for all ages and levels. Brainfuse HelpNow offers a personalized homework help in core subjects (math, reading, writing, science and social studies). Brainfuse will be made available to all library patrons from the public computers at their local library or from any computer with internet connection starting immediately, seven days a week from 1pm to 10pm.

HelpNow is designed to be particularly helpful to school-aged students, with tools such as flashcards, learning games, customized study plans, writing help, and the opportunity for students to meet up with their friends in a virtual study room. HelpNow also includes a variety of college preparatory materials and lifelong learning resources such as a Spanish language study center and ESL assistance, as well as test preparation tools for the ACT/SAT, GED and the USCIS citizenship test.

Brainfuse is just one of a number of remote educational tools that the Library has made available, enhanced, or continues to make available during its temporary closure to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In addition to Brainfuse, the Library offers BookFlix (for remotely-accessible read alouds), CloudLibrary eBooks and eAudiobooks, and much more at vencolibrary.org/elibrary. ❁

Reading Suggestions from TST Volunteers

Laura Paine, Twice-Sold Tales Sorter & Substitute Clerk

Loved the book *'Book Woman of Troublesome Creek'* by Kim Michele Richardson, about a depression era WPA program to provide library books to remote backcountry Kentucky residents. The power of literacy and the importance of information and connection to others is made very tangible. Although the characters and their lives are fiction, the adherence to historical accuracy of the Appalachian setting and culture as well as the WPA program makes this book an informative and interesting read.

Millie Mitchell, Twice-Sold Tales Store Clerk

I'm currently about 2/3 of the way through Ron Chernow's bio of George Washington: *'Washington: A Life'*. I've been spending way too much time cooking AND eating, so waistband alterations will become necessary unless I change

my ways soon. While cleaning kitchen drawers and cupboard, I've found many long-lost items. My husband and I are discovering new neighborhoods on our daily walks. I'm missing the social interactions with customers at the bookstore and the chance to stumble onto written treasures.

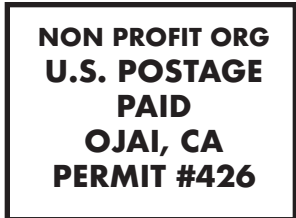
Liz Beaty, Twice-Sold Tales Volunteer Coordinator

For me, business as usual typically means that I'm constantly go-go-going; if you run into me on the street, you'll most likely hear me say that I'm on my way to/running late for one of my many commitments. So, the stay at home orders have forced me to make some much needed changes. They have helped me to pause and enjoy the little things a lot more. I've spent more time outside, gotten more organized, and have read 8 books: *I am Malala, A Tale for the Time Being, Dear Girls, How to be a Woman*, and the first 4 *Chronicles of Narnia* books (just started the 5th). I'm looking forward to maintaining some of this calm as things open back up and we return to real life. Stay healthy everyone and happy reading! ❁





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COVID-19 SURVEY BY PHI DELTA KAPPA

Released April 2, 2020

Excerpts:

Data from [the] first PDK COVID-19 survey, released on March 27th, revealed that since their schools have closed, most students have been looking to their teachers to create schedules and routines that will provide their everyday lives with structure, which they believe will help them cope with the many stresses they face. Overall, their responses suggest that the current crisis is taking a significant emotional toll. They long for a sense of normalcy, and they feel a profound sense of loss over the activities they are missing, such as prom, graduation, sports, the arts, and many other parts of school life.

Among K-12 educators, “student mental health” stood out as the most pressing area of concern, cited by 62% of all respondents

Given recent national and state-level economic forecasts, we suspect that district administrators are right to be extremely concerned about budgetary issues. While spending formulas differ somewhat from state to state, K-12 funding is based largely on state and local tax revenue, which has plummeted in recent weeks (as business has slowed and unemployment climbed) and is not expected to recover anytime soon.

Established in 1906, Phi Delta Kappa International supports P-20 educators, researchers, and policy makers by strengthening their commitment to the profession throughout the entire arc of their careers.

*Methodology notes: This survey was conducted over a week period mid-April 2020 to Educators Rising high school students and PDK members with nearly 400 respondents in each cohort.

[Ed. Note: a copy of the full survey report is available by emailing contact@ovlff.com putting “Survey” in the subject line.] ❁