



BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 9, 2011

AGENDA
6:30 PM

SOUTH BRANCH
1901 RUSSELL STREET

The Board of Library Trustees may act on any item on this agenda.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- A. **Call to Order**
- B. **Public Comments (6:30 – 7:00 PM)**
(Proposed 30-minute time limit, with speakers allowed 3 minutes each)
- C. **Report from library employees and unions, discussion of staff issues**
Comments / responses to reports and issues addressed in packet.
- D. **Report from Board of Library Trustees**

*Click on dashed
links to view the
item documents.*

II. BUDGET WORKSHOP

- A. **FY 2012/13 budget workshop** – Dennis Dang – To be delivered

III. PRESENTATIONS

- A. **Kitchell CEM Quarterly Update** – Steve Dewan

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

The Board will consider removal and addition of items to the Consent Calendar prior to voting on the Consent Calendar. All items remaining on the Consent Calendar will be approved in one motion.

- A. **Approve minutes of February 16, 2011 Special Meeting**
Recommendation: Approve the minutes of the February 16, 2011 special meeting of the Board of Library Trustees.

V. INFORMATION REPORTS

- A. **Update on the Branch Bond Program**
Discussion of staff report on status of implementation of the Measure FF branch improvement program, to include update on Request for Proposals, schedule, and budget.
- B. **March 2011 Monthly Report from Library Director**
 - i. Library Development
 - ii. Professional Activities
 - iii. Programs, Services and Collections
 - iv. Personnel
- C. **Library events**: Calendar of events and press releases for various Library programs are posted at <http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org>

VI. AGENDA BUILDING

The next meeting will be a Regular Meeting held at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, April 13, 2011 at the **South Branch Library, 1901 Russell Street, Berkeley.**

VII. CLOSED SESSION

A. Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957)

Title of position being evaluated: Director of Library Services

The Board of Library Trustees will recess into closed session to conduct a public employee performance evaluation.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Written materials may be viewed in advance of the meeting at the Central Library Reference Desk (2090 Kittredge Street), or any of the branches, during regular library hours.



Wheelchair accessible. To request a sign language interpreter, real-time captioning, materials in large print or Braille, or other accommodations for this event, please call (510) 981-6107 (voice) or (510) 548-1240 (TTY); at least three working days will help ensure availability.

Please refrain from wearing scented products to public programs.

I hereby certify that the agenda for this regular meeting of the Board of Library Trustees of the City of Berkeley was posted in the display cases located at 2134 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and in front of the Central Public Library at 2090 Kittredge Street, as well as on the Berkeley Public Library’s website on March 04, 2011.

//s//

Donna Corbeil, Director of Library Services
Serving as Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees

For further information, please call (510) 981-6195.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City’s electronic records, which are accessible through the City’s website. **Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record.** If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission or committee for further information.

1. Al Kitt – Ergonomics and the rights of the elderly and the disabled in the library
2. Berkeley Architectural Historical Association - Alternative Branch Library Designs

**Library Budget Workshop
Planning for FY 2012 and 2013**

March 9, 2011

I. Overview of current situation

Where we are:

- BOLT approved budget goals
- Midyear report
- 5-year projections with & without reductions
- Structural deficit
- Unknowns – tax rate & State Library funding

II. Specific ideas under consideration

Internal process and discussion

- Personnel changes
- Non- personnel reductions
- Workload and efficiency ideas

III. Next Steps

- Staff presentation on draft budget
- Draft proposals to Council for March 22, 2011
- Continue to refine proposals
- April BOLT meeting

IV. Board Discussion

Berkeley Public Library
Board of Library Trustees

III Consent, Item A

Special Meeting
February 16, 2011

MINUTES
6:30 p.m.

South Branch
1901 Russell Street

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

*A copy of the agenda packet and a digital recording of this meeting is accessible at
http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/bolt/bolt.php*

A. Call to Order

The Regular meeting of February 16, 2011 was called to order by Vice Chair Moore at 6:34 PM.

Present: Trustees Winston Burton, Carolyn Henry-Golphin, Abigail Franklin and Darryl Moore.

Absent: Trustee Susan Kupfer (arrived during closed session)

Also present: Donna Corbeil, Director of Library Services; Douglas Smith, Deputy Director; Dennis Dang, Library Admin Manager; Suzanne Olawski, Branch Library Manager; Megan McArdle, Technical Services Manager; Eve Franklin, Administrative Secretary.

B. Public Comments

1. Gene Bernardi, SuperBOLD – Spoke regarding II Presentations, Item A; Technical Services Department. Was not sure what agenda item was, assumed it was about Bibliotheca and or RFID. What is the library going to do when the contract expires, will there be a security lapse. Recommended abandoning RFID and getting a barcode system.
2. Judith Epstein – It appears this agenda is a regular meeting type of agenda and not a special meeting. Normally special meetings deal with a single subject on a time sensitive nature. Questioned whether the meeting was being held in violation of the Brown Act. Urged library to consult the Brown Act. In response to the DEIR for South and West Branches, Concerned Library Users has submitted partial preservationist alternative designs by architect Todd Jersey for the South and West branches.

C. Report from Library employees and Unions, Discussion of Staff Issues – None.

D. Report from Board of Library Trustees

Trustee Franklin – reported she and Trustee Burton had attended 4x2 Committee Meeting. Great support for the branch project expressed from the Friends and the Foundation.

Trustee Moore – Successful and fun Author’s Dinner held last Saturday.

Trustee Franklin – Reported Open House held February 1 was well attended.

E. Approval of Agenda

R11-009 Moved by Trustee Burton, seconded by Trustee Henry-Golphin, to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion passed unanimously.

II. PRESENTATIONS CALENDAR

- A. Technical Services Department** – Director Corbeil clarified this agenda item was a staff presentation on the Technical Services Department. Megan McArdle provided an update on the Technical Services Department and provided a copy of “ Behind the Scenes at the Library: The Journey of a Book” article that ran in the Daily Planet in June 2009 (Attachment 1).

Technical Services has 18 employees from aides to librarians working behind the scenes in the Central Branch. Also has youth enrollee and volunteers. Most employees also work with the public. There are four main areas of effort: Selecting, Ordering, Cataloging and Processing of materials. Last year we added 50,000 new items to

the collection, including magazines, books, CD's, DVD's and databases. Also handle mending of damaged materials and discarding materials at end of life-cycle.

Selection – Selectors meet regularly. Provided with budgets, reports showing usage, what being circulated a lot and not so much, what items are being placed on hold. Tools used include journals, reviews, catalogs, patrons suggestions. Selectors see what other departments are purchasing.

Ordering – staff choose vendors, place orders, check receipts and confirm items received correctly, and arrange payments.

Cataloging – staff enter materials into the catalog database so that patrons can search things and know where to look for it on the shelves. Library shares catalog holdings under the SkyRiver, allows libraries to see how other libraries catalog items.

Processing – gets materials ready for the shelves, applies labels barcodes, security tags, link to security database. Also determine if damaged materials can be mended either in house or through other vendors. Is it cost effective to repair or better to replace. In some cases it is determined that items are unable to be repaired and must be discarded.

Trustee Burton – What do the staff do with the public. *Staff do at least one hour per week helping patrons at the information desk, it helps keep them in touch with why they do what they do in their daily work.*

Trustee Burton - Likes reading the suggestions at Central. *We received hundreds of suggestions each week, most are now submitted online.*

Trustee Franklin – Where does the library purchase materials? *We use a variety of vendors. Amazon has turned out to be a good place to find out of print books.*

Trustee Franklin – How do branches get books? *If we are ordering for the whole system we ask branches if they want items. Two Branch heads and Technical Services staff meet monthly and order best sellers.*

Trustee Henry-Golphin – What sort of changes have you seen in ordering with the change in the economy. *General circulation and holds have increased. Fiction and DVD's are very popular. Patrons want to be informed and entertained.*

Trustee Moore – Are all the books from the Author's Dinner in the collection? *Yes.*

B. Update on Measure FF Projects - Temporary Closure of Claremont and North Branches for Improvements –

Suzanne Olawski provided an update on the Branch Improvement Project.

When exact closure dates are determined, they will be posted on banners at the branches and on the website. We Will also do newspaper ads and press releases, email and U.S. mail.

Branch Van schedule has been established. North Branch patrons will find the van on Shattuck Avenue at Live Oak Park Community Center. Claremont patrons will find it at St. John's Presbyterian Church at Garber and College. Staff will work in teams of two. Each neighborhood will be visited once per day Monday – Saturday. Branch story times will continue in the neighborhoods. David will provide story time at Live Oak Community Center on Tuesday mornings and Dawn will provide baby and toddler story time at St. John's on Thursday mornings. BranchVan and story time service will start a few weeks after the branch has closed to allow for staff to pack up library. Brochures have been prepared.

Claremont and North Branch staff have been doing outreach to promote upcoming closures and BranchVan services. Van has been parked at the North Branch, the Solano Avenue Association Lunar New Year event., Berkeley Chamber of Commerce network breakfast, Berkeley Art Center. Future North neighborhoods outreach events include: Mr. Mopp's ribbon cutting ceremony, Temple Beth El, Jewish Community Center, Downtown and North Berkeley Farmers Markets. Claremont neighborhood outreach events include: stops at the branch, Andronico's, Whole Foods and along College Avenue.

A temporary storage site has been secured at Sather Gate Mall.

A vendor selected for packing and moving.

Media items from the closed branches will not be stored but will remain in circulation.

Human Resource analyst Jenifer has been working with staff regarding redeployment during branch closures. Staff has been queried as to preferred relocations, schedules and special needs. All staff have been notified as to where they are going.

Closing events are being planned. Claremont on March 19, North branch on March 5.

North Branch construction bids are scheduled to be opened this Thursday, and Claremont bids are scheduled for next Tuesday. At that point we'll know who our contractors will be. We anticipate starting construction in April.

Trustee Moore – What a wonderful report, so exciting.

Trustee Franklin – Great brochures.

Trustee Burton – Are any of the staff requesting to take time off? *Staff were queried about that and some have requested some personal time off. We're still making tweaks to the schedule.*

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

- R11-010 Moved by Trustee Franklin, seconded by Trustee Henry-Golphin, to approve Consent Calendar as presented.** Trustee Kupfer absent. Motion passed unanimously.
- A. Approve minutes of January 12, 2011 Regular Meeting**
- R11-011 Moved by Trustee Franklin, seconded by Trustee Henry-Golphin, to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2011 regular meeting of the Board of Library Trustees as presented.** Trustee Kupfer absent. Motion passed unanimously.
- B. Acceptance of Grants and Gifts Proceeds and Appropriation to the FY 2011 Revised Budget.**
- R11-012 Moved by Trustee Franklin, seconded by Trustee Henry-Golphin, to approve the resolution authorizing the Director of Library Services to accept awarded grants and gifts and to appropriate those funds as identified in section Fiscal Impacts of Recommendation to the FY11 Revised Budget.** Trustee Kupfer absent. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. INFORMATION REPORTS

- A. Library Budget Update**
- Director Corbeil reported a budget workshop will be held at the March meeting.
- Vice Chair Moore reported the city of Berkeley has a deficit of \$2 million in FY11 and a deficit of \$3 million in FY12.
- Director Corbeil reported the Federal government is zeroing out all library funding (LSTA)
- B. Update on the Branch Bond Program**
- Director Corbeil reported the deadline for North Branch Bids has been extended to February 17, 2011. Hope to have 6 or 7 bids. Kitchell has been working extremely hard to get the word out and answer questions. John Rosenbrock will be very involved in the construction phase.
- C. February 2011 Monthly Report from Library Director**
- Director Corbeil provided a handout on Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R.) Day on Friday, March 11, 2011 (Attachment 2). Volunteers read to students at Berkeley elementary and pre schools.
- D. Central Library Project Update:** No discussion.
- E. Library events:** No discussion.

V. AGENDA BUILDING

- A.** The next meeting will be a Regular Meeting held at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at the South Branch Library, 1901 Russell Street, Berkeley.
1. Possible agenda topics:
 - If all goes well on bids for North Branch (due February 17), there will be a special meeting on February 23, 2010.
 - Budget Workshop on March 9.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- R10-013** Moved by Trustee Burton, seconded by Trustee Henry-Golphin, to adjourn the special meeting of the board at **7:22 PM**. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session called to order by Darryl Moore at 7:28PM

The Trustees went into closed session pursuant to Government code Section 54957, to conduct director of library performance evaluation. No Action taken.

- R10-014** Moved by Trustee Franklin, seconded by Trustee Kupfer, to adjourn the closed session of the meeting of the board at **8:29 PM**. Motion passed unanimously.

THE BERKELEY DAILY PLANET

THE EAST BAY'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

FRONT PAGE OPINION COLUMNISTS ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CONTENTS FULL TEXT

News

Behind the Scenes at the Library: The Journey of a Book

By Phila Rogers, *Special to the Planet*
Thursday July 23, 2009

When you visit the Berkeley Public Library you'll see staff at the circulation desk, at the reference desk, and others who are shelving books. What you are less likely to see are all those library employees, mostly in offices on the second floor of the Central Library, who move a book along from the time it's either requested by a patron or a librarian. These are the employees who select, order, catalog, and process the 50,000 items added to the library's collection every year.



First stop on a tour of this labyrinth of activity is the office of Marti Morec, the Collection Development librarian. A graduate of UC Berkeley's Library School, Marti has been with the Berkeley Public Library since 1989, mostly in the Art and Music Department. "Though I loved working with the fabulous collection of recordings and books, I've also loved the last two years since I've stepped up to the exciting job of collection librarian. I still get a kick out of seeing a book arrive that I have steered through the whole process," she adds.

A cart of new books sits next to Marti's office and on her desk are a number of periodicals (Library Journal, Kirkus, Publishers Weekly) along with newspaper book review sections. "All the librarians are responsible for suggesting titles to buy and, of course, we listen to our patrons. Knowing our community helps us select books," she says.

Marti coordinates patron requests, plus book selections made by a branch librarian and the Central Library book teams—each team focusing on a broad subject area. She also keeps a close eye on the book-buying budget and monitors the progress of the high-demand books. "Though it takes about four to six weeks from the time we order a book until it gets to the shelves, a hot item may be on the shelf in two weeks," Marti adds.

(The library also has an impressive collection of audio books, CDs, and movies, but books still make up the lion's share of the library's collections.)

Marti electronically forwards the lists of suggested purchases to Technical Services, managed by librarian Megan McArdle. Tech Services includes four departments: Collection Development, Order, Cataloging, and Processing.

In the Order Department, lists are further collated and the best sources determined for buying at particular item. The orders are sent off to an appropriate vendor or jobber using a computerized book ordering system.

Delivery trucks deliver dozens of boxes of books daily, all of which are opened and the contents checked and rechecked to be sure that what is received is exactly what was ordered.

A cart, groaning under the weight of two packed shelves of books, with tags sticking out of each book, is parked in front of Yvette Pleasant's office. She is one of the three people receiving new books. An order tag sticking out of the top of a book titled *The Banana Slug: A Close Look at a*

Giant Forest Slug of Western North America contains 16 items of information which Yvette enters into the library database. A red slip indicates that a patron has already put a hold on the book. (Patrons can check the library's catalog for titles "on order.")

Once Yvette is satisfied that everything is in proper order she pays the bill electronically and Banana Slug, along with the other books, is rolled along into the Cataloging Department.

"This is where a book is given a call number so it can be shelved with similar books," says librarian Greg McKean. "A book is also given a bar-code and lots of other information about the book, some of which you see when you look up a book on a computer," he adds.

Finally, the book is off to its last stop on this complicated journey—to the Processing Department, a big cheery room with certain aspects of Santa's workshop, well stocked with tools, labels, tapes, and packaging materials. Sam Zhang, the head of the Processing Department, says, "If a book is one that should remain in our collection but needs repair, we try and repair it here. ... With five employees, someone usually has the requisite skills."

At a work table, one employee affixes a mylar strip down the spine of a paperback book. A hardcover book is fitted with a protective cover, stamped "Berkeley Public Library" on the ends of the closed pages, and is given an electronic tag for circulation tracking and security.

At another table, a technician tries to repair a spiral-bound Russian book, while another employee cleans a dirty CD. "If we can't repair a book that is both valuable and irreplaceable, we send it to an outside bindery for repair," says Sam.

Processed books are finally loaded into crates for twice-daily transport to the branches or on to book carts for the trip to Central's various departments.

Now it's up to the patron, checking out a book, to complete the journey.

Note: If Banana Slug: A Close Look at a Giant Forest Slug of Western North America has captured your fancy, copies are available in the Children's Library at both the Central Library and at the Claremont Branch. The call number is 594.3 H213b.

Drop Everything and Read Day – Friday, March 11

It's getting to be D.E.A.R. Day again! If you have read for a Berkeley elementary or preschool in the past, you know how much fun it is! If you haven't, you don't want to miss out! D.E.A.R. Day (also known as Drop Everything and Read Day) will take place this year on **Friday, March 11**. If you've ever read for a group of kids, you know what an appreciative audience they can be. This is a great way to volunteer, have a little fun and talk about the joy of reading! Just pick a book or story that can be read in 20 minutes or less. The Children's Department has a list of read-alouds to help you in your search for the perfect book.

Want to sign up? It's easy!

Send an email to Berkeley School Volunteers at bsv@berkeley.k12.ca.us no later than Wednesday, February 23rd at 5:00 pm with this required information:

- Full Name
- Name of Group: (For us, it would be The Berkeley Public Library)
- Email Address, (They will email your placement information and teacher contact info. to the address you list, so this is important)
- Daytime and Evening Phone Numbers
- Preferred grade, school, teacher, etc.: (Preschool through 5th grade. They will do their best to honor your preferences, but please understand that it is not always possible.)
- Let them know if you are able and willing to read a book in Spanish – this would be at one of the following school sites: *Rosa Parks, Cragmont, LeConte, Thousand Oaks.*

Please plan to arrive at your school by 9:00 am. Reading begins promptly at 9:30 am.

The Registration Deadline is Wednesday, February 23, so they can they can have your assignments ready for you by March 4.

Thank you very much on behalf of the Berkeley School Volunteers and the Children of the Berkeley Unified School District!



BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

INFORMATION CALENDAR

March 9, 2011

TO: Board of Library Trustees

FROM: Donna Corbeil, Director of Library Services

SUBJECT: MARCH 2011 MONTHLY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REPORT FROM LIBRARY DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

Every month the Library Director gives the Board a report on branch improvement activities and updates from the previous month.

FISCAL IMPACT

This report will have no fiscal impacts.

SUMMARY OF WORK

Meetings held during this reporting period include:

- Weekly project meetings facilitated by the KCEM project manager, Steve Dewan or Bob Fusilier
- Meeting with City's Planning Department and architects as needed
- North Branch and Claremont Branch immediate neighbor meetings to discuss traffic and construction impacts

COMMUNICATION

Staff continues to update the Library website with FAQs, announcements of meetings etc. as needed: http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/b-renovation.php. A display of the latest plans for that branch and the appropriate FAQ is posted for public review. Comments are being taken and suggestions received are posted. Closure guides, FAQs and bookmarks related to construction closure for the first two projects were finalized and made available in paper and posted on the library's website.

FISCAL

None.

OTHER CITY AGENCIES, BOARDS AND BODIES

CoB Planning Commission



The Planning Commission held a hearing on the zoning ordinance amendment (ZOA) to Title 23 of the Berkeley Municipal Code to allow development flexibility for existing public libraries, on March 2, 2011.

Detailed information, including the agenda and staff report can be found at:

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=65188>. In the Planning Department staff report, it was recommended: "the Planning Commission hold a public hearing and recommend that the City Council approve the Zoning Ordinance Amendment discussed herein, with any of the revisions discussed herein that the Commission finds appropriate". Approval of the ZOA for the Library will require two readings by the Council.

Planning and Development- EIR

The Draft EIR was released on December 15, 2010 by the Planning Department: *DEIR for the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Public Libraries and the South and West Branch Libraries Project*. Public comment was open for 45 days, from December 14, 2010 to January 31, 2011. During the review period several public meetings were held and testimony taken. The Planning Department and their consultant are in the process of producing a final EIR document. The final Library EIR may be available to the public sometime in March. While no further comment period or response to comments is required under CEQA, comments typically are submitted during the public hearing process at ZAB and LPC. During this period required CEQA findings are prepared. The FEIR will require certification by ZAB, and finally by the City Council.

Design Review Commission

At the February 17, 2011 DRC meeting the West Branch Library proposed project was discussed: DR#10-3000049: Preliminary Design Review of a new 9,399 sq. ft. branch library for the Berkeley Public Library. The proposed project will include the demolition of the existing structure and site excavation. The staff report and related documents for the item can be found at:

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=62562>. Additional meetings will be held but no schedule for these has yet been set.

PROJECT UPDATES

Events

Information is posted to the Library's website at <http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/branchimprovements>. Events to mark the beginning of the construction phase, i.e. ground breaking were planned. The North Branch event was held on Saturday, March 5 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. The Claremont Branch Library project launch celebration will take place on Saturday, March 19 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. We look forward to celebrating with the community this momentous occasion.

BranchVan publicity

Staff is busy publicizing mobile services to the neighborhoods affected by the first two closures, activities have included:

- February 6 - Asian New Year's Parade on Solano Ave
- February 9 – Berkeley Chamber of Commerce Networking Breakfast
- February 10 - Berkeley Art Center for Youth Identity Exhibit Opening
- February 12 - Authors Dinner and Reception at Central
- February 18 - Mr. Mopp's Ribbon Cutting
- February 19 – Claremont Branch Library
- February 26 – Andronico's on Telegraph Avenue
- March 6 – St. John's Presbyterian Church (Garber Street)



As a result hundreds of people saw the van and heard about the branch improvement projects and pending temporary closures for construction.



BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

INFORMATION CALENDAR

March 9, 2011

TO: Board of Library Trustees
FROM: Donna Corbeil, Director of Library Services
SUBJECT: MARCH 2011 MONTHLY REPORT FROM LIBRARY DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

Every month the Library Director gives the Board a report on Library activities and updates from the previous month.

FISCAL IMPACT

This report will have no fiscal impacts.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

None.

PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND COLLECTIONS

Collections

Staff has added to the electronic resources available from the Library's home page a new service, *Research Guides*. Listed under online resources this is a unique source of information as it is produced by staff on topics of interest highlighting. For example there are topics such as health, teen reading, job searches, among many others that represent topics and questions staff get regularly from the public, the link is: <http://berkeleypubliclibrary.libguides.com/> the guides include books, DVDs and audio-books owned by BPL, links to resources on the Internet and links to our electronic databases. These guides present a good sampling of the best resources on a topic to get you starting in your research regardless of the subject.

Programming

Library staff has planned a selection of programming for all age groups. The best place to see all of this is on the Library's website at: <http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/>. The Library continues to print a paper calendar for patron pickup at all locations. Highlights of some of the programming taking place:

The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival as they present the touring company's presentation of Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest* on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 6:30 p. m. at the Central Library.

Collaboration between the Berkeley Public Library and the Alameda County Small Business Development Center to present six free Small Business Seminars, held from February – May, 2011, weekday afternoons at the Central library. This series of six free classes will teach entrepreneurs and small-business owners how to implement new strategies, skills and ideas across varied business disciplines. Taught by experienced consultants and industry experts, workshops are tailored to fit entrepreneurs in any stage of the business development process.

Café Literario, our ongoing Spanish language book club continues, bringing at least 25 people each month to the West Branch Library. All books are in Spanish as are the lively discussions. This is a Friends of the Library funded program, facilitated by SFPL librarian Alvaro Sanabria. Participants receive a copy of the book. This program has been going for many many years at West Branch and is extremely popular. The highest turnout was last October for a discussion of *Travesuras de la Niña Mala* by Mario Vargas Llosa who had just won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Annual Report

The 2010 Library annual report has been completed, printed and posted on the Library's website for public review, under Planning on the homepage: http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/documents/BPL_AR10.pdf.

FACILITIES/ OPERATIONS & PERSONNEL

Central Library Event

Doug Smith has prepared a brief report on the annual Foundation sponsored fundraising dinner: On Saturday February 12th, the 9th annual Author's Dinner took place at the Central Library. The 1st and 2nd floors of the Library were transformed into a beautiful locale for large-scale festivities wherein over 30 noted authors joined over 300 guests for a reception and dinner. Although it is an event that is planned and coordinated by the Library Foundation, a great many Library staff got involved by volunteering their own time before and during the night of the Dinner. Hearty thanks are due to these staff volunteers for their support, and to those employees who worked at Central on Feb. 12th for their assistance with helping Library patrons adapt to the shorter schedule and reduced services on floors one and two. It was noteworthy this year that the recent improvements to the layouts and shelving on the Central Library's 1st floor permitted a much larger open space to be used, and as a result guests at the reception and silent auction before the Dinner could move about much more easily than in previous years. The Foundation's Authors Dinner Committee again worked extremely hard this year to produce a very successful event and they stayed in close communication with the Deputy Library Director during the several months of planning the Dinner.

Energy Production Opportunity

The Library has been contacted by Alice La Pierre, Energy Efficiency Coordinator for the City of Berkeley, Office of Energy & Sustainable Development, regarding the possible installation of wind turbines on the

Central Library. She has reviewed the capabilities, sound ratings and energy production of the small wind turbines available from SolAire, and will be recommending funding (financial rebates) to Council which will support their installation on the roof of the Central Library, Civic Center, 1947 Center St. and the Marina. The SolAire model (<http://www.dyocore.com/>) has an integrated solar panel to produce energy while the sun is shining, so that the rated energy output exceeds conventional wind turbines. These are micro turbines, only 5 feet in diameter. In addition, she is working on getting a network-based monitoring system for all of them, similar to the one attached to the solar electric system at the corporation yard, to facilitate monitoring of how much energy they are producing. Here is the link to the Corp. Yard system:
<http://view2.fatspaniel.net/FST/Portal/SunlightPower/berk/HostedAdminView.html> . We will keep you informed of this project; if it is funded; and any issues related to the installation etc.

Phone System Replacement

The City of Berkeley, Department of Information Technology has released an RFP soliciting proposals for a comprehensive and fully integrated Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system, the RFP and other relevant documents are available at:
<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=7128&portalID=20> . Ideally, this will be a turnkey solution leading to the complete replacement of the existing NEC PBX system. The Library branches would be included in this transition. The RFP is scheduled to close on April 7, 2011, contract execution and commencement on June 1, 2011 and full operation by September 21, 2011. Actual costs to the Library are not known at this time. We will keep you informed of the status of this project; what level of funding is required for the library portion; and any issues related to the installation etc.



Made in Berkeley: Dirt Dinners celebrate local food



Comic Relief closes



City budget faces \$1.8 million mid-year shortfall



UC Berkeley

Tickets in Berkeley scarce for Joyce Carol Oates' talks

February 10, 2011 8:59 am by [Frances Dinkelspiel](#)



Joyce Carol Oates: a popular draw for Berkeleyans.

As soon as word leaked out that Joyce Carol Oates, one of the country's most prolific and respected writers, would be appearing at the [Berkeley Public Library 9th Annual Authors' Dinner](#), tickets were snatched up.

The event, the major fundraiser for the library, generally sells out, but often not until right before the gala dinner in early February. This year, the Berkeley Library Foundation sent out a "Save the Date," notice in December 2010. Before it could send out a formal invitation in January, all but four seats to the dinner were gone, according to Linda Schacht Gage, a director of the foundation.

"This has never happened before," Gage wrote in an email. "I am not sure it was entirely because of Joyce Carol Oates, because [the list of authors](#) is really great. This was both a blessing and a curse as we have so many loyal Authors Dinner folks from years past who expect to get the invitation but we couldn't invite them to something they couldn't get a ticket for!"

Oates lovers still have a few chances to see the author, but they will take a bit of scrambling. There are still tickets available to the [reception before the library dinner](#), said Gage. Oates is also scheduled to deliver [The Avenali Lecture](#) tonight at Sibley Auditorium at UC Berkeley. Titled "The Writer's (Secret) Life: Rejection, Woundedness and Inspiration," Oates will begin her presentation at 6 pm.

Tickets are free, and will be handed out starting at 5 pm at Sibley – which means students will probably start lining up early in the day.

Oates will also participate in a panel discussion on Friday from noon to 2 pm in the Maude Fife Room, 315 Wheeler

Hall. She will be joined by Vikram Chandra and Dori Hale of UC Berkeley's English Department and Wendy Lesser, editor of "The Threepenny Review" literary magazine. Anthony J. Cascardi, director of the Townsend Center, will moderate. No tickets are required for that event.

Oates is living in Berkeley for a few months. Her husband, [Charles Gross](#), a professor of psychology at Princeton University, is a visiting scholar for the semester at the [Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute](#) at Cal.

Oates has written more than 50 novels, as well as poetry, plays, novellas, short stories, essays, book reviews and magazine pieces. She is also The Roger S. Berlind Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Princeton.

10 Comments

Like

7

Email

Tagged [Anthony J. Cascardi](#), [Avenali Lecture](#), [Berkeley Authors Dinner](#), [Charles Gross](#), [Dori Hale](#), [Joyce Carol Oates](#), [Townsend Center](#), [Vikram Chandra](#), [Wendy Lesser](#)

43 #r p hqw



Anonymous says:

February 10, 2011 at 10:36 am

These folks care so much about the library that they couldn't even provide a free seat or two for library staff as they have in past years. Oh, that's right, we're the little folks.



Tim C. says:

February 10, 2011 at 12:51 pm

@ anon, don't fret too much..it's really just an expensive circle-jerk for the most part.



max says:

February 10, 2011 at 1:29 pm

Jeez, what sourpusses. The Library Foundation helps raise money to support the public library—that's what this is about. And I think many staff volunteer their own time to help, which allows them to participate in the event, meet the authors attending, and enjoy the celebration of a pretty nice library. I guess that doesn't include "anonymous". Evidently some people prefer to just sit and throw stones.



Victoria says:

February 10, 2011 at 2:32 pm

The BPLF Library Author Dinner has grown over the past nine years because of the generosity, goodwill, and enormous support of the authors, their generous publishers, a hardworking and dedicated committee that spends six or more months putting the dinner and the auction in place, and dozens of library employees who donate time to make this a truly beautiful event. On top of that it is blessed with the support of dozens of businesses and vendors. I would like to point out that in the past nine years the BPLF Author Dinner has hosted almost 300 authors from the greater Bay Area; some of them household names, many of them emerging literary voices. We have had Nobel Laureates, National Book Award Winners...scientists to poets, chefs to first time novelists. In this economy the \$100,000+ that the dinner raises is nothing to take lightly. We are delighted to have Joyce Carol Oates with us in Berkeley. The dinner is built on the wealth of authors we have in our midst and that in turn helps to build the future of the library...for All to use.



Friend of Libraries says:

February 10, 2011 at 2:51 pm

Anon has it all wrong. Library staff volunteer to help for the evening. This year they will receive dinner, book bags, the opportunity to join in the reception with the authors, books signed by the authors, the reception food and drink. In year's past all have enjoyed this opportunity without complaint. They are the first people we go to when there are unfilled seats at the dinner...to see if they'd like to be guests of the Library Foundation. As for the "circle jerk" referred to by Tim C..... if you believe that bringing wonderful authors to our library, honoring them for their contribution to the literary community in Berkeley, thanking them for their time and celebrating one of the great community library systems in the country...the Berkeley Public Library.....if you believe all of that constitutes a "circle jerk"...then you have a very bitter and narrow minded view of the world. I doubt you'd enjoy the Goldman Environmental Prize event or the end of the season celebration of the local Little League team.



Richard Friedman says:



February 10, 2011 at 2:58 pm

Tim C. seems to be an expert on "circle jerks".



DC says:

February 10, 2011 at 4:19 pm

Isn't it a fundraiser, with a goal of raising money for the library? If so, those seats should go to paying attendees. I'm sure there are lots of volunteer opportunities for library employees to get involved and maybe attend part or all of it. Now if this were a public-interest event open to all at minimal cost, and seats weren't made available to library employees that would be different, but it isn't. It's an event for the purpose of bringing in funding.



shorty says:

February 10, 2011 at 10:24 pm

Gee...and I was hoping it was because of one simple fact.....she is an awesome writer, unmatched.



Mike Z. says:

February 11, 2011 at 10:31 am

I think the point made was that there are plenty of very privileged people in Berkeley who like to hob nob with the so-called literati. In some cases, they authors are merely famous, and not that great. The dinner is very expensive, and it's an opportunity for those with money to feel important around "important" people. Mr Friedman's comment is pretty sophomoric as well as vaguely defensive.



Friend of Libraries says:

February 13, 2011 at 10:35 pm

Mike Z...curious. How expensive is it? You must have been to it.

Red-hot raffle for S.F. General Hospital

Wednesday, February 16, 2011



See next page for
Author's Dinner mention

Hearts, and wallets, were open Thursday in Union Square Park at the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation's sixth Heroes & Hearts Luncheon (co-chaired by **Connie Shanahan** and **Patrick Smith**) and Hearts After Dark evening soiree (co-chaired by **Amy Busch** and **Elizabeth Revetria**).

More than 800 supporters turned out for each, wearing compassion and artistic appreciation on their sleeves for the silent auction of ginormous heart sculptures - a foundation fundraising idea dreamed up in 2004 by civic leaders **Nancy Bechtle** and **Ellen Magnin Newman**.

"Even though I worked in the fashion business, I wear the same red coat every year," said Newman, also decked out in her signature red-framed glasses. "I'm superstitious."

It seems Newman's coat did the trick: The tally from both added up to just over a red-hot \$1 million in support of the foundation.

The event has grown mightily under the guidance of foundation board President **Judy Guggenhime** and board member **Pam Baer**, whose two tables of guests included such glamour gals as **Vanessa Getty**, **Hilary Armstrong**, **Suzanne Levitt** and **Pen Callan**.

Team Baer also included two of the youngest guests, children **Alana** and **Zachary Baer**, who, because of teacher conferences, had the day off from school but chose to help Mom sell more raffle tickets.

"We're all here today," said Baer, "because of the excellent care Zach received at General, which saved his life."

The luncheon honored local heroes Judge **Mary Morgan** (S.F. Superior Court's Behavioral Health Court), **Dewey Rosetti** (Parents Education Network founder), retired SFPD Officer **John Weidinger**, (S.F. Education Fund volunteer at Cleveland Elementary School) and Dr. **Shannon Thyne** (S.F. General's Children's Health Center and chief of staff-elect).

"I love my job. I work with some of the most incredibly talented, brilliant people I know," enthused Thyne. "But it's the patients and families at General who are my inspiration."

General is in the midst of a seismically safe LEED rebuild, and Mayor **Ed Lee** praised guests for approving the [proposition](#) funding these renovations.

"What other cities have a trauma center that is world famous, open 24 hours and provides comprehensive psychiatric care?" asked Lee, with a joking aside: "Which at the end of my year as mayor, I may possibly enter."

Turning the mike over to that other mayor, **Willie Brown**, the surprise recipient of the Spirit of the General Award was

announced: Judy Guggenhime, who was instrumental in the passage of the hospital's Proposition A.

"When I see her coming now," joked Brown, "I turn the other way because I've already given all I can."

As most people end up at General because of an injury, she didn't wish that on anyone there.

"But," said Guggenhime, beaming with her award, "I'm happy to set up anyone on a tour."

Making book: Bibliophiles and belletrists crowded the stacks Saturday at Berkeley Central Library during the Berkeley Public Library Foundation's ninth Authors Dinner.

The heady evening (chaired by **Linda Schacht Gage** with emcee **Bill Schechner**) honored renowned scribes (including Nobel Prize winner **Burton Richter**, **Joyce Carol Oates**, **Dave Eggers**, **Rachel Saunders**, **Phil Cousineau**, **Daniel Clowes**, **Romney Steele**, **Tobias Wolff**, **Jaron Lanier**) who headlined at tables featuring a masterful McCalls Associates meal.

Last year, **Charlie Haas** was among the honorees. This year, he enjoyed being a civilian.

"Tonight we're sitting at **Vendela Vida's** table," said Haas. "And we're all starstruck."

Even in the midst of a \$3.5 million capital campaign for the system's four branch libraries (of which \$1.4 million has already been raised), book lovers raised \$110K more at dinner in support of branch infrastructure.

In his first at-bat as honorary dinner chair, former Secretary of Labor **Robert Reich**, now a public policy professor at UC Berkeley, who recently wrote "Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future," was also on this star-studded author roster.

"Berkeley is filled with extraordinary people and amazing authors," he said. "But my books are the kind that once you put down, you can't pick up again. In fact, they have better side effects than Sominex."

Staying awake was easy for **Marion Abbott** and **Ann Leyhe**, founders of Mrs. Dalloway's Literary & Garden Arts, who received the Fred & Pat Cody Award.

Located on College Avenue, the beloved bookshop is host to numerous literary events. And even as such cultural institutions as Cody's Books, Barnes & Noble and Black Oak Books fell prey to the Amazon-ization of reading habits, in 2009, Mrs. Dalloway's expanded its space.

"Pat Cody was an inspiration to us," said Leyhe. "When she first walked through the doors of Mrs. Dalloway, we thought, 'Now we're a real bookstore.' "

Chronicle society correspondent Catherine Bigelow's columns appear Wednesday in Datebook, Sunday in Style and at SFGate.com. E-mail her at missbigelow@sfgate.com.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/02/16/LV6M1HN078.DTL>

This article appeared on page E - 2 of the San Francisco Chronicle

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2 of 2



Robert Reich with Cody Award honorees Marion Abbott (left) and Ann Leyhe at the Authors Dinner.
Photo: Catherine Bigelow / Special to The Chronicle

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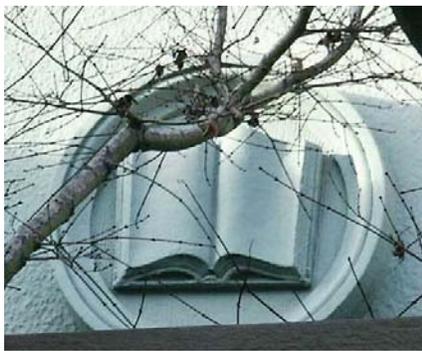
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FRONT PAGE OPINION COLUMNISTS ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CONTENTS FULL TEXT

Reader Commentaries

Demolition of Branch Libraries – Not What the Voters Approved

By Gail Garcia
Tuesday February 15, 2011



Gail Garcia
The stone medallion which decorates the front of the West Berkeley branch library.

I grew up loving Berkeley's historic architecture. Until age nine, I lived about seven blocks from the West Berkeley Branch Library. I viewed this Classical Revival structure fondly every time I went down University Avenue. Its stone medallions, representing the curved pages of an open book, seemed to invite one into the joy of reading and the magic of books. How appropriate for a library!

SHARE   

Some time during the 1970s the West Berkeley Branch Library was desecrated with blocky additions.

When I first saw the renovation, I couldn't believe that anyone could do such insensitive alterations to a stately and classical structure.

In 2004, there was a plan to restore the historic 1923 portion of the building, move it forward on the lot and enlarge the back. But the proposal was not funded and the plan was dropped.

Now, in 2011, funding *is* available for just this sort of project, because voters approved Measure FF in 2008, providing \$26 million to "renovate, expand, and make seismic and access improvements" at Berkeley's four branch libraries.

Despite the clear and simple mandate from Measure FF, the Board of Library Trustees' plan is to use the Measure FF money for a brand new modern library to be built after the historic structure is expunged from the site. The South Berkeley Branch Library is slated for a similar fate.

A matter of social justice

I participated in two petition drives to preserve Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance. I gathered hundreds of signatures over several weeks out on the street, and talked to over a thousand people during the process.

Two of my favorite spots to gather signatures were near the Ashby BART station and near University Avenue in West Berkeley. I do not recall ever hearing a resident in these areas say that they wanted Berkeley's old

buildings knocked down for modern new buildings, while claims to this effect were not uncommon in wealthier areas. Dozens of African American residents told me that they felt that their neighborhoods were regarded as targets for demolition.

Is it therefore disheartening that the Trustees' plan is to demolish the South and West Branch libraries, while simply renovating, expanding and making seismic and access improvements – exactly what the voters approved in 2008 – to the North Branch and Claremont libraries. What is wrong with this picture?

Berkeley's "public process" is a sham

The vast majority of residents never attend city meetings. Those of us who do, but aren't part of Berkeley's in-crowd know that the decisions have generally been made in advance, and the subsequent process is a sham conducted so that insiders can claim that there was a lengthy public process involving many public meetings.

The process for the plan to demolish the South and West Branch Libraries is the poster child for this phenomenon.

In 2007 there was a top-down plan to move the South Branch Library into the Ed Roberts complex on Adeline Street. Neighbors formed a group called Save Our Library (SOL) to advocate for the preservation and improvement of the South Berkeley Branch Library.

The Library Board of Trustees hired a firm, Hacheul Tabernik & Associates (HTA), to survey the community's needs. It determined that there would be a favorable response to the move. How it came to this decision is completely unknown.

SOL members therefore did their own survey. They stood outside the South Branch Library for many days and asked people how they felt about the potential move, only to learn that very few people had even heard about it. SOL members found *only one person* who had actually been interviewed by HTA. They ultimately gathered over 600 signatures asking to keep the library (and historic building) on Russell Street.

The Board of Library Trustees completely ignored this grassroots effort to save the South Branch Library. Just two years later, a "public process" was conducted to "show" that a majority of residents wanted a new library. Those who disagreed were simply ignored (see Steve Finacom's commentary, "Measure FF and Branch Library Demolitions" in the December 15, 2010 issue of the Planet).

The planned demolition of the West Berkeley Branch library is even more outrageous. The West Branch is a designated a City of Berkeley Structure of Merit. Furthermore, the 2008 Berkeley Public Library Branch Libraries Facilities Master Plan (FMP) recommended "restor[ing] the original 1923 branch façade and the lovely interior historic details". The Berkeley City Council decided to put Measure FF on the ballot – based upon the findings of the FMP! Why is demolition even being considered?

It's not nice to fool the electorate

The voters certainly were not informed in 2008 that demolition was part of the Trustees' plan. The text of Measure FF did not reveal it. The City Attorney's Impartial Analysis of Measure FF said "Current plans for renovation include restoration and refurbishment of historic features at the branch libraries as part of any renovation", while saying nothing about demolition.

An attendee of the October 14, 2009 Library Board of Trustees meeting told me that one of the trustees stated that they had always planned to demolish the buildings; they just didn't put it in the bond. The official recording of this meeting mysteriously trails off before this statement was made.

Why was the critical piece of information about the planned demolitions left out of the bond language? It seems obvious to me that the bond measure would very likely have failed if the truth were told. Then \$26 million would not be available – *no* millions would be available – to renovate any of the branch libraries.

The citizens of Berkeley voted to support funding to “renovate, expand, and make seismic and access improvements” at the four branch libraries. And that is exactly what should be done.

Wednesday
February 16, 2011

THE BERKELEY DAILY PLANET

THE EAST BAY'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Reader Commentaries

HUAC** at Peace and Justice Commission

By Gene Bernardi
Tuesday February 15, 2011

A rather startling interruption occurred during the Peace and Justice Commission's (P&J) discussion of a motion at its February 7, 2011 meeting. The motion was to send a letter drafted by the P&J's Nuclear Free Berkeley Act (NFBA) subcommittee to Library Director Donna Corbeil, asking for "clarification as to whether the risk of unsupported checkout systems, a possible result of the identified gap between the end of the 3M contract and installation of the Bibliotheca system, places at risk the termination of the 3M contract by 14 March, 2011."



Translated, this means: Will the Berkeley Public Library (BPL) have its newly-purchased Bibliotheca Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) checkout system for books and other materials fully installed by March 14, 2011. This, so that there will be no question regarding whether BPL can meet the Nuclear Free Berkeley Act waiver deadline of two years that was approved by the City Council, which allowed 3M to maintain the existing proprietary RFID checkout system. (The waiver was required because the 3M Company declined to sign a city-required form that they are not involved, and will be involved, with nuclear weapons or the nuclear fuel cycle during the life of the contract.)

Suddenly, during the Commission's discussion of the motion, the secretary to the P&J Commission asserted to the Commissioners that two members of the public, Gene Bernardi of SuperBOLD (Berkeleyans Organizing for Library Defense) and Peter Warfield of Library Users Association and SuperBOLD, who had earlier spoken during public comment, were litigants in a suit against the BPL. The chair allowed these two members of the public to respond. Each one stated that neither the organizations they represented, nor either of them as individuals, were litigants in a lawsuit against BPL.

The P&J secretary, concerned that perhaps Bernardi and Warfield or their organizations may not NOW be litigants, then asked, "have you EVER been a litigant against the library?"

Although startled by this interruption, which was irrelevant to the motion on the table, Bernardi and Warfield responded that they did not recall any such litigation. However, Warfield said he did recall a SuperBOLD challenge to the Public Comment procedures of the Berkeley City Council and the Board of Library Trustees (BOLT), made with the assistance of the First Amendment Project. The challenge — which was not a lawsuit, and did not become one — resulted in expanded public comment at the City Council, in conformance with the Brown Act.

The First Amendment Project "is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and promoting freedom of information, expression, and petition," and serves "a core constituency of activists, journalists, and artists who seek to vindicate important First Amendment rights . . . by contesting governmental non-compliance with open records and [open] meetings laws. . . ." according to the group's website.

Warfield continued that SuperBOLD received a James Madison Freedom of Information award in the Citizen category from the Society of Professional Journalists for this effort, which resulted in Public Comment improvements at City Council.

Warfield and Bernardi, in their public comments at this P&J meeting, suggested that, rather than sending the NFBA subcommittee's letter directly to Library Director Donna Corbeil, that P&J instead advise the City Council to send the letter to the library director. Bernardi read a selection from Berkeley's Commissioner's Manual which instructs commissions to advise the City Council and not communicate with outside agencies.

The effect of the secretary's interruption was not just the spreading of inaccurate information, but perhaps worse — creating an irrelevant distraction from the topic at hand. It is important to note that even if the falsehood about litigation were true, there is nothing unlawful or inappropriate about filing a lawsuit.

So the big question is: Why are the NFBA subcommittee and the P&J secretary trying to shield the library director from potential City Council knowledge that either (1) the NFBA waiver deadline may not be met, or that (2) there may be a security gap at the library?

**HUAC = House Un-American Activities Committee, famous for repeatedly asking the question: "Are you now or have you ever been. . . .?"

Gene Bernardi is a member of SuperBOLD, Berkeleyans Organizing for Library Defense, and received a City of Berkeley Outstanding Woman of Berkeley award in 2009.

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CITY NEWS

Daniels to host community forum, Saturday, Feb. 19

Berkeley School Director Josh Daniels recently announced that he would host a Community Engagement Forum on Saturday, February 19 at the Berkeley Technology Academy (B-Tech) Multi-Purpose Room from noon to 3 p.m.

The stated goal of the meeting is for Daniels, as a member of the School Board, to strengthen lines of communication with "individuals, groups, and organizations that make up the Berkeley community."

After an introduction, breakout groups will develop specific pro-

posals before reporting back to the group assembled. The entire community is welcome including parents, students, teachers, staff, Berkeley residents, as well as "anyone connected to Berkeley or our schools, or anyone else who is interested." Kids of all ages are welcome, however, no childcare will be provided. Light refreshments will be served.

The B-Tech Multipurpose Room is located at 2701 Martin Luther King Jr., Way at Derby St. For more information, contact Daniels at 213-8683 or info@electjoshdaniels.com.



Photo by Richard Friedman, all rights reserved

There was a capacity crowd on Saturday night at the 9th annual Authors Dinner at the Main Branch of the Berkeley Library. Benefiting the Berkeley Public Library Foundation, the event attracted more than 300 guests and more than 30 extraordinary Bay Area authors. Look for the complete story and photos in next week's edition of Berkeley Times.



Berkeleyside

Berkeley Central Library gets a mini-makeover

Indie band competes for top recording contract

Former president of Chile to teach at Berkeley

- News
- Local business
- Arts
- Food
- Schools
- Crime
- Government

Government

Berkeley Central Library gets a mini-makeover

February 17, 2011 12:02 pm by [Frances Dinkelspiel](#)



It was gray and rainy in Berkeley on Wednesday, but the Central Library provided a welcoming retreat.

On the third floor, along a row of magazines, a handful of people sat in tawny leather chairs, reading books, glancing at computer screens, or talking quietly with friends. They were taking advantage of a newly installed seating arrangement, part of a makeover of the first three floors of the library.

It's been nine years since the Central Library reopened after a major retrofit and remodel and patron patterns have shifted dramatically during that time. Now more than 1,800 visit the main library each day and they take out about 1.1 million items a year – a 35% increase since 2006.

In 2009, the library administration did a new needs assessment of the building and came up with a plan to reconfigure the library's first three floors. They hope the upgrades, which are almost completed, will make the library not only more comfortable, but more accessible.

"We're really happy with the changes so far," said Deputy Director Douglas Smith, who planned and oversaw the changes. "We've been able to observe the newly created areas at capacity and we've had a lot of positive feedback from users as



Douglas Smith

well."

The changes cost about \$150,000 and were paid for out of private donations, said Smith. The library tried to reuse materials whenever possible. It dismantled an information desk on the first floor and reused the material for another staff desk on the first floor, for example, he said.

The change is evidently immediately as you walk in the front door on Kittredge. The huge information desk is gone. In its place are maple bookshelves carrying the latest fiction and non-fiction titles as well as DVDs. The bookshelves are on wheels and can be rolled away, creating a large space for events.

"Even though the information desk was front and center, people just breezed by," said Smith.



Rolling bookshelves near library entrance

The information desk and check out counter are now in the corner. There is a larger patron reserve shelf, which Smith said will get even more use once the Claremont and North Branch close in mid-March for remodeling.

Some of the other changes include:

- All of the 40 computers have been consolidated onto the second floor. Partitions have been erected around some of the computers to enhance privacy.
- The Friends of the Library bookshelves have been consolidated into the first floor store, opening up a nook by the windows on the second floor. The library brought in some historic round tables which give people a place to sit while they wait for the computer.
- All the periodicals and newspapers have been moved to the third floor. Comfortable leather chairs are now located nearby, bringing the number of seats in the library from 195 to 229. Without computers on the third floor, the reading area has evolved into a quiet zone, said Smith.
- The travel, history, and biography books, once split between two floors, have been consolidated in the second floor Historic Reading Room.
- The International Language Collection, which includes books, magazines, and DVDs in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, French, Japanese, Arabic, and Urdu are also in the Historic Reading Room. Shelf space for the collection has increased 64%, from 774 linear feet to 1,269 linear feet.
- The concrete floor pavers have been cleaned and sealed, which dramatically improved their appearance. The concrete floor on the third floor will be painted soon.



There are 40 computers on the second floor



New tables and chairs in third floor nook

4
Comments

UC Berkeley student proved pivotal in the rise of Twitter »

1.

Friend of Libraries says:

February 17, 2011 at 12:13 pm

Thanks to the Library for some significant changes. The Berkeley Public Library system, Central plus the four branches, distributed more than 2 million items last year. A record! The Library is, contrary to urban rumor, becoming more, not less, relevant in people's lives.

2.

Name Withheld says:

February 17, 2011 at 12:32 pm

The Berkeley Public Library is an excellent community resource. Well stocked, well staffed, and a pleasure to visit.

3.

Bryan Garcia says:

February 17, 2011 at 1:10 pm

Now if only I could use the restrooms when the need arises. Whenever I've gone into ANY of the mens' rooms there, there is without fail a homeless person camped out in the stall of every one of them.

4.

DC says:

February 17, 2011 at 1:26 pm

Love the Library!

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Name *

Email *

Website

Comment

Post Comment

Notify me of followup comments via e-mail



DOUG OAKLEY/STAFF

Carmen at the library

Buffy Baggott, who plays Carmen in Berkeley West Edge Opera's modern and condensed version of Carmen, dubbed *The Carmen Fixation*, sings at the Berkeley Public Library during a teaser performance on Feb. 10. The opera opens March 5 at the El Cerrito Performing Arts Theater. For more information, visit the website at www.westedgeopera.org.

Wednesday
February 23, 2011

[FRONT PAGE](#) [OPINION](#) [COLUMNISTS](#) [ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT](#) [CONTENTS](#) [FULL TEXT](#)

Letters to the Editor

Sunday February 20, 2011

Global Warming



With regards to concerns about global warming, the book "Common Wealth" by Jeffrey Sachs (2008) claims that about 18 billion tons of current human carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are absorbed by natural sinks on land and in the ocean per year. This suggests that we can begin to limit potential climate problems by restricting our emissions to this level. With almost 7 billion people on the planet this works out to 2.6 tons of CO₂ per person.

This value can be used to set personal goals. For example, in the U.S. about 1/3 of our national energy use goes to residential and private vehicle use - or about 1730 pounds per person. For a family of three, splitting this target evenly between electricity use (assuming normal utility power - not solar power), gas use, and gasoline use leads to individual targets for annual use of 1300 kilowatt-hours, 150 therms of gas, and 87 gallons of gasoline. Trade-offs between the three categories are obviously allowed. You can also have an impact on your share of the other 2/3 portion of energy use (commercial, industrial, and commercial vehicle use) by your choices on spending. Take vacations closer to home, buy art or go to concerts instead of buying the latest manufactured goods, reuse, and recycle, eat less meat, and so on.

Yes, we need to restart the debate on global warming, but we also need to recognize that all of us will need to be involved in the solution. There is no reason not to start doing our share now.

Robert Clear

* * *

Book Vans

Regarding San Francisco resident Peter Warfield's negative comments about the Berkeley Public Library's book van, I would like to set the record straight on the library's plans to maintain service for the city's library users while the branches are closed for renovation. The book van will give library users access to books they want and need during these renovations. The van is a flexible and cost effective solution for Berkeley's neighborhoods. Mr. Warfield, from his vantage point in San Francisco, says the library should be moving into temporary fixed locations for the duration of the closures. Such a plan would not meet the needs of the Library, the library's users or the community. A temporary site would be expensive, and impractical. ADA accessibility would be difficult. We could not guarantee adequate bathrooms. The costs to remodel temporary sites could easily exceed original estimates.

Book vans are proven and effective solutions to temporary library closures. They've been used in many communities, including San Francisco, where Mr. Warfield lives. . While the library branches are closed for remodeling, the Library's collection will be available online. Order a book, the book van will bring it to you. Log on at www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org.

My neighbors and I welcome the book van to our neighborhood while the branch closest to me is closed. I appreciate the library's efforts to make sure its services continue for my neighborhood. I'm sure Mr. Warfield would be appreciative too if he lived in Berkeley.

John Gage

* * *

Mental Illness

Jack Bragen's articles on mental illness are informed and enlightening. His perspective as a writer with experience in being occasionally afflicted by an attack of a chronic mental illness is invaluable. I raised my children (none with mental illness, luckily) during the days when parenting, especially mothers, were blamed for everything from skin rashes to autism (remember Bruno Bette heim?) in their children. Thank God those days are over. Bragen's pointing out that genetic predisposition plays an important role is a reassuring return to the folk wisdom of my grandparents, who used to say, without blame, sadly shaking their heads,

"It's in the family, in the blood."

I hope Bragen gives us more concrete examples of how a mentally ill person experiences the world during an episode, either from his own experiences or those of afflicted friends or acquaintances, and how his friends and family can best help. We could also learn something from his evaluation of present treatments and general comments on how, as a community, we help or hinder the lives of those who suffer these still-mysterious disorders, which, despite occasional headlines, are 99% more dangerous to the sick person than to the rest of us. Maybe a question and answer format, like:

- Why do mental patients resist taking medication?
- What services does our community provide, and which ones are helpful?
- Is it true that recreational drugs may trigger attacks in the genetically predisposed?

Dorothy Bryant

* * *

The Role of Aladdin?

How does Gaddafi fit the role of Aladdin? Gaddafi himself was a poor little Arab boy born in a tent, the son of a nomadic camel trader who roamed the poverty-stricken desert throughout most of his childhood. Significantly enough, he did his early studies by the light of an old Arab oil lamp. In his early teens, he became active in political demonstrations in favour of Egypt's Nasser, procuring the necessary materials for his flags, banners and slogans by personally provisioning them from different merchants, and was often harassed by his enemies

At the youthful age of only 27 in 1969, He led a successful revolution of the poor as a young army officer, ousted Libya's corrupt monarchy and became her new head of state. He also promptly ousted the foreign scientific magicians, who had helped discover Libya's lamp of oil far beneath the sands of her desert, and began rubbing that lamp vigorously to produce its black gold and force its powerful genie of foreign oil companies to pay him more than double their former prices, from one billion dollars in his first year of 1969 to over two billion in 1971 and approximately three billion in '73, amassing the largest gold reserves in the Arab world, and giving him a distinct place of leadership amongst its one hundred million Arabs, second only to that of Egypt!

He used the Magic Genie of its power to accrue more wealth and power for both Libya and himself, although the Western magicians would certainly like to bury him alive if they could! But he himself seems to wear some uncanny ring of spiritual authority which causes him to lead a nearly charmed life in opposition to his enemies. To their disgruntled and frustrated chagrin, he keeps gleefully rubbing his new magic lamp and producing its black genie of oil which has now brought him so much wealth and power.

Ted Rudow III, MA

* * *

In response to your op-ed re: the Berkeley Public Library

Dear Editor, I attended many many public meetings regarding the plans for the West and South Branches of the public library. Hundreds of neighbors from those two communities attended as well. The process was completely transparent. Anyone who thinks otherwise is seriously paranoid. The costs of the plans were discussed. Residents, neighbors, librarians all had their say. We discussed the costs of keeping the old buildings. Architects tried to plan for that choice. The decision among all was that new buildings in those locations are the best use of city money. In other words, the taxpayers' money. It is misleading to say otherwise. I don't know why your correspondent wants to mislead the people of Berkeley. What is her motivation? Perhaps her opposition to RFID's in the library? Could she be trying to use the leverage of Judith Epstein's lawsuit to persuade the Library to drop RFID's?? What the lawsuit will in fact do is delay construction of West and South, and perhaps mean that costs rise, legal fees will have to be paid, and the new libraries at West and South will never happen.

The Library's plans for the West Branch on University Ave are innovative and look to the future, not the past. One may love some parts of the old buildings, but the new one speaks to tomorrow, not yesterday. It will be the first Zero Net Energy public library in the United States. That means annual savings on energy costs...much lower construction costs. The design also adopts historic practices. When West was built, architects had to rely on design to achieve light and moderate temperatures. This building will do so with zero carbon emissions. South and West will finally be ADA accessible and seismically safe for users, staff, the disabled. The union that represents library workers, SEIU, has come out in favor of the plans for new buildings. This is an opportunity for Berkeley, not the boondoggle described by your correspondent.

Berkeley residents use their libraries at three times the rate of other California cities. Let's reward library

users with the buildings they have told the city they want. New , improved library branches for all -- that is exactly what I expected when I voted for Measure FF!

Linda Schacht

* * *

V Information, Item C
Attachment #8
Berkeley Daily Planet
02/23/2011



Berkeley library branches close for renovations

By Doug Oakley
Berkeley Voice

Posted: 02/25/2011 07:43:13 PM PST

Updated: 02/25/2011 07:43:14 PM PST

Two of Berkeley's four branch libraries will close in early April to complete \$7.6 million in renovations and additions that will keep them out of use for about a year.

Both the North Branch Library at the corner of The Alameda and Hopkins Street and the Claremont Branch Library at Benvenue and Ashby avenues will close, said Berkeley libraries Deputy Director Doug Smith.

The closures mean people like 74-year-old Wanda Nusted, who has been using Berkeley libraries all her life, including the North Branch for the last 45 years, will have to go elsewhere or use the new \$86,000 book van to pick up and drop off pre-ordered books.

Nusted, who uses the North Branch to find books to read to her grandchildren, is both

happy and sad about the closure of her beloved North Branch.

"The children's section is beautiful," said Nusted, who was there perusing kids' books on Tuesday morning.

"I don't know what I will do when this one closes. I guess I'll have to go to the West or main library. But I do understand the need for a larger community room here because there is not enough space for all the activities to happen at one time." The libraries, which get most of their funding from property taxes, are using a \$26 million bond measure approved by city voters in 2008. The North and Claremont branches will be expanded and renovated and the West and South branches will be torn down and rebuilt.

That bond money is just for construction,

however. The Neighborhood Libraries Campaign is hoping to raise another \$3.5 million for furniture, fixtures and equipment at all four branches, said its chairwoman, Linda Schacht. The campaign already has raised \$1.4 million she said.

After the North and Claremont branches are finished, library officials hope to tear down and rebuild both the West and South branch



libraries, which will expand them and bring them into compliance with disability and earthquake structural rules.

The new book van, Smith said, will be used for book holds, pickups and returns while the North and Claremont branches are under construction. It will be parked at both the Live Oak Community Center at 1301 Shattuck Avenue and St. John's Presbyterian Church at College Avenue and Garber Street six days a week.

Even though the book van will help take up some of the crunch on users during construction, it will be a sacrifice for many at a time when library use is going up.

"In this current economic climate, our use has gone up significantly," Smith said. "Last year we checked out over 2 million items for the first time in our history." At the North Branch, Smith said, construction will add 4,000 square feet on two floors at the rear of the building, bringing it to a total of 9,900 feet.

The Claremont Branch will grow by 350 square feet, bringing it to 7,800 square feet.

Library officials hope to have the west and south branch libraries ready to go for construction when the North and Claremont

branches are finished, Smith said. A lawsuit challenging language in the bond measure as it relates to construction and renovation could change plans for those two branches, depending on its outcome.

Current plans call for nearly tripling the size of the West Branch on University Avenue from 3,400 square feet to 9,400 square feet and the South Branch would grow from 3,300 square feet to 8,700 square feet, Smith said. The tool lending library at the south branch also would be expanded, but plans are not yet finished for that building, Smith said.

The library has held 39 public meetings so far to discuss construction at the four branch libraries, Smith said.



Berkeley grocer vows to give back despite robbery



Jefferson teacher Beth Trevor is doubly honored



The most entertaining, imaginative film ever made?



Government

Say “adieu” to the North and Claremont branch libraries

February 28, 2011 2:08 pm by [Frances Dinkelspiel](#)



North Branch Library

Even though no firm date has been set for the [closure of the Claremont and North Branch libraries](#), Berkeley is throwing a bon voyage party for the two buildings.

Library patrons and residents are invited to say goodbye (albeit temporarily) to the structures as they are shuttered and extensively remodeled. The party for North Branch is Saturday March 5 from 2 to 5 pm and the party for the Claremont Branch is Saturday March 19 at the same time.

“We are doing a small closing event just to celebrate the next step,” said Suzanne Olawski, the library’s

neighborhood services manger.

She has invited the mayor and city council members to the celebrations, she said. There will music and some activities geared for children.

“We know these libraries are very well-loved and well-used and we understand the angst it causes some people (that they will be shut down for a year),” said Olawski. “We want to do these projects as quickly as we can.”

Both branches will be closed at the end of March or beginning of April for about a year. The Claremont renovation, which is expected to cost about \$3.3 million, will create 324 square feet of new space, a new service desk, a new teen room, more computers and restrooms, and will have more seating. The building will be seismically strengthened and made ADA accessible.

The North Branch renovation will be cost about \$4.3 million. There will be a 4,000 square foot addition added to the historic building, a new teen room, a new multipurpose room, new landscaping, and other features.

The Library Board received bids last week for the North Branch renovation and will open bids for the Claremont branch on Tuesday, said Olawski.



When the branches are closed, the library will be running a “BranchVan” back and forth between the north and south ends of town. Patrons will be able to reserve books on line and then go to the mobile library to pick them up. They will also be able to return them to the van.

The Branch Van will be parked in front of the Live Oak Community Center at 1299 Shattuck Avenue on Monday and Friday from 2:30 to 5:30, Tuesday and Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm, Wednesday from noon to 3 pm, and Thursday from 4:40 pm to 7:30 pm.

The van will be parked in front of St. John’s Church at Garber Street near College Avenue on Monday and Friday from 10 am to 1 pm, Tuesday and Saturday from 2:30 to 5:30 pm, Wednesday from 4:30 to 7:30 pm, and Thursday from noon to 3 pm.

The library will set a firm date for the branch closures sometime in early March, said Olawski. It has hired a firm, Moovers, Inc. to move out the books from the two branches and store them at Sather Gate Mall. The move out (and back in) will cost about \$31,000 and monthly rental will cost \$750, according to library documents.

The top bestsellers, movies and audio books will be kept in circulation, she said.

Not everyone is supportive of the plans for the branch renovations. Peter Warfield of the San Francisco-based Library Users Group is concerned that the Claremont renovation will decrease the linear shelf space for books. It is part of his broader concern that libraries are now emphasizing computers and DVDs over books.

Another group, Concerned Library Users, [sued Berkeley](#) for passing an ordinance that permitted the library to seek a use permit rather than a variance to remodel any of the branches. CLU said the city should have done an Environmental Impact Report on the effects of the ordinance before passing it.

In December, the two parties [settled that aspect of the lawsuit](#). The city rescinded its ordinance, and is including an examination of a new one in its EIR. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at on the proposed change to zoning laws on Wednesday March 2 at Old City Hall at 7 pm.

CLU is still suing the library over its plans to demolish the South and West branches and to build new structures on the sites. CLU contends that Measure FF did not permit demolition of the branches, only remodeling.

Steve Finacom wrote a lengthy article in the Berkeley Daily Planet [expressing concern](#) that the library used \$88,000 from Measure FF to buy the BranchVan. He contends the bond measure did not specify using the money for a bookmobile.

13 Comments  10  3 

Tagged [Berkeley Public Library](#), [BranchVan](#), [Concerned Library Users](#), [Library Users Group](#), [Peter Warfield](#), [Suzanne Olawski](#)

13 Comments



Rachel A. says:
February 28, 2011 at 2:23 pm

My family will miss our branch a great deal but I am really excited for the renovations. As a Berkeley resident, I'm appalled by the South Berkeley branch—it's cramped, the staff work spaces are ridiculously cramped and it's long out-served its original form and function. I will be glad for the day when both South Berkeley and West Berkeley have new branch libraries.



Tracey Taylor says:
February 28, 2011 at 2:31 pm

Maybe it's more a case of "au revoir" than "adieu", n'est-ce-pas?



Frances Dinkelspiel says:
February 28, 2011 at 3:34 pm

Perhaps I should have used "ciao" since it means both goodbye and hello.



Bruce Love says:
February 28, 2011 at 3:54 pm

So, the model of van they bought *lists* for like 50 or 60% of what they paid when not tricked out for bookmobile use and with the fancy paint/decals-job detailing . Assuming they got a reasonable deal on one, bought a generator (did the tricked out version even come with one?) and bought locally to throw in some shelves etc.... Think they might have saved a few \$10K and boosted the local economy by putting out an RFP? Hell, they might have wound up with a vehicle that could have more flexible uses as part of the City's fleet.

So in addition to conceding in settlement that they passed an unlawful ordinance. And in addition to having a tough legal fight on FF for razing and rebuilding. And in addition to blowing renovation contingency money – money theoretically meant to cover things like inflation in the price of concrete or a construction accident – on a book-mobile. An in addition to the contempt of public that the staff exhibits in response to the inquiries of Finacom's inquiries. Over and above all of that. The bookmobile is overpriced for what we got (and, by the way, there are a lot of low prices on the resale market for those things... they likely could have bought three used ones over 10 years and come out ahead, if nothing else and it is unlikely we're going to recoup squat selling it used.).

Sometimes this city runs like a well-oiled machine. By which I mean, of course, like a bicycle dropped into a vat of used fry oil.



Point Counterpoint says:
February 28, 2011 at 4:07 pm

After the renovations are complete, for all branches, the Bookmobile might find other uses, like delivering books, DVD's, etc. to those unable to come into the libraries, delivering donated books to local schools, standing out at local street fairs with staff on board, etc. I view the purchase of the Bookmobile as "planning ahead".



tizzielish says:
February 28, 2011 at 5:00 pm

I don't like the purchase of the bookmobile. It seems like they could have, as Bruce Love points out, been much more frugal. Surely it is time for public entities to start being frugal in all things.

I am challenged by the library decision to use funds that voters voted on for remodeling and rehabbing and decided to demolish two branch libraries. I think the new buildings are going to be much better facilities than anything that could have been done by keeping the old buildings, esp. the South library. I'm not an architect but it is hard to see how it could ever be cost-effective or produce a really good library design — and, yes there are good designs — by maintaining some kind of allegiance to keeping the old. So, overall, I'm okay with demolishing old, out-of-date, decrepit public spaces and using funds efficiently to build new public spaces.

But, as I said, I am challenged by the way voters were misled. That matters a lot. Principle matters. Transparency matters. Respect for the public by public servants matters. I know that the public servants working at the library to use these library funds have to balance many things but this is a democracy, right? Public employees can't say whatever they think they need to say to get money from the voters and then go out and spend the money in different ways.

What I long for is transparency. And accountability. I want library board and staff, esp. their appointed spokesperson(s) to directly and honestly answer questions about the decisions they make. Sunshine is the best disinfectant. Step into the light. If the library board/staff decided, after further study, that it did not make good sense to remodel the South and West branches so they went in a different direction, I wish they would just say so, speak their truth and then let the public respond. Dodging such questions is wrong. Whatever these public servants decided, however they deliberated, the public has a right to know about those deliberations. Unless they are talking about confidential, personal issues related to individual employees, everything public servants do in their jobs should be available to the public.

This library funding is a tempest in a teapot, compared to many of the other challenges facing Berkeley's public needs. Libraries are one of the best institutions we give ourselves as a culture. Heck, I think public libraries are my absolute favorite public institution.

I would like to hear, from library board and/or staff what factors they considered when they chose the bookmobile they chose. Did they even look at used? Ultimately, of course, they did what they did. Apparently, their decisions cannot, or will not, be undone. But the library could use this dissonance regarding the library remodeling funding to begin a new era of transparency. Just tells us why you made the decisions you made when you spent our money. Give us that. Treat us with respect. Give us the public information that really belongs to us already.



Bruce Love says:
February 28, 2011 at 5:54 pm

I was talking with someone just now and we agreed on a prediction. We'd bet (a little, not a lot — could go either way) that what happens here is that the city dithers around over the South and West controversy, meanwhile proceeding with the North and Claremont branches. Eventually they'll work out how to correct their mistakes about South and West, but only after cost over-runs on North and Claremont (plus the van) eat up so much FF funds that South and West projects can't get started. It won't be the legal expenses that thwart South and West — it will be the direction of funds to North and West during the delay. We'd attribute this outcome, if it occurs, to a systemic creation of neglect of SW Berkeley as a priority by the City. I'll be pleased (and surprised) when the City proves us wrong.



max says:
February 28, 2011 at 9:17 pm

It's the library haters that want to prevent new libraries from being built where the decrepit old West and South and Tool branch libraries are now. Nothing against North Berkeley and the Elmwood but it's the south and west parts of Berkeley that most need new libraries. This is a question of social justice, where a very small group (or is it just the one woman who brought the lawsuit?) from outside those areas who want to halt new libraries in the flatlands. The city is being blackmailed and it's we flatlanders (my library is the West Branch, and I love their staff too) who will end up paying. Maybe all we'll get, thanks to those who fear progress, is a visit from the book-mobile.



Friend of Libraries says:
March 1, 2011 at 7:28 am

Thank you, Max. It is an issue of social justice and equity. The woman who filed this lawsuit lives in the Claremont area. She never participated in any of the dozens of public meetings held with hundreds of neighbors who settled upon the rebuild plan for West and South. In a city with such a progressive population, full of great ideas, it continually amazes me that a few people, selfish at best, think they should stand in the way of public will in this way. Bruce, your cynicism flies in the face of the hopeful and generous plans that our city has come up with for its libraries.

I'm surprised that Berkeleyside was unable to find anyone in favor of the library renovations to include in their story. Remember the 70% of the voters who approved the library bonds? Or the more than 120 people who wrote to city council supporting the plan?



Lee Trampleasure says:
March 1, 2011 at 8:01 am

Politics aside for a moment, I'll be bringing a caricature sketch that Morrie Turner did of my way back in the '60's (at the North Branch Library). The libraries had a summer reading program where we got "Read with ____" buttons with the various Wee Pals characters. At the end of the summer, Mr. Turner came to each library to talk and draw for the kids. I remember that the table he was to sit on the edge of didn't have level feet, so they had me sit on the other side while he drew other kids. At the end, he drew my caricature.

The silverfish got to the edge of my drawing at one point, but I still have the it.



Friend of Libraries says:
March 1, 2011 at 8:23 am

Morrie Turner was an honored author at the public library's authors dinner a few years back. Thanks for the memory of a lovely guy.

Tizzelish: The library held dozens of meetings before, during and after the bond measure passed. These decisions were not the work of staff or bureaucrats. It was one of the more transparent processes I can remember in Berkeley. In those dozens of meetings, the library staff and BOLT did, and continue to, answer the questions you asked. Did you go to those meetings?



Friend of Libraries says:
March 1, 2011 at 8:27 am

Max mentions "those who fear progress". Hits the nail on the head. By the way, this article mentions Peter Warfield and raises him to the status of a valuable commentator on this issue. Mr. Warfield lives in San Francisco. His organization has maybe three members including himself and he has no degrees in library science. Talk about fearing progress. The public library is now an institution with many roles beyond books. He's seems unwilling to accept this. Example: Berkeley Reads is a program that teaches 150 adults a year to read and write (that translates to getting a drivers license, filling out job applications, getting jobs, etc, etc). Berkeley Reads is at the west branch. It will be able to help many more people when the new building is in place.



Library Lover says:
March 1, 2011 at 11:34 am

The headline for this article is somewhat misleading. The branch closures are unavoidable, given the scope of renovation and construction. The branches will reopen and will be vastly better equipped to serve our needs. We're not saying goodbye.

More importantly, the public has been actively involved in the branch planning. For meeting notices and notes, see http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/past_meetings.php.

To review the analysis of the branch requirements and the criteria for selection, see http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/branch_libraries_FMP.php.

The 11th hour proposals from the small group that opposes the South and West branch construction have NO input from the public. The sketches were drawn by an architect who chose not to participate in the architect selection process.

Most importantly, what is it that the opponents to great libraries for South and West want? Preservation and renovation are important considerations – and they are considerations that were part of the public process. Is this additional delay and the resulting delay in services, caused in part by residents of San Francisco, worth giving up state of the art libraries in ALL of our neighborhoods? And if so, can the opponents to our libraries please explain how?



Drama king: Armand Volkas, who describes himself as an actor, rabbi, and psychologist rolled into one, heads Berkeley's Playback Theatre group.

descendants of the Third Reich for a weekend workshop held in an Oakland television studio. The process, says Volkas, included arguing, yelling, drawing, painting, grieving, and playing. Participants acted out one another's stories and dreams. Volkas also asked participants to imagine that it was 500 years in the future and Jews and Germans were commemorating the Holocaust together, and to create a healing ritual for all parties to share. Over the course of the event, through very different stories, both Germans and Jews expressed feelings of pain, guilt, and shame. "At the end of the workshop," says Volkas, "what struck me most were the deep bonds that had been formed."

Building on that initial workshop, Volkas continued to explore the use of techniques from Playback Theater and drama therapy to address personal and collective trauma. Today, the actors in Healing the Wounds of History (originally called Acts of Reconciliation) dramatize stories told by participants, or help group members themselves act out one another's memories.

In one exercise, Volkas shows a historical photo and asks participants to become a character of a nationality different from their own, first through a posture, and then with words and movement. Before these enactments of emotionally fraught scenes take place—for example, a non-Jewish German might play the role of a young Jewish boy raising his hands in surrender, and a Jew take on the character of a Nazi pointing a gun at the child—Volkas uses his therapeutic expertise to help the participants develop an essential sense of trust and safety. Under his tutelage, Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans have come together to explore the aftermath of World War II, and African-Americans and

European Americans have jointly explored the legacy of slavery. Palestinians and Israelis, and Turks and Armenians have also taken part. At these events, the focus is on sharing personal stories—not on arguing over whose version of history is correct. The goal, says Volkas, is to build mutual empathy.

The technique of Playback has been criticized by social change advocates such as the Brazilian Theater of the Oppressed (TO) for just this reason—because it empathizes rather than challenges. "That's a different frame," says Volkas of the activist style of theater created by Augusto Boal in 1971. "In TO, there's a black and white kind of stance about oppressor and oppressed; it can be very shaming. In Playback, we need to empathize with the oppressor as well."

"We are giving a gift to the storyteller," says Roni Alperin, 35, a graceful, athletic actor who joined Volkas's troupe three years ago after working with a Playback company in Israel. "Maybe there is an unspoken emotion that needs to be expressed. We come in and hear what is needed and give the unsaid emotion a stage."

Whether in a workshop or a performance, finding the heart of the story is paramount. "We don't want to reiterate the teller's story but rather to delve deeper and play back the subtext," says actor Ruth Jovel, 51, who has worked with Volkas for six years and incorporates her expressive singing voice into some of the performances.

The company recently took part in The Year of Civil Discourse Initiative, a project of speakers and workshops aimed at easing bitter divisions about Israel within the Jewish community. At Brandeis Hillel Day School in San Francisco, the Playback actors conducted two

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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Wednesday
March 02, 2011

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Reader Commentaries

How a Public Process Led to New Designs for the South and West Branch Libraries

By Judith Epstein

Wednesday March 02, 2011



Todd Jersey Architecture
West Berkeley Library Design View of University St. Entrance



Todd Jersey Architecture
The South Berkeley Library. Photos are of the existing structure, and architect Todd Jersey's rendering illustrates his proposal for remodeling and expanding it to meet current needs. The view from the entrance at the corner of Russell Street.

In 2008, Berkeley voters passed Measure FF “to renovate, expand, and make seismic and access improvements at four neighborhood branch libraries.” In his impartial analysis of the measure, the City Attorney wrote, “Current plans for renovation include restoration and refurbishment of historic features at the branch libraries as part of any renovation.”



Yet, sometime after the passage of Measure FF, plans to demolish and rebuild the South and West Branch Libraries surfaced. Both of these libraries have historic features, and their proposed demolitions triggered an Environmental Impact Report – a public process required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Few people would claim that the branch libraries aren't in need of improvement, in particular, the South and West Branches, which have been historically neglected by the City of Berkeley. While the Claremont and North Branch Libraries have been carefully and beautifully maintained, the South and West Branches have not fared so well. Ironically, the City's pattern of poor treatment of these libraries is being used as reason to demolish them. In an [excellent commentary](#) in the February 16, 2011 edition of the Berkeley Daily Planet, Gale Garcia questioned the social justice of neglecting buildings in less affluent neighborhoods, which leads to the idea that demolition is the only viable

alternative. Sometimes it's not.

In fact, CEQA includes a public process that provides for the submission of alternatives for projects having significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Along with many citizens and organizations, Concerned Library Users (CLU) participated in this public process. CLU had already filed a lawsuit against the City for the misuse of Measure FF funds and a CEQA violation; the latter cause of action was settled. As part of the environmental review process, CLU submitted partial preservation alternatives for the South and West Branch projects, which would, unlike the City's designs, satisfy Measure FF and lessen environmental impacts. CLU hired preservation architect Todd Jersey, who saved the Richmond Plunge, to create these two new designs. These designs save and renovate only the most historic portions of the South and West Branch libraries, while adding new construction to each for a Children's Room, a Teen Room, and extra space for computers, patrons, and staff. These plans satisfy Universal Design practices for ADA accessibility and would meet all current seismic safety standards.

The West Branch Library

Mr. Jersey's design for the West Branch would save only the 1923 adult reading room, which would be restored and moved closer to the sidewalk to make room for all new construction on the lot behind it. This design has some similarities to the City's 2003 plan for the West Branch, which the City abandoned when funding fell through. The restored adult reading room would be about 80% larger than the one proposed in the City's new plans. Like the City's designs, there will new space for computers and a Teen Room. Perhaps the most enchanting element of Mr. Jersey's design is the circular Children's Room surrounded by a garden of redwoods, two of which would be destroyed if the City's plans are implemented.

In all, Mr. Jersey's design for the West Branch would be about 2000 square feet larger than the one proposed by the City, including a larger area for browsing. While both designs have second floors, the City's would be only 700 square feet, and it would be not open to the public. One notable difference between the two plans is the location of the meeting room and the room for the Berkeley Reads program. In the City's plans, these rooms would be on the first floor. They are not dedicated spaces and could be used by library patrons to accommodate overflow, when not otherwise in use. By contrast, Mr. Jersey's designs place the meeting room and the Berkeley Reads program on the second floor, giving them permanent dedicated space. The extra space for patrons on the first floor can accommodate future growth, while the City's plans only accommodate the current level of service.

The South Branch Library

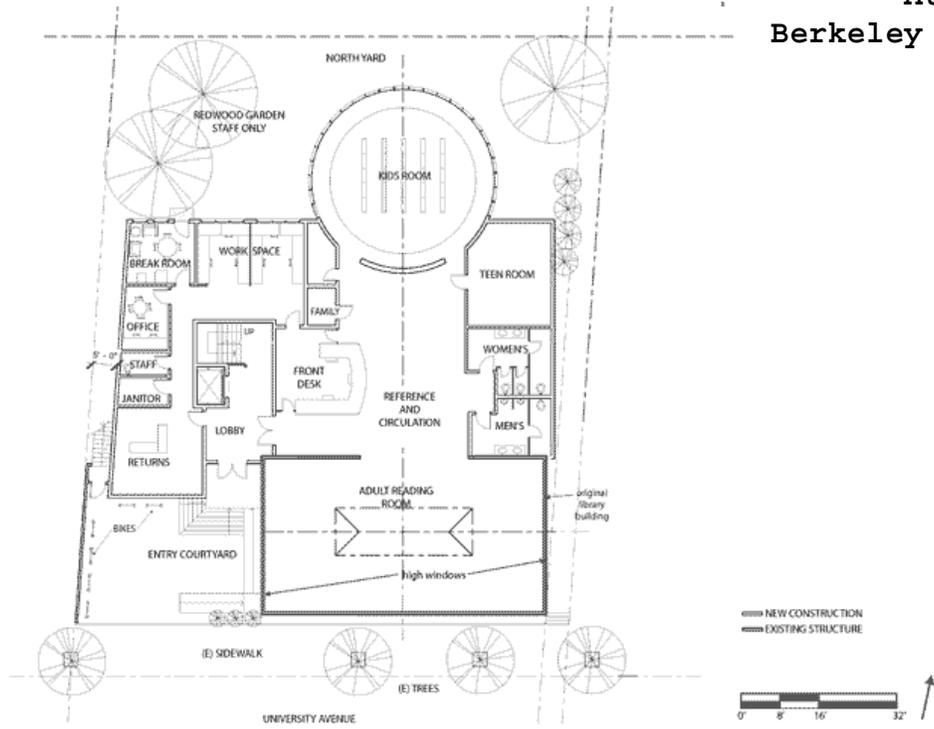
Similarly, Mr. Jersey's designs for the South Branch would save only a small portion of the original library and use the lot in a more efficient way, resulting in a larger structure, including an attached Tool Library. The current Adult and Children's Reading Rooms would be saved and restored. The dropped ceilings in these rooms would be removed, and the circular skylights would again be the major design features. Circular lighting would accompany the skylights, and these design features would be extended into the new construction. Like the City's design, Mr. Jersey's design includes comparable new space for computers, a Children's Room, a Teen Room, and a meeting room; the Tool Library would no longer be separate. However in Mr. Jersey's design, there would be a second floor above the Tool Library for storage, a mechanical room, and a private staff lounge. The library as a whole would be 900 square feet larger than the one proposed by the City.

Responsible Choices

By saving some parts of the old structures, the partial preservations designed submitted by CLU in the CEQA public process are more environmentally responsible. Furthermore, the South Branch design would be considerably less expensive, and the cost of the West Branch design would not exceed that of the City's plan. There is one major difference, however. Measure FF funds could pay for all of CLU's projects. The City Attorney has publicly stated that Measure FF funds could not be used for the demolitions called for in the City's designs. Donna Corbeil, the Director of Library Services, said that the General Fund would be tapped to pay for the demolitions. In these tough economic times, it's reasonable to expect that other programs or services will have to be cut to pay for the demolitions. So the City's plans are pricey indeed.

The City is currently in the process of preparing a final Environmental Impact Report, after which the City Council will decide the fate of the South and West Branch projects. Experienced Council watchers expect for a majority of the Council to reject the designs submitted by CLU.

Dr. Judith Epstein is a member of Concerned Library Users.

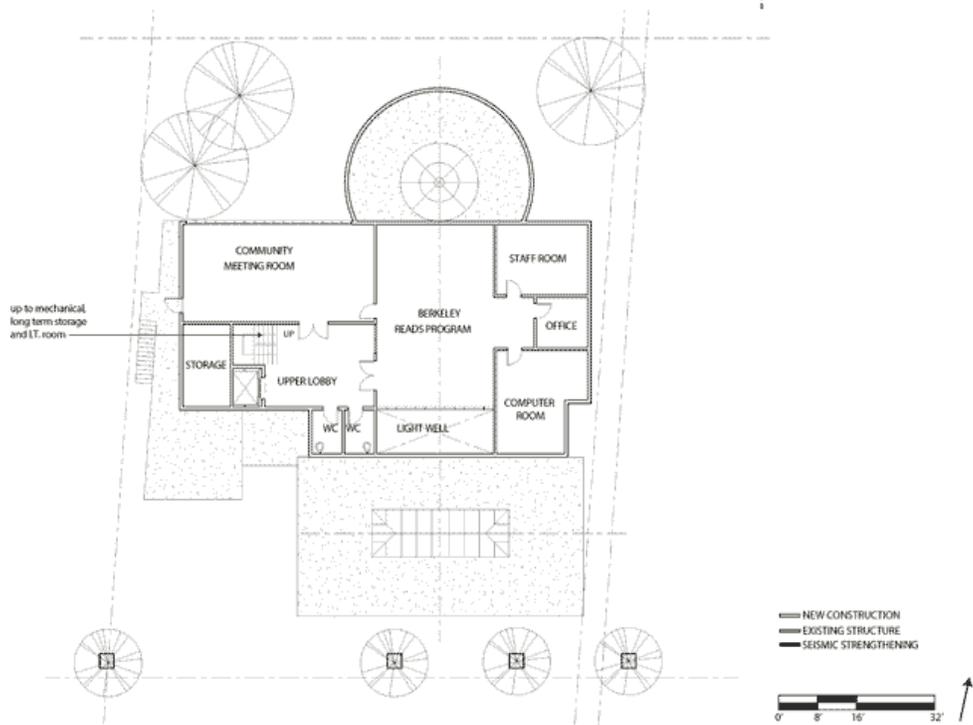


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PROJECT
WEST BERKELEY LIBRARY

SHEET TITLE
FIRST LEVEL
 1/16"=1'

DATE
 1/31/2011

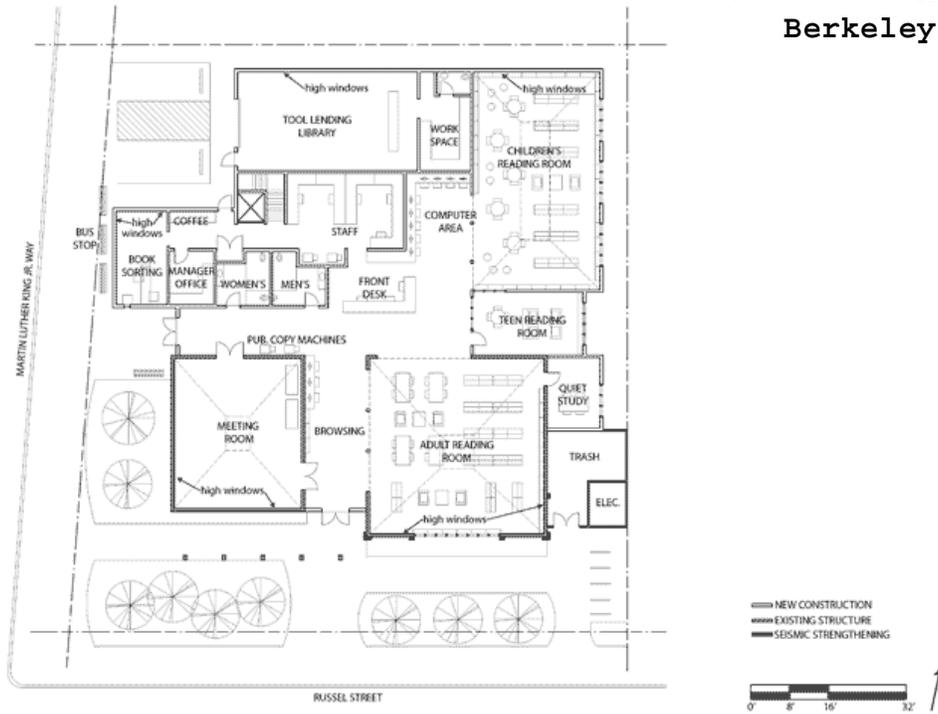


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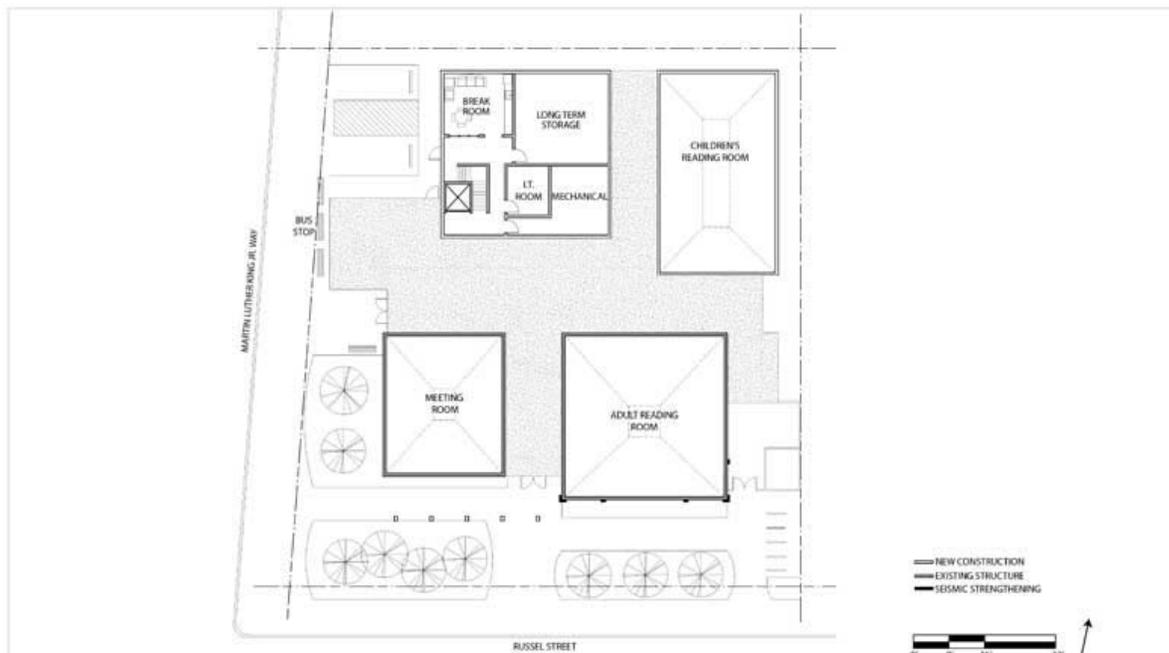


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Response to a Response on the Library Demolition

I found last week's letter from Linda Schacht to be almost incomprehensible. She seems to be responding to a commentary in the February 16 issue of the Planet about the demolition of the South and West Berkeley Branch Libraries, without understanding the content.

The commentary, "The Demolition of Branch Libraries – Not What the Voters Approved" was most informative. Measure FF certainly did not mention demolitions. None of the campaign literature ever mentioned the possibility. Is it actually legal to use bond funding for projects about which the voters were misled?

It doesn't surprise me that the City was less than honest in conducting the public process. I think that the City regards neighborhoods in South and West Berkeley as opportunity sites, rather than vibrant communities, filled with history and character.

As for the rest of the Schacht narrative, I have to question if she is the one who is "seriously paranoid."

Casey Silva

Wednesday
March 02, 2011

[FRONT PAGE](#) [OPINION](#) [COLUMNISTS](#) [ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT](#) [CONTENTS](#) [FULL TEXT](#)

Reader Commentaries

RE: South and West Berkeley Branch Libraries and Zoning Ordinance amendment to allow development flexibility for existing public libraries.

By Carole Davis Kennerley

Wednesday March 02, 2011

As a long-time resident of South Berkeley, a former member of the Berkeley City Council and Vice Mayor, parent and grandparent, I ask that you support approval of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment. I also want to take this opportunity to express my strong support for the Berkeley Library plans for all four branch libraries. I strongly support the demolition and renovation plans for South and West Branch libraries.



As you are aware the Berkeley voters overwhelmingly approved the Measure FF directing the City of Berkeley to issue general obligation bonds not to exceed \$26 million dollars to renovate, expand, and improve four (4) neighborhood branch libraries, but not the central library. When these libraries are renovated and rebuilt, they will be brought up to code standards and fully be able to provide services to Berkeley's diverse population.

In order to follow through on the voter's mandate and complete the branch library projects as scheduled, the library zoning ordinance amendment is vital. I ask that the planning commission adopt the proposed zoning ordinance amendment as written.

Plans are in place to remodel two branch libraries (Claremont and North) and build new libraries in South and West Berkeley. South and West Berkeley comprise a significant percentage of the City's population of color. The proportion of families with incomes below the poverty level is highest in South and West Berkeley. Poverty has a direct relationship to life's inequities such as disease, educational attainment, and life expectancy, etc. At every poverty level, African Americans have higher death rates than all other race/ethnic groups. Race and ethnicity are major determinants of every indicator of socioeconomic position. African Americans are disadvantaged in terms of education, but even given the same education, have lower incomes than Whites.

Access to modern, safe, well equipped and staffed local/branch libraries are important to ALL residents of Berkeley and critical to overcoming the inequities most prominent in South and West Berkeley communities. South and West Berkeley communities deserve the same beautiful, modern, safe and accessible branch libraries as other parts of the City. At one time in our country's history, U.S. Citizens lived under the legal doctrine of "Separate but Equal" until the 1954 Supreme Court case of Brown vs Board of Education. I would hope no one wants to go back to those days—even unintentionally.

But it appears that just might happen. Unfortunately one North South/Central Berkeley resident, Ms Judith Epstein, for a group calling itself Concerned Library Users has filed a lawsuit to stop the South and West Berkeley projects. The plaintiffs reportedly secured their own architect and developed their own plans for South and West Berkeley to "preserve" the buildings; not to build new ones. The plaintiffs bypassed a transparent community decision-making process. Residents of South and West Berkeley participated in the transparent process resulting in a consensus plan to demolish and rebuild South and West branch libraries. Neither is a landmarked building; nor are the buildings able to adequately meet the needs of library users now or in the future. The buildings are not seismically safe nor accessible to the disabled.

If the lawsuit delays the current plans for South and West Berkeley Branch libraries, it could mean that Claremont and North Branch Libraries are renovated and South and West Berkeley's are NOT.

In current and future deliberations, I ask the Planning Commission to honor the transparent decision making process and support the residents of South and West Berkeley who, along with their fellow citizens from all parts of the City, have determined that demolition and rebuilding is the right way to go for the branch libraries in South and West Berkeley.

Berkeley's guiding principle is "community engagement". We believe that residents know their needs and communities best, and that we cannot create a healthy, vibrant city without engaging in true community partnerships, cooperation and collaboration. We build on community assets and strengthen community capacity. I am proud of Berkeley and I know we will work together to ensure the best for our community.

Honorable Carole Davis Kennerly is a former Berkeley City Council member and a former Vice Mayor.

Editor's Note: This letter was addressed to the Berkeley Planning Commission. The correction indicated was made by the editor.