



# FOCUS

The Newsletter of the  
Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library  
Volume 2020 Issue 6  
October 2020



Dick Piernot,  
FTOL President

Friends,

As we have been forced to adjust our daily lives to the reality of the Covid-19 virus, so also have we been forced to adjust to the reality of closed libraries, limited material donations, canceled events, and the resulting reduction in the amount of money that we can raise to support the Library. Fortunately, Covid-19 has not impacted our ability to sell our limited inventory online via

Amazon and eBay, and we have been able to provide more direct support to community organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs) in need of books. We have a dedicated core of members who have been willing to do whatever is necessary to maintain our support and commitment to the Library and to the community.

Despite our perseverance and dedication to the cause, until the Covid-19 pandemic impact is over, we have not and will not be able to provide the Library with the same level of financial support as before. More specifically, during the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year FTOL raised over \$200K, more than enough to meet the Library's request to pay for materials, programs and services. During Fiscal Year 2019-2020 FTOL's revenue due to the impact of the pandemic was reduced by one third. Just two months into Fiscal Year 2020-2021 with no end in sight to the Covid-19

impact, we project revenue of less than one fourth of the 2018-2019 level.

We have been exploring alternative revenue sources since the libraries have closed, but because our success in raising funds has been tied to the sales of donated materials, coming up with new ways to raise funds equivalent to those we have lost has been daunting to say the least. We continue to pay for materials, services and programs provided to the community by the Library, but unless and until the libraries reopen, we shall be hard pressed to continue that support at anywhere near the levels of the past.

Donations can be made online at <http://ftol.org>, or if you prefer to donate by check, please write "Donation" on the message line of the check and send it to:

Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library  
Attn: FTOL Treasurer  
1401 E. Janss Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

*"If you call yourself Save the Whales, every once in a while you have to save a whale." —Tom Ahern*

*—Dick Piernot*

## Telemachus Orfanos

*The Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library thank the Orfanos family  
for their generous donation in honor of their son and brother,*

*Telemachus Nicholas Orfanos.*

*He loved the library and loved to read.*

## Donated Books Helping Kids



Donations of books and media are needed now more than ever before. Beyond the monies raised selling books on Amazon and eBay in support of library programs, we are now giving directly back to the community. Books have been provided to two Boys and Girls Clubs, the Safe Passage Youth Program, Adelante Comunidad, the Westminster Clinic, and the Conejo Recreation and Parks District. To make an appointment to donate books, please call 805-498-2400 or email [sales@ftol.org](mailto:sales@ftol.org).

Janet Doman  
VP Book Sales

## Friends Reunite Family With History

Submitted by Kathy Leslie

When book sorter Susan Bullard first saw the book, she knew it was something out of the ordinary.

"I was sorting in Janet (Doman)'s garage," she said. "Currently we're taking the donated books there for a safe handling period of 48 hours before processing. Janet handed me the book to look at, and right away I knew this was something personal, something special."

The slim volume was dark blue, with *My Stretch in the Service* written in gold script across a pebbled leather cover. On the flyleaf, a black and white photo of a young woman smiled from her perch on a tiled fountain,



which was captioned "Santa Barbara, California," was printed above the picture; a name, an Ohio address, and the year 1943.

"This is someone's journal," Bullard thought, and decided she would take it home to look through, to see if she could find the person it belonged to. The journal had come in with a box of books donated to the Friends of the Library, and she was curious how it came to be in a box of books in Newbury Park, far from its Ohio address.



Between the internet and the diary, Bullard discovered that the author, Jean Krieg Irving, was one of the nation's very first female Marines. A further search discovered an interview that Ms. Irving had recorded, sharing her experiences with the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. As Bullard read further in the journal, she discovered detailed reminiscences and original poetry, and became determined to reunite the journal—if not with the author, then with the family.

Fortunately, since the Friends are now taking donations by appointment to ensure a safe and socially distanced donation experience, they were able to identify and contact Annie Tenwick, Ms. Irving's niece. Tenwick had finalized

Ms. Irving's affairs after her passing, which included donating books to the Friends of the Library. Tenwick was stunned to hear that the journal had been placed into the donated books pile, and overjoyed to hear it had been recovered.

"I had no idea it even existed," said Tenwick.

The Friends were soon able to reunite Ms. Irving's journal with her family, and have enjoyed learning more about her long and fruitful life in the process; she was a playwright, artist, and an award-winning chef; she was one of the first residents of University Village and of course, one of the very first female Marines. Ms. Irving had been the subject of a special



*Acorn* feature in 2018, which detailed Irving's determination to serve her country in WWII, the many barriers she faced before becoming a Marine, and her distinguished career.

"This means so much to our family," Tenwick said, upon receiving the journal. "We are so grateful to the Friends of the Library for taking the time and care to identify the book and to restore it to our family."



As book lovers, the Friends of the Library love a happy ending. We take pride in our careful handling of donated materials, and we're so gratified that that care resulted in restoring a piece of family history to its rightful place.

You can read more about Ms. Irving's life and service career in the *Acorn* archives, in the 11/22/18 edition, and hear her complete interview for the Library of Congress' Veteran's History Project at <https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.82726/>.



A non-profit organization of library supporters dedicated to promoting and enhancing the Thousand Oaks Library System

### 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Online Book Sales Coordinator — Caryl Piernot

Publicity Coordinator — Kathy Leslie  
Cultural Bus Tour Coordinator — Open  
FOCUS Editor — Dan Ruth  
History Book Discussion Leader — Jack Heller

Friendly Book Discussion Leader — Sai Chandavarkar

#### Library Advisors:

Heather Cousin, Library Services Director  
Judi Bumstead, TO Library Volunteer Coordinator

### Board Meetings

Held at 10:30 a.m. the 2nd Monday of each month (except August), currently via Zoom. Members are welcome to attend. Please contact Dick Piernot at [president@ftol.org](mailto:president@ftol.org) for information.

### Focus

A bimonthly newsletter focusing on the Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library, the Thousand Oaks Library System and topics supporting literacy. Submit articles to: FOCUS Editor, Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library, 1401 East Janss Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362 or to the email address that follows:

Editor: Dan Ruth  
Email: [drutheditor@gmail.com](mailto:drutheditor@gmail.com)  
Circulation: 450  
Friends' website: [www.ftol.org](http://www.ftol.org)

### Library Closures

GRB and Newbury Park Libraries are closed to walk-in traffic for the time being; however, the Grant R. Brimhall Library has begun curbside service and is accepting returns. To find out more and request the items you'd like, please visit the Thousand Oaks Library's website, <https://www.tolibrary.org/home>.

Visit our website ([www.ftol.org](http://www.ftol.org)) and join our Facebook page

**Celebrating Your Freedom To Read  
September 27-October 3**

Many books are banned each year. Among them *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, and *The Call of the Wild*.



Sue Soy  
FTOL Archivist

We enjoy the freedom to read, but sometimes take it for granted.

Looking back in the Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library archives to 1992 when Barb Wilson was President of the Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library, I have found a letter from young adult author Louis Sachar. Mr. Sachar is responding to an attempt to remove his book, *The*

*Boy Who Lost His Face* from the Thousand Oaks Library collection. He had this to say in his letter:

“I never write down to children. I respect my readers as mature, intelligent, sensitive, imaginative people. I write stories that challenge kids to think and give them something to reach for. I don’t try to guess what kids like. I write what I like. But as a result, my books have become very popular.

In this particular book, some of the characters use profanity. (And only in a very few places.) I chose these words for the same reason I choose any word in any book. As the author, it felt to me to be the right word. It hopefully conveyed all I was trying to get across about the character who used the word, and its effect on the person to whom he was speaking.

Undoubtedly there are some kids who might giggle at the words. Or they may read the book because they were told it had “dirty words” in it. I don’t think there is anything terribly wrong with that. Adults will read a book because it has sex in it. But I think most kids, and even the kids who giggle on the outside, will appreciate the fact that the author thinks they are mature enough to read books with these words in it, and they will rise to that level of maturity.” It is signed “With best wishes, Louis Sachar.”

Sachar, since this February 5, 1992 letter, has gone forward to write *Holes*, a book which won several awards and has sold over 8 million copies since its publication in 1998. It also was challenged along with several of his other young adult titles. And so it goes...

Banned Books Week gives us the opportunity to reflect on reading as essential to our democracy and as one of our greatest freedoms. There will always be challenges, and there will always be those who defend intellectual freedom and your freedom to read.

For more information about books that have been banned, explore <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks> on the American Library Association website. You might be surprised at what you see.

**Shop at Ralphs for the Friends!**

Register your Ralphs card at [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and select Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library as your organization for the Community Contribution Program. This will earn the Friends from 1% to 4% of your Ralphs purchases—at no additional cost to you! All participants (past and new) must re-register every year at <http://www.ralphs.com>.

**Renew and pay your dues online at**

<http://www.ftol.org/membership>

**OR**

**Complete and mail the application below**

**Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library  
Membership Application**

*(Please print)*

New member  Renewal  Gift membership

Today’s date \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

First name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

*If you provide an email address, the Focus and renewal notices will be sent by email.*

**Membership Level:**

Life \$500+  Sponsor \$100  Patron \$50

Booster \$25  Advocate \$10

I want to get involved! Please contact me about current Friends volunteer opportunities

**Make check payable and mail to:**

Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library

Attn: Membership Vice-President

2331 Borchard Rd., Newbury Park CA 91320

*The Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Check to see if there is a matching gift program where you work.*



Follow us on  
**Instagram**



## The Friends Help Summer Reading Club “Bee” the Best!

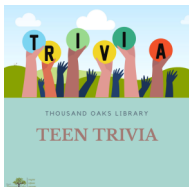
Submitted by Kathy Leslie

Summer Reading Club usually means groups, crafts, programs, stories, prizes. How do you handle that during a pandemic? With groups, crafts, programs, stories, and prizes! Our amazing library staff mounted an engaging, stimulating, thoroughly enjoyable Summer Reading Club online this year, using their skills, imagination, and technology.



This year’s theme was “Bee A Champion Reader,” tying in with the One City, One Book title *The Honey Bus*. And in

spite of all the challenges this year, the 2020 Summer Reading Club had 1,050 readers who logged more than 1,002,224 reading minutes! Yes, that’s over a million! Young readers had access to magic shows, crafts, story times, and more, all delivered virtually in the comfort of their own homes. Staff engaged older readers with challenging creative writing prompts, teen trivia, book and movie clubs, and book recommendations. Adult readers were treated to the library’s “Gentle Reads” recommendations – so welcome during the current stressful times.



At the program’s end, each participant who had earned enough points or read ten or more hours was entered into a drawing; fifty ran-

domly-selected winners received a \$10 Target gift card, purchased with funds from the Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library.

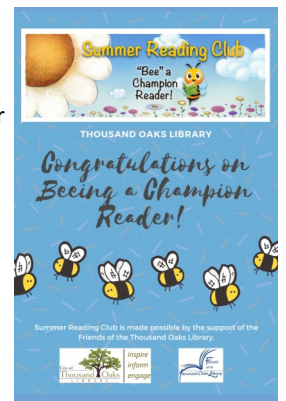
Library staff shared some responses from the winners; from one happy seven year-old prize winner:

“Dear Library, Thank you so much for selecting me as the winner for summer reading program. I was surprised and happy when my mom showed the mail. Thank you for encouraging me to read more.”

And from a happy parent:

“Thank you for your email! My daughter is SO thrilled! Winning this was her only goal this summer!”

The Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library are proud to sponsor this year’s Summer Reading Club, as we have sponsored every summer’s program for over thirty years. We are especially proud this year to support our library and the amazing way the staff has responded to the challenge of providing library services during the pandemic. There’s no library like our library, and it’s an honor to raise the funds that support it.



### New and Renewed Members

#### New Members

##### Sponsor

Leonard Begalla  
Janaki Chakravarthy  
Beverly Craig  
Denni & Nancy Lepon  
Jason Moore  
Karen Sekeres

##### Patron

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Anita Juneja  
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Sandra Newell  
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Barbara Smith

##### Advocate

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T Feightner

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Michio Okui  
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### Remember FTOL on AmazonSmile!

FTOL is an eligible charity on AmazonSmile, so you can shop online and the Friends will receive 0.5% of the purchase price on eligible Amazon purchases.

Simply go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and indicate Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library as your charitable organization of choice. With our FTOL Book Shop COVID-closed, AmazonSmile offers a painless way of supporting your library!

## The Friends Reach Out to the Community!

Submitted by Kathy Leslie

There's a new team in town! The Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library have welcomed Lori Kissinger and Aerin LeDuc-Gummeson to the newly created Community Outreach team. The team, working with longtime members Janet Doman and Bettie Rae Hall, collect, sort, clean and deliver books in good condition to local agencies. From there, the books are delivered to area children, to advance literacy and help families build home libraries.



In just two months, under the direction of team lead Lori Kissinger, Aerin LeDuc-Gummeson has delivered hundreds of children's and young adult books to Safe Passage, Adelante Comunidad Conejo, Los Cerritos Boys and Girls Club, and Conejo Recreation and Park District, all sorted by grade and reading levels. The agencies then hold an event for the children to receive their books. These are joyful occasions, with children thrilled with their new acquisitions and the wide range of titles to choose from. A recent email from an agency said that the children receiving the books were so excited that they literally would not put them away to go home at the end of the day.



Findings published in the journal *Social Science Research* show that a child raised in a home with a substantial number of books will see significant benefits in educational attainment and occupational standing. The Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library are dedicated to the library and to the cause of advancing literacy in the community, and we are so grateful to be working with area agencies to help families build home libraries, which will entertain and benefit their children for years to come.



Currently, Lori Kissinger is working on a big pilot project with the Conejo Unified School District, to connect students at Thousand Oaks High School with the Friends' Core Literature collection. The

database is in the process of being developed, so stay tuned for updates on what promises to be a very successful collaboration.

As the Conejo Rec and Park District put it, "Thank you for reaching out to us, thank you for picking out books our kids are going to love, thank you for taking the time to come on-site during this challenging time and thank you for giving this special gift to our kids." We'd like to add our own thanks—to our team of dedicated community volunteers; to Library Director Heather Cousin and her staff, for their support and facilitating the transfer of donated books to our offsite sorting areas during the pandemic; to the area agencies with whom we collaborate; and of course, to our community, who so generously and consistently donates the gently loved books which make this program possible. To donate, or to find out more, contact us at [sales@ftol.org](mailto:sales@ftol.org) or at (805) 498-2400.



### How Do They Do It?

The GRB Library's curbside service has been a tremendous support for library patrons during the pandemic. Its popularity is attested by the numbers. One Monday morning a few weeks ago, 12 cars were lined up as the service opened, and a recent Thursday saw 340 cars pass through the stations for pick-ups. Here's how it's done.

- Patron puts book on hold online
- Library staff pulls book, checks it out to patron, and puts it in the holding area
- Patron is notified that the book is ready for pickup
- Patron comes to the **Greeter Station** in the library parking lot
- Staff member calls holding area staff for book retrieval
- Book is delivered to the parking lot **Distribution Station** for patron pickup

**Many thanks to the library and its fantastic staff!**





1401 E. Janss Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362  
Return Service Requested

Is it time to renew? Your membership expiration date is printed on your mailing label.

## Monetary Donations Welcome!

Owing to library closures resulting from the Coronavirus quarantine, the Thousand Oaks Library is currently accepting only limited book and other material donations (see Janet Doman's note on the first page). As soon as we know the plan for reopening and resumption of FTOL Book Shop operations, we will post this information on the Friends website.

**In the meantime . . .** Though we continue to sell books through our online sales team, overall we have seen a decrease in FTOL fundraising, which directly affects the library's current and future programs and ongoing collections development. To offset this, we welcome your monetary donation.

The power to keep our library a strong, vibrant community center is in your hands. Your tax-deductible donation helps the Friends of the Library fund purchases of materials, technology, education, concerts, summer reading programs, and more.

Donations can be made online at <http://ftol.org/> . If you would prefer to donate by check, please write "Donation" on the message line of the check and send it to:

Friends of the Thousand Oaks Library  
Attn: FTOL Treasurer  
1401 E. Janss Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

If you have questions or need help regarding your donations, please contact Dick Piernot, FTOL President, at [president@ftol.org](mailto:president@ftol.org) .

**Thank you for your support!**

**THOUSAND OAKS LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
[www.toaks.org/library](http://www.toaks.org/library)

**Grant R. Brimhall Library**  
1401 E. Janss Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362  
(805) 449-2660

**Newbury Park Branch Library**  
2331 Borchard Road  
Newbury Park, CA 91320  
(805) 498-2139

**Both library branches are currently CLOSED to walk-in traffic, though the GRB Library is taking returns and offering curbside check-out.**

**Please visit the library website for more information and status updates.**