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## President's message by Karen Butter



Happy New Year! 2024 marks our 50th anniversary! The first book sale was held in 1974. If anyone has memories of that first sale, we'd love to hear your stories. A task force is working on a number of events throughout the year in collaboration with the Library to celebrate our anniversary. You'll hear more about these events in coming newsletters.

Looking back at 2023, FAL had an outstanding year. We produced a very popular Live @ the Library concert in the spring. We successfully relaunched the Friends Cafe, introducing delicious Firebrand pastries and new healthy food choices. Our wonderful used bookstore, Books for Friends (BFF), continued to increase in popularity and in sales. We held three very successful used book sales in the Library. Moreover, we increased attendance at our remarkable Friends @ Home author and art docent talks, with the quality of the programs increasing each year. All in all, we enjoyed a very successful year.

On a transitional note, five individuals left the Board at the end of 2023: Bill Gibbs, Cathy Peloquin, Billy Reinschmeidt, Karen Roemer and Susan Schonberg. Their work has been instrumental in our progress to date, and we applaud their dedication and hard work on behalf of FAL. Some of these former Board members plan to continue working for FAL in various volunteer capacities. We are delighted to welcome three new Board members: Lydia Kim, Bharat Parikh and Joanne Schneider.

It's not too late to contribute to our [Fall Appeal campaign!](#) Your donations keep our programs going and our library flourishing.

Friends of the Alameda Free Library wish you and your family health, happiness, and prosperity in 2024.

[Join FAL's fall fundraising appeal](#)



Throughout 2023, we have witnessed an incredible growth in participation at FAL's programs and events from the community of Alameda and beyond.

Whether you donated to the spring or fall appeals, purchased tickets for or sponsored Live @ The Library, bought books at BFF or coffee at the Library Friends Cafe, or volunteered your time, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude. Your gifts keep the Alameda Free Library strong. We are likewise grateful for the many patrons who have participated from all over the U.S. and beyond to support our online programs.

FAL received many DAF (*donor advised fund*) grants and employee matching gifts this year (*full list to come soon*). We are particularly grateful to the Alameda County Arts Commission and Rotary Club of Alameda for their generous grants.

Lastly, it's not too late to contribute to our holiday [Giving Circles](#)! We'd be more than happy to include your gift of any size in our year end (*Annual*) campaign report for 2023.

Join the Holiday Giving Circles!



## FAL welcomes three new board members



Friends of the Alameda Free Library Board of Directors warmly welcomes three new members: Joanne Schneider, Bharat Parikh, and Lydia Kim!

Joanne has served on several non-profit boards of directors and is currently employed as a philanthropy advisor, helping funders develop and implement impactful giving strategies. Her skills in event planning and fundraising, as well as her desire to ensure that our library is well-resourced and well-regarded, will serve FAL's continued growth and outreach wonderfully. Joanne resides in Alameda with her husband and two children.

Bharat, a long-time Alamedan, has a strong background in finance and accounting. He brings to FAL a keen desire to deliver quality education and access to cultural events through the Friends' advocacy and fundraising for our library.

Lydia has significant experience in marketing, community planning, writing and creative strategizing. She was a library kid growing up and worked at her college library. Now, she will draw upon that passion and experience to advocate for Alameda's library.

Our three new members bring a wealth of varied skills that will greatly enhance our board, and they are already hard at work! We are truly honored to have them on board.

## Warm up with hot soup at the Friends Cafe

Wintertime brings chilly, rainy weather to Alameda, but the Library Friends Cafe is here to help you keep warm with plenty of treats and hot beverages! Per your request, we've added pita chips to the menu, which will go nicely with the hummus we carry. We also have pretzels and a new, healthier trail mix. Finally, new hot foods! We now serve **Mac and Cheese, Pho, and Chicken Noodle Soup.**



Come in, order your favorite noodle or baked good and crack open your latest purchase from Books For Friends. And keep your eyes open for even more new offerings in the first quarter of 2024!

We had a successful **Hot Cider Days** event on December 15 and 16. Customers received a free mug of hot cider with any purchase from the Library Friends Cafe or Books For Friends. Our patrons were very pleased with the tasty cider and the complimentary mug! We appreciate everyone who stopped by and look forward to seeing you in the cafe again soon.

Thank you for all your support this past year. We wish you all a safe and healthy 2024!

## New BFF tote bags



You can now get a quality tote bag for a donation of \$10. Get yours today and fill it with great books!

To everyone who did their holiday shopping at BFF, we're so glad you stopped by! We had beautiful holiday picture books for children, as well as some wonderful novels for parents. We keep current with holidays, so come by any time (especially during pre-celebration events!). Our regular selections are top quality for exceptional prices.

### BFF Hours

Thursday Noon to 4 p.m.

Friday Noon to 4 p.m.

Saturday Noon to 4 p.m.

- We accept book donations by appointment on Sundays from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Please find donation and scheduling instructions [here](#).
- All our workers are volunteers. If you are looking for a fun place to volunteer, please consider BFF! More volunteers will allow us to expand our hours of operation. Click [here](#) to sign up!

**Shop local! All proceeds benefit the Alameda Free Library.**

## Coming events!

### Online Author Event | January 10



**Author Megan Kamalei Kakimoto**

***Every Drop is a Man's Nightmare***

**January 10 @ 7pm**

Megan Kamalei Kakimoto's wrenching and sensational debut story collection follows a cast of mixed native Hawaiian and Japanese women through a

contemporary landscape thick with inherited wisdom and the ghosts of colonization. This is a Hawai'i where unruly sexuality and generational memory overflow the postcard image of paradise and the boundaries of the real, where the superstitions born of the islands take on the weight of truth.

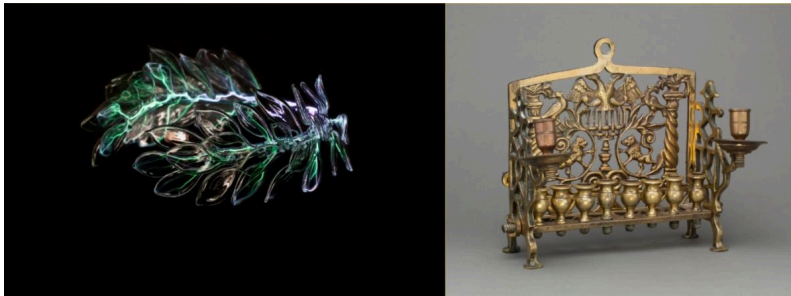
*Every Drop is a Man's Nightmare* is both a fierce love letter to Hawaiian identity and mythology, and a searing dispatch from an occupied territory threatening to erupt with violent secrets.

Megan Kamalei Kakimoto is a Japanese and Kanaka Maoli (native Hawaiian) writer from Honolulu, Hawai'i. Her fiction has been featured in *Granta*, *Conjunctions*, *Joyland*, and elsewhere. She was a finalist for the Keene Prize for Literature and has received support from the Rona Jaffe Foundation and the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. She received her MFA from the Michener Center for Writers, where she was a Fiction Fellow.

To learn more and register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below.



## Online Art Docent Event | January 17



Kamila Mróz, Hanukkah and Sabbath lamp, c. 1875. Well Done—What Was the Cost?, 2023.  
The Peachy and Mark Levy Family Judaica Collection, Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life.

### First Light and Radiant Practices

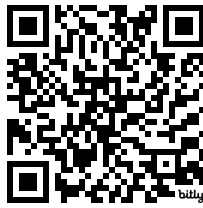
January 17 @ 7 p.m.

Discover the significance of light and its power in Jewish ritual through historic and contemporary objects and art.

In this presentation from The Contemporary Jewish Museum, we will visit two gorgeous exhibitions. We'll explore a variety of Jewish ritual objects featured in *Radiant Practices: Illuminating Jewish Traditions* that highlight the foundational role of light in Jewish life and ritual, both historically and today. Additionally, we'll journey through *First Light: Rituals of Glass and Neon Art* to experience how artists use neon art making as a form of spiritual practice and identity expression, along with the processes that go into creating light through neon.

Our docent for this talk is Ron Glait, the Adult Learning Program Manager and the Museum Technology Manager at The Contemporary Jewish Museum, where he shares his love of art and deep knowledge of Jewish culture and history with visitors of all ages and walks of life.

To learn more and register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below.



## Online Art Docent Event | February 21



### The Art of Volume: Fernando Botero

February 21 @ 7 p.m.

Fernando Botero's unique style is instantly recognizable. His subjects exist in a universe populated by exaggerated beings seemingly larger than life, at once solid and voluptuous. It echoes Pre-Columbian, Classical Spanish and Spanish Colonial Art. His work is an assault on what is held to be timeless canons of beauty and ideal proportions. Botero said, "My painting has two main sources. On one hand they are my views on aesthetics and on the other the Latin American world where I grew up. I also think sensuality plays a great role."

A native of Buenos Aires, Isabel Ballerna has been a docent at Phoenix Art Museum since 2014. She holds a BA in art and is an artist and interior designer. Her works have been featured in art galleries and published in numerous publications, including *Artists of the Rockies*. Isabel is also an avid horse rider and competitor in dressage.

To learn more and register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below.



## Looking for local volunteer opportunities?

Whether you'd like to volunteer from home or in person, we'd love for you to join our team! We are a dedicated group of volunteers working in a variety of ways to raise money for our wonderful library. We welcome fresh ideas and new ways to raise funds.

[Click here to learn more!](#)



## Find us on YouTube



Did you miss a Friends @ Home event, or want to rewatch your favorites? Simply [check our website](#) or subscribe to [our YouTube channel](#) to view the recordings. We record as many events as possible, copyright permitting. Enjoy!



## We need your support!

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