

# FOAL Focus

A Quarterly Newsletter from Friends of the Auberry Library

## FOAL MISSION CONTINUES DESPITE VIRUS

Beginning in March, FOAL programs and events saw some major changes as the state health directives limited gatherings and closed businesses and schools. Here is a summary of activities that were suspended:

- FOAL office hours
- Anne Neal Series: Author Donna Wright
- Children's Book Sale with FES
- Concerts by Eva Scow and Le Petit Strings, Lance Canales and the Flood, and the Laurie Morvan Band
- Art and Music outreach at SHS
- Harvest Festival
- FOAL Benefit Concert

We all look forward to rescheduling these events, and enjoying the rich and vibrant environment of being together and appreciating music, art, and knowledge. However, there are still things happening in our group that we want to share. For example, our annual gift of books to local first graders did happen. Thanks to the sponsorship of the Briscoe Family Foundation, every first grader received two books to encourage reading over the summer.

Also, our annual Membership Meeting did occur. Although it was via Zoom, and minus the hot fudge sundaes, it was great to see and hear each other.

We have resumed our book sales on Amazon, thanks to some amazing volunteers.

We also hosted our first Zoom Astronomy night, where members tuned in for a guided observation of Jupiter and Saturn. Look for future dates listed on p. 6, and on our website.

And lastly, we have resumed publication of the FOAL Focus to reach out to our members and let you know we are still here and thinking of you.

- Submitted by Connie Schlaefer

## SIMONIAN WINS SCHOLARSHIP

FOAL is proud to recognize the 2020 FOAL Scholarship winner: Kassidy Simonian. Kassidy earned \$500. She became involved with the library because her older sister was a volunteer. She explains "I truly believe that volunteering at the library every summer helped prepare me for the first job I ever had." In addition to volunteering 129 hours over the last 3 years, Kassidy has an impressive resume of activities, including intensive academics and a deep involvement in the music program.

Currently, Kassidy is working hard to earn money to live on her own. She plans to attend CSU Stanislaus and major in mathematics, to become a math teacher. With a busy work schedule, she doesn't have many hobbies, just enjoys her down time with her family and her cat. When asked about her favorite book, she responded: "I have too many favorite books to be able to choose just one, though a book that I still have from fifth grade I still will sometimes read now. It's *Clementine*." FOAL looks forward to seeing this young woman excel at her new goals.



Scholarship winner Kassidy Simonian

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Jamelie Taylor

As this long, hot summer returns us to thoughts of school in some fashion, Labor Day and the approach of fall, FOAL staff and volunteers are quietly and safely making a few plans, raising a few funds and supporting the Auberry Library staff in their few requests. I

guess *few* is my current 'most-frequently-used word'.

I can only look forward a few days to a well-planned shopping trip or a distanced outdoor gathering with just a few friends. We each have a few masks that we can use while one or two are drying after a careful wash. I reserve a few books each week because there is more time to read distantly to my granddaughters and, most importantly for the safety of my family, I take as few trips from the house as possible.

FOAL is currently selling quite a few books online each week

thanks to a few reliable volunteers. Loren is planning a few Zoom events that we will publicize as soon as the details are worked out and we have discovered a few reasons to replace the Sohm Garden lawn that is looking unsightly this summer.

Our community has recently lost a few members who were dear to many and our heartfelt condolences go to those families and friends. This is a difficult and challenging time for many and it seems important to move forward a few steps at a time. Stay safe and protect everyone.

FOAL's mission is to

- *Support the Auberry Branch Library as it strives to encourage literacy and lifelong learning*
- *Provide a vibrant cultural gathering place;*
- *Enhance the Library's resources and services;*
- *Increase community access to information and knowledge.*

## FOAL ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

There were no fudge sundaes on the lawn this year, but also no traveling to the library! FOAL members participated in the annual FOAL meeting via Zoom in June.

The meeting was short, with the treasurer's financial report from 2019 indicating that Amazon sales brought in \$7000, the Benefit concert netted \$5000, the quilt show earned \$3000, Escrip (Mar-Val market) donated over \$1000, and dues came to over \$4000. Net investments grew over \$16,000.

The FOAL team has been busy planning for alternate virtual programming, including night sky programs by Carl Dotts over Zoom. Our 2020 fund-raising is ramping up with Amazon and EBay book sales being activated. Jamelie Taylor complimented the volunteers who have worked so hard on book sales. We have received two legacy donations and member dues and donations are always encouraged. It is a very different year but FOAL is still here.

– Submitted by Anne Neal

## AMAZON BOOK SALES

In March, Covid-19 struck and the FOAL office went into shutdown mode. We put all of our online listings into vacation mode and went home. The revenue normally generated by the book vault in the library completely ended when the library curtailed its hours and access. Also due to the pandemic, a book sale onsite was deemed unsafe and had to be cancelled. Amazon and Ebay sales of donated books are a prime source of revenue for FOAL.

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## ZOOM ASTRONOMY

Normally, one of FOAL's most popular summer programs is the Astronomy series, hosted by local amateur astronomer Carl Dotts. The evening events are held out on the library lawn, with one or two large telescopes set up for people to use. The program usually focuses on a celestial event that is prominent at that time of year. These evenings draw anywhere from 25 to 60 attendees, some with their own telescopes.

Adapting to current conditions, this summer Dotts is hosting an astronomy program on Zoom. The first offering was on August 15. Look for the next Astronomy night on September 26, from 7:30-8:30 pm. A Zoom link will be posted on our website - [friendsofauberrylibrary.org](http://friendsofauberrylibrary.org), our Facebook page, and sent out as an email. If you haven't "Zoomed" before, just click the link, and the app will automatically load and open the meeting. If you are not on our emailing list and want to be, send request to Loren Leach at [foalorg@gmail.com](mailto:foalorg@gmail.com).

## FIRST GRADE BOOK GIFTS

As part of FOAL's mission to encourage literacy and lifelong learning, FOAL reaches out to the local elementary schools and visits each 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom every spring. The visiting team normally consists of a couple board members, the program director, and a library staff member. The team discusses the library with the class, including the summer reading programs and children's events. Then, each child is given two brand new books to keep and read over the summer. These children have just learned to read, and the goal is to foster that reading skill and the appreciation of books.

This year, of course, was a little different. Gift bags with library info and the books were brought to the Foothill, Pine Ridge, and Big Creek campuses, and were distributed as each child visited the classroom for the end-of-year meeting with their teacher. Although the team missed out on seeing the happiness on young faces, the primary goal was still accomplished.

Jamelie Taylor usually spearheads this program for FOAL. She notes "I purchase the books from Petunia's Place. The owner, Jean Fennacy, always gives us advice and a generous discount."

The book gift program is sponsored by Valley Iron/Briscoe Family Foundation. They stated: "We are very happy to be part of your organization and the message of "love reading" that you are sending to the children in your community. You can certainly count on our support for another year!" Thank you, Valley Iron!

## LIBRARY LAWN NEEDS A REFRESH

One of FOAL's most well-used assets is the beautiful lawn area in Sohm Garden, next to the library. However, the years, the traffic, the heat, and now the gophers have been hard on the lawn, and it shows. According to FOAL Chair Jamelie Taylor: "The lawn in the garden was originally put in as sod over an organic layer over gravel that was there originally. Over time with weather and wear, the organic matter has disappeared and the gravel worked to the surface producing several brown, dead areas and taxing the lawn mower. We also have some gophers working there as well. Long story short we need to replace the lawn so we are looking for solutions professionally".

Especially since our normal summer programs are not taking place on the lawn, now is a great window to do some care-taking of this wonderful space. The current plan is to renovate the lawn in the fall, after the summer heat dies down a bit. If you have any good referrals for landscaping contractors who do this kind of work, please let Loren know at [foalorg@gmail.com](mailto:foalorg@gmail.com)



The library lawn is having a tough year too.

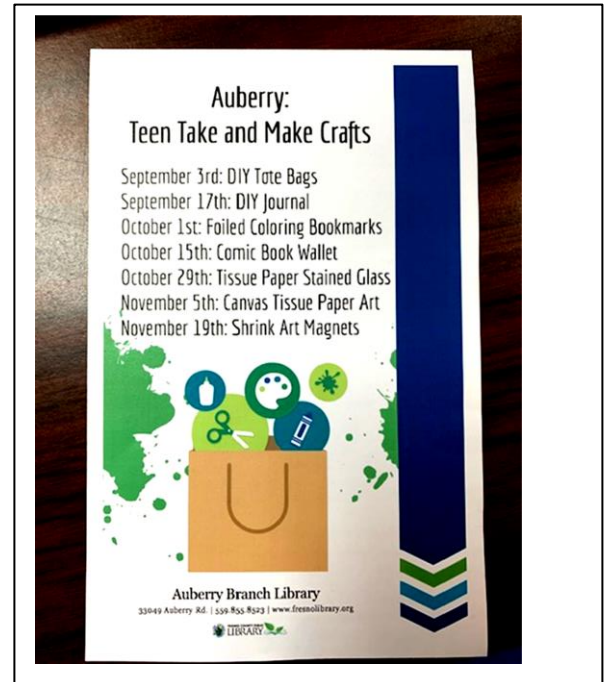
## 4 LIBRARY LINK: HAPPENINGS AT OUR FAVORITE BRANCH

The Auberry Library is eager to serve our community despite the CoVid pandemic. You can borrow books and DVDs as well as participate in virtual programming. The library hours for curbside pickup are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 10-4, Thursday from 10-6, and Saturday from 10-2. You can request items through the online catalog and pick them up at the front door when you are notified that they are available or just browse the display of ready to borrow books and DVDs.

Fall programs will include kits with online video instructions for certain activities like genealogy and chess as well as Take and Make crafts for all age groups. These will consist of bags with all the supplies and instructions needed for the craft and will be available in September.

A Teen Zine is available now that has book recommendations and relevant information on such topics as how to vote, college prep, mental health help etc. Go to the library website: [www.fresnolibrary.org](http://www.fresnolibrary.org) for further information.

- Submitted by Anne Neal



We're on the Web!

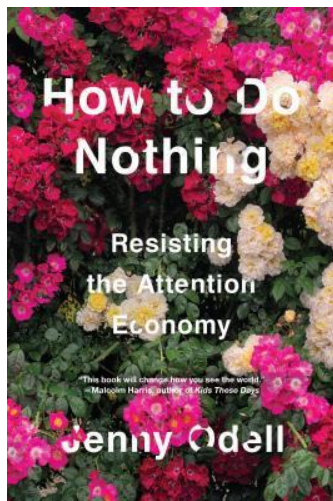
<http://www.friendsofauberrylibrary.org/>

## A FRIEND RECOMMENDS: BOOK REVIEWS

Reviewer: Beth Carr

Genre: Non-fiction, Self Help

***How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*** by Jenny Odell (2019)



You'll find Jenny Odell's book in the Social Science section of the bookstore, and it's more than that. It's also the author's personal story as she investigates the ways in which what she's calling the attention economy robs us of our ability to sit quietly, to locate ourselves in time and space, to observe what is around us, and in that way recover our ability to reflect, to generate ideas, and ultimately not really do nothing, but rather, draw our attention away from sources who use us for profit, and redirect them toward other, more important things.

As the book opens, Odell is sitting in the Rose Garden, a park near her home in Oakland, taking the time to listen to the birds, to watch them, to pay attention to her surrounds, to ground herself in place and time, to allow her thoughts to wander, and gradually, to form into coherence. And that's just what the culture of productivity and attention economy deprive us of, she says. The following thumbnail description comes from the inside cover: "A galvanizing critique of the forces vying for our attention...that redefines what we think of as productivity, reconnects us with the environment, and reveals all that we've been too distracted to see about ourselves and our world."

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*How to Do Nothing* is thoroughly researched, densely written, with extensive endnotes, and I found myself annotating as I read, taking note of important insights. For instance, she contrasts Manifest Destiny—the unbridled belief in forward progress, regardless of what harm may be done in the process, to nature or people—with Manifest Dismantling: the idea that removing, regenerating, renewing are more in line with a future in which we all can thrive. She talks about the importance of preserving public and open space, as well as restoring habitats for human thought.

As the book closes, Odell finds herself in a different park, Middle Harbor Shoreline Park, one of the few in West Berkeley on the Bay. She's again watching the birds, a long list of whom have responded to the invitation that this park represents—to return to a place which had been developed for years, and was now occupied by the Port of Oakland. They'd carved out a small sliver for the birds and the people who come to watch them. Among the birds— the 30 million year-old brown pelican, an old survivor, slowly starting to come back to the area after years of habitat loss. What could she do to express her gratitude for this unlikely spectacle on this day? "The answer was nothing. Just watch." (204)

**Reviewer: Evelyn Howard**

**Genre: Fiction, Contemporary**

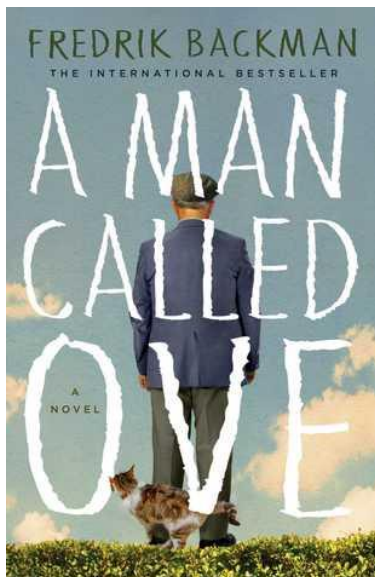
***A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman (2019)**

This is a modern Swedish novel of a grumpy old man named Ove (pronounced Ooo-va). He lives alone having lost his beloved wife, Sonia, sometime earlier. Everything he encounters seems to upset him, from cars driving in the 'no cars allowed' area of his subdivision to the actions his neighbors take from time to time.

He is determined to end it all and join Sonia, but something always foils his plans: the rope breaks, or he worries that the gun blast might wake the cat upstairs. His neighbors are persistent, lovable folks who won't let him get away with his grumpiness. One set of neighbors is a couple from Iran with two little girls and a third child on the way. They move in with a trailer that they cannot back up. Not only do they drive where they are not supposed to, but they cannot back a trailer and it knocks over his mailbox. Ove ends up backing the trailer for them, all the while thinking "a person shouldn't be allowed to vote if they can't back a trailer"! Grump, grump.

Then there is the special couple living next door who suffer the ills of old age and need his help, even though the two men have been at odds for years. The new Iranian neighbor must be rushed to the hospital because he injured himself in a fall from a ladder. Ove drove him to the hospital. Now his wife wants Ove to teach her how to drive a car because her husband is unable to drive. She is with Ove when they discover a cat buried in the snow; is it still alive? A young man comes to his door and pleasantly surprises him with a memory of Sonia as the best teacher he ever had.

What happened to Sonia? Will he ever get to join her? This is a charming, heartwarming book, with humor and some tragedy. I enjoyed it immensely.



## AMAZON BOOK SALES (CONT'D FROM P.2)

In June, FOAL Chair Jamelie Taylor, decided that we should regain the revenue stream that is generated by online book sales. It was agreed that masks would be worn in the FOAL office and volunteers would work primarily by themselves to maintain physical distancing. Aaron Turner, Anne Neal, Susan Smith and Jamelie discussed the logistics of restarting online book sales and worked out a schedule so that only one or two people would be in the office at the same time. Anne and Susan inventoried all of the Amazon books and updated our listings. Aaron sorts the donations and organizes them for sale. Jamelie then takes care of mailing all of the books we sell.

We have been fortunate to have widely-travelled and well-educated book donors. Recently, volunteers have listed books in five different languages: German, Italian, Danish, Croatian and Japanese. One significant donation was an amazing collection of Hollywood biographies, covering Hollywood from the turn of the century up to the 1980s. Another notable donation was a huge collection of genealogy and history books. This donation also happened to include a specialty collection of very popular and highly sought-after historical railroad books. A special local donation occurred when a well-known and beloved teacher retired; we received from her a very nice group of books in German.

Unfortunately, because of space limitations, FOAL will not be taking additional donations until further notice as we still have a large backlog to work through. But please keep us in mind if you have a specialty collection to part with--FOAL will be here for you when the pandemic is over. Meanwhile, enjoy your reading!

- Submitted by Susan Smith

## ABOUT US

### Friends of the Auberry Library (FOAL)

*A registered non-profit since 2005*

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#### FOAL Focus Newsletter

Connie Schlaefer, Editor

The Friends of the Auberry Library would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support:

The AHS Foundation  
The Rotary Club of Auberry Intermountain  
Valley Iron Inc.  
Bonner Family Foundation

## FALL CALENDAR

Saturday, **September 26**. Zoom Astronomy, Focus on the Moon and Neptune.

TBD. Concert via Zoom: Emerald Duo

TBD. Anne Neal Guest Speaker Series via Zoom: Sharon Giacomazzi (she presented the acclaimed Tombstone Tourist in 2018)

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