

## FOAL Focus

**A Quarterly Newsletter from Friends of the Auberry Library**

### FOAL Celebrates New Library Look with Open House Sat Sep 23rd



FOAL and Fresno County Public Library have invested in upgrades for our Auberry Branch

It all began in April, 2022, but I guess it actually began long before when the redwood trees were planted on the northeast edge of the library property. That was probably when the building was a bank in our thriving community. Some of you remember the lit up 'lollipop' sign that was first Security Pacific Bank, then Union Bank and finally Auberry Library. But it was in April that FOAL hired Lite on the Land to remove those dead redwood trees.

The removal went beautifully on a Sunday when the library was closed and they kindly took the logs to my brother-in-law, Joe Taylor. As a huge favor he milled those trees into three hearty planks that we stacked inside for months to dry. They were so heavy when we put them down, and so much lighter a year later.

During those early wet months of 2023, we took the lumber to Brian Terry so he could begin the actual sign. Working from our rough sketches, (Loren's vision actually), Brian and his crew pieced together the wood, sanded and (*cont'd on p. 4*)

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## Chat From the Chair



Jamelie Taylor, Chair

The recent rains and wind are making our garden sparkle and the birds sing. I hope your homes and property weathered the unseasonal surprises as well. Feels like fall is coming and the summer heat is almost a memory.

Speaking of memory, what do you remember about the last book you read? Did you travel in your mind to an unfamiliar place, meet characters you would like to know or who were unsavory? The power of the book to

transport our minds to other times and situations is why the library is such an important part of my life. Of late I've been spending more time there and have made a few discoveries.

Have you ever looked into the California Indian Library Collection (CILC) in our branch? Auberry has a separate room housing one of only a few collections of information as well as sound recordings of language from local tribes. There are wonderful old photographs to look through in the room. Most of the collection and its parts do not circulate but are available during library hours to anyone interested. Some language materials are available for checkout as well as shelves of books on many aspects of native culture. These resources are ideal for research projects and to learn more about our community.

Also in that room is a large map chest filled with drawer after drawer of alphabetized topographic maps. The quadrangle key in one of the upper drawers helps the curious, like me, figure out which sectional maps I'd like to study. These are wonderful for planning hikes or drives, or just getting more familiar with the names of local peaks and washes. Staff may soon move the chest into the larger library so patrons can make use of the maps and more history can be displayed in the room.

Speaking of history look around the walls of our branch next time you are in. Not only is there art work by local creators but also some history of our branch and the people who have made it possible. Spend some time enjoying our library and all it has to offer the community.

## Join Us 9/9 at the Benefit Concert!

The Friends of the Auberry Library's 5th annual Benefit Concert is Saturday, September 9 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. It takes place at the Auberry Library outside on the lawn in the Sohm Garden. Once again it will feature local Blues musician A C Myles. The incredibly talented guitarist and vocalist wowed the crowd last year with his tasty licks and bag of tricks on the guitar along with his superb vocals. Crowd favorites The Mana Fire Dancers are also returning to perform their amazing flaming feats. They are always the highlight of the evening! Another favorite of foothill audiences will be there this year. Ooh De Lolli Ice Pops. Succulent homemade refreshing and quenching desserts in a variety of delicious and sometimes surprising flavors.

This event is our biggest fundraiser of the year and the only time we ever charge money for a program. Please come out and show your support while having a great time. This is fun evening for the entire family. Kids 10 and under get in free! Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased at the door. Online early bird tickets may be purchased for only \$12 through Thursday, September 7 on our website at [www.friendsofauberrylibrary.org](http://www.friendsofauberrylibrary.org) Bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating. No pets, alcohol or refunds.



## Anne Neal Speaker: Forester John Mount Packs the House

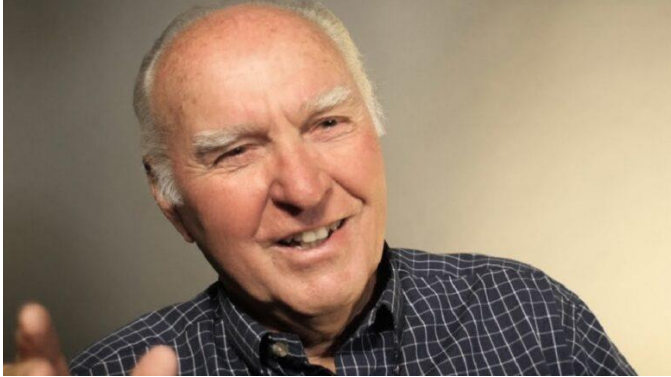


Image from Mount's "Forester for Life" YouTube video

On Tuesday, August 15, award-winning forester and author John Mount gave a talk to a packed house at the Auberry Library. His presentation was part of the Anne Neal Speaker Series, a regular feature of the Friends of the Auberry Library free programs.

The topic was the life of Alexander Von Humboldt, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century explorer and intellectual who studied all details of the natural world. Mount based his talk on the book, "The Invention of Nature" by Andrea Wulf. He selected tidbits from the book to illustrate the

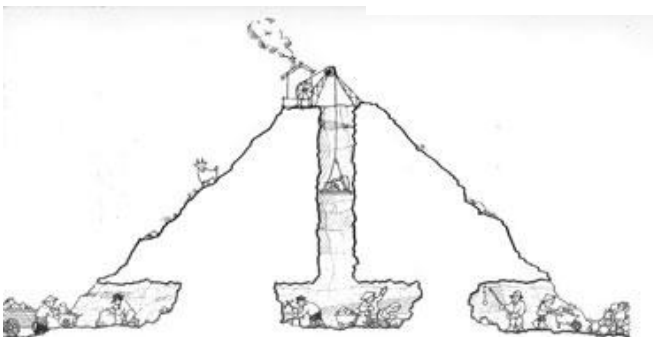
astonishing outpouring of Von Humboldt who measured everything from the blue of the sky to the magnetic equator. He literally traversed the Western hemisphere making discoveries and posing inquiries. He was a celebrity in his day but people generally are unfamiliar with him today, except for the geographical features named for him.

Mount's presentation was as rich and varied as his subject and was impressive in condensing the outpourings of Von Humboldt...John Mount is the retired Edison Company forester who wrote a book titled "Torching Conventional Forestry". He is an enthusiastic and popular speaker with many followers. FOAL was fortunate to engage him and is appreciative of his generosity in sharing himself with the public.



## Next: Ted Gong on History of the Summit Tunnel Wednesday Sept 27, 7:30-8:30

Policy Expert Ted Gong will present a movie and discussion on The Summit Tunnel: A Missing National Monument in Plain Sight. The talk will deal with the history and significance of the Summit Tunnel and the Chinese workers who made construction of the tunnel and the Transcontinental railroad possible. The tunnel complex has been listed by the National Trust of Historic Preservation among America's most endangered places. After the film screening, Gong, the Executive Director of the 1882 Foundation, will discuss efforts to establish the site as a National Historic Landmark and the site's special significance to Chinese American heritage.



Sketch of the tunnel (from Union Pacific Railroad Museum website)

Ted Gong retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in 2009 as a Senior Foreign Service Officer. He worked on policies, laws and operations related to visas, border security, immigration, refugees, citizenship, and consular services. He served in U.S. Embassies and Consulates in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Taipei, Manila, and Sydney and at the Departments of State and Homeland Security. He is the Founder-Director of the 1882 Project Foundation and President of the DC chapter of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. Ted was educated at the University of California in History, University of Hawaii in Asian Studies, and U.S. Army War College in National Strategic Studies. He received a Frederick Douglass FD200 Award in 2019.

## Library Link: Auberry Branch Update

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. Celebrated since 1987 by the American Library Association, September marks the beginning of the new school year for many and as one of the best school supplies out there, the Fresno County Public Library also does a large push to get our youth signed up for library cards.

The theme this September will be on space, in preparation for the annular eclipse that will occur on Saturday, October 14, 2023. Library card holders will get the chance to win their own pair of solar eclipse glasses by participating in a bingo challenge through the Beanstack app. Those that complete the bingo challenge will have a chance to pick up one pair of solar eclipse glasses at any FCPL library, including the Auberry Library.

We will be hosting a Solar Eclipse Viewing Party on Saturday, October 14th. While Auberry is not directly in the path of the eclipse, we should experience a nice partial eclipse that morning. Starting at 9am, Library staff will go over safety measures on how to view the eclipse. Proper eclipse viewing glasses are a must, as looking at the sun without protection can permanently damage your eyes. Eclipse viewing glasses will be provided until supplies last that morning.

Call for Volunteers at the Library

If you have ever been interested in learning more about the library or meeting new people

### Upgrades and Open House (cont'd from p.1)

coated it until it gleamed. Then Justin Gibson worked his metal magic to surround the wood with hearty frames and together these two craftsmen worked out the details of removing the lollipop and using the bottom section (housing the electrical power) to mount and illuminate the new sign.

While Terry Construction and Black Mountain Metal were working on the sign project, the Fresno County staff hired crews to remove the old bank's siding and drive-up overhang. Working around the wet weather

while serving the community, we have volunteer opportunities available at the Auberry Library. The library's wonderful volunteers help us to expand our services and mission to transform and strengthen our communities. Whether you are able to donate 1 hour a week or help with special events, we have a place for you.

Current areas to volunteer:

- Shelving and fulfilling patron title requests
- Bulletin board or library display assistance
- Organizing library materials: To include books, DVDs, CDs, and general library supplies
- Library program assistance

How do I get started?

1. Fill out the Volunteer Application, online or at the library.
2. Our Volunteer Coordinator will be in contact with you after you submit an application.
3. After reviewing the Volunteer guidelines and policies, you can start volunteering.

*Submitted by Jamie Kurumaji, FCPL*

our library building has been resided and painted so that it looks like new.

To celebrate this new look FOAL would like to invite the community to an open house on Saturday, September 23rd, from 12:00 noon to 2:00pm. There will be food, beverages, games and a photo booth. Come get a close up of the library's new look and when you have a chance, thank all of those skilled craftsmen in our community who made the new look possible.

# FOAL Wishes To Thank Our 2023 Benefit Concert Generous Sponsors

Gold Level Event  
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Jamelie & Ron Taylor

Bob & Sheila Larsen

## Astronomy Night: Fri Oct 13

FOAL is happy to welcome the return of the Central Valley Astronomers to guide an evening of stargazing on the Sohm Garden lawn at the library. There will be multiple telescopes set up to focus on various objects of interest. Bring a jacket and perhaps a folding chair. Hope to see you there!

## John Austin: The Floods of '23

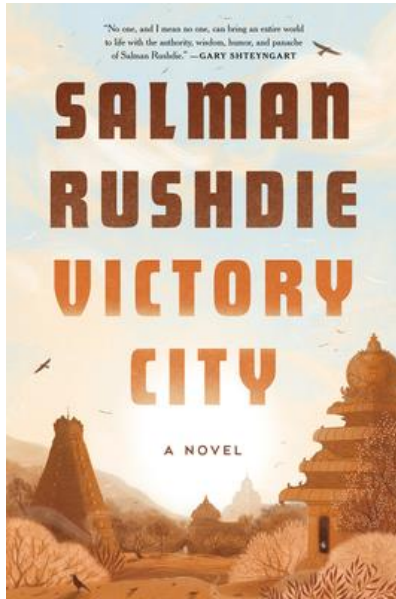
2023 brought a lot of precipitation, storms, and floods from the High Sierra down to Tulare Lake. Author John Austin will share his thoughts on these historic events and put them in the context of our area's history of the last 175 years. Wednesday Oct 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:30-8:30 pm.

## The Neptunes: Fri Oct 27

This is instrumental surf music that is actually a genre born in California. The Neptunes stay true to the instrumentation and the tones of the original bands, playing a combination of vintage covers and Neptunes originals. Kick back and enjoy an evening where the guitars speak for themselves.

## Yosemite History: Tue Nov 7

Illustrated with beautiful old photos, find out why Yosemite was once the most developed winter sports location in the United States. It was even a contender to host the 1932 Winter Olympics. With the blessing of the Park Service and the determination and ingenuity of the concessionaire, the goal was to make the Company profitable during the winter. Join us to hear from author Sharon Giacomazzi how and when it began, as well as how it ended.



**Reviewer: Bev Schubert**

**Genre: Fiction, Fantasy**

**Victory City** by Salman Rushdie (2023)

Only 331 pages long this story reads and feels like an epic. It tells the story of a heroic propheticess, the myth of an empire created, and the historic events covering the span of an incredibly long lifetime. It is a piece of magical realism that parallels the writing of a work that rivals the Ramayana. The narrator imbues the story with detailed descriptions that draw the reader into 14th century India with rapt descriptions of places and events while moving the story along at a compelling pace. Birth, Exile, Glory and Fall are the four parts to the story- a familiar model for a heroic story, but our protagonist is a remarkable female who has been given the task by the Hindu Goddess Parvati to elevate women to equal that of men in an ancient and patriarchal world.

Victory City is the tenderest of Salman Rushdie's works that I have read. His ability to portray the depth of evolution in the characters through this journey without being heavy handed is remarkable. The challenges are timeless, but the empathy, humor and warmth they are presented with are a welcome perspective on familiar themes.

I both listened to and read this novel I enjoyed it so much!

**Reviewer: Beth Linder Carr**

**Genre: Historical Fiction**

**Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague** by Maggie O'Farrell (2020)

Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague opens with a historical note with these three bits of information:

In the 1580's, a couple living on Henley Street, Stratford, had three children: Susanna, then Hamnet and Judith, who were twins.

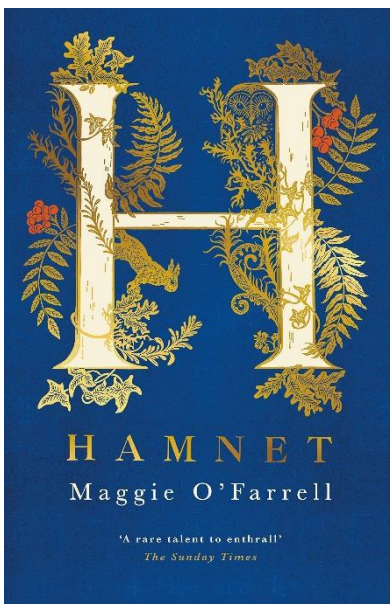
The boy, Hamnet, died in 1596, aged eleven.

Four years or so later, the father wrote a play called Hamlet.

The author, Maggie O'Farrell, is using a strategy here not unlike the playwright who remains unnamed in the text, and whose family is the subject of this book. We know from the very beginning that Hamnet, the son, will die, just as we know from play's prologue—in another of this playwright's plays—that Romeo and Juliet will also die. We're not reading, then, to find out who dies, but rather to follow the story as it evolves, to see how this death affects his community and the people who survive him.

Here's the thing—this is a piece of fiction, even though most of you reading this already know that the characters are actual historical figures, William Shakespeare and his family, about whom very little is known. Maggie O'Farrell fills in the blanks for us, imagining this family's world, creating a story that shuttles back and forth between two different time periods.

*Cont'd on p. 7*



## Book Review: Hamnet (Cont'd from p. 6)

The scene opens in the present moment, with young Hamnet frantically looking for his mother Agnes and grandmother and anyone else who can help him. His twin Judith has just taken to bed with a fever, and everyone seems to have disappeared. The next chapter, though, takes us back several years, to the playwright's youth, a young man pressured by his abusive father to tutor a neighbor's children in order to pay off the father's debt. It's here, at this house, though, where he meets the extraordinary and eccentric young woman, eight years his senior, who will become his wife and the mother of his children. She is the students' older half-sister, a free spirit, friend to a falcon, with the gift of second sight.

These two story lines play out until they meet, the frantic father called home from London when his child falls ill.

The effect on me, as I read the opening lines, was one of extreme unease, and yet even though I knew that young Hamnet would die, I was compelled to keep reading for other reasons. If Judith is the one with fever as the novel opens, how will Hamnet end up the one dead? How do a young man and a

woman from such different backgrounds fall in love? How will their families respond? How is it that the young father and playwright ends up living separately from his family?

I was in awe of the formidable woman O'Farrell created in Agnes: brilliant healer, protective mother, savant... What insight, I wanted to know, would there be into the mind of her husband, the brilliant, never-named writer, even as the main characters remain his wife and children, left behind in Stratford to live with his parents. And most of all, what would Maggie O'Farrell have to say about the way real-life tragedy, loss, and grief can be transformed through art?

As the final scene unfolded, about which I will reveal very little here, I became undone. It was if I had never read the opening scene of Hamlet before, let alone ever taught it. Maggie O'Farrell has performed a bit of magic here—similar to the alchemy that Agnes recognizes in her husband's work, as she watches. A transcendent moment for all of us, characters and reader. You'll see, when you get to the end. You'll see.

### 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.***

## As Amazon Smile Ends, MarVal Escript Card Is Even More Important

For years, FOAL has received a small but steady level of support from users of Amazon Smile and the MarVal EScript card. Both programs allowed users to designate a small portion of their purchase amount to a chosen non-profit. Amazon discontinued the Smile program in February, much to the chagrin of many non-profits, I'm sure. So it is even more important to break out that MarVal card when you make your purchase at our local grocery store.

I will freely admit, I got out of the habit during COVID, and have really not gotten back INTO the habit. So let's all renew that practice together! If you do not already have an EScript card, you can check out this link: <https://marvalfoodstores.org/escript/> or of course, you can also ask at the store. Once you have the card, just have it scanned as you check out with your groceries. Thank you, MarVal for this important community support! - *Connie Schlaefer*

## Autumn Calendar

Saturday Sept 9<sup>th</sup>. **Benefit Concert: Blues Musician AC Myles with guest performance by Mana Fire Dancers.** 7:30-9:00, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

Wednesday September 27<sup>th</sup>. **Anne Neal Speaker Series: Policy Expert Ted Gong on The Summit Tunnel: A Missing National Monument in Plain Sight.** 7:30-8:30, indoors at the Auberry Library.

Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. **Astronomy Night.** 8:30-10:30, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup>. **Anne Neal Speaker Series: Author John Austin on Storms and Floods in 2023.** 7:30-8:30, indoors at the Auberry Library.

Friday October 27<sup>th</sup>. **Concert: Surf Rock band The Neptunes.** 7:30-9:00, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

Tuesday November 7<sup>th</sup>. **Anne Neal Speaker Series: Author Sharon Giacomazzi presents Yosemite, Switzerland of the West.** 7:30-8:30, indoors at the Auberry Library.

Friday November 17<sup>th</sup>. **Concert: Blues Rock with Joel Pickford and the Hellhounds.** 7:30-9:00, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

## About Us

### Friends of the Auberry Library (FOAL)

*A registered non-profit since 2005*

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Connie Schlaefer, Editor

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