

# FOAL Focus

A Quarterly Newsletter from Friends of the Auberry Library

## FOAL TO PARTNER FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> CHILDREN'S BOOK SALE



Happy customers of last year's first-ever book bazaar—a great partnership with Foothill PFA

This spring, FOAL will once again partner with the Parent Faculty Association (PFA) at Foothill Elementary School to bring books to children, and have them leave with books of their very own.

Last year was the first try at this new concept, and it was a huge hit with students, staff, and parents. Classes visited the bazaar, which was set up in the library. For the first ten minutes or so, a FOAL representative read a short piece from their favorite children's book targeted for that age group. Next, the children spent time shopping through the gently used books for items that sparked their interest. Books were available from 25 cents to several dollars for a hard-covered Harry Potter in prime condition. There was also a rack of free books, so every child could leave with at least two books, even if they didn't come with money in their pocket.

Although the primary purpose of this event was literacy, it was also intended as a modest

fundraiser. It raised \$847, which went toward educational programs sponsored by the PFA. Quite a success!

Now through Feb 28th, both FOAL and PFA are again collecting books to offer during the bazaar. Anything from board books (kids loved those for younger siblings,) to children's literature, to how-to books are all great contributions for this cause. One of the most popular topics I observed was animals of any sort, from worms to whales. Here are the drop-off locations:

- Foothill Elementary front office
- Sierra Jr/Sr High front office
- Sierra Unified District Office
- FOAL office (Tuesdays)
- Freight Station

The big event is March 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>.

- Submitted by Connie Schlaefer

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Jamelie Taylor

The final quarter of 2019 ended sadly for the FOAL board. One of our long-term members, Charlotte Gordon, passed away on December 1<sup>st</sup> after a long illness. She will be missed by many friends and colleagues after more than 40 years in our community.

Our paths were interwoven with multiple threads over those decades. I think I first met Charlotte when a group of us decided to form a food co-op at Skyline many years ago. It was a huge success until we all ran out of steam. We next worked together in the foundational years of Tollberry Theater, which featured her husband Richard's on-stage performances many times. Charlotte and I shared strategies and students over the years as special ed teachers for Sierra Unified, and then, after we both retired, we have enjoyed serving the community as volunteers for FOAL.

Charlotte was very handy with a needle, sang beautifully and read widely. She created many handmade gifts for friends and family as well as decorative pillows for her home while participating in several local book clubs. When her girls were young I recall many occasions with Charlotte and her autoharp or piano leading us in folk and holiday songs. More recently she and Richard were part of a local choir traveling to delight audiences with their harmonies. Now she is singing in the angel choir and her voice will be missed by many. Rest in peace, Charlotte.

## FOAL ELECTION RESULTS

In October, the ballots of our annual election were tallied and the results announced via e-mail to our members. This time we had a quorum. As you may remember, in June we did not receive enough ballots returned to achieve a quorum, so we tried again with mailed ballots. The following items were on the ballot:

- Board member Jamelie Taylor was re-elected to a 3-year term.
- The actions taken by the board in fiscal year 2018 were ratified.
- The vote to change bylaw sections 3.01 & 3.07 was approved. This was a proposal to designate members as Associate rather than Voting, so that the voting responsibility rests with the board. The intent is to make the process of governing our organization more efficient which will help in tasks like updating a series of dated bylaws.

We appreciate our members' support as we continue striving to carry out FOAL's mission to the best of our abilities.

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.*

## BAKE SALE THANKS

This year's Bake Sale booth at the 27th Annual Harvest Arts Festival was another resounding success. We raised over \$1,000 from the sale of donated "Home Baked Goodies". Volunteers staffed the booth while a steady stream of friendly faces dropped off their fresh baked goods to be wrapped and priced for sale. We sold everything we had! Once again a huge shout out of appreciation goes to Vickie Maxwell who each year donates 18 of her famous Apple pies still warm from the oven. Her pies have quite the reputation in the community and many of them are sold before they even arrive! Thank you again to the volunteers who staffed the booth and all of our friends in the community who took the time and effort to bake such a variety of delicious goods for this event.

## UPCOMING ANNE NEAL SPEAKER SERIES: HIGHLIGHT ON LOCAL AUTHORS

*Submitted by Connie Schlaefter* Our local literary talent is starting off 2020 with a bang. Authors Sheila Van der Smissen and Donna Wright both have new books to share with the community. FOAL will host events for both this quarter. In preparation, I thought it would be fun to get some background on both authors with a little Q and A.

**SHEILA VANDERSMISSEN: FEB 4**

**DONNA WRIGHT: MARCH 24**



Sheila hints at the global theme of her work



Wright exploring her family history across the nation

Q: I understand you're a local...how long have you lived in this area?

A: *I was born and raised in the Valley, grammar school in Visalia, McLane High and Fresno State in Fresno. I moved to the foothills in 1997.*

Q: What brought you to Africa?

A: *After a couple of trips to Europe, I was eager to see the animals in East Africa as they were being decimated by big-game hunters. I also had a desire to see the Egyptian pyramids. This prompted me to undertake a trip around the world - that took me 13 years to complete as I lived 12 of those years in Sudan - which is the content of my memoir Drinking from the Nile.*

Q: Where did you go during that time?

A: *I lived in Sudan for 12 years, spent several months in Malawi working on malaria research, and one month in Ethiopia presenting CDC workshops. I have visited about 55 countries in my life.*

Q: How did your experiences compare to your expectations?

A: *I really didn't have much expectation; I found that if I researched a country before I visited, I didn't retain much. If I read about the country when I got*

*Continued on p. 5*

Q: What brought you do this area, and how long have you been here?

A: *Tyler and I bought our land and moved to Tollhouse forty-six years ago. Just married, we wanted to get closer to the land and raise our children "country style," same as we had both been raised.*

Q: When did you decide to write your first book?

A: *While I had written for years, from childhood stories to children's plays when I taught at Sierra Elementary, writing a book never entered my mind. Read a book, yes. I'm an avid reader, but writing one seemed (and was) a daunting task. But after retiring, I started researching my family history and wrote a genealogy book, just for family. As I wrote, I bored with the birth/death details and wrote short, italicized snippets imagining those lives. Then, I started a blog so I could add to what I learned and correct any errors I'd made. The stories jumped out at me, begging to be told, and the rest, as they say, is history.*

Q: This is your third book in a series--what was your inspiration behind it?

A: *In my genealogical research, I uncovered the lives of Sam and Abby Payne (descendants of the Payne*

*Continued on p.5*



## THANKS TO MARVAL, SHOPPERS CAN DONATE TO FOAL

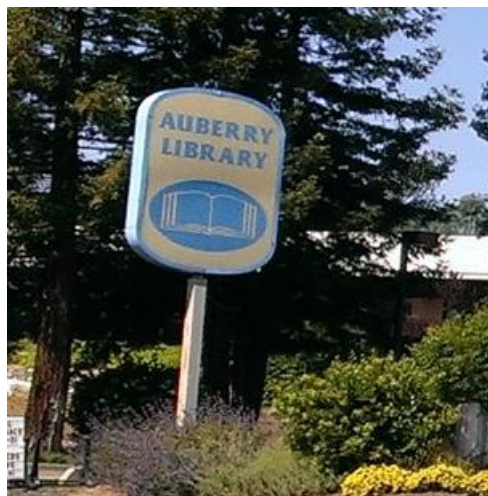


The Community Card is easy to use, and makes a difference!

As a member of the FOAL board, I'm often thinking about how to support my organization and its mission. I also believe in keeping a lot of my business local. When I shop at MarVal, I can do both. I have a MarVal community card, which I get scanned during checkout. One percent of my purchase amount is donated to non-profits that I have chosen through the eScrip program. The hardest part was training myself to pull that card out when I'm paying for my groceries! According to our program director Loren Leach, this simple fundraiser brought in \$901 last year. That buys a concert and student outreach, or funds the teen tour program. Here's to MarVal for participating, and my fellow shoppers, who are helping to bring these programs to life!

*-Submitted by Connie Schlaefer*

## THE SIGNS THEY ARE A CHANGIN'!



The current library sign is aging, and in disrepair. Rather than fixing it, the FOAL board decided to redesign it with one that a) is easier to maintain and b) fits in the new Revitalize Auberry effort with a more country-style theme. We'll be working with the Fresno County Public Library to make sure the update meets everyone's needs. If you would like to contribute to this project, please let Loren Leach know at [foalorg@gmail.com](mailto:foalorg@gmail.com)

*Editor's note: Apologies and thanks to Bob Dylan for his title inspiration*

## LIBRARY LINK: HAPPENINGS AT OUR FAVORITE BRANCH

Join the Big Read! The Fresno County Public Library is excited to be a participant in the 2020 Big Read, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts. One of the goals of the Big Read is to bring the community together "to broaden our understanding of the world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book."

This year's title is *Citizen: An American Lyric*, by Claudia Rankine, an award-winning poet and playwright. *Citizen* is a genre-defying blend of lyrical prose, poetry, artwork and images, all focused on race, racism, microaggressions, and American culture. *Citizen* won the National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry, and was the first work of poetry to become a New York Times best seller for multiple weeks on the paperback nonfiction list.

The "Kickoff" event for this year's Big Read will take place at the Central Library on Saturday, February 8 at 2:30 in the Saroyan Gallery, and will feature local community leaders reading selections from the book, as well as a poetry reading by Fresno's third Poet Laureate, S. Bryan Medina. Claudia Rankine will appear at the Fresno City College Speakers Forum on February 13 at 7 p.m. and after her presentation, will be available to sign books at a reception on campus. Other events centered around the book through February and March will include a panel discussion about race and identity, several poetry readings and workshops, and a staged reading of the book by Fresno State's Deseree Whitt and a contingent of student actors. For a full calendar of events, please visit [www.fresnolibrary.org/bigread](http://www.fresnolibrary.org/bigread).

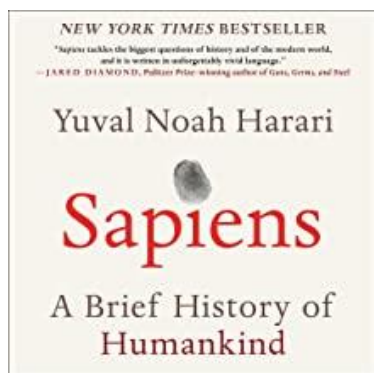
*- Submitted by Jennifer Bethel, FCPL*



**Reviewer: Rick Sexty**

**Genre: Non-fiction, History**

***Sapiens; A Brief History of Humankind* By Yuval Noah Harari (2015)**



This international bestseller explicates the history of the genus *Homo* and particularly our own species, *Sapiens*, latin for “wise.” Harari uses an historical approach aided by the tools of modern archaeology and genetic research to present a fascinating account of the time when at least six different species of man inhabited earth, to the present, when only one remains.

Harari highlights certain pivotal eras of history to chart the tracks of the human journey, a course he deems less progressive or enlightened than many historians would have us believe. Those eras include what he calls; The Cognitive Revolution, The Agricultural Revolution (“History’s biggest Fraud”), and The Scientific Revolution.

This well annotated read will appeal to readers who enjoy science, delight in balanced and rhythmic phrasing, have a sense of humor and a particular appetite for irony.

## CONT'D FROM P.3: SHEILA VANDERSMISSEN

*home, I learned so much more and understood the perspective of its history better. I now have an expectation to find good people in every country, to be an ambassador of goodwill wherever I go. I want to study the history of mankind in order to better understand myself and my place on this earth.*

**Q:** How did your experience change you?

*A: I hope that I have become color blind. That I see people for who they are. My experience has shown me that basically we all care about the same things; family, love, caring, security, and respect.*

**Q:** Can you share the bio from your book cover?

*A: In 1975, an ordinary young woman embarked alone with a backpack on an extraordinary journey around the world. Her travels were interrupted when she reached Sudan and fell in love with a spirited Belgian pilot. Her love for this man grew into love for a country, its people, and the African continent.*

*She mistook bullets for hummingbirds, smelled her first whiff of tear gas, and lived without the comforts of her American home. All her experiences—both personal and professional—reshaped her perspective of herself, the world, and humanity.*

*After twelve years of happiness, tragedy, hardship, and joy, she left Sudan and continued her journey around the world with her five-year-old daughter—and a big suitcase.*

## CONT'D FROM P.3: DONNA WRIGHT

*family in The Forging of Frost. They lived in what is now southern Vermont throughout the American Revolution where The Green Mountain Boys, instrumental in taking Fort Ticonderoga, reigned. The Battle of Hubbardton, The Battle of Bennington, and the Canada campaign took place at their doorstep. How could that NOT be a story? The Legacy of Payne was born of that research.*

**Q:** How has writing changed you, if at all?

*A: Giving life to ordinary people in extraordinary times, to their feelings, concerns, and connections has helped me understand myself better—my feelings, concerns, and connections to community, my place in history. I've learned things I never knew about history and the writing process, and I've made wonderful friends along the way.*

**Q:** Has anything surprised you with this process?

*A: Writing a book is great fun, yes. It is also hard work, requiring long hours. The editing process is endless. It is also not an isolated task (a good thing). In this book, I've enlisted the help of readers (including locals: Shauna Actis, Pam Smedley, and Vicki Clason). I've used the artistry of Linda Zupcic for my maps and that of Pam Mullins for my cover. And I've traveled to Vermont to meet with experts there. How wonderful is that?*

## WINTER/SPRING CALENDAR

Tuesday, **February 4.** Anne Neal Guest Speaker Series. Author Sheila Vandersmissen. *Drinking from the Nile, 12 years of happiness, tragedy, hardship, and joy, living in Sudan.* Refreshments and book signing, 7:00-7:30 p.m. Presentation, followed by Q & A, and book signing, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Friday, **February 28.** Concert - Music Viva Trio. An evening of classical music celebrating Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th anniversary of his birth. Violin, Viola, and Piano. Social 1/2 hour 7:00-7:30. Concert 7:30-9:00.

Friday, **March 20.** Concert - Eva Scow and Le Petit Strings. A tribute to the music of Stephane Grappelli and Gypsy Jazz. Social 1/2 hour 7:00-7:30. Concert 7:30-9:00.

Tuesday, **March 24.** Anne Neal Guest Speaker Series. Author Donna Wright, *The Legacy of Payne* book launch. Refreshments and book signing, 7:00-7:30 p.m. Presentation, followed by Q & A, and book signing, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Friday, **April 3.** Concert - Lance Canales and the Flood. New CD release. Social 1/2 hour 7:00-7:30. Concert 7:30-9:00.

Friday, **June 12.** Concert - An evening of high energy, rockin' blues with the return of 2018 Grammy nominee The Laurie Morvan Band. Social 1/2 hour 7:00-7:30. Concert 7:30-9:00.

## ABOUT US

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### FOAL Focus Newsletter

Connie Schlaefer, Editor

### **Friends of the Auberry Library (FOAL)**

*A registered non-profit since 2005*

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

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**We're on the Web!**

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

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