

FOAL Focus

A Quarterly Newsletter from Friends of the Auberry Library

FIRST GRADERS RECEIVE BOOK GIFT FROM FOAL



FOAL visited Pine Ridge Elementary to bring the gift of books to first grade

This spring, FOAL continued the tradition of visiting local first-grade classrooms and gifting the students with a bag of goodies from the library, as well as three brand-new books for each student. Representatives from FOAL and the library visited four classrooms at Foothill Elementary and one at Pine Ridge Elementary, sharing the word about summer programs at the library. The students each received a copy of “Charlie the Ranch Dog: Charlie’s New Friend”, “Owl at Home”, and a non-fiction selection from National Geographic “Night Sky”. Students responded with observations ranging from books to snakes, to frogs and stars. It was a very entertaining exchange for all!

The first-grade book gift was initiated by FOAL to encourage new readers to practice and strengthen their new skills over the summer. Between the two schools, FOAL distributed 105 gift bags to the

students. The gift is sponsored by Valley Iron, and bookstore Petunia’s Place donates the books at cost. FOAL is deeply grateful for these partnerships in the mission to encourage literacy and lifelong learning.

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CHAT FROM THE CHAIR



Jamelie Taylor, Chair

Summer's just around the bend and the heat is coming. School is almost out for the year and we will all be changing routines to accommodate the weather and vacation breaks. Have you thought about adding volunteering to your lifestyle?

Fellow FOAL Board member Connie Schlaefer and I recently attended a reception at CSUF titled *Spirit of Service*. This annual event honors those students, faculty and community members who spend time invested in service learning and volunteer engagement to benefit others. FOAL was invited as a community benefit organization after enrolling in a 2017 seminar to learn more about how to enhance our role locally. Working with Humanics students, FOAL has been the recipient of two wonderful grants since that time. This specific funding has allowed us to increase our First Grade Book program and

extend our classroom support of SUSD's art education. This year FOAL reached out to the Sierra Foundation and further expanded collaboration within our own community for art outreach.

As you probably know, FOAL's board members are putting in service hours to this community in a variety of ways including working at our book sales, helping at concerts and visiting schools. The Auberry branch of the Fresno County Public Library is an ideal place to volunteer as staff there need extra help during summer months with the reading program.

(cont'd on p.4)

NEW FACES AT FOAL



Program Director Kevin Hill

FOAL is restructuring its support functions into two different branches (and faces!) These faces probably look familiar if you have been around FOAL for a while. In the role of program director, Kevin Hill will be managing the music, outreach, speakers, astronomy, and all the other programs FOAL undertakes. Susan Smith will be running the FOAL office, handling all the administrative tasks for FOAL, as well as office hours.

Kevin has been a presence in both the FOAL concerts and music outreach for many years. He is a professional musician and music instructor



Office Manager Susan Smith

in bass instruments. Born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1978, Kevin lived in China and West Africa during childhood and began performing music at age 12. Kevin has played bass since he was 16 and has been a member of numerous bands in California and New York. In 2000, he attended New School Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City. He is currently working with several different bands in the Fresno area, playing jazz, funk, soul, blues, reggae, zydeco and a host of other styles. Kevin also teaches

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ANNE NEAL SPEAKER: FILMMAKER JOEL PICKFORD

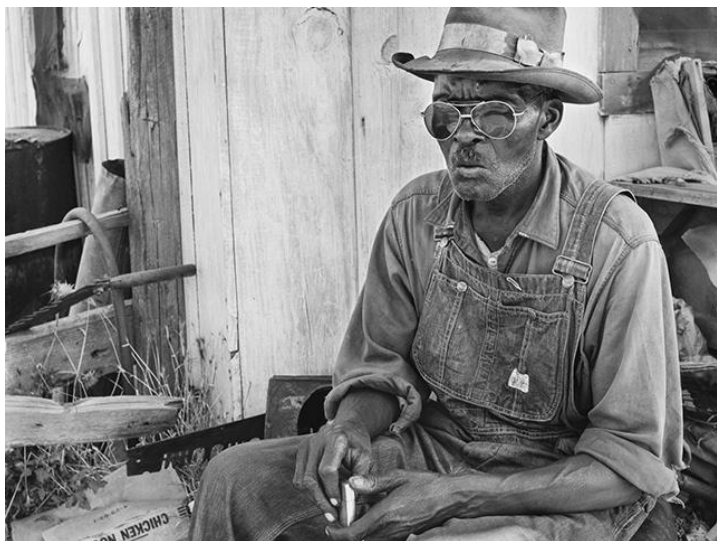


Image from Pickford's "The Black Oakies" (Pickford photo)

as they arrived. Stranded in squalid labor camps, they struggled for decades to bring water and other basic services to their unincorporated communities. Meanwhile, they lived in the shadow of the largest cotton plantation in history—the one created by J.G. Boswell after he lobbied the federal government to drain Tulare Lake and dam the four rivers that fed it.

Filmed in 2004 and completed in 2015, this new documentary by Joel Pickford and Mark Arax lets the last surviving Black Okies tell their story in their own voices.

Filmmaker Joel Pickford will introduce the film and lead a discussion afterwards.

The Anne Neal Guest Speaker Program presents Joel Pickford's documentary film 'Black Okies' on Tuesday, June 13 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. indoors at the Auberry Library.

During the 1940s and 50s, between 30,000 and 40,000 black sharecroppers left the deep south and migrated to the rural Central Valley of California. While the saga of the white Dust Bowl Okies has been chronicled by everyone from John Steinbeck to Dorothea Lange, the story of the Black Okies has gone largely untold--until now.

Arriving in California a decade after the Dust Bowl, many black migrants were put out of work by mechanized farming almost as soon

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER LEXI KIRKPATRICK



Kirkpatrick with FOAL board member Lorraine Doyle

The 2023 winner of the FOAL scholarship is Lexi Kirkpatrick. Lexi has been a long-time volunteer and participant in FOAL programs, and the scholarship committee was happy to recognize her contributions with a \$500 scholarship to help with future studies in welding at Reedley College.

Kirkpatrick has also been an active participant in the Ag program at Sierra High. As an FFA student, she showed swine for several years at the Fresno Fair. She has been recognized by her teachers and counselors as positive, kind, and supportive of her peers.

Regarding her volunteer experience with the library, Kirkpatrick noted "These experiences have given me a sense of purpose and have helped me develop a strong work ethic". This summer, she says, "I hope to continue my work with the library community, and be a part of people's lives every day."

LIBRARY LINK: AUBERRY BRANCH UPDATE

We are happy to announce the Office of Senator Shannon Grove has set-up office hours at the Auberry Library on the following dates: May 26, July 28, and September 29. These times are open to anyone in the public and are intended for Senator Grove's constituents to come sit down and ask any questions they may have. They are also welcoming anyone who may need help making an inquiry of assistance with state agencies.



SUMMER at your Library

With summer coming around the corner and as the end of the school year is quickly wrapping up, the Auberry Library staff have been busy planning and preparing for our annual Summer At Your Library (SAYL) reading logs and fun summer activities.

When does SAYL start? SAYL will begin on June 12th and will run through to July 31st. There will be reading and activity challenges for all ages to participate in this year (including adults)! Reading

logs will become available on June 12th at all library locations.

How do you sign up? On or after June 12th, come on down to the Auberry Library to register in-person, or you have the option to register online using the Beanstack app. You will receive a free book to add to your home library once you do. Once you have your reading log, you'll be able to earn points. The goal is to earn 1000 points so you can complete the SAYL survey and have the chance to win a Fresno County Public Library tote bag.

What else will there be to do in the summer at the library? There will be in-person summer programs at the Auberry Library. There will be programs for children to adults, both in-person and online. Auberry's SAYL children's programs will start on Wednesday, June 14th, at 11am. (Please note that some of these programs are for older school-age children and registration may be required). Teen SAYL programs will largely be available virtually and will include Board Game Arena (on FCPL's Discord channel), What's the Tea (Teen Instagram), and Friday Trivia on Instagram. There will also be Take & Make crafts available for teens this summer on Tuesdays at the library. For adults, there will be a monthly in-person craft in June and July, along with virtual programs on the library's YouTube Channel.

For more information, please visit <https://fresnolibrary.org/summer/index.html>.

Submitted by Jamie Kurumaji, FCPL

CHAT FROM THE CHAIR (CONT'D FROM P.2)

Another opportunity at the library is in reviving the chess program. FOAL has chess sets and timers for players of all ages to learn, practice or perfect their games. Other libraries have teams with whom competitions are possible if our local team could be rebuilt. If anyone is interested, please let FOAL know.

FOAL welcomes ideas of all kinds from our community. How could we provide opportunities for literacies, enhance resources available at the library and encourage its development as a community gathering place? Please participate in what our community has to offer and help us make it more for all to enjoy.

A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing.

- Emo Philips

NEW FACES (CNT'D FROM P2)

lessons on electric and acoustic bass. Kevin shared: "I have been friends with Loren for about 30 years and was always happy to come up and participate in anything that FOAL had going. I was inspired by what he was doing up here and the service that he was providing to the underserved but super great community of Auberry/Prather and the surrounding areas. I am excited to continue the great work that FOAL does with the roadmap that he has laid out over the last couple of decades."

Susan Smith was born and raised in the Chicago area. She moved to Arizona in 1975 after earning her Bachelor's degree in Education and taught 3rd grade. After realizing that teaching did not pay a living wage, she went back to school and studied bookkeeping, eventually landing a job as Financial Contracts Officer for the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe.

In 1982, Susan was hired by Southern California Edison to be a plant equipment operator in Barstow. In 1983, she married Mitch, and he was eventually hired to be a nuclear plant equipment operator at San Onofre, so Susan transferred there to join him.

In 1987, they returned to Arizona and worked at the Mohave Generating Station for over 20 years. During that time, Susan returned to school, earning a master's degree in library science. She continued working for SCE as a special librarian to the Engineering, Electrical and Environmental Compliance departments.

After retiring, Susan came to Burrough Valley in 2012 to join Mitch who was working at Big Creek. Susan began joining several of our wonderful community organizations, including FOAL, the Eastern Fresno Historical Society, the Sierra Women's Club, and the Tollberry Book Club. Susan began listing books on Amazon and Ebay for FOAL, and found the work to be fun and fascinating.

Susan's hobbies are reading, genealogy, birding, wildflowers, cats, movies, music and history. She shared her favorite quote: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." ~Nelson Mandela.

A warm welcome to both of these new(ish) faces to their new roles at FOAL!

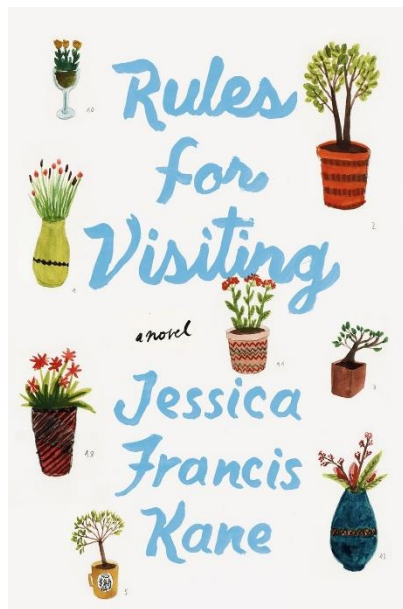
MUSIC OUTREACH: THE TOWER QUARTET



A happy group of Sierra High music students after The Tower Quartet visit to their classroom

Back by popular demand, The Tower Quartet visited the music department at Sierra High to share musical performances, advice, insights, and answers to free-ranging questions from the students. The musicians played pieces in the theme of "musical mimicry", and there was great discussion on how the music evoked thoughts and visions of other things...including chickens! (yes, intentionally) The students were engaged and observant as they watched and listened to the pieces. One of the big challenges was identifying the timing of the piece, with one student coming up with the right (very tricky) answer. The visit was the final student outreach for this school year. FOAL tries to schedule 4-5 per year.

A FRIEND RECOMMENDS: BOOK REVIEWS



Reviewer: Anne Neal

Genre: Fiction, Contemporary

Rules for Visiting by Jessica Francis Kane (2019)

May Attaway, a botanist, works as a landscaper for her hometown. Her care for an ancient Yew tree rewards her with a sabbatical by her employer so she decides to use the time to visit 4 school friends over the course of the year. Following the etiquette guide Emily Post, she learns the “rules for visiting” as well as learning about how to interact with people outside her narrow world at home.

My favorite parts of the book are the essays about special trees that start each chapter.

This is a satisfyingly engaging story about friendship and about trees.

Willing to write a book review to share? We'd love to include it!
Please let us know at foalorg@gmail.com

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.***

THEATER PROGRAM WAS A BIG HIT!

FOAL hosted the first theater program of the year on Saturday, April 22, which was attended by 54 adults and 4 children. It featured an improv comedy group from Roger Rocka's Second Space theater company called Brunch, led by Laurie and Emily Pessano. Followers of Fresno theater are very familiar with that last name. The family has been involved with the theater scene there since the early 1970's, including founding the Good

Company Players. This extremely gifted group of actors incorporated audience participation to give a great performance that had the audience roaring with laughter. FOAL is already coordinating a return visit next year and adding an outreach visit to the drama students at Sierra High.



POSITIVE REVIEWS FOR ART OUTREACH

On March 21, artist Chris Janzen, who is an Art professor at Fresno Pacific University, visited the Sierra High art class. He spoke a bit about his work, especially about using symbols within it, and then did a demonstration, showing some of his process while letting students ask questions.

Here are some comments about the visit from art teacher David Haslett and some of his students:

“Chris Janzen joined our Advanced Art/AP Art class here at Sierra High School, speaking about his background with art, leading to the processes he uses to create. Notably, he spoke about having his ‘sail open,’ using everyday experience and ponderings to create artwork. Janzen stressed experimentation and play as integral to the experience, showing pictures of work he has created which alternated from mysterious to lighthearted to profound. For the final segment, Janzen demonstrated his process, working from a layered piece with ‘china markers,’ layering from images from magazines he and his daughter selected the previous night.”

Said students afterward:

‘It was so helpful to see his process of how he does art, incorporating what is around him in a creative way.’

‘That guest speaker was so good--I was having brain waves the whole time! There’s just so much I want to try now... I can’t put it in words.’

‘I was reconsidering double-majoring with art but now I want to, again.’

Many thanks to FOAL for organizing this event, to the Sierra Foundation for helping to make this possible, as well as to Chris Janzen for bringing such a positively developmental experience to our art students.”

And this from Peter McManus, President of the Sierra Foundation who also attended the outreach

visit (the Sierra Foundation provided matching funds for this outreach):

“As a person with a limited art background, I felt honored and enlightened after being able to “get in the head” of an accomplished local artist whose art has been exhibited internationally. I appreciated the intensity to which the young art students at Sierra High School were paying attention to Chris Janzen as he went through the stages of his art progression from a small boy, undergraduate student, graduate student, and now as an accomplished artist and professor at Fresno Pacific University.

Mr. Janzen continued his presentation by speaking to his personal philosophy about art and tying it into his musical interests as a jazz guitarist. He explained to the captivated students that his approach to his art is very freeform and spontaneous, but it became obvious as he spoke that it is also very focused on the messages he hopes to convey.

All this came together in the last ten minutes of the presentation where he laid his canvas and materials out on the table after explaining his ritual for getting into his creative zone. As he used magazine clippings he and his daughter clipped the night before for inspiration, he went to work inspired by one particular clipping, but soon was using one of the student’s hand as it rested on her face as a model that demonstrated the spontaneity he spoke of.

The presentation came to an all-too-quick end and I am thankful to FOAL for the chance to present this professional and his methods to our high school students.”

The art outreach program at FOAL is sponsored by the Bonner Family Foundation and the Sierra Foundation.

"Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time."

– Thomas Merton

SUMMER CALENDAR

Saturday June 3. **Concert: Rockabilly band Elvis Cantu.** 7:30-9:00, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

Tuesday, June 13. **Anne Neal Guest Speaker Program: Joel Pickford's documentary film 'Black Okies'** from 7:30-8:30, indoors at the Auberry Library.

Wednesday June 21. **Meeting: FOAL Annual Members Meeting and Ice Cream Social.** 6:30-7:30, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

Saturday July 8. **Concert: Rhythm and Blues/Soul band. Ray Moore and the Get Down Band.** 7:30-9:00, outdoors at the Auberry Library's Sohm Garden.

Saturday Sept 9. **Benefit Concert: AC Myles with guest performance by Mana Fire Dancers.** 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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FOAL Focus Newsletter

Connie Schlaefer, Editor

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

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