



Message from the President

Judy Oberlander

The OVLFF board remains committed to supporting the Ojai libraries and the community. Kris Humphries has purchased a large number of young adult books in Spanish for the Little Free Libraries funded by OVLFF funds. She plans to use and place them strategically so that they can best serve the community; they are in high demand and are a popular addition to the LFLs at the public schools. Also, Kara Hooper, in collaboration with Ojai Children’s Librarian Becky Rowe, has created a list of graphic novels that appeal to young adults and foster a love of reading as well as a reading habit. The board has allocated funds so that these books can be purchased for the three Ojai library branches over a period of two years.

Over half of our board members are active volunteers at Twice-Sold Tales, acting as clerks, sorters, or substitutes. Our bookstore continues to be a busy attraction for Ojai locals and tourists alike. We have many customers who visit regularly to check our offerings and bring donations of books and other materials- such as a huge collection of puzzles.

Due to current COVID restrictions we are currently allowing only two customers or one family in the store at a time, and everyone has been understanding and positive about this request, for which we most heartily thank you. We are very appreciative of our volunteers who work to keep Twice-Sold Tales open under the challenging conditions of the last two years. Many customers have thanked us for being open, often noting that it is a very attractive store.

While the board has had to return to Zoom meetings, we hope this is a temporary situation. We look forward to the time when the library is open, the community room is being used, and the homework center is back in operation.



Graphic Novels at the Ojai Libraries

By Kara Hooper

Remember those Classic Comics books we enjoyed as kids. They introduced so many of us to Shakespeare, Mark Twain, The Count of Monte Cristo and other “classic” stories. Well, they’re back- but now they are called “Graphic Novels” and they are increasingly popular with young readers, from developing readers through high school students.

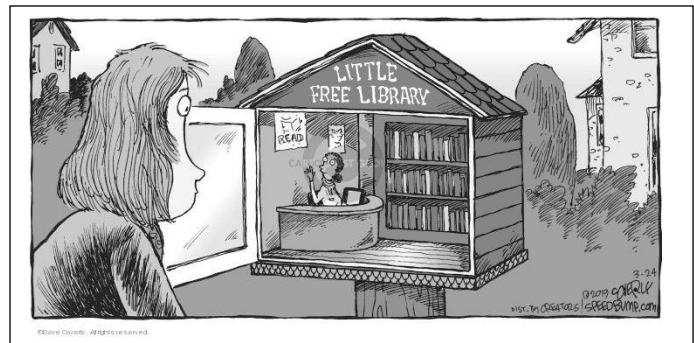
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OVLFF LFL Wins Prize

Kris Humphries (The Friends’ coordinator of all things LFL) entered to win books through the national LFL organization’s partnership with Good Morning America. We have been selected to win two copies of Good Morning America's February Book Club Pick!

February 1st was the proposed air date for the Good Morning America segment. They announce their February Book Club pick and share a map of the 150 Little Free Libraries that received copies of the book--including ours! They will encourage viewers to visit those libraries to find a copy of the book. They may even feature photos of select little libraries on air.

The publisher is shipping out books ASAP with the goal of arrival before February 1. When the books arrive a copy will be placed in a little library. Cool! A bit of national recognition for our LFL efforts.



At its November meeting, the OVLFF board voted to approve a grant of \$12,000 over two years to bolster the Graphic Novel collection at the three branches of public libraries in the Ojai Valley. In concert with the Ojai Library’s new children’s librarian, Becky Rowe, a list of titles was developed and all three librarians from the three valley locations helped shape the plan for acquisition. Look for more Manga, Reina Telgemeier titles, and books like *Dog Man* in the years to come.

The Ojai Library Friends are happy to be part of this new trend in reading, affecting elementary through high school students... your contributions in action.



Board Meddling – Library Director Resigns

By Micah Drew - Flathead Beacon - December 2, 2021

The interim leader of Flathead County’s (Montana) ImagineIF public library system resigned on Thursday (November 2021), citing interference by a board of trustees that devalued the institution by slashing salaries while entertaining motions to censor certain books and materials, particularly those that portray characters who are gay, queer or transgender. One board member stated: “If you look at what we say we stand for as a library, we generally base that on the American Library Association (ALA) and what their tenets are,” referring to the nonprofit organization that promotes libraries and library education, “I find them to be hindering and I don’t find them to be genuine. The fact of the matter is, change is hard, but political winds blow and they blow in different directions... Their line is a radical leftist agenda.” The ALA (American Library Association) released a statement condemning “acts of censorship and intimidation,” noting that it has documented 155 separate incidents of efforts to remove or ban books that focus on LGBTQ+ issues and books by Black authors.

[Note: a PDF copy of the full article is available by sending an email to ovlff121@gmail.com with the word “Meddling” in the subject line.]



Books, censorship, and anti-intellectualism in schools

Emily J.M. Knox

March 26, 2020 - Phi Delta Kappan Magazine (on-line)

Efforts to remove certain books from schools are rooted in a strong belief in the power of books to introduce people to new ideas and to change their minds.

The book plays an outsized role in intellectual life. Because there is a taken-for-granted correspondence between reading books and the life of the mind, research on intellectualism often focuses on how much individuals read. For example, in his article “Anti-intellectualism is a virus,” Michael Peters (2018) writes about a book he read in childhood: “It was the second book I had read and I was 15-16 years old at that stage! . . . I don’t know what sparked my interest in ideas. There were no books in our home” (p. 360). In Peters’ formulation, there is no gap between the ideas that he’s taken an interest in and the books that contain them.

In an article on anti-intellectualism in U.S. schools, Aimee Howley, Edwina Pendarvis, and Craig Howley (1993) discuss what they perceive as a lack of intellectualism among teachers by focusing on their reading habits, noting that care for intellect “involves attention to the thinking subject, the minds of students, and equally important our own minds as those who care for students” (p. 11).

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OVLFF Board 2022

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The board welcomes anyone who is interested in its activities to the Board meetings, fourth Tuesday of each month- while appropriate it is a Zoom meeting; send an email to contact@ovlff.com for a link to the meeting.

Little Free Libraries during a pandemic

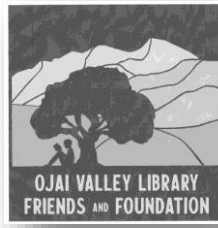
by Kris Humphries

Who would have foreseen the impacts that COVID-19 would have on the library community? Our libraries, bookstore, and schools have cycled through several closures since March of 2020. They have tried modified systems such as online requests and walk-up service and the bookstore moved large volumes of stock outdoors so patrons could shop. Acquiring materials was more necessary than ever before but people were limited by finances, safety concerns, closures, and access. Enter the LFLs!

Our cadre of volunteers have spent the past years loading books into their vehicles and “book-bombing” the LFLs in earnest. We have requested and received large donations of books that were then pushed out to any LFL in need. One local business, Bookends Bookstore, adopted several LFLs in their neighborhood and uses book stock of their own to keep the LFLs full. All these efforts have ensured that the Ojai Library Friends can fulfill our mission by being able to pivot to new and creative supply/distribution chains, even during pandemics.

When the OVLFF began to install Little Free Libraries (LFL) in our community it was with the intent to provide free access to books on a 24/7, 365 days per year basis. The LFLs were to be a complement to our three existing brick and mortar libraries and our bookstore, Twice-Sold Tales.

April is National Library Month. Thank you for being a supporting member of The Library Friends; your membership is an expression of both monetary and political support for public libraries. Do you know of anyone who also should be a supporting member of our Library Friends?



A 2017 grant from the Ojai Women’s Fund helped jumpstart the program at the school sites, private homes and other partners such as the Humane Society of Ventura County and two Ventura County Parks and Recreation facilities.

To date, we have built, installed, stocked and maintained at least 15 LFLs since that grant was awarded and it has been a completely volunteer effort. Our school district has partnered with OVLFF to install a LFL at each public school on the outside area so the LFL is always accessible to the local community. Soon, a second LFL will open at Topa Topa School, one of our first LFL sites. The new LFL was built and sponsored by a local patron who had asked us “How can I help?” In this case the answer was “More space for books!” as the school’s existing LFL is so heavily frequented by the community.

Ojai Libraries and COVID

From Nancy Schram, Library Director

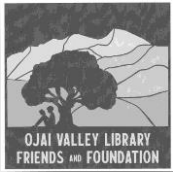
Effective Wednesday January 5, 2022, Ventura County Library Branches and the Mobile Library will be closed for indoor library services, but will continue to provide curbside/walk up holds pick up to provide access to library materials including Computer Kits with internet access. Online programs will continue to be available including a robust collection of e-books, databases, and virtual services such as live homework assistance, chat reference services, and more.

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There are now 45 LFLs in our area; the OVLFF stocks any LFL that asks for assistance or appears to be in need of more books. These books are from you through community donations to our bookstore, Twice-Sold Tales, and from donations left at the LFLs. OVLFF maintains a Google map with addresses and photos of the LFLs in the greater Ojai Valley at: <http://bit.ly/OVLFFLFL>.





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Libraries and COVID - continued

WiFi will be available outside library facilities during normal hours of operation.

Select library programs may continue in-person if they are held outside and with safety protocols in place. We will be working with staff on a case-by-case basis, so please contact your supervisor or me if you have questions about your specific situation and program.

At this time, there will be no change to hours of operation at the library facilities. We may have to make adjustments moving forward.

The safety of our staff and customers remain the utmost priority.



Books, Censorship - continued

My analysis of the discourse of censorship suggests that the people who try to remove books from school curriculum and library collections tend to believe strongly in the power of books. We can understand this attitude if we accept the power of books to change people's minds, which is, of course, the whole point of education. As I tell my students, it is no mistake that my syllabus includes books and articles that I hope will lead them to wrestle with ideas. By the end of the course, I hope they will have integrated these ideas and concepts into their own understanding of the world, even if that means disagreeing with some of those ideas. This process of changing an individual through education is exactly what censors are trying

to control when they target books in public libraries and schools

[Note: a PDF copy of the full article is available by sending an email to ovlff121@gmail.com with the word "Censorship" in the subject line.]

