



## Libraries: a tale of luck and location

By Judy Oberlander

The Ojai Valley is fortunate in that we have three branches of the County Library System (the Meiners Oaks branch is currently closed until it can move into new quarters at Meiners Oaks Elementary School). We are especially fortunate that while the Oak View branch is open 24 hours a week, the Ojai branch is open seven days a week for a total of 55 hours per week. That's more than the E.P. Foster (54 hours), the main branch for the County. We have the best access to a public library in Ventura County. The citizens of Ojai care about their library. In the 1990's when our library was threatened with fewer hours, the community (after more than one try) voted for a parcel tax to be applied to the operation of the Ojai Library. Unfortunately that parcel tax today does not meet the full needs of the Ojai Valley libraries, and the County is currently making up the difference. At some point the Valley libraries will need to have that parcel tax increased to maintain our current level of service. But that's a story for another time.

While Ojai enjoys great access to our wonderful downtown library, the little town of McFarland in Kern County is not so lucky. Their Clara M. Jackson Branch library is currently open only two afternoons a week for a total of 12 hours. This small town of 14,000 inhabitants doesn't have much for its residents to do, and the library, even with its limited hours, is an important gathering place for both kids and adults -- when it's open. But even that small access may be soon taken away. The City Manager, Kenny Williams (who is also the Chief of Police), wants Kern County to turn the building over to the city so that it can be the headquarters for the McFarland Police Department, which does desperately need new, larger quarters. He states: "It [the library] does provide some service, but sometimes you have to judge what's most important ...we would use that building 24/7."

Emma Gallegos, in EdSource, writes: "Money is the key factor in how many hours a library location is open, and Kern County has the worst-funded county library system in California. Kern County is about the size of New Jersey but with more people than San Francisco. It also has more than twice as many children, according to census figures. In rural areas like McFarland, the rates of children are higher: 34.6 percent of residents are under 18. Within its 8,131 square miles, Kern County has 22 libraries with an operating budget of \$9 million this year. By contrast, San Francisco has 28 locations within its 47 square miles with a budget of \$171 million.

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## Remembering Julie

By Susan Bee



As a new widow in 2004, my sister (former Ojai librarian Ann Crosier) suggested I get out of my funk by volunteering for, the library bookstore, Twice-Sold Tales. It was then that I met Julie Rischar. A small bundle of hummingbird energy, she trained me up as a clerk.

Over the years I had the opportunity to work in many capacities beside Julie. Nothing seemed to faze her. A huge pick up load of boxed donated books to sort, clean and shelve did not defeat her, she would say, "Do what you can, someone will come behind you and finish up." And she was right, somehow we always got it done.

Julie had many friends, and she spread her enthusiasm for Twice-Sold Tales bookstore to them, enticing many to work the store. As a former English teacher, she had an experienced eye for the most readable, and thus salable, books. She could work her way through a box of donated books separating the best from the horrid in record time. She taught sorters to choose books with wide appeal, including some that could be considered controversial.

Twice-Sold Tales had two gigantic sales a year, major fund raising events for OVLFF. For the volunteers it was challenging to pull it off requiring organization, physical stamina and the ability to attract dozens of volunteers and hundreds of customers. Again, Julie's community wide contacts were invaluable, pulling in Nordhoff students, Boy Scouts and even people off the street to help with the set up and tear down. She inspired loyalty in the volunteers, motivating us all to meet her high standards.



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Julie was a friend who always had time to listen, whatever your own concern was in that moment it took priority over her issues. I feel fortunate to have known and learned so much from her. Julie died April 6th after a protracted battle with cancer. She was a foundational member who will be missed not only by The Friends, but by the entire community of Ojai.



## Teaching reading: Development and differentiation

Melanie R. Kuhn and Katherine A. Dougherty Stahl  
Kappanonline.com - May 2, 2022

**Effective reading instruction must be flexible enough to address individual students' needs, wherever they are in their literacy development.**

When it comes to teaching reading, we believe that many of the disputes surrounding best practices are the result of taking what is appropriate for some children and applying it to all learners (Kuhn & Stahl, in press). For example, some children become readers with little or no explicit phonics instruction; however, the majority of learners benefit from some form of explicit decoding instruction and need such instruction to make sense of our alphabetic writing system. On the other hand, while some students (especially dyslexic students or those with specific learning disabilities) need a granular, structured focus on the mechanics of reading, most children do not need such an intensive approach, and teaching what has already been mastered makes poor use of limited instruction time.

Given the complexities of learning to read, it is essential to consider how reading develops broadly, the role of each component of reading throughout a reader's development, and the reality that not all readers develop in every area at the same rate. A general understanding of the path learners follow as they grow from emergent to post-transitional readers is critical to understanding reading

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## College bound- and with our best wishes!

Ten years or so ago, the OVLFF acquired a new Board member, Kris Humphries. Her son was in the second grade at the time, an avid reader, and a Twice-Sold Tales bookstore and library patron. Sean became a regular at the evening OVLFF Board meetings sitting quietly doing his homework. He soon was working the annual book sales and organizing sections in the bookstore working his way "up" from Children's to Young Adult to Travel and even Classics. He learned to compute large sales without a calculator and to make change without the help of a cash register; a lost art these days! Eventually he worked bookstore shifts with his mom and then, several years ago, acquired his own bookstore shift on Saturday afternoons. Sean is now graduating from Nordhoff High School and on his way to American University in Washington D.C., and has given The Friends his "notice" so we can find his replacement. We have and have had many long term volunteers with the OVLFF and the bookstore and they all love books, reading, and serving the Ojai community. Sean, however, holds the record for the youngest and one of the most able volunteers.

We wish Sean Reed the best of luck in college and beyond. We will miss him and his joyfulness and thank him for his years of service.



### OVLFF Board 2022

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The board welcomes anyone who is interested in its activities to the Board meetings, held the fourth Tuesday of each month. While appropriate it is a Zoom meeting (send an email to [ovlff121@gmail.com](mailto:ovlff121@gmail.com) for a link to the meeting), otherwise we meet at the Library Meeting Room in Twice-Sold Tales.

development and creating effective instruction across formal schooling. At the same time, differentiation and flexibility in the application of this knowledge can prevent the types of overgeneralizations that keep students stuck in place, whether it's because they need more support or because they're ready to leap ahead. By carefully considering both the reading process and the needs of learners, it becomes possible not only to improve reading instruction, but also to increase the likelihood that every student will develop into a skilled reader.

[Ed. Note: a PDF copy of the full article is available by sending an email to [ovlff121@gmail.com](mailto:ovlff121@gmail.com) with the words "Teaching Reading" in the subject line.]



### OVLFF- Who We Are

The Ojai Valley Library Friends and Foundation (OVLFF) is a volunteer organization dedicated to building community support for and the development and continuation of programs within the public libraries of the Ojai Valley. OVLFF (The Friends) is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

OVLFF is dedicated to building community support to promote and ensure the public library's role as a vibrant center for lifelong learning and enrichment for Ojai Valley residents.

### Dissent in Schools- yes!

By Sarah M. Stitzlein - July 2, 2021 – Phi Delta Kappan Magazine

It has always been challenging to teach young people to appreciate and practice civil dissent, but the hurdles only seem to be growing higher today, as some state legislators pass laws restricting approaches to teaching U.S. history, others propose restricting the right to protest in public places, and the U.S. Supreme Court struggles to clearly distinguish which speech is protected in public schools. These challenges are exacerbated also by a climate of growing political partisanship and distrust of fellow citizens in general and teachers in particular. But the stakes for our democracy are high, and our responsibility to future generations requires courageous action... Rather than shying away from teaching about controversial topics, we should make it a priority to model civic discourse in our classrooms, teaching our students to listen and respond carefully to those who hold differing views.

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



In conjunction with the professional library staff, OVLFF seeks to extend and enhance high-quality library services and education throughout the community. The Friends are cognizant of its obligation to remain aware of and informed about contemporary issues that may impact public libraries. The Friends further accept the obligation to raise funds during this time of reduced government monetary support to libraries, so that the cost of the efforts, services and necessary materials needed for optimal operation can be met.

OVLFF believes libraries are most effective as public-access community centers that encourage literacy, promote the joy of reading, and provide the tools for informed decision-making.



Currently, every branch in San Francisco is open five to seven days a week, but in Kern County, most branches are open two or three days a week. The central Bakersfield library is the only branch open five days a week.

The discrepancy in funding between library systems is a consequence of the fact that California's 1,130 public libraries are funded almost entirely locally. Last year, local governments provided 94 percent of California public libraries' \$1.84 billion. Federal and state contributions typically come in the form of grants for targeted programs."

Libraries can make a huge difference in the lives of children, and nowhere is this more important than in under-served communities. Here in Ojai we benefit from generous County and local support. The people of McFarland are not so lucky.

Two articles were used for the details of this article: Emma Gallegos *EdSource* "A Small Town in Kern County contemplates turning its community library into a police station." (April 18, 2022) and Gustavo Arrellano *Los Angeles Times* "Central Valley town may swap books for cops." (May 7, 2022)



### Erosion of faith in objective information

Mark Smith - *Public Library Quarterly*, Vol. 38, April 2019 – Issue3

Public libraries are at a critical juncture. The continuing success of the institution lies in how we manage through these challenges. These larger social trends are not within our control, but how we respond is. Despite these difficulties, the time has never been better to be a public library director or staff person. We have weathered the

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Erosion... *continued from page 3*

worst of the threats against us and so long as we maintain our integrity, determination, and commitment to our professional mission and values, I believe the public library will endure and thrive long into the future.

The dystopian novel *Golden State Winters* (2019) by Ben H. Winters imagines a distant future where objective truth is society's most important value, and the official record is faithfully guarded by – you guessed it – librarians. Unfortunately, the post-apocalyptic world of *Golden State* has succeeded an unknown and unknowable past in which truth was so degraded that it fatally undermined the foundations of society, leading to the destruction of the world. In other words, a past that looks distressingly like our present.

Those of us of a certain age can remember when people agreed about

basic facts, when science was considered gospel, and we looked up to experts in academia, government, and industry. While research shows that public trust in scientists has remained relatively stable since the 1970s (though only 44 percent of U.S. adults report “a great deal of confidence”) there are deep divides over some issues, such as climate change and food science. Meanwhile, by the same survey, only 37 percent of U.S. adults report that they have a great deal of confidence in medicine and only 13 percent have confidence in the press (Funk and Kennedy 2019).

This trend is troubling because it undermines what we thought would always be regarded as authoritative sources of information and undermines the ability of people to make decisions about their lives, families, and communities. And while the public seems to continue to have a high level of trust in the in the authenticity of information from libraries, I worry that

just as we have seen confidence in the reliability of information from other sources erode, the public could lose faith in the authenticity of information from the library, undermining one of the most important pillars of the library's value to society.

[Ed. Note: excerpted from a longer article: Top Ten Challenges Facing Public Libraries. A PDF copy of the full article is available by sending an email to [ovlff121@gmail.com](mailto:ovlff121@gmail.com) with the word “Erosion” in the subject line.]

