

Friends of the Sausalito Library



Eye on an Era

Anne Walbridge

After 32 years here, Sausalito's superlative City Librarian, Mary Richardson, will be retiring in July. It will be the end of an era. Mary has been at the helm through a multitude of changes, and her tenure has already surpassed even that of her famously long-standing predecessor, Mabel Wosser, who was the head librarian here from 1937-1960.

So what were *you* up to back in 1979? That's the year Mary first came to work at the Sausalito Library, and as you may recall, things were a bit different back then... The library had just moved into its new digs in City Hall a few years before, after occupying part of what is now the Gene Hiller building downtown. The library was a quiet and peaceful place, with plenty of room on the shelves. Instead of banks of computers, there was just one and it was solely for checking books in and out. The other "high tech" included microfiche catalogs, a microfilm reader for newspapers, and a copy machine.

The only audio-visual materials were cassettes and records, for which there was a "listening station" where patrons could listen to a record player through headphones – a very groovy amenity. (Unfortunately the listening station had to go when patrons started singing along too loudly.)

Shortly before Mary arrived, the library was remodeled. It's hard to believe, but the new color scheme was even brighter than it is today. Much of the original furniture, from before the remodel, can still be seen up in the Friends Book Store, on the top floor of City Hall. According to Mary, "The Friends room really captures the essence of what I like about libraries, with people quietly browsing books. It reminds me of the early days of the library here." So, it is fitting that this is where Libby Wilkinson and I sat down with Mary recently to talk about her experiences.

Early Years: Libraries have always played an important role in Mary's life. She grew up just one block away from a library in San Diego, reading every book she could reach, slowly working her way up and up the stacks as she grew taller. She has always felt most comfortable, "being around folks that are curious and like to be alone quietly with their thoughts." She also loves eccentric characters – whether in real life or in stories. As a child, she adored all the old Ealing Studio and Alec Guinness movies (think *The Ladykillers, The Lavender Hill Mob*, and *Barnacle Bill*), many of which she featured here years later as part of the Cinema Rec program.

At UC Berkeley, she majored in Art History while working in the library there, where staff would hand-write the call numbers on the book spines in white pen. She also worked as a telephone information operator, busily plugging and unplugging connectors while quickly looking up phone numbers in the directory – which turned out to be perfect training for being a reference librarian.

The Psychic Was Right: After college, a psychic told Mary, "You will be surrounded by books your whole life." And indeed UCLA Library School was Mary's next stop, after which she headed off to work in New Orleans. As you might imagine, there was no shortage of eccentric characters at the NOPL, including a man tinted blue from ingesting gentian violet, as well as a regular streaker.

Leaving New Orleans and driving around Mexico for a few months, Mary eventually wound up in Northern California. Like so many of us, she got to Sausalito and thought, "Ah, just my kind of place!" She moved onto a boat on the Napa Street Pier, again living just one block away from the library, where she started working as a Reference Sub. The pier was on pilings, so to get home after work at low tide she had to climb down a ladder and jump past the rotted bottom rungs.

Getting Underway in Sausalito: Mary became a full-fledged Librarian II in 1979. "It was heaven!" she says. "Seeing the look on a patron's face when you can connect them with the information they need is so satisfying." One of her favorite memories from this time is running the Cinema Rec program, which featured films shown with a 16mm projector down in the Recreation Department. The audience ranged from salty types to ladies in white gloves. There were times when the film unspooled unnoticed into a mess on the floor, or where the projector jammed and burned a hole in the film —"Pretty much every disaster you could think of" — but the series was a huge hit.

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In 1985, Mary was promoted to City Librarian, the position she still holds today. She started developing the reference and non-fiction collection, focusing on nautical, art and travel books. The most fun part of her job is ordering books and then having them arrive. "It's like Christmas!" She also revived the oral history program, which eventually included a video history of ark row (at the foot of Johnson Street) as well as a series of Alan Watts lectures, for which we still get requests from throughout the country. Many of her favorite experiences come from working with patrons, volunteers and staff. She loves what a vibrant community this is and how much the library reflects it.



Milestones at the Library: There have been countless milestones during Mary's tenure, but one of the first was the formation of MARINet, which was a huge

improvement over the microfilm catalog and allows libraries to share books more easily. She, along with library directors from Mill Valley, San Rafael, and the Marin County Free Library, started working on this in 1988, but it took years to arrive online. Once the groundwork was laid, the rest of Marin's public libraries joined in, making MARINet a tremendous resource.

Of course the flourishing of the internet was a major development. The library added internet stations in 1997 and created its website that same year. While the internet allows patrons access to reference information, it is not a replacement for all reference books since so many cannot be duplicated online.

Over the years, the library budget and hours have fluctuated dramatically. Mary arrived here the same time Proposition 13 was enacted and the library's operating hours were at their lowest ebb: only 40 hours a week vs. the current 63. But 2004 turned out to be a particularly low moment. The library budget was suddenly slashed in mid-year, and it was apparent that the budget would be cut even more the following year. Something had to be done. It was the worst moment in the library's history, but turned into the most shining moment as the Friends rallied the community.

In a town filled with such independent spirits, it can be a challenge to get people to agree on things – but in this case everyone agreed that the library needed to be saved. In the spring of 2004, the Friends created the Centennial Fund with a goal of raising \$300,000 by 2006, the library's 100th anniversary. Between 2004 and 2006 the Friends were able to cover a huge shortfall in the book budget and to raise money for Sunday hours. Unfortunately, Friends President K.T. Kalbfleisch was not able to see her efforts come to fruition: she passed away in 2004, leaving a legacy of the formation of the Centennial Fund as well as \$360,000 from her estate.

The Centennial Fund was the crowning glory of the Friends and Library. As Mary said, "It was really when I realized how the Friends are truly important. The Friends saved the library. All these people who hadn't even been formally involved with the library emerged and worked together in a way you don't often see in Sausalito."

The Sausalito Library Foundation was formed in 2006, with the donation from K.T. Kalbfleisch, and one of its first accomplishments was the Strategic Plan. While many such plans are completed with good intentions and then essentially put in a drawer and forgotten, Sausalito's plan has been followed diligently, and led to such developments as the Compulab classes and expanded children's services. Most recently, the plan has led to the Space Needs Assessment, which will help develop a new layout plan to improve the library's existing space until further recommendations can be implemented.

The Future: When Mary first arrived in Sausalito, the library was in a brand new space, so it's fitting that her departure coincides with the prospect of an even better library space. She hopes that as it evolves, the library remains comfortable and familiar. (However, she wouldn't be averse to having one that floats!) "People no matter how young or old want a library to look like a library – a sanctuary, but with technology. Libraries are so important for the future of civilization... to have a place to meet and talk and have it be free. That's what's so unique about them."

Speaking for her personal life, Mary has no plans other than: "Just relax and then see what happens... Everyone says I'll never know how I ever had time for work." She has friends and family in San Diego, Hawaii and the south of France to visit, but will continue living in Sausalito for the time being, where you'll certainly see her spending time in the library and Friends Book Store.

The Friends and the Foundation

Barbara Geisler and Anne Walbridge

People often ask: What's the difference between the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation? They are two separate organizations, both 501(c)(3) nonprofits, working in various ways to support the Sausalito Library. *To which do I belong?* If you're receiving this newsletter, you are a member of the Friends, and we thank you for keeping your membership current through payment of your annual dues. You're a Foundation member if you've donated to the Foundation directly. The Foundation solicits annual gifts from the community and with these donations builds the fund that finances its grants. So how do they differ? Essentially, the Friends handle immediate needs while the Foundation lends long-term support. The Friends of the Sausalito Library was founded in 1961. It provides financial support for short-term needs and furnishes volunteer assistance ...

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- "Wish list" items These include computer classes, museum passes, children's programs, and the Speaker Series events. As you may have noticed, there is a lot happening in the library these days!
- Book budget Over the past seven years, the Friends have contributed a whopping \$272,000 toward our public library's book budget. Fortunately, this year the City has provided the bulk of the book budget but, as you can see, Friends support is crucial for this core aspect of the library.
- Volunteers Circulation desk volunteers logged about 300 hours last year and that's just part of the volunteer support the
 Friends provide. Volunteers also keep the Friends Book Store open 10 hours a week and put in extra hours receiving, sorting,
 and displaying used-book donations from the community. Revenue from the book sales provides the lion's share of income for
 the Friends.

The Sausalito Library Foundation was established in 2006 and is sustained with financial contributions from the community. It supports the Library through special programs and projects and helps provide long-term financial stability. In its first three years the Foundation funded the Library's strategic plan and the Library's Early Childhood Services program. In partnership with others, the Foundation also underwrote a computer lab and the digitization of the *Sausalito News* from 1895 to 1922. A current grant has enabled the hiring of a library planning and interior design firm to look at our library's physical space, assess its ability to serve the community, and identify strategies to 1) more effectively use the space we have and 2) recommend plans for the future. Donations and bequests to the Foundation are used to maintain a revenue source that supplements public funding and helps ensure that our Library remains a current and relevant resource for our community in the years to come.

The Friends and the Foundation are two different organizations that work independently, but in support of each other and with a common goal: To help the Library's able staff and its governing body, the Library Board of Trustees, maintain excellence in a most valuable community resource. One of the reasons Sausalito is such a vibrant place to live is *you*, the enthusiastic residents. Our wonderful Library serves a central role in our town – it's been called Sausalito's "living room" – but can't do so without the community's help. Speaking for both the Friends and the Foundation, we *thank you* for your support.

MARINet

Jim Delano

MARINet is a consortium of the libraries of Marin County that was conceived in 1988, began to operate in 1993 (with Sausalito a founding member), and was expanded by 2001 to include all public libraries in Marin. A plan to include Dominican University is currently underway.

What is in it for you? More than 365,000 books, audio-visual materials and downloadable materials. While you enjoy the familiarity and benefits of our Sausalito Library you have access to the full range of materials held by all the public libraries in Marin County.

How does it work? MARINet maintains an electronic database of the materials held by all of the member libraries. Patrons can search this catalog from within or outside the library. Any desired items can be requested on line, and for the modest fee of \$.50 per item, be delivered to a local library. E-mail notices advise patrons when materials are ready for pickup and remind them when they are due. To make this happen about 5000 items move between the member libraries every weekday. The system also allows patrons to return materials to any member library for return to the home library. It allows patrons to pay fees and fines online.

How much is it used? Patrons search the catalog about 200,000 times a month. Two thirds of those searches originate outside the libraries, from homes, offices and via mobile devices such as the iPhone, iPad, and Blackberry and Android phones. About a quarter of those accesses are used to request items, pay fines or request renewals.

Is it limited to libraries in the system? No. External search links allow borrowing from some other libraries outside MARINet.

What else is available through MARINet? Many catalog entries include an image of the dust jacket, a brief summary of the book and even an excerpt, and ...

- Connections to external databases allow access to newspapers and magazines and other resources. EBooks and some audio materials may be borrowed and used by patrons outside the library.
- If you have ever been unable to recall the title or author of a book you have read, you will appreciate the ability, with MARINet, to maintain a reading history. Turn this feature on when logged into your account, and all materials you check out thereafter will be recorded. This is a private list, and you can discontinue at any time.
- Help in using the system to full potential is available through tutorials (at the MARINet main page) and FAQs at the MARINet main page and from reference librarians at local libraries.

If you haven't done so already, get a PIN (personal identification number) associated with your library card. Instructions for doing this are found in a tutorial on the MARINet main page. It is simple, fast, and will provide you with all the features of this amazing resource.

Book Store News

Libby Wilkinson

Last month, the Friends Book Store was given a very impressive donation. A Friend invited us in to raid her magnificent library and carry away anything we wished. So, Forest (out internet book sales guru), armed with his trusty scanner, and I spent an exciting morning gathering stacks of beautiful and valuable art book for sale on Amazon. So far this contribution clocks in at over \$3500 in potential sales. Thank you, thank you, good Friend!

And, while we are on the subject of heartfelt thank yous, we would like to offer many more to all of our faithful Friends who, week after week, come in with bags and boxes of book donations. You are the ones who keep our doors open and keep that essential extra money flowing to our library.

You may have noticed that we have been experimenting with different locations for book donation drop-offs. We have finally settled on taking donations in the library, as well as in the upstairs hallway outside of the book store. If you are making a large donation of multiple boxes and bags, we would greatly appreciate it if you could arrange to bring them in during store hours. This will not only reduce the chance of pilferage, but allow us to help you with the toting. Notice that we have extended our Monday hours to 5PM. If our hours don't work with your schedule, please give me a ring at 332-0206 and I will arrange to meet you at City Hall at your convenience. Your donations are important!

The Nominating Committee of Friends submits the following slate of officers for the Friends' Board 2011 - 2012

President
Anne Walbridge

1st Vice President/Membership
John Hefler
2nd Vice President/Booksales
Myralin Whitaker
Treasurer
Stephanie Leonard
Secretary
Jeannette Sims

The election will be held at the Friends' general meeting at the

Friends' Book Store Tuesday, May 3rd at 7:00 PM

Refreshments will be served! Come! Vote! Socialize!

The Sausalito Library Speaker Series

Sponsored by the Friends of the Sausalito Library

420 LITHO STREET

6:00pm Refreshments Served - FRIENDS BOOKSTORE 7:00pm Speaker - CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Monday, May 9th - Ciji Ware, author, A Race to Splendor

Marking the 105th anniversary of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and firestorm, Ciji Ware, author, will discuss her latest novel, *A Race to Splendor*, based on the story of California's first licensed woman architect, Julia Morgan, restoring the fabled Fairmont Hotel in ten months following the disaster that obliterated 400 city blocks and left some 250,000 people homeless for up to two and a half years. Ware, a resident of Sausalito, is an Emmy award-winning television producer, broadcaster, print journalist, and the author of eight books.

Monday, July 11th - Judi Gentry, author, *Aging Outrageously Well*Monday, September 12th - Katrina Bramstedt, author and clinician, *Bioethics for Patients and Families:*the Value of a Living Will

Just for the Record

John Hefler

Starting in January 2011, we began to look at how we could improve maintenance of our membership records. In the past, Friends' memberships expired on the last day of each calendar year, yet we received renewals throughout the year and memberships were sometimes extended for irregular periods. If you renewed your membership anytime in 2010 calendar year, the expiration date will be 12/31/2011. Going forward, as you renew your membership after January 1, 2011, the expiration date will be one year from the date on which we receive your renewal.

As an example, the top line of your mailing label shows your Current or Expired membership status and the effective date. We received Adam's payment on March 30, 2011. His membership term is through March 30, 2012, one year later.

Current Until . 03/30/2012 Adam Smith 123 Crescent St Sausalito, CA 94965

We will continue to cull through membership transactions to prevent duplications and catch errors, but we are not perfect. Do not hesitate to contact John Hefler, Membership Vice President at jhefler@pacbell.net if you have any questions regarding your membership status.

Please Note Expiration Date on Your Mailing Label! Renew Your Membership! New Friends Are Always Welcome!	
☐ YES! I want to renew my Friends of the Library Membership! \$	Enclosed
SENIOR \$5 MEMBER \$10 FAMILY \$25 SUPPORTER \$50 BENEFACTOR \$100+	
Payable: "Friends of the Sausalito Library"	
Mail to: Friends of the Sausalito Library, PO Box 298, Sausalito, CA 94966.	
Name	
Address	
City	
State Zip	
Telephone	
E-Mail	

Visit the Friends' Bookstore! Monday - 9am – 5pm Wednesday & Saturday - 10am – 1pm

Your Friendship is appreciated!

FRIENDS OF THE SAUSALITO LIBRARY PO Box 298 SAUSALITO, CA 94966

Address service requested

NONPROFIT U.S. POSTAGE PAID SAUSALITO, CA PERMIT NO. 8

The Friends of the Sausalito Public Library is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that is an important source of financial support to the Sausalito Public Library, augmenting much-needed services and materials not provided by the Library's budget.

Printing by Joanne's Print Shop Design and Layout by Cindy Pierson

I could spend hours browsing in the Bookstore! Love it!

Paula (Florida)

Volunteers so kind!

Best book sale in Marin ...

period!

Love this place!

Great selection!

Sausalito Friends
Bookstore has
opened many new
avenues of reading
to me with the
great selection and
affordable prices!
Thank you!

Carol (San Francisco)



It is always fun to come to the Friends Bookstore ... a good selection of sailing books and some fiction I don't usually find elsewhere.

Steve (Omaha)