

CHECK IT OUT

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY-PLACERVILLE CHAPTER

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SPECIAL EDITION

Marking 40 years on Fair Lane!

As we prepare to celebrate our library

By Celia Orona

The late 1970s—a time when you could buy a car for less than \$6000, gas for 86 cents a gallon, a new home for \$58,000.

When asked what she recalled about the seventies, library patron Mary Ellen Smith stated, “It was a gentler time, more peaceful.” Looking back, it is easy to think of them as the “good old days” when life seemed simpler but in reality, it was a time of tumultuous contradiction. Change, promising as well as grim, was occurring at every level of our lives.

After the upheaval of the sixties, the Silent Majority became more vocal. The Vietnam War and Watergate led the news. Escapism meant watching TV shows like “Happy Days,” “Laverne and Shirley,” and “All in the Family.” At the same time, the need to protect the environment was celebrated on the first Earth Day in 1970. Women’s fight for equality was reflected in pop culture like the “Mary Tyler Moore Show.”

The voting age was lowered and big box stores emerged. The first microprocessor was released by Intel and in 1976 Apple sold its first computer. For many, the times were exhilarating and filled with promise. It was in this context that a major change occurred in El Dorado County: the main library moved to its final home in 1978.

Library had many different homes

The backstory on the library’s various locations is part of the county’s colorful history. In the early 1900s, for example, the city library actually occupied the upper floor of the Confidence Hall Building (city hall) which meant that the library shared its space with the city clerk. Patrons waited until the city clerk was not busy in order to gain access to the books which were located behind her desk.

In the late 1940s, the recently formed Friends of the Library of El Dorado County, Inc., raised \$10,000 to purchase the first county library building on Sacramento Street. This was followed two decades later with yet another move, into the old Purity grocery market on Main St., to make room for the Post Office. However, no one anticipated the unusual accommodations as the librarian’s office was in the store’s old meat locker. And

then, in the mid-seventies, plans were made for the library’s final home with the creation of a committee. The rest is history.

FOL played a vital role in the new building

In a recent interview, Mary Jane Battaglia described the essential participation of the Friends of the Library (FOL) in the planning and execution of the new home for the main library. Battaglia,

continued on back



(Above) The new building takes shape on Fair Lane in October 1977; (right) today’s library.



Please come to the party on Aug. 25!

Stop by the library between noon and 3pm for refreshments and fun activities popular in the 1970s, such as tie-dye book bags, macrame instruction, a jump rope contest and non-electronic games—plus check out the storyboards about what was trending in 1978. FOL will have an information table there, too!



(Left) By the late forties, the library had relocated to Sacramento St. (Below) In 1968 it settled into the old Purity grocery market on Main St. (now Placerville Town Hall) to make room for the Post Office.

who became the first commissioner for the Placerville Library, stated that members of the FOL were largely responsible for the library's current home: "They are the ones who did the work; they worked hard to raise the money."

Unswerving in their dedication, the Library Commissioners took their duty seriously: oversee the building of the library and provide input. Indeed, she, along with the other commissioners, had a direct hand in the selection of the architect and even argued for handicap access.

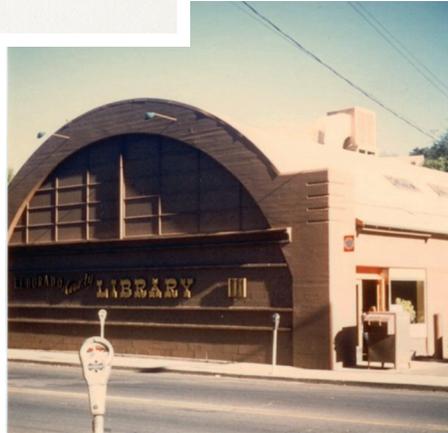
Placerville chapter steps up

It wasn't until 2005 that the Placerville chapter of FOL was called on again to help the library.

Measure H, which would have provided vital funding to the main library, failed; it was a serious blow. If the high quality of library services were to be maintained, another source of funding and advocacy had to be developed.

The original Friends of the Library, the Placerville-based organization behind all the county's libraries, was reorganized. A corporate board was formed and the Placerville chapter came into its own in 2005, along with separate chapters for the other libraries.

Rising to the occasion, officers of the Placerville chapter were quickly elected and the fledgling organization was up and running. One founding member (and still active to this day) Barbara Parmenter recalls with droll humor, being told that "we'll be low



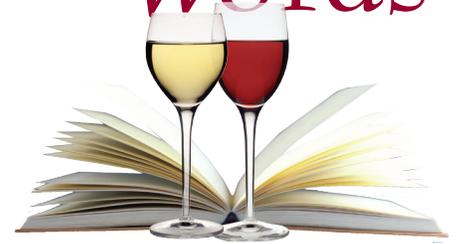
key, with very few meetings . . ." We know how that worked out given the hundreds of volunteer hours that have been logged since the beginning days of the Placerville FOL.

Throughout the years members of the Placerville chapter have worked tirelessly to promote and support the main library through various projects. Few patrons realize that it is through the efforts of the FOL that new books are purchased, children's programs funded, supplies and equipment purchased. Projects such as the 3-D printer, computer access, and the Library Teen Council are just a few of the ways FOL members have helped to make the library a community center. Although often in the background, FOL members have insured that the library is "more than just books."

Because of our long history and dedication to our main library, we'll be present during Saturday, August 25, to help library staff, volunteers, and patrons celebrate the fortieth birthday of the main library (details on reverse). We hope you'll join us.

And don't forget...

Wine for Words



We hope you'll join us for our premier fundraiser, **Wine For Words**, which we will be hosting on **Sunday, September 30**, from 4pm to 7pm.

The event will include tasty hors d'oeuvres, wine tasting from five local wineries — Bookshelf Wines, Fleur de Lys Winery, Lava Cap Winery, Madroña Vineyards, Sierra Vista Winery—music, silent auction and a presentation and book signing by author Barbara Keck discussing her book, *Wineries of the Sierra Foothills: Risk-Takers & Rule-Breakers*.

Many thanks to our sponsors for helping make this event possible: El Dorado Savings Bank (Legacy Sponsor), The Windfall, Spot-On Signs & Graphics, Gold Country Retirement Community, and Walmart Placerville.

Tickets may be purchased for \$40/person by going online to www.eldoradolibraryfriends.org or in person at the Placerville, El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park libraries.



For just \$10 a year, you, too, can become a Friend, and keep history alive by supporting the library. Visit www.eldoradolibraryfriends.org to join today!