

## Friends Update: May 2020

### Dear Friends:

Hope this finds you well in these strange and trying times.

May is the third month without a Friends' book sale and seventh week without revenue from the bookshop or Fiction to Go. Online sales have resumed on eBay and David Schneider has resumed selling collectible and antiquarian books (over \$1000 since May 1). Fortunately, although even the Friends' conservative investments took a hit, we have ample funds to continue to pay our coordinator Melissa Carlisle and support the Library.

### Looking Ahead

When the Library will reopen is unknown right now, but the reading logs for the Summer Reading Program (SRP) have been printed and will also be available online. There won't be the usual workshops and live performances that the Friends have funded in the past, but it is hoped that there will be new digital programming—the Library has produced several videos during the closure and is exploring future options. It is likely the SRP prizes for younger readers will be distributed all at once at the end of the summer, rather than weekly. When the Main Library reopens, the book sales in the Lower Level Community Room will resume. Much will have changed throughout the building. There will be sneeze/cough guards, disinfecting stations, social distancing and more. But because the Community Room won't have outside bookings for some time, the book sales set-up will remain in place, rather than the customary monthly set-up/take down. Melissa is thinking through possibilities and ramifications. Stay tuned.

### Updating the Bookshop



As reported earlier, bookshop volunteers got together this winter to brainstorm ideas to improve the bookshop and increase traffic. Melissa and volunteers Bob Wilson and Chris Deminsky worked through the rearrangement of books, magazines and furniture. The main room is now easier to navigate and appears larger—plus the gardening and cook books moved into the main room are selling. It was Melissa's good idea to make the back room into an oasis for children and teens. And, surprise, the back room is now more pleas-

ing because the scale is right. Smaller books look better in the smaller room. Shortly before the Library closure, Melissa, board member Angela Mihm, and I were in the back room comparing notes when in walked customers—two girls looking for YA reading, a mother with a stroller, and two very young boys, who demonstrated how that demographic may interact with cube chairs and bookends (think trains). Next comes improved signage, shelving for art books that have been on a cart, and hanging the 50th anniversary posters that show what the Friends fund at all 18 branch libraries. Nice to see so many thoughtful ideas being put to good use at little cost.

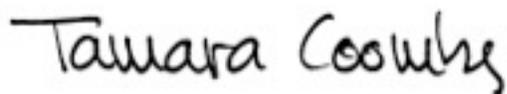
### **New Blood Needed**

The Friends' board needs new members. We need people with marketing experience or an interest in membership development or an ability to write (or some combination thereof). We also need a new Treasurer. The board has reduced the Treasurer's tasks—our bookkeeper prepares the monthly financial report now; the monthly money transfers, check-signing and forwarding of bank statements are handled by another board officer. We need a treasurer to provide oversight, interpretation, and informed advice. If you might be interested in serving (or know someone we should contact) please reply to this email.

### **What You Can Do Now**

The economic aspects of the pandemic are daunting at all levels, private and public. The City faces a \$20 M shortfall now and a \$50 M shortfall in the new fiscal year, beginning July 1. Fortunately, City and County bonds will cover the purchase of new library materials, but staffing has taken an enormous hit. All temporary workers (61 individuals—21% of staff) have been furloughed, with further furloughs anticipated. Other budgetary cuts are expected. If you feel the Library is critical to the future of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, speak up now. Let elected officials know how important the Library is to you and why. Tell *your* story. Email is likely best and certainly fastest (security concerns can delay land mail). To email your councilor, go to <https://www.cabq.gov/council/find-your-councilor/contact-all-councilors>. (If you're unsure who your councilor is, visit <https://www.cabq.gov/council/find-your-councilor> . )

Thank you for all you do to support the Library and the Friends,



Tamara Coombs, President  
Friends of the Public Library