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AMONG
FRIENDS
NEWSLETTER

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Officers' Report

Dear Members,

Happy Spring!

Every spring brings a sense of new life and replenished energy, but this one particularly so. It has been a difficult year, but (as of this writing, at least), our Covid new infection levels are down and vaccines are being steadily administered. Things are looking up.

As you know, Tamara Coombs, our recent Board President, has resigned. While we miss her knowledge, vision, and enthusiasm, the four Board Officers have come together as a committee to maintain the Friends' activities. If you would like to learn a little more about the officers: Angela Mihm, 1st VP; Alice Haddix, 2nd VP; Sara Elliott, Treasurer; and Susan Hurley, Secretary, you can [read our bios on our website](#).

But really, we would like to learn more about you and how your specific skills and interests could benefit the Board. You see, at our upcoming annual meeting in June,

we will be electing our Board Members for the next year. Our goal is to create a robust Board with a variety of skills not only to maintain our current support of the library and programs such as the Summer Reading Program, but also to identify new opportunities to support reading for pleasure and the plentiful functions of the library going forward.

Sadly, we will be losing Susan Hurley; she has devoted the last 12 years to service on the Board and the by-laws require that she step down. Do you enjoy summarizing conversations into concise notes that can be shared after the meeting? Consider joining our Board as Secretary. Would you like to learn more about the inner workings of the bookstore, the Friends, and the library? Consider joining the Board as a Director at Large. Would you like to add a line to your resume, demonstrating your intellect, collaboration skills, and commitment to service? Considering joining the Board.

If you would like more information about joining the Board, please reach out to us to explore the possibilities. Email president@friendsofthepubliclibrary.org. (Even though we don't currently have a President, we check the email.)

The annual meeting will be held on June 30, 2021, at noon, via Zoom. Invitations will be sent out to members closer to the date, but mark your calendars and join us for the elections.

The Bookshop will reopen and Book Sales will resume in the near future. When we open, we will once again be accepting donations. Check our website and Facebook page for timely updates.

Financial Report

Sara Elliott, Treasurer

Financially, we have been paused for the last year. Book sales have been limited, if available at all, since March 2020, which has reduced our revenue. However, library programming costs have also been lower, due to no in-person programming. Ultimately, we have seen an increase (\$27,000) in our available cash and investments as of January 2021 compared to January 2020. We are fortunate that as revenue decreased, so did expenses and, overall, our investments have grown.

Debbie Hassi with the CABQ Public Library recently updated the Friends of the Public Library about the summer reading program. The challenges of programming during a pandemic are high, but the staff at the libraries have a flexible plan, while also being good

stewards of the funds available.

Thank you to all our members, volunteers, coordinator (Melissa), and library staff. Because of your hard work and support, we are financially in a good position to continue to support library programs.

Director's Report

Dean P. Smith, Library Director

The Library world is feeling positive as staff and customers are getting vaccines, Bernalillo County Coronavirus statistics continue to improve, and the International District Library begins really to take shape. We've started an exciting new program through the State Library called Career Online High School. The program offers high school diplomas to selected individuals through an innovative online course.

I'm also thrilled to see the second round of selected books by Albuquerque Influencers go on display at the Main Library. This round of Influencers includes Leon M. Powell, Rathi Casey, Gabrielle Uballe, and Ebony Isis Booth with some truly thought provoking and engrossing book titles — check them out! The first set of titles, selected by Influencers Katie Stone, Adrian Carver, Rita Powdrell, and Melonie Matthews, are now at the Erna Fergusson, Central, and Unser Libraries. We still don't know when in-person programming will be able to resume, but staff are now experts at doing programs online. You can find their outstanding output on the [Library YouTube channel](#).



The International District Library is in progress. Don't worry, it won't end up lime green — that's just some of the weather proofing wrap before the bricks go on!

Q&A: Melissa Carlisle, Friends' Coordinator

Jessica Zech, Board Member At Large

This year marks Melissa Carlisle's 20th anniversary of working with the Friends as our coordinator. In honor of that milestone, we asked her to share how she got started, what her day-to-day looks like (now and before COVID), and what her favorite memory is. Enjoy!

How did you start working with the Friends?

In 1996, my parents lived downtown and were patrons of the Main Library. They were also members of the Friends. I joined my mother in attending a call for volunteers to help with the annual book sale, which at that time was held at the Pit. I started volunteering for the annual sales and coordinated the last two in 1999 and 2000. I also started volunteering in pricing and sorting and served a couple years as Secretary on the Board of Directors. By about 2000, the Friends were going through a growth period and we decided to revamp how we did business, extending

bookshop hours and going to monthly instead of yearly book sales. It was clear we would need a paid coordinator to make the leap, and I was in the right place at the right time.

What do you love most about your work?

Working for a nonprofit to make a difference is something personally important to me. I get to support a cause I'm passionate about — libraries — and work with books, which have always been a big part of my life. Also, working with volunteers is incredibly rewarding. You get to meet so many people with different backgrounds who all have a common interest. Some of our volunteers have also been with us for 20 years and many of them have become good friends. Volunteers are there because they want to be, not because they have to be, and that makes them an incredibly dependable workforce.

What does your job normally entail?

As the sole employee of the Friends, you might ask what I don't do. I'm the office manager, handling all the day-to-day and administrative duties of the Friends, I manage the book shop and book sales, and I'm the volunteer coordinator for over 50 volunteers.

How has your job changed due to COVID?

What hasn't changed? We've essentially been in a cycle of open/closed, open/closed, open/closed for almost a year now. Flexibility is something we've all had to learn to embrace. We've worked with a skeleton volunteer crew, partly because we've had to limit the number of people working and partly because a number of volunteers have made the personal decision to stay home until things improve. Let's just say I've been wearing a lot of hats.

How do you sort donations and get them ready to sell?

All of the book donations, even those made at the branch libraries, are processed at the Main Library. Branch libraries that have Fiction to Go will hold some of the books for selling at those branches before the remainder are delivered to us at Main. Our pricing and sorting crew will go through the donations to direct them to the proper area. They are pre-sorted by category and directed to the individuals responsible for pricing. Depending on age, books are designated for the bookshop or book sale and priced according to our standard guidelines. We also donate many books to other organizations, such as the City's Read to Me program, institutional facilities, and educational organizations.

What is your favorite memory from working with the Friends?

It's so hard to pin down a specific memory, but I can tell you that my favorite time was always the morning of our monthly book sales. Volunteers would start gathering an hour or two before we would open, and we'd share doughnuts and stories, peruse the book tables, and look forward to a day of happy shoppers.

What is your favorite library branch?

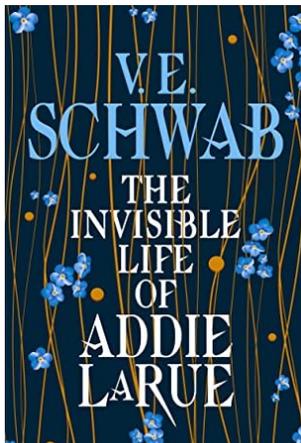
I love the diversity of all the branch libraries. Special Collections is, of course, a jewel with its incredible architecture and history. Then, there's the beautiful interior design of the Rudolfo Anaya North Valley branch, and the charm of little Ernie Pyle. But Main will always be the one that feels like home.

What is your favorite book?

Wow, that's like asking a parent to choose their favorite child. When I was a child, it was probably *Robinson Crusoe*, and I still love disaster and survival books and movies. I have very eclectic tastes when it comes to books. I read a lot of nature and natural history, books about exploration and discovery, regional history, anthropology, science — you name it. When it comes to fiction, I enjoy a good dystopian novel and locally set mysteries, such as Steven Havill's Posadas Count series, or Michael Orenduff's Pot Thief mysteries.

Book Review: *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*

Jen Hull



If *Doctor Faustus*, *Groundhog Day*, and *50 First Dates* had a lovechild, it might look something like *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, by V.E. Schwab. Reading very much — at first glance — like a white feminist take on *Doctor Faustus*, the story is about a woman who would rather submit to pretty much any other fate than the one (marriage, children, death) defined for her by her provincial 17th century French community. The deal she makes with a mercurial higher power permits her to escape domesticity, but the downside is that no one will

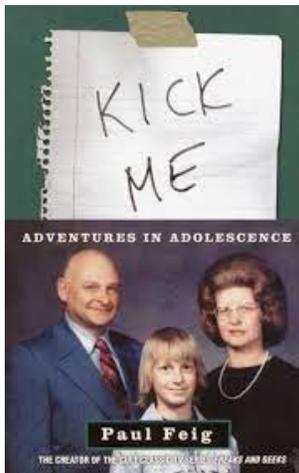


remember her, even from one moment to the next. She lives for hundreds of years like a shadow, until one day, a young, attractive man in a bookshop does remember her.

I didn't root for Addie LaRue as a character until the very end. Her existence seemed too selfish, too bent on the peak white feminist goal of living like a proverbial white man — no non-individualistic responsibilities, no consequences, no sacrifices; the knee-jerk reaction, understandably perhaps, of taking on too much responsibility for others, experiencing too many consequences, making too many sacrifices. Even her attempts throughout the book to outwit the deal she made didn't elicit much of a reaction: oh look, she's sad she can't have her cake and eat it too. But the ending made me do a little whoop for Addie: in hundreds of years of living, she shows the reader she learned a thing or two and did grow up.

Book Review: *Kick Me*

Andy K.



Adolescence is equal parts pain, humiliation, confusion, and FEELINGS, especially if, like Paul Feig, you were uncool and unpopular — a geek in the 1980s, before the power of the word was taken back by earth-ruling computer wizards, entertainment lords, and entrepreneurial billionaires. Back then, geek was not a badge of honor but what you got called between receiving wedgies and swirlies. To cope, you had to develop a sense of humor. And Feig certainly did.

As an adult, Feig is best known for his directorial work for comedy films like *Bridesmaids* and *A Simple Favor* and the creation of the one-season cult-hit series *Freaks & Geeks*, which in 1999 launched the careers of now-famous actors like Linda Cardinelli, James Franco, and Seth Rogen. Like *Freaks & Geeks*, the essays in *Kick Me* draw on Feig's experiences as a social underdog going through adolescent rites of passage in a pre-internet/pre-cellphone era.

Feig was straight out of central casting for 1980s geek: he was seriously into sci-fi comics and *Dungeons & Dragons* when they were still the province of the social pariah, a slightly built kid usually picked last for the team, an extreme germaphobe, and a hopeless romantic, crushed out on every pretty girl in school.

Feig's memoir taps the universal and perennial youthful concerns of fitting in at school, lust and dating, the horrors of gym class, the social anxiety of prom, parents, and so on. Readers will enjoy his self-deprecating humor, which is also kind — Feig seems to recognize that paying his dues then made him who he is now.

Good Reading

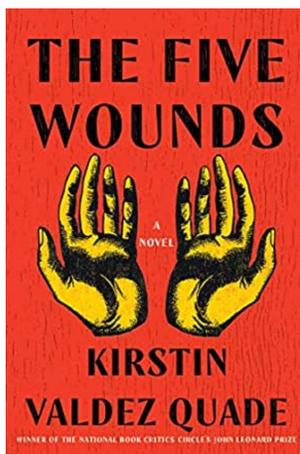
Read a good book recently?

Share your review in the next newsletter!

Send your review, up to 200 words, to
2ndvp@friendsofthepubliclibrary.org.

'A Word with Writers' with Kirstin Valdez Quade

Virtual Event | April 6 | 6 p.m.



The Albuquerque Public Library Foundation, in concert with Bookworks, will celebrate the first 'Word With Writers' event of 2021. New Mexico author Kirstin Valdez Quade will discuss her debut novel, *The Five Wounds*. Ms. Valdez Quade's novel is one of Oprah Magazine's most anticipated books of 2021. Each ticket includes a hardcover copy of *The Five Wounds* and a signed book plate.

Get Your Ticket



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