

## EXECUTIVE ORDER SLASHES INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES / GRANTS TO LOCAL LIBRARIES

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is an independent federal agency that supports libraries, archives, and museums in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Created in 1996, IMLS is the federal government's source of support for these local institutions, with a total budget of \$290 million—\$160 million of which goes to state library agencies

**Let your legislators know that libraries are a priority for you, that they are here not to tell just one story, but to tell everyone's story.**

that in turn is competitively grant funded to local libraries to support operations, construction projects, early literacy development, summer reading for kids, access to high-speed internet, and more.

A March 14 Executive Order decreed that the IMLS be “eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law.” On March 31 the administration placed the entire IMLS staff on leave for up to 90 days, a move that will prevent 2025 grants from being reviewed and processed.

Deputy Secretary of Labor and newly appointed IMLS acting director, Keith Sonderling said, “We will revitalize IMLS and restore focus on patriotism, ensuring we preserve our country's core values, promote American exceptionalism, and cultivate love of country in future generations.”

While our Humboldt County libraries have benefitted from IMLS grants, including the recent establishment of the “Library of Things” at the Hoopa Branch, we will not experience a devastating impact from these actions. The same

cannot be said for other libraries throughout our country. Some rural libraries will close. Our library system will continue to operate and even thrive, in large part due to your support of the Humboldt Library Foundation. HLF's commitment to our libraries is stronger than ever.

We encourage you to let your legislators know that libraries are a priority for you, that they are here not to tell just one story, but to tell everyone's story.

We also remind you to visit your local library, thank a librarian or staff member for their work, check out a book, attend a movie night or join a book club. Make USE of this vital institution—it is all of ours to enjoy and benefit from.

**“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”**

*~J.R.R. Tolkien*

### HIGHLIGHTS THIS ISSUE

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## From the President's Desk

### ALISON TALBOTT

In April, I had the pleasure of attending a pre-screening of the Independent Lens documentary, ***Free For All: The Public Library***. The Humboldt County Library and KEET collaborated to bring this absolutely fantastic documentary to the community prior to it being available on television. The film tells of the “quiet revolutionaries” who made America’s public libraries the vital institution they are today. “From the pioneering women behind the ‘Free Library Movement’ to today’s librarians who service the

**Friends, we are part of a rich tradition of supporting an institution that is foundational to the America that I have known and loved.**

public despite working in a contentious age of closures and book bans, meet those who created a civic institution where everything is free and the doors are open to all.”

It is hardly a secret that I am a passionate library nerd and watching this movie was quite validating—it was also incredibly motivating. Friends, we are part of a rich tradition of supporting an institution that is foundational to the America that I have known and loved. I have taken for granted that the library will always be there, but it is only with ongoing care and vigilance that the “palace of the people” will continue to thrive.

In times when even a glance at the headlines is to suffer moral injury, feelings of powerlessness and grief can overwhelm. It is, as always, a deep comfort to take breaks and curl up with old favorites or speculative fiction from the far future, but reality creeps back in. Watching this film reminded me that it is each of us, doing our small part that creates a legacy for our children, our community, even our nation.

Whether you are a member of our Board of Sponsors, part of the Book a Month Club, an attendee at our annual gala (see photos pages 9-11), or making donations as a “gift to” or “in memory of” a loved one, every bit of your support ensures the continued vitality of one of America’s finest achievements. I feel so honored to follow in the footsteps of the early public library advocates, and I am fired up to continue supporting Humboldt County’s libraries with all of you.

I encourage you to seek out this compelling documentary and experience for yourself the optimism and invigoration it provided me.

*I tell people, make a list of ten things you hate and tear them down in a short story or poem. Make a list of ten things you love and celebrate them. When I wrote Fahrenheit 451 I hated book burners and I loved libraries. So there you go.*

~ Ray Bradbury

## NEW HLF BOARD MEMBERS

### PAMELA DRESSLER



Pamela's resume reads like an epic novel. With early jobs that included Yosemite firefighting, sheepshearing in Australia, and teaching in Nanjing, China she eventually became in-house strategy consultant for a 3.9 billion dollar holding company that included brands like Fiji, Cuties Clementines, and Pom. Since 2004 she has managed Cypress Grove Cheese and is now the President and Managing Director for Cypress Grove Cheese and Meyenberg Goat Milk, as well as Chair of the board of Redwood Hill Creamery and Cowgirl Creamery.

Pamela shared, "Libraries are my happy place. I have such fond memories of visiting our beautiful library with my kids on a rainy afternoon, filling up our big bag with books and then returning home to spend hours perusing them all. Additionally, I value libraries in general for being one of the few remaining third spaces in our society, a public space open to all that offers a sense of community and belonging, to say nothing of the opportunities to learn and explore new ideas/worlds. Libraries are one of the best things about modern society and I'd like to help ensure ours has the resources to remain vibrant and welcoming."

### LEE LEER



Family physician Lee Leer recently joined the Humboldt Library Foundation Board. With degrees from UC Berkeley and the University of Southern California, Lee has practiced medicine in Humboldt County for over 30 years. Lee's passion for music and community led him to be the founding medical director of the 'Jah Med' medical response unit. Since 2005 Jah Med has safeguarded the health and well-being of countless attendees at music festivals around the state – including our own Reggae on the River and the storied Monterey Jazz Festival.

When asked about joining the HLF board Lee said, "Until very recently I've not thought much about libraries. Had you asked me, I'd have said they're important community resources, but I had never considered getting involved. Things changed for me for two reasons: (1) the recent political environment seems to be turning against freedom of speech and we seem to be entering an era of aggressive book/thought banning, and (2) I was hugely inspired by the recent Gala. I now welcome the opportunity to do my small part to help ensure the survival of our local public library system with its attendant free public access to knowledge, enjoyment, art, escapism, and challenging and controversial information."



## From the Director's Desk

### CHRIS COOPER

Over the past two and half years, the Humboldt County Library has experienced the retirement of seven employees with an average tenure of forty years. As the library moves forward, we have appointed many gifted and talented people internally and from beyond Humboldt County to serve in key roles. Here are some of our newest hires.



The Humboldt County Library is pleased to announce the appointment of the new Senior Library Assistant for the Acquisitions and Technical Services Division, **Althea Christensen**.

Althea's appointment comes after a search that yielded many highly qualified candidates. Althea has

worked as a Library Assistant I/II for the Humboldt County Library since July 2022. As a cataloger, Althea has completed additional training in cataloging videos, maps, 3D objects, and graphic novels. In October 2024, Althea attended the OLAC (Online Audiovisual Catalogers) Network Conference in Minneapolis. Her enthusiasm for the position and library services was evident from her work on the Library of Things project for the Kim Yerton Memorial Library and the reimagining of the graphic novel collection in a dedicated space. Regarding Althea's appointment, Library Division Manager Corin Balkovec stated "Althea is dedicated and enthusiastic. She never hesitates to roll up her sleeves for finding creative solutions to improve access to library resources. We are excited to see her in an expanded role and continue her commitment to the tradition of high-quality library services across the Humboldt County system."

Prior to that Althea worked for over ten years in the animal sheltering field, and two years working with local elementary school students. Her hobbies include hiking, arts and crafts (ask her about artist trading cards), and gardening. Her passion for library work and her boundless energy will be a great benefit to staff, volunteers, and library customers.

**Katie Mitchell** is our newest addition to Team HCL. Katie is primarily assisting Administrative Services Officer Kara Fales in administration, though she will receive train-



ing for other roles in Eureka and in north coast branches. Katie's work experience includes serving as the branch

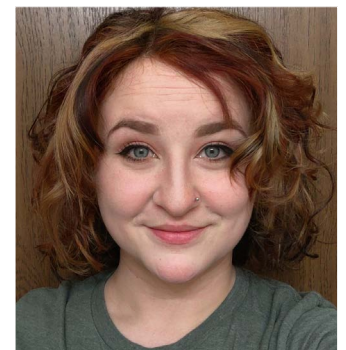
manager of the Loyalton Library in Sierra County and as a Literacy Program Assistant for the Quincy Library in Plumas County. She also worked as a Family Outreach Worker, Food Bank Coordinator, and Temporary Office Manager for the High Sierras Family Resource Center.



Katie is from a big family from the small mountain

town of Loyalton, California. She has a bachelor's degree in general studies with an emphasis on secondary education: math and science and museum studies from the University of Nevada Reno. She has spent most of her professional career in libraries or in offices, usually in front facing positions. Katie enjoys working with patrons, as well as doing behind-the-scenes work. She has also worked for a small newspaper, an ice cream shop, and as an ESL tutor abroad. Her favorite genre of books is sci-f/fantasy, and her favorite genre of music is acoustic folk. Katie is very excited to be working for the Humboldt County Library.

**Cheyenne Janger** brings a diverse skill set to her new role in the Youth Services and Circulation divisions at the Eureka Library. She is thrilled to be a part of the Humboldt County Library team. Originally from San Diego, California, she moved to Humboldt in 2016 to pursue a bachelor's degree in English Literary Studies. Cheyenne worked as a Student Assistant II in the Circulation Division of the



Cal Poly Humboldt Library from 2016-2020. She brings extensive customer service, data entry, and office experience to the position through her work with Harland Law Firm, Bear Humboldt, and Heart of Humboldt. In addition to providing support for the Eureka Library, Cheyenne is currently serving as a substitute for the Fortuna, Ferndale, McKinleyville, and Arcata Libraries.

In her spare time, Cheyenne enjoys reading, crafting, and playing Dungeons & Dragons with friends and family. During the warmer months, she loves hiking through our stunning state parks and camping throughout California to experience its diverse natural beauty.



Library Assistant **Virginia Noble** is the latest employee to join the Arcata Library team. She has worked for HCL for over two years, providing critical support to the northern branches and the Eureka Library. Virginia is reliable, trustworthy, and

a consummate professional. She was part of the dynamic onboarding cohort that included Dom Christenson, Cayman McFarland and Hershey Moreno. Prior to working for HCL, Virginia worked for Warren Creek Farms in Arcata. She has worked or volunteered for the Redwood Parks Conservancy, Yellowstone National Park and the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center.

Library Assistant I **Samantha Pate** graduated from Cal Poly Humboldt in 2024 with a bachelor's degree in history. For her Senior Capstone project, she wrote an almost 30-page paper about Bigfoot and his evolution from a folklore tale into a consumerist icon. The paper won second place for the Barnum History Award in Spring 2024. Her favorite hobbies include reading, crocheting, and watching Star Trek. She is also the proud owner of a Betta fish named Opal and a snail named Shelley.



Samantha has worked as a student assistant in the Eureka High School and Cal Poly Humboldt Libraries, and she has contributed to an archiving project for the Eureka Heritage Society. Samantha is versatile; she provides support for Youth Services, Circulation, and Acquisitions and Techni-



cal Services. Samantha also assists in branch locations on an as-needed basis.

The library has hired Library Assistant **John Fintel** as a customer service specialist to assist with night shifts in the Arcata, Eureka, Ferndale, and Fortuna Branches. John

states, "I've been proud to call Humboldt County home for the past 18 years. I graduated from College of the Redwoods with associate degrees in Humanities & Communication, Behavioral & Social Science, and Anthropology. For the past 15 years, I've built a diverse career in the hospitality industry, gaining experience in various roles. In my free time I enjoy photography, hiking, Latin partner dance with my wife, and volunteering at places like the Sequoia Park Zoo." John works days at the Victorian Inn in Ferndale.

Library Assistant **Erika Morlan**, also known as **Squeaky**, was born and raised in Southern California, graduated from Reed College in Oregon and lived for a while in St. Petersburg, Russia. She attended law school in San Francisco



but dropped out to raise a family and work for the library in Sonoma County. In 2005, Squeaky moved to Humboldt County, living off-grid on a homestead in Honeydew and joining the volunteer fire company. She recently moved to Eureka and has been spending her time renovating her house, learning to play piano and volunteering at the library.

Squeaky served the Sonoma County Public Library's Windsor and Healdsburg Libraries as a library clerk and assistant.

Hailing from the Central Valley, Library Assistant **Chantal Gonzalez** brings customer experience from her time working as a Library Assistant for the Fresno County Public

Library and as a barista for Starbucks.

Originally a Fresno native, Chantal is excited to be a part of the team. Chantal's favorite activities include reading, watching/logging movies and scrapbooking.





## LIBRARY AT YOUR DOOR



Do you love borrowing from the library, but need assistance getting materials? The library will bring them to you!

Library at Your Door is a home delivery service that currently serves patrons within a five mile radius of the Arcata, Eureka, or Fortuna library branches.

The Humboldt Library Foundation and generous donors, including **Mercer-Fraser Company, Terri Clarke and Marty Lay, Leslie and Bruce Silvey, Bonnie Neely,** and the local businesses listed below provided the funding to purchase the cargo van. The Outbound Services Team at the library is passionate about putting it to use. Call them to set up delivery or ask questions; 707-269-1954.



## EUREKA BOOKS DONATES ONE PERCENT OF CASH SALES TO HLF

Everyone knows that shopping locally is the right thing to do, but savvy shoppers take an extra step and pay with cash. Paying with cash saves local businesses thousands of dollars each year, keeping that money in the local economy. One small business has decided encouraging cash payments can be a benefit to his store and to the Humboldt County Library.

“When I bought Eureka Books three years ago I looked into ways to cut expenses. Credit card fees were an obvious place to start,” Solomon Everta reports. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic credit card usage was on the rise but in 2020 use of cash dropped precipitously. “This is an important issue for small businesses,” said Everta, “I was even invited by a bookselling trade group to go to Washington, D.C. to testify about how these fees are impacting small businesses, but it’s not just booksellers – it’s all retailers.” Everta was not able to make the trip, but continues to share what he has learned.

After changing card processing providers and getting his

fees down to around 4% of each credit card sale, Everta worked on getting more people to stop using credit cards altogether. “At the bookshop I have little signs at the registers explaining that 1% of cash sales will be donated to the Humboldt Library Foundation. It’s an easy way to start the conversation about exorbitant credit card fees.”

At the end of every year, as Everta is working with the rest of the Humboldt Library Foundation Board planning the annual Gala for the Library he calculates total cash sales at Eureka Books in the last year. One percent of that amount is donated to the Foundation.

“It really is a win-win situation,” said Everta. “I get to talk about supporting small business and supporting the Humboldt County Library. My customers get to choose to support both institutions. So, bring some cash, the next time you go shopping!” Keeping Everta’s suggestion in mind you can support local small businesses and you just might end up supporting the Library, too.

## HAPPY 25<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY TO THE SERENDIPITY BOOK STORE!

Serendipity Book Store, “The Little Store on the Second Floor” of the Eureka Main Branch library, celebrated its 25th birthday not long ago. Since Friends of the Redwood Libraries opened the store in the Fall of 1999, Serendipity has raised over \$630,000 for the benefit of the library.

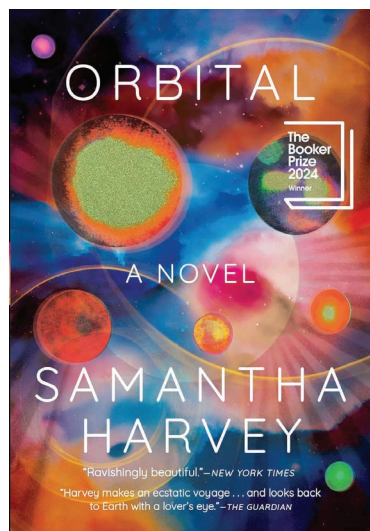
Customers love the great prices – most books are \$2 and children’s books are even less. There are also quite a few items like greeting cards, maps, sheet music and ephemera for just 25 or 50 cents. New stock comes into the store every week and display tables change often - savvy customers come in weekly to check the new arrivals shelves. The local

history shelf is especially popular, and books in that section may sell within hours. Serendipity stocks best sellers and classic favorites, but also older and more unusual books. It isn’t uncommon for customers to tell volunteers “I always find something great here!” as they make their purchase.

The volunteers at the Serendipity Book Store are friendly and knowledgeable. You can even find HLF’s own Susan O’Connor there on Thursdays. Don’t miss out on this charming institution on the second floor of the Eureka library. You’re sure to find a treasure!

## WRIGHT’S RECOMMENDATIONS

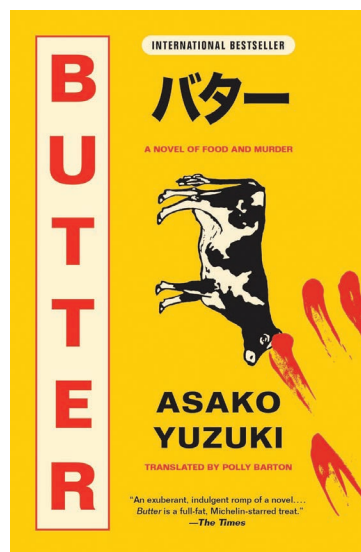
“Orbital” by Samantha Harvey: I couldn’t stop reading this short, beautifully written Booker prize winner. Set over a 24-hour period on the space station, 250 miles above earth, this book is told through the eyes of six international cosmonauts as they go about their daily routine. Chie, for example, works with rats, apologizes to them for their discomfort, and often thinks about her mother’s passing while contemplating life without her. I loved the descriptions of eating, exercising, and doing research in space. I appreciated the way the characters each pondered life and mortality as they looked at the earth from so far away. From space it’s a land with no borders



or boundaries—a living, breathing, beautiful place. I loved this beautiful, immersive book told over the course of the 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets that take place over a 24-hour period. And it made me love our planet even more.

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*HLF Board member Erika Wright is a voracious reader who doesn't limit herself to any one genre. Her book recommendations at board meetings have proven delightful and we are so pleased to share some with you here.*



“Butter – a novel of food and murder” by Asako Yuzuki: I enjoy international translations and the peek into a different world view. This story was inspired by a real person (the Konkatsu Killer) – a Japanese foodie who was convicted of seducing and poisoning three businessmen. It begins when a journalist (Rika) secures an interview with Manako Kajji by asking her for her beef stew recipe. Manako refuses to speak about the case, but instead sends Rika on food adventures. A strangely intimate relationship with complicated power dynamics develops between the two women as Rika becomes obsessed with following Manako’s life and culinary experiences. This story is rich in so many ways, not only in its descriptions of food, but also as a societal critique—particularly of the impossible, sometimes competing expectations of women—from beauty standards, to fatphobia, and expectations of marriage and children—all from a decidedly Japanese perspective. The story also illustrates various forms of friendship that defy rigid social norms.

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*A book too can be a star ...  
a living fire to lighten the  
darkness, leading out into the  
expanding universe.*

~ Madeline L'Engle



**2025 LEGACY CIRCLE**

The HLF Legacy Circle comprises a special group of individuals who have remembered HLF in their wills or estate plans. These gifts will grow the HLF Endowment Fund, a long-term strategy to provide enhanced funding for the library in perpetuity.

For every new HLF Legacy Circle member added, long-time supporters Ed Olsgard and Michele McKeegan generously make a \$500 contribution to HLF. So please consider today—your planning will provide immediate and long-term support for the public library.

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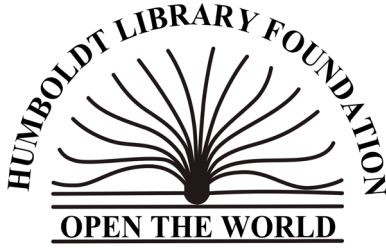


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