Thursday, January 22, 2009

MINUTES

1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER
Commission Chair, Chris Tang, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSION BOOKSHELF

2. Commissioners provided suggestions for current reading:

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<td>Ambassador’s Journal</td>
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<td>Riding Rockets</td>
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<td>1421: The Year China Discovered America</td>
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3. ROLL CALL

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Total Commission positions: 29  
Commission positions filled: 24  
Commission positions vacant: 5  
Commission quorum: 15  
With 18 Library Commissioners present, a quorum was established.

VOTING:
According to the By-Laws of the Library Commission, in order for a vote to pass, a majority of the city representatives and a majority of the County representatives must approve it. Upon reauthorization of the Library Commission, the five special appointees to the Library Commission draw lots to determine whether their votes count with the cities or the County. Through June 2011 the special appointees will be counted as follows:

- Three representatives votes count with the cities
- Two representatives votes count with the County
  - Youth Council
  - Friends Council
  - Central Labor Council
  - Superintendent of Schools

4. INTRODUCTIONS
Others present at the meeting include: Joanne Ward, Hercules Councilmember; Chauncey Lindquist, Concord resident; Cathy Sanford, Deputy County Librarian: Support Services; Gail McPartland, Deputy County Librarian: Public Services; Laura O'Donoghue, Deputy County Librarian: Public Services; Susan LaPat, Library Volunteer Coordinator; Corinne Kelly, Executive Secretary; Anne Cain, County Librarian.

5. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC
There were no items from the public.

6. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES
Commissioners approved the minutes.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Commissioners approved the agenda.

8. ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
Anne Cain, County Librarian, said that there are many recent articles about the increased use of libraries in economic times and some of the articles are in the Commission agenda packet.

Commissioner Smith (District IV) shared a cereal box that promotes libraries and reading on the back of
the box.

Commissioner Hoisington (Lafayette) said that it is sad that Susan Hildreth (State Librarian) will be leaving the State to become the Seattle Library Director. Commissioners requested that the Chair send a letter of thanks to Susan Hildreth.

Commissioner Smith (District IV) suggested that the Lafayette Library consider having a book brigade with volunteers to move material from the old Library the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center. He said that this was done in Redding and it would be a great publicity opportunity.

Commissioner Hoisington (Lafayette) said that the new Lafayette Library is expected to open at the end of 2009 and she will share the suggestion of the book brigade.

Commissioner Smith said that he attended the swearing in ceremony of Assemblyman Torlakson and Senator DeSaulnier in Sacramento and the Board of Supervisors reorganization luncheon on January 6. He said that events like these offer an excellent opportunity to talk up libraries with the legislators. Smith spoke about library circulation during the December 8 Walnut Creek City Council Meeting and thanked the Council for their continued support and added that the Walnut Creek City Council has two new members.

The CALTAC (California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners) workshop will be on February 28 and feature Joan Frye Williams, Library and Information Technology Consultant, and Stacey Aldrich, California Deputy State Librarian presenting "Thinking in Future Tense." Smith added that the next CALTACTIC newsletter will feature an article on a remote Kern County library and a legislation article written by Assemblyman Kevin De Leon (D-CA 45th District.)

Commissioner Smith reminded Commissioners of their approval of the draft PLF (Public Library Foundation) resolution last November asking the Mayors' Conference to pass the resolution. This was discussed with Don Blubaugh, Executive Director of the Mayors' Conference, and it was determined to not move forward with the request because the Mayors' Conference is thinking in terms of the bigger issues that the cities are facing. Smith recommended writing a letter to the Governor thanking him for not eliminating the Public Library Fund (PLF).

Commissioner Hoisington (Lafayette) believes that the Commission should not send a letter to the Governor at this time since there is not an adopted State budget.

Commissioner Marshburn (Office of Education) shared concerns that this is premature and to consider letters once a State budget is passed.

Commissioners agreed that it would be better to wait until a State budget is adopted before thanking legislators for supporting PLF and TBR funding and to revisit this issue during the March 26 Meeting.

Commissioner Mellon (Walnut Creek) said that the structural steel has gone up on the new Walnut Creek Library. The Walnut Creek Library Foundation presented the City with their second check for the new library in the amount of $750,000. Since 1998, the Walnut Creek Library Foundation has raised more than $5,000,000 and the Foundation will hold sneak peek events in March.

Commissioner Marshburn (Office of Education) mentioned the Barnes & Noble book fair that runs through January 31 to support the Juvenile Hall Library using the certificate that was included in a recent e-mail to Commissioners. Cain suggested that information on the event be sent out to Commissioner's personal e-mail contacts to support the fundraiser.

Gail McPartland, Deputy County Librarian: Public Services, said that during her recent visit to the
Juvenile Hall Library she was inspired to see the work that Alison McKee, Librarian, is doing with the inmates and that the services provided by the Library do make a tangible difference to the people in Juvenile Hall.

Commissioner Hoisington (Lafayette) – thanked Commissioner Ruehlig for his November letter about library services to the Editor of the Contra Costa Times. Hoisington shared news that the State grant funding for the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center has been frozen. All State bonds are frozen, including school bonds. The State is warning organizations not to sign contracts until the funding becomes available. Asian Arts and Cultural Celebrations, are being sponsored by the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation for two weeks beginning February 5 and will feature events for all ages including ping pong with “Survivor” finalist You-Man, Chinese cooking and culture with author and TV chef Shirley Fong-Torres, and brush painting, calligraphy, origami and a Tea Ceremony. The event closes with benefit fashion show for the Library Foundation. Sweet Thursday, on January 22 features Laura Schumaker, author of A Regular Guy: Growing up with Autism, speaking about her family’s struggle with autism. The February 19 Sweet Thursday event will feature Michael McAlister, discussing his book Awake in This Life: A Guide for Those Climbing the Mountain of Spirit. The March 16 Sweet Thursdays will feature Blake Taylor, speaking about his book ADHD and Ms: What I Learned from Lighting Fires at the Dinner Table. Hoisington shared a study by the National Endowment for the Arts (January 12, 2009) identifying that more “American Adults Read Literature” (attachment to the minutes).

Commissioner McEwan (Moraga) mentioned two upcoming lectures at the Moraga Library. On February 25 a presentation will be given on Andy Warhol’s work based on the deYoung exhibit, and on March 25 a presentation on the work of three jewelry and decorative arts designers at the turn of the 20th century: Fabergé, Tiffany, and Lalique based on the Legion of Honor exhibit. The Moraga Library will have a California Center for the Book’s "Books in a Box" program featuring mysteries set in California. The five month series begins on January 29 with a screening of the film "Mysterious California: Four Authors", featuring four crime novels. The Library had a "Joy of Movement" program for ages 3-7 on January 15, a "Bedazzled Beading" program for ages 12-adult on January 22 and on January 31 there will be a circus clown interactive show.

Commissioner Madfes (Hercules) thanked Councilmember Joanne Ward for attending this Commission meeting and added that Councilmember Ward was very instrumental in planning the new Hercules Library and securing the State grant funding and the local match and she is a wonderful library supporter. Madfes thanked Commissioner Smith for his upcoming, and previous two, presentations to the Hercules Library Commission. The Hercules Friends’ book sale will be on March 21 and 22 and the Friends’ bookstore inside the Hercules Library continues to do very well.

Commissioner Enholm (District V) said that the Concord City Council approved the Clustered Villages Plan for the Concord Naval Weapons site on January 12. The plan is not specific, however it does include a library. The process requires several reviews so it will be far in the future.

Commissioner Hoisington (Lafayette) thanked Commissioners Enholm, Smith and Tang (Concord) for their consistent support and push to have a library developed on the Naval Weapons site.

9. CORRESPONDENCE
No comments were made on the correspondence that was included in the agenda packet. There was no other correspondence to the Commission.

10. REPORT FROM COUNTY LIBRARIAN
Anne Cain, County Librarian reported that the 32nd Holiday Run sponsored by Assemblyman Tom Torlakson and the Kiwanis Club of the Delta awarded Antioch ($500), Pittsburg ($250), and Oakley ($250) libraries during the January 20 awards breakfast. The funds will be used for materials on health, fitness, and nutrition. The Library has participated in the Holiday Run since 2004.
Commissioner Smith (District IV) said that $50 was sent for the Holiday Run designated for the Concord Library. The Library will make the adjustments internally.

The County began using an electronic AgendaQuick (tm) system for Board items. This paperless system automates the flow of work required to develop and prepare the weekly Board of Supervisors agenda and packet materials. The new system will be implemented with the February 3 Board meeting. In addition to improvement of the efficiency of workflow, the automated system will allow the public to view online the entire agenda packet.

Project Second Chance's 9th annual "Bookies" fundraiser will be held on March 19 and feature author Annie Barrows, the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. A flyer on the event was shared (attachment to the minutes)

The County recently completed and Information Technology (IT) audit of the Library, looking at security issues, licenses of hardware/software, password maintenance and more. All Library staff is taking an hour online security training course that they must complete by February 2. The training identifies security measures that will limit the possibility of a security breach. Library has implemented the recommendations of the audit.

There is nothing further to report on the lawsuit involving the Antioch Library meeting room use for religious services beyond the article included in the packet:

Commissioner Smith (District IV) suggested that the Library develop a two-page flyer of services for the visually disabled that identifies where information and material can be located, such as talking books. He suggested the flyer be made in large print. Smith offered his services in determining the information that would be valuable in the flyer.

County Librarian, Anne Cain, said that the Library has a committee that is taking a broad approach to accessibility issues, and is identifying library services that address these. They are in the process of surveying Library staff and will contact Smith.

Library circulation is up 14% this fiscal year (July 1-December). Circulation was up 13% last year, and 9% the year before that; circulation is up a total of 35% overall in the last two and a half years. Library customers are increasingly using small business and job search materials. She added that the Library is in the process of preparing a press release about the increased use.

11. **OLD BUSINESS**
None.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **BUDGET**
Anne Cain, County Librarian, said that that the County is in a critical budget situation and there will need to be further cuts. County departments, including the Library, will submit budgets to the County Administrator at the end of February. The process involves having a budget hearing in March and then adopting the County budget in April.

The Library receives over 80% of the budget from property tax. The assessed value of property is declining for the first time in decades. In recent years the Library used an 8% increase in the funding from property tax. This year the Library projected 4% and which needed to be reduced to .21%,
eliminating $804,000 from the Library's budget. The County Administrator reported that property tax revenue could be a negative 2% to a negative 10% for next fiscal year.

Commissioner Hoisington questioned if there was an obligation to fund those services, programs and equipment that were reduced when $804,000 was eliminated this year's budget, such as equipment for the Pleasant Hill Library.

Cain explained that a part of the $804,000 came from the money that was set aside for an automated materials handling system that sorts material using RFID tagging in the Pleasant Hill Library. The cities are purchasing the automated handling systems for the new libraries in Walnut Creek and Lafayette. Pleasant Hill's automated handling system has been put on an indefinite hold. Another part of the savings came from temporary staffing; this will not result in an actual cut because the money would not have been spent anyway.

County Department heads are meeting all day on January 30 to discuss the budget. The Library implemented a Library staff survey for suggestions of ways to reduce spending and identify possible revenue sources. Cain asked that Commissioners offer suggestions and first asked them to identify what they perceive as the Library's core services.

Commissioner Enhholm (District V) added that an argument for why libraries are needed is that libraries promote economic growth.

Suggestions for Library Core Services included:
• Hours — was the first on the list from many, Commissioners
• Books, periodicals and audio visual collections that customers check out
  o Maintaining and the acquisition of new material
  o Specialized collection
    ▪ Jazz,
    ▪ Non-English material
      - Russian, Tagalong, Chinese
  o DVDs and VHS material
  o Link +
• Reference material and staffing that provide help
  o Including phone and Internet access
  o Job search databases and material
• Staffing — maintain community library managers in each library, don't just eliminate positions because they are vacant
• Meeting special needs of children and teens.
  o Children's services — story times, Stories to Go, Reach Out and Read
  o Teen services
  o Tutoring
  o Homework help
• Information technology
  o Library's Web site
  o Internet access
  o IT services and staffing
  o Databases
  o Virtual Library (24/7)
  o Virtual reference
  o Library subject guides
  o Self services
• Maintain the Library as a safe place for people to be
• Senior services
• Project Second Chance
• Special Libraries  
  o Juvenile Hall
• Volunteer Services  
  o Rossmoor Delivery  
  o Books for the home bound
• Library Outreach  
  o Library a-Go-Go
• Material Delivery Services  
  o Trucks

The first thing that Commissioners labeled as a core service was hours. Commissioners considered options for reducing hours. There are many articles on ways that other libraries are reducing hours to reduce costs such as the City of Oakland closed for ten days during the holiday. Days of closure could be viewed as reduction in hours.

Commissioner Marshburn (Office of Education) said that if you close libraries and cut hours, then the cost savings is coming from furloughing staff, reducing payroll. This is not looking at a reduction in gas and electric. Library staff would be required to take unpaid time off; taking vacation is not the savings because staff is still paid. She is interested in the per day amount of savings comparison by reducing hours. And compare the savings of closing days verses weeks, what is the staff difference in staffing hours. Cutting hours should not be the first choice to make in reducing hours and that there are other ways to reduce spending, such as a reduction in spending on acquisitions.

Commissioner Tumin (Oakley) said that if hours were to be cut, consideration of Library staff preferences should be made. Would they prefer a day off a week, or to be closed a complete week? It can be easier to absorb one less day in a paycheck per month verses missing two weeks pay in one pay check.

Library customers should also be considered when reducing hours. Would they rather be closed a week during the winter holidays verses other options such as reducing the daily open hours or closing one day a week, or rotating the closures amongst the libraries regionally on alternate days or rotating the Sunday hours regionally.

The Library spends approximately $1.5 million on the material budget. Some Commissioners preferred reducing the materials budget to reducing library open hours. Commissioners suggested that Friends could try to provide additional funds, although this may be possible for some Friends and not others. A suggestion was made to discontinue maintenance of the DVD collections although some felt that the DVD format is a way that some customers get their education, information and entertainment.

Cain summarized the discussion so far by saying that the Library should consider a combination of ways to reduce the budget, by reducing expenditures and generating revenue. Commissioners feel that open hours is a core service and is most important. If hours are reduced, there is a variety of ways to look at it and combination of the impact on the public and on staff should be considered. The regional nature closures should be looked at. If there are to be cuts in the materials budget then there should be an appeal to the Friends groups and to the public. The Library did reduce the materials budget five years ago and raised $225,000, but Cain thinks it might be more difficult to repeat that in these financially strapped times.

Commissioner Shapiro (Hercules) asked questions about the annual costs for computer hardware, software and access.

Commissioner Tumin (Oakley) said that there are low income families where their only access to
computers is through the Library. Computer access is an essential service.

Commissioners asked about reducing delivery service. Approximately 20% of the Library's circulation comes from other libraries other than the owning library. The two library delivery trucks move material around the County six days a week. Reducing the number of days only makes more work on the other days unless something else is changed that reduces the amount of material to be delivered.

Commissioners suggested keeping the library open with limited staffing just to handle circulation. Cain said that this point is actually moot, as the self-check machines already do over 80% of the circulation in many of the libraries. This self-serve option is the only way that the Library was able to maintain the 35% increase in circulation without additional staffing.

Commissioner Madfes (Hercules) said that the Hercules Friends made an agreement to pay for the volunteer coordinator so that volunteers in the library could augment library services.

Commissioner Ruelig (Antioch) suggested that there may be some advantage in cutting hours, at this point there would be more to gain in terms of reducing costs. The Library might consider reducing hours throughout the system so that hours are not reduced at all in one location. He suggested that the Library consider attendance and check customer usage during holiday time.

Cain addressed the costs of facility related operating and maintenance costs. She pointed out that some libraries, such as Clayton and Hercules are open additional hours by paying for all of facility related costs. The Library could save over $1.3 million a year if all cities picked up these costs. The County is spending an increasing amount of money to maintain older library facilities in some communities. The work done with the Public Managers Association was partly to get all communities on an equitable basis.

Commissioners reaffirmed their action on July 26, 2007 to transfer property and facility management responsibilities and costs to the cities. They do not feel that this is a core responsibility of the County Library.

Commissioners discussed that the cities would need to answer to their constituents if they fail to maintain their community library facilities.

Cain asked Commissioners to share ideas on ways that the Library could save money, reduce costs and also generate revenue.

Commissioners suggested that the Friends groups could look carefully at material that they receive to identify if it would benefit the collection. It would be helpful if Friends had a list of material that is desired for all of the libraries. Many of the libraries already do this, such as San Ramon and Clayton. When the material is being prepared for the book sales, Library staff selects the material for the library before the sale.

Commissioner Smith suggested that the County reexamine contracts and look at uniform contracts such as for copiers or renegotiate existing contacts. He also mentioned another County department that used a higher quality of paper as an example of things that can be looked at.

Commissioners suggested reducing the lighting and air conditioning levels to reduce energy costs.

Commissioner McEwan (Moraga) suggested that the Library consider raising overdue fines.

Cain said that the current fine level is .25 a day for adult material and .10 for children's material.
Commissioners came to a consensus that the Library should consider raising fines, including fines on children’s materials.

Commissioners suggested charging for placing material on hold. One Commissioner added that sometimes material on the hold shelves are not picked up and so they do not circulate. If customers were charged for placing holds and charged is they do not pick up their holds, they would be more likely to retrieve their holds.

Other Commissioners suggested that it might cost more in staff time to collect these charges, especially with all of the self-service features. It should be looked at as the cost vs. the benefit.

Commissioners asked about the status of collecting fines by credit cards. An e-commerce trial is planned for the Library.

Commissioner Magann (Pinole) suggested making greater use of volunteers, but not at the risk of reducing staff.

The Library budget will be discussed in more detail at the March 26 Library Commission Meeting.

B. CLA (CALIFORNIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION) LEGISLATIVE DAY IN THE DISTRICT
The 2009 Legislative Day in the District is scheduled for Fridays, January 30 and February 6. This event provides an opportunity for supporters of library services to meet with their legislators in their district offices and to thank the legislators for their past support for libraries. It is also an opportunity for anyone who is unable to spend the whole day in Sacramento during Legislative Day, which will be on April 15, 2009, to meet with their legislator to discuss libraries. Commissioners will consider signing up to attend the scheduled meeting.

Commissioner Smith (District IV) said because of a conflict, he is unable to attend. He encouraged Commissioners to attend to encourage legislators to continue supporting library services.

Commissioner Enholm (District V) suggested that Commissioners also meet with their district Board of Supervisor and talk about library services. Enholm will coordinate with the Commissioners appointed by the Board of Supervisors to determine the best way to talk to the Board of Supervisors. Enholm may also contact the Friends group to organize individual meetings with their legislators.

13. AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING and FUTURE TOPICS
- District III Supervisor Mary Pejpo will speak at the March 26 meeting
- District I Supervisor, John Giola, District IV Supervisor Susan Bonilla and District V Supervisor, Federal Glover have been invited to attend a future meeting
- Update on the continued collaboration with schools in library technology and electronic resources
- Budget
- PLF
- Teen Services report

14. ADJOURNMENT TO THE MARCH 26, 2009 LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING
The Library Commission meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by Corinne Kelly
Executive Secretary
Contra Costa County Library
To: Library Commissioners
   Library Friends and Foundation Presidents
   Previous Legislative Day Attendees

Date: January 9, 2009

From: Anne Cain, County Librarian

SUBJECT: Day in the District – January 30 & February 6, 2009

The California Library Association has planned the 2009 Legislative Day in the District, which provides us with an opportunity to meet locally with our legislators. These meetings are in addition to the annual Legislative Day in Sacramento that will be held on April 15, 2009.

The following appointments have been set up for Friday, February 6, 2009:

1:30 P.M. Senator Mark DeSaulnier: District Office is in transition. Meeting location to be determined (925) 602-6593
Senator DeSaulnier’s 7th District includes: Antioch, Alamo, Bay Point, Byron, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Crockett, Danville, Diablo, Discovery Bay, Bethel Island, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Kensington, Knightsen, Hercules, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pacheco, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Port Costa, Rodeo, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek.

3 P.M. Assemblymember Joan Buchanan: Meeting location: Dougherty Station Library, 17017 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon (925) 973-3380
Assemblymember Buchanan’s 15th District includes: Walnut Creek, San Ramon, Bethel Island, Byron, Diablo, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Danville, Alamo, Oakley, and Brentwood.
** Please note that this meeting will be with the Assemblymember’s District Director, Susanna Schlendorf.

4 P.M. Senator Lori Hancock: District Office: 1515 Clay St #2202, Oakland (510) 286-1333
Senator Hancock’s 9th District includes: Richmond (part) and San Pablo.

4:30 P.M. Assemblymember Tom Torlakson**: District Office: 815 Estudillo Street, Martinez (925) 372-7990
Assemblymember DeSaulnier’s 11th District includes: Antioch, Bay Point, Bayview-Montalvin, Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Crockett, El Sobrante, Hercules, Martinez, Mountain View, Pacheco, Pinole, Pittsburg, Port Costa, Rodeo, Tara Hills and Vine Hill,
** Please note that this meeting will be with the Assemblymember’s District Director, Craig Cheslog.

A time/day has not been confirmed for the following legislator, but let us know if you plan to attend if an appointment is made:

Assemblymember Nancy Skinner: District Office: 712 El Cerrito Plaza, El Cerrito (510) 559-1406
Assemblymember Skinner’s 14th District includes: El Cerrito, El Sobrante (part), Kensington, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, and San Pablo and parts of Martinez, and Walnut Creek.

cc: Library Managers
The Contra Costa County Library Reading Festival is back.....and this year it's better than ever! For an entire week, May 3 – 9, 2009, libraries throughout Contra Costa County will celebrate reading and the library - as information resources, community gathering places, and providers of entertainment for the whole family. With authors and events, carnivals and intellectually stimulating programs, the Contra Costa County Library is the place to be this May.

Presented by Target and sponsored by the Contra Costa Times, the 2009 Reading Festival is featuring five big Festival Authors and numerous events and celebrations in the community libraries. As of today, major Reading Festival Author events include:

An Evening with Daniel Handler (known to your kids as Lemony Snicket), which promises wit and laughter for the whole family

A chance to brush up on all things Harry Potter before the next movie. Meet Melissa Anelli, webmistress of the popular Leaky Cauldron website and author of Harry: A History

A chance to hear the inspiring stories of growth, perseverance, the struggle for education, and, ultimately, success from Dr. Francisco Jimenez, professor and author of a trilogy of award-winning books about his childhood as an illegal immigrant and child migrant laborer, The Circuit, Breaking Through and Reaching Out.

What was it like to be on the Presidential campaign trail? Mark Curtis, longtime Bay Area Newscaster, shares his latest work, Age of Obama: A Reporter's Journey with Clinton, McCain and Obama in The Making of the President, 2008.

Stay tuned for more - additional Reading Festival events are being scheduled and will be announced at cclib.org this spring!
Menzies, Gavin. **1421: The Year China Discovered America**

(For booksharing at CCLC, January 22, 2009)

An *unusual* retired submarine captain was in the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota. There he studied a recently discovered map drawn and dated 1424 by Pizzigano, a Venetian. Captain Gavin Menzies was unusual in that he

- was first educated by a Chinese amah,
- had a strong interest in history,
- knew navigation and had visited virtually every coast in the world,
- had used many ways to determine longitude,
- could read a map from an explorer’s point of view, and
- was married to a very rich lady who shared his interests.

The Pizzigano map identified two islands on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean. They turned out to be Puerto Rico and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean Islands. How could they have been known years before Columbus had reached that part of the world?

This question started Menzies on a decades-long search of the history of Chinese exploration. He has proved that an armada of five fleets took off from China in 1421, seventy-one years ahead of Columbus’ feted trip to America. Those ships were many times bigger than those of European explorers. The tens of thousands of men and hundreds of women went on the ships on several different routes, mapping, collecting and planting. They charted the western and eastern coasts of Africa, North and South America, much of Australia and parts of New Zealand. They traveled around Greenland and across the northern edges of Europe and Asia.

Menzies has corrected their maps by adjusting the longitude for the speed of currents and winds for their ships that could only “go with the flow.” These corrected maps are not far off from today’s maps that are being adjusted by satellite data. But somehow those Chinese maps got into the hands of the Venetians. So both Columbus and Magellan had secret information that helped them in their “discoveries.” It’s ironic that the straits at the bottom of South America bear the name of the second explorer to pass through them.

Why haven’t we heard all of this? Because the power structure in China changed drastically and these accomplishments were hidden by the emperors who died in 1424, 1425, and 1435. What a loss that represented! All of the records of the science and culture of the time were destroyed. And that was within two decades after emperor Zhu Di had started a massive encyclopedia. This was a project headed by two advisers, “assisted by 2,180 scholars... to preserve all known literature and knowledge.” This *four thousand* volume encyclopedia, containing fifty million characters (words), was printed before the Forbidden City was finished, and before Gutenberg “invented” printing! How would you like to own that encyclopedia? Unfortunately, there was no ALA available to protect this culture and knowledge.

Records carved in stone, Chinese imports, languages in remote villages, carbon dating, and now DNA, are mounting proof that uncounted ships with their crews and passengers were wrecked or abandoned... yet survived on dozens of ocean and river coasts throughout the then unknown world.

This is a very well-documented book, on a level with Fernand Braudel’s *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World In the Age of Philip II*. I can hardly wait to read Menzies’ sequel, *1434*, which may reveal how the Venetian mapmaker got his information.  [Charles Reed]

The Bookies

This fun-filled evening features our special guest author

Annie Barrows

Annie is the author of the popular *Ivy and Bean* series of books for young children. She became the co-author of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* at the request of her ailing aunt, Mary Anne Shaffer. This is a tender and inspiring story, told in letters between Juliet Ashton and residents of Guernsey. It sheds light on the resilient people who lived through the German occupation of England’s Channel Islands.

Ron Shoop

of Random House will announce the Bookies Book Club Book of the Year

Again this year

a silent auction that promises to add some fun surprises to the evening.

Items for bidding will include:

An evening with Ron Shoop of Random House,
Tasting and Tours at the incredible Far Niente and Nickel & Nickel wineries,
exciting golf outings at Blackhawk, Diablo & Round Hill Country-Clubs,
AND a live auction featuring lodging for a weekend at a 3-bedroom condo with an ocean view in Aptos

Book Club Lists

will be on display at the Bookies.

To insure that your club’s list is included, send the title and author for each book you read and the name of your group to Darra Williamson:

Darraw944@astound.net

To be included in the display at the Bookies please be sure your book club list reaches Darra by March 10th
Project Second Chance, Inc.

Presents

The Bookies

Our 9th Annual Celebration of Books and the People Who Love Them

Special Guest

Annie Barrows

Co-Author of

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

Ron Scoop of Random House will announce the winner of
The Bookies Book Club Book of the Year

Thursday, March 19th, 2009

No Host Reception 6 p.m. – Dinner – 6:45 p.m.

The Lafayette Park Hotel
3287 Mount Diablo Boulevard

Dinner, Dessert and Wine from Jacuzzi Family Vineyards – $50 per person
(vegetarian requests to 925-927-3250 by March 13th please)

Tickets available Monday, February 9th through Friday, March 13th
~ By telephone, with a credit or debit card call Fremont Bank at 510-723-5811 (M-F, 10-5)
(Tickets will then be mailed to your home address)
~ Cash or check purchases may be made at Project Second Chance
75 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill (M-F, 9-5) (no credit/debit sales here) 925-927-3250

This event benefits Project Second Chance ♡ The Contra Costa County Library Adult Literacy Program

For more information call 925-927-3250