

Downloadable Audiobooks: From the Library Website to Your Hard Drive

Library cardholders now can download audiobooks from the library's website to their personal computers. Titles can be enjoyed on a home or office PC or laptop and can be transferred to a wide range of MP3 players. Some titles can even be burned to CD. At present, the audiobooks are not compatible with Macs or iPods because of publishers' concerns about copyright issues.

NEW!

"We are trying to reach out to patrons who are commuters and to people who don't have time to come into the library," said Jaime Anderson, a library manager who oversees purchases of new materials. "This is something that is available 24-7. Any time of the day or night, people can jump on their home computers and have access to this service."

The new online service allows library users to choose from hundreds of adult, teen, and children's titles. The choices include new releases, classics, mysteries, biographies, and a variety of nonfiction including foreign language learning. You'll see works by such authors as Michael Pollan, Alice Sebold, Dave Barry, and Philip Pullman.


"This service is different from our traditional library services in that there is nothing for patrons



to have to come in and physically pick up. There is nothing that can be damaged or lost or returned late," Anderson said. The audiobooks "check out" for 7 days and are automatically "returned" when the loan period is over.

Sandra Cooper, the director of the Library, says, "This is a baby step in creating a strong online presence for the Library, and we look forward to having feedback from people who use the service."

To learn more, click on the download audiobooks

icon  in the upper right corner at the

Library's homepage, www.sonomalibrary.org.

Have your library card number ready.

Book Group Brings Readers Together



Participants in the Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library book group discuss Manil Suri's *The Death of Vishnu*.

At half past noon on a rainy Thursday, eleven people gathered in a conference room at the Guerneville Regional Library, where they munched on sandwiches, salads, and cookies and shared their thoughts about a novel by Geraldine Brooks entitled *March*.

"I try to make it to the book group every month," said Ed Schoon, a retired college professor who lives in Guerneville. "I value the stimulation of hearing different perspectives on what I read. I tend to get caught up in my own narrow perspective. It's refreshing to hear what other people are thinking."

Book discussion groups (some bilingual) are held at Sonoma County libraries throughout the year either around midday or in the evening. (Check www.sonomalibrary.org for book discussion group schedules.) Some groups focus on certain genres; for instance, a group that meets monthly at Central Library reads mysteries exclusively.

A committee of librarians selects books with input from group participants. Nearly all the sets of books chosen for discussion are purchased by the Library Foundation. Once the library-sponsored groups are finished discussing a book, the copies are available for check out by private, non-library-affiliated book discussion groups.

Rohnert Park resident Mary Boster had a simple explanation for why she regularly attends her library's midday book group: "I like books. I like talking about books. And I like listening to other people talk about books."

Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library Manager Kathy Dennison said book group participants often tell her they end up reading

I value the stimulation of hearing different perspectives on what I read...

It's refreshing to hear what other people are thinking.

books that they normally wouldn't have read. Her mother, Phyllis Dennison, who regularly attends book discussions at the library, said participating in the group is "a big help in getting a lot more out of a book than I would on my own. When you hear other people's opinions and listen to what struck them about a book, it really helps you to deepen your understanding of what you've read."

If your independent book group would like to reserve multiple copies of a specific book, here's how to do it:

1. View titles of books available for reserve for book groups at www.sonomalibrary.org/bookgroup/booklinks.html
2. Submit your book requests to a reference librarian at your local library. Be sure to have several books in mind because your first choice might not be available.
3. The library will contact you when the books for your group arrive at your local library. They will be held in reserve for the members of your book group to check out.

Teenager Does a Good Turn

Sixteen-year-old Gurkamaljot Kaur said her first year as the youth member on the Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library Advisory Board was a real eye-opener. “I didn’t realize how much goes into making the library a good place,” the Elsie Allen High School junior said. “It’s interesting to see what goes on behind the scenes.”

Gurkamaljot, who goes by the nickname Kamal, applied for the newly created youth spot on the Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library Advisory Board in 2006 after volunteering at the library reshelving books. She now is in her second one-year term on the board.

“Kamal is not afraid to speak up or to ask questions,” said Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library Manager Kathy Dennison. Dennison said she plans to tap Kamal for more ideas later this year when the Advisory Board focuses on creating a designated area for teens in the library.

Too many people . . . take the library for granted.

Every library in the Sonoma County system has an Advisory Board comprised of citizens responsible for advising the Library Commission and Library Director on library services in their community. Two of the Advisory Boards—in Petaluma and Rohnert Park—have spots specifically reserved for youth members.

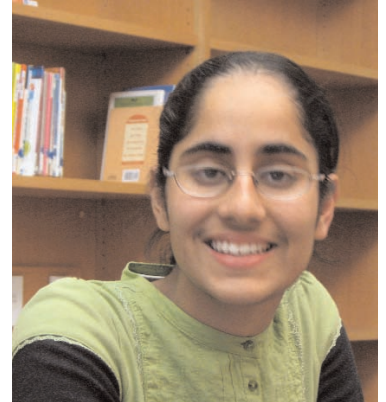
Kiyo Okazaki, manager of public services for the Sonoma County Library, said teens bring an “extremely valuable” perspective to the boards. “We adults need input from our youth,” Okazaki said. “We need their fresh thoughts and their current take on the library service—from the building to the technology to the collection.”

As an honor student in the University Center program at Elsie Allen, Kamal spends a lot of time in the library doing research and studying

for the advanced classes she takes both at high school and at Sonoma State University. “It’s a good place to study, especially if you don’t have a place at home,” Kamal said.

Kamal wishes more of her fellow teens would recognize what wonderful resources are available through the library. She says many teens are too quick to purchase their books and to rely on Wikipedia for their research rather than turning first to the library. “A lot of teens don’t really see the library as the resource that it is,” she said.

A recent trip to her native India left Kamal with an even stronger appreciation for public libraries and other American institutions. “In India they don’t have free public libraries like we do here. There, where they do have libraries, you have to pay for a library card,” she said. “Too many people here just take it for granted.”



DO YOU LOVE YOUR LIBRARY?

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION
WITH A DONATION*

*Please donate to the Library. Your gift will help the Library add to its collection of books and materials as well as expand programs and services. A remit envelope is included for your consideration.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jane Kunde

For more than 25 years, Jane Kunde has spent almost every Monday engaged in the Sisyphean task of reshelving books in the Sonoma Valley Library. She's been volunteering at the library ever since retiring from a long career as a Medical Laboratory Technologist. "I wanted to do something to give back to the community," Kunde recalls. "I felt that by helping at the library I could be useful."

Kunde decided earlier this year not to seek another four-year term on the Library Commission after 20 years of service, but she plans to keep volunteering. "I love the place," she said. "I'm comfortable there. The patrons are nice. The staff is great, and I enjoy the sense of satisfaction I get from the work."

In earlier years, Kunde often would put in two full days a week at the library. Now, at 76, she works one day a week for four to six hours. "I do what I can," she said on a recent Monday after completing a full morning of work during which she pushed carts laden with books and videos all over the library, bending down and reaching up over and over again to pull books that had been placed on hold and to tuck returned books back into their proper places on the shelves.

"Jane is unbelievable," said Sonoma Valley Regional Library Manager Stephan Buffy. "She still regularly puts in six-hour days reshelving books. A lot of our younger volunteers can't keep up with her."

An avid reader from a young age—"I read everything I could get my hands on by Tolstoy and then I moved on to Dostoevsky"—Kunde grew up going to libraries. Her family moved around a lot. In fact, she attended eight different high schools in four years. "It would have been nine except during my senior year my parents felt sorry for me when they were about to move yet again, so they rented me an apartment and I was able to graduate with my senior class in Vallejo," she said. Everywhere she lived, she found a library, usually within walking distance.

After high school, Kunde studied lab sciences at the University of California at Berkeley. She recalls envying the literature majors whom she'd see reading novels while she worked math problems and wrote up lab reports. "It used to gall me to see these gals in the dining hall reading great literature—and they were given credit for it!" she recalls. After Berkeley she married Fred Kunde, who grew grapes and other crops on the land between Kenwood and Glen Ellen that his family had farmed since 1904. "I liked that he was a farmer because farmers don't move around," Kunde said.



While Fred Kunde ran the family business with his brother, Bob, Jane Kunde worked as a lab tech in Napa and Sonoma counties. After retiring, she started helping out at the winery that the Kundes established in 1990. Fred died in 1993. Today, Jane and Fred's sons, Kurt and Bill, oversee the family business along with their cousins Jeff, Keith, and Marcia Kunde.

As a library commissioner, Kunde was a "strong and persistent advocate" for the needs of the Sonoma Valley library, said Library Commission Chairman Joe Murphy. "She was absolutely dedicated," Murphy said.

Kunde said she cares so much about the Sonoma Valley library that she felt challenged as a commissioner to consider of the needs of other libraries in the system when the deficits in Sonoma were so glaring. "As a commissioner, I had to think of the library system as a whole," she said. "But my heart was always with the Sonoma Valley library."

 **Chew On This!**

*Dinner conversations with
local writers*

 **March 2009** 

Stay tuned for information in the fall
issue of this newsletter 

Big Changes for Sonoma Valley's Library

Big changes are in the works at the Sonoma Valley Regional Library. Fueled with pledges of \$200,000 from the Sonoma City Council and \$100,000 from the Sonoma Valley Friends of the Library, the aging facility is about to be transformed into a 21st-century library.

Sonoma Valley Library Manager Stephan Buffy said he and other library staff members are working with design consultants to decide how best to use the windfall to modernize the 30-year-old facility. "We're looking to update our library in ways that will best improve our ability to serve our patrons," Buffy said. "We're considering everything from new signs inside and outside the library to improved lighting to more programming. We want our library to operate more efficiently as well as to be a brighter and friendlier place."

Housed in a brown brick building behind a row of oak trees seven blocks west of Sonoma's historic downtown, the Sonoma library serves a population of 45,000 residents living in an area that stretches from the town of Sonoma, east to the Napa County line, southwest to Stage Gulch Drive in Petaluma, and northwest to the towns of Glen Ellen and Kenwood.

Like most of Sonoma County's 11 libraries, the Sonoma Valley Regional Library was built in the 1970s to serve a much smaller population in an era before computer use became widespread. Modernizations are needed throughout the library system, and Sonoma Valley's library is "on the fast track to be the model for the rest of the county," Buffy said.

The Sonoma library's rejuvenation project is the end result of years of work by a dedicated and well-organized group of library supporters who have been raising as much as \$35,000 a year for the last several years through the Sonoma Valley Friends of the Library book sales. Last year, the Friends group teamed up with members of the Sonoma Valley Library Advisory Board to lobby



Patrons use the computers at the soon-to-be-renovated Sonoma Valley Regional Library.

Sonoma City Council members for matching funds for library improvements. David Dobbins, a Friends of the Library board member who runs the book sales in Sonoma, said he and other library supporters spent hours meeting with individual city council members and attending council meetings. Their persistence paid off: Last November, the city council voted unanimously to appropriate \$200,000 in its 2008 budget for the library project. "It's a dream come true," said Dobbins.

Library Director Sandra Cooper noted, "The Sonoma Valley Friends and Library Advisory Board have been fantastic in their advocacy for the Library in their community. This is an important role for them in helping us to improve library service in Sonoma County."

The modernization goals under consideration include

- new interior and exterior signs
- automated, self-checkout system for library books and materials
- improved interior and exterior lighting
- new entryway
- reconfigured interior layout with a single service desk
- a designated area for teens
- improved seating arrangements for library patrons
- enhanced and expanded programming and services to attract typically underserved groups including senior citizens, teens, and Latinos

(continued on back page)

Foundation Board Welcomes New Officers and Members

The Sonoma County Public Library Foundation announces its executive officers for 2008 and welcomes four new members to its board. The new officers are **Charlene Bunas**, President; **Becky Christensen**, Vice President; **Ruth Freis**, Secretary; and **Gary Bunas**, Treasurer. The new members of the volunteer Board are **Nate Bisbee**, **Winston Bull**, **Gary Bunas**, and **Jenni Klose**. Each comes with great experience and enthusiasm.



Nate Bisbee, a local architect, has lived in Sonoma County for 25 years. His first memory of any library is the Children's Room at the Central Branch. His love of reading, his interest in education, and his passion for cultural arts brought him to

the Foundation. Bisbee hopes to focus on the Library's "continued commitment to offering all residents free resources for learning."

Bisbee and his wife, Carrie, have two daughters, one and six years old, and spend a lot of time at the Petaluma Regional Library. Bisbee works at TLC D Architecture in Santa Rosa. A dedicated volunteer, Bisbee also commits time to the Petaluma Food Kitchen, American Institute of Architects, and the Sonoma County Museum.

Winston Bull brings a background of fundraising and PR in the not-for-profit sector. His dreams for the Sonoma County Library include greater use by all ages. "There are some wonderful classes and programs for adults, from adult literacy to gardening and computer usage."



Although Bull has lived in Sonoma County only six months, his wife Deborah grew up here and persuaded him to relocate from Washington, D.C., with their young daughter. Volunteerism is nothing new for Bull. He was active in "MoTH," an influential parents' network on Capitol Hill, and also volunteered for Habitat for Humanity in Washington, D.C.



Gary Bunas joined the Foundation in order to fill the spot of Treasurer. His years as Financial Secretary and Chairman of the Finance Committee of Christ Church United Methodist taught him "to keep accounts accurate to the penny." A former engineer, Bunas

sees libraries as "the cornerstone to education and culture."

Bunas and his wife, Charlene, have lived in Sonoma County 33 years. They have two grown children and four grandchildren—all library users. In addition to active participation in his church, Bunas has helped Hurricane Katrina victims in Biloxi, Mississippi, via Volunteers in Mission, and has worked with Habitat for Humanity.

Jenni Klose, a Santa Rosa attorney, joined the Board "because I am interested in being part of a group that supports the library and helps to encourage reading as an important part of life." Klose is an associate with Beeson Terhorst LLP, where she practices labor and employment law litigation.



Klose has lived most of her life in Sonoma County. "I hope that the Library, like all libraries, can maintain its relevance in the community at a time when lots of people are turning to the internet for information."

The Board welcomes applications. To learn more about this rewarding organization, log on to the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation website:

www.sonomalibrary.org/foundation

The Director's Corner

Sandra Cooper, Library Director

The Sonoma County Library has a set of priorities titled "Focus & Finish"—you might call it "back to basics."

One priority is to update all our facilities to provide better service and to create a safe, welcoming environment for library users and staff. The article on the Sonoma Valley Regional Library's improvements is one example of those priorities being put into action.

Another way is self-checkout. The buildings in Sonoma and Rohnert Park will be the first to use self-check technology to make checkout faster and easier. We are also striving to incorporate practical ideas that have worked for other libraries. We want to make the library a "customer friendly" place.

Also on the "to do" list is to improve our collections and your access to them. You may have seen the new format icons in our online catalog—and as soon as we begin using our new fiber optic network, you will also see enhanced content in the catalog with pictures

of the cover, table of contents, and other features that will make us a little more like Amazon.com.

Last but not least, we are taking a good, hard look at our library collection to see how we can improve

it. One of our challenges is to serve people who are accomplished online users while continuing to make sure that everyone can find the information they need and the books they want!

The Library has a wonderful staff of hardworking librarians and other staff members—and they are committed to improving our service to you.



***Coming soon to select libraries:
Self-Checkout!***



Sign up at www.escrip.com and designate the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation. Merchants will donate a percentage of your purchases.



Register at www.goodsearch.com and type in Sonoma County Public Library Foundation. Each time you search the internet using GoodSearch, money from their Yahoo advertisers will be donated.

Mark Your Calendars!

CHOCOLATES AND CINEMA



October 15, 2008

Come enjoy a delicious chocolate tasting followed by a classic film screening at the 8th annual "Chocolates and Cinema." The Sonoma County Public Library Foundation's gala fundraiser is set for October 15, 2008, at the Rialto Cinemas Lakeside in Santa Rosa. This evening of food, fun, and fabulous entertainment is considered a "must" by the many patrons who attend annually.

Michelle Marie's Patisserie, Powell's Sweet Shoppe, See's Candies, Sebastopol Cookie Company, and Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory are just a few of the chocolatiers who generously donated last year. Clover Stornetta Farms provided the milk.

Date: October 15, 2008

Time: 6:30 P.M. Chocolate Tasting

Place: Rialto Cinemas Lakeside
551 Summerfield Road
Santa Rosa



A benefit for the Sonoma County
Public Library Foundation to support
the programs of the Library

*Thank you to the Rialto Cinemas Lakeside
for its continuing, generous
sponsorship of this event*



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Big Changes for Sonoma Valley's Library

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Buffy has been part of a team of Sonoma County library staff who have been visiting more up-to-date libraries in the East and South Bay in search of design ideas. "We're going to try to reproduce here in Sonoma County some of the best ideas we've seen," he said. The library plans to try to have the work completed in time to celebrate 30 years in its present location on November 19, 2008.

Meanwhile, the Sonoma Valley Regional Library is still buzzing with activity. On a recent chilly Monday morning, young mothers were cuddling with their toddlers on the royal blue sofas in the children's area, reading them picture books. People were at work on all but two of the public access computers. And two library volunteers were reshelving all the books that had been returned after the winter break.

In the Coleccion en Espanol section of the library, cheese factory worker Jose Guido was collecting a tall stack of Spanish-language children's books that he had selected for his eight-year-old son, a second grader at Flowery Elementary School. Guido was perusing the Spanish-language collection with his friend, Manuel Castillo, a winery cellar worker, who also was picking out books for his two children, ages nine and 13. "I like to keep them reading in Spanish, as well as in English, so they don't forget how," Castillo said.