

LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION (LAC)

On Monday, August 17, 2026 at 6:30 PM

This is a hybrid in person and online provided meeting open to the public

Public Viewing:

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Public comment: There are three ways to comment during this meeting. All comments must be received prior to the close of public comment on that agenda item:

1. How to comment on agenda items via email before the meeting begins:

Members of the public may provide public comment by sending an email to the Library Board Clerk at clerk@santacruzpl.org

- Identify the agenda item number in the subject line of the email
- Emailed comments should be a maximum of 500 words, which corresponds to approximately 3 minutes of speaking time.
- All correspondences received prior to 12:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding a LAC Meeting will be distributed to Commission members to review prior to the meeting. Information submitted after 12:00 p.m. on that Friday may not have time to reach Commission members, nor be read by them prior to consideration of an item.

2. How to comment on agenda items during the meeting and prior to the close of public comment on an item, using the Zoom Q&A feature:

- Type your comment using the “Q&A” feature found on the Zoom control bar
- Identify the agenda item first, then type your comment
- Your comment will be read aloud

3. How to comment aloud on agenda items, during the meeting and prior to the close of public comment on an item, via the Zoom “raise hand” feature:

If you are accessing the meeting using the Zoom app and using computer audio:

- During the comment period for that agenda item, use the “raise hand” icon found on the Zoom control bar
- The moderator will announce your name or the last 3 digits of your phone number when it is your turn to speak
- Unmute yourself using the microphone icon
- Identify the agenda item
- Introduce yourself using your first and last name
- You will have three minutes of speaking time

If you are accessing the meeting using telephone audio:

- During the comment period for that agenda item, press *9 to raise your hand
- The moderator will announce the last 3 digits of your phone number when it is your turn to speak
- Unmute yourself using *6 – to toggle the mute/unmute feature
- Identify the agenda item
- Introduce yourself using your first and last name
- You will have three minutes of speaking time

LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

**MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026 at 6:30 PM
CAPITOLA BRANCH**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioners Rena Dubin, Charlotte Khandelwal, Timothy Lydgate, Vivian Rogers, Mike Termini, Pamela Woll, and Tricia Wynne

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any member of the community may address the Board during this Public Comment period on any "Consent Calendar" item on today's agenda or on any topic not on today's agenda but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. Please note, however, that for non-agendized items, the Board is not able to undertake extended discussion or take any action today without notice. Such items may be referred to staff for appropriate action, such as individual follow-up or placement on a future agenda. If you intend to address a subject or item that is on the Agenda, please hold your comments until that item is before the Board so that we may properly address all comments on that subject at the same time. In general, 3 minutes will be permitted per speaker during Public Comment; A MAXIMUM of 30 MINUTES is set aside for Public Comment at this time.

4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

A. Library Director's Report (5-9)

5. REPORT BY FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A. Friends of SCPL – Report (Oral)

6. MEMBER REPORTS

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

All items listed in the "Consent Calendar" will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items prior to the time the Board votes on the action unless members of the public or the Board request specific items to be discussed for separate review. Items pulled for separate discussion will be considered following General Business.

- A. Minutes of May 18, 2026
Staff Recommendation: Approve Minutes (10-11)
- B. Recent Articles about Santa Cruz Public Libraries
Staff Recommendation: Accept and File (12-24)

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

General Business items are intended to provide an opportunity for public discussion of each item listed. The following procedure is followed for each Business item: 1) Staff explanation; 2) Board questions; 3) Public comment; 4) Board deliberation; 5) Decision.

- A. Commemorative Flag Policy #109
Staff Recommendation: (25-26)
- B. Public Technology and Internet Access Policy #317
Staff Recommendation: (27-30)
- C. Public Programming Policy
Staff Recommendation: (31-60)

9. SCHEDULED UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Location	Anticipated Upcoming Agenda Items:
October 19, 2026	Downtown Branch	

10. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned to the next regular meeting of the Library Advisory Commission to be held on Monday, October 19, 2026 at 6:30pm at the Downtown Branch.

11. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Email from U. Langis- Defend Our Public Libraries—Now (61-62)
- B. Email from D. Rosen- For Library Commissioners re: Aug 17 meeting (63)
- C. Email from J. Grunstra- LAC agenda item 8c (64)
- D. Email from A. Lipson- 8/17/26 Library Commission Mtg re Proposed Protocols for Adult Programming -public comment (65-66)
- E. Email from A. Torres-Gil- 8/17/26 Library Commission Mtg re Proposed Protocols for Adult Programming -public comment (67-70)
- F. Email from the Resource Center for Nonviolence- Letter in support of intellectual freedom at tonight's Library Advisory Commission Meeting (71-72)

August 17, 2026

Director's Report to the Library Advisory Commission

Introduction and General Updates:

Santa Cruz Public Libraries have had a busy summer. Details for select programs follow below but the initial count at the end of our Summer Reading Program in July indicates another year of increased engagement, with nearly 10% more participants than the 2025 season. Additionally, we experienced a great deal of public feedback centered on a Daniel Reyes Poetry Event which has caused us to prioritize the creation of a new Public Programs Policy which will be discussed elsewhere on this meeting's agenda.

We are officially in the launch phase of our new strategic plan, with 19 work charters scheduled over the next three years. Aside from the policy work, additional strategic work has begun with library staff visiting Santa Clara County Library and San Jose Public Library to gain peer insights on Bookmobile and Outreach services as well as experiences serving a predominantly Spanish-speaking community from a branch library. We also have scheduled Beth Wahler, a specialist in public libraries hosting social workers, to begin her consultant engagement with SCPL in late 2026. Additionally, we are entering conversations with People First of Santa Cruz County to explore ways they could support our Downtown Library's most vulnerable users during heat events.

With strategic planning underway, the Policy Team has returned to our scheduled policy updates two of which are on today's agenda. An additional upcoming policy will be a printing and copying policy based on the pilot of a new print management program for the libraries, led by our IT Manager.

Since we last met in May, we celebrated the Be the Difference Awards of Elise Dempsey, lead volunteer for our historical files scanning project, and Lezlie Ward, lead volunteer for our very popular puzzle exchange program. We co-sponsored a Santa Cruz Mayoral Forum at The Tannery with the Arts Council, Visit Santa Cruz, and All About Theater. Library staff also participated in the annual Summit of the Friends of Santa Cruz Public Library, which focused on advocacy and fundraising.

Also, since we met last May, the day of the public launch of our new mobile app, we have 4,919 users registered with that improved app experience.

As Director, I continued to represent SCPL and the profession in meetings of the Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Library System (current Chair), the California Library Association Board, and as a new member of the Pacific Library Partnership's Executive Committee.

I am especially pleased that SCPL is nominating a staff member each to participate in the Pacific Library Partnership's GOLD leadership development program, as well as the State Library's CATALYST leadership development program. Both programs are multi-month professional development opportunities that work with mentors and fellow participants to develop skills, learn about library leadership issues, and present capstone projects.

STAFFING:**Vacant Positions**

Position Title	Library FTE
Librarian- Boulder Creek	1.0
Librarian- Life Literacy Center	1.0
Building Maintenance Worker II	1.0
Bookmobile Library Assistant III (Overhire)	1.0
Library Assistant II- Branciforte	0.75
Library Assistant II- Scotts Valley	0.5
Library Assistant II- Garfield Park	0.5
Library Assistant II- Capitola	0.5
Bookmobile Library Assistant II	1.0

New Hires & Home Position Changes

Merna Mardini- Library Assistant II @ Scotts Valley to Aptos. 6/20/2026

Laura Blasingame- Librarian @ Boulder Creek (Generalist) to Downtown (Teen). 8/1/2026

Abigail Hope- Library Assistant II @ Garfield Park to Downtown. 7/18/2026

Jennifer Santillana- Library Assistant II @ Scotts Valley to Scotts Valley. 7/18/2026

Ciera Dudley- Library Assistant II @ Capitola to Librarian (Adult) @ Downtown. 8/15/2026

Grayson McCoy- New Hire Library Aide. 9/1/2026

Resignations

Michelle Mogollon- Library Aide. 6/15/2026

Robin Horn- On-Call Library Assistant II 7/8/2026

Jennifer Lings- Library Aide. 7/20/2026

Zoe Willats- Bookmobile Library Assistant II. 8/14/2026

PROGRAMS & SERVICES:**SRP Highlights from Youth Programs -**

SRP Participants as of August 10 2025 and August 10 2026

Age Group	Participants as of August 10 2025	Participants as of August 10 2026	Percent Increase
Kids	2208	2415	9.4%
Teens	467	535	14.6%
Adults	1392	1519	9.1%
All Ages	4067	4469	9.9%

We offered 398 programs for youth during June and July, attended by 9,861 people.

We celebrated the start of SRP with kick off parties across the county. On June 1st, the Downtown Branch hosted a Summer Reading Kick-Off party featuring face painting, ice cream and popsicles, henna art, crafts and SRP sign ups. It was a huge success with around 300 people attending from all over the County. On June 6th, Aptos Branch kicked off Summer Reading with a rock painting program where 41 artists of all ages painted rocks for our Children's Patio. Advisory Council of Teens members tabled at the program to sign up for Summer Reading participants and give out free beach bags of books to Teen. At Boulder Creek, the BC Friends Committee provided funds and support for a Last Day of School Party with snacks and games, attended by 133 people.

Throughout the months of June and July, we offered special craft and STEAM programs to go along with the Plant a Seed, Read! summer reading theme in addition to our regular ongoing programming. We hosted special performances including the bilingual Zany Zoe Comedy Magic Show, Pop and Go Puppets, Claytopia, Perry Yan Magic, Village Rhythms, Mariela's Music Time program presented in Spanish, a Talk & Walk with Artist Lea de Wit, Happy Birds, Sterling Bubblesmith. Jungle James, Sean's Music Factory, Lucha Libro, Didgeridoo Down Under, Anime Your Way, Circus of Smiles, and Cascada de Flores. FSCPL funded most of the performances for youth and all of the incentive prizes.

All of our performer and craft programs were well received and well attended at all of our branches. The biggest draw was 230 people in attendance for Circus of Smiles in the Landing theater at SV. We also had 165 people at LSB for Happy Birds. Bilingual musical storytelling performers Cascada de Flores are now regulars for us and the BC community was especially appreciative to have this bilingual performance.

Participants at Juvenile hall enjoyed the SRP Pizza celebration and librarians received strong positive feedback about the books.

The Great Reads Book giveaway promotion sponsored by Aptos ACT was a great success and all of the bags were distributed.

Ice cream making programs at LIV and FEL were super successful.

Anime Your Way at APT was attended by 23 teens! (see photo)

We provided Lunch@theLibrary programming at 9 summer meal sites, sharing information about our summer reading program and distributing books to build home libraries at the Downtown and Live Oak Boys and Girls Clubs, Del Mar Elementary, Quail Hollow Charter School and Rio Del Mar Elementary. We

also presented bimonthly programming at Juvenile hall, presented an outreach visit to Corralitos Creek Apartments, and tabled at the DTN and SV Farmers' Markets.



Adult Programs -

- Preparing for Life's Transitions, in partnership with Village Santa Cruz: New 6-part monthly workshop series at Aptos designed for participants to gather essential information about personal, legal, medical, financial, insurance, real estate, living options, daily living, crisis plans, home health, hospice and end of life in one place.
- Bats of Santa Cruz County at Boulder Creek: 40 participants learned about the vital role bats play in maintaining the health and balance of diverse ecosystems. The presentation was given by the lead researcher for bat projects at the Western Ecological Research Center for the U.S. Geological Survey.
- Cat Love: Celebrating Cats Through Art & Story - In-Person Visit with Artist & Author Teresa Mallen at Capitola: 71 participants celebrated all things feline through prose, poetry, and visual arts.

- In partnership with the Santa Cruz Jewish Film Festival, the Capitola library hosted screenings of three films in celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month, enjoyed by 157 attendees.
- Santa Cruz Shakespeare Summer Dramaturgy Talks at Downtown bookended summer programming with 2 talks attended by 115 participants.
- The new volunteer-led Hot Topics Book Club with local author Susie Bright at Garfield Park is organized around discussing the “hot topic” titles in the news, and book buzz— controversies, new classics or perhaps overexposed.
- This year SCPL hosted the annual Santa Cruz County History Fair, attended by 314 people, at London Nelson Center and highlighted SCPL’s special local history collections.

FACILITIES:

BOULDER CREEK: The County has identified the funding to install the generator we are relocating from Downtown and a project manager has been assigned. This plan has been in the works some time and will bring much needed back up to the facility.

BRANCIFORTE: The library is exploring additional options for sound attenuation within the building.

CAPITOLA: We are exploring options for restoring the landscaping and have installed electric shades to address glare issues from the very tops of the reading room windows.

DOWNTOWN: With the successful test of the generator install at HDQ, we are planning the next phase of relocating our servers from DTN to the HDQ building, which will free up the generator for install at Boulder Creek as originally planned.

HEADQUARTERS: City of SC has coordinated and completed roof repairs and a plumbing upgrade to the building.

FELTON: The County is finalizing the contract for solar installation, with anticipated completion in Spring of 2027. We have installed a sun shade for the patio area.

LA SELVA BEACH: We are installing a proper roof on the patio pergola structure to make it more program-friendly.

LIVE OAK: We are exploring options for bolstering landscaping near the entrance as well as working on County approval for enclosing an alcove to create a local history research room.

LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026 at 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Rena Dubin, Charlotte Khandelwal, Timothy Lydgate, Mike Termini,
Pamela Woll, Tricia Wynne

Vivian Rogers resigned.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED THE AGENDA
MOVER:	Tricia Wynne
SECONDER:	Charlotte Khandelwal
AYES:	Dubin, Khandelwal, Lydgate, Termini, Woll, Wynne

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Library Director, Christopher Platt, provided a written report

5. REPORT BY FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Sarah Beck, Executive Director of the Friends, provided a report

6. MEMBER REPORTS

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

RESULT:	APPROVED THE CONSENT CALENDAR Items A - E
	A. Approved Minutes of April 20, 2026
	B. Accepted and filed recent articles about Santa Cruz Public Libraries
	C. Accepted and filed 3rd Quarter FY26 Community Impact Measures
	D. Accepted and filed FY 26 3rd Qtr. SCPL Incident Report
	E. Accepted and filed the State of America's Libraries Report
MOVER:	Tricia Wynne
SECONDER:	Rena Dubin
AYES:	Dubin, Khandelwal, Lydgate, Termini, Woll, Wynne

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. FY 27 Draft Library Operating Budget Proposal

RESULT:	Accepted the proposed Draft FY 27 Library Operating Budget and recommended approval to the JPA
MOVER:	Charlotte Khandelwal
SECONDER:	Tricia Wynne
AYES:	Dubin, Khandelwal, Lydgate, Termini, Woll, Wynne

9. SCHEDULED UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Location	Anticipated Upcoming Agenda Items:
August 17, 2026	Capitola Branch	•

10. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 7:20pm to the next regular meeting of the Library Advisory Commission to be held on Monday, August 17, 2026 at 6:30pm at the Capitola Branch Library.

Library Advisory Commission

Media Packet

(Apr 1st – Jun 30th, 2026)

In the News and Media

Santa Cruz Sentinel

April 17, 2026: Coastlines

4 santacruzsentinel.com | Section A | Friday, April 17, 2026

Coast Lines

■ SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK APRIL 19-25

What brings you joy? Whether it's cozying up with a new story, learning a new skill, gathering with the community or something else, you can find your joy at any branch of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries. National Library Week, April 19-25, is a time to celebrate the many ways libraries bring people together, spark imagination and support lifelong learning.

Join SCPL for special National Library Week events: Book Bag Painting at participating libraries. See Library Calendar for times and locations at tinyurl.com/SCCNationalLibraryWeek.

On April 22, there will be a librarians film screening and discussion at Scotts Valley Branch Library, 251 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley, from 5-7 p.m. Visit santacruzpl.libnet.info/event/15426535 to register.

Another librarians film screening and discussion will be held April 23 at the Capitola Branch Library, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola, from 6:30-8 p.m. Visit santacruzpl.libnet.info/event/15416115 to register.

Santa Cruz Public Libraries welcome everyone.



April 17, 2026: News Briefs

By Staff

SLV Museum presents 'The Road I Call Home' exhibit

San Lorenzo Valley Museum will present "The Road I Call Home," a photography exhibition by humanitarian and award-winning photographer Randy Bacon, beginning April 18.

The exhibit features portraits and personal narratives of 32 people experiencing homelessness, including men, women and children. According to the museum, the project aims to build empathy and highlight the dignity, identity and lived experiences of unhoused individuals. Each portrait is accompanied by a written account from the subject, ranging from emotional and uplifting to heartbreaking stories, the museum said.

An opening reception will be held Thursday, April 23, at the Belardi Memorial Gallery in Felton as part of the Ripple Effect Arts Festival.

The exhibition will run through Sept. 20 at the Belardi Memorial Gallery, 6299 Gushee St., and the Community Room at the Felton Public Library, 6121 Gushee St.

Santa Cruz libraries celebrate National Library Week

Santa Cruz Public Libraries will celebrate 2026 National Library Week from April 19-25, highlighting programs, resources and services available at all branches.

The theme encourages residents to "find your joy" through library offerings such as books, digital collections, storytimes, author talks, job assistance, free Wi-Fi and community programming. Events include book bag painting at participating branches, with times and locations listed on the library calendar.

Scotts Valley Branch Library will host a screening and discussion of "The Librarians" on Wednesday, April 22, from 5-7pm. Registration is available at santacruzpl.libnet.info/event/15426535. Capitola Branch Library will host a similar screening on Thursday, April 23, from 6:30-8pm. Registration is available at santacruzpl.libnet.info/event/15416115.

Link to story: <https://pressbanner.com/news-briefs-published-april-17-2026/>



April 21, 2026: Libraries mark National Library Week, Speaker Rivas endorses Becerra for governor

By Ngozi Cole

National Library Week

Public libraries around the region are marking [National Library Week](#). The theme this year is “Find Your Joy.”

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries will be hosting screenings and discussions of the film *The Librarians*. The documentary looks at how librarians are pushing back against censorship.

One [screening](#) will be at the Scotts Valley Branch on Wednesday evening and [another](#) at the Capitola Branch on Thursday evening.

For Hillary Theyer, the director of Monterey County Free Libraries, the importance of libraries goes beyond books.

“We are the safe place to ask for many, many people,” Theyer said. “You can come in and ask anything, and we’re gonna do our best to help you. Even if that is referring you to the best agency that can help you.”

Theyer encourages people to use the library’s free resources, including adult literacy programs and online veterans assistance.

“We serve everyone, all ages, all stages in life.”

Link to story: <https://www.kazu.org/kazu-news/2026-04-21/libraries-mark-national-library-week-speaker-rivas-endorses-becerra-for-governor>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

April 21, 2026: Santa Cruz High School senior Vicky Tinnell named 2026-27 county youth poet laureate

By Nick Sestanovich

SANTA CRUZ — Vicky Arabella Tinnell, a senior at Santa Cruz High School, has been named Santa Cruz County youth poet laureate for 2026-27. The announcement was made during a ceremony held at Kuumbwa Jazz Thursday.

According to a Santa Cruz Public Libraries news release, Tinnell is an active member of the Rising Voices Youth Poetry Collective and her work has been published in local youth anthologies. Her poetry is shaped by her Congolese roots and life in Santa Cruz, with themes including identity, belonging and resilience.

Tinnell was selected from a panel of finalists who read their poems alongside the past year’s outgoing youth poetry cohorts. The other finalists were Bella Dowd of Delta High School in Aptos, Felice Rickwald of Branciforte Middle School in Santa Cruz, Ash Raznick of Cypress High School in Twin Lakes and Ror Spagh of Aptos High School.

They, along with Vinnell, will comprise the youth poetry cohort for 2026-27. Santa Cruz Public Libraries has had a youth poet laureate program since 2024 when then-Pacific Collegiate School student Dina Lusztig Noyes was named to the position. Much like the adult counterpart title, the youth poet laureate serves as an ambassador of all things poetic in Santa Cruz County on a youth-focused level. For a one-year term, they are tasked with promoting the art of poetry throughout the county, whether through workshops, civic functions or readings, while also encouraging their peers to take part in the art form. The position also allows for publishing opportunities. Tinnell is taking the reins of youth poet laureate from Finn Maxwell, a senior at San Lorenzo Valley High School in Felton.

For information on Santa Cruz County's youth poet laureate program, go to [Sites.google.com/view/santa-cruz-youth-poet-laureate/](https://sites.google.com/view/santa-cruz-youth-poet-laureate/).

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/04/20/santa-cruz-high-school-senior-vicky-tinnell-named-2026-27-county-youth-poet-laureate/>

KQED

May 12, 2026: How Bay Area Libraries Are Helping Residents Switch From Gas to Induction Cooking

By Sara Mohamad

Bay Area libraries are lending induction cooktops to help residents transition away from gas stoves, cut greenhouse gas emissions and improve indoor air quality. *California is transitioning to clean energy. KQED is reporting on what that means for you. What works? What doesn't? How much does it cost?*

Mirella Bucci cooked on a gas stove her whole life. She connected it to her family's Italian cooking traditions and the way she grew up. Bucci thought its heat control was unmatched. Until she tried an induction cooktop for the first time.

"My mom and these influential people in my cooking world have always used gas," Bucci said. She remembers her mom's big pot of tomato sauce simmering above a low flame; Bucci and her two siblings would eat it with pasta every week.

Bucci long believed the industry standard, that only gas provided the precision "top chefs" require. But, as an adult, Bucci grew curious about induction as she considered replacing her gas stove as part of a home electrification project. She had heard professional chefs still relied on gas in restaurants, but that some used induction at home because it was faster and easier to control. Still, she was skeptical. Bucci, who works at the Stanford School of Medicine helping biomedical research labs apply for federal funding, has lived in San Mateo County for nearly 25 years. She didn't know anyone personally who used induction cooking. So she checked one out from San Mateo City Hall. Within days, her doubts faded. Water boiled faster than she expected. The stove's surface didn't remain too hot for too long. And the temperature control felt more precise. "The induction made things easier," Bucci said.

That mattered to Bucci, whose cooking is deeply tied to her family's heritage.

She cooks seafood risotto, squid-ink pasta, lobster macaroni, scallops with wedges of grapefruit, and other seafood dishes for the Italian-American “Feast of Seven Fishes” Christmas Eve traditional meal. For years, she believed those meals required cooking over a flame. “You can cook something really hot and get those grill lines on your meat or your vegetables,” Bucci said. “That’s kind of an advantage too, with the induction, is that it gets really hot.”

Across the Bay Area, libraries and other civic institutions now offer induction cooktop kits like the one Bucci borrowed, giving residents a free, low-risk way to try an alternative to gas cooking. The loaner programs are part of a broader push by Bay Area municipalities and climate advocates to reduce household emissions from gas appliances and improve indoor air quality.

Gas and propane stoves are a major source of pollution in U.S. households. A 2025 study found that for homes using these fuels, cooking accounts for a quarter of their total exposure to nitrogen dioxide.

This is a serious health concern because nitrogen dioxide is a well-known trigger for asthma, meaning that simply preparing meals can contribute to a person’s long-term health risk.

But for many households, switching isn’t simple. Full stove replacements can cost thousands of dollars, and even portable units, typically between \$50 and \$200, can feel like a financial risk if people aren’t sure they’ll like the technology.

The library as a climate outreach space

The induction cooktop loaner program in San Mateo that Bucci participated in began at City Hall but moved into the public library’s technology lending program in 2024.

Jonathan Jung, a supervising library assistant in San Mateo, said the induction cooktops are a natural extension of the library’s mission. “Libraries are a well-respected pillar of knowledge in the community,” he said. The lending program includes everything from keyboards and synthesizers for musicians to microcontrollers for hobbyists. Jung said the program’s two induction cooktops are in high demand. “Patrons have given me positive feedback. They’re really happy that they can test it out,” he said.

Civic groups offer the cooktops as part of their local climate goals, said Andrea Chow, a sustainability analyst with the city. In San Mateo, buildings account for a portion of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, which come primarily from the use of gas in residential and commercial buildings. Especially in unincorporated areas, where they are the second largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions at 32%. “Decarbonizing existing buildings is a huge priority for our city,” Chow said.

The Sunnyvale Public Library started a similar program in 2019. The library has 14 cooktops available and averages 100 checkouts per year. Madeline Khair, environmental programs manager within Sunnyvale’s environmental services department, said the library is expanding its sustainability section to include solar panels, rechargeable batteries and emergency kits.

“Our partners at the library have always been really supportive of the climate action plan and sustainability goals,” she said.

The city of Sunnyvale aims to reduce overall community greenhouse gas emissions by 56% from 1990 levels by 2030, according to its climate action playbook. This target is more aggressive than California’s 40% reduction goal.

While the loaner program offers a pathway for people interested in trying induction cooktops for free, some libraries carry only a handful of kits and have waitlists to check them out. And replacing a stove can still be expensive. Costs can range from \$2,000 to \$8,000, or even more. Some households may need electrical upgrades to switch completely away from gas.

What the research says about gas stoves and indoor air

About a year and a half after trying a loaner, San Mateo resident Mike Driscoll and his wife made the switch. They discovered one benefit they did not expect: a cleaner home. Gas stoves also emit pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide, and fine particulate matter, which can linger in indoor air or settle on surfaces. Exposure has been linked to increased asthma symptoms in children and can worsen other respiratory conditions, according to a 2023 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

Those health considerations are becoming a key driver behind programs like these, alongside climate goals.

Gas stoves contribute to climate change by emitting carbon dioxide during combustion and methane, which is present in unburned natural gas that leaks from gas stoves.

These greenhouse gases trap atmospheric heat. According to a 2022 study in *Environmental Science and Technology*, annual methane leaks from U.S. stoves alone create a climate impact comparable to that of half a million cars, highlighting a significant environmental footprint beyond active cooking.

“With gas, there was always a little layer of grease on nearby surfaces,” he said. “After switching, that just disappeared.”

Cooking itself produces grease particles and ultrafine aerosols. With gas, the open flame can intensify how those particles spread, carrying them onto nearby counters, cabinets and furniture, something households like Driscoll’s may notice as residue over time. Buildings account for a significant share of California’s emissions, much of it from gas appliances, making reductions in heating, hot water and cooking a key part of the state’s climate strategy.

Long-term studies indicate that switching from gas stoves to induction cooking significantly improves indoor air quality, reducing nitrogen dioxide exposure by over 50%, according to a 2025 study by Stanford researchers.

Induction cooktops use electromagnetic energy to heat cookware directly, with no combustion and no combustion-related indoor air pollution. That can improve indoor air quality, especially in smaller or poorly ventilated spaces, while also reducing excess heat in the kitchen. “Gas heats the air to thousands of degrees; electric doesn’t,” said Rob Jackson, the study’s senior author and professor at the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability.

He said these programs also help people who cannot swap all of their gas appliances — furnaces, water heaters — at once. They can start by using their gas stove less.

“We sample many homes in Bakersfield and elsewhere where people rent and can’t change their appliances, or convince their landlord to, and can’t afford to pay for the transition themselves,” he said. “In this case, the best thing you can do to improve indoor air quality is to burn less gas indoors.”

Where to borrow an induction cooktop in the Bay Area

Programs have expanded across the region, including Santa Cruz, Milpitas, Burlingame, Palo Alto, Santa Clara, Oakland, Marin County and Hayward. In some cities, kits are available through libraries; in others, through sustainability departments or community programs.

Regional energy providers, including Peninsula Clean Energy and Silicon Valley Clean Energy, have supported these efforts.

Silicon Valley Clean Energy also offers rebates of up to \$750 for upgrading to induction cooktops. The Bay Area Regional Energy Network assists moderate-income households with home improvements, including electrical upgrades for cooking.

Loaner programs are also available through PG&E, Acterra in the East Bay, and San Jose Clean Energy.

In Milpitas, sustainability coordinator Grace Chan said the goal is to make the gas-to-induction transition as easy as possible. "It's a very low-commitment way for residents to test out a new type of equipment that they may never have used before," Chan said. For some, the appeal isn't even about replacing a stove.

Jessica Egbert, a renter in San Bruno, borrowed a cooktop for a backyard-style Korean barbecue with friends. "It was my first time using induction," she said. "It heated up really fast, and I liked that I could use it outside without worrying about an open flame." Still, awareness remains a challenge.

"There is a very strong, sometimes cultural or personal connection to gas cooking. There's a lot of hesitancy," Chow said.

But once people try induction, perceptions can shift. Borrowers frequently mention that water boils faster, that the controls feel precise, and that the surface is safe, cooling quickly and reducing the risk of burns or fires.

There are still trade-offs. Induction requires compatible cookware like stainless steel and cast iron, and some cooks miss the visual cue of a flame or worry about techniques like stir-frying.

For Bucci, the loaner program made all the difference. It was a little over two years ago when she borrowed a single-burner induction cooktop from city hall to try out for two weeks at home. What started out as a more climate-conscious decision, Bucci said, turned out to be better for her cooking overall. Now, she wonders if there will ever be a situation where she would prefer gas. "I mean, if you were making a flambé and you were trying to light your alcohol on fire in the pan, that would be one."

Aside from that rare occurrence, Bucci doesn't miss the flame. "You realize the point is to heat your food quickly and with control," she said. "And induction does that."

Link to story: <https://www.kqed.org/science/200962/how-bay-area-libraries-are-helping-residents-switch-from-gas-to-induction-cooking>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

June 2, 2026: 'Dungeon Crawler Carl' - Libraries to host author online

By Nick Sestanovich

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY — The popularity of Dungeons and Dragons in the '70s revolutionized the world of role-playing games, in which players go beyond merely rolling the dice to determine the outcomes but crafting characters to try to give themselves an advantage.

This success led to not only other tabletop RPGs but also brought the concept to other media, including books where game mechanics are integrated into the story itself. One of the most notable recent examples of literary role-playing games — also known as LitRPG — is Matt Dinniman's "Dungeon Crawler Carl" series, which has published eight books and is set to make its way into additional forms of media, including a television adaptation. Through a partnership with the Library Speakers Consortium, Dinniman will be discussing his latest installment, "A Parade of Horribles," in a virtual presentation that will be streamed to member libraries, including the Santa Cruz Public Libraries and Watsonville Public Library systems, June 11.

The "Dungeon Crawler Carl" series settles around Coast Guard veteran Carl and his ex-girlfriend's cat Princess Donut, two beings on a quest for survival, as the alien mining company Borant Corporation has destroyed Earth and turned planets against each other for an intergalactic game show called "Dungeon Crawler World." Carl, with Princess Donut in tow, has to utilize his knowledge of tabletop RPGs and video games to traverse through a perilous dungeon crawl.

First published in 2020, the first seven books have sold millions of copies, made the New York Times Best-Seller List and have spawned a franchise in the making.

Dinniman has already published a webcomic based on the series and a graphic novel adaptation, and there are also plans for a line of figurines and trading cards from Renegade Toys, a tabletop game from Renegade Game Studios and a live-action adaptation from Universal Studios and Fuzzy Door Productions —the company founded by "Family Guy" creator Seth MacFarlane — for Peacock.

Amid all these busy developments for the franchise, Dinniman released the eighth book in the series, "A Parade of Horribles," May 12. In this installment, Carl and Princess Donut make their way to the 10th floor of the dungeon where they take part in a race with a track that shifts with every vehicle upgrade, all while growing concern about the enigmatic 11th floor, dubbed "A Parade of Horribles" and "a coming-out party for the ages."

Earlier this year, Dinniman published a standalone novel, "Operation Bounce House" about a group of space colonists defending their planet from outside forces. He also has written the "Dominion of Blades" and "Shivered Sky" series.

In addition to discussing his works, Dinniman will be taking questions submitted in advance and during the presentation as time allows.

The discussion is 4 p.m. June 11. To register and submit questions, go to [Library.org/santacruzpl/](https://library.org/santacruzpl/) or [Library.org/watsonvillelibrary](https://library.org/watsonvillelibrary).

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/06/01/santa-cruz-county-libraries-to-virtually-host-dungeon-crawler-carl-author-matt-dinniman/>



June 4, 2026: Summer Reading Program returns to Santa Cruz libraries

By Staff Report

2026 initiative features 'Plant a Seed, Read' theme

Santa Cruz Public Libraries has launched its 2026 Summer Reading Program, inviting adults, children and families to participate in a season of reading, learning and community activities.

The program, themed "Plant a Seed, Read," began June 1 and runs through July 31. Participants can earn prizes by reaching reading milestones, with prize redemption continuing through Aug. 9.

According to the library system, this year's theme is rooted in the concept of farm-to-table, drawing parallels between farms that grow food to nourish the body and libraries that cultivate ideas to nourish the mind. The program emphasizes the connections among food, stories, family, culture, economy and ecology.

Throughout the summer, all 10 branches of the library system will host free activities for children, teens and adults designed to encourage reading and lifelong learning.

"The Summer Reading Program is all about celebrating reading for pleasure and encouraging children and everyone to keep reading all summer long," said Youth Programs and Services Manager Heather Norquist. "I love that we have this opportunity to host special performances by magicians, puppeteers, musicians and more, and that we give children books as incentive prizes to build their home libraries. This year we are also offering a fantastic selection of arts and crafts programs to go along with the 'Plant a Seed, Read' theme."

Adult Programs and Services Manager Jessica Goodman said the program offers opportunities for adults as well.

"Summer Reading is not just for kids. We invite all adults to slow down and enjoy a summer filled with creativity, community, and unique learning experiences for wide-ranging interests," Goodman said.

Adult programming will include gardening workshops, author talks, music performances, nature journaling, mosaics, sketching, painting and botanical bundle dyeing. Science-themed presentations will explore topics, such as astronomy, bees, mountain lions and bobcats, bats and everyday chemistry. Additional programs will focus on the farmworker experience and sustainable futures through a series of Solarpunk workshops.

Goodman encouraged adults to participate in the reading challenge and prize program.

"Spend some summer leisure time reading for pleasure, and you can win Renee's Garden seeds, our custom designed Summer Reading 2026 vinyl sticker, plus have a chance to win Santa Cruz Shakespeare tickets, a Museum of Art and History Fan membership pass, or a Monterey Bay Aquarium family membership," she said.

Residents can register for the Summer Reading Program by visiting their local library branch or the library system's website santacruzpl.org.

Link to story: <https://pressbanner.com/summer-reading-program-returns-to-santa-cruz-libraries/>



June 7, 2026: Showing Pride in Santa Cruz

By Todd Guild

Thousands of people lined Pacific Avenue late Sunday morning, many dressed in rainbow colors and waving flags, as they watched the annual Pride Parade. Santa Cruz Pride is the largest LGBTQ+ event on the Central Coast and the third-oldest annual Pride festival in California.

Marching in the parade was a mix of nonprofits, social groups, individuals and performers such as dancers and cheerleaders. This included Santa Cruz Gay Beach Volleyball, which meets on Wednesdays from 5:30pm to sunset at Main Beach in Santa Cruz.

The group set up a mobile volleyball net bedazzled with an estimated 18,000 tiny beads in rainbow colors and flanked by two tile-mosaic planters filled with colorful flowers. "Visibility, visibility," group member Joe Cosentino said of the group's reason for being there. "We're not going away, ever." Pride, Cosentino said, is a "family reunion."

"People showing up for the first time, not knowing where they are in this community, they find us and they find family," he said. Nearby, members of the Book Truck Precision Drill Team stood ready with their book carts painted in various rainbow shades. "We have a long history of doing this," Santa Cruz Public Libraries Director Christopher Platt said. "We celebrate everyone in our community, and this is a great way to do it. Libraries welcome everyone. No matter who you are, all the time."

In another staging area, the Nor Cal Pride Band waited, most members wearing rainbow-inspired clothing and practicing with their instruments. The group is an amalgamation of about 85 young musicians from schools around Northern California, most of them from Santa Cruz County. Instructor Keegan McCoy said the group was excited to participate. "We're just here to be in the community and support love and support acceptance and just people loving each other," he said. "And we're here to spread happiness and positivity." Percussionist Jayden Ross, 11, who attends Mission Hill Middle School in Santa Cruz, said performing in the parade was an exciting opportunity.

"Everybody's here today to celebrate pride," he said. "Because some people come from families and roots that don't really let them be themselves. So it's kind of, like, a chance to celebrate people being free and being themselves."

Emi Akioishi, who volunteers with Teen Kitchen Project, said she came with the organization to show her support for the queer community. The spirit of the parade, she said, matches the mission of Teen Kitchen Project, which teaches young people to cook nutritious meals that are delivered to people with serious illnesses. "It feels good to be here. I mean, I'm part of the community myself," she said. Rachel Williams, who chairs the Santa Cruz County Board of Education, said she was there to support all of the county's students.

"We really feel like there's a place for every student with academics, but we want to make sure that we create a safe space for all students to learn, to thrive, to grow and to advance," Williams said. "We want to be here in support of them

and our entire community of individuals.” Elaine Johnson, president of the Santa Cruz NAACP and CEO of Housing Santa Cruz County, said the celebration is important in the current political climate.

“I’m just so happy that we’re here today celebrating who we are, who we truly are,” she said. “And I get to do it with people that I love and respect. And my thing is that it doesn’t stop when the sun sets tonight. We keep on celebrating life.” Cabrillo College Trustee Adam Spickler agreed.

“We spend, as the LGBTQIA2S-plus community, most of our time since President Donald Trump’s inauguration living in shadows, fearful of the ways they’re going to take back our rights,” he said. “That we’re going to lose our access to health care, you know, all this stuff. And we get to show up visibly in our community today and put all of that aside and celebrate and unite with each other in a way that really allows us to remember what we fight for in the first place.”

Link to story: <https://pajaronian.com/showing-pride-in-santa-cruz/>



June 21, 2026: Dungeons & Dragons group thrives in an unlikely place – local libraries – thanks to a volunteer at the helm

By Tania Ortiz

When Jeltje van Baren began teaching people how to lead a game of Dungeons & Dragons — the most well-known role-playing game — a few years ago, she ran into a few problems: finding players and a space to play.

“I noticed that some people said, ‘I’m really interested in playing, but I’m afraid to come to a stranger’s house,’” said van Baren, whose first name is pronounced “Yelcha.” “I thought that’s interesting and unfortunate.”

What came out of that realization was the idea to pitch a library program, where adults could meet once a month to play tabletop role-playing games, like Dungeons & Dragons, no matter their experience level.

The idea took off, and van Baren’s enthusiasm and love for role-playing games is at the heart of the program and its success — it’s now offered in Capitola, Santa Cruz and Watsonville — as many program volunteers and library staff have told Lookout. It’s the legacy that she’ll leave behind as she embarks on a new chapter in Portugal after living in Santa Cruz for nearly 16 years. Under van Baren’s leadership, the program is thriving, with game sessions running almost every weekend. Her group of friends is ready to continue the work she started. What makes the group especially noteworthy, according to some of its members, is that it brings together people from different walks of life, such as the LGBTQ+ and neurodivergent communities. It also has retirees who play. All one needs to feel welcome is the enthusiasm and interest to play, the volunteers say.

“I didn’t set out to make this big program, but I did want to have people connect,” Van Baren said. She told Lookout that sometimes people are afraid of entering an unfamiliar space where they don’t know anyone — especially if they’re trying something new, like playing Dungeons & Dragons.

One of the goals of the library program is to encourage people to start their own games with players they meet, said David Sanda, a program volunteer. The group usually gets 15 to 25 people showing up at the Capitola and downtown Santa Cruz sessions once a month, which allows for about four games to be played at once. What helps ease any social

anxiety is the immersive and creative nature of tabletop role-playing games, van Baren said. Players embody different characters, such as elves, fairies, wizards or even robots, that contribute to the narrative of the game.

There's no awkward ice-breakers or needing to introduce yourself like in formal social get-togethers; rather, players introduce themselves as a character in whatever game they're playing. "If you're here to play Seven Dwarfs or trying to escape an elf king's castle, then what you do is you introduce yourself [as your character]," van Baren said. "For example: 'I'm Humbug and I care deeply about things that glitter.'" There's a lot of imagination and improvisation involved, said Mark Pettigrew, a fellow program volunteer. Pettigrew, who joined the group more than a year ago, is a "game master," a person who leads a game and often provides scenarios for the players.

"They don't make up the whole script," he said. "The players say what their characters do, so you don't necessarily know how things are going to wind up."

But to further immerse players into a game, the game masters have additional tokens or miniatures to represent a character or bring in other elements that tie into a game's storyline, like curating a soundtrack, he said. Among the group, Pettigrew is known for his pirate-themed game and for singing sea shanties. That's where van Baren gets to show her craftiness, Pettigrew said. She's made a medieval tavern landscape for a game she was leading, equipped with bar tables, a keg of beer and a piano tucked away in one of the corners. And for other games, she's used dry ice and colored lights to create an ominous atmosphere when the villain character is introduced. "She's very creative. She comes up with new ways of engaging people and entertaining them all the time," Pettigrew said.

A lot of people come out of their shells because they "can just be somebody else" in a safe environment, said Pettigrew. Additionally, the format of these games allows each person the opportunity to contribute, which removes any pressure from being "put on the spot" for players who might be neurodivergent, said van Baren. Storytelling is a "deep and primal need that human beings have," said Shauna Soldate, another program volunteer and game master. Telling stories is a way to build connections with other people, which can manifest in different ways, she said. But, what also makes this group unique is the fact that people can connect with players who are significantly older, Soldate said.

"Just because someone's older than you, or in college, it doesn't necessarily mean that you're different from a personality perspective," she said. "Being able to meet people who are just different from you, but also be able to do the same activity together, is a really heartening experience." That's also the beauty of the culture van Baren has fostered in the past four years since beginning the program. Pettigrew told Lookout that one of the first things he noticed when joining the group almost a year and half ago was how supportive everyone is of one another.

The group has also made an effort to have inclusive representation in who leads the games, van Baren said: "It's very important to me that when you step into that library room, that the people that are at the head of the table are diverse." The Dungeons & Dragons community, and those of other tabletop role-playing games, have been primarily dominated by men, but over the past few years, van Baren says the culture has been shifting to become more inclusive. The group is always looking for more women and nonbinary people who are interested in leading games.

"It brings people together in a way that allows for a lot of different people coming from different places to each participate and share in whatever they feel comfortable," said Capitola librarian Diane Cowen.

With her upcoming move to Portugal, van Baren said she's excited to observe the program grow from afar, handing it over to volunteers, such as Pettigrew, Soldate, Sanda and others, who will "just do it in their own way," she said.

"The joy was setting it up," she said.

Soldate told Lookout that she and other volunteers have been taking on different tasks originally handled by van Baren. "Jeltje wasn't doing everything, but she was doing a big lift," she said. "I feel like the program is healthy," Soldate said. "And a lot of that is because we sat down with Jeltje and we talked about what she was doing and we kind of wrote

everything down.” A big part of maintaining the program, Soldate said, is making sure that it’s not dependent on just one person. They’ve already been making that transition in the past few months leading up to van Baren’s departure.

After van Baren stepped away from being a data scientist and programmer, creating this program was a way to contribute to the community. “It made me just feel really great to just reach out and make people happy,” she told Lookout. “I’m sad to leave people behind here,” van Baren said. “I found lots of great friends.”

While it’s sad to see van Baren leave Santa Cruz, the program is left in the hands of people who are just as enthusiastic as she is, said Cowen. “They’re carrying the torch, and I feel like it’s going to be good,” she said. “Jeltje created this template for gathering and creating community, and mentored people on how to keep that going – and they’re going to do that.”

Link to story: https://lookout.co/dungeons-dragons-group-thrives-in-an-unlikely-place-local-libraries-thanks-to-a-volunteer-at-the-helm/story?fbclid=IwdGRleASIMNtleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAo2Njl4NTY4Mzc5AAEeBS-v_8qPdjjUYHFHxd3TDoyTjlnN75U_ieg3VrE5TA61aVcUDsAj4v6js6E_aem_IWpNOH5DntlId9qNyF_4RA

Chair Mike Termini
Vice Chair Rena Dubin
Commissioner Timothy Lydgate
Commissioner Charlotte Khandelwal
Commissioner Pamela Woll
Commissioner Tricia Wynne



STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 17, 2026
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries
RE: Updated Commemorative Flag Policy #109

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Motion to endorse the updated Commemorative Flag Policy #109 as written and direct staff to submit the policy and staff report to the Library Joint Powers Board for approval.

DISCUSSION

The Commemorative Flag Policy #109 was last reviewed and approved on June 2, 2022. The updated version contains minor word changes to improve readability.

Furthermore, the context of this policy remains unchanged. The Library has added clarifying information on how a request would be submitted and presented to the Library Advisory Commission (LAC) for consideration.

Once endorsed by the LAC, the updated Commemorative Flag Policy and staff report will be submitted to the Library Joint Powers Board to renew the continued authority for the LAC to approve or deny any request to fly a commemorative flag on library flagpoles at all branch locations.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENT

Commemorative Flag Policy #109

Report Prepared by: Jennifer Yeung, Management Analyst

Reviewed and Approved by: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries

Commemorative Flag Policy

JPAB Policy # 109
Approved: 6/2022
Last Revised: 7/2026
Review Schedule: 7/2031

Purpose

This Policy guides the outdoor display of a commemorative flag on library flagpoles located at the branch locations for the Santa Cruz Public Libraries (the Library).

In adopting this policy, the Library Joint Powers Board declares that the Library's flagpoles are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression of the public, but rather for the display of the United States of America and the State of California flags.

Commemorative flags are recommended by the Library and are approved by the Library Advisory Commission (LAC) as an expression of the Library's official sentiments and must be consistent with the Library's mission and Strategic Plan.

Guidance

1. For purposes of this Policy, the term "commemorative flag" shall mean any flag that identifies with a specific date, historical event, cause, nation or group of people, whereby the Library honors or commemorates the date, event, cause, nation or people by displaying the flag.
2. The Library's flagpoles are not a forum for free expression for or by the public.
3. The Library shall display commemorative flags only if approved by the LAC.
4. Commemorative flag displays are an expression of the Library's official sentiments and must be consistent with the Library's mission and Strategic Plan.
5. Commemorative flags shall be authorized for display for a set period of time that is reasonable or customary for the ceremony or the subject to be commemorated, but no longer than 31 continuous days, unless further specified at the time of approval by the LAC.
6. Commemorative flags will be flown in accordance with all applicable provisions of federal and state laws.

Chair	Mike Termini
Vice Chair	Rena Dubin
Commissioner	Timothy Lydgate
Commissioner	Charlotte Khandelwal
Commissioner	Pamela Woll
Commissioner	Tricia Wynne



STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 17, 2026

TO: Library Advisory Commission

FROM: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries

RE: Updated Public Technology and Internet Access Policy #317

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Endorse the updated Public Technology and Internet Access Policy #317 for the Library Joint Powers Authority Board adoption.

DISCUSSION

The Public Technology and Internet Access Policy, formerly known as the Internet and Wireless Access Policy #317 was last revised on December 7, 2017. This proposed version has been reviewed by Legal Counsel. Below are the summarized updates to the policy:

General Use and Internet Filtering:

The context of this section below has not changed. The Library has added clarifying information to articulate its current and continued practice.

“The Library blocks network traffic from regions identified by the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency engaging in malicious cyber activities to safeguard the security of confidential patron information and the integrity of the Library’s networks. The Library does not utilize content-based internet filtering because current technology intended to block inappropriate materials can also block legitimate sites and materials.”

Furthermore, because the Library does not use content-based internet filtering software, the assertion “the Library is CIPA ([Children’s Internet Protection Act](#)) compliant...” has been removed from the updated policy. The Federal Communications Commission recognizes CIPA certification, enacted by Congress in 2000, when a school or library has software to “block or filter Internet access to pictures that are: (a) obscene; (b) child pornography; or (c) harmful to minors (for computers that are accessed by minors).” CIPA compliance is not mandatory. It is a requirement to apply for federal grants via the Library Services and Technology Act, but SCPL has not sought such funding since CIPA was implemented.

Patron Data Policy: The [Confidentiality of Library Records and Patron Data Policy #303](#) was added as reference for patrons to understand what the Library collects, uses, and how it safeguards patron data with respect to the use of our technology and internet services.

Liability Disclaimer: Additional information was added for clarity to state that the Library is not responsible for user experience.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENT

Public Technology and Internet Access Policy #317

Report Prepared by: Brett P. Hoyer, Information Technology Manager
Jennifer Yeung, Management Analyst

Reviewed and Approved by: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries



Public Technology and Internet Access Policy

JPAB Policy # 317

Approved: 2/2017

Last Revised: 7/2026

Five-year Review Schedule: 7/2031

Purpose

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries (the Library) strives to provide free and equitable access to information in all forms including the Internet. The Library's goal is to promote digital access to all by providing innovative tools and technologies for the community to find, evaluate, and use information and resources. Internet-enabled devices and unsecured wireless Internet access are available at all branches free of charge to all users pursuant to the terms of this Policy.

General Use and Internet Filtering

By using the Library's wireless Internet access or services, or Internet-enabled devices, patrons agree to comply with this policy and any and all applicable federal, state, or local laws.

The Library does not act *in loco parentis*, or in place of a parent or legal guardian, and the Library shall not be responsible for determining which Internet resources are appropriate for a particular minor. Supervision of a minor's internet use is the responsibility of a parent or legal guardian; the Library does not monitor children's use of the Internet or any information or materials obtained through such use.

While the Library upholds the principles of the First Amendment, some materials are more suited to private viewing or are illegal. Library equipment and networks may not be used:

- For any purposes that violate copyright, trademark, patent, or other intellectual property rights;
- For any purposes that may damage or disrupt Library equipment, software, or data, including but not limited to in violation of California Penal Code, Section 502 et seq.;
- To access pornography or material that is obscene or harmful to minors, as defined or prohibited by applicable federal or state law, including but not limited to 18 USC 2252;
- For any other purposes that violate applicable federal or state laws.

Users who do not abide by these restrictions will be asked to stop immediately. Repeated or serious violations may result in suspension of Library privileges, in the Library's discretion.

The Library blocks network traffic from regions identified by the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency engaging in malicious cyber activities to safeguard the security of confidential patron information and the integrity of the Library's networks. The Library does not utilize content-based internet filtering because current technology intended to block inappropriate materials can also block legitimate sites and materials.

Patron Data Privacy

More information on Patron Data Privacy, can be found online on the Library's [Confidentiality of Library Records and Patron Data Privacy Policy #303](#), which outlines how the Library collects, uses, and safeguards patron data. Furthermore, public computers and lendable devices are configured to clear personal data after a user logs off the public computers and lendable devices.

Liability Disclaimer

The Library's public computing and Wi-Fi services are provided strictly on an "as is" and as-available basis, and without warranties of any kind. The Library does not guarantee the availability, speed, security, compatibility, or uninterrupted operation of the Wi-Fi services. By utilizing the Library's network and equipment, users acknowledge and accept the following:

- **Assumption of All Risks of Use:** Users agree to assume all risks arising from, connected to, or resulting from the user's use of the Library's Internet-enabled devices and/or Wi-Fi services.
- **Content Accuracy:** The internet is an unregulated medium. The Library has no control over the information accessed through the internet and shall not be held responsible for its content, accuracy, or validity.
- **Service Reliability and Device Safety:** The Library is not responsible for interrupted service, dropped connections, interception of communications, or any loss of data, documents, or work resulting from network failures or automated session timeouts. Furthermore, the Library assumes no liability for damage caused to an individual's hardware or software due to electric surges, security issues, viruses, or hacking, or any other reason related to the user connecting to the Library's Wi-Fi.
- **Financial and Data Security:** Users conduct online financial transactions and banking at their own risk. The Library will not be responsible for compromised personal information (e.g., credit card data), nor is it liable for any financial issues or disputes arising from online purchases or transactions conducted on Library networks or when using the Library's devices or Wi-Fi services.

Chair	Mike Termini
Vice Chair	Rena Dubin
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STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 17, 2026

TO: Library Advisory Commission

FROM: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries

RE: Public Program Policy development

BACKGROUND

SCPL's new strategic plan places significant focus on library programming. Given the recent experience with the Daniel Reyes event at Capitola Library, one component of that focused work is taking on new urgency: developing a Public Programs Policy for the Library that will sit alongside our Collection Development Policy as the guide and public articulation of programming at SCPL for our staff, partners, members of the community, and stakeholders. As of 2026, California has mandated that public libraries have a collection development policy but public programs policies are not required and still more rare in libraries. This is not to state the libraries, including SCPL, do not have internal criteria or purpose for their program offerings, but with the growth of programming in libraries in recent years the need for such policies is increasing.

Presented today are two documents:

- one from SCPL articulating the need for the policy including sample policy examples and SCPL's current program criteria, and,
- LAC Vice Chair Dubin's Resolution to Enact Protocols Regarding Adult Library Programming which includes numerous issues around the Reyes event and supporting documentation.

Please note, any new policy that comes to the LAC will have passed review by legal counsel prior to a request for endorsement. The new Program Policy when developed will be reviewed as well as any changes implemented from the protocols proposed in the Resolution document. To expedite, the Resolution document has been shared with library counsel for their insights.

PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Resolve that SCPL acknowledges that without the Public Program Policy in place, it was not fully clear that sponsorship of a program such as the Reyes event does not mean

endorsement of the program provider's viewpoints or content. Views expressed by a program presenter or participant do not constitute endorsement from the Library.

- Recommend to the LJPA that until clearer guidelines are in place, the use of volunteer security or de-escalation services ceases, and as necessary alternate solutions be utilized.
- SCPL requests the LAC to endorse the development of this new policy and use that process to propose any changes in protocols as outlined in Vice Chair Dubin's proposal.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

ATTACHMENT

- SCPL's Need for a Program Policy
- Resolution to Enact Protocols Regarding Adult Library Programming

Report Prepared by: Christopher Platt

Reviewed and Approved by: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries

DISCUSSION: SCPL's Need for a Program Policy

The Libraries' new strategic plan has 19 project charters, of which 5 focus on library programming, reflecting the importance our communities and our staff place on library programs and events. Specifically, the *Program Priorities and Alignment* charter, the *Program Evaluation Process* charter, and the *Partner Collaboration Enhancements* charter aim to build on SCPL's previous and current work in programming to provide clearer focus on the types of programs we offer and for whom, the amount of programming we offer as a system, and continual program evaluation so that library resources are being applied responsibly and with clear purpose.

Libraries across the country have invested heavily in programming in recent years to activate little-used spaces, engage with more members of their community, and to solidify their role as a convener of community conversations. SCPL has followed suit. While libraries have long had collection development policies that set the criteria for their collections, it is still rare for libraries to have a program policy. The recent expansion of library programming, especially with community partners, is driving a need for libraries to draft policies that articulate their program goals and criteria and, similar to a collection development policy, provide a mechanism for a patron to request reconsideration of a program.

The model for programming in SCPL has evolved over the years, including centralized teams that travelled to provide programming across multiple locations to today's model which places librarians in each of our branches to provide and coordinate their own local programming, managed by a Manager of Adult Programs and Services and a Manager of Youth Programs and Services. In addition, the Outreach Manager coordinates programming for their constituents. Currently, outside of the Downtown Library, most SCPL librarians focus mainly on providing programs. The managers regularly convene their librarians to train, develop and review new proposals or partnerships. They have developed criteria (pp 4-5) and processes for librarians to propose a new program for approval, and in the case of adult programs, a process for outside individuals/organizations to propose a program. All of this is set to be reviewed and updated as part of our new strategic plan charters.

An important first step is to develop a program policy which will be the north star guide for our programming and for updating the supporting processes and documentation we maintain. We have a staff working group assigned to this strategic charter, led by our Manager of Youth Programs and Services. We have already assembled resources including a model policy document from the American Library Association and sample policies from many libraries across the U.S. These resources are listed on pp 2-3.

To ensure full consideration of Commissioners' feedback and recommendations as it is created, the new Program Policy will remain a recurring agenda item until the final draft is ready to be endorsed to the LJPA for approval.

Sample Program Policy Template

(provided by the American Library Association)

Library's Mission & Vision:

- Insert the library's mission & vision to frame the library's purpose within the community.

Scope of Programs:

- Library Program Definition
- Describe types of programs the library may offer, ie: early literacy, intergenerational, lectures, book clubs, community forums, etc.

Private Programs in the Library:

- Explain that some programs are not sponsored by or affiliated with the library but may take place inside the library.
- Include a statement such as: "Views expressed by a program presenter or participant do not constitute endorsement from the library."

Essential Principles:

- What principles guide program decisions? What restrictions are there?
 - Include statements like:
 - Programs are free and open to the public
 - Programs reflect community interest
 - Registration policies
 - Cancellation policies
 - Who is the intended audience of the program? Are there age restrictions for certain programs?
 - Safety of minors (ie: children must be accompanied by an adult for Storytime).

Criteria for Programs:

- What criteria are considered when choosing programs to offer?
 - These criteria might include:
 - Cost and budget
 - Alignment with mission & vision
 - Community needs

Photography, Videography, and Recording:

- Address the library's policies for photography and filming during library programs either from journalists or library staff.
- Take a look at the [Clearview Library District policy](#) as an example.

Controversial Topics Statement:

- Refer back to the library's mission & vision.

- Reference the Library Bill of Rights.
- Include a statement such as: "Views expressed by a program presenter or participant do not constitute endorsement from the library."

The Library Does Not Provide:

- What does the library not provide through programs? - such as a political candidate endorsement or religious proselytization.

Reconsideration:

- What can a community member do if they oppose a library program?

Accessibility Statement:

- How will the library support accessibility needs?

Examples of current public library program policies:

[Santa Clara County Library District](#)

[Los Gatos Library](#)

[Denver Public Library](#)

[Lafayette Public Library](#)

[Hillsboro Public Library](#)

[Spokane Public Library](#)

[Hartford Public Library](#)

[Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library](#)

[Wichita Public Library](#)

[Fulton County Library System](#)

[Jacksonville Public Library](#)

[Erie County Public Library](#)

SCPL Criteria for Programming Decisions – to be reviewed and updated as part of new strategic plan:

Adult Program Proposal Submissions

Public programs are planned at least three months in advance to allow for successful planning and promotion of the event, reservation of a meeting room, budgeting, and coordination with other activities and services taking place at the library.

Proposals are considered with respect to SCPL's mission, [Strategic Plan](#), annual programming priorities, staff and financial resources, space and time availability, duplication of existing programs, and the diverse educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community.

Requirements for library programs include:

- Programs must be non-commercial in nature, free to attend, and open to the public. Library programs are not an opportunity to promote a business or service to the public.
- Presenters may not collect donations.
- If you are an author, please read our [Collection Development Policy](#)

Considerations may include:

- Whether the presenter is a resident of Santa Cruz County or has a specific connection to Santa Cruz County
- Title, description, and goal of offering the program
- Intended age-appropriate audience
- Fit with the [library's mission and strategic plan](#)
- Presenter's qualifications and/or background with regard to the content of the program
- Experience presenting this program or a similar program
- Cost and/or other required resources
- Community interest
- Diverse program topics and formats
- Connection with underrepresented populations
- Duplication of similar programs
- Opportunities for partnering with local organizations

Youth Program Considerations Criteria 2023

Mission: *Inclusion, Connection, Collaboration*

Prerequisites:

- Can the program be presented safely in person, or does it work well in a virtual format? Or is there a safe alternative or can it be presented in partnership with a community organization?
- Does the program meet our criteria for online safety? Does it include a safe environment for participants? For example, will a library staff person be present?

- Does it serve a historically underserved and/or vulnerable population? Who is the intended audience? How does the program serve this specific population? How can we market to this audience?

Answers to all of the above must be yes

- Does it duplicate existing options?
- Can it be provided another way, through a partner?

Answers to all of the above must be no

Necessary Programming

- Is it part of the workplan?
- Is it core to public library work?
- Does it support current needs meeting challenges of the current health/economic crisis?

Program must meet two of the above criteria

Program Goals

- Does it support Learning and Discovery?
- Does it support Early Literacy?
- Does it support School Readiness?
- Does It support STEAM learning?
- Does it support Creativity?
- Does it support Emotional Well-Being?
- Does it support Workplace Readiness?

Program must support at least 2 of the above

Further Considerations

- Does it require more than two staff people or more than two shifts to coordinate and run?
- Does it serve at least 10 participants?
- Does it support community connections?
- Will there be measurable outcomes?
- Does it continue, expand, or create a significant partnership?
- Does it provide a fulfilling volunteer activity?
- For programs requiring funds, is the projected budget/attendance ratio less than \$5/person?
- Is there a budget available for this or will it be funded by a grant?
- Is this a Spanish or bilingual program? Will it require an interpreter? Will it require bilingual staff support? If yes, check with bilingual staff before proceeding further.

Resolution to Enact Protocols Regarding Adult Library Programming

DATE: August 17, 2026
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Rena Dubin, Vice Chair, Santa Cruz Library Advisory Commission
RE: Enact Protocols Regarding Adult Library Programming

RECOMMENDATION:

Endorse a resolution to support actions regarding adult library programming.

BACKGROUND:

This spring, Capitola Branch's Adult Librarian and Program Coordinator Diane Cowen invited Daniel Reyes to read poems from his book *Six is for Genocide* as a Library-sponsored program for April 25, 2026.

Many members from the Jewish community voiced alarm about the program based on Daniel Reyes' public posts and reposts on Instagram, which contain harmful conspiracy theories against Israel, Zionists, and Jews. In response to the concerns raised, the event was postponed.

Diane Cowen met with Jessica Goodman, the Adult Program and Services Manager, who added an introductory poem by local Palestinian Howla Jardali and asked Professor Stephen Zunes, Program Director of USF's Middle Eastern Studies Program, to answer questions about the history and politics of the region.

Multiple members of the public gave feedback that they were excited about the program. Other patrons were upset about the event, and Library staff were given guidelines for how to respond.

The program was advertised widely as a Santa Cruz Public Library-sponsored program for July 25, 2026, on the library's website calendar, the library's Instagram page, on flyers, and in community listings such as *GoodTimes*.

On Tuesday, July 21, Library Advisory Commissioner Rena Dubin, along with local Jewish community leaders Rabbi Eli Cohen, Rabbi Debbie Israel, and Anastasia Torres-Gil, met with Diane Cowen, Jessica Goodman, and Library Director Christopher Platt.

Commissioner Dubin read an opening statement (see Appendix i), which detailed Daniel Reyes' problematic Instagram posts. She requested that the Library cease sponsorship and promotion of the program, but allow Daniel Reyes to reserve the room at the same time for the program to continue. Christopher Platt responded in

a letter (see Appendix ii) that the Library had an obligation to first amendment rights, and that the library withdrawing sponsorship could be construed as censorship.

DRAFT RESOLUTION TO ENACT PROTOCOLS REGARDING ADULT LIBRARY PROGRAMMING:

PART ONE: ADDRESSING THE IMPLICIT ENDORSEMENT FROM THE SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARY

WHEREAS the Library sponsored program at the Capitola Library on July 25, 2026, carried a tacit endorsement from the Santa Cruz Public Library System.

The meeting rooms in the Santa Cruz Public Library System are accessible for reservations by the public, and when reserved, have first amendment protections. The Meeting Room Guidelines state that “the Library’s provision of meeting room space to a group is not an endorsement of the group, its beliefs, or its speech.”

However, the *Six is for Genocide* Poetry Reading was not necessarily bound by the Meeting Room Guidelines, as the program was not merely held in the Capitola meeting room, but was a sponsored program by the Library.

In a letter to Commissioner Rena Dubin, Rabbi Debbie Israel, Anastasia Torres Gil, and Rabbi Eli Cohen, the Library Director stated that “SCPL’s sponsorship of this event does not constitute endorsement of Mr Reyes’ beliefs or content.” However, this was not outwardly stated or visible to the public.

Instead, the Library advertised on behalf of the program on the Library’s website, Library calendar, community calendars such as *GoodTimes*, and within the branches. The promotion contained SCPL’s logo, used language encouraging attendance, promised and provided free refreshments, and allowed the author the opportunity to sell his book at the event (see Appendix iii).

Many local Jewish members were vocal prior to the event that the author’s Instagram contains what the United Nations defines as hate speech against Jews. The program itself included hate speech against Jews. Additionally, the Library sponsored program arguably contained language that did not meet the Library’s Code of Conduct.

The Library refrained from stating that the author's viewpoints do not represent the Library on any promotion materials or verbally during the program.

During the program, Diane Cowen asked for "conversation agreements" that asked for attendees to "use respectful language" and "refrain from stereotyping," but did not call out anyone when these agreements were ignored.

These actions, especially in congregate, imply the endorsement of the poet and his views.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Library Advisory Commission that this body calls for Library staff to publicly acknowledge that the Library has appeared to endorse the speech and viewpoints expressed by the featured poet and speakers during the Library-sponsored program, and clarify the Library's position.

PART TWO: VOLUNTEER SECURITY FOR LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

WHEREAS the Library used volunteers from the Rainbow Defense Coalition as security for the event, but they wore keffiyeh scarves, signaling strong solidarity with Palestinians.

Jewish communities have seen a huge uptick in hate crimes over the last two years. Physical assaults against Jews are now the highest since 1979, and Jews in the US are assaulted and targeted an average of 17 times a day (statistics reported in *Axios*).

In our area, there have been increased anti-Jewish incidents of hate crimes, some involving local residents and some involving local synagogue desecration. Copious security measures have been enacted here in Santa Cruz to help Jews congregate safely.

Security is at the forefront of many Jews' concerns, nationally and locally.

The Library's promotional materials for the July 25th program stated that the poetry (written by someone known to publicly post and repost numerous conspiracy theories against Zionists) was "meant to disturb, ignite" with "language that challenges, unsettles, and provokes." The wording of the program's description used language that felt alarming to a community already worried about safety.

Library Advisory Commissioner Rena Dubin heard that members of the local

Jewish community felt unsafe going to the library on July 25th. Members of the public wanted to know about security measures that would keep the Library sponsored program safe. Acting as a liaison in her official capacity as a Library Advisory Commissioner, Commissioner Dubin inquired about safety measures that would be enacted during the program. Commissioner Dubin received assurance from Diane Cowen that staff had “also enlisted the assistance of the Rainbow Defense Coalition, with 6 members trained in de-escalation techniques to be present in the off chance someone does not adhere to the conversation agreements I intend to set at the beginning of the event.”

Commissioner Dubin relayed this to the Jewish community.

Unfortunately, the Rainbow Defense Coalition members were not neutral safety monitors. They arrived wearing keffiyeh scarves, which visually proclaims a strong pro-Palestinian / anti-Israeli stance. This was counter to the “de-escalating” mission that the volunteers were ostensibly there to help facilitate, and was as polarizing as it would have been if they came wearing Israeli flags. The keffiyeh scarves served to announce a bias to the public.

Many in the Jewish community feel betrayed, and Commissioner Dubin’s reputation as a trustworthy liaison to the community is at risk.

Additionally, Silvia Morales agreed to Diane Cowen’s request to be at the event, as she is “trained in nonviolent communication,” but she also is not perceived by the community as a neutral arbiter.

Volunteers requested by the Library to assist with security, who are known to the community to have a bias, either by dress, affiliation, or reputation, create the impression that the Library is “protecting” some people over others.

By using volunteers to provide security and de-escalation, the Library is perceived as liable for said volunteers. If the volunteers helping in a variety of programs, including Drag Storytime, are not perceived as neutral, they can potentially exacerbate a volatile situation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Library Advisory Commission that this body calls for library staff to acknowledge that security for the event was misrepresented to the Jewish community, and to eliminate using volunteers for security or de-escalation efforts during Library programming in favor of paid, neutral officers in professional uniforms.

PART THREE: LACK OF GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARY-SPONSORED ADULT PROGRAMMING

WHEREAS staff at the Santa Cruz Public Library have no criteria or guidelines for sponsoring or endorsing adult programs.

The Library has Meeting Room Guidelines. However, no specific guidelines exist for staff as to what should be a Library-sponsored program that will be promoted on the Library's calendar, website, and in branches, and will use tax-payer funding in staff time to create, promote, and administer.

The Library Director has recognized this as a problem, and agreed that guidelines need to be forthcoming.

Because this is of such strong issue to the public, the Library Advisory Commission needs to have the option to help create the guidelines, not just rely on staff. Otherwise, the Commission only sees the finished proposal, and has limited opportunity for discussion before voting to endorse.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Library Advisory Commission that this body calls for library staff to create guidelines for library-sponsored adult programming as a joint effort with staff and up to three Library Advisory Commissioners, with the goal to be presented at the next scheduled Library Advisory Commission meeting.

PART FOUR: TEMPORARY GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARY-SPONSORED PROGRAMS

WHEREAS the lack of guidelines for Library-sponsored programming leads to mistrust and confusion for the public, and should be immediately addressed.

The wheels of government are slow, yet many members of the public are concerned about the criteria and protocols for Library-sponsored programs.

The Library's Code of Conduct prohibits, in part: "using profane or abusive language likely to provoke an immediate violent reaction" where "abusive language includes racial, ethnic, gendered, or other epithets used verbally or in writing."

The United Nation's definition of "hate speech" is as follows: "any kind of

communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.”

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Library Advisory Commission that this body calls for library staff to enact temporary guidelines for all Library-sponsored adult programs until new guidelines are presented and approved, that include: (a) a visible disclaimer that by sponsoring the program, the Library does not endorse the viewpoints, beliefs, or speech of an author, moderator, or presenter, along with an oral disclaimer at the beginning of the program; (b) a prohibition of presenter/author book sales within the library building due to perception of tacit endorsement; (c) an announcement by Library staff at the beginning of each Library-sponsored program that the attendees are expected to adhere to the Library Code of Conduct, and cites the relevant clauses where appropriate; (d) an announcement by Library staff at the beginning of each Library-sponsored program that requests that attendees refrain from using hate speech; and (e) monitoring by Library staff for hate speech during the program, with a request from Library staff for respectful word usage if hate speech is used by patrons.

PART FIVE: PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS Library Advisory Commissioners’ personal emails were included on an email blast against the July 25th program.

In April, a local Jewish resident spoke to Diane Cowen about her distress with the Library-sponsored *Six is for Genocide* program. When the program was postponed, she thought the event had been canceled forever. When she discovered that the program had only been postponed and rescheduled, she felt upset, angry, and frightened. She felt like she spoke her concerns to the Library staff, but that she had been ignored and callously disregarded. In response, she reached out to the local Jewish community as well as a national Jewish organization, which urged its members to speak out against the program via email.

Library Advisory Commissioners, the Joint Powers Board, Library Director

Christopher Platt, Santa Cruz City Council Members, Capitola City Council Members, and other elected officials received upwards of 2500 emails urging the library to discontinue the program (see Appendix iv).

Library Advisory Commissioners' personal emails were used.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Library Advisory Commission that this body calls for library staff to ascertain if the Library Advisory Commissioners' personal emails were attained through publicly accessible Library records, if Commissioners phone numbers and addresses are similarly accessible, and fix any breach of privacy.

APPENDIX I

Library Advisory Commissioner Rena Dubin's Opening Statement in the July 21, 2026, Meeting with Jewish Community Leaders, Library Director Christopher Platt, and Library Staff

Thanks for meeting with us! I'm grateful and respect Diane and Jessica, and acknowledge the work y'all have done since April to put together a more inclusive program.

However, we are still very concerned about this program and I do not think it is appropriate - - nor advisable -- for the SC Library to sponsor and promote Daniel Reyes.

This comes not from anger, nor from politics. This comes from fear for the safety of the Jewish community in Santa Cruz.

Y'all all know I am a huge proponent of free speech, and I am passionate about the library. If you look at the library's instagram page, a video of me is right there next to the advertisement for this program, talking up the downtown library!

So you know that my goal here is not to censor Daniel Reyes, and I fully believe in his right to rent out the Capitola community room for his poetry reading, and have his poetry books on the shelves. But the Library should not be a sponsor of this program.

Here's why:

This program is not only about "the plight of Palestinians and the war in Gaza," as the library is describing it. It is aggressively anti-Israel. What we know -- with our lived experience -- is that speech that is aggressively anti-Israel usually devolves into anti-Jewish speech, which increases hate crimes against Jews in the community.

Let's start with Daniel Reyes' Instagram page.

Daniel Reyes has videos and clips, some original and some reposted, showing the devastation in Gaza, and its effect on the people and specific families. That's about the plight of the Palestinians, and against the war on Gaza.

But he also has clips, original and reposted, that devolve into conspiracy theories about Israel. These clips on his Instagram page talk about "the greater Israel project -- the project that is planning a one-world government ruled from Israel."

And "Zionists brainwash the whole world... they are working to literally engineer your thoughts."

And "Zionism is on its last legs... they have no humanity left...with hatred in their hearts... you see Israelis buying up media outlets, Israeli billionaires trying to tamp down."

And "Zionist Jewish power over society must be exposed and dismantled."

When we hear "Zionist Jewish power over society must be exposed and dismantled," we hear that word "dismantled," and we know that some people hear that as a call to action. And because Israel is so far away, they are not dismantling Israel, they are taking it out on local synagogues and local Jewish communities. Just ask Rabbi Debbie, whose synagogue, Congregation Emeth, was desecrated in a hate crime just two weeks ago! Temple Beth El has had to install copious security measures. I know Rabbi Eli has stories of local incidents. Nationally, physical assaults against Jews are now the highest since 1979, and Jews in the US are assaulted and targeted an average of 17 times a day. (*Axios*)

The library has a responsibility and obligation to -- and I'm quoting you, Christopher -- "provide a welcoming and safe space." I understand that you "seek to make the library a place for respectful, even if difficult, discussions that will strengthen our community." I do think it is possible for our community to have a respectful conversation about the war on Gaza, even if people passionately disagree.

However, I do not see how the Jewish community can expect that to happen with Daniel Reyes, the Daniel Reyes who proudly went to a No Kings Rally with a sign that said "Israel Loves Pediphiles." The Daniel Reyes who posts about the "Zio Epstein class."

This is not someone who wants to have a respectful conversation, certainly not with anyone who feels even remotely connected to Israel.

I haven't read his poetry, but I have heard it, on his Instagram, where he juxtaposes his words with an image of a silhouette of the state of Israel, that first has a Jewish star which is then replaced by the words "Palestine" and then Palestinian flags. I do not feel welcomed or safe when I see his poetry video; I feel the "stigma and hate" directed at me and other Jewish institutions. I do not see how the presence of a professor will make me feel like my library is a safe place for me to be. And as Rabbi Debbie mentioned to me, it's not just him, it's all the people who saw his Instagram and thought, yes, this is a program I want to attend.

As a Library Advisory Commissioner, I advise you, I beg you, to stop the sponsorship of a

program that promotes a person who espouses anti-Israel and anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. The library has choices: postpone the program until the Library Advisory Commission can agendaize and discuss the program, like we did with Drag Storytime. Or the library can stop promoting this as a library-sponsored program, and let him rent the community room. Or create a program about the war in Gaza with people who are genuinely interested in that difficult but respectful conversation. Anastasia has created some fantastic programs; I'm sure she would be delighted to partner with a pro-Palestinian group to create an impassioned and diverse panel that would truly create spirited yet respectful dialogue in the community. But as it stands, I do not want the library to give credibility to a platform of conspiracy theories and hatred. That goes against everything that our public libraries should be.

Look, if Daniel Reyes reserved the meeting room on his own to read his poetry, as long as he didn't say anything about Jewish power needing to be dismantled, I would support his right to do so 100%. It meets the Meeting Room Guidelines. If this was the case, and patrons complained to staff, their response is simple: "This is not a library-endorsed event, but the program is happening. It meets our Meeting Room Guidelines. You are welcome to reserve a meeting room for your own event as long as it meets the guidelines; I can show you how to do so online." But the standards for a library-endorsed program are different. As it stands, you are making it needlessly difficult for the community and your staff. When a patron complains to staff, staff are instructed to respond that the library is here for, and I quote, "respectful, even if difficult, discussions that will strengthen our community." When that patron then asks, "How is listening to a guy who rants about the Zionist-Epstein class and gofundme Zionists going to strengthen our community?" what is staff supposed to say? The solution to this seems really simple: the library takes off the sponsorship and the program continues. The library's reputation as a welcoming and safe space – even one that facilitates respectful and difficult conversations – still wins.

Although our inbox was inundated with emails from Jews nationally, there were many, many locals on that list. We are here as representatives of many parts of the Jewish community asking that you do not continue Saturday's program.

APPENDIX II

Response from Christopher Platt to Commissioner Dubin and Local Jewish Community Leaders Rabbi Eli Cohen, Rabbi Debbie Israel, and Anastasia Torres-Gil

Rena,

Thank you again for the time and discussion yesterday with you, Rabbi Eli, Rabbi Israel and Anastasia. Thank you as well for sending a copy of your statement. The team and I discussed at length and conducted additional research. I've drafted a response attached, with supporting documentation.

I also want to reiterate that I know and understand this is a challenging and difficult issue. It genuinely affects me that people are fearful, hostility is growing and I respect that convictions

are strongly held. We are committed to being as constructive as possible with sensitive issues going forward.

--

Christopher Platt

Director of Libraries



JULY 22, 2026

To: Rena Durbin, Rabbi Israel, Rabbi Cohen, and Anastasia Torres-Gil

From: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries

Dear Rena, Anastasia, Rabbi Israel and Rabbi Eli,

Thank you so much for meeting with us yesterday to review your concerns and requests regarding the Daniel Reyes Poetry Reading event on Saturday, July 25th at the Capitola Library. We are, and I am especially, glad to have been able to make this personal connection and to have heard your concerns in face to face discussion. Thank you for your prepared remarks (and for sending a copy afterward) as well as the points you made during the meeting.

You began the conversation stating your goal is not to censor, that you are ok with the book being in the collection and that you strongly believe the library should not be sponsoring the program, but would be ok if sponsorship were removed and the event treated as a room rental. A key theme we heard throughout the conversation were concerns about increasing levels of hostility, fear and safety among the Jewish community.

You believe, and cited examples, that Mr Reyes' poetry and online presence serve to stoke fear and conspiracy. You feel that this event will not support a welcoming and safe program, nor induce a respectful conversation. You questioned does the program "add to a sense of community or polarization." You also pointed out you believe that in the broad scope, "other marginalized communities are listened to, we're not." You also feel that the SCPL sponsorship of the event is a de facto endorsement of Mr Reyes' beliefs and activities.

We also discussed the need for a program policy, which SCPL has flagged as an activity integral to our new strategic plan and which the Library Advisory Commission will be part of shaping, as it does other policies.

We also discussed the nature of a poetry reading vs a more facilitated program panel with multiple viewpoint stakeholders which would be a constructive method for conversation around many of the issues you raised. As stated in the meeting, this is something the Library is interested in pursuing.

After our meeting concluded, the Library team stayed and discussed at length the issues you raised as well as the request to pull sponsorship of the Saturday program. We discussed the numerous messages voicing opposition to the program as well as the numerous messages of support from local community stakeholders. We have also been doing our research and this morning I compiled documents that shed light on the impacts of this potential decision.

As a public library that is aligned with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, there is much professional guidance for our organization's response to the request to pull sponsorship. These helped inform our decision.

Saturday: The Daniel Reyes poetry reading event will continue as planned, with Library sponsorship intact. To remove sponsorship would, per our professional guidelines, be an act of censorship. I respect that you feel differently. To illustrate this decision I have included four American Library Association guiding documents below with relevant sections highlighted in yellow. SCPL's sponsorship of this event does not constitute endorsement of Mr Reyes' beliefs or content. Similar to the many materials in our collections that have library ownership labels, we are providing access to ideas and conversation rather than offering endorsement.

Going forward: the Library and myself especially respect that this is a challenging issue, deeply personal to many. We are interested in pursuing a facilitated panel discussion program that can respectfully surface many of the issues in a constructive manner. This would also allow participation by the many stakeholders who have expressed support.

Finally, none of this consideration has been easy. We genuinely strive to offer a welcoming, constructive and safe environment and it is distressing to understand how this program has affected you. I hope that we can develop more effective and constructive paths forward on collaborative programs and avoid this level of stress going forward.

Respectfully - Christopher

1. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS:

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal

disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

2. ALA CODE OF ETHICS:

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

1.

We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and											
usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and											
accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.											
We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library											
resources.											
We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to											
information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or											
transmitted.											
We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of											
information users and rights holders.											
We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and											
advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all											
employees of our institutions.											
We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our											
employing institutions.											

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not									
allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our									
institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.									
We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own									
knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers,									
and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.									
We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and									
dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to									
enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our									
libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy,									
education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.									

8.

9.

<i>Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28,</i>	
<i>1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.</i>	

3. LIBRARY-INITIATED PROGRAMS AS A RESOURCE: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS:

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library. They do this by giving users extra ways to access information, education, and recreation. Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves.”

These programs may take place on-site at the library, off-site at other locations, or online. They may be provided by library workers, volunteers, or partners.

Library workers use their expertise to highlight:

- community interests;
- collections;
- services;
- facilities; and
- information resources.

These programs help users discover library resources and the library’s role in providing access to information. Libraries may work with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals to create programs that serve the community.

“Socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people, not just the mainstream majority, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer.” Programming options should represent a diversity of genres, formats, ideas, and

[i]

expressions. Programming options should provide a variety of viewpoints and cultural perspectives that reflect the diversity in communities. Libraries serving multilingual communities should make efforts to accommodate the needs of those who speak and read languages other than English, including advertising for such events.

Library-initiated programs should comply with all applicable laws. This includes the standards and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and state and local disability accessibility guidelines. Program spaces should be safe and accessible for all users (e.g.,

[ii]

ramps, pathways, and emergency exit routes). Reasonable accommodation should be made to have interpretation, voice amplification, and/or real-time captioning when needed or requested by library users.

Concerns, questions, or complaints about programs should follow the same policies and procedures used to reconsider other library resources. These policies should apply equally to everyone, including, but not limited to, library users, staff, and members of the governing body. They should also emphasize the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all.

Sponsoring a program does not mean the library endorses the content or the views of the participants or speakers. Similarly, adding materials to the collection or curating a display doesn't mean the library supports the creator or resources' views. Libraries should vigorously defend the First Amendment right of speakers and participants to express themselves.

Article V of the states, "A person's right to use a library should not be

*Library Bill of
Rights*

denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes all the resources offered, including programming.

Libraries may create programs for:

- specific age groups;
- educational suitability; or
- audience interest.

However, restrictions based solely on gender, age, or educational level violate this right. These restrictions should only be enforced if not doing so would have a negative impact on the safety of the participants or the intended purpose of the program.

Parents and guardians may decide whether their own children can participate in library programs. They should discuss these decisions with their children. However, no person or organization may interfere with another person's access or participation, including decisions about other people's children.

Users should not be denied access to programs because they owe overdue fines or other fees. If libraries charge for supplies, they should make every effort to reduce economic barriers to participation.

[iii]

Libraries should only collect and keep participants' personal information if they choose to opt in. Attendees may need to show a library card or student ID to prove eligibility, but their information should not be recorded as a condition for attending the program.

Notes

[i] "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the ,," adopted

Library Bill of Rights

January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council, under the previous name "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018; and June 29, 2025.

[ii] "Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted June 27, 2017, by the ALA Council, under the previous name "Equity, Diversity, Inclusion"; amended May 29, 2025.

[iii] "Economic Barriers to Library Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019, under the previous name "Economic Barriers to Information Access"; and June 29, 2025.

Adopted January 27, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 1990; July 12, 2000; June

26,		
2018 (under previous name “Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource”); June 24, 2019 (under		
previous name “Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource”); and June 29, 2025.		

4. POLITICS IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS:

The U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. . .” The says that library materials

*Library Bill of
Rights*

should include “all people” and “all points of view.” There are no restrictions on viewpoint, origin, or politics. Libraries should not exclude opinions just because they are unpopular or offensive to some. This applies even when those opposing views are loud or influential in society.

Associate Justice William J. Brennan, Jr.
observed in

*New York Times Co. v. Sullivan
(1964):*

[There exists a] profound national commitment to the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials.

This means libraries should collect, maintain, and provide access to a wide range of materials. Within budget limits and community needs, they should include diverse views on political topics.

A balanced collection does not need to have an equal number of resources for every possible viewpoint. Instead, it should offer a variety of perspectives around each issue.

[i]

Libraries that have designated space for community use must make it available to all community organizations and groups, no matter their views or affiliations. This includes political

[ii]

organizations. To guarantee access and to avoid misuse, libraries should have time, place, and manner rules. These rules may include how often a meeting can happen, meeting length, and behavior policies. Libraries should create similar rules if they have space for public exhibits or

[iii]

the public distribution of literature. Policies about use of the library and its resources should be available to all library users.

[iv]

A healthy democracy must have a robust exchange of ideas and opinions. American libraries play a key role by providing free, unrestricted access to these ideas. Libraries should support civic engagement by encouraging political discussion in designated forums. They should not avoid these discussions out of fear of offense or controversy.

Library workers may have limitations on workplace speech, including political advocacy.

[v]

When libraries serve as polling places, state or local laws may temporarily limit political expression. These rules can apply to the public, poll workers, and library workers while the polling place is open.

Libraries should implement these guidelines in accordance with their institutional mission and state and local laws.

Notes

[i] “Diverse and Inclusive Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014, under the previous name “Diversity in Collection Development”; and June 25, 2019, under the previous name “Diverse Collections”; and May 29, 2025.

[ii] “Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 2018; amended version rescinded August 16, 2018; amended January 29, 2019; and June 29, 2025.

[iii] “Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures Regarding User Behavior and Library Usage,” adopted January 24, 1993, by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee; amended November 17, 2000; January 19, 2005; March 29, 2014; August 16, 2019; and August 5, 2025.

[iv] “Exhibits, Displays, and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 2004; and July 1, 2014, under the previous name “Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards”; amended June 25, 2019, under the previous name “User-Initiated Exhibits, Displays, and Bulletin Boards”; and May 29, 2025.

[v] “Speech in the Workplace Q&A,” adopted by the Committee on Professional Ethics, July 2001; amended January 2004; June 26, 2006; January 24, 2007; July 1, 2014; April 30, 2019; and March 25, 2025.

Endorsed by the ACRL Professional Values Committee in June 2017. Adopted June 27, 2017, by

the ALA Council; amended June 29, 2025.

APPENDIX III

Library Promotional Material for the Six is for 6enocide Program



Registration now closed



SIX is for 6enocide

Powerful Poetry by Daniel Reyes



Saturday, July 25
2:00pm - 3:30pm
[Add to Calendar](#)



Capitola Branch
Ow Family Community Room

Daniel reads from his powerful book of poetry, *SIX is for 6enocide*. Copies of the book are available for purchase and signing. Light refreshments will be provided. Registration is recommended.

Join us as Daniel Reyes reads from his book *SIX is for 6enocide*, which is dedicated to the Alaydi family in Gaza, Palestine. Local Palestinian poet Howla Jardali will read a poem and introduce Daniel. Professor Stephen Zunes, Program Director of USF's Middle Eastern Studies Program will be present to answer any questions about the history and politics of the region.

From the Book Description:

"Although not Palestinian himself, Daniel's book gives voice to those whose stories have been erased. His work seeks to circumvent censorship and erasure of any people through poetry, reflection, and rant." Copies of the book will be available for sale and signing, and light refreshments will be provided. Registration is recommended, and walk-ins are welcome."

"*SIX is for 6enocide* is not a quiet book. It is a howl, a cry, and a refusal to look away. Through poems, reflections, and unapologetic rants, Daniel S. Reyes, carves language into witness. Their pieces are raw and urgent, confronting violence, displacement, and the silent complicity that allows atrocities to continue. This collection is not meant to comfort - it is meant to disturb, to ignite, to keep memory alive. Each word stands as resistance against erasure, demanding that readers not only see, but feel the weight of lives stolen and voices silenced."

"*SIX* is a book for those who dare to face uncomfortable truths and believe that words, even broken ones, can carry the power of survival and defiance."

"Daniel S. Reyes is a writer, artist, and relentless truth-teller. His work moves between poetry, reflection, and social critique, always rooted in a commitment to justice and the preservation of memory. Writing from the intersections of personal witness and collective struggle, Reyes refuses to sanitize reality, instead choosing language that challenges, unsettles, and provokes."

AGE GROUP : Adults 18+ years

EVENT TYPE : Poetry : Author Talks

APPENDIX IV

Content of the mass emails that were sent, wording by and large verbatim across the approximately 2500 emails

Dear Friends of the Santa Cruz County Public Library,

As staunch defenders of intellectual freedom and critical inquiry, we express our profound concern about the scheduled event at the Capitola Branch on July 25.

According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Code of Ethics for Librarians (2012):

"Librarians and other information workers are strictly committed to neutrality and an unbiased stance regarding collection, access, and service. They seek to acquire balanced collections."

This principle is particularly crucial for programs that delve into complex, controversial topics. It's essential to present multiple perspectives so patrons can engage with challenging issues thoughtfully.

The upcoming program, featuring the author of *Six is for Genocide*, alongside Professor Stephen Zunes and Howla Jardali, fails to meet this standard. It presents the accusation of 'genocide' against Israel as a settled fact. However, no UN body - neither the General Assembly, the Security Council, nor the International Court of Justice -- has ever ruled on a genocide charge. The ICJ case is still at the provisional-measures stage, meaning there has been a charge, not a ruling. To present a contested legal claim as fact is biased, misleading, and risks harming the Jewish residents of Santa Cruz.

Moreover, the panel lacks balance. The speakers are not impartial. Professor Stephen Zunes, while experienced in the region, views Israel through an 'anti-colonialist, anti imperialist' lens, which may skew his judgment. Howla Jardali, a Palestinian whose family lost property in the War of Independence/Nakba, is clearly biased. They are apologists for terrorism, and you are providing them an unchallenged platform.

We ask, why is there no Israeli on this panel? No survivor of the October 7 massacre? No hostage representative? No Middle East expert who could factually address the campaign of terrorism by Islamic fundamentalist organizations? No residents of Gaza living under Hamas rule? No one to provide context for this charge and the events leading to an unacceptable defensive war, amplified through the internet, media, and social contagion?

This is unacceptable for an institution like yours.

Public libraries, as taxpayer-funded institutions, have a unique responsibility to foster understanding, not division. Sponsoring an event that normalizes violence against Jews amid rising antisemitic incidents undermines community trust and goes against the IFLA commitment to neutrality.

Jewish residents of Santa Cruz deserve to feel safe and represented in their public institutions.

We urge the library to either cancel this program, postpone it, or immediately add credible, balanced speakers to ensure compliance with professional ethics.

We are happy to suggest qualified participants and resources that represent the missing perspectives.

We all value the sacred library space and hope to see it continue as a beacon of balanced inquiry for members of all communities.

Respectfully,

{signature}

Public Comment for Aug. 17 Library Advisory Commission Meeting

1 message

Unhae Langis <ulangis@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 12, 2026 at 8:11 AM

To: clerk@santacruzpl.org

Cc: plattc@santacruzpl.org, Diane Cowen <cowend@santacruzpl.org>, Jessica Goodman <goodmanj@santacruzpl.org>

Dear Library Board Clerk,

I am submitting the attached op-ed, “**Defend Our Public Libraries—Now**,” as written public comment for the Library Advisory Commission meeting on Monday, Aug. 17. I would appreciate having it included in the agenda packet and distributed to the commissioners.

The piece concerns the recent controversy surrounding the July 25 program at the Capitola Branch Library and the broader questions it raises about intellectual freedom, viewpoint diversity, and the role of public libraries in fostering open civic discussion. It also addresses anticipated discussion of future library programming at Monday’s meeting.

I am grateful for the Santa Cruz Public Libraries’ commitment to serving the entire community and for the Library Advisory Commission’s stated role as “a voice of the community to provide advice and feedback” to the board and library director. I offer the attached piece in that spirit and hope it will be useful to the Commission’s deliberations.

Please confirm that it has been received and will be included with the materials for Monday’s meeting.

Thank you,

Unhae Langis (she/her)

Defend Our Public Libraries—Now

On July 25, the Capitola Branch Library hosted Daniel Reyes reading from his collection *SIX is for genocide*, dedicated to the Alaydi family in Gaza. Palestinian educator Howla Jardali participated, and Professor Stephen Zunes answered questions about the history and politics of the region. It was exactly the kind of literary and educational program public libraries exist to provide.

The event almost never happened. Originally scheduled for April 25, it met an organized campaign demanding its cancellation. The library postponed the program, and the reading quickly moved to the Resource Center for Nonviolence. When the library rescheduled it for July 25, opponents renewed their efforts, appealing to library administrators and the Santa Cruz City Council. Library Director Christopher Platt, Capitola librarian Diane Cowen, and their colleagues met with concerned community members and remained faithful to the library’s educational mission. For that, they deserve our gratitude.

The campaign did not end there. Rabbi Eli Cohen attended the event and later circulated a letter at Temple Beth El and elsewhere expressing disappointment that it had gone forward. More significantly, he hoped the library would adopt new criteria so that “this type of programming will not be approved in the future.” That should concern everyone, regardless of where they stand on Israel and Palestine. The issue is whether organized political pressure should determine what ideas may be heard in our public institutions.

Rabbi Cohen’s letter raises a deeper question: Who gets to define antisemitism?

The campaign to cancel the event rested on the premise that criticism of Zionism is, by definition, antisemitism. Many Christian and Jewish Zionists sincerely believe that. Many Jews—including rabbis, historians, scholars, Israelis, and Jews throughout the diaspora—do not. Antisemitism is real and has increased in recent years. Hatred, discrimination, and violence directed against Jews because they are Jewish deserve unequivocal condemnation. Precisely because antisemitism is serious, the term should not become a catch-all for political positions about Israel and Palestine.

No political movement—including Zionism—possesses sole authority to define antisemitism for the rest of society, much less for public institutions. Nor should any private advocacy group become its de facto arbiter. To insist that opposition to Zionism is automatically antisemitic is not an uncontested fact; it is a political claim vigorously debated within Jewish communities themselves. Public libraries should not resolve that debate by deciding that only one interpretation may be heard.

The implications extend far beyond Israel and Palestine. If criticism of a political ideology can be reclassified as hatred of a people whenever influential groups insist upon it, democratic discussion begins to shrink. Today the target may be a poetry reading about Gaza. Tomorrow it could be immigration, climate change, Indigenous rights, racial justice, or another contentious issue. Public institutions cannot remain places of inquiry if organized campaigns determine which lawful viewpoints may be heard.

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries upheld the harder principle. They listened respectfully to objections without surrendering their independence and trusted the public to hear, question, disagree, and think for themselves. Libraries embody civic trust by assuming that citizens can engage difficult ideas without officials deciding in advance which are permissible.

That civic trust now requires something from us. The Library Advisory Commission, intended to provide “a voice of the community” offering advice and feedback to the board and library director, meets Monday, Aug. 17, at 6:30 p.m. at the Capitola Branch Library. [Meeting information](#) Commissioner Rena Dubin is expected to propose changes affecting future library programming.

Community members who value intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity should attend and speak up, or write Library Director Christopher Platt at plattc@santacruzpl.org in support. The effort to prevent “this type of programming” has not ended. Fighting antisemitism and protecting political expression are not competing obligations; a democratic community must do both. If we want our libraries to remain places of inquiry rather than instruments of ideological conformity, the time to defend them is now.

Unhae Langis is a writer, former literature professor, and community activist in Santa Cruz County.

For Library Commissioners re: Aug 17 meeting

1 message

Dorah <finndorah@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 16, 2026 at 10:47 PM

To: clerk@santacruzpl.org

Cc: plattc@santacruzpl.org, citycouncil@santacruzca.gov, boardofsupervisors@santacruzcounty-ca.gov, Diane Cowen <cowend@santacruzpl.org>

Dear Library Advisory Board Commissioners and others,

It was my great pleasure to serve as an On Call LA II at SCPL after retiring from decades of work in the nonprofit field. It was a great way to continue community work and serve people from all parts of Santa Cruz.

One of the wonderful things about SCPL is the opportunity to hear from local authors, experts, and artists. Another is SCPL's devotion to sharing viewpoints and information on so many topics, controversial subjects. On July 25th, Diane Cowen and the rest of the excellent Capitola staff hosted an event that combined both these strengths: Regional author Daniel Reyes reading from *6 is for Genocide* and then a panel with Reyes and award-winning author Prof. Stephen Zunes, director of Middle Eastern Studies and inaugural Daniel Greenberg Fellow at USF.

Since I'm a Jewish transplant from the Christian Zionist Deep South who has lived in Santa Cruz for over twenty years, I'm not surprised that many Jewish Zionist residents of Santa Cruz were quick to call the *6 is for Genocide* event "anti-semitic" and to say the same about Daniel Reyes. They make the claim though worldwide- including in Israel- Jewish people are working daily with Palestinians and others in our beloved community to end the genocide, stop the war profiteering and hatred, and support Palestinians' struggle for survival, autonomy and human rights. My rabbi, Paula Marcus, Chief Rabbi at Temple Beth El, has drawn attention to Palestinians' deadly plight and the horrible Israeli violence against Palestinians, Bedouin, and Druze in Palestine and parts of Israel.

Please don't let Zionists who conflate the religion and heritage of Judaism with Zionism tell you that criticism of Israel, Zionism, or specific Jewish people or politicians is antisemitic. Antisemitism is lying and hatred of Jewish people, such as calling us masterminds of Replacement Theory or Christ-killers, with active repression against us and our faith.

More importantly, remember that our precious community includes many Palestinians, Arabs, Druze, and Muslims who have had family and friends killed and terribly affected by Zionism. That is what *6 is for Genocide* is about- it's bringing the suffering of millions of civilians to our attention. Thank you for giving voice to people who are often marginalized.

Sincerely,
Dorah L. Rosen
401 Windham St
Santa Cruz CA 95060
205.253.4211

LAC agenda item 8c

1 message

Judi Grunstra <judiriva@hotmail.com>
To: "clerk@santacruzpl.org" <clerk@santacruzpl.org>

Sun, Aug 16, 2026 at 12:57 AM

Dear Commissioners and Director Platt,

As a librarian, I am aware of libraries' support of free speech. I appreciate Ms. Dubin's alarm at the Reyes program, and the coming together of concerned leaders in the Jewish community, Ms. Cowan, and others who sought to resolve controversy about this public program.

Yes, the library should develop a policy, as outlined. But it should clearly state that no hate speech will be tolerated, even if cloaked in academic rationalization, or accusations of censorship, or that is being expressed as "poetry."

If an individual or group proposed a program that spewed hatred against Blacks, Latinos, the LGBTQ+ community, women, Asians, etc., would the library allow that program to take place in a library meeting room? I doubt it. But Jews seem to be a fair target these days. Please steer such groups to venues that are not supported by my tax dollars.

Thank you.

Judi Grunstra

8/17/26 Library Commission Mtg re Proposed Protocols for Adult Programming - public comment

1 message

Lipsonlaw@gmail.com <lipsonlaw@gmail.com>
To: clerk@santacruzpl.org

Fri, Aug 14, 2026 at 10:59 AM

Dear Library Commission Chair Mike Termini and Commissioners Rena Dubin, Charlotte Khandelwal, Timothy Lydgate, Vivian Rogers, Pamela Woll, and Tricia Wynne:

I am writing about the event that took place on Saturday, July 25, 2026, 2:00–3:30 p.m. at the Capitola Branch Library, in the Ow Family Community Room and how this event shines a bright light on the need for Adult programming protocols.

“SIX is for 6enocide — Powerful Poetry by Daniel Reyes.”

The library’s description goes considerably beyond simply saying that an outside author was renting a room. It says:

- * “Join us as Daniel Reyes reads...”
- * the book is dedicated to a Palestinian family in Gaza;
- * Palestinian poet Howla Jardali would introduce Reyes and read a poem;
- * Professor Stephen Zunes would answer questions about “the history and politics of the region”;
- * the book description characterizes the work as confronting “violence, displacement, and the silent complicity” and as “resistance against erasure.”

The library also promoted the event in its own mid-July newsletter, placing it among its library programming and providing a “Register Here” link.

Most importantly, there is no disclaimer in the official event listing or the library newsletter stating that the program was sponsored by an outside organization or that the library did not endorse the views expressed.

Santa Cruz Public Libraries’ current Meeting Room Policy #315, revised August 2025, says that when a group uses a community room, all promotional materials, notifications, and other communications about the event must include a disclaimer:

“The views and opinions expressed during or as related to this event are solely those of the individuals involved in the event and do not necessarily represent those of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries...”

The same policy says something even more fundamental:

“The Library’s provision of meeting room space to a group is not an endorsement of the group, its beliefs, or its speech.”

And the Library Advisory Commission’s discussion of the 2024 revision specifically says the changes added “more extensive detailed language regarding the requirement for event organizers to state that the Library neither approves nor disapproves of any viewpoint and the event is not sponsored by the Library.”

I note that Mr. Reyes’ words often bordered on antisemitism, which is hatred of Jews based on their religion, ethnicity and race. Judaism is all of those labels and pre-dates such modern categories.

The Commission meeting Agenda published by the library for the 8/17/26 meeting included a community comment (bottom of page 60), which asked, “Who gets to define antisemitism?” [italics added]

No single person or authority determines what is racist or antisemitic or simply hate speech. Instead, whether something is racist or antisemitic is assessed through a combination of clear definitions, the impact of an action, historical context, and societal consensus.

The perspective and lived experience of those targeted plays a vital role in identifying racism, or in this case, antisemitism. On an individual level, individual people targeted by this hatred are the ones who experience its psychological, social, and economic harm while on a community level, Jewish individuals and their communities often

possess a shared understanding of historical tropes, coded language, and modern microaggressions that outsiders might miss.

Protocols for Adult Programming are urgently needed, and needed now,

Thank you for your kind attention to this.

Ann L. Lipson
Attorney-at-Law
510-459-6293

Ann L. Lipson



Ann L. Lipson, Attorney-at-Law
lipsonlaw@gmail.com
Tel: (831) 477-7516

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8/17/26 Library Commission Mtg re Proposed Protocols for Adult Programming - public comment

1 message

'Anastasia' via SCPL Board Clerk <scplboardclerk@santacruzpl.org>

Fri, Aug 14, 2026 at 7:58 AM

Reply-To: Anastasia <atorresgil@pm.me>

To: "clerk@santacruzpl.org" <clerk@santacruzpl.org>

Dear Library Commission Chair Mike Termini and Commissioners Rena Dubin, Charlotte Khandelwal, Timothy Lydgate, Vivian Rogers, Pamela Woll, and Tricia Wynne:

I am a firm believer in the First Amendment, but public libraries still have a responsibility to exercise institutional judgment over those they choose to elevate through official library programming and sponsorship. Free speech exists to protect the right to express deeply offensive speech, but it does not create an entitlement to a public library sponsored platform.

Regarding the 7/25/26 reading by Daniel Reyes at the Capitola Branch:

The author, Mr. Reyes, had the ability to reserve a room at the library to espouse his opinions - regardless of how odious. But I object to the library's decision to sponsor - and by that sponsorship, elevate and promote Mr. Reyes' prose - prose which veered into antisemitism (See sample in Addendum 1, Exhibit A, from YouTube video <https://youtu.be/IYRs5ozg3lw?si=dqKmql2QkPknlt8> of the event).

Further, the library staff member present at the event, ended the program by facilitating the purchase of Mr. Reyes' book, which appeared to endorse his opinions.

No disclaimer was made at any time during the event or its promotion by the library, that the selection of Mr. Reyes or his work *did not constitute or imply agreement with - or approval of - the content*. Such Disclaimer language was already codified by the library in JPAB Policy # 307, since 1997, (See attached Addendum 1, Exhibit B) but apparently not applied to the library's Adult Programming.

The Commission meeting Agenda published by the library for the 8/17/26 meeting included a community comment (bottom of page 60), which asked, "Who *gets* to define antisemitism?" [italics added]

No single person or authority determines what is racist or antisemitic. Instead, whether something is racist or antisemitic is assessed through a combination of clear definitions, the impact of an action, historical context, and societal consensus.

The perspective and lived experience of those targeted plays a vital role in identifying racism, or in this case, antisemitism

And here's why the perspective of those targeted matters:

Direct Impact: The people targeted by the bias are the ones who experience its psychological, social, and economic harm.

Shared Context: Jewish individuals and communities often possess a shared understanding of historical tropes, coded language, and modern microaggressions that outsiders might miss.

Protocols for Adult Programming are needed, and needed now,

Thank you.

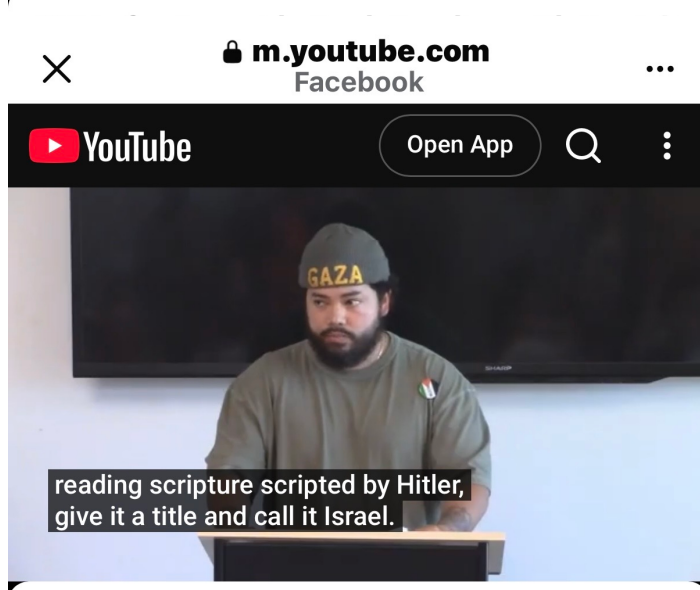
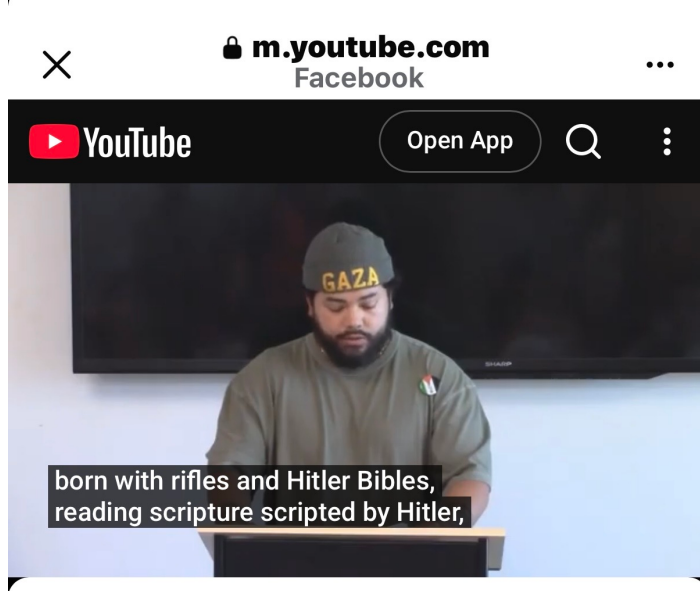
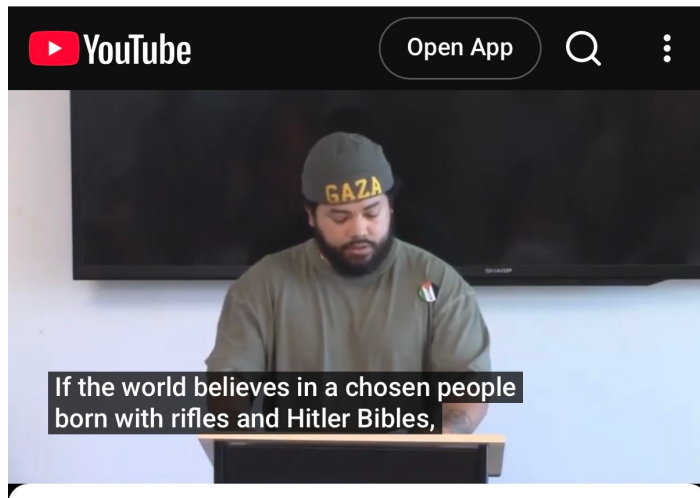
Anastasia Torres-Gil
atorresgil@pm.me

Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831)247-9775

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.



Library Addendum 1.pdf
1205K



SIX is for 6enocide Book Reading with Daniel

@johndoe13k 2 likes 67 views 3 days ago more



Subscribe



7/25/26 reading at Capitola Branch Library
<https://youtu.be/IYRs5ozg3lw?si=dqKmqvI2QkPknlt8>

Exhibit A

The Freedom to View Statement

JPAB Policy # 307
Approved: 7/1997
Last Revised: 8/2022
Five-year Review Schedule: 8/2027

The freedom to view, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, we affirm these principles:

1. It is in the public interest to provide the broadest possible access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the most effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
 2. It is in the public interest to provide for audiences films and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
 3. It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling or prejudging a film on the basis of the moral, religious or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker, or on the basis of controversial content.
 4. It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.
-

Adopted by the Education Film Library Association in February, 1979, and endorsed in June, 1979 by the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association.

Adopted by the Santa Cruz City/County Library System [citizen] Board in December 1987, and by the Library Oversight Committee at its first meeting on November 3, 1988.

Confirmed by the Library Joint Powers Authority Board in July 1997.

There was no disclaimer for the event in question that was sponsored, though the library does require a disclaimer on other adult items.

Exhibit B

Letter in support of intellectual freedom at tonight's Library Advisory Commission Meeting

Christopher Platt <plattc@santacruzpl.org>

Mon, Aug 17, 2026 at 1:42 PM

To: Kira Henifin <henifink@santacruzpl.org>, Devin Schwarz <schwarzd@santacruzpl.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Gail Walker** <gail@rcnv.org>

Date: Mon, Aug 17, 2026 at 1:08 PM

Subject: Letter in support of intellectual freedom at tonight's Library Advisory Commission Meeting

To: <plattc@santacruzpl.org>

Dear Mr. Platt,

We urge SCPL and its board to uphold the principles of free speech and equity outlined in your Statement of Commitment to Racial and Social Equity, which emphasizes eliminating barriers, fostering inclusion, amplifying disenfranchised voices, and addressing tough community issues.

Succumbing to pressure to cancel events like Daniel Reyes' reading would undermine these values and the trust placed in SCPL by the communities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Scotts Valley. Fighting antisemitism and protecting political expression are not competing obligations; a democratic community must do both.

If our libraries are to remain spaces of inquiry rather than ideological conformity, we must defend them now. We hope tonight's meeting reflects this commitment.

I am attaching our original email in support of Daniel Reyes' poetry reading, so you have the full context of our position.

Sincerely,

The Resource Center for Nonviolence

[612 Ocean Street](#)

[Santa Cruz, CA 95060](#)

--



Gail Walker

(SHE/HER) MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



(831) 230-0563



www.rcnv.org



gail@rcnv.org



612 Ocean St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060



SIX is for 6enocide letter of support from RCNV.pdf

314K



To: Jamie Goldstein (City Manager), Mali LaGoe, Chair (City Manager), Matt Huffakerm, Member (City Manager), and Nicole Coburn, Vice Chair

Dear Santa Cruz Public Library Board (SCPL),

We write to you in support of the poet Daniel Reyes and his poetry reading of *6 is for genocide*. We write to encourage SCPL and its board members to uphold the sentiments of [free speech as framed on the SCPL website](#). In their Statement of Commitment to Racial and Social Equity, SCPL notes

“As leaders of North America’s public libraries, we are committed to achieving racial and social equity by contributing to a more just society in which all community members can realize their full potential. Our libraries can help achieve true and sustained equity through an intentional, systemic, and transformative library-community partnership by:

- Eliminating racial and social equity barriers in library programs, services, policies and practices.
- Creating and maintaining an environment of diversity, inclusion and respect both in our library systems and in all aspects of our community role.
- Ensuring that we are reaching and engaging disenfranchised people in the community and helping them express their voice.
- Serving as a convener and facilitator of conversations and partnerships to address community challenges.
- Being forthright on tough issues that are important to our communities.”

SCPL and the board succumbing to the pressures of cancelling the reading because of opposition from some community members would be a disservice to the values outlined and established by SCPL, the Joint Powers Board, and [the cities of Santa Cruz](#), Capitola, and Scotts Valley more broadly.

We at the Resource Center for Nonviolence continue to advocate for marginalized groups/voices and the study of their histories and livelihoods. We expect other city organizations and the county more generally to adhere to the standards it sets forth. This includes the protection of events that are “forthright on tough issues that are important to our communities.” Please do not allow Daniel Reyes to be censored and ousted from sharing his work with the community at large.

In solidarity with those who have been disenfranchised,

The Resource Center for Nonviolence (RCNV)