

## FRIENDS OF THE Calaveras County LIBRARY

# The Focus

## Gift of Friendship



Friends of the  
Calaveras County Library  
PO Box 1552  
San Andreas, CA 95249  
(209) 754-6510  
calaverasfotl@gmail.com  
calaverasreads.com

### This holiday season, give the gift of friendship to your loved ones!

Give a membership to Friends of the Calaveras County Library along with a book from the Book Sale room at any of the library branches. Use the 2 for 1 coupon on the next page to make it even sweeter.

When you send in your gift membership form, we will send you a certificate suitable for giving. You can download the special membership form from the website [www.CalaverasReads.com](http://www.CalaverasReads.com) or pick one up at your local branch.



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#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **COUPON**
- Comet Viewing
- Volunteer Fair

Friends who read, are Friends indeed!

# NEW FOCUS FOR THE NEW YEAR

## FROM YOUR FOCUS EDITOR:

Your response to our **Focus Newsletter** has been excellent! Now in our efforts to reach you more effectively, we have redesigned our format. Starting in January, I will send you email messages of events at your libraries as soon as they are planned. Then twice a year, I will send you a full newsletter highlighting our accomplishments for the previous six months and plans for the next six months.



Amber will post on the website every month all the regular features of **The Focus**: Book Reviews, Book Club Calendar, Storytime Hours, and Pictures of Branch Events. Be sure to "Follow" us on Facebook (*Friends of the Calaveras County Library*) to receive up-to-the-minute news.

Let us know how this works for you! You may be hearing from us more often, but the messages will be more timely and more concise.

Mary Cole  
Project Coordinator & FOCUS Editor

**FREE BOOK  
2 FOR 1  
COUPON**

Get 1 book FREE with the purchase of 1 book from the Book Sale Area at any Calaveras County Branch.

Books are in slightly used condition and priced to sell.

Proceeds help support library programs at each branch.

Save paper and redeem coupon by showing this screen on your device at check out.

\*One free item per patron. The lesser valued item will be free.

'T WAS THE NIGHT OF THE COMET

Bring Your Binoculars

Comet 46P/Wirtanen  
Predicted to Peak on December 15th

Come view the comet with us!  
Incredible Night for a Comet, Cocoa, Cookies and a Crowd of Friends!

HOSTED BY  
JERRY SIFFERMAN  
&  
JACK FORKNER

Raffle to Win  
NIKON Action Extreme  
All Terrain Binoculars  
Amazing Optics & Easy to Use  
Visit Copper Library  
for Details!

December 15, 2018  
Presentation at 7:00pm

Copper Library Special Event  
IGA Payless Market Parking Lot  
Copperopolis, CA (209) 785-0920

WE'LL BE HERE!

COME MEET US AND FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN  
PLAY A PART IN YOUR LIBRARY!

**VOLUNTEER FAIR**  
BEHIND EVERY ORGANIZATION ARE AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

Match your passion for community with organizations looking for volunteers.

**JANUARY 9, 2019**  
**6:00PM - 8:00PM**

SAN ANDREAS TOWN HALL  
24 CHURCH HILL RD.  
SAN ANDREAS

Calaveras County  
Chamber of Commerce

CBRC  
CALAVERAS BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER



**4<sup>th</sup> Annual**

*Holiday Home Tour*

**Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 2-5 pm at VALLEY SPRINGS**

Tickets are \$20, available at Valley Springs library, or call 209-772-1000 or 209-772-8630. Refreshments will be served from 4-6 pm at Gold Creek Clubhouse.



**Dec 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 1-5 pm  
at MOKELUMNE HILL LIBRARY**

Mokelumne Hill FOTL will have a Cookbook Sale. Refreshments will be served, and there will be craft activities for kids. *There will be free books and treats for everyone!*

**Santa Claus is Coming . . .  
to the ARNOLD LIBRARY  
Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Storytime begins at 2pm Santa arrives at 2:30  
*There will be free books and treats for everyone!*



**Little Elves Crafting Workshop  
at SAN ANDREAS LIBRARY  
Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 10 am**

Get creative with friends and neighbors at this fun-for-all-ages event.

## WHAT DO LIBRARIANS DO ALL DAY?



*Kristine Loving*

When I first became a high school library media teacher (aka librarian) I truly did not know what the job entailed. Obviously, checking books in and out and shelving them was high on the list. In the high school library we also had 40 computers that I updated and kept in working order helping sometimes upwards of 500 students a day with term papers, research, and technology issues. I collaborated with classroom teachers on lessons and taught technology skills to teachers and students. Little did I know that I would also have to clean up taco sauce smashed under mouse pads and be a mom/counselor to students facing serious issues. There was not a class in the Master's Program of Library and

***“Google can bring you back 100,000 answers.  
A librarian can bring you back the right one.”***

— Neil Gaiman

Information Science about dealing with patron/student crisis! But the more years I worked the better at my job I became. On the job training was essential to learning the skills I practice in the Murphys Library today. And “no” we don't get to sit around and read all day!

So here is a short list of what a librarian actually does:

- Order books, catalog books, discard books, read about books, recommend books
- Work with technology: help with research, help to locate accurate information, assist with printing, faxing, copying, use of cell phones and tablets, etc.
  - Plan children's programs (choosing thematic books and crafts), author visits, and special events
  - Write grants and follow-up reports
  - Sweep the leaves out of the foyer
  - Organize donations of books, DVDs, CDs, etc.
  - And check books in and out and put them away!

It's a great job that perfectly blends technology, working with people, and books – what could be better! (I do slip in reading a chapter or two at lunch if possible)

*Kristine Loving,  
Murphys Branch Assistant*

### EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pru Starr, President  
Kathi Copeland, Vice President  
Shirley Huberty, Treasurer  
Jackie Wietrick, Secretary

### BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES

Diane Jarvi - Angels Camp  
Richard Raso - Arnold  
Kathi Copeland - Copperopolis  
Bob Dean - Mokelumne Hill  
- Murphys  
Charnette Boylan & Karen  
Eggleston - San Andreas  
Jackie Wietrick - Valley Springs  
Pru Starr - West Point

### STAFF

Mary Cole - Project Coordinator,  
and *The Focus* - Editor  
Amber Rack - Webmaster &  
Social Media



*Friends of the Copper Library  
had a marvelous family night of  
fun and fright passing out treats  
and invitations to come to the  
library for more family events!*

## BOOK REVIEW BY SUZANNE MURPHY - Valley Springs Book Club

**Varina** by Charles Frazier  
Publish date: HarperCollins, 2018

### First Lady of the Confederacy

Charles Frazier commented he would never write another Civil War novel after he finished *Cold Mountain*, but he couldn't keep that promise. His newest effort is a portrait of the woman who, according to his interpretation, may have most regretted the terrible war that very nearly tore a new nation—"conceived in liberty"—apart forever. Varina Davis, wife to Jefferson Davis, could be a mirror image of Mary Todd Lincoln in their personal suffering and loss of husbands who traded their life to preserve conflicting cultures—Lincoln to assassination and Davis to isolation and notoriety.

Using an imagined reunion of Varina Davis with a man named James Blake at a retreat in Saratoga Springs where the elderly woman lives quietly with her bitter memories and sorrows, the author writes a fascinating historical fiction. James Blake, who does appear in the historical record, a six-year-old slave, seems to have been rescued by Varina Davis and taken home to live in the household in the position of a sibling among the Davis children.

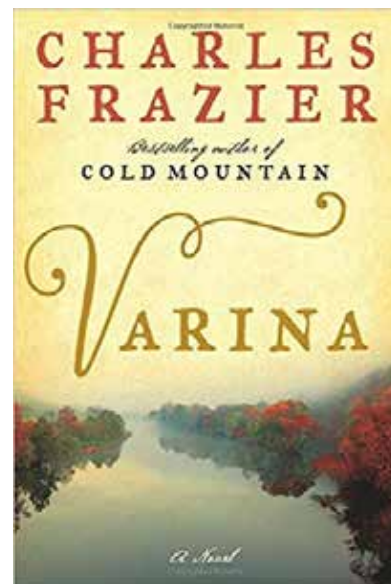
Blake's actual origins and relationship to the Davis family are sufficiently muddy, allowing Frazier to concoct a series of meetings between these two individuals, serving as a vehicle for narrating Varina's history as interviews rather than a chronology. The character James has a raft of questions for "V"—as she is referred to—and the conversations around these questions have qualities of a family history, exaggerations or not-quite-truths to cushion painful facts.

Loss has been the hallmark of Varina's life. Her lament is that she never asked for the place she held in the horrific bloodbath of the War Between the States. While she has no actual impact on the events themselves, she is witness to it all and married to a key player in the destruction of the South. Varina repeats that all she wanted was a stable marriage, even though her husband was more than twenty years her senior, and family.

It might be difficult to imagine Davis, who would become the president of an imaginary country, as the man who attracted the romantic attention of lively, dark-eyed Varina. From the very beginning of their marriage, he was absent frequently, feeding the fire of his political ambition, leaving Varina stranded and longing for the cadaverous embrace of this man of haggard appearance

and scarecrow dimensions even in his well-nourished years.

While the novel is a fiction, historical subjects of the conversations between V and Blake did occur. Sherman's rampage through Georgia is depicted in burning detail. In the dark days as Dixie is driven to its knees, V's flight with her children from Richmond resonates with the terror so many experienced in their own attempts to escape a landscape of ruination and lawlessness. "The last four years had made a whole generation of young boys—who ought to have been going to school and learning a trade...—into slit-eyes killers with no more tell of emotion than an old riverboat faro gambler."



Frazier also spends time with Jefferson and V in their later years when withdrawn to Biloxi, Mississippi, an old couple who has spent most of married life apart.

The person of Mary Chestnut, long-time friend of V and prolific biographer of the Civil War (her account was a rich resource for Ken Burns' documentary *The Civil War*) makes several appearances in the story. And that wicked Oscar Wilde shows up for a pleasant evening at the Davis' dinner table; Jefferson has nothing much to say to the young reprobate (perhaps strait-laced Davis had an inkling of the trouble Wilde was courting) and he excuses himself early from the table, so V delights in the witty conversation she thirsts for in her isolation from the wider world.

While this story is the narrative of a woman who suffered much and rationalizes she was not the master of her destiny even before she took up residence in the Grey House as its First—and Last—Lady, it is an entertaining version of the very real personal cost of war on people literally caught in the cross-fire of men whose ambition threatens the very foundations of a nation.

###

## BOOK REVIEW BY SUZANNE MURPHY - Valley Springs Book Club

***The Miniaturist*** by Jessie Burton

Publish date: HarperCollins, 2014

In the sixteenth century, the Dutch Republic was a trade powerhouse, as formidable as France and Britain in its wide-ranging colonization of non-European lands, especially the exotic Indonesian islands. The City of Amsterdam enriched itself beyond belief with its control in goods distribution throughout the Continent. Amsterdam's social history evolved through a unique set of circumstances that propelled the Dutch Republic's economic rise as well as its disastrous downfall. The Republic essentially became the world's biggest financial institution ruled by an oligarchy that organized an economy with strict regulations that also shaped social life—the guilds that guaranteed stability in every trade, from bakers and silversmiths to butchers and merchants, also suppressed innovation and opportunity.

Author Burton recreates this world with the character of Nella Oortman, an eighteen-year-old country girl whose fresh beauty has captured the attention of Johannes Brandt, arguably one of the wealthiest traders in the City. Their marriage, though hastily arranged, is a stroke of luck since her alcoholic father has just died, leaving a widow and three children without a guilder. Nella will always have what is most prized in Dutch society, stability and a roof over her head. Although the ceremony is brief and she does not have a wedding night because Brandt prefers to hop on a ship for a business opportunity, the girl thinks little of the delay since that was not an unusual occurrence in those times. However, when she journeys alone and arrives at the Brandt residence in Amsterdam, the household and its inhabitants prove to be more puzzling. Brandt's spinster sister Marin is frightening in her religious fervor, Cornelia the maid freely expresses her opinion with impudence, Brandt's man Otto, purchased from slavery, is dark with mystery, and husband Johannes is absent both in body and spirit. Nella cannot find the source of whispered conversations that torment her sleep, and nobody else seems disturbed. Every time she asks a question, she meets vague replies, so she takes up eavesdropping, practiced by every other member in the household.

Mysteries begin to grow at a rapid pace, and Nella becomes more agitated. When Johannes returns from his trip, instead of taking her into a loving embrace, he purchases for Nella an elaborate cabinet house, a cold excuse for his indifference and a preposterous gift for a new wife. Nella tries to make the best of a bad situation,

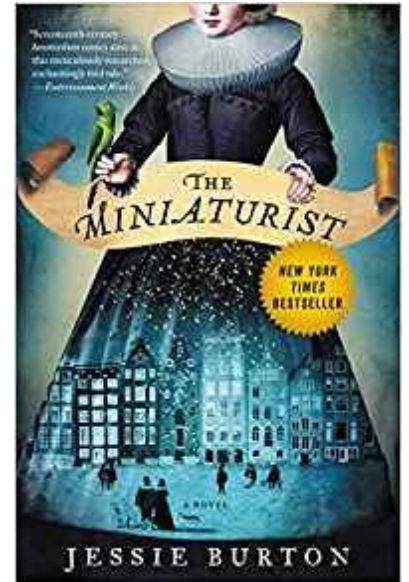
and hires a miniaturist, sight unseen, to create furnishings and people to take their place in this exact miniature replica of the very house she occupies. Packages containing tiny additions to the house begin to arrive, frightening Nella because they become clues to events that very soon come to pass, events that a stranger could not possibly know. She frets that she is an actor in a play, and the miniaturist is writing

the horrifying script. Nella does not succumb to fainting fits and hysteria, however, but uses her wit and a growing curiosity to make sense of these conundrums.

Burton renders a background rich with Dutch social customs, descriptions of dress and foods, making the story itself a fascinating study on a personal level of a time of unlimited wealth and greed. Although the tulip craze that collapsed the economy is not part of the story—there is only a riddle of the difference between a tulip and a turnip—the fragile business transaction of a sugar crop from Surinam hints at the insane pace of trade in a world of sailing ships and paper ledgers.

The waft of exotic spices in the foods and perfuming the flesh of characters is a direct counterpoint to Amsterdam's canals, the stinking waterways that serve as the streets and laps its noxious fumes so close to the finest residences of the wealthiest burgomasters in Europe.

The mysteries are dark and tightly woven in this gem of a story, an intriguing glimpse at the uneasy underside of this time and place. A startling contrast to Dutch artist Vermeer's capture of light and orderliness on the canvas. Beware, a skirt of blood, chaos, and paranoia all figure into a story which should have been so genteel and immaculate.



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## BOOK CLUB CALENDAR

|                           |                            |   |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Children's Storytime      | See schedule on page 5     | All Branches  |
| Moke Hill READS Book Club | First Tuesday each month   | 7:00 pm<br>Mokelumne Hill Branch                          |
| Valley Springs Book Club  | Third Tuesday each month   | 3:30 pm<br>Valley Springs Branch                          |
| San Andreas Book Club     | Fourth Thursday each month | 10:30 am - noon<br>and 5:00–6:30 pm<br>San Andreas Branch |
| Arnold Mystery Book Club  | Third Thursday each month  | 1 pm<br>Bistro Espresso, Arnold                           |



### MORE RESOURCES

**Your library now offers online resources for maps & travel.**

**Fantastic for travelers or social studies projects!**

Go to [www.calaveraslibrary.com](http://www.calaveraslibrary.com) and click on 'Resources.'



### NEW S.T.E.A.M PROGRAMS!

**Visual Reality** - Tuesdays 10 am-12 noon & 3-5 pm;  
Thursdays 4:30-6:30 pm

**STEAM Pioneers (ages 6-12)** -  
Wednesdays 10:15-11:45 am;  
Thursdays 3-5 pm  
**at San Andreas Library**

