

We LOVE the Library, Episode 9

A: Hello, and welcome to *We LOVE the Library*, a twice-monthly podcast brought to you by the San Luis Obispo County Library Foundation. I'm your host, Rachel Duchak. In this ninth episode, we travel the Quail Trail to visit two small but mighty libraries in North County: Shandon Library and Creston Library. Learn more about the unique Tool Library in Shandon from Joey, and hear from Cookie in Creston about what it's been like to run the public library for over 48 years. Also, for Black History Month Part One, we speak with local author John King about his background, his writing process, and his love for the public library. In late 2024, John published his non-fiction book, *Black and Blue in Boston*, which recounts his and his boyhood friend's experiences growing up in Boston in the turbulent 1960s, as well as his friends' highly-decorated career as a detective and law enforcement officer. Thanks for supporting your public library! Everybody, we are in Shandon today with our friends from the library system, and I am sitting here with Senior Library Associate Joey Lay. Hi, Joey, how are you?

B: Good, how are you?

A: I'm good, thank you. We're also here with Tina Baugh, who is the North County Regional Librarian.

C: Good morning.

A: Hello, and thank you both for joining us. We are sitting here in the Shandon Library. Joey, could you describe what this place looks like?

B: This building has been many different things. It's been a community center. It's definitely been here for a long time. It's a large building. It's the largest out of all the express branches, I would say. I have the most square footage. It's also very unique.

A: It looks like a gymnasium or a theater. So it has taller ceilings, hardwood floor.

You could imagine a basketball game was played here at some point.

B: It was.

A: Cool. So this is a unique building out of all the libraries. Is there another library that looks like this, Tina?

C: They're all totally different. So yeah, this is definitely unique. Kind of has like a feel, the wooden paneling on the side, like an ark or something like that, being all wood. Good acoustics, good lighting, good air.

A: A ship of library materials. That's great. Okay. So one of the reasons we came all the way out here to visit you from the coast, Joey, is we were curious to learn more about the Tool Library. And I've had a chance to get a little tour of it. Last summer, we were here for a Library Foundation meeting. But could you tell us what the Tool Library is and why is it in Shandon? Because we don't have those at the Los Osos Library.

B: The Tool Library was started with a grant that we received. And in Shandon, it's pretty remote. There's not a whole lot of businesses. There's only a couple of markets and a post office. So if you need sandpaper, if you need a weed whacker, or if you need tools, it's quite a drive to go to the nearest. It's at least like a 20-25 minute drive to get to Lowe's or Home Depot. And there just isn't aren't a lot of resources out here. So having the Tool Library out here, Shandon is also, since it's so remote, I think the economic dynamic, I think it's a little bit, you know, people can't always afford to buy weed whackers and pole saws and kind of the bigger equipment. And so I think it's very helpful to have these tools available to people here because there are no other places that you can really rent.

A: Awesome. The library comes through once again. So if people are interested, we have some images on the page on the website with this post that demonstrates some of the tools that we have in this particular library, Tool Library. So wheelbarrows, weed whackers, there's a 3D printer, and just all kinds of things that you can imagine that would help you get the job done. And this is a, as you say, it's a more rural farming community, ranching and

farming community. And so how do you think that that makes this library different than the other libraries in the system?

B: There's more diversity as far as things that are needed in the community. We're not just books. This is kind of a place for kids to come to have something to do. Adults like the programs, so do the kids. It's a real community, bringing the community together.

A: And it's also a little free form. You were talking about after trying to arrange a few programs that require people to be coming at a certain time of day on a certain day. Instead, you'll put out art materials and people can come in or the Lego table and kids can come in and participate as needed with more of that free form schedule.

B: Yeah. Passive programming works a lot better here than the structured programming. It really helps to just like, like I said, the kids will come in, you know, some of them will come in several times and make the art project or they'll, you know, only get here once a week or something depending on their schedules. So having all this stuff available kind of on an ongoing basis really helps to capture a lot of the participation.

A: Awesome. And you were saying that due to the small size of this library, it's an express branch. And so you are the only librarian here. Is that correct? As opposed to say, the San Luis Obispo library, which has more than one librarian, that the benefit of being a smaller library, even though the space is on the bigger side, there's space for everyone to touch a snake when the Reptile Ron team, the reptile show comes to visit, right?

B: Yeah.

A: Tell us more about that. It's nice having a smaller, I mean, we get a good, I mean, a good turnout from my community is probably not very good for somewhere like Atascadero, you know, it's much bigger. But what that also brings is, you know, like in programs like Reptile Ron or things that are hands-on, everybody gets a chance to see the snake, to touch the snake, you know, I mean, it's more intimate, it's a more intimate program. So in that respect, I think it's pretty fun.

A: Awesome.

C: Well, and Joey's done a really good job bringing things to this community that they couldn't get to easily. For example, like hosting movie nights, other things like that. So while this library has all the same benefits as a larger library, the tool library is the thing that makes this library unique because you have to pick them up here and return them here, which is different than anywhere else.

A: Right. You can drop off a book or a movie anywhere, then it'll go through circulation back to where it belongs. But here you have to, so it's building more of that relationship. Plus, you just got air conditioning last summer. So this is a place that in the summertime gets pretty warm, doesn't it? Warmer than the coast. So that makes it another wonderful third space for your community to come in, be comfortable and be intellectually stimulated and have fun. So Tina, I had never heard of a regional librarian before. You're going to tell us what it is and how it works. Please tell us.

C: So there are three of us in the county system, and I'm the one that's in charge of North County, which is Creston, Shandon, San Miguel, Cambria, and Atascadero. So I get all the little ones out in the rural communities that are on the edges of the county. So I get to see everywhere from Cambria to Shandon and see how unique these little communities are. So my responsibilities really is assisting, overseeing, helping in any way possible. They joke and call me the North County courier because if anybody needs anything, it goes in my car and I drive to wherever I'm already going to drop it off. But it's a really good opportunity to visit places that people might not see normally.

A: Great. And could you describe the differences between these five librarians or libraries that you work with? Yeah, absolutely. So it does have a pool.

C: So Shandon and San Miguel both have pools and parks that are close by. And so we do swimsuit drives every year to raise, to donate swimming suits to these communities in particular. So that is one thing. Cambria is up by the ocean, which is beautiful

up there. It's kind of called the tree house because there's trees everywhere, but it is beautiful. A lot of artists up there. So they have a particular system for hanging art every month. They get a different artist that hangs and they're allowed to sell them based on that. So it introduces patrons to new artists in the community, gives them a different space. They wouldn't probably be allowed to in a gallery because it's not the same criteria. Creston right down the road, 15 minutes, is also a beautiful little community. Lots of ag 4-H stuff. It's huge there. And they do a lot to help the library out there participating in story times, cleanups, anything like that, which is fabulous with cookie out there. San Miguel is another one that is a smaller library. It just got remodeled a couple of years ago. Since then we do school outreach there every single week to Lillian Larson Elementary. So we take the mobile library out there for four or five hours on Thursdays and get the books directly to the kids. They may not always make it to the library, but there they do. And so that's a really good place for us to connect.

A: Is that one of those branch out vans that's going? We learned about this in episode six from Jackie Kinsey.

C: Yes, that is a branch out van that is dedicated to that during the school year. So it lives up there in San Miguel during the school year. And then Atascadero is the main branch. And so that's obviously located in the city proper there. And so that's where all the bigger events happen, in-house librarians there for children as well as adults, bigger programs. We host a lot of author talks out there, just really trying to bring as much as we can to North County in general, because I think a lot of people get over the grade. They're like, I'm so scared. I'm over the grade. So we're talking about, so let's get them over there and see what there is. And so there's a lot of very unique things that happen over here. In Shannon especially, Joey started a blood drive, comes here now. This will be the second time we're doing it in February, where people can come here and donate blood.

Cap Slow has been here with a mobile van. So North County in general, partnerships are really important to us. Different partnerships that we have in North County, because people need services everywhere. We partner with the food bank, Atascadero gets up twice a week. They're all over North County. They have distribution spots. The Noor Clinic comes, which is a mobile clinic to help people with doctor's appointments, et cetera. And then we also do, yeah, TEMA comes to Atascadero once a week. A: And that's the Transitions Mental Health Association.

C: Transitions Mental Health. That's our partnership with them to help people that need housing, jobs, whatever it is they need. Eckerd Connects also comes out there to help people with job placement. And so it's really about marshaling our resources so everyone knows where they can find help.

A: The library is the perfect conduit for sharing all this information and providing the support to these communities. This is so great. I'm so glad you were able to join us and give us this insight, because as I said, this is a brand new concept for me. So it's nice to have these connections, like little hands holding onto each other of the library system. So one more question for you, Joey, which is, could you tell us a little bit more about the history of this building? It sounds like it's been here a long time, since World War II era, and that some of your residents, your neighbors come over and tell you more about it, some of your older residents. Can you tell us a bit more about the history of the building?

B: Yeah, I always love it when some of my older residents, longtime residents come here, and they'll tell me, oh, this is where, you know, my mom used to put on plays for the soldiers in, you know, Camp Roberts, or they would travel to Camp Roberts, but there was a stage back here, and they would, you know, have this, they would figure out entertainment plays and things to do. They would do their rehearsals here before they well, and either that, or they would actually perform here. And then I've had people come in and say, oh, this, you know, you know, this building used to have a basement, and that was a full-

blown basement with, you know, a kitchen in there, and storage, and things like that. And that's kind of weird to me, because it's like a raised foundation building now, you know, so just trying to imagine that there's a whole other level underneath, you know. Well, they said there were parties happening there, so maybe it was just a dream. After they filled in the basement, then there was, I guess, enough space to put a couch down there and have a good time, you know. I don't know. That's another story that we've had. I mean, and people come in all the time, oh, we had our quinceanera here, or we had our wedding reception here, you know, and there used to be a kitchen in the back, you know. And so this building has just done a lot of service to the community and really been a cornerstone in a lot of people's lives, you know. They just come in and love sharing their memories, and I just, I love, I love hearing all that, because it's, you know, sometimes I'll, you know, when I heard about the basement, I kind of looked around, and I was like, oh yeah, there's a doorway there that was sealed, and then I can see there's, there's stairs, you know. And, you know, so it's kind of like a little bit of a mystery, you know. So it's been really amazing to hear all the stories.

A: This building definitely has some personality, and some history. Tina Baugh, Joey Lay, thank you very much for meeting us here in Shandon, and telling us more about this wonderful library, and this really important space for this community. Thank you very much.

B and C: Thank you for having us.

A: We're here in Creston at Cookie's Library, and we are sitting here with librarian Cookie Saffell. Hi Cookie, how are you?

D: Hi, I'm well, thank you. How are you?

A: Oh, I'm good, thanks. Thank you for meeting with us.

D: My pleasure.

A: Your parents started the Loading Chute, and then your mother also was one of the earlier librarians who predated you here at Creston. Can you tell us a little bit about your personal history with your family and the library?

D: Well, mom was kind of the original librarian after it came out of the post office. The PTA had determined that we really needed a regular library out here, you know, and so it was kind of a joint effort with all the PTA members.

A: And you were saying before we started recording that there used to be a couple of bookcases in the post office.

D: One bookcase. One bookcase with a padlock, so that, and that was the library.

A: That was the library. And so when you're saying that the post office decided there needs to be more...

D: The PTA decided it should be a dedicated space.

A: Yeah. Cool.

D: And so that was the teacher's parking garage over on the corner of the school grounds, and that was actually a two-car garage when I was a little girl, believe it or not. It still has the big old hinges where the doors used to open, you know. And so they had people donating hutches and bookshelves, and so they painted them a lot of turquoise. It was really bright and pretty and wallpapered in the back of the shelves, you know, and the curtains matched the wallpaper.

A: Making it fun to come to the library and pick out a book.

D: Yeah. Put linoleum down over the old concrete, you know, and so it was, it was cool.

A: I have also lived in a remote area of West Texas, and when you don't have a lot of things nearby, you make do.

D: Yeah, you do.

A: Absolutely.

D: And sometimes that's the best, the best of the best, you know. At least that's how I feel.

A: Comes from the heart.

D: It does indeed, yes. And anything that comes from the heart is better than not.

A: So you have been librarian with the Creston Library for 48 years, is that right?

D: Yeah.

A: What is it like to be working at a library for that long?

D: Well, it actually kind of went back even before that, because when mom was librarian, you had to go to San Luis, and the old library was on Bishop and Johnson, and down, you know, I think the, what is it, the county school library was on the back of that building. So you had to go down and pick out your own books off of their shelves, and so anytime that it was a day that I wasn't in school, then I would go with her and help her pull books, and then you had like tons of cards to file, and so I was the card filer, and we had our little card catalog, you know, like in the old days, because it was the old days, and so, and then when you returned them, you had to go the opposite direction and put all those cards back in that book. Sometimes they had 10 cards because, you know, you did author, title, subject, and on, and on, and on.

A: We complain about computers, but in some ways computers have really helped out with organizing libraries.

D: When they work, yes.

A: We all understand what you're talking about, Cookie.

D: I'm sure anyone who deals with one does, and so, yeah, we worked in that little building for over 20 years, and then the community just felt like we needed more room because the school was at that time bringing, every class would come in, and so the locals would come to come in the library, and it would be so full of kids they couldn't get in the door, and they'd say, I'll come back later, you know, and so this, and Mike Ryan was the supervisor at that time, so his aunt was my mother's sister, and so they were two of the real driving forces in the PTA to get that little library over there up and going, and so, obviously, he sort of came into that realm, I guess you might say, of the library, you know, being important from his mom. Perfect. And so we partnered with the school district, the county and the school district, and then we had a friends of a library group, and so between those three different, what do you call them, entities, they got enough money raked together to be able to bring this in, so it came in three pieces, and we were all excited watching them put it together, you know.

A: This is a manufactured building?

D: Yeah, always peeking out the door from across the street to see how things were going, you know, and so yeah. So you've been here for about 23 years? We opened in 2003 here, so yeah.

A: Great. Well, it's a really cute library.

D: Thank you.

A: Lots of bookshelves, and it is nice and bright and open. We've already had a patron come in looking for something, so this seems like it's an important building in this town.

D: I think so, yeah. It's kind of a gathering place for people who don't want to go to, you know, the bar/restaurant atmosphere, right, and so they come and sit at the round table here and visit. Some days there'll be six people sitting there all talking and visiting, you know, and so I think it's important to have alternative places that people can gather and visit.

A: Absolutely.

D: You know, camaraderie is an important thing.

A: It's an important connector for communities. You've got to know who your neighbors are and know what's going on with them.

D: Yeah.

A: So, and one of the things that sounded really fun that I learned about is that you open the library on Halloween and you do some programming for the kids on Halloween. Can you tell us about that?

D: We've been really lucky in being able to be open on Halloween, even on a day that we aren't normally open, and so Halloween has gotten to be really huge in this community. The community garden and the community center is right next door to it, and so the women's club and different organizations kind of get together and so they serve like free hot dogs and have cupcakes and some hot chocolate I think maybe and so they start maybe over there and then proceed to walk around through the town what there is of it. And so we make sure that everybody is aware that we're open and so the kids come pouring in. I mean

sometimes there will be so many of them it's like wow! But it's really really fun and so yeah it's it's it's a nice service and it gets and people come in and that have never been in and they're like wow! Halloween's like a gateway for come back here you know and sometimes they do so and I mean even people from town come out for Halloween because it's considered like a safe area you're not worrying about who's giving your kid what you know and so we have people from Paso, Templeton, you know different areas, Atascadero come out here to do their trick-or-treating and they'll pop in the library like wow! We didn't know this was here!

A: This is great! You know so it sounds like your library does some really important work in this town.

D: Well we try.

A: Being open and safe and friendly and comfortable for people who are young as well as older people.

D: All ages, all everything, we take them all in.

A: So do you do a story time here?

D: We do.

A: Can you tell us about that? Every Wednesday for the last I don't know how many years it's been now and so I don't open until noon on Wednesday but I come in at 11 because you can't do story time when you're the only person there and you can't check out and read stories at the same time. So come in that extra early you know and so story times from 11-15 till around noon-ish and it varies. Vicki Biddle has a little daycare preschool and so she's like our main event as far as bringing the kids in and yeah it's just it's fun you know they you get them to participate as much as you can. We have a really super young age group right now so I do a lot of well I've pretty much read every picture book in here because I like to know what's in my picture books. Not that I'm judging anything but you just you know some people are have limits as to what they want their kids reading and you can you know steer them in a right direction so they aren't offended or you know and so I kind of read all of the picture books and so there's billions of great ones obviously but you

have to really gear back for these tender ages you know they're like three.

A: Wow.

D: So it's like okay we can't read one that long because they won't last through it.

A: Right.

D: Although I usually do like about three stories you know short ones and we do our good morning song every time and they get where they kind of know the words and participate it has little action parts in it you know so it's fun.

A: It must be so exciting to be helping to guide this new little generation of people who are going to love the library because you make it like a fun safe place.

D: Yeah always I think safety is a huge issue in this day and age and in this world so I think it's really important that people know your library is a safe haven you know I just truly believe that.

A: And you have background as a teacher's aide before you started working at the library.

D: Many many many years.

A: Many years so you've already been like wired for how to work with kids.

D: Yes yes I worked with some great teachers and I'd take you know we were studying Africa and African animals and whatever I'd go in with an armload of books like that. Teachers like oh yay here she comes.

A: Oh that's so great. So my last question for you is what do you love about the library?

D: Oh jeeppers. Of course I love books and I love people so you know just you get in a tiny library you get on a much more personal basis with your patrons than you can in a big library. Obviously there's no comparison so you know you know people and I mean I have like third generation people coming in that I've known the whole family till way back you know and so that's kind of cool that connection you know. But yeah I just I don't know I think connecting people with books is a really important thing. I know technology is a biggie and I'm not against it. I just feel like

there's an awful lot of screen time that's been proven to not be really good for any of us especially children. So the more books we can get in small hands I feel that that's kind of crucial to their development and their enjoyment of life you know.

A: So yeah awesome. Thank you so much for speaking with us. We really appreciate you meeting with us.

D: Well thank you for coming.

A: Let's meet another SLO County author. We speak with John King who co-wrote *Black and Blue in Boston: A Black Cop's Battles*. He wrote this with his literary subject Joe Britt. We're here with local author John King. Hi John. Hi. How are you?

E: I'm great.

A: Good. Thanks for joining us. You and I crossed paths last month at a very cool narrative visual and musical event called At the Table with Dr. King to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s holiday and it was presented by the NAACP SLO County Branch and you're one of the NAACP committee chairs this year is that correct?

E: Yeah that's correct.

A: Can you tell us what your role is in this important group?

E: Well thank you for asking. I'm officially the committee chair for the Freedom Fund. As we all know freedom ain't free and so we are specifically charged with overseeing fundraising efforts for the branch the NAACP SLO Branch and also for a year-end gala to honor people who have been outstanding participants in community equality and diversity development.

A: Great. Yes I have heard about the Freedom Fund. Thank you for being part of NAACP and taking the leadership role. It's fun to volunteer for something like the library in my case or the NAACP in your case because they are so important for our community. So we were just talking before we began to record about what you have gained by being a user of the library. So can you tell us that story again about what you love about the library?

E: Well as a kid who was a little bit different than most of the kids in the neighborhood because I was always moving into a new neighborhood, I was able to find safe space within the library.

Nobody was trying to beat me up you know and I was able to use my curiosity to find out about things that interested me and one of those things was the internal combustion engine and I remember reading about that and seeing the diagram and everything just like it was yesterday and I ended up being in the car business for 30 years as a salesman and then I also took an interest in the undersea world and Jacques Cousteau who had just recently created the aqualung this is back in the 60s you know and so that was really fascinating to me that you could actually go under the sea and explore and I ended up getting into the diving navy for a little while when I was in the navy as a photographer also and did some underwater photography. So the library was really important for you in terms of career directions? It really sparked my curiosity in areas that I later as an adult explored and became part of my livelihood.

A: Yeah awesome that's great. So you have written this non-fiction book called *Black and Blue in Boston* and why and how did you decide to write this book?

E: Well it's kind of a long story but I'll try and condense it. I grew up in my formative years in Boston and as I was developing I remember reading a book called *Man Child in the Promised Land*. I really loved how he made me feel seen and that was a good feeling that someone could share that window into my world as a young black youth growing up in an inner city. I partially grew up on a basketball court called Ripley Road and it was like a real microcosm of Boston at that time in a developing city and one of my friends there another short basketball player like myself Joey Britt and I became good friends and years later we went our separate ways through the magic of the technology we reunited over Facebook and I noticed that Joey had just retired from the police department and I said oh there's a story there we talked it turns out it was a really rich story about his and my growing up in Boston during turbulent times where there was busing there was segregation there was you know neighborhoods that were in transition one minority group to

another there was you know all sorts of turmoil the drug epidemic of the 80s and Joey was in the midst of all of that and I was too except that he became a police officer and then he later on in his career became a decorated highly decorated police officer and detective in a major crimes unit and so he has these tremendous action-packed stories from his journey but it was also he was very forthcoming with his personal life and so it's a real 360 it's almost like a love letter to Boston and growing up as an urban youth and facing overcoming racism institutional racism because the way he became a police officer was because of a court order called a consent decree that forced the Boston police department to hire black police officers so he had to earn every bit of what he got as a police officer but it's also it's a I think an objective view of what it's like to be a police officer not just a black police officer and that's why I call it black and blue in Boston.

A: That's a really great story I write short article length non-fiction so what was your process for writing book length non-fiction? Do you outline?

E: This was like my very first attempt at writing a novel I had actually previously studied the screenplay format which actually did help me because you know there was so much action in the story that you know a lot of what screenplay writing is show don't tell so but then I had to really get into you know portraying characters and developing the character in writing and what the beauty of it was once again through technology even though Joey and I were 3,000 miles apart we could get on our computers and look at each other and talk and you know have some soul-searching conversations and I was able to record them go back and take and what I thought was the gems out of the conversations and put them in the book and so it became like a firsthand account as opposed to taking the fictional standpoint of you writing a story like this.

A: Wow what an interesting approach when did you publish?

E: December 2024. You might look at it some people look at it as ghost written but it was really my voice in his stories.

A: I would not consider that ghost written if you've written it and you were doing the interviewing you you were translating his story for readers so that's great. You have a background in photography and where did you get the idea though to just launch into writing a like writing a full book? What's your writing background?

E: Well it's interesting. I had always loved writing poetry from being a kid and then I wrote a few songs and so I had kind of I guess you could say a natural talent with words. I actually was a car salesman and so words were my stock of trade you know in terms of you know creating an image and you know being descriptive and so that was really important and what I did to keep a roof over my head so I think that's part and parcel but I think even from just the time I was a child I was always like a storyteller so I think it just who knows somewhere back in ancient history I was descended from a great griot however you say it and I like to think that who we are what we are is a collection of what our ancestors gifts gave us.

A: Nice that's nice okay I didn't prepare you for this last question but is there a book or an author it really got you excited about reading? Sometimes it's this is a hard question to answer.

E: No no no it's actually kind of easy I think the very first time I conceptualized the fact that I had deciphered these symbols on a piece of white paper was this little story or poem called *Mr. Nobody* and it like you know it related to me because it was like who left the screen door open Mr. Nobody who spilled the milk Mr. Nobody who you know did something else mischievous Mr. Nobody and that was me so I remember reading that and I was like they're talking about me. There is a very I must have been five years old...

A: I totally... when I was I think six that's when I was learning how to read and I learned I remember the moment when things started to click and you'll just always have that wonderful feeling of I have just found this amazing key to unlock all of these different doors.

E: Yeah it cracked the code yeah yeah it is really but *Man Child in the Promised Land* and Richard Wright's *Native Son* both of those books really impressed me a lot and then I used to love reading about the Renaissance era in Harlem and how Langston Hughes and you know so many notable you know W.E.B. Du Bois and you know just all of these black intellectuals who were in and amongst each other at rent parties and you know jazz clubs and how this was just this beautiful moment in time and I kind of experienced that in Atlanta Georgia where I lived and was among you know these really people who have become very successful in the arts and so it just always felt as though I didn't want to die with my flowers in me and I also wanted to extol Joey's flowers because you know for putting his life on the line which he literally did I mean you know knife fights with machetes people shooting at him him shooting people you know people jumping out of seven-story windows you know all that's in the book you know and it's like real life you know from the first time even as a kid that he saw a dead body you know in the neighborhood you know all of these like real seminal experiences that led him on a path to what he became as that protective but aggressive law officer who loved the chase and the challenge.

A: How interesting well thank you for giving us some background on your book and telling us a little bit about your writing process and we appreciate you joining us on the *We LOVE the Library* podcast. Thank you John.

E: You're quite welcome and I really appreciate your interest.

A: We hope you're learning more about your public library and enjoying our *We LOVE the Library* podcast. Next time for Black History Month part two we speak with a collection of brainiac black women. First we meet Sylvia Hensen. She's another NAACP leader with our local SLO County branch and chair of the education committee. She's involved with inspiring women and girls to pursue careers in STEM fields and like me she loves audiobooks.

Then we meet three students from Cal Poly who are members of the university's Black Student Union in a truly delightful conversation. They tell us about the books that inspired them to be lifelong readers and they explain their deep appreciation and affection for the public library. We'll also hear a poem by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. Black excellence for the win! If you want to participate in our pro library podcast send us an email: [Podcast@SLOLibraryFoundation dot org](mailto:Podcast@SLOLibraryFoundation.org). If you want to learn more about the SLO county library foundation if you want to buy some merch or if you want to make a donation visit our website at [SLOLibraryFoundation dot org](http://SLOLibraryFoundation.org). The next episode drops in two weeks. Thank you for listening and for helping support the public library the people's champion.