

# AT THE LIBRARY

Events and Happenings at the San Francisco Public Library

May 2020

Vol. 51 No. 5

Dear library community,



Even though our doors are closed right now, we want to take this time to honor the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and their history and traditions that make

the city of San Francisco so special.

The City has long been a destination for immigrants from Asia with world-renowned cultural heritage districts such as Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon and SOMA Pilipinas. San Francisco is also made up of people from Burma, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Pacific Islands, Singapore and Thailand, among others.

As the city's first Asian American city librarian, I take great pride in the fact that the Library is a key partner for the citywide APA Heritage Foundation. Within these pages are library books, films and virtual online programs that I hope will inspire you to engage, honor and learn more about our city's exceptionally rich heritage, this May and all year long.

Together, yet apart, let's continue to celebrate our community.

Sincerely,  
Michael Lambert  
City Librarian

## Take Part in Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month

**W**e are honored to bring APIA Heritage Month online with virtual events, eResources, film and book recommendations and connections to our partners and their range of educational and fun online content.

On May 14, the Library hosts authors Joy Ma, Katya Cengel and Sieu Sean Do in a panel discussion about overcoming the loss of cultural identity and trauma. Sieu Sean Do's work *A Cloak of Good Fortune: A Cambodian Boy's Journey From Paradise Through A Kingdom of Terror* traces one Cambodian child's coming of age from the idyllic, peaceful years of childhood in rural Cambodia through his family's forced exile by the Khmer Rouge. Katya Cengel's *Exiled: From the Killing Fields of Cambodia to California and Back* depicts the story of four families confronting deportation 40 years after the beginning of large-scale resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees in America following the fall of the genocidal Khmer Rouge. Lastly, check out Joy Ma's *The Deoliwallahs: The True Story of the 1962 Chinese-Indian Internment*. The book is the untold account of the internment of 3,000 Chinese-Indians after the Sino-Indian War in 1962.



From left: Joy Ma, Katya Cengel, Sieu Sean Do

Miss your monthly book group? The World Literature Book Club meets online on May 7 to discuss Kobo Abe's novel *The Box Man*, an original and bizarrely fascinating Kafkaesque fable about the nature of identity and the place of man in society. Additionally, we are partnering with Hoopla to bring you a special APIA city-wide read, *The Mountains Sing* by Nguyen Phan Que Mai. See page 2 for more details about the book and author.

In a unique presentation on May 13, Kristian Kabuay will discuss pre-Philippine scripts in the diaspora, which will investigate writing systems and their identity, value, history, economics, social impact and cultural context. Additionally, Kabuay gives an introduction to Baybayin calligraphy, covering its history, basic characters, stroke technique and translation methods.

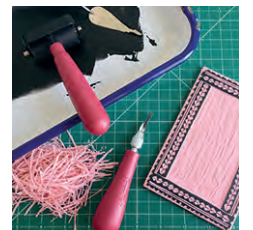
Catch our virtual storytime series, "Sweet Stories with SFPL," and listen for stories and songs from Asian American authors or Pacific Island folklore. Classic tales and fun stories set in varied landscapes such as lush tropical backgrounds and busy urban communities offer opportunities to learn about a different language and culture.

Furthermore, learn about Eskrima, the national martial art of the Philippines, with VSCK Visayan Style Corto Kadena Larga Mano Eskrima demonstrations online with @visayaneskrima on Facebook and Instagram. Discover Pasifika Print-Making by Afakasi Prints rooted in Pacific Islander culture, representation and art at [afakasiprints.com](http://afakasiprints.com) or @afakasiprints on Instagram. We look forward to sharing incredible local artists, performers and musicians with you this month.

Visit [sfpl.org/asian-pacific-islander-american-heritage-month](http://sfpl.org/asian-pacific-islander-american-heritage-month) for updates.



Kristian Kabuay



Pasifika Print-Making



Special thanks to Mayor Breed for reading one of our first Sweet Stories. Photo: Michael-Vincent D'Anella-Mercanti

## Settle In with Sweet Stories

**S**torytimes are the cornerstone of our early literacy programming at SFPL. Every week, children, caregivers and librarians gather for storytimes—cherished moments to sing, read, dance and learn something new.

In that spirit, you can now press play on the Library's storytime right in your home. Tune in to the Library's Instagram account (@sfpubliclibrary) every Tuesday and Thursday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 10 a.m. for "Sweet Stories with SFPL," a short video of songs, rhymes and a story to enjoy with your young children. On Saturdays, we offer Sweet Stories en español, read by our very own librarians.

Don't have Instagram? "Sweet Stories with SFPL" is also available on the Library's YouTube channel. Simply search for "San Francisco Public Library" in YouTube and click on the "Sweet Stories" playlist to view all available videos.

Replay Sweet Stories at your convenience and easily access them on any device wherever you might be. We encourage you to repeat them, as repetition is a great way for children—and grownups!—to learn the songs.

In addition to our regular schedule, on Fridays, look out for bonus editions of Sweet Stories featuring a guest reader, such as local City officials and authors. Special thanks to Mayor Breed for reading one of our first Sweet Stories and our very own City Librarian for sharing readings and favorite songs.

We love supporting the early learning of your children and encourage families to talk, read, sing, play and write, every day.



**Pro tip:** while you are together, help your child learn their letters by singing alphabet songs. Point out special letters that correspond with their name or names of family members. Give them tools to practice writing as their interest grows. It all starts with spending time together, and we hope you will continue to watch and learn with us each week.

## Fostering Creative Play at Home

**S**earching for fun and easy playtime ideas for children that don't require intense, hands-on preparation? Fundamental to early learning, play is entertaining and has cognitive, emotional and linguistic benefits. In addition, play helps children to develop gross and fine motor skills.

Look around your home for inspiration. Cereal and pasta boxes can turn into blocks: just empty and tape off the ends. Find items that nest like measuring cups. A variety of dry beans in the pantry are great for sorting, letter and counting practice. Colorful tools for writing—pens, pencils, crayons—encourage art and writing.

Even the recycling bin can yield creative supplies. Ever paint an egg carton in a pattern? Use the egg wells to hold beans? Improvise a 12-well egg carton to play mancala? Part of inspiring play in the young is being able to see everyday things through curious eyes, like those of children.

The Library supports families in enjoying playful moments together. Visit [sfpl.org/bigplaydate](http://sfpl.org/bigplaydate) to download your own copy of innovative, interactive play ideas inspired by our popular Big San Francisco Play Dates.





# Collections and Services


get social!

SFPL.ORG

 [facebook.com/sfpl.org](https://facebook.com/sfpl.org)

 [twitter.com/SFPublicLibrary](https://twitter.com/SFPublicLibrary)

 [instagram.com/sfpubliclibrary](https://instagram.com/sfpubliclibrary)

 [youtube.com/user/SanFranciscoLibrary](https://youtube.com/user/SanFranciscoLibrary)

## Learn and Relax at Home with eResources

While sheltering-in-place at home and armchair traveling, consider taking advantage of this time to build language skills. Mango Languages is an easy-to-use, interactive platform that offers more than 70 different languages. Popular choices include Japanese, German, Spanish (Latin America) and Mandarin. The immersive learning platform of Rosetta Stone offers 30 different languages, including Arabic, Filipino and Vietnamese. All of these eResources can be easily accessed via [sfpl.org](https://sfpl.org) under the "Research and Learn" tab.



Need to take a break from studying? Perhaps you'd like to peruse an eMagazine or eBook. We offer them on your digital device with a few easy steps. Try Flipster, RB Digital or Kono for magazines, or Overdrive, SimplyE or Axis 360 for the latest absorbing, escapist reads. Want to watch a movie or listen to music instead? We have Hoopla and Kanopy for that! Simply visit [sfpl.org](https://sfpl.org) and click on "Books & Media." Select "24/7 Virtual Library" to find all that we offer right from your device.

## APIA Month Reads

Enjoy book recommendations in recognition of Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month. We've created booklists for Kid Picks, Teens Picks, Adult Fiction, Adult Nonfiction and Adult Graphic Novels.

### Highlights:

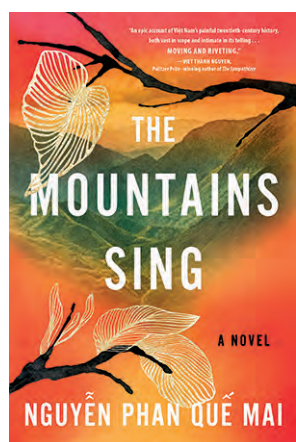
**Children** [sfpl.org/APIA-children](https://sfpl.org/APIA-children)



**A Different Pond**  
by Bao Phi  
A young boy in Minneapolis wakes early to fish with his father, who tells him about a similar pond in their homeland of Vietnam.



**Cilla Lee-Jenkins: Future Author Extraordinaire**  
by Susan Tan  
Cilla's quest to become a best-selling author finds her writing about her family traditions.



## Featured Book for APIA Month: *The Mountains Sing*

*The Mountains Sing* tells an enveloping, multigenerational tale of the Tran family, set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War. Tran Dieu Lan, who was born in 1920, was forced to flee her family farm with her six children during the Land Reform as the Communist government rose in the North. Years later in Hanoi, her young granddaughter, Huong, comes of age as her parents and uncles head off down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to fight in a conflict that tore not just her beloved country, but also her family apart.

Vivid, gripping and steeped in the language and traditions of Vietnam, *The Mountains Sing* brings to life the human costs of this conflict from the point of view of the Vietnamese people themselves, while showing us the true power of kindness and hope.

Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai is a Vietnamese poet and author of eight books. This is her first novel in English. Quế Mai is one of a relatively few authors now bringing Vietnamese literature to a wider English-speaking audience; her work offers a rare glimpse into this world.

This book is available for immediate check-out as an ebook or audiobook on Hoopla. For more staff recommendations on what to read during APIA Heritage Month, visit [sfpl.org/asian-pacific-islander-american-heritage-month](https://sfpl.org/asian-pacific-islander-american-heritage-month).

Join the Library for an exciting book club discussion of *The Mountains Sing*, Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m. Reservations required: <https://bit.ly/MntSingReg>



Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai

**Teen/Young Adult**  
[sfpl.org/APIA-teens](https://sfpl.org/APIA-teens)



**The House That Lou Built**  
by Mae Respicio

This big-hearted book follows Lou, who lives with her extended family in San Francisco, as she dreams of building a tiny house on land inherited from her deceased father.

**It's Not Like It's a Secret**



by Misa Sugiura

A story about being Asian, being in high school and living in the Bay Area.

**Outrun the Moon** by Stacey Lee



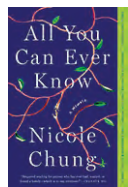
San Francisco, 1906: Fifteen-year-old Mercy Wong is determined to break from the poverty in Chinatown, and an education at St. Clare's is her best hope—except it's off-limits to all but the wealthiest white girls.

**Adult** [sfpl.org/APIA-fiction](https://sfpl.org/APIA-fiction)



**A River of Stars**  
by Vanessa Hua

Pregnant by her boss/lover, who sends her to America to give birth, Chinese factory clerk Scarlett Chen goes on the run from the maternity center with another mother-to-be.



**All You Can Ever Know**  
by Nicole Chung

A Korean adoptee who grew up with a white family in Oregon discusses her journey to find her identity as an Asian American woman and a writer after becoming curious about her true origins.



**Cook Korean!**  
by Robin Ha

A charming introduction to the basics of Korean cooking in graphic novel form, with 64 recipes, ingredient profiles and more, presented through light-hearted comics.

## Films to Download and Stream for APIA Heritage Month

We've selected a wide variety of films for APIA Heritage Month, all available on Kanopy or Hoopla. [sfpl.org/APIA-films-for-adults](https://sfpl.org/APIA-films-for-adults)

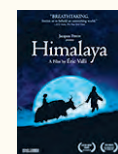
**Police Story** – This early Jackie Chan film (and Hong Kong action cinema classic) sees him framed for murder, forcing him to go on the run and prove his innocence.



**Mother and The Host** – You may recognize Bong Joon-ho as the director of Oscar winner *Parasite*; these are two of his previous films, *Mother* and *The Host*.



**Himalaya** – This breathtaking, Academy Award-nominated film tells the story of a generational struggle for the leadership of a tiny mountain village between its proud old chief and a headstrong young caravanner.



**Election** – Every two years the senior members of the oldest gang in Hong Kong elect an up-and-coming younger boss as their chairman. When the voting does not go how some people would have liked, lines are divided and a gang war begins to form. And if you like this film, its sequel, *Triad Election*, is also available.



**Hero** – A visually stunning epic, in which a fearless warrior seeking justice takes on the empire's most ruthless assassins.



**The Royal Tailor** – Amid the Joseon era of South Korea, two tailors square off over who can make more stunning clothes for royalty. Scandal, tragedy and a secret history begin to unfold amid the rivalry.

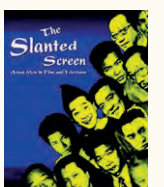


**Soul of a Banquet** – In this mouth-watering documentary, director Wayne Wang (*The Joy Luck Club*) profiles Cecilia Chiang as she relates her fascinating history and cooks up a sumptuous, once-in-a-lifetime banquet.



**CAAM** We've also created a separate list of films presented by our partner, the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM). [sfpl.org/APIA-caam-films](https://sfpl.org/APIA-caam-films)

**The Slanted Screen** – From filmmaker and late San Francisco public defender Jeff Adachi, *The Slanted Screen* explores the portrayals of Asian men in American cinema, chronicling the experiences of actors who have had to struggle against ethnic stereotyping and limiting roles.



Both Hoopla and Kanopy offer many films that feature Asian, Asian-American or Pacific Island Americans, as well as films from Asian and Pacific Island countries. These can be searched by language, film title, actors or directors. We hope you enjoy our selections and we encourage you to explore.





## Check Out Our Podcast!

The Library Friends Podcast is a way for you to get more connected with the Library.

Our latest episode, *The Future of Our Library: Inside Out*, is a presentation from City Librarian Michael Lambert and Executive Director of Friends of the Library Marie Ciepiela. They discuss Friends' Strategic Plan for the Library and the three upcoming renovations at the Mission, Chinatown and Oceanview Branches.

Find the podcast by searching "Library Friends Podcast" on your favorite podcasting app, or by going to [friendssfpl.org/Podcast](http://friendssfpl.org/Podcast).

## Friends Bookstore

### Locations & Hours

Check our website for exact locations, schedules and hours.

[FriendsSFPL.org](http://FriendsSFPL.org)

Phone: (415) 771-1076

Donation Center:  
1630 17th Street  
(415) 522-8606

## get social! *with Friends*

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Stay connected with all the latest happenings, events, and deals at Friends!  
[FriendsSFPL.org](http://FriendsSFPL.org)

## Profile:

# From Busy Librarian to the Front Lines of the COVID-19 Pandemic



Alan Wong, a librarian at the busy Excelsior Branch.

around 11 a.m., we have our groups who come in for storytime. We see nannies with strollers and young schoolchildren holding the little rope coming in. That's how you know it's almost lunchtime. Around 3 p.m., when schools let out, all the kids come pouring into our library. There are about ten schools around us, a mix of public and private, elementary, middle and a high school, so we get a large gathering of kids after school of all ages.

### What does your day look like now after COVID-19?

Before the mayor announced Shelter-in-Place, some Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) were already activated, and right now, I'm serving as a DSW. I go to the San Francisco Marin Food Bank, on 101, by Cesar Chavez. I'm with about 20 other Librarians, Techs, Pages, and we work together to pack bags of produce and food for those in need. We create an assembly line of products, like 50 pounds of potatoes and onions, boxes of apples and oranges, and bags of rice; then we go down the line and pack bags of produce for the public.

### How many other librarians are on the front lines with you?

We have a good amount of librarians serving as DSWs. At the food bank, I have coworkers from the West Portal, North Beach and Richmond Branches.

### Do you miss your patrons?

Yes, definitely. I haven't seen any of them, which worries me—not only my older patrons, but also my younger visitors whom I see every day after school. I miss them. Even though they're always sneaking chips and candy, it's normal for them to see me and then pretend not to see me as they sneak food, but that's all part of the fun.

### We hope the library can come back soon at its full capacity.

I'm very happy that everyone's using our online resources now, but once COVID-19 and the Shelter in Place order are over, I hope to see you all come into the branch.

For more of our interview with Alan Wong, as well as other Library workers, visit [FriendsSFPL.org/Voices](http://FriendsSFPL.org/Voices).

**A**lan Wong, a librarian at the busy Excelsior Branch, is currently mobilized as a Disaster Service Worker during the COVID-19 public health emergency. We spoke with Alan (via mobile phone) to learn about how librarians are helping the City of San Francisco during this turbulent time.

### What did your typical routine look like before COVID-19?

At the library, my day starts when the branch opens. We have our quiet time—that's when our regular patrons come in. I usually interact with our Chinese seniors, who come in to read our Chinese newspapers, or patrons who use the computer every day. Then,



The mission of Friends of the San Francisco Public Library is to create, steward and support a superior, free public library system in San Francisco. We are committed to raising the standard of excellence of our libraries by funding programs and services beyond what is allocated in the city's budget. We believe in free and equal access to information for all.

## Help Our Local Independent Bookstores Recover from COVID-19 Closures and Get 10% Off

Friends members (\$60+ level) receive a 10% discount at the following bookstores:

A. Cavalli Italian Bookstore ■ Academy Store, California Academy of Science ■ Adobe Bookstore ■ Alan Wofsy Fine Arts LLC ■ Alexander Book Co., Inc. ■ Alley Cat Books ■ Amazing Fantasy ■ The Beat Museum ■ Bibliohead Bookstore ■ Bibliomania ■ Bird & Beckett Books & Records ■ Black Oak Books Holding Corp. ■ Bolerium Books ■ Books, Inc. ■ Booksmith ■ Borderlands Books ■ Browser Books ■ Christopher's Books ■ Chronicle Books ■ Compass Books, Inc. ■ Dog Eared Books ■ Eastwind Books ■ Globus Slavic Bookstore ■ Great Overland Book Company ■ Green Apple Books & Music ■ The Green Arcade ■ Kayo Books ■ Louie Brothers Book Store, Inc. ■ Manning's Books & Prints ■ Marcus Book Stores ■ Omnivore Books on Food ■ Friends Bookstore: Fort Mason and Main Library ■ Red Hill Books ■ San Francisco Botanical Gardens, Garden Bookstore ■ Thidwick Books ■



# AT THE LIBRARY

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## May 2020

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Background images: *Shoshoku-shi: Decorative Papers of Japan*  
(San Francisco, 1967). Grabhorn Collection on the History of  
Printing and the Development of the Book, SFPL.

## Asian Pacific Islander American HERITAGE MONTH

*"Unless we know ourselves and our history,  
and other people and their history,  
there is really no way that we can  
really have positive kind of interaction  
where there is real understanding."*

- Yuri Kochiyama

*The San Francisco Public Library system is  
dedicated to free and equal access to information,  
knowledge, independent learning and the joys  
of reading for our diverse community.*

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Online version: [sfpl.org/atl](http://sfpl.org/atl)

### How to reach us

San Francisco Public Library  
100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102  
phone hours: Monday - Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
(415) 557-4400  
(415) 557-4433 (TTY)  
Public Affairs email: [publicaffairs@sfpl.org](mailto:publicaffairs@sfpl.org)  
Website: [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

During the library closure, staff are available to assist by  
email or phone (TIP Line) Monday - Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Online: Ask for eBook assistance or email [info@sfpl.org](mailto:info@sfpl.org)  
TIP Line: (415) 557-4400

### eBook Assistance:

[sfpl.org/books-and-media/ebook-collections](http://sfpl.org/books-and-media/ebook-collections)

### Frequently Asked Questions:

[sfpl.libanswers.com](http://sfpl.libanswers.com)

### Libraries Closed

All locations and bookdrops of the San Francisco  
Public Library are currently closed to help limit  
the spread of COVID-19. Find the latest on our  
response to the virus here: [sfpl.org/coronavirus](http://sfpl.org/coronavirus).  
Check back for updates on our reopening date. Visit  
[sfpl.org/books-and-media/your-virtual-library-open](http://sfpl.org/books-and-media/your-virtual-library-open)  
for our 24/7 Virtual Library.

## VIRTUAL LIBRARY EVENT CALENDAR

### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### Introduction to Baybian Calligraphy with Kristian Kabuay

Wednesday, May 13,  
7 p.m. on Zoom

In a unique presentation,  
Kristian Kabuay will discuss  
pre-Philippine scripts in  
the diaspora and introduce  
Baybayin calligraphy, covering  
its history, basic characters,  
stroke technique and  
translation methods.

#### APIA Author Panel: Overcoming Loss of Identity and Trauma

Thursday, May 14,  
6 p.m.

Authors, Joy Ma, Katya Cengel,  
Sieu Sean Do will discuss  
their books, and the common  
thread which unites them,  
loss of identity and trauma  
through cultural violence.

The meeting link will be sent  
the day of the event.

Reservations required:  
[https://bit.ly/  
APIAauthorpanel20](https://bit.ly/APIAauthorpanel20)

### BOOK CLUBS

#### World Literature: *The Box Man* by Kobo Abe

Thursday, May 7, 6 p.m.

*The Box Man* is also available  
using the Internet Archives',  
National Emergency Library.  
The title may be checked out  
for 14 days.

The World Literature Book  
Club will be an online event  
until further notice, using the  
Zoom platform.

The meeting link will be sent  
the day of the event.

Reservations required:  
<https://bit.ly/TheBoxMan>

#### On the Same Page: *The Mountains Sing*

Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m.

We partner with hoopla  
Digital to bring you a special  
APIA/Shelter in Place edition  
of our On the Same Page  
city-wide read.

The meeting link will be sent  
the day of the event.

Reservations required:  
<https://bit.ly/MntSingReg>

### JOBS AND CAREERS

#### Career Coaching

Tuesdays in May and June  
5:30–7:30 p.m.

Thursdays in May and June  
3–5 p.m.

Work with a career coach who  
can help you identify goals, find  
your passion and guide you  
through job search, interview,  
resumes and career change.

Each session is 30 minutes. This  
will be an online event, using  
the Zoom platform. The link for  
the event will be sent the day  
of your appointment. To make  
an appointment, please go to  
[https://bstjobscareers.  
youcanbook.me/](https://bstjobscareers.youcanbook.me/)

### EARLY CHILDHOOD, FAMILY

#### Sweet Storytimes with SFPL

Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
2–2:15 p.m.

Fridays, 2–2:15 p.m.  
with Special Guests

Saturdays, 10–10:15 a.m.  
en español

Watch on IGTV@sfpubliclibrary  
or on the San Francisco  
Public Library YouTube  
channel.

Please check our event calendar for additional  
programs: [sfpl.org/events](http://sfpl.org/events)



San Francisco Public Library