

CheckItOut!

Winter 2008



Promises Made, Promises Kept

*Solano County Library
Keeps Its Promise to
Supporters of*

MEASURE B

Newsletter of the Solano County Library, serving the cities of Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun, Vacaville, and Vallejo

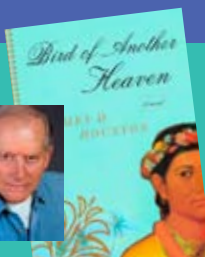


*Remembering
Solano
County:*
**Jack
Hopkins**

**Best of
2008**
*Top Reads You
Won't Want
to Miss!*



**Jean
Wakatsuki
Houston
and
James D.
Houston**





Promises Made, Promises Kept

Ten years ago, Solano County Library was imploding. Like many other library systems in the state, Solano had been on a downward spiral for a number of years, slashing budgets for books and materials and cutting hours. We were facing the real possibility of closing branches. This steady decline in service was the result of the state shifting local property tax dollars, the Library's

“Those of us who use and work in our libraries are grateful every day to the voters of Solano County and the value they place in their public library. We honor that trust by providing the services people voted for and work to do so in a competent, friendly and accessible manner.”

main source of funding, away from local government. All the Library's branches were closed on Fridays, only two were open on Sunday and on many days library branches did not open until noon or later. It was confusing and frustrating to remember what time the library opened in any given city on any given day. The budget for books and other materials was shrinking and further cuts were inevitable.

In 1998, Solano voters stepped forward and showed how much they supported their local libraries by voting and

passing Measure B with more than a two-thirds vote. Measure B added an eighth of a penny sales tax for Solano County and dedicated the amount entirely to Solano County's public libraries. In 2014 the measure will expire unless it is renewed.

According to Library Director, Ann Cousineau, “Those of us who use and work in our libraries are grateful every day to the voters of Solano County and the value they place in their public library. We honor that trust by providing the services people voted for and work to do so in a competent, friendly and accessible manner.”



“ Measure B resuscitated

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When the proposal was put on the ballot, library leaders promised more hours, more services for children, and more books and other materials. Every year the Library's success in making good on that 1998 promise is celebrated with the motto, "Promises Made, Promises Kept."

Since 1998, that one-eighth of a cent in dedicated sales tax for our libraries has:

- **Increased the hours at all of the branches, with a total of 94 percent more hours. Five of eight libraries are open seven days a week.**
- **Increased book, magazine, best seller, recorded books, DVD and music purchases, from \$432,000 to over \$2.2 million**
- **Quadrupled the programs for children and teens, as well as adults and seniors.**

In addition to supporting the Library with tax dollars, Solano residents vote with their feet and fingers every day. Solano County Library branches record more than a million and a half visitors a year and check out nearly 3 million items. They visit in person and take advantage of new online services that make the Library more convenient. Solano residents use the Library's award-winning web site as a "virtual branch." Online tutors, e-books, online "holds" and e-mail alerts are just a few examples of the "one-stop shopping" experience they get for free.

In just a few short years, the Library has moved off life support to renewed energy and vigor. Two new libraries have been built in Fairfield and Vacaville. The Suisun City Library recently moved from cramped quarters in leased space to its own facility and a new role as a joint public school library. In addition to these three new buildings, all five of the other branches have been updated – from gutting and remodeling the Fairfield Civic Center and Springtowne libraries, to more gentle renovations of the John F. Kennedy and Vacaville Cultural Center libraries. The facelift of the Rio Vista Library will be completed this spring. These new and renovated buildings, many featuring computer centers and meeting rooms, are the latest accomplishments of a 20-year plan to build and renovate libraries in the five cities served by Solano County Library.

The eighth of a penny sales tax makes it possible to operate these new and expanded libraries.

Cousineau, the architect of the Library's growth since 1993, explains:

"Measure B resuscitated our Library. The promises that were made are at the heart of all we do."

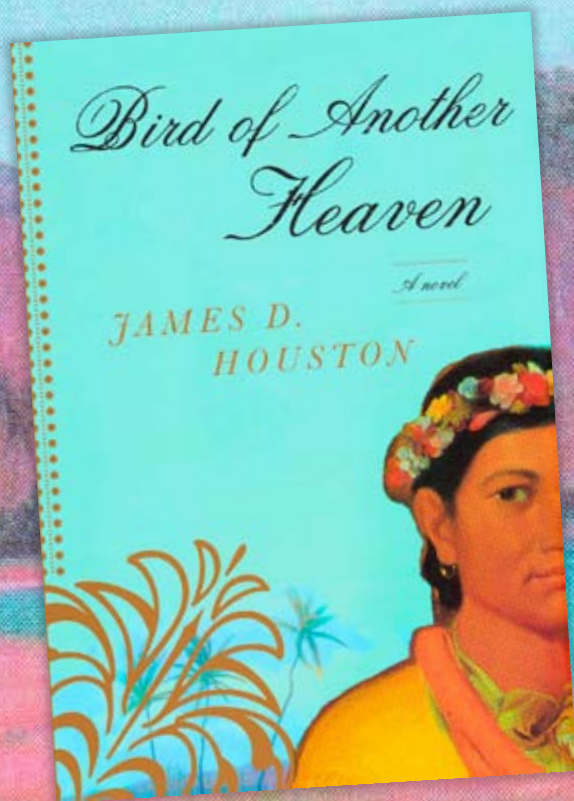


Exploring Women's Roles in California

Monday, January 26, 2009

Vacaville
Performing Arts Theatre

6:30 p.m. *Doors open at 6:00 p.m.*



Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston in conversation, exploring women's roles in California, both historically and in the authors' imaginations.

Admission is free.

Sponsored by Solano County Library and Solano County Library Foundation. Made possible by the generous contribution of the Solano County Women's History Month Committee, under the leadership of Jennifer Barton. Book signing (Bounty Books) to follow.

Living History

It took Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston more than twenty years before she could talk about her childhood years spent in a Japanese American internment camp during World War II. Her husband, James D. Houston, knew her story needed to be told, and their groundbreaking work about the experience was born. The result, *Farewell to Manzanar*, has been read by tens of thousands of young people and adults since its initial publication in 1973 and is currently in its 70th printing.

This stunning memoir personalizes a tragic chapter in our country's history and continues to resonate with today's readers. In their afterword to the 2002 edition, the authors reflected on how Jeanne's story can be connected to today's "new" Americans. They say, "As our society becomes ever more diverse, more and more people bring their own immigrant experience to the reading." The universality of one family's story cannot be underestimated.

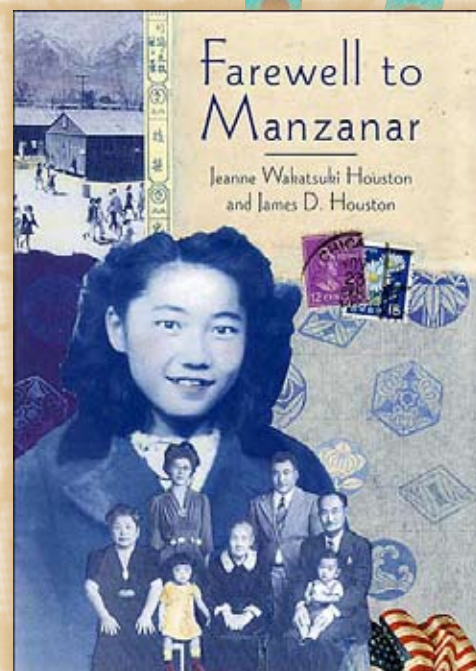
Beyond this, Jeanne and Jim have each carved out independent writing paths. They have explored strong women characters from California history and their own imaginations, creating memorable historical novels. Jim's novel about the ill-fated Donner Party, *Snow Mountain Passage*, brings Sally Reed and her family right into our hearts again. His *Bird of Another Heaven* sweeps us away from the Bay Area across the Pacific to historic Hawaii. Jeanne's novel, *The Legend of Fire Horse Woman*, introduces us to three generations of Japanese American women in the first half of the 20th century.

Well-known in literary circles, the two authors received an Emmy nomination and the Humanitas Prize for the teleplay of *Farewell to Manzanar*. Among other awards, Jeanne has received the prestigious Wonder Woman Award, given to women over forty who have made outstanding achievements in pursuit of truth and positive social change. Jim's work has earned numerous honors, including a Wallace Stegner Fellowship at Stanford, an NEA Writing Grant, and two American Book Awards.

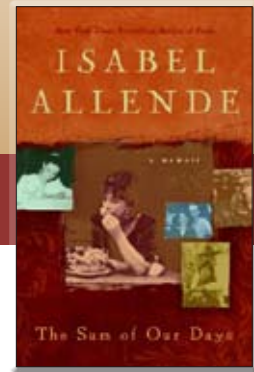
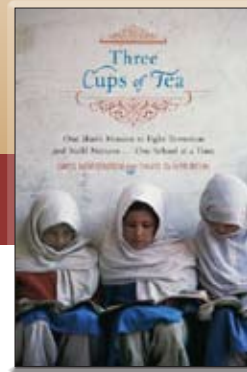
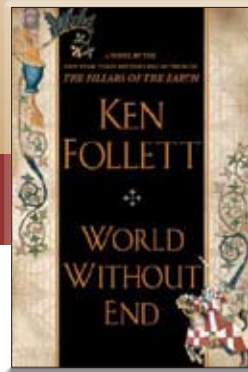
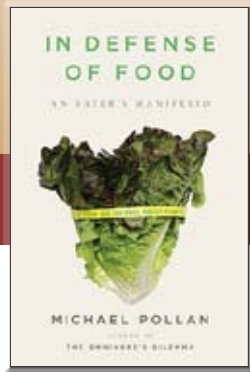
Solano County Library, Solano County Women's History Month Committee and Solano County Library Foundation are proud to bring this dynamic couple to the Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre on the evening of January 26, 2009. Join us as they reflect on their writing careers and share with the audience some of the exciting historical figures they have been drawn to. What stories do you have to tell? Perhaps their stories will inspire you to share with your loved ones, too.

This very special author event is made possible thanks to the generous contributions by the Solano County Women's History Month Committee, under the leadership of Jennifer Barton. There is no charge. Bring your family, your students, and your book group. The Houstons will speak at 6:30 pm; there will be a book signing, courtesy of Bounty Books, afterwards. What a provocative and stimulating way to start off 2009!

By Teresa Jacobsen, Supervising Librarian for Training and Virtual Services



Best of



I found

a shocking statistic online. In the course of a year there are close to 300,000 titles published, about 50,000 fiction. I admit I am woefully unable to keep up with even the fiction part of the list, which piles up at about 130 titles per day. Talk about being behind in your work!

Nevertheless, having read less than a tenth of one percent of what is out there, I have a few selections to recommend. I apologize for some being published in 2007. They remained on bestseller lists of 2008, so I gave myself permission to include them.

Non-fiction often surprises me by being as engaging as fiction and is sometimes wonderfully informative as well. Two of the best I read lately are Michael Pollan's *In Defense of Food* and Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal Vegetable Miracle*. Both address the issues around

food safety, sustainability and wholesomeness, which are important to consider since they influence our health and that of the planet. Kingsolver set herself the task of eating only food produced within a certain radius of her home, and with her family did a prodigious amount of work gardening so they would have the variety of things they liked.

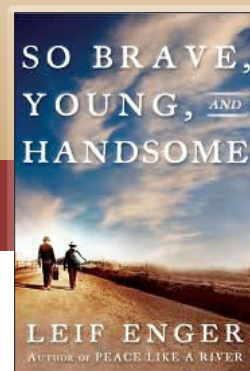
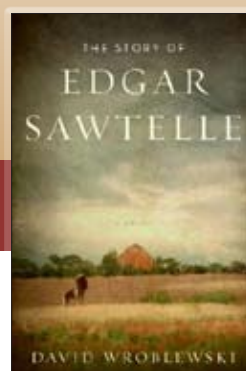
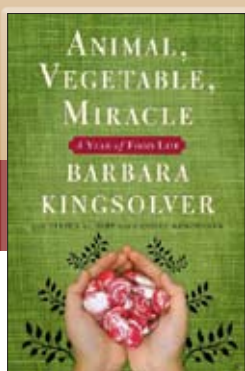
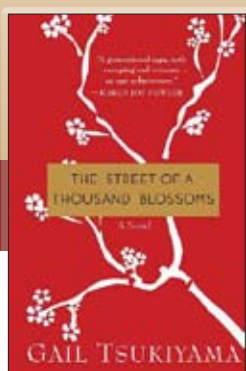
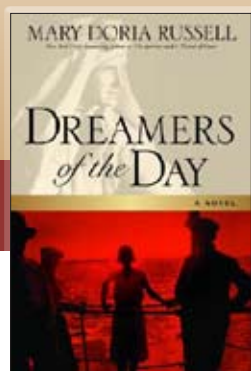
I may be an easy mark for stories of people who, like Kingsolver, take on a challenge because I also felt *Three Cups of Tea* was a must-read. Greg Mortenson, the hero (and that's not at all too strong a word for him), made a pledge to build a school for a remote Himalayan village after the locals took care of him on a trek. This was not an easy task and he seemed to be risking his life many times in the course of his effort to fulfill his pledge. He persevered and has been called to a life work of building schools in Pakistan

and Afghanistan, two places where this makes a profound difference. He has my vote for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Another real winner from this year's crop is Isabel Allende's *The Sun of Our Days*, which is written as a summary of her family events since the death of her daughter Paula several years ago. The stories of her family are very melodramatic, including the birth of a very sickly infant to a drug-addicted step-daughter, her own marital traumas and those of her children. She somehow wades through everything and provides some philosophical views about life that are compelling and useful.

In this area of memoir David Sedaris is a regular entrant. He leans toward self deprecation and the appreciation of the absurd in himself and in life generally. His *When You are Engulfed in Flames* carries on the sometimes hilarious, sometimes poignant tales of his life's adventures.

2008



In the fiction world, as a member of two book groups, I gravitate toward books which are meaty enough to generate discussion. Yes, I did read *World Without End* and *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* before they were selected by Oprah. Edgar Sawtelle had a classically tragic ending, but featured such imaginative, thoughtful writing that I have to recommend it heartily. The story revolves around a family that breeds, raises and trains dogs and author Wroblewski gives some very insightful and poetic descriptions of dog perception and thought.

World without End is a remarkable fictional tale of Kingsbridge and the priory which was constructed in Follett's earlier *Pillars of the Earth*. Set in the 14th century, tales of peasants, knights, monks, healers, inventors and more are woven into a believable tapestry of a long gone time.

On an ongoing basis I have some favorite authors whose new work I always try to find and read. Three of these are Leif Enger, Mary Doria Russell and Gail Tsukiyama. Enger's new entry, *So Brave, Young, and Handsome*, features distinctive roguish characters who go on a wild romp in the Old West. This one should be a movie.

Mary Doria Russell, having ranged into science fiction and historical fiction with success, this year produced *Dreamers of the Day*, the story of a forty-year-old woman who has lost her family in the influenza epidemic after World War I. She decides she must get out of town and decides Egypt would be interesting. She meets Lawrence of Arabia, Churchill and others who are gathered to draw lines in the Middle East to form the countries that have been uncomfortably squabbling ever since.

The Street of a Thousand Blossoms is Gail Tsukiyama's recent novel set in Japan around World War II, tracing the story of two brothers and the grandparents who raised them as they survive the traumas of war. One brother becomes a sumo champion, the other an artisan making masks for the Noh theater, so there is a great deal of cul-

tural information about these uniquely Japanese topics.

While none of us can keep up with the flood of new books, at least by sharing our reading favorites we may be able to read some of the best that are being produced. If you need recommendations about books new or old, your library is a resource worth exploring.

More Good Books from 2008

Stephen L Carter	Palace Council
Michael Connelly	Brass Verdict
Robert Crais	Chasing Darkness
Ivan Doig	The Eleventh Man
Julia Glass	I See You Everywhere
Beth Gutcheon	Goodbye and Amen
David Guterson	The Other
Joanne Harris	The Girl with No Shadow
Henning Mankell	Eye of the Leopard
Haruki Murakami	What I Talk About When I Talk About Running

To celebrate Older Americans Month, Solano County Library sponsored a project in April 2008 called Remembering Solano County. The library collected and documented the stories of residents who were school-age children or teenagers living in Solano County during the 1930s and 1940s. Interviews were conducted by students and volunteers from Fairfield, Rio Vista, Vacaville and Vallejo. Read more in the news section at solanolibrary.com



Sheldon Oil Softball Team



Jack Hopkins

By Cayla, Armijo High School

John, or Jack, Hopkins has been living in Fairfield since February 28, 1922, the day he was born. He attended Fairfield Grammar School, and then Armijo High School, graduating in 1940 with a class of 57 students. The average classroom at Armijo had only about 20 students at a time, compared to today's averages nearing 35.

Jack clearly remembers some of his teachers, like Ms. Carlson, the language teacher; Mr. Spawn, the biology teacher,

who Jack described as "a lot of fun"; and Coach Bailey, "a very good coach".

Jack recalled a lot of the best times during his high school career. He remembers the fashions of the time: corduroy pants were "the big things in those days." He remembered how he and his classmates enjoyed passing the time the best. Jack was never really one for music, he was more of the sports loving kid. There wasn't anything like Little League back then so how did he and his companions exercise their love of sports? Why, they played ball in the

streets! Jack later went on to join Armijo's basketball, football and track teams. When they weren't playing sports to pass the time during the school year, Jack and his friends would either go to the movies for only 10¢, sometimes free because he knew the people that worked there, or go skating in Suisun.

During the summer, Jack got a job working in the valley cutting and drying fruit. Getting a job back then was a lot simpler than it is now. When Jack was in high school, everybody knew everybody in Fairfield. Jack knew the guy who worked at the fruit place and he needed someone to work for him so he asked Jack, who said yes, and the rest is history. No paperwork, no grade check, nothing. Just a simple question and an even simpler answer.

Jack had a pretty simple childhood. His father died when Jack was only 5 years old, so he was raised mostly by his mother. Naturally, they were really close. Jack has nothing but fond memories of his mother, who he described as being a "good lady." He recalls her working hard at both her

Texas Street, circa 1920



job at CP Packaging and at raising three kids by herself. As a child Jack remembers getting sicknesses that were not uncommon, like the measles and whooping cough, but he never went to the hospital. Back then most families had their doctors make house calls, which was the case for Jack's family. It only cost a dollar for both the visit and the treatment. This is just one of many examples of how Fairfield has changed, and Jack has been here for the last 86 years to witness these changes firsthand.

Most of the buildings Jack grew up around and spent his time in are no longer standing. The most important of these buildings was his first home which PG&E dismantled a number of years ago. Of course downtown still has many of the same buildings from way back when, but a lot of them have changed. For example, Jack remembers doing his grocery shopping in the store that is now Joe's Buffet, and going to see movies at a theater that is now Pepperbelly's.

More than just the establishment has changed around here. Fairfield back then was definitely a smaller, safer and quieter place to live. According to Jack, you'd have a hard time just counting 1,000 people living here then compared to the current population of about 100,000. The crime rate was so low that it was practically nonexistent. There was only need for one policeman in the entire town, and whenever someone needed help with something, or had a problem they would go up to the Solano sign and press a button which would then set off a light atop the sign, alerting the officer. Jack couldn't even recall any major crimes ever occurring.

The thing he misses most about Fairfield is that everyone knew everyone. There were no street signs back then, so if someone needed directions, he or she would just ask a fellow resident or neighbor and they'd tell them the way by listing off people's houses instead of street names. Directions like "Make a left at the Johnson's house, then keep straight until you get to the Lindons" were common.

Not all the changes are bad though. The only bad change Jack could think of was that "Fairfield's gotten too big." With size came a lot of beneficial things, like the addition of Travis Air Force Base, which Jack actually said was "the biggest" change, and Armijo's football field, which he said was the "best improvement". All in all, even though Jack misses the familiarity and quiet of the old Fairfield, he has adjusted well to the new and ever-changing Fairfield.



Track Team



Texas Street, circa 1940





Auto Repair Reference Center

How many times have you wished you could solve every problem to come your way all by yourself? When it comes to vehicle problems, most of us aren't equipped with the right knowledge to dive into the project without the help of a professional. Solano County Library understands this need and is now offering a database geared completely to do-it-yourself auto repairs!



Auto Repair Reference Center (ARRC) is one of the new databases added to Solano County Library's collection, and it covers approximately 25,000 different vehicles from 1954 to the present. After selecting the year of your model, you are given a list of different makes, and then taken to a list of models.

After finding your specific make and model, there are lists of options you can pursue. Repair topics include: repair procedures, service bulletins and recalls, wiring diagrams, specifications, and maintenance levels. Chances are, if your vehicle's problem is not addressed on the list provided for your make and model, seeking professional help would be in your best interest.

Auto Repair Reference Center offers more than 65,000 technical service bulletins and recalls issued by the original equipment manufacturer, as well as wiring diagrams for easy viewing and printing. Labor cost is one of the highest priced items in car repair, and by doing this work you'll save yourself money. ARRC includes a labor time guide and estimator in the event that you do need to take your car to a professional.

by Victoria Pena, Public Relations Intern



Foreclosure Author in Vallejo and Vacaville in January

The No. 1 topic of conversation in the news and around the office today and tomorrow? Foreclosures. They rose in the U.S. by over 79 percent last year – and over two million more are expected in the next two years. In the last twelve months in Solano County, 62 percent of homes have been sold at a loss.

Stephen Elias, author of *The Foreclosure Survival Guide* will appear at the John F. Kennedy Library in Vallejo on Wednesday, January 14, at 7 p.m. and at the Vacaville Public Library-Cultural Center on Thursday, January 15, at 7 p.m.

Elias is a practicing lawyer who has helped hundreds keep their homes or come out of foreclosure financially sound. He will discuss ways that people facing foreclosure can make the the best decisions possible:

- What to expect from foreclosure
- Whether it's worth trying to keep the house
- Walking away from a house with money in hand
- Building liquidity
- Uncovering unseen resources
- Using Chapter 7 bankruptcy to buy time
- Using Chapter 13 bankruptcy to save a home
- "Last resort" strategies if all else fails

The Foreclosure Survival Guide will be available for purchase and signing at these events.



This book is one of many Nolo Press e-books that guide the reader past the legal tangles of life's big events. Nolo books are written in easy to understand language and cover answers to all kinds of everyday legal questions, whether they involve personal or business matters.

Solano County Library Awarded Two Grants Totaling \$30,000

Solano County Library has received two grants totaling \$30,000 from the Library Services and Technology Act. The purpose of the Transforming Life After Fifty (TLAF) grant for \$20,000 is to find ways to more effectively meet the needs and engage the interests of the county's growing population of Baby Boomers. A Digital Storytelling Station grant for \$10,000 will be used to record the stories of Solano residents and publish them on the web.

The Baby Boomer generation, individuals born between 1946 and 1964, is expected to grow more than twice as fast as California's total population, increasing to 8.5 million people by 2020. Solano County Library, one of 24 California libraries to receive the TLAF grant, will use the funds to improve Web-based communication tools. The grant will also fund training for staff in outreach methods, in order to introduce the county's Baby Boom demographic to new services provided by the library.

The Library was also one of 18 California libraries to receive a Digital Storytelling Station grant. Along with \$10,000 the Library has received video and audio recording equipment to implement a local digital story station. This program helps the library engage people of all ages and diverse cultures in creating digital stories on the history of Solano County and California, and to make them available on the Web. The first project for the Digital Story Station will be to record personal stories from the decade of the 50s. If you are interested in recording your story call 1-866-57-ASKUS.



For several years, extra-help librarian Michael Senturia has been writing music for a variety of ensembles. His new work, *Petra for Chamber Orchestra*, will receive its first performance with the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra, Tim Smith, Director, Sunday evening February 15, 2009, 7:30 p.m. at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. Tickets are available through the Leshner Center box office (925) 943-7469. Senturia is known for the Sunday concert series he organized when he was a librarian at the John F. Kennedy Library in Vallejo. Before becoming a librarian, from 1962-1992 he was on the music faculty and Director of the University Symphony at the University of California, Berkeley.



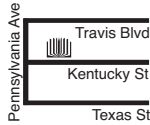
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FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

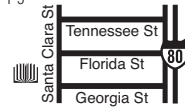
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SUN: 1-5



VALLEJO- JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

505 SANTA CLARA ST • VALLEJO, CA 94590

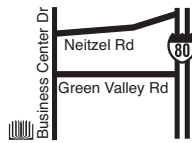
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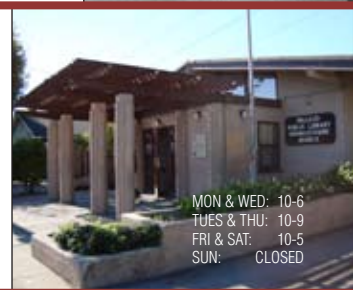
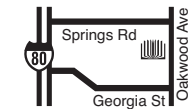
5050 BUSINESS CENTER DR
FAIRFIELD, CA 94534

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VALLEJO-SPRINGS- TOWNE LIBRARY

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SUISUN CITY LIBRARY

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SUITE 280
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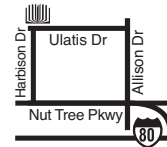


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FRI & SAT: 10-5
SUN: CLOSED



VACAVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY- CULTURAL CENTER

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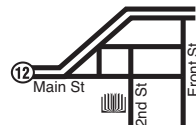
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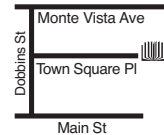
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FRI & SAT: 10-5
SUN: CLOSED



VACAVILLE TOWN SQUARE LIBRARY

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