

FRIENDS



OF LOS GATOS LIBRARY

Friends of
Los Gatos
Library

Off The Shelf

Meet Bestselling Author Alka Joshi on November 4

Alka Joshi, author of the novels *The Henna Artist* and *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur*, will talk about her books and her writing career in a Friends Zoom presentation on November 4 at 11 a.m.

The Henna Artist, the first novel in a trilogy, tells the story of Lakshmi who at age 17 runs away from an arranged, abusive marriage, leaving her 1950s rural village to make her own way in the city of Jaipur. She becomes a much-in-demand henna artist and confidante to upper-caste women, as she shapes her destiny in post-colonial India. Alka says, "I'm passionate about women's agency in life, especially in patriarchal cultures. It's important that I could imbue my writing with so many things I believe in."

Born in India, Alka came to the U.S. at age 9. After earning an undergraduate degree at Stanford, she worked for 30 years in marketing. Her husband, author Bradley Jay Owens, urged her to try writing fiction, pointing out that the ads and commercials she was crafting were really tiny stories. Encouragement from her instructors in evening writing classes led her to spend two years pursuing an MFA at California College of the Arts. *The Henna Artist* was her master's thesis.

Upon publication, this debut novel quickly became a *New York Times* bestseller and a Reese Witherspoon Book Club pick, and is being translated into 23 languages. It is being developed as a limited television miniseries for Netflix.

While it took 10 years of research and many trips to India to develop her master's project into her first publishable book, Alka's second novel, *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur*, was released just 15 months after the first. "I had

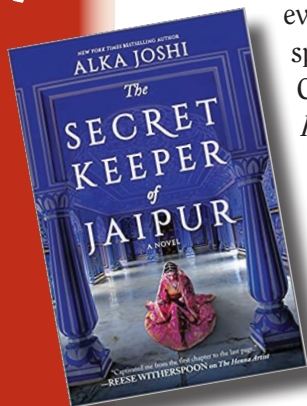
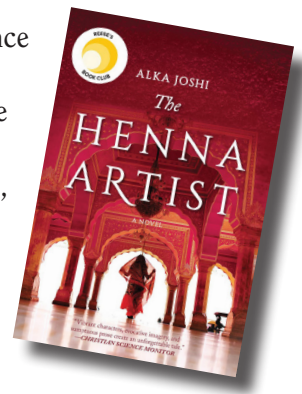
to cut 150 pages from my first manuscript," she explains, "so I had a lot of information about the characters and their futures, making it easier to write subsequent books."

At the time of this interview, Alka was preparing to leave her home in Monterey to travel to France and Spain where she will research perfume-making for the final book of her trilogy.

In the year and a half since *The Henna Artist* was published, Alka has made Zoom presentations to people all over the world, including members of 570 book clubs. Estimating that she's talked to 6,000 people, Alka says, "It's a lot of work to promote a book, but COVID and Zoom made it a bit easier." We're glad that Zoom makes it possible for her to speak to the Friends! 🌿



Photo: Gerry Babay, 2021



SAVE THE DATE

When: November 4, 2021 11:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Topic: FOL Author Talk: Alka Joshi

Use this link or QR to join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81714680278?pwd=dXd5cDd6by9YOVVkbm9rMytLMzY3UT09>

Passcode: 170474

or Telephone:

USA 215 861 0674 US Toll

USA 888 398 2342 US

Toll-free

Conference Code: 589749



Fall
2021



President's Message

by Mary Brence Martin

Autumn, not January, has always been the beginning of a new year for me from the time I started first grade at age 5. (My tiny mountain school had no kindergarten back then.) Even though my schooldays and my kids' schooldays are long gone, I still feel the sense of anticipation and excitement that a new school year brings when the air turns crisp and the annual onslaught of pumpkin spice begins.

The start of a new year for the Friends of Los Gatos Library brings that same feeling of anticipation and excitement. We kicked off this fall with a booth at the Chamber of Commerce's successful end-of-summer celebration on Labor Day Weekend. Volunteers staffing the booth gave out candy and coupons for 50 percent off the already low prices in our bookstore.

Speaking of the bookstore ... with the easing of some COVID restrictions, masked customers can visit our bookstore and the lobby shop in the library, all the proceeds of which support library programming for people of all ages. The store is very ably managed by Marlene Rodman and staffed with a loyal crew of volunteers. Behind the scenes, Tom Atkinson manages the Amazon sales and the sorting room where hundreds of books are processed each week. (If you're interested in joining this fun team or donating gently used books, see the article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

And speaking of books... mark your calendars for Nov. 4 when popular author Alka Joshi will discuss the art of writing and her books *The Henna Artist* and *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur* in what promises to be a fascinating Zoom presentation. I had the pleasure of talking with Alka recently, and can't wait to hear more about her path to the best-seller list and being chosen as Reese Witherspoon's May 2020 book club selection. Many thanks to Alyce Parsons who finds such amazing speakers for the Friends.

If you're interested in learning more about the Friends, you're welcome to attend our board meetings which are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m. We will now be holding hybrid meetings, both in person and on Zoom. If you're interested in attending, contact us at friendsoflglib@aol.com. 🌿

Hoping to see you soon!

Meet the Staff: Francisco Vargas

If there's a tech problem or question in the library, Francisco Vargas is your go-to guy! As Los Gatos Library's technology specialist, he takes care of the website, the catalog, computers for staff and patrons and all the new technology such as 3D printers, laser-cutters and virtual reality. He also does graphic design for the library and has been very helpful to the Friends by creating posters and other materials and posting pictures of special items on Facebook.

The Friends sorting-room volunteers also appreciate that Francisco often restocks the book-sale shelves just inside the library's front door and sometimes helps with collecting book donations at the back door. When book donation was by appointment only, he used the library's reservation software for that end.

Francisco says, "The best part of my job is helping people with technology. Sometimes it's as easy as getting them

their first audiobook on their smartphone or helping them finish a computer project. I bounce around the library all day long meeting new people and helping wherever I can."

Formerly a librarian in San Mateo County and at Long Beach Public Library, Francisco graduated in 2005 from library school at the University of Arizona through a program called Knowledge River which at the time was only for Native Americans and Latinos. He has been at our library for just over a year, and loves living in Los Gatos. On his days off, he enjoys riding his bike, running the trails and being in nature. 🌿



The Only Bookstore in Town!

One of the best-kept secrets in Los Gatos is the Friends of the Library Bookstore at 110 E. Main Street right next door to New Museum Los Gatos (NUMU) and the fountain. Currently it's the only



Book donations are accepted at the side door of the library by Tom Atkinson and Sue Tuttle. Tom is the treasurer for the Friends as well as manager of the sorting room, and Sue was co-facilitator of the organization last year.

bookstore in town, and it offers thousands of books, many of which are like new and cost only \$1.

If you don't have time to walk up the ramp or stairs to the bookstore, check out the selection on the Friends shelves just inside the front door of the library. You can make purchases here whenever the library is open. Often, there is a themed selection of special books displayed in this "lobby shop."

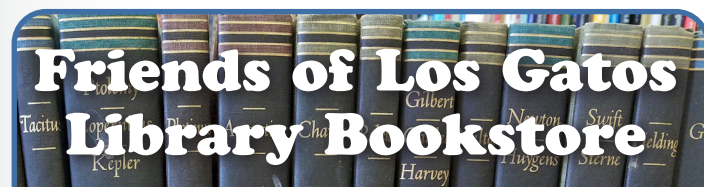
All money made in the bookstore goes to support the library's programs for community members of all ages. These include story times, activities for teens, adult book clubs, a best-seller collection, family programs, summer reading contests, support for the local history archives and more. 🌿



Library patrons can browse this "lobby shop" just inside the library entrance.



Friends board members Brian Skulman and Cheryl McKenzie, who is the group's publicity chair, took a stint staffing the Friends of the Library booth at the end-of-summer town party sponsored by the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 4. The aim was to publicize the Friends Bookstore by giving out coupons for 50 percent off one total purchase in the store.



Friends of Los Gatos Library Bookstore

110 E. Main St., Los Gatos
(up the stairs near the fountain)

Open

1-5 p.m.

Wednesday through Sunday

Donations

Donate up to 100 lightly used books and DVDs at one time, Tuesdays Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. Bring them to the side door at the left of the library (*not* to the bookstore), 100 Villa Avenue, Los Gatos.

Volunteers

The bookstore is an all-volunteer effort. If you are interested in sorting books, doing Amazon sales or staffing the store, please complete an application form which you can pick up in the bookstore.

Be Part of What We Do!

We know you like libraries if you're reading this! So here are a few ways you can help your library by becoming part of the Friends of the Library:

- **You can volunteer.**
- **You can donate cash.** This only requires a quick click at a link on our website—friendsofllibrary.org—or a check made out to the Friends of Los Gatos Library. Every penny goes to support library programming.
- **You can donate books.**
- **You can attend events** that the Friends organize.
- **You can visit our website**, join us on Facebook, and see what our Twitter feed has of interest. 🌿

Especially Generous Donors!

Donations to the Friends of any amount are always greatly appreciated and are put to good use supporting library programs and equipment. Donors who have given \$500 or more have their names listed on the scrolling screen near the entrance to the Children's Room. Thank you to the following folks who gave \$500 or more in recent months:

The Cardinale Fund | Rotary Club of Los Gatos
Marlene Rodman Robert Salvagno Sereno Group Real Estate