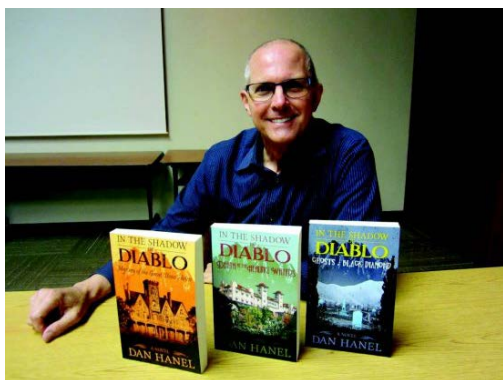


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Behind the scenes of Moraga Library events

By Vera Kochan



Local author Daniel Hanel Photo Vera Kochan

Most patrons appreciate the variety of events that the Moraga Library has to offer, but aren't aware of the process behind providing interesting programs for young and old alike.

Adult Services Librarian Michael Goldman and Youth Services Librarian Nirit Schnitzer are the folks responsible for the library's extracurricular and always free activities.

Goldman has scheduled upcoming events such as Gentle Yoga; a Chinese brush painting workshop in honor of Asian Pacific Islander Month; the monthly book club meeting; a folk singer; and last week's local guest author Daniel Hanel.

The Contra Costa County libraries are a great resource to Goldman for mining event ideas. Librarians from the other cities make recommendations to each other regarding worthwhile speakers or artists. While he likes to book local talent as much as possible, Goldman says, "My choices aren't closed to only locals. I like to offer something that the community can relate to."

Hanel's presentation was more of a detailed historical mystery lesson. Born in Richmond, California, and currently living in Brentwood, the high school science teacher said, "Writing a novel was a bucket list item." His intriguing mystery series, "In the Shadow of Mt. Diablo," is a spellbinding account of local folklore where, according to Hanel, "past meets present, with a parallel story line, where fact meets fiction."

Hanel's first book in the series, "Mystery of the Great Stone House," recounts the life and murder of wealthy and influential Brentwood historical figure Dr. John Marsh. His second novel, "Death at the Healing Waters," uncovers a WWII secret at the Byron Hot Springs Resort. Hanel's most recent novel, "Ghosts of Black Diamond," takes the reader back to the historical 19th century coal mining town once located in the Mt. Diablo foothills.

Many of the library programs are sponsored by The Friends of the Moraga Library.

For the younger library-goers, Schnitzer says, "I like a mix of performers and crafts - something that's inspirational. For the preschool and kindergarten age groups I offer something funny or musical." Some Moraga Library events for children include Comic book drawing and Kindergarten Countdown (talking and singing) which are coming in May.

From June 8 to Aug. 8 the county library system is hosting its Summer Reading Program designed to get kids, teens, adults and seniors to read more and participate in all of the county library offerings. The theme this year is "Take Me to Your Reader," with an overall space theme in honor of the 50th anniversary of the moon landing.

Schnitzer explains, "Libraries will pass out reading records (passports) with spaces to track reading and other activities. All summer reading finishers (those who have filled out their passport and turn it in to a library or submit it online) are given a free book and entered into a countywide drawing." The passports and prizes will be age appropriate.

Info: For more information about Daniel Hanel, visit www.danhanel.com. To find out what other events are on the horizon visit <http://ccclib.org> and click onto the library location you're interested in to check out their events calendar.

For information on the Summer Reading Program visit <http://ccclib.org/reads/summerreading/>. The Moraga Library's events are free, but some programs may require preregistration. Check the event's details for more information.



Moraga librarians, from left: Michael Goldman and Nirit Schnitzer.

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

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