



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE SHOW NOTES

Episode Title: Research Librarian Eric Groth - San Mateo Public Library

Episode # & Date: Episode #40 – July 30, 2020

About this Episode: Judy profiles one of San Mateo’s most helpful—and free—resources: our local research librarian.

Episode Web Page: <https://sanmateofocus.com/research-librarian-eric-groth/>

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

I’m Judy Gordon, and *this* is San Mateo Focus. As long-term residents who have raised six kids here, we thought it was high time someone shined a light on the good things in San Mateo to enrich the lives of those living here, and the businesses that serve them. Right now, we need your help to make San Mateo Focus even better by answering a few survey questions. Please visit our website at sanmateofocus.com and click the “Take Our Online Survey” button. Then, listen to this week’s episode, and come back every Thursday for new episodes. And please be sure to click the ‘subscribe’ button on your favorite podcast app. Now, onto this week’s episode.

From our survey results, we’ve learned that most of you like episodes on the history of San Mateo. I discovered, while working on an earlier episode, that San Mateo Librarian Eric Groth was really helpful for all kinds of research topics. So, I contacted him and asked him if he had some historical episode ideas and to tell us a few things about his job at the Main Library. He directed me to some online historical databases, gave me some ideas for future episodes, and told me about a few local history books that would be useful. Which led me to my next question, “How do you check out an actual book at the library during a pandemic?” At the main library they are filling holds and requests via *Curbside Pickup Service*. Go online to smplibrary.org, or call them at (650) 522-7818, request a book in the catalog with your library card and wait to get the notice that the item has arrived. Then, make an appointment to pick up the item at the main library. If your book is being transferred from another branch to the main library, it could take longer than normal to have the book available to you. When you pick up your books at your appointment time there will probably be others in line, so wear a mask and observe the recommended distance guidelines. The library is also offering *Book Bundles* for curbside pickup. That’s a set of four picture and non-fiction books for children on the same theme or topic. These books are free for pre-readers through 3rd Grade. Check out the link on our [Episode Page](#) for contact information, or call the library if you want to order.

People are still using the library extensively to borrow print materials. About 15 years ago there was lots of talk about print books going away in a few years, but this still hasn’t happened. It’s true that there has been a gradual transition of people using eBooks from print, but Eric says the printed book will remain. He finds that people are choosing the right format to suit their comfort level, and where and when they will be reading the book. If they are planning to travel or commute, it is likely they will prefer an eBook, but if they are planning to read at home they want the print book. Each person is different.



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Eric came naturally to his profession as a librarian since both of his parents were librarians at the Sacramento Public Library. He graduated with a history degree from UC Davis and then received a Masters of Library Science from the University of Washington. His first job after graduation was with the New York Public Library. He moved back to California to be closer to his family and he got a job at the Sonoma County Library. When the opportunity came up with the San Mateo Public Library, he was excited to work in the newly opened main library building and has been here in the San Mateo community for the last 14 years.

When the Library is open to the public Eric's job is like an Information booth, fielding questions like, "Where's the scanner?" "Can I book a meeting room?" "Where's the Passport Office?" and, "How do I check out and download eBooks?" The main library has historically specialized in business resources, biotech, local history, grant searching, and Holocaust materials. The research requests are as varied as the questions. He's helped a few local small business startups use the library to find materials to write a successful business plan. He introduces ESL students to the Library and manages the Job Seekers Center where people looking for work get help from trained volunteers with a business background. Once he was asked to trace a photo downtown that was taken in the early 1900s. Using old maps, business directories, and details in the photo they were able to identify the year it was taken within a two-year period. The library even receives genealogy requests for information from European countries to help find those missing links. Eric says that he feels as if the library has achieved their goal "to become the community's living room".

A public library is still a place where everyone has equal access to materials. One of the jobs that Eric says is very important is helping people use the Internet along with the library resources, to find reputable sources of information for their research projects or their personal interests. The nearly 100 Internet computers in the main library were still very busy before it closed in March. Popular borrowed resources are Chromebooks and MiFis so community members without internet access can get online access at home.

Aided with all this newfound research knowledge from Eric we plan to create some more history episodes about San Mateo. But until then, *Here's the Deal*: Check out the link to the 15-minute video on our episode page. Created in 1976, it's called "Between Sail and Satellite, A History of San Mateo County."

Okay, that's all the time we have for this episode. Have a great week. Don't forget to subscribe to San Mateo Focus on your favorite Podcast app. As always, if you'd like more information about the topics in today's episode or any of our sponsors, visit sanmateofocus.com.

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HELPFUL LINKS:

[Webpage: Library Curbside Pickup Program](#)

[Webpage: Library Book Bundle Program for Kids](#)

[Webpage: San Mateo Historical Association Speakers Bureau](#)

[Webpage: San Mateo Historical Association Online Collections](#)

[Video: Between Sail and Satellite: A History of San Mateo County](#)

[Website: California Revealed](#)

[Book: "San Mateo – A Centennial History"](#)

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PODCAST SHOW NOTES

Podcast Name: **San Mateo Focus**

Logo:



Description: We created San Mateo Focus to shine a light on the good things in San Mateo in order to enrich the lives of those living here and the businesses that serve them.

Website: <http://www.sanmateofocus.com>

Email: info@sanmateofocus.com

Host & Founder: Judy Gordon

Producer/Co-host: Peter Radsliff

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