



# NEWSLETTER

April 2024

Web: [Modestolibraryfriends.org](http://Modestolibraryfriends.org) Email: [Info@Modestolibraryfriends.org](mailto:Info@Modestolibraryfriends.org)

## Book Fair, Used Book Sale Set for Late April/Early May

Our book sale fundraisers will be here before you know it! The Scholastic Book Fair will be April 26 to May 3 at the Modesto Library and online from April 26 to May 9. The Used Book Sale on Saturday, May 4, will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Library portico. Spread the word person to person, by email and/or on social media.

The spring **Scholastic Book Fair** is your chance to stock up on low-cost, high-quality new books for children and teens. The books can be earmarked for trips, birthdays, holidays or just because. The book fair, located in the library's basement auditorium, will be open Fridays, April 26 and May 3 from 10 to 5; Saturday, April 27 from 10 to 4; Monday, April 29, from noon to 7 p.m. and then Tuesday, April 30 through Thursday, May 2 from 10 to 6. Shop online April 26-May 9 at <https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bf/modestopubliclibrary>

On Saturday, May 4, our **Used Book Sale** will take place from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the library portico. Volunteers are sorting thousands of donated books into categories, including art, children's, history, biographies, hobbies and travel. Fiction will be sorted by author. New this year: jigsaw puzzles!

Everything is priced to sell: Adult hardbacks, \$2, adult paperbacks, \$1, children's books 50 cents to \$1 and puzzles \$2. Rare books and special collections will be in a designated area near the checkout tables. Both the book fair and the used book sale accept cash, checks or credit cards.

## The Big Remodeling Project: What we know and don't know

At the Friends' annual meeting in early March, County Librarian Sarah Dentan shared general information about the major renovation coming to the Modesto Library, offering this reminder: "Construction projects are ever changing until they end." Many details are not yet firm.

Even the timeline is in flux, although Sarah currently anticipates an early 2025 closing with an 18-month schedule. Asbestos remediation comes first, and it requires that all books and other materials and people be moved out of the building.

Little used warehouse space at the Salida Library will be finished to house much of the collection and most of the staff.

The collection will be visible in the library's catalog, and users will be able to place holds and have materials sent to their most convenient branch. The intent is to have a downtown

Modesto browsing/pickup center and to hold story times in a variety of Modesto locations. Other planned

elements of the renovation project:

\*\*\* All public and staff bathrooms will be remodeled to be ADA accessible.

\*\*\* LearningQuest will have a dedicated space funded by the state library grant.

\*\*\* Changes will be made to improve safety and accessibility throughout the library.

\*\*\* Current library spaces, such as the circulation desk and computers, will be in different locations

\*\*\* Seating will be at smaller tables and scattered throughout the library.

\*\*\* The story time room, not used for years due to lack of accessibility, will have a flat floor and collapsible wall.

Future issues of the Friends' newsletter will keep you informed about the remodeling project and the FOML Lifelong Legacy Capital Campaign that will provide funds for amenities such as comfortable seating and a quiet reading area.



*Possible for Modesto - a quiet study area like the one in the new Turlock library.*

# The Story of Us: The Catalyst for Creation of Friends of the Library

By Maree Hawkins

There is a link between a June 1973 US Supreme Court 5-4 decision to tighten obscenity laws and the January 1974 formation of the Friends of the Modesto Library.

A month after the court decision, The Modesto Bee reported that the ruling had no perceptible impact upon Modesto's two adult bookstores, a sex film house, the Modesto library or regular bookstores. In the article, County Librarian Oscar Smaalders said he was concerned about a return to censorship and a siege of book banning, adding there had been complaints concerning nudes in a library art display and four-letter words in a song book.



Peggy (Fields) Gardiner

The decision did not establish national standards but allowed local community judgment. Modesto Mayor Lee Davies asked the city attorney to determine the city's ability to regulate pornography under the court's decision. In November 1973 the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors considered forming a library selections review committee after hearing complaints about materials, particularly a photo exhibit of farmworkers in the Modesto Library. The complaint said the exhibit favored the United Farm Workers union and Cesar Chavez over growers.

Public reaction was immediate. Within a week the Board of Supervisors received a petition signed by 104 people, spearheaded and delivered by Peggy Fields (now Peggy Gardiner), one of our founding members. The petition read: "We do feel there is no need for any type of censorship in our library system and no need for a review committee."

Concerned citizens increased pressure on the supervisors with letters to the editor and attendance at board meetings. The result: the two supervisors dropped the idea of a library review board.

But County Librarian Smaalders had a plan to build on the coalition of citizens who responded to the initial threat of censorship. The first meeting of the Stanislaus County Library Auxiliary was called to order by Acting President Peti Taylor on Jan. 14, 1974, in a library conference room. During our 50 years we've also been known as Friends of the Stanislaus County Free Library, Friends of the Modesto-Stanislaus Free Library and, since 2008 as Friends of the Modesto Library.

In a Bee article the day after the organization's first meeting, Smaalders said: "It will be nice to have a group of people who really know what's going on in the library." He also had no fear the new group would be usurped by ultra conservatives or the book burning element. "There are more people concerned with the library as a free institution than otherwise." **The Story of Us will continue in the next issue.**

## President's message

FOML's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year is well underway. We enjoyed record attendance at the annual membership meeting in March, perhaps because of the premiere of "50 Years of Friendship – The Story of Us," by our own Maree Hawkins.

The silent phase of our Capital Campaign, A Lifelong Legacy, is also well under way, thanks to a dedicated Fundraising Committee led by community volunteers Lynn Dickerson and Katy Menges.

Now the heavy lifting begins. We are building out teams for Phase II, the public phase of the campaign to raise money for enhancements to the Modesto Library renovation project. This phase will begin in the summer. Volunteers are needed in several areas, particularly events and fund-raising. Won't you consider joining us? Contact me at [president@modestolibraryfriends.org](mailto:president@modestolibraryfriends.org).

-- Denise Nordell

## Membership On the Mark

A record number of our members from 2023 and earlier have renewed as of mid-March -- 124! We are on pace to achieve the goal set a few years ago of 200 members.

Please renew if you haven't. And invite a friend to join us in supporting the Modesto Library. Go to <https://modestolibraryfriends.org/join/> to quickly and easily join or renew your membership with PayPal, a credit card or a check.

## Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

When Friends of the Modesto Library was asked whether we wanted to be the beneficiary of CrabFest '24, an annual event benefiting a different nonprofit each year, we of course said yes, without knowing what it would mean to us. The answer is in. We received \$38,350 from this event, sponsored, organized and served by Dallas and Garrad Marsh, and their family, friends and colleagues at McHenry Bowl. We can't thank them all enough!



Thank you for printing our newsletter!