



# NEWSLETTER

**April 2025**

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## Library Lovers Excited About New FOML Role

Two longtime teachers who have been library lovers since childhood will serve as co-presidents of Friends of the Modesto Library for 2025-26. Ellen Burchett and Jennifer Pereira were elected at the annual meeting in March. Their term will begin July 1.

Ellen attended story times as a child. She continued to be a regular at the Modesto library through her teen years, working there in the mid-'90s as a page (wearing a Discman and reshelving books). She continued her patronage when she had her own children, bouncing them on her knees at Wiggle Worms and exploring the stacks with them as they grew.

Ellen is finishing her 22<sup>nd</sup> year teaching third grade for the Sylvan Union School District. Third grade is a pivotal year for literacy, and Ellen's focus is always on reading and passing on her lifelong love of books. As a young teacher, Ellen joined Friends and volunteered until her second son arrived. Now that they are in middle school, she was able to take on a more active role in the capital campaign. During the past year, she has worked closely with many of the Friends, including Jennifer Pereira. Ellen says she continues to be impressed by Jennifer's work ethic, gentle spirit and passion for advocacy. That passion and Ellen's organizational skills and comfort with technology should positively influence the upcoming year during the library closure.



*Ellen, left, and Jennifer*

Jennifer's love affair with the Stanislaus County Library began when she moved here at age 8 from Maryland. "I can't remember a time when my library card has gone dormant. An avid reader since the time my mom introduced me to Golden Books, the library has always been my happy place - even when doing research for term papers in college or helping my own high school students find their favorite authors or tackle their own Extended Essays in the Modesto High School International Baccalaureate Program. When I retired after teaching English for 30 years, it was inevitable that I would choose the library as the focus for my volunteerism."

"Helping with the annual book sale, Dewey Crew and serving as a co-lead on the Events Team for the Lifelong Legacy Campaign revealed to me the incredible work the Friends contribute, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Ellen Burchett to continue building on the legacy."

## Federal Budget Cuts Will Affect Modesto Library

Many FOML members and others have contacted their representatives in Congress to urge them to try to preserve the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This is one of the federal agencies that President Trump has ordered defunded. In fiscal year 2024, California libraries received \$15.9 million in funding from the IMLS. Stanislaus County Librarian Sarah Dentan explains that the institute doesn't give money directly to our library, but we benefit from its funding of statewide services. Among them:

1. E-books for all, known as the Palace Project, which gives us access to a statewide collection of 228,850 e-books, newspapers, magazines, etc.
2. Free professional development for library employees, which has saved our library tens of thousands of dollars since COVID;
3. Free access to the New York Times online, including historical access; and
4. The Braille and Talking Book Library, a resource our local library cannot provide for the visually impaired.

For more information on responding to the cuts: <https://www.infodocket.com/2025/03/15/everylibrary-statement-on-trumps-attack-on-federal-funding-for-libraries/>

# FOML Reports on 2024-25 Activities

FOML's annual report was presented by President Denise Nordell at the March annual meeting. By the numbers:

**Fundraising:** Used book sales raised more than \$5,500 in 2024; the Scholastic Book sales earned \$4,455 in book credits, plus \$480 in books for local youth charities; December's Barnes & Noble Bookfair earned \$2,495 and, as of early March, the Lifelong Legacy campaign had raised \$2.8 million for the Library renovation.

**FOML Gifts to the Library:** Using \$3,196 Scholastic credit from book fairs, books were given out as part of Modesto Library's Summer Reading and other library celebrations.

**Events in 2024-25:** Friends of the Modesto Library celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Yarning with Friends monthly knit and crochet classes continue at the Salida Library with average monthly attendance between 16 and 20 youth and adults. FOML-hosted library events including the Halloween Spooktacular Parade (co-hosted with the McHenry Mansion) drew over 700 participants. FOML members worked 137 volunteer shifts at eight events -- over 400 hours in service time.

## Pearls of Wisdom from Local Author/Bookstore Owner

Paula Treick DeBoard, author, creative writing teacher at UC Merced and owner of the local bookstore Bookish, spoke about her love of libraries and reading at the FOML annual meeting. Among the many thoughts she left us with are these:

*"Libraries are the souls of a community."*

*"I am all that I have read."*

*"Through stories we learn about ourselves."*



Paula Treick DeBoard

## President's Message – Two Good News Items

The Lifelong Legacy Campaign for the renovation of the Modesto Library received a big boost from Subaru of Modesto -- \$46,416 as a result of the dealership's Holiday Share the Love event. People buying or leasing a car could designate a donation to a national charity or a local charity. For 2024, the local charity was Friends of the Modesto Library.

Other donations, including Save Mart CARES, are helping us inch ever closer to our goal of \$3 million. There is still time to give or add to a previous gift. Remember, cumulative gifts of \$1,000 and more earn a spot on the Donor Wall to be located inside the newly refurbished library. For more info or to donate: [modestolibraryfriends.org/legacy/](https://modestolibraryfriends.org/legacy/)

Modesto's annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade is the oldest in California. This year, Friends of the Modesto Library and the Lifelong Legacy Campaign have the honor of being named co-grand marshals, along with the Modesto Children's Museum. If you want to help us plan our involvement in the parade, contact Amy Burrow at [Amy.burrow@gmail.com](mailto:Amy.burrow@gmail.com)

■ Denise Nordell

## Good To Know

**Free Books for Children:** Día De Los Niños/Libros for Modesto will be April 19 in a new location this year -- the Gallo Center Music Garden. FOML is providing hundreds of free "forever" books to children that day as part of the celebration. This will be the 20th year FOML has supported this library program.

**Membership:** In 2024, we had 124 paid memberships by mid-March. We're running a little behind that with 110 memberships. It's never too late in the year to join or renew. Go to <https://modestolibraryfriends.org/join> to pay online or to find instructions for mailing a check.

**Collaboration:** Modesto Library collaborates with the Imagination Library of Stanislaus County to promote literacy and school readiness. Our members volunteered to enroll about 100 youngsters a year to receive free, age-appropriate books mailed home from Dolly Parton's non-profit program. If you'd like to support this effort, Panda Express is donating 28 percent of online orders on May 2. Go to [www.pandaexpress.com](http://www.pandaexpress.com) and put 9001384 in the FUNDRAISER code. This promotion applies only to online orders.