



February 2022

NEWSLETTER

Little Free Libraries

They're little. They're free. They're a movement.

By Maree Hawkins

Modesto's neighborhoods have many hidden gems, including over 90 libraries registered with Little Free Library, a non-profit global organization.

This book-sharing-in-a-box movement began in 2009 when the first Little Free Library was built by the late Todd Bol in Hudson, Wisconsin. Bol mounted a wooden container, designed to look like a one-room schoolhouse, on a post on his lawn and filled it with books as a tribute to his late mother, a book lover and school teacher who had recently died. You can now find these libraries, or LFLs, in 50 states, 91 countries and every continent except Antarctica.

The organization's goal is to be a



FOML members Kathy Sniffen and Cathie Peck are both LFL stewards

catalyst for building community and increasing access to books through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Libraries. The organization's web site, littlefreelibrary.org, has building information and a locator map.

FOML members with a Little Free Library include Cathie Peck and Kathy Sniffen, while Sal Salerno has visited more Little Free Libraries than most of us.

Cathie Peck first heard about the movement about five years ago when a cousin put up a little free library. Her enthusiasm was contagious and husband Bill got excited about building one. Their library is registered as "Smell the Roses, Pick a Book" even though it ended up not being located near their rose garden.

Cathie used books she had on hand to get it going. Since then, neighbors have kept it stocked. "People definitely make use of it," she says. The only complaint she's heard is that there aren't enough children's books.

It was a New York Times article that sparked Kathy Sniffen's interest. "I thought it sounded like the best thing

ever," she said. Then in 2013 her husband surprised her with her own little library as a Christmas gift. She too used her own books to stock it, but books soon started appearing on her doorstep.

Kathy says she has felt nothing but support and appreciation from the community. She adds that she loves seeing adults and children come up to the library when they walk through the neighborhood. Pre-pandemic kindergarten classes studying their neighborhood would walk to her library and stay for snack and story-time.



Modesto's poet laureate, Sal Salerno

Sal Salerno knows there's a Little Free Library within a block of his house, but has also been to about most of the Free Little Libraries in

Modesto. Sal, who is Modesto's current poet laureate, has donated a book of his poems, *Inkboat*, to about 60 of these libraries. When traveling, he'll often bring his book along and find a Little Free Library for it.

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The Friends promotes goodwill and community support for the Modesto Library, stimulates public awareness of Modesto Library needs, and seeks sources of cultural and educational programs for the Modesto Library. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of March, June, September and December and are open to all members or interested individuals.

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Modesto, CA 95352-4565

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ModestoLibraryFriends.org

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Many thanks to



**for printing our
newsletter**

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The next few years will offer great challenges and great opportunities for public libraries. Recognizing this, the Friends board recently initiated a “wellness check” to determine how we are positioned to face a future when we will be called on to support our beloved library through more robust fundraising and strong advocacy. A first step was to ask FOML members their opinions about how well our efforts align with our mission and the library’s strategic plan. The responses were helpful and encouraging and have already yielded solid results: for example, a new fundraising committee is being formed to seek out, apply for and secure grant funding. What is your passion? Where could you serve? I encourage you to take a moment to respond to the [survey today](#). We’re listening! – Denise Nordell, President



FOML Breaks Membership Record

The news just keeps getting better! We met each new membership goal we set last year and ended with a record-breaking number of members in 2021—181! That significantly surpassed our previous best of 157 members in 2018. Thanks to all of you who joined or renewed last year to support the Friends and one of our city’s greatest institutions—the Modesto Library.

Now that it’s 2022, guess what? The new membership year has begun. That means it’s time once again to show how much you care about the library by renewing your Friends membership.

Paying by check? Fill out the form in this newsletter or select the Offline Donation button at <https://modestolibraryfriends.org/join/> to skip the paper form and just send a check.

Paying online? It’s easy at [online](#).

If you’ve already renewed, consider asking someone you know who values libraries to join the Friends this year and help us meet our 2022 goal of 200 members. ■

Welcome new members

- Diane and David Bartlett
- Dylan Driver
- Gary Pogue
- Michael Wolterbeek
- David and Melba Yarbrough
- Amy Sensney

Board Survey Results By Denise Nordell

Sometimes you ask the question even if you know what the answer will be. In the case of recent surveys completed by Friends of the Modesto Library members, some of the responses – particularly those in praise of the library, its staff and programs – were not unexpected.

There were some surprises as well. For instance, we asked how well people thought FOML’s activities aligned with the Library’s Strategic Plan. In fact, many people were unaware of the plan. (We’ve included it in this newsletter.) We also heard several good suggestions for raising awareness of the Friends (LoveModesto, Baskets of Books and Little Free Libraries to name a few). Respondents also acknowledged the importance of advocating for a vibrant library.

Thanks to all who responded with your thoughts and ideas. It’s not too late: you can take the survey [here](#).

November Scholastic Sale a Success!

By Anne Britton



It was great to be back at the library in November for the first in-person Scholastic Book Fair since 2019. Judging by the near-record results, there was obvious demand built up, which translated to \$3,200 in Scholastic credit earnings. This credit will be used to purchase books to be given away at the next Día De Los Niños/Libros (Children's Book Day) celebration and for other Library programs.

In addition, nearly \$1,700 in books were purchased and distributed to local youth-serving agencies, thanks to generous "Wish List" donors. For a triple win, Scholastic matches that wish list amount to donate books nationally through *Kids in Need Foundation*.

Watch for a Spring Scholastic Book Fair; this event is traditionally a "Buy 1 Get 1 Free" discount sale.

Thanks and more thanks for your generosity of time and donations that put books into the hands of our community's children. *More Books for More Kids!* ■



Little Free Libraries
Continued from Page 1

Modesto native Angie (Decker) Allen lives in Clinton Utah; her daughter, Leonora is a librarian. Their Shady Grove Little Free Library is registered as LFL 76434. "When you register with Little Free Library, they will ask you if you want a plaque and they will send it to you for a fee," Angie says. "There is also a stewards' newsletter to which one can subscribe." ■

Registered as "LFL 76434 Shady Grove" this Little Free Library is in Clinton, UT



Little Free Libraries can be spotted all over Modesto. Find dozens of others at littlefreelibrary.org.

FUN FACTS

- More than 120 million books have been shared in Little Free Libraries worldwide.
- There is a Little Free Library book-sharing box at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.
- There are three Little Free Libraries for every public library in the United States.
- A Little Free Library doesn't have to be typical. Some are even mounted on bicycles!

Annual Used Book Sale Slated for May

Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 7 – the annual FOML Used Book Sale at the Modesto Library. Event Chair Pat Glattke has announced that used book donations are now being accepted. Call (209) 985-7156 to arrange to drop off your books. Or, take them to the Modesto Library in boxes or bags clearly marked MODESTO FRIENDS USED BOOK SALE.

As always, volunteers are needed to sort books prior to the sale and to work at the event. Contact Marilyn Drew (WalkingMD@pacbell.net) to volunteer. ■



NextGen On Board Update



by **Maria Hernandez,**
FOML Board Member

Maria Hernandez began her two-year term on the FOML Board as a NextGen on Board Fellow last summer. NextGen on Board is a leadership program that matches young people who show leadership potential with local non-profit boards. Here is a 6-month update from Maria.

Over the past 6 months NextGen on Board fellows have virtually gathered and learned about their individual leadership skills and board member responsibilities. Fellows have the chance to interact with each other and discuss their experiences as board members during their sessions. Some topics that have been discussed include board governance, nonprofit financials, StrengthFinders, legal responsibilities, and fundraising responsibilities. Fellows have already gained knowledge and skills to share with their boards and still have more topics and exercises to explore. In the next six months, fellows will continue to learn about organization planning, evaluation, policy advocacy and the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion.

I am very grateful to those who have made the NextGen on Board program available and to FOML for welcoming me as a board member. As a first-time board member, this program has eased my nerves and calmed my “imposter syndrome.” I may not know it all, but I learn something new with each session and FOML board meeting I attend. I’m learning about the skills I bring to the organization and how I can use these strengths to help FOML meet its goals and live out its mission. I look forward to the next two years as a board member and supporter of FOML.

For more information on NextGen on Board, visit stanislauscf.org ■

*Yarning with Friends**

(* a tiny little division of Friends of the Modesto Library)

FREE programs – Mondays 5:30 – 8 p.m.

February 7

- One-on-One Crochet Clinic
- Yarning with Friends Project: Valentine Love for the Library – Knitted and Crocheted Hearts

March 7

- Yarning with Friends Project: Planning a Library Yarn Garden – Knitted and Crocheted Flowers

April 4

- One-on-One Stitch Clinic for New Knitters
- Yarning with Friends Project: Library Yarn Garden – Knitted and Crocheted Flowers



Register at
modestolibraryfriends.org

Strategic Giving

The Modesto Friends Board of Directors has been examining how we operate to ensure we are well-positioned for the demands of the future (see President's Message on pg. 2). One area we have been focusing on is our giving. Together with staff, County Library Director Sarah Dentan recently updated the Stanislaus Library's strategic plan, which provides guidance for the library system through 2023.

Thinking strategically is the best way to honor the generosity of our donors.

This provided a good opportunity for us to examine our giving to be sure the money we raise is earmarked for programs and materials that in turn help the library achieve its goals. Now, each request for funding is attached to a specific strategic goal. Thinking strategically is the best way to honor the generosity of our donors.

– Denise Nordell, President

Stanislaus County Library Strategic Plan

July 2021 - June 2023

Demonstrate Fiscal Responsibility

- Revenues and expenditures are balanced
- Fund balance is managed appropriately
- Budget is transparent and visible to stakeholders

Ensure the Library is a Welcoming Environment

- Facilities are in repair, safe, functional and comfortable to use
- Signage is consistent across the system
- Library staffing is sufficient to meet customer needs
- Library staff are well trained and able to meet the needs of our customers

Increase Community Connections and Partnerships

- Community organizations know what the Library has to offer, and how to connect to Library Resources; County-wide partners look to the Library as a partner on community issues
- Branches partner with community organizations to offer programs and services

Provide Responsive and Creative Programs and Services

- Library promotes First-Rate Learning
- Community children enter Kindergarten ready to succeed in school
- All ages look to the library for educational and culturally responsive programs
- Library collections are current and help customers create, learn, and discover

Expand the Reach of the Library

- Increase Library use by members of key populations, including:
 - Children and families
 - Seniors
 - Latino/a community members
 - Economically disadvantaged
 - Other underserved communities




www.stanislauslibrary.org

Join the Friends Today!

Friends of the Modesto Library provides funds to enhance the programs and services at the Modesto Library. Dues are paid on a calendar-year basis (Jan. 1-Dec. 31). Please select a membership level and indicate the amount of your donation.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/ZIP _____

Mobile Phone _____

Home Phone _____

Email _____

Thank you for giving us your email. It reduces our expenses and lets us keep in touch.

We publish the names of new members in our quarterly newsletter. If you prefer your name NOT be printed, please check this box .

Join FOML:

New Member Renewing Member Returning Member

Sign me up for

Reader (\$25 - \$49) \$ _____

Storyteller (\$50 - \$99) \$ _____

Novelist (\$100 - \$249) \$ _____

Bestseller (\$250 - \$499) \$ _____

Classic (\$500 - \$999) \$ _____

Epic (\$1,000 and above) \$ _____

Method of payment: cash check # _____

If paying by check, make payable to FOML. Provide information on form, then mail to:

Friends of the Modesto Library
P.O. Box 4565
Modesto, CA 95352-4565

You can also go to modestolibraryfriends.org/join/ to pay with PayPal or a credit card.



Affinity programs mean \$\$\$ for FOML

By Ellen Dambrosio

In a typical year, Friends of the Modesto Library funds over \$15,000 of library staff requests and gives away thousands of dollars' worth of new books to children in the community. How is this possible? Because of you – our caring and helpful members – who renew your support year after year and participate in our fundraising activities.

Membership dues usually represent about 50% of our budget in most years. Major fundraising events (Scholastic book sales, used book sales, and Barnes & Noble bookfairs) generate another 30-40%. Other underused but potentially important sources of income are three affinity programs that generate donations when you shop.

We. Need. You.

Signing up for affinity programs costs you nothing. We are currently registered with eScrip, AmazonSmile, and iGive.com. Details and links to sign up are available on our [fundraising page](#). If you shop at O'Brien's Market, you could really help the Friends by signing up with eScrip. Once you sign up, your purchases create automatic contributions of up to 5% of your purchase when you show your card at checkout.

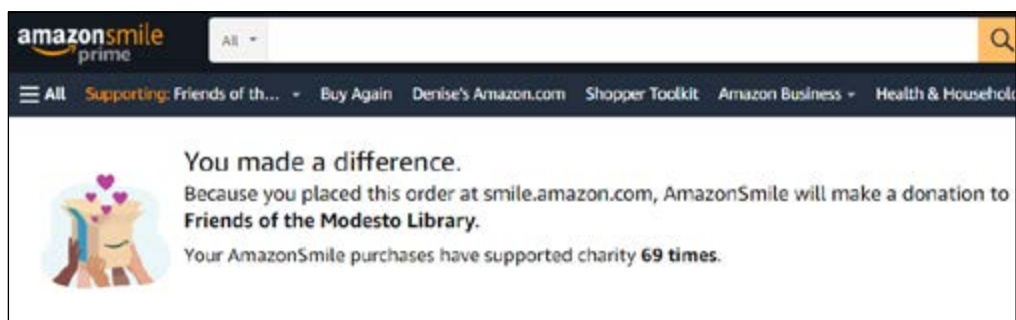
Sign. Up. Today.

Amazon shoppers, did you know that you can buy the same products at the same prices at smile.amazon.com and earn money for FOML? If you designate Friends of the Modesto Library as your charity when you sign up, we'll earn 0.5% of all your purchases—at no cost to you, of course. Just remember to shop at smile.amazon.com.

Please. Don't. Wait.

For other online shopping register at iGive.com and earn money each time you shop at any of 2,132 participating online stores. All you have to do is start your shopping at iGive.com or add the iGive button to your browser to make earning easy.

Denise adds: Who doesn't love getting love letters? I enjoy receiving little notes like these from time to time, which inform me about the impact my online shopping has. Here's one example:

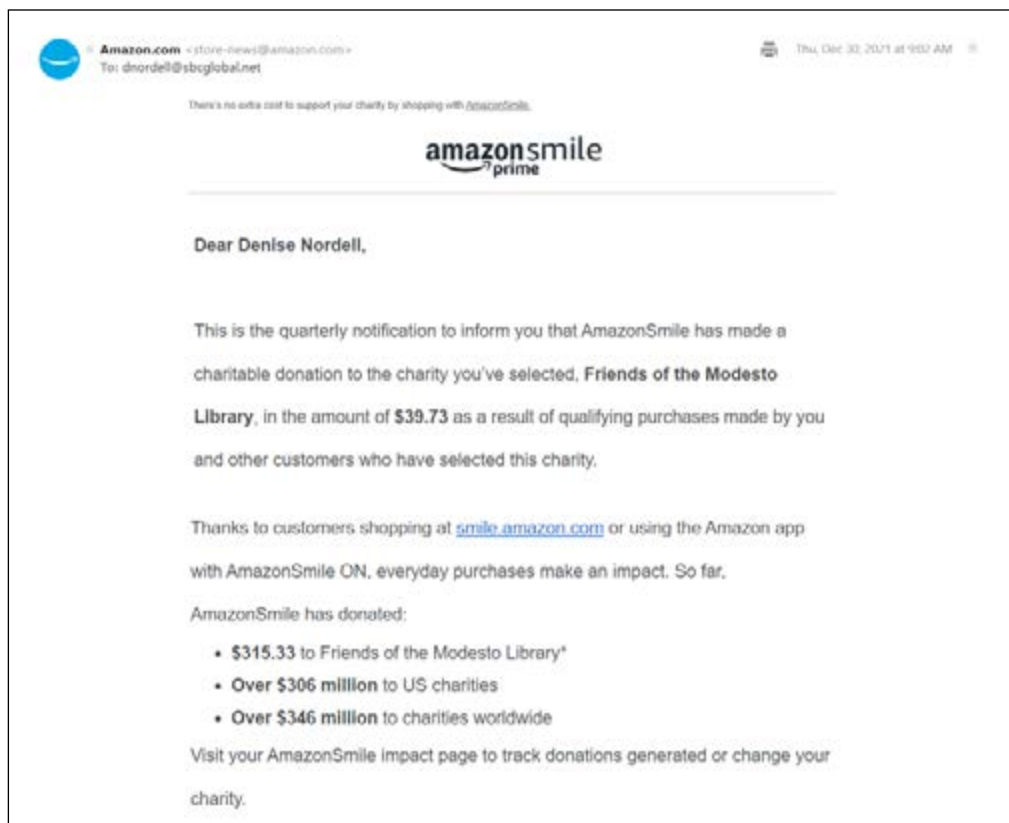


It's. Not. Difficult.

Don't put it off. Start using these affinity programs today. And encourage others to do the same. You have nothing to lose, but the Friends have a lot to gain!

Thank. You. A lot.

Just think how this amount could multiply if every FOML member signed onto our affinity programs! This email provides an annual summary:



→ Seriously. It's Easy. Sign up.

They're Yarning Again: Holiday trees in the Library

By Ellen Dambrosio

After installing their popular leaf garlands in the library in September, Yarning with Friends picked up their knitting needles and crochet hooks to start their December project - "square" holiday trees. Two months later, the busy yarn crafters installed a brightly colored scene in the front lobby of the library.

This project was no small feat. It took nine women over 100 hours to make and stitch together 96 crocheted and knitted squares, assemble them into three trees, and decorate them with 124 handmade ornaments.

Participants were pleased with their holiday trees and plan to display them again next year after making

even more decorations. Library staff reported many people stopped to admire the holiday decorations throughout December.

Their January project was a yarn bombed chair, created to celebrate the return of in-person Story Times. (Unfortunately, the date has since been pushed back again due to COVID concerns.) Yarning with Friends members presented the chair to the library on January 18.

For this project, stitchers covered a plain wooden thrift store chair with yarn of all kinds: knitted, crocheted, twisted, braided and

wrapped! We hope this playful, colorful chair will bring a smile to everyone who visits.

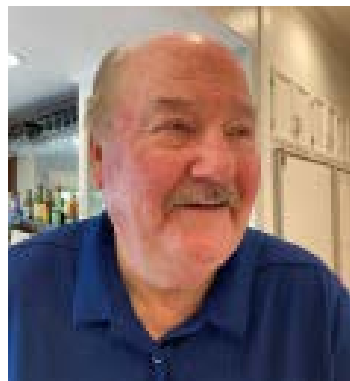
Yarning with Friends offers free monthly classes to those who want to learn to knit or crochet or to improve their skills. Classes are held the first Monday of each month from 5:30-8:00 pm in the library's new MakerSpace. Details can be found on the FOML [web site](#). ■

Give the gift that gives *TWICE!*



When you purchase Barnes & Noble gift cards from the Friends, we get 100% of the purchase price! To order, visit the FOML website or email membership@modestolibraryfriends.org





“Everybody talks about the weather, but...”

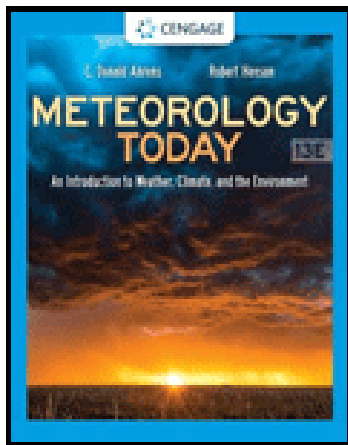
By Christine Brereton,
FOML Board Member

At the Friends of the Modesto Library annual general membership meeting on March 2, guest speaker Dr. Donald Ahrens will do more than talk about the weather... he'll explain it! He will discuss his publishing experience for his first book; *Meteorology Today*, currently in its thirteenth edition with the fourteenth edition in progress. It has been used by at least 500 colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada, and it has consistently ranked in the top three Meteorology textbooks in the United States. Along with his insights into the

publishing world, Dr. Ahrens will discuss changing weather patterns and what we can expect as the impacts of climate change accelerate.

With B.S. and M.S. degrees in Meteorology and a doctoral degree in education, Dr. Ahrens taught Meteorology and Earth Science at Modesto Junior College for 35 years. Also on the agenda at the meeting will be election of board officers and new board members, and the president's annual report to the membership. ■

**Annual Membership Meeting
Wednesday, Mar. 2 • 4 – 6 p.m.
Modesto Library Auditorium**



People you meet at a fundraiser

By Maree Hawkins

The next time you get a “volunteers needed” email from FOML, say yes if you can. You'll not only lend a hand, but you will have a chance to meet some pretty amazing people. In early December I worked a shift at FOML's Barnes & Noble fundraiser. Easy peasy and successful: FOML earned over \$4,000 in gift cards, which are available for sale – details on page 7. During my shift, I had the chance to visit with new FOML members Alice White (right) and Kristi and Dylan Driver.

White, who moved to Modesto from Santa Clara in 2019, spends her time working in her house and garden and enjoys walks. As soon as the pandemic settles down she really wants to be able to volunteer and meet more people. Now 80 years young, Alice spent most of her professional life in customer service work with Equifax. By the time she left there, she says



that she had seen it all – from manual credit reporting via slips of paper to computers.

Kristi and Dylan Driver are teachers, and avid readers. The couple met at California State University Stanislaus in a World Literature class. Libraries were often date locations and even their engagement photo shoot took



place in the Modesto Library. Dylan teaches at Elliott High School while Kristi teaches a fifth grade GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) class at Sonoma Elementary. She has wonderful memories of the library, especially library trips with her grandmother. They belong to several book clubs, including a virtual one with participants from all over the United States and Canada. Volunteering has many rewards... meeting new people is definitely one of them! ■

Library Staffers Share their 2021 Book Faves

Say what you will about 2021, but the year definitely brought some good books to our attention. Thanks to the Stanislaus County Library staff for sharing some of their favorite books published in 2021. All are available at the Library in print or electronic formats.

The Spanish Love Deception, Elena Armas; The Push, Ashley Audrain; Winterlight, Kristen Britain; A Lot Like Adiós and You Had Me at Hola, Alexis Daria; Moonsteel Crown, Stephen Deas; Death in Daylesford, Kerry Greenwood; The Forest of Vanishing Stars, Kristen Harmel; The Love Hypothesis, Ali Hazelwood; The Final Girl Support Group, Grady Hendrix; The Wisteria Society of Lady Scoundrels, India Holton; Never Saw Me Coming, Vera Kurian; We Are the Brennans, Tracey Lange; The Velocity of Revolution, Marshall Ryan Maresca; The Last Graduate, Naomi Novik; The Lost Apothecary, Sarah Penner; Hyde, Craig Russell; The Last Green Valley, Mark T. Sullivan; The Chosen and the Beautiful, Nghi Vo; The Ruthless Lady's Guide to Wizardry, C. M. Waggoner; Seven Days in June, Tia Williams; Broken (In the Best Possible Way) Lawson; Baking for the Holidays: 50+ Treats for a Festive Season, Kieffer; The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor, Jaku; Some Things I Still Can't Tell You, Misha Collins.