



NEWSLETTER

July 2025

Web: modestolibraryfriends.org
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FOML Leads the Way (Parade) for Literacy

By Jennifer Pereira and Ellen Burchett

Celebrating America's Youth, the theme of this year's 4th of July Parade, was in full display as Friends of the Modesto Library distributed 450 books and hundreds of handmade Hungry Caterpillar bookmarks to children



and families along the parade route. We were honored to serve as co-grand marshals of the parade with the Modesto Children's Museum.

In this infancy of our co-presidency, we witnessed the strength, talent, and creativity of our current membership as we collaborated to plan the event. Donations of books poured in, Yarning with Friends put their hands to work in record time to add to the theme this year, and each individual behind the scenes provided time and resources to make this a team effort.

You will see the limitless ways our organization supports our community and upholds our mission of celebrating literacy in our

media gallery at modestolibraryfriends.org/media-gallery/. We look forward to more opportunities to support the library and our organization, even during the library's closure.

Jennifer and Ellen began their terms as co-presidents of Friends of the Modesto Library on July 1.

Lifelong Legacy Campaign Update

Just in from our fundraising financial tracking duo of Donna Flanders and Julie Saugstad: We are oh so close to our \$3 million goal to provide extras in the Modesto Library renovation. Donations and commitments are now at \$2,904,424.25. That leaves \$96,000 to reach our goal.

Immediate Past President Denise Nordell, who initiated the Lifelong Legacy Campaign goal, reminds us that "every gift to the campaign is appreciated" and gifts at \$1,000 and above will be recorded on the donor wall in the newly remodeled library. Gifts are cumulative, which means that if you've already given you may give additional funds to reach \$1,000.

To make a contribution or learn more: modestolibraryfriends.org

What's Happening Inside the Closed Building

FOML member Maree Hawkins ran into Stanislaus County Librarian Sarah Dentan while visiting the Salida Library last week. Sarah provided a quick update on the Modesto Library remodeling.

- Asbestos abatement in the basement is complete, and abatement work is underway on the main floor.
- The drop ceiling has been removed, exposing a mezzanine that goes around the main floor, providing space for infrastructure such as heating/air conditioning.
- The work is progressing on schedule with no surprises.
- No remodeling can be done until asbestos abatement is completed.
- Abatement work should be completed for remodeling to begin in the fall.

Exit Interview with Outgoing President Denise Nordell

When did you start your first volunteer effort? My parents set a good example. My dad tutored male inmates at the County Jail and my mom was a Girl Scout leader and belonged to League of Women Voters. They both volunteered at our church as well.

What was your first volunteer opportunity? I was a Girl Scout (of course!) although I don't remember specific community service.

What organizations have you volunteered with over the years?

Mostly literacy-based organizations: LearningQuest, Stanislaus Library Foundation, KidsQuest, FOML. Other volunteer service includes American Red Cross, and Stanislaus Community Foundation scholarship evaluator. These days, I try to filter opportunities and say yes if it supports literacy.

What have you received in return for volunteering? A sense of purpose. I look at volunteering as a privilege. I realize that not everyone has the freedom to choose volunteerism due to family obligations and other barriers. I feel that my "working" life and career gave me the skills to be an effective (I hope!) volunteer and leader.

How did you become FOML president? Anne Britton thought it would be a great idea if Maree Hawkins and I became co-presidents in 2016. We said yes and served as co-presidents in 2016/17 and 2017/18. Maree ended her co-presidency in June 2018 (but stayed on the board) and I became president in 2018.

What are you most proud of during your FOML presidency? The Lifelong Legacy campaign is the obvious high point. But I am very proud to think that FOML is stronger today because of some of the things we have accomplished such as governing policies and defined roles for board members. Also, our contributions to the library have increased dramatically and our involvement in events is very robust.

Read more of her interview at modestolibraryfriends.org/current-newsletter (choose the emailed version).

Check Out Other Stanislaus Library Branches

Day Tripping with Maree Hawkins

The Modesto Library may be closed, but there are 13 other county library branches to explore, plus the Express Library in downtown Modesto. Libraries are located in Ceres, Denair, Empire, Grayson, Hughson, Keyes, Newman, Oakdale, Patterson, Riverbank, Salida, Turlock and Waterford.



All you have to do is pick a town and decide on your adventure partner.

I recently visited the Oakdale Library, introduced myself to an

employee and then wandered. The library also includes a patio area with a statue of a child reading. Delightful library!



My Oakdale visit also included wandering along N. Third Avenue (just a bit of retail therapy) and lunch.

Branch hours at stanlibrary.org/about_hours.shtml

In Brief

2025-26 Board Duties

Co-presidents: Jennifer Pereira and Ellen Burchett

Vice president: Isa Wiechmann, Mentor to New Officers

Secretary: Anne Britton

Treasurer: Julie Saugstad

Amy Burrow: Event Coordinator

Ellen Dambrosio: Membership Director, FOML webmaster

Marilyn Drew: Volunteer Coordinator

As of July 15, we have 150 members. It's not too late to join or renew for 2025.
modestolibraryfriends.org/join

**THANKS TO DITTOS
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