

NEWSLETTER

Welcome Back

Modesto Library reopens for browsing and checkout at limited capacities

Modesto Library staff welcomed customers back to the library in April, more than one year after closing in March 2020 due to COVID restrictions. Most Stanislaus County Libraries are open for browsing and checkout of materials. Capacities are limited and libraries are not equipped for group or extended visits at this time. In keeping with the State of California's current guidance for opening, customers may browse, check out library materials and make appointments for passport applications. Masks and social distancing are required to maintain capacity limits.

"We are so happy to welcome the public back into our buildings," said Sarah Dentan, county library director. "And we are looking forward to expanding in-person offerings as we are able."

Computers are available for use and free Wi-Fi is available at all open locations, with Wi-Fi access

"Opening has been a benchmark for a lot of people that we are near the end of the pandemic. It has given them hope..."

– Library staffer, on the reopening of the library

extended to the parking lot at the Modesto Library. Library programs such as Story Time Trivia Nights (see related article in this issue) and book discussions will continue to be offered in a virtual format at this time.

The library staff and the public alike were elated to welcome customers back. "We had customers walking in giving us a celebratory clap and expressing so much gratitude for the library," said one library employee.

Other library employees shared their stories: "We tell parents that they can come in and hearing their kids scream for joy is mind blowing!", said one. "I had a few people well up with tears of joy," said another. ■



Inset: Friends of the Modesto Library provided sweet treats to the first visitors after the Modesto Library reopened in April.

Visit www.stanislauslibrary.org for online services and information on library reopenings.

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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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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Can you remember when Spring was more gladly anticipated and welcomed? We seem to be nearing the end of a dreary year that, despite many trials, saw some positive things as well. One bright spot was the creativity and optimism with which library staff met the challenges of the pandemic closures. Another was the continuing financial support of FOML members, for which we are grateful. As we emerge into the new normal, we are excited about the future. Join us as we reenter the library and look toward the future!

Denise Nordell, Co-president



Historic Groundbreaking Takes Place in Modesto

"New" library was fraught with controversy as well as optimism

By Maree Hawkins

April 1970: Earth Day is celebrated for the first time, Apollo 13 tells Houston, "We've had a problem" but returns safely to Earth, "Midnight Cowboy" wins the Academy Award for Best Picture...

... and the groundbreaking ceremony for the building we know as the Modesto Library takes place on April 19, 1970. The ceremony, which featured city and county dignitaries for this unusual joint project, was held on a beautiful spring day. People attending had probably seen the architectural drawings and knew the finished product would be impressive, but only those involved knew how much planning and negotiating had gone into the project.

Discussions began in the mid-1960s about replacing the

McHenry Library with a larger facility. Library staff found a report by County Librarian Oscar Smaalders dated 1968 in which the often-irascible head librarian said his recommendations were based on the experience of thousands of libraries across the country rather than ideals or pipedreams.

Above all, he said, it was important to remember that the selection of the site would to a large extent determine whether the library was going to be a vital and essential part of the community. Smaalders, who favored a downtown site, cited local and national studies that said people "drive rather



than walk these days." Downtown Modesto was still the shopping core in those days. One library commissioner, who had served on the City Planning Commission, favored a central library site within the "civic center, civic complex concept."

The selected site on I Street, bounded by 15th and 16th, would include a county-operated building designed and constructed by the City of Modesto, and a city-owned parking lot behind the building. Eventually the project evolved into a 62,000 sq. ft. structure with a price tag of \$2.6 million. Bids would be sought in January with groundbreaking scheduled for April. Construction would take about 18 months.

But with final working drawings close to completion in late 1968, there were still problems to be solved.

According to an undated Modesto Bee article unearthed by library staff, these included what to name the new library, how to decorate the frontispiece over the entrance and where to locate a drive-up book drop.

The book drop was originally planned for the parking lot area behind the library. Smaalders said the location would involve too much staff time since it would need to be emptied daily and require too much heavy lifting. The compromise was a book drop on the front curb with a buried conveyor linking the box to the library basement.

Another issue was what to name the building. One option, suggested by the Modesto Library and Culture Commission, was the Stanislaus Public Library. McHenry Library was evidently discarded since the new

facility was being built with public funds.

Yet another point of contention was the artwork. Architect Robert Field suggested commissioning an artist acquaintance of his to provide art, perhaps a sculpture of some sort, for the space above the front door of the public auditorium. Smaalders said he disagreed with a non-competitive artistic venture and would rather have an invitational contest. "Otherwise," he said in a memo to his county bosses, "we will end up with no choice at all, just like when the City of Modesto made the architect selection."

Despite differences of opinion, there was optimism and excitement around the groundbreaking and much anticipation about the finished project. ■



Membership Update

By Ellen Dambrosio

Membership dues are vital to our organization. In fact, they account for 30-40% of our budget in most years. Fewer members means reduced financial support for the Modesto Library, so we must maintain a robust membership roster. This requires that first, we are able to encourage a high percentage of our current members to renew each year and second, we continue to bring in new members.

I am happy to report that, as of mid-April, 83 past members have renewed or rejoined for the 2021 calendar year and 10 new members have joined, too. Now we're counting on our 2020 members who have not yet renewed to again support their favorite library in 2021. Of course, we accept dues and donations throughout the year, but why wait? It's easy to renew [online](#).

We also hope that past members who have taken a break from paying dues will consider rejoining. Your support is important to the library and the community.

Welcome New Members!

- Michael and Claudia Krausnick • Christine Malekos-Quick
- Carrie Rasmussen • Jake & Maggie Weiler

Trivia about ... Trivia

Trivia is defined as “unimportant facts or details,” but is that really so?

In medieval Europe, students learned the “trivium” which means triple way. For students this learning comprised grammar, logic, and rhetoric. After mastering this trivium they then focused on the quadrivium which moved to learning arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Our use of the word “trivia” dates back to about 1589 and referred to the insignificant pieces of information, which were only interesting to a few educated folks.

Today, trivia is associated with random factoids for everyone. In the 1950s, quiz shows like *Dotto*, *The \$64,000 Question*, and *Twenty-One* became extremely popular forms of trivia’s history. After the *Quiz Show Scandals*, quiz shows disappeared from TV. Then in 1982, Merv Griffin came up with the idea to reintroduce *Jeopardy!* and trivia shows again became popular.

Trivia then moved to board games in 1982 when *Trivial Pursuit* was presented. Over 100 million copies have been sold and an estimated 1 billion plus people have played the trivia game and fallen in love with the challenge. The challenge spread to bars and restaurants around the world as friends joined together for Trivia Nights.



Virtual Trivia Nights

presented by Stanislaus County Library

By Judy Pierce

The COVID pandemic presented plenty of challenges, but some intriguing opportunities as well. Recognizing the popularity of Library Trivia Nights, staffers Jessica Geiss and Laura Ferrell determined that the popular trivia program could move to a virtual space and decided to initiate Virtual Trivia Nights. The virtual trivia events became so popular that they are now presented every other Friday from 7 to 8 p.m.

Individuals or teams work to answer 50 questions around a theme. Past themes have included Harry Potter, Disney, *The Office*, and *Gilmore Girls*. Two of the most popular have been when the trivia night focused on the *Hunger Games* and the night which focused on banned books. May 2021 themes are “Friends” and “Wandavision.”

The hour-long programs have been drawing 20 participants or more with one of the most popular themed nights—Disney’s *Frozen*—having over 80 enthusiastic players. Trivia Nights are open to everyone

and participants have joined in from other states as well as Canada. The programs alternate between themes appropriate for adults (ages 15 +) and programs for families and children.

To participate in Virtual Trivia Night, simply go to the Stanislaus County Library website to register; click on Library Services, then Events and Classes - All Ages. You will find the monthly calendar, themes for that month, and instructions for participating. Note, two devices are needed to participate; one with Zoom to view the questions and another with the app, Kahoot! to answer them.

Now that you are ready for the challenge, let’s warm up with a couple stumpers:

1. Which of Jane Austen’s books was the last to be published in her lifetime?
2. In Harry Potter’s books what color is Jenny’s Pygmy Puff?



Remembering Beverly Cleary

By Anne Britton

The author of the beloved Ramona, Ribs, Ralph S. Mouse and many other books was remembered by some Friends after her passing in March. So many of us read, listened to or gifted her books to next generations. Here are some things that popped in our minds, thinking of her books.

“Ramona with her rain boots stuck in the mud. Read as an adult, this put me back into my own Oregon childhood, rubber boots and all.” – Anne Britton

“H-O-W-L. Whole box.” – Beverly Schlegel

“My earliest Beverly Cleary memory: Ribs in a box on the bus, guppies galore, fat night crawlers, precious football flying into a car window, purely entertainment in early

elementary, still remembered vividly today.” – Cathie Peck

“De Sooner De Better De Later De Letter De Madder I Getter” in Dear Mr. Henshaw. When the kids (in my classes) and I read Dear Mr. Henshaw they usually hadn’t heard this. It led to some fun discussions of letter writing. – Judy Pierce

“I loved her second memoir, ‘My Own Two Feet!’ Thank goodness times have changed.” – Maree Hawkins

Beverly Cleary would have turned 105 on April 12 this year. Her birthday has become National DEAR Day, which stands for Drop Everything and Read. Note to self: Mark my 2022 calendar and make time to celebrate reading and remembering this family-favorite author. ■

Britton Recognized as Outstanding Woman by SCCW



Anne Britton is relentless in her pursuit of literacy, especially for children. She accomplishes her personal motto of “more books in the hands of more kids” in a variety of ways: through volunteerism, board membership and financial support. In March, Anne was recognized by Stanislaus County Commission on Women as an Outstanding Woman of Stanislaus County. In part, her nomination read:

“One of Anne’s key contributions is coordinating Friends-sponsored Scholastic book fairs. Twice each year, Anne lassos a regular gang of volunteers (or “volun-tolds” as it is very difficult to say no to Anne!) for Scholastic book fairs at the library. Anne has become renowned in Scholastic circles for the way she leverages relationships, time and resources to wring the absolute maximum benefit for kids. Under Anne’s guidance, Scholastic sales earn cash and books for the library as well as books for young clients of a number of local non-profit agencies. Last year, for example, she coordinated with LearningQuest, which was sponsoring its own book drive. Anne worked her magic so that LearningQuest purchased their books through Scholastic, making their money go much farther and also earning additional books and credit for the Modesto Library! Many of the hundreds and hundreds of books FOML earns are in turn distributed at library and community events, from Día de los Niños/de los Libros to the Stanislaus County Fair and food distribution sites during the COVID pandemic. Anne likes to call these books the children’s forever books.” ■

Congratulations, Anne, on your well-deserved award!

Annual meeting recap

The annual meeting of Friends of the Modesto Library took place virtually in March. Special guest Sue Rich of Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) delivered an update on Imagination Library and officers were elected for FOML’s next fiscal year, which begins July 1:

President, Denise Nordell • Vice President, Beverly Schlegel
Secretary, Anne Britton • Treasurer, Jonaca Driscoll



L·I·B·R·A·R·I·E·S

and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

By Anne Britton

In addition to stimulus checks to individuals and relief payments for businesses, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 also includes funds for libraries. Although few specifics are available yet, \$178 million is allocated for state library administrative agencies on a population-based formula, with a \$2 million state minimum. Local libraries may apply for these funds. County Librarian Sarah Dentan remarked about the ARPA, "The Library has had great success applying for grants with the State Library this year, and we are confident this success will continue in the future."

In the coming weeks, the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) will work with state library agencies to confirm state allotments and specify allowable uses for the funding.

Major sections of ARPA with some local examples include,

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Programs funded through California State Library grants include

- Beanstack, a virtual platform that makes it easy to register, log reading, earn badges, and participate in reading challenges remotely.
- Virtual author visits and other virtual programs.

EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY

Participating libraries will receive 100 percent reimbursement for the

cost of hotspots and other Wi-Fi capable devices, modems, routers, laptops, tablets and similar devices to loan to patrons through the FCC's E-rate program.

- Stanislaus County Library has already expanded access of Wi-Fi, both hours and range, at the 13 branches in Stanislaus.
- Waterford library has hot spots to help families during remote learning.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Intended to offset potential cuts to public health, safety, education, and library programs.

EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND

At least 20 percent to be used to address learning loss.

HIGHER EDUCATION

To defray pandemic-related costs and provide emergency aid to students to cover expenses such as food, housing, and computer

equipment. Makes all COVID-19 student loan relief tax-free.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM FUNDING

- National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities funds include grants to libraries.
- Head Start partnership opportunities for school and public libraries.

• Afterschool and summer programs See American Library Association's link [here](#).

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/libfunding/fed/American%20Rescue%20Plan%20Act%20of%202021%20ALA%20Summary.pdf>

Pending legislation in the form of The Build America's Libraries Act would provide significant funds for Library renovations and new buildings. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/buildlibraries>

Used Book Sale Save June 26-Tell Everyone

FOML's largest book sale will be Saturday, June 26. We will get details to you via email. Volunteers will be needed.

There will be an amazing assortment of books (largest ever), including two new categories, Science Fiction and Civil War.

Due to COVID 19 protocols, we will expand the space for the sale. Entry will be from the parking lot and exit at the front of the library. We look forward to seeing you there.

Library Advisory Board Seeks to Fill Open Positions

The Stanislaus County Library Advisory Board is looking for civic-minded, motivated individuals to participate in the continued growth of the library.

The Library Advisory Board acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors and the County Librarian. The Stanislaus County Library is funded primarily by a 1/8-cent sales tax, and the Library Advisory Board provides oversight to ensure these funds are spent only on Stanislaus County Libraries, as required by the most recent measure.

There is currently one district seat available, representing Stanislaus County Supervisor District 3. The board member in this seat must live in District 3, which encompasses West Modesto and Salida, and will be appointed by County Supervisor Terry Withrow.

**There are currently
three at-large
seats available,
representing
Education, Business
and Agriculture.**

There are currently three at-large seats available, representing Education, Business and Agriculture. The board members in these seats must have some connection to the named sector and will be appointed by the members of the Library Advisory Board.

Library Advisory Board members serve for three-year terms.

This advisory board position will benefit from an individual with the willingness to use his/her skills for supporting the library into the future. It includes working closely with the other Advisory Board members and the Library Director, and dedicating time to learn about library funding, policies, and planning. The Library Advisory Board meetings are held quarterly (currently on Zoom due to pandemic restrictions). Board members are also advocates for the library within their service areas and make a valuable contribution to the community.

To discuss this opportunity, please feel free to contact County Librarian Sarah Dentan at sdentan@stanlibrary.org or 209-558-7806, or Library Advisory Board Chairman Josh Vander Veen at 209-604-8689 or josh.vanderveen85@gmail.com.

Scholastic Bookfair Benefits Friends of the Modesto Library

Shop online May 11-24

While COVID restrictions linger, we can't invite you to physically walk through and shop at a **Scholastic Book Fair** as we normally would. But fear not! You can browse virtually to benefit FOML and put more books in the hands of more kids. Just go to <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/modestopubliclibrary> and look for the 360° experience at our online book fair. Or shop by age, grade level, or by individual titles.

Let your kids browse the shelves for their own selections. Stock up for holidays, birthdays, vacations, even road trips during these quiet stay-at-home days.



Or fill up your guest room or a local Little Free Library.

Online benefits include

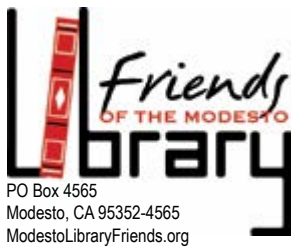
- **Free shipping** for orders of books \$25 or more.
- **Ship anywhere:** your house, the neighbors, grandkids, your favorite charity.

- Books for children and teens or generally, the young at heart.
- Deliveries arrive in 3-10 days.

The online sale takes place May 11 – 24

Friends of the Modesto Library uses the credit we earn to support the library's mission. For example, using Scholastic sale credits, we purchased 400 books to hand out at the Modesto Library's Día de los Niños/ de los Libros celebration.

Everybody wins with the Scholastic sale! Questions? Call Anne Britton at (209) 996-1531.



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.