



Among Michigan Friends

INFORMATION • SUPPORT • ADVOCACY

Volume 16, Issue # 2 January 2009

www.foml.org

Message from the President

Dan Stock,
Robert J. Parks Library

Looking back at FOML's October linking in West Michigan, we very much enjoyed the presentations at the Hastings Public Library. Particularly noteworthy was Tom Genson's encouragement for us to become better library advocates. (An overview of his remarks can be found on Page 3 of this newsletter.)

Also, our heartfelt thanks go out to the Hastings Friends and staff for being wonderful hosts and sharing the story of their attractive new "green" facility with us.

Our next linking, "Love Your Library," will be held in February in Plymouth. (For more details, see the article elsewhere on this page.) Please make plans to come and learn more about fund-raising and managing volunteers. Also, please be prepared to share the story of *your* Friends group during the afternoon table talks or the open sharing session.

The Friends of Michigan Libraries are finishing another eventful year, one that may be most noted for the trials and

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Message
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tribulations of our maturing and sometimes ailing board

Love Your Library: A Linking at the Plymouth District Library

Volunteerism and Fund-raising

Showing your love for your library can take a variety of forms, but in most cases, it comes down to volunteering and raising funds. Yet these are without a doubt two of the most difficult challenges Friends face. How do you find enough hard-working volunteers to take care of everything you'd like to do? And what do you need to do to keep them happily involved? If selling used books is your chief means of raising funds (as it is for most groups), what kinds of strategies will help you make a success of your efforts? Please join FOML in suburban Detroit for a get-together on these two very important topics—recruiting and retaining volunteers and making the most of your book sales.

Our guest speakers are Sue Stoney, volunteer coordinator of the Plymouth District Library, and Sharon Pignanelli, president of the Friends of the Chelsea District Library. Topics to be discussed will include strategies you can use to find volunteers, put them to work in ways that truly benefit the library, and, last but certainly not least, identify what keeps them motivated to continue volunteering. And since your volunteers are the folks who make those book sales possible, we'll also take a look at how Friends with successful book-sale operations manage to keep them going...and going...and going. We'll also hear from Sue Stoney on the unique services of award-winning libraries.

Make it a New Year's resolution to sign up today to attend this informative linking. We guarantee you'll take some good ideas back to *your* library!

"Table Talks" Featured in the Afternoon

After lunch and a tour of the Plymouth District Library, FOML's "Table Talks" will be the focus of the afternoon. These casual, fast-paced, and informative small-group discussions focus on a variety of subjects. We invite you to attend two, thirty-minute-long sessions—you choose what interests you the most. Table Talk topics in Plymouth will include a segment on volunteerism as well as a session on book sales, plus a third topic to be announced.

**This linking will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2009,
from 9:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.**

See page 7 for registration and travel information.

Calendar

- 2009 has arrived! Renew your FOML membership today (see page 6)
- Deadline for applying for a grant from FOML (see page 6) March 31, 2009
- Rural Libraries Conference April 2009
For more information, see a future issue of *Among Michigan Friends*

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“The Little Library That Could”: A Story of Perseverance

Glenda Middleton would probably be the last to admit it, but she is a bona fide expert in grassroots advocacy. Her remarks on the subject complemented those of Tom Genson at FOML’s October linking in Hastings (see Page 3).

Middleton shared her personal story of how the residents of a small, rural community in a less-than-prosperous corner of Michigan were able to “think big” and build the library of their dreams. And as the driving force behind that years-long effort, she is more knowledgeable than most about what it takes to nurture a true grassroots movement and see it through to success.

Middleton hails from Sand Lake, located in extreme northern Kent County. She is the manager of Kent District Library’s Sand Lake/ Nelson Township Branch.

When it became apparent more than a decade ago that the library had outgrown its 1,400-square-foot space in the Nelson Township Hall, Middleton began lobbying for a new building. As she soon discovered, however, there aren’t many “bricks and mortar” grants available for rural libraries, and Sand Lake is not home to wealthy benefactors or generous corporations. Undaunted, she applied for a gift from West Michigan-based office

furniture manufacturer Steelcase.

After a long and sometimes discouraging wait came news that the Steelcase Foundation would come through with \$25,000—provided the community matched it. (Steelcase eventually donated a total of \$50,000.) That gift ended up inspiring residents to dig deep into their own pockets, and it gave Middleton the incentive to launch an all-out fund-raising drive. She had no specific dollar amount in mind, just what became known as AMAP—“as much as possible.”

Grants were a source of some funding, including a \$700,000 USDA Rural Development Grant (actually a loan that must be repaid), several years’ worth of Community Block Grants, and a Wal-Mart grant that helped pay for the new library’s teen area.

But community-based fund-raising was key. Volunteers sold or auctioned perennial plants, cookies, hand-decorated tiles, cookbooks, bracelets, calendars, pumpkins, and purses, among other items. The library held scrapbooking events, Christmas bazaars, pancake breakfasts, and garage sales. A local bank made “love your library” heart buttons available for a donation.

And one local man raised \$3,600 picking up coins he found around town.

The Friends of the Sand Lake Library initiated around twenty projects, including a “LiBerry” Pie Sale for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. All told, the Friends contributed about \$150,000 over the years through book sales and other endeavors.

In 2007, the Sand Lake Library finally moved into its new building—an 8,350-square-foot structure designed to resemble a red barn in keeping with the area’s rural character.

In the end, said Middleton, the new library was not the result of a few big gifts, but of numerous small gifts and the work of many hands. It was, she proudly recalled, “a labor of love by a community that loves its library.”

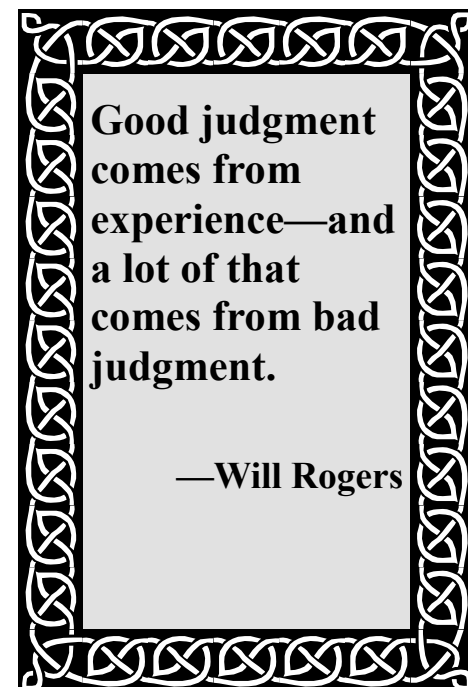
members and their families.

We also regret to note that Marie Brooks is leaving the FOML board to devote more time to a new professional undertaking. We will particularly miss her marvelous management skills, which were very useful to us in her position as Linkings Coordinator. We wish Marie the best and thank her for her contributions to FOML over the past several years.

However, as they say, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” We are very pleased with the success Vice President Charles Hanson has realized in his recruitment of new board members. On that basis, we expect to be able to present a full slate of very qualified candidates for election to the board during our annual meeting in Plymouth.

Even given that good news, we always can use more help from advisors and committee members. If you are interested, please contact us to see if your interests are a match for the areas where we are most in need. You may call me at (989) 739-4239 or e-mail me at etts95@yahoo.com.

On behalf of the board, we hope you have enjoyed a happy holiday season, and we wish you a prosperous New Year.



Making the First Call: Becoming an Advocate

Dan Stock,
Robert J. Parks Library

Advocacy was the theme of the day at the FOML linking held at the Hastings Public Library on October 15. One of two featured speakers to address the topic was Tom Genson, director of the Herrick District Library in Holland. After establishing his own credentials as an advocate earlier in his career on behalf of the Grand Rapids Public Library, Genson focused his remarks on what is required of an effective advocate.

First and foremost, he noted, an effective advocate must have a sense of what is important to libraries not only locally but also at the state and federal levels.

At the federal level, for example, terrorism and security concerns, privacy, and providing safe Internet access to children are among the most important issues. Also significant is the financial support furnished by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). LSTA funds underwrite research and development efforts into new programs and services aimed at facilitating the public's access to library resources. In Michigan, LSTA funding is used primarily to provide library users statewide with access to many information databases both in the library and from their homes.

Another federal program of importance to libraries is the Universal Services Fund of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Supported by a fee that appears on your telephone bill every month, this fund reimburses libraries for their telecommunications and Internet costs.

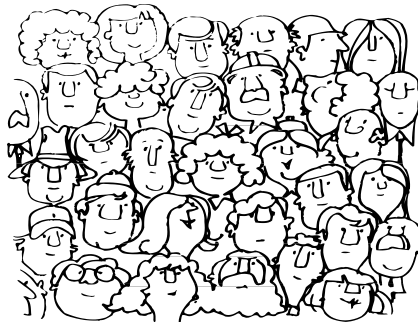
Very little in the way of actual funding for the operation of local libraries comes from the federal government. However, having an understanding of what goes on at the federal level provides some background information that you can use to convey your concerns to your representative in Congress.

At the state level, penal fines and other forms of aid provide a significant, but ever shifting, source of library funding.

Michigan's constitution specifically states that penal fines are to be devoted to helping libraries. Yet legislators are steadily nibbling away at those funds to pay for other initiatives that, while worthwhile, have absolutely nothing to do with libraries.

Take, for instance, the fines collected from drivers who violate the laws mandating the use of car seats for infants and young children. Instead of that money going to libraries as originally intended, half of it is now used to pay for educating drivers about the proper use of car seats.

Although the \$10 million in aid that the state provides annually may not be a major part of an individual library's budget, it is of great importance to the cooperatives and the statewide delivery service used to aggregate resources and make the statewide library system stronger. Without adequate funding, the current system of interlibrary loans may well become a thing of the past.



In addition, local economic development incentives often siphon money from millages. Such incentives can freeze tax rates for as long as twenty years, thus ensuring that taxes gathered for libraries remain unchanged for the same length of time—even if the development in question leads to population growth that places greater demands on the local library. Genson stated that advocates need to be aware of these kinds of issues so that their libraries can take appropriate action to eliminate or minimize the financial impact of tax breaks linked to development projects.

On the local level, Genson urged library supporters to share their ideas and feeling with friends and neighbors (the first point of advocacy). After all is said and done,

advocacy is explaining the value of something and why it is of particular importance to you and then further sharing your belief so someone else can think about it in terms of their own needs and desires. As Genson put it, the goal should be to move that person from being a fence-sitter to a fellow advocate. And given the current economic climate, more of us will be forced in the coming months and years to get off that fence and take a position on library budgets or a millage.

The most important step in this process is making that first call (or sending that first e-mail) to your congressional representative or state legislator. It can be a very short and simple message to show your concern as a voter on an issue of interest to you. If given the opportunity, be able to explain briefly why the issue matters to you. Calls from constituents can have a multiplier effect of 50 or 60 times, and as few as six calls from voters can prompt a legislator to change his or her vote on an issue.

Genson concluded by urging Friends to be prepared to stand up for libraries and to be knowledgeable about the problems they face, even if the only objective is to maintain the status quo. You can't really consider yourself a good Friend unless you take a stand and contact the people who are in a position to offer assistance, he noted. Remember—libraries will be here to serve us only as long as we continue to support them!

Best Practices from Your Colleagues



News Around the State

FRIENDS OF
MICHIGAN
LIBRARIES
INFORMATION . SUPPORT . ADVOCACY

Don't see news about your Friends group here? It might be because we haven't received a copy of your newsletter. If you publish a newsletter—or if your library publishes one containing information about the Friends—please send it to FOML, c/o Debbie Straub, 9700 Grand River Dr. SE, Lowell, MI 49331. You can also send it via e-mail to EditorDAS@aol.com (please put "FOML news" in the subject line).

Lowell

In September 2008, the **Friends of the Englehardt Library** partnered with the Lowell Area Arts Council to sponsor a ghost story writing workshop led by a local author. Participants of all ages were encouraged not only to write a story but to enter it in a contest. Winning entries were read during the town's Harvest Celebration in October.

St. Clair

The **Friends of the St. Clair Library** took part in St. Clair's sesquicentennial celebration in July 2008 by holding an ice cream social and designing a parade float. The float depicted how the library has evolved from the days of the card catalog to the multimedia center of today, with special emphasis on programs and services that the Friends support.

Sterling Heights

The **Friends of the Sterling Heights Public Library** are helping underwrite the creation of a Children's Art Garden at their facility. The vision for this space includes colorful seasonal plantings that will appeal to children, an area where the children themselves can plant seeds and watch them grow, and plenty of room for story time programs and independent reading by children and their families. Donations are also being solicited from the community to make this vision a reality. For example, a \$50 donation gives a child the chance to create a weatherproof masterpiece that will be on display in the garden for a year.

Flint

As part of General Motors' 100th anniversary celebration (and a nod to the importance of the automotive industry in the area), the **Friends of the Kettering University Library and Scharzburg Archives** sponsored the GM 100th Home Tour in July 2008. Tickets were \$15.00 per person in advance or \$20.00 on the day of the tour. The event featured five homes built during the 1920s and 1930s by GM executives and earned the Friends over \$9,000 after expenses.

Stephenson

The **Friends of the Menominee County Library** launched a "furry" unique fundraiser just in time for the Christmas holiday—selling stuffed bears perfect for gift-giving. "Bentley the Bibliobear" is ultra-soft and sports a polka-dot bowtie, and at almost two feet tall, he's *big*. Each bear was priced at \$19.99 plus tax, with 45 percent of the proceeds going to the Friends to support technology improvements and other projects at the library. The **Friends of the Flat River Community Library** make a habit of community outreach by partnering with other groups and individuals in a variety of worthwhile projects. For instance, they underwrite postage costs for a Friend who sends used books to members of the military serving overseas or those who have been injured and are hospitalized in the U.S. They also participate in a "Food for Fines" program that allows library patrons to pay fines with donations of food;

the Friends then deliver the groceries to local food pantries. Finally, they support a program aimed at women and their families and friends who have been directly affected by breast cancer by hosting free meetings at the library that feature the latest information on treatments and related topics.

Greenville

Spring fever was definitely on the minds of members of the **Friends of the Cadillac Wexford Public Library** in early 2008. In May they sponsored a program entitled "Gardens in Literature: From Peter Rabbit to Hamlet," put on by Iris Underwood, author and owner of Yule Love It Lavender Farm.

Underwood treated her audience to favorite passages from books that represent the rich theme of gardens. In April and again in May (by popular demand), the Friends invited rustic furniture maker Bim Willow to hold two workshops on his craft. Attendees could make whatever they chose, and the fee to participate varied according to the project from as low as \$45 for a small table to \$300 for a love seat. The programs were among the best-attended in the Friends' history.

Cadillac

September marks the annual **Chesaning Area Friends of the Library** "Reading Between the Vines" wine-tasting fundraiser. The 2008 theme was "Exploring Michigan Wines." One hundred attendees received an itinerary highlighting the different wine trails throughout Michigan and sampled nineteen different wines from those trails. They also enjoyed great food and music. Fifty-Fifty raffle tickets were sold to benefit the "Room to Read" program founded by former Microsoft executive John Woods, raising \$109. Organizations and individuals donated door prizes that were given away throughout the evening. Guest authors Lorri Hathaway and Sharon Kegerreis were available to mingle with guests and promote their award-winning book, *From the Vine: Exploring Michigan Wineries*. Wine expert David Creighton, a retired member of the Michigan Wine Industry Council, answered attendees' questions. The proceeds of \$1300 will provide funding for the Summer Reading Program, Spring Art Fair, the Friends Café and other activities throughout the year.

Chesaning

And from out of state...

From California comes news of another wine-related fundraiser, the annual "Wine for Words" event hosted by the Placerville chapter of the **El Dorado County Friends of the Library**. The event features raffle prizes, live auction prizes, food, and lots of wine to sample provided by the owners of local wineries who first proposed the idea of holding such a fundraiser. Proceeds are earmarked for the purchase of new books for the library.

The **Friends of the Pima County Public Library** in Tucson, Arizona, have instituted "Senior Hours" and "Dollar Day" at their book sales. "Senior Hours" enable older patrons to shop for two hours on the first day of the sale before it opens to the general public, while "Dollar Day" exclusively features books costing \$1.00 or less.

Out of State

Two Friends Groups Receive FOML Grants

FOML offers grants of up to \$250 twice a year to Friends groups whose applications meet the necessary criteria and the deadline requirement. The grants are intended to help new or revived Friends organizations in their efforts to become more effective.

This fall's grant recipients (each in the amount of \$250) are the Friends of the Addison Township Public Library (near Leonard) and the Friends of the Walker Memorial Library in North Muskegon. The Addison Friends are in the process of raising funds for a new facility and plan to use their grant money to publish and distribute a brochure about themselves and their activities. On the opposite side of the state, the Walker Memorial Library Friends want to use their grant money to design and publish the premier issue of a Friends newsletter. They will use their library's mailing list to reach all residents in their service area.

Wondering how an FOML grant can truly make a difference? From Beth Bynum of the Kingsley Friends of the Library comes an update on their activities since they received a \$250 grant in 2000 to launch a membership drive with the goal of building a new facility. "At that time our bank account contained \$560, including your grant," Bynum reports. "I remember our small group printing and mailing out invitations to 1,000 potential members.... Fast-forward to today, we have over 100 members and enjoy tremendous community involvement and support. [We] have forged alliances with local organizations [and] have worked the past eight years to reach our goal of raising over \$800,000.... By the new year, we will be housed in a new Kingsley Branch Library with an attached community room and village offices." Bynum concludes by saying, "We feel you were a great help in our endeavor, and again, thank you. Keep up the good work, Friends."

Could *Your* Group Use a Grant?

Applying for an FOML grant is easy! There are two different ways to obtain the necessary form: you can download it from the FOML website (www.foml.org), or you can request a copy by mail by contacting Betty Newton, FOML, c/o Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Rd., Livonia, MI 48154.

Once you have filled out your grant application, submit it along with a brief explanation of how you intend to make use of any money you might receive. Be sure to keep in mind that the purpose of an FOML grant is to assist new or revived Friends groups become more effective.

Also, please note that applicants must agree to join FOML prior to receiving the grant if selected and to report on their grant-related activities periodically following receipt of a grant.

Applications received by September 30 will be considered for the fall grant cycle, and those received by March 31 will be considered for the spring cycle.

Membership or Renewal Application

- YES!** We want to JOIN Friends of Michigan Libraries
 YES! We want to RENEW our membership

Contact Person's Name

Contact Person's Phone Number and E-mail Address

Contact Person's Street Address

City/State

Zip

Library Name

Library phone number

Membership Fees (please check one; all are tax deductible)

- Individual \$ 10.00
 Friends Group \$ 25.00
 Patron \$ 100.00
 Benefactor \$ 500.00
 Corporate Sponsor \$ 1,000.00

Make checks payable to: **Friends of Michigan Libraries**

Send completed application form and check to:

Harriet Larson, FOML
c/o Livonia Civic Center Library
32777 Five Mile Rd.
Livonia, MI 48154

Linking Travel Information and Registration

**Love Your Library:
Volunteerism and Fund-raising**
Thursday, February 12, 2009, 9:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

(Please see page 1 for program information)

Plymouth District Library

223 South Main St.
Plymouth, MI 48170

<http://plymouthlibrary.org>

Telephone (734) 453-0750

Travel Information

The Plymouth District Library is located in downtown Plymouth next door to the Plymouth City Hall. It is west of I-275 and east of Sheldon Road. It is south of M-14 and north of Ann Arbor Road.

For specific directions to the library from your location, please consult www.mapquest.com.

Parking is available behind the library in a large municipal lot. The entrance to the library is off the parking lot.

Parking

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: **Linking Program Registration**
: **Thursday, February 12, 2009, 9:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.**
: **Plymouth District Library**
: **Plymouth, Michigan**
:

.....
: **Registration Deadline: February 6, 2009**
: Registration includes lunch.
:

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: **Make checks payable to: Friends of Michigan Libraries (FOML)**
:

.....
: Send your check and the completed registration form below to:
:

.....
: FOML
: c/o Carol Perrin
: 12319 SW Torch Lake Dr.
: Rapid City, MI 49676
: Questions? Telephone: (231) 322-6122; e-mail: carolper@charter.net
:

.....
: Name _____ Phone _____
:

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: Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
:

.....
: Library Affiliation _____
:

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: Number Attending _____ x \$20.00. Total Amount Enclosed = _____
:



Friends of Michigan Libraries
Livonia Civic Center Library
32777 Five Mile Rd.
Livonia, MI 48154

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**Time to Renew
 Your FOML
 Membership!
 See Page 6**

TO: Friends of the Library

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The mission of the Friends of Michigan Libraries (FOML) is to support Friends working on behalf of Michigan libraries, to serve as an information resource for Friends groups, and to be advocates for libraries at the state level.

Among Michigan Friends is published three times a year as part of membership in the Friends of Michigan Libraries. FOML would like to thank The Gale Group for its support in helping to print and mail copies of this newsletter to every public library (including their branches) in the State of Michigan.

Editorial contributions to the publication are welcome and should be sent to:

Debbie Straub, FOML
 9700 Grand River Dr. SE
 Lowell, MI 49331
 E-mail: EditorDAS@aol.com (please include FOML in the subject line)

**Get Your Copy of the
 FOML Manual Today!**

The latest edition of the FOML manual, *A Manual for Michigan Friends: A Guide to Creating and Nurturing an Effective Friends of the Library Organization* (published in 2006), is a must-have for every Friends group in search of information on how to operate successfully. The contents have been updated and clarified throughout.

Among the new or expanded chapters are "Getting and Keeping Friends," "Bookstores, Gift Shops and Cafes," "Book Sales" (including a new section on Internet selling), "Communications," and "Marketing and Public Relations" (including new information on preparing media releases).

The manual is priced at \$15.00 plus a \$5.00 mailing fee for a total of \$20.00.

To get your copy, visit www.foml.org to download an order form and send a check made payable to Friends of Michigan Libraries to:

FOML
 c/o Livonia Civic Center Library
 32777 Five Mile Rd.
 Livonia, MI 48154

Or, to save on mailing costs, simply purchase a copy at our next linking.

Either way, your group will reap the benefits of this invaluable resource!