



# Among Michigan Friends

INFORMATION • SUPPORT • ADVOCACY

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[www.foml.org](http://www.foml.org)

## *Avoiding By-laws Blunders*

By Paul Snyder

By-laws are perhaps one of the most neglected yet effective items in a library Friends toolbox. It's easy to think of by-laws as a dull but required document necessary to apply for the group's 501(c)(3) status or for grants. But well written by-laws are much, much more. They should be the cornerstone of your organization's mission statement, the guiding principles by which your board makes its decisions about how your energies and resources are focused.

The Friends of Michigan Libraries (FOML), from time to time, is called upon to help groups who are having difficulties. Many times, we find that those difficulties could have been avoided if there was a greater awareness of the boundaries drawn by the groups by-laws regarding the range of acceptable activities available to Friends' organizations on how the Friends might help their Library.

Perhaps the Friends board has decided to use its funds in a way that the Library Administration or a Friends member objects. Perhaps the Friends board has committed funds to a High School scholarship program. It is certainly a worthy endeavor to help students with the cost of higher education, but does it measure up to the test of delivering a direct benefit to your library? Perhaps the library board, to curb rising costs, requests that the Friends allocate funding or volunteer hours to defray the expense of custodial services. Again, while providing a very tangible service to the Library, it commits the Friends to shouldering costs for which tax dollars are intended.

For this and other reasons the FOML Board recommends reviewing your by-laws on an annual basis. Many library Friends board members were elected far after the by-laws were adopted and may never have seen them. This process would give new board members some perspective on what the group's founders had in mind when the group was formed. With knowledge of the by-laws, Friends sponsored events and resource allocations can be measured against the group's founding principles making sure board actions fit with their mission.

While core principles tend to remain constant it may make sense to recommend changes occasionally. Any changes to by-laws should be approved by Friends' members at an annual membership meeting. Changing technology has been the catalyst for by-laws amendments in recent years, allowing for email notification as opposed to US Post notification of some types of meetings for instance. The time to review your by-laws should be far enough up stream to make thoughtful changes based on need prior to an annual meeting.

In conclusion, by-laws are more than a dry document. They are a way of managing expectations for what a board should and should not consider as appropriate allocations to your library. They provide a guidepost for your library administration to better understand the motivation of your group. It should be shared with the library administration and board of trustees especially if there is a change in any position. Finally, it is a covenant that you make with your Friends' members committing to use their contributions responsibly to the benefit of the institution they support.



**Friends of Michigan Libraries  
Talk About Friends  
Charlevoix Public Library  
Thursday, October 10, 2019**

**An Open-Sharing Discussion about Friends of the Library**

**Thursday, October 10, 2019, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

**[Charlevoix Public Library](#), 220 Clinton St., Charlevoix, MI 49720**

**AGENDA**

**1:00 p.m. Welcome**

**Jill Stodt, President, Friends of Michigan Libraries**

**Rebecca Higginson, FOML “Talk About Friends” Coordinator**

**Clare Membiela, Library Law Consultant, Library of Michigan**

**1:15 p.m. Tom Roberts, President, Friends of the Brandon Township Public Library**

**1:30 p.m. What are your Friends most successful fundraising projects? (full group discussion)**

**2:25 p.m. Break**

**2:40 p.m. Giving back: What library gift requests have your Friends funded?  
(full group discussion)**

**3:25 p.m. Evaluation**

**3:30 p.m. Adjournment**

Light refreshments will be available throughout the session courtesy of our host, **[Friends of the Charlevoix Public Library](#)**

**Cost is Free, [Register here](#)**

**[Click here for a list of hotels in the area.](#)**

# ***How to Make New Friends***

[Reprinted from Library Strategies](#)

Are you worried that your Friends group is “aging out?” Are you concerned that there just aren’t that many available volunteers to sustain your group into the future? You will probably be surprised to learn that there are many young volunteers ready and willing to work with your group. While most Friends members guess that the largest cohort of volunteers in America are over 65 years old, the truth of the matter is that the largest cohort of volunteers are between the ages of 35 and 54 years old.

It is true that those with children in school – those averaging from ages 34-45 years are mostly volunteering in youth-based organizations and education, those over 45 are volunteering in large numbers in community organizations – like Friends of Libraries! So, just how can a Friends group reach out to these “youngsters” to get active members? It’s simple, all you have to do is ask!

Ok, maybe it’s really not that cut and dried, but it’s true that you can get volunteers of all ages to chip in to help make your group successful, but it takes making changes to the way your Friends group has traditionally operated. Most Friends groups are still doing business the same way they have been for the last 50 to 75 years, but the world has changed and groups who want to attract new and active members must change as well.

One of the biggest changes will come as no surprise; women who used to be homemakers are now largely in the workforce. This means that groups who have traditionally met once a month to hear committee reports are becoming increasingly unable to attract working women and men. Another big change is, of course, technology. Many volunteers today are interested in being able to do some of their volunteer work remotely.

How do you attract working men and women? It’s easier than you think. Your board must begin to consider ways to break down your various programs and fundraising events into small discrete tasks. And, you probably already have a model – your on-site book sale. These events often involve scores of people. You enlist cashiers, sorters, boxers, clean-up crews, and set-up crews. You reach out and ask a lot of people to spend several hours to help in these categories – and most who are asked say yes!

Think about your other programs. Maybe you have an annual membership drive. Don’t look to one or two board members or a committee of one to accomplish this. Instead break this down to simple and discrete opportunities for many in your community to give back. One person may design a brochure, another may take the design to the printer, others may be called upon to distribute the brochures to the library and its branches (*continued on next page*)

## ***How to Make New Friends (continued)***

[Reprinted from Library Strategies](#)

to doctors' offices waiting rooms, to the local community college, etc. Still another might be responsible for taking in the contributions and yet another to reach out to those who offer to volunteer in the future. You get the idea. It may seem counterintuitive to reach out to more potential volunteers when you feel you can't get even one more to volunteer, but when you have a clear description of what you are asking a volunteer to do, can predict the time it will take to do it, and have an established deadline, you'll be surprised at the number of folks who will say yes.

Here's a quick check list of what today's volunteers are looking for:

- A clear and discrete task that is flexible in its ability to be carried out
- The ability (for some tasks) to be done remotely
- The ability for the volunteer to use their professional skills in the accomplishment of the task
- A feeling that what you are asking them to do will make a difference
- Being thanked!

Here's the number one thing most of today's volunteers do not want to do:

- Attend meetings!

Most of today's Friends groups are very meeting-centric. While the board may meet monthly or quarterly to plan events and distribute money to the library, the vast majority of your active volunteers need not attend, but simply be asked to contribute a limited amount of time to make a program successful.

You can find these new volunteers in lots of places. Begin by asking your own friends and family. If you are only asking for a couple of hours of their time and you're sure to pitch this as an opportunity for them to support their fabulous library, it's really not a tough sell. Also, contact your area schools – many of them will have a requirement that their students volunteer. Contact your civic organizations such as Rotary Clubs, Lions, etc. These groups are established to give back to their communities. See if you can advertise in local church bulletins. Use your imaginations, the opportunities to recruit are endless.

One last tip, be sure to keep a database of every single person who agrees to make a time commitment and their contact information because in all likelihood they'll be willing to do something again. All you have to do is ask!

## ***New: FOML Membership Toolkit***

The Membership Committee of the Friends of Michigan Libraries (FOML) has produced a membership toolkit which provides information on the benefits of FOML membership and which can be used to promote the FOML mission of information, support, and advocacy.

In addition, a printable membership brochure has been posted on the FOML website.

The link to the membership toolkit and trifold brochure is <http://foml.org/membership-toolkit/>.

## ***FOML Merit Award***

Did your Friends of the Library carry out an outstanding project or a number of successful activities in your community during 2019 that had a significant impact on your library's services to the community?

The Friends of Michigan Libraries (FOML) invites Michigan Friends groups to apply for this award. There are two \$400 award categories: a Friends group serving a population under 12,000, and a Friends group serving a population of 12,000 and higher. (Consult with your library director for service population information.) **Applications must be postmarked or emailed by Sunday, January 12, 2020.** The winner will be presented with the award at the FOML Annual Membership Meeting.

To be eligible for this award, **your Friends group must be a 2019 FOML member.** Membership information can be found at <http://foml.org/group-membership-form/>. The project or activities must have been completed during the 2019 calendar year.

[Get more information and download an application.](#) Your Friends Group could be a winner!

## ***Joining Friends of Michigan Libraries Just Became Easier!***

**Now you can become an FOML member by signing up online using our easy, secure membership service.**

1. On our website, go to [foml.org/membership](http://foml.org/membership).
2. Select from the membership categories the one that best fits your library's needs. All membership categories are explained in detail on the membership webpage.
3. Fill in the requested information in the online form.
4. Select the method of payment. Payment can be made by credit card securely through Paypal. Or you can select Invoice and will be able to print out an invoice to mail in with your check.

### **Membership Term**

- Annual membership begins upon submission of the online membership form and payment.
- Annual membership term expires one year from initial membership start date.
- Notification of membership renewal will be automatically sent via email for the upcoming year.

### **Membership Benefits**

- Access to information exchange about Friends groups throughout Michigan
- An electronic copy of the FOML Newsletter which is filled with ideas and projects from Friends
- Access to "*A Manual for Michigan Friends*" (digital publication on the FOML website)
- The opportunity to participate in FOML workshops at member rates
- Opportunities to help develop the FOML website through your member contribution of library photographs and other material
- Receive information about the FOML Board and its activities and plans
- Eligibility for the Harriet Larsen Founders Award and the annual FOML Award of Merit
- Assistance (upon request) from a FOML Board member about questions and concerns involving Friends development and organization
- An opportunity to become a member of the FOML Board and work toward the improvement of Friends' services
- Establish networking connections among Michigan Friends groups and participate in the FOML listserv

## *Sharing Friends News and Events from Around the State*

Dear FOML Member,

Please share what's happening with YOUR friends!

In the past, FOML maintained a listserv for the exchange and sharing of Friends news and events from around the state. That listserv has been discontinued. We also published Friends news and information from around the State of Michigan in our newsletter. We have decided to discontinue that practice for gathering news.

FOML is now requesting that news and information about your Friends organization be sent to FOML's Membership Coordinator, Janet Newell, and she will post that news on the [News and Announcements](#) section of the FOML website ([www.foml.org](http://www.foml.org)). This procedure will ensure that news is posted on a timely basis.



We request that you send news and information in an email that can be copied and posted on the FOML website, and that your email has the name of a person who may be contacted if others have questions or wish to have more details about your Friends' events or activities.

In summary, from now on moving forward, please send news about your Friends organization to Janet Newell, FOML Membership Coordinator, at [janet@foml.org](mailto:janet@foml.org).

Also, please keep updating your Facebook page, expand your networking by "liking" all of your other Friends and Library Facebook pages, including the terrific [Friends of Michigan Libraries \(FOML\) Facebook](#) page.

Thank you for sharing news about your events and activities! Help everyone to grow, learn and have more fun!

# *Your FOML Board of Directors*

**President:** Jill Sodt, Mott Community College

**Vice-President:** Melanie Baldwin, Ann Arbor District Library

**Secretary:** Jill Mason, Albion College

**Treasurer:** Charles Hanson, ALA United For Libraries Rep

**Director:** Kate Pohjola Andrade, Woodlands Library Cooperative

**Director:** Allison Arnold, St Clair County Library System

**Director:** Mary Beall, Southfield Public Library

**Director Emeritus:** Jim Doyle, Livonia Civic Center Library

**Director:** Gerald Furi, Farmington Community Library (retired)

**Director:** Shelley Gach-Droz, Huntington Woods Public Library

**Director Emeritus:** Darnell Gundy-Reed, Muskegon Area District Library

**Director:** Sandra Brown Gellis, Flushing Area Library

**Director:** Yolanda Haynes, Southfield Public Library

**Director:** Rebecca Higgeson, Brandon Township Public Library

**Director:** Marcella Kinsey, Ypsilanti District Library

**Director Emeritus:** Jennifer Kundak, Chelsea District Library

**Director:** Jill Mason, Albion College Library

**Director:** Roger Mendel, Northland Library Cooperative

**Director:** Michael Mok, Grosse Pointe Public Library

**Director:** Patricia Orr, Livonia Public Library

**Director:** Cathy Russ, Troy Public Library

**Director:** Paul Snyder, Friends of the Commerce Library

**Director:** Jill Sodt, Mott Community College Library

**Director:** Trudi Werner

## **Trustee Alliance Representatives:**

Shirley A. Bruursema, Kent District Library

Verna Cole, Brandon Township Public Library

**Advisors:** Ann Ingles, Petoskey District Library  
Shannon White, Library of Michigan

## **Web Developer and Membership Coordinator:**

Janet Newell, Island River Digital

## **FOML Fiscal Agent:** Mideastern Library Cooperative

Denise Hooks, Director and Irene Bancroft, Administrative Specialist



## ***Among Michigan Friends***

is published  
two times a year  
as part of  
membership in the  
Friends of Michigan  
Libraries.

FOML would like to  
thank Gale Cengage  
Learning for its support  
of this newsletter.

Administrative  
questions and editorial  
contributions may be  
directed to the FOML

President at

[president@foml.org](mailto:president@foml.org)





**Friends of Michigan Libraries**  
% Mideastern MI Library Cooperative  
Attn: Irene Bancroft (FOML)  
503 Saginaw Street  
Flint, MI 48502

FOML thanks...

**Gale Cengage Learning**  
for their generous grant.



We appreciate your  
ongoing support of Michigan Friends!

FOML members are reminded to check the FOML website ([www.foml.org](http://www.foml.org)) for the latest postings about Michigan (and other) library news and for FOML activities and events. On the website you will also find information about grants, the Trustee Alliance, contact information, and photo galleries. You can help build this website by sending us a photo of your library for inclusion on the website.

## FOML MISSION STATEMENT

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.

## With a Little Help From Our Friends

FOML is pleased to have so many Friends in the publishing world who have donated either money or supplies to help FOML carry out its services to Michigan Friends. For example, FOML has received financial contributions from Omnigraphics and Gale Cengage Learning. Others have supplied materials for our workshops: bags from Scholastic, pens from Doris Taylor (representing Quality Publishers), pens and note pads from Emery Pratt. Thanks to all who contribute! To quote from a Beatles song, we "get by with a little help from our Friends."



## Mark Your Calendar!

**Wednesday, October 2**

**Thursday, October 10**

**Friday, October 11**

**Wednesday, October 16-18**

**Wednesday, November 6**

**Wednesday, December 4**

**January 24-28, 2020**

**February 25-29, 2020**

**Thursday, March 26, 2020**

**Friday, March 27, 2020**

**April 13-15, 2020**

**FOML Board Meeting**

**Talk About Friends, Charlevoix Public Library, Charlevoix, MI**

**Talk About Trustees, Charlevoix Public Library, Charlevoix, MI**

**Michigan Library Association Conference, Novi, MI**

**FOML Board Meeting**

**FOML Board Meeting**

**ALA Midwinter Conference, Philadelphia, PA**

**Public Libraries Association Conference, Nashville, TN**

**FOML Spring Workshop, Portage District Library, Portage, MI**

**FOML Trustee Alliance Spring Workshop, Portage District Library, Portage, MI**

**Loleta Fyan Small & Rural Libraries Conference, Grand Traverse Resort, Traverse City, MI**

NOTE: FOML Board meetings are conference call meetings and are held the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. Any FOML member who wishes to participate should email the [FOML President](#) requesting conference call information.