



Friends of Michigan Libraries
Connecting Friends across Michigan

Focus On Friends

April 2025

Our Website



Letter from the President

Ten years ago, I retired from a busy career, wondering how I could possibly fill my days productively. I bought every power tool I could find and set up a woodshop. I bought a new set of golf clubs and rediscovered my game. I even contemplated revisiting that novel I had abandoned decades before. But, it still wasn't enough. That's when the local library serendipitously came to my rescue.

One eventful day, my wife volunteered me to help set up for a book sale at the library. One thing led to another and, before I knew it, they elected me president, which we all know is a euphemism for "he shall do everything that nobody else wants to do."

Well, I no longer had trouble filling my days. And then, six years later, FOML came calling, and I found that I actually had more capacity than I thought. But, best of all, I found that my relationship with FOML not only filled my time...it fulfilled a need I have to make a meaningful contribution to a good cause.

There is a lot written these days about our disconnected society. But, it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, FOML's primary mission is to build a strong and connected community of Friends groups that can support each other in so many ways.

By sharing best practices, stories about creative fundraising events, and a hundred other pieces of information that will help you more confidently navigate the complicated world of Friends, I believe that we're serving an essential mission that simply can't be replicated on a golf course or in a woodshop.

I look forward to serving as your president and encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with us so that we can address them together. Thank you for supporting FOML and the libraries we all love.

Joe David
FOML President

May 9th Talk About Friends



Join us for the next Talk About Friends session, a vibrant and collaborative gathering of Friends groups from across the state, on Friday, May 9, 2025, at the Novi Public Library, located at 45255 W 10 Mile Rd, Novi, MI 48375. This in-person event runs from 9:30 AM to 12:15 PM, with check-in and light refreshments starting at 9:15 AM. The day promises an engaging mix of networking, roundtable discussions, and idea-sharing with Friends groups and library supporters just like you. Whether you're a seasoned member or brand new to your Friends group, this is a great opportunity to learn, connect, and be inspired.

Members Elect FOML Board at Annual Meeting



FOML members voted to approve a slate of board officers and directors at the organization's Annual Membership Meeting, April 11 in Lansing.

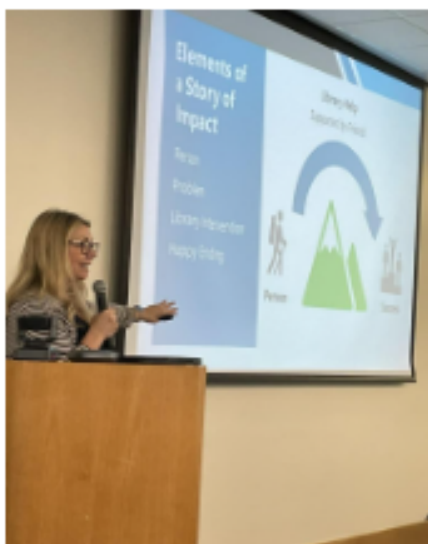
The four elected officers are:

- Joe David, President, (Cascade Branch of the Kent District Library)
- Jill Sodt, Vice President (Mott Community College)
- Sue Johnson, Treasurer (Novi Public Library)
- Bryonna Barton, Secretary, (Eaton Rapids Area District Library)

FOML elected Board of Directors are:

- Julie Boylan, Director (Flint Public Library)
 - Camille Campbell, Director (Elk Rapids District Library)
 - Debra Friedman, Director (Crawford County Library)
 - Geri Furi, Director (Farmington Community Library)
 - Vicki Granger, Director (Grosse Pointe Public Library)
 - Charles Hanson, Director (ALA United for Libraries)
 - Yolanda Haynes, Director (Southfield Public Library)
 - Maria McCarville, Director (Saginaw Public Libraries)
 - Cindy McKinnon, Director (Shelby Area District Library)
 - Kelly O'Leary, Director (Portage District Library)
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Annual Membership Meeting Featured Speaker Cordelia Anderson



FOML members enjoyed a presentation by featured speaker, Cordelia Anderson, a nationally renowned library marketing and communications consultant.

Anderson's presentation shared information about how the role of libraries is evolving and what Friends groups can do to evolve with them (see related article in this issue). Then, in the afternoon, representatives of FOML's two 2024 Merit Award winners—the Friends of the Pentwater Township Library and the Friends of the Hamburg Township Library—shared an overview of the activities that had earned the awards for them.

After a presentation by newly elected President Joe David on FOML's "[Consult-A-Friend](#)" program, those in attendance broke out into small groups for two of the popular "Table Talk" sessions.

"Table Talk is always one of the highlights of our get-togethers," explained David. "Members love to see how other Friends groups are doing things and share ideas. Based on feedback we regularly receive from participants, I think it's the most popular and productive portion of our workshops."

Guest Speaker Shares Tips on How Friends Can Adapt to Better Support Libraries

Nationally renowned library consultant Cordelia Anderson was the featured speaker at FOML's annual membership meeting April 11 at the Library of Michigan, sharing insights on how Friends groups can remain "strong and nimble" in support of Michigan libraries.

After sharing some of the unique challenges facing smaller, rural libraries and the uncertainties in today's economy, Anderson described how Friends groups need to evolve in their three main roles—program support, fundraising and advocacy—especially at the grassroots level and by attracting younger members.

"Friends can help cultivate grassroots support for libraries through events, fundraising and advocacy," she said. Customizing your messaging and tactics toward your target audiences is key. "Younger volunteers need more flexibility and opportunities suited to their skill sets, such as social media and online meetings," she said.

Anderson shared five tips for recruiting, retention and engagement of volunteers:

- Provide leadership and advocacy roles that add career value while giving a voice to younger members.
- Schedule events and meetings that suit varied lifestyles and clearly define volunteer roles.
- Use direct invitations and cultivate an inclusive, diverse environment.
- Encourage active, hands-on service with opportunities that show direct impact.
- Expand outreach beyond traditional circles.

She shared the importance of telling stories that resonate with your audiences rather than just fact-sharing when it comes to getting them engaged. "Storytelling can help you gain recognition for the library and show how Friends groups are partnering with the library to benefit the community," she said.

Anderson spoke to a number of other issues and opportunities facing Friends groups, including how to build a successful advocacy campaign, how to develop a shared vision, the importance of a strategic plan in sustainability. You can access her entire presentation on the [FOML website](#).

She founded Cordelia Anderson Consulting in 2018, has spent 25 years working in or supporting libraries, and wrote "Library Marketing and Communications: Strategies to Increase Relevance and Results." She lives in Charlotte, NC but has clients throughout the United States. You can follow her on [Facebook](#), connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) or get on her [mailing list](#) to receive information.

FOML Grants and Awards increased to \$750 starting in 2025

The **FOML Merit Award** is given in January to a Michigan Friends group either for a specific project carried out in the prior year or based on the full scope of the group's activities during that year. There are two \$750 award categories: a Friends group serving a population under 12,000, and a Friends group serving a population of 12,000 and higher. Applications are due January 31st. This year's awards went to Pentwater (population < 12,000) and Hamburg (population > 12,000). Merit Award winners present at the FOML Annual Membership Meeting. To find out more about the Merit Award, [click here](#). To view the submissions, scroll down to **Past Winners**.



The **Harriet Larson Founders Grant** is in honor of a founding member of the Friends of Michigan Libraries. To learn more about her and the history of FOML, [click here](#). Applications received by March 31 and September 30 of each year will be considered by the Awards Committee.

This \$750 grant is given to a Friends group that is starting up or restarting or has an innovative approach for increasing awareness of the Friends.

This March, the Friends of Salem-South Lyon District Library were awarded the grant for their innovative approach to awarding a scholarship to a high school senior. It is a great story about how a Friends group challenged their high school seniors and in doing so brought together their community and highlighted the great work of their library staff.

For more information on the Harriet Larson Founders Grant [click here](#). To view the Salem-South Lyon submission scroll down to **Past Winners**.

Harriet Larson Founders Grant applications received by September 30, 2025 will be considered at the first FOML Board meeting following that date.



FOML's Logo Gets a Refresh

Recently, FOML began working with a small web design company here in Michigan to make changes to its website...changes that will improve the look, content, navigation and functionality, according to Joe David, FOML president.

"We are all really excited about the new look that's in store for our website," he said. "And, part of that update is the modernization we've given to our logo."

David explained that the team didn't want to abandon the primary component of the old logo, which was the depiction of the state of Michigan clenching an open book in the thumb area.

"But, we wanted to make it crisper, add more color and include the tagline 'Connecting Friends across Michigan' because that pretty much sums up what we're all about," he said.

"Branding isn't really a high priority for FOML," he added. "But, we think the refreshed look for our logo is representative of our goal to keep evolving and adding a fresh look to everything we do."

David said that current plans are to introduce the updated website in late spring.

Get Featured

Attention all Friends of the Library groups! Your hard work deserves recognition, and The Friends of Michigan Libraries newsletter wants to feature you! Send us images and a short article highlighting a project you're proud of, and we'll showcase it in our newsletter. Let's celebrate the incredible efforts of Friends of the library groups across Michigan and inspire others with your accomplishments. Email us today to be part of our next issue!

