Friends of the San Antonio Public Library

SAPLings

Nov-Dec 2026
Vol. 39 No. 6
friendsofsapl.org
facebook.com/fosapl/
instagram.com/fosapl_tx

From the Library Director

Dear Friends,

As we approach the end of another productive year at the San Antonio Public Library, I want to take a moment to share a few important updates about our library system and the year ahead. I am grateful for the continued support of our community and for the dedication of our staff, whose work makes everything we do possible.

In September, the City Council adopted the **Fiscal Year 2027 Operating and Capital Budget**. As part of the budget, the library saw an overall 4 percent increase of its budget, increasing SAPL's budget to $58.1 million. The budget includes several important investments in SAPL, including recurring funding for the renovated Carver Branch Library and four additional staff to support its new and expanded services.

Prior to this year's budget adoption, the library budget underwent a comprehensive review process. This led to an intentional staffing realignment. Overall, the budget provides the necessary resources to continue our work and provide the same excellent service to our community.

(continued on page 9)

Arts & Letters Awards Ceremony

Sunday, Nov. 15 at 2 p.m.
Las Palmas Branch Library

Friends of the San Antonio Public Library is pleased to announce the 2026 honorees of the Arts & Letters Awards.

ARTISTIC MERIT

Native San Antonian **Elaine Ayala** spent the first part of her career in mainstream journalism. From reporter to editorial page editor to blogger to Metro columnist, Elaine has had her finger on the pulse of communities across six metropolitan dailies, including the San Antonio Express-News, from where she retired. She now co-hosts The Buena Vista Project with her friend and fellow Express-News veteran, Michael Quintanilla.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Elaine has mentored countless journalists through her participation in Hispanic journalist associations across Texas, including the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

Among her many awards are the Henry Guerra Lifetime Achievement Award and the Phillip True Reporter of the Year Award.

ARTS EDUCATION

The author and illustrator of 25 books, **Xavier Garza** is an acclaimed artist, author, illustrator, educator, and storyteller. His books include Just One Itsy Bitsy Little Bite, The Great and Mighty Nikko, Zulema and the Witch Owl, Lucha Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask and Maximilian and the Mystery of the Guardian Angel.

He has been the recipient of several prestigious awards for his work, such as the Pura Belpré honor Award, the América's Award and the Texas Institute of Letters

(continued on page 5)

From the President

Dear Friends,

It has been a very busy Fall for the Friends and will continue to be until the end of the year.It has been exciting to see all the books sales and pop-up book sales Friends are having. Each Friends branch is also working hard to attract new members using creative ideas, and that's something to celebrate.

Congratulations to all branch groups for hosting successful book sales to help fund the programs that attract patrons to their neighborhood libraries. Check the branch news section of SAPLings newsletter and the events pages on FOSAPL's website for branch sales near you. Be sure to send in any of your other event dates so they can be included.

It's also time to renew your membership. You should soon receive your renewal letter in the mail, or you can renew online to speed the process. Please consider becoming a Life Member and never worry about renewal time again.

The New Fee

Now that the FY2027 City Budget is over and city council passed the $30 yearly fee for Bexar County residents living outside the city limits, it is a good time to write to your county commissioner, the county judge, and your councilperson to let them know how this affects you and your family's budget. This $30 fee shows how surprises can happen despite our advocacy for public libraries with attendance at council and trustee meetings. But Friends, we must not give up. Each of us needs to continue our advocacy efforts: attend the city council meetings, sign up to talk about the fee, and let the county commissioners hear from you, too.

I hope you find the time to visit the Book Cellar and pick up some wonderful gifts for the special people in your life. Many thanks to Ben and the volunteer Book Cellar staff for another year of hard work and dedication.

Wishing each of you a Happy Holiday season,

Liz

FOSAPL Board Meetings—Sundays at 2 p.m.

November 22 PARMAN LIBRARY, 20735 Wilderness Oak

ANNUAL MEETING —Saturday, Jan. 23, 2027

CENTRAL LIBRARY, 600 Soledad St / 3-hour free parking in the garage

REMINDER: Please do not schedule branch meetings or book sales on the same dates as the board meetings.

Branch Leaves

News from Friends at Branch Libraries

Send us your photos and stories!

Brook Hollow

Don't miss it: **Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**, we are having a **HUGE, sell-everything-we-have sale** at Brook Hollow! We will have an abundance of adult fiction, DVDs and CDs for sale, plus a great selection of non-fiction, children's books, and wonderful Christmas gifts. See you at the sale!

Our next meeting will be **Sunday, Dec. 6, about 12:30 p.m.** We will be cleaning up from Saturday's sale. Then at noon we will have a lunch (probably pizza or tacos), followed by our quarterly meeting. You don't have to help with the cleanup in order to have lunch. Let's have a great turnout!

—Pat Bjornson

Encino Our **Fall Book Sale** was our best by far, and our smoothest setup and teardown, thanks to the NHS students from Johnson HS who helped in exchange for community service hours. They saved our backs! We made approximately $1650 for Encino programs and community events! Because Encino is one of the busiest polling sites in San Antonio, we are going to do a staff appreciation pizza party for them during early voting.

—Laura Glueck

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

Las Palmas Friends congratulate Luis Cavazos, library custodian, who received an Outstanding Service Award (Sept. 26) at St. Timothy Catholic Church's annual "Noche de Amistad" banquet. His time and talents obviously extend beyond his much-appreciated library work. Friends president, Velma Peña, attended the awards ceremony.

On Sept. 29, Friends supported the programming for **Hispanic Heritage month** that included Folkloric dances by the ladies of *Abuelitas de Oro* and a flour tortilla making interactive class presented by library staff. Class participants, including children, rolled out their own tortillas, and ended up with several tasty quesadillas to enjoy.

For the first time, **Las Palmas Neighbors Together** was held Oct. 6 at the Library and was hosted by staff and Friends along with partners: Westwood Square Neighborhood Association and H-E-B. Melissa Lovett, Velma Peña, Sylvia Soto, Robert Ramirez, and Delia Ramirez Trimble, together with **new members** Emma Llanas and Tina Morales, all helped with a very successful community celebration. Representatives from city departments and area organizations provided important information and folks of all ages participated in friendly games and contests that included a popular cakewalk, fishpond for the kiddos, and dancers—real "movers and shakers".

Our Friends group is staying busy, with upcoming events: **Halloween**

Abuelitas de Oro

Tortilla Class

Neighbors Together

/Día de Los Muertos, a **Social and Membership Recruitment Hour**, and a **Holiday Market** fundraiser to support future library programs and activities. Happy Holidays, all!

—Delia Ramirez Trimble

McCreless Friends will be having our last meeting of 2026 on **Monday, Nov. 9 at 6 p.m.** in the library's meeting room. Election of Officers will be held. All members are called to serve on the Friends of McCreless Board. Please come to the meeting and put your name forward or nominate another member (just be sure to first ask them if they're willing to serve). We are an active group and welcome input from all members.

Neighbors Together

On the topic of active, we achieved the goals set out on the Donation Plan for 2026. We provided funds for library programs, a laminator, the face painting artist at the 60th anniversary celebration, and staff summer reading t-shirts. We also provided snacks to show library workers our appreciation, supported teen and movie night programming, bought a bookcase for our Book Nook, and staffed a table at our 60th, where we distributed fun stickers and snacks!

Outdoor fun!

President Cammie Brantley is working with the McCreless Branch Manager on the 2027 Donation Plan, but the year is not over yet. Individual members are still attending library events, and our group is getting ready to support holiday programming. Come to our Monday, Nov. 9 meeting to find out all we have been up to this year and join us for planning for 2027!

—Jill Zimmerman

San Pedro Friends hosted an information table at the **Beacon Hill Neighbors Together** event on Tuesday, Oct. 6. Visitors were invited to pick up a bookmark, a membership envelope (and a plant) and provided information about their neighborhood library—San Pedro. Approximately 30 people came by and we had great conversations with our guests. We also received donations for the Friends, and several people committed to membership in the

(continued on page 4)

Branches *(continued from page 3)* San Pedro Friends group. The event took place at the Children's Park area of the Beacon Hill Linear Park. The park was a great draw for the neighborhood, and we heard lots of great stories about life in Beacon Hill.

—Diane Backhus

Pan American Friends held a **Trunk or Treat** on Oct. 27 in conjunction with **PanAm Paranormal**, an evening of spooky story telling. The Friends purchased snacks, as well as treats, for children attending the story time.

—Jo Ann Tobias Molina

Tobin's annual **Halloween Carnival**, held on Oct. 12 is one of the biggest family events of the year. The Friends of the Tobin Library are involved with making it a great success by funding snacks and the **Jolly Joeys**. This year, the big crowd (many in costumes!) enjoyed carnival style games, craft activities, tarot readings and a showing of the movie, "Hocus Pocus." And, of course, there were snacks galore. The highlight was a visit from the highly-acclaimed **Jolly Joeys Clown Alley of San Antonio.** The clowns stayed busy twisting dozens of balloons into a myriad of animals, as well as painting faces, delighting little and big folks, alike.

Jolly Joeys Clowns

Roar!

Fishing, too!

The holiday season wouldn't be complete without a year-end celebration. This year's is a **Pirate Christmas**, happening **Saturday, Dec. 5 from 2-5 p.m.** This year's party features cartoon movies, lots of crafts, snacks, and the appearance of Santa, who—it's rumored—will be available for a photo-op. This is a family-friendly occasion not to be missed.

Tobin patrons have been generous in their contributions to the Friends' book sales. Many thanks to Pat De Pasquale and Tracey Knouse who deliver overflow donations to other libraries that are in need of materials for their book sales. Much appreciated, ladies.

—Karen Sebesta

Great Northwest Friends hosted a **Pop-Up Children's Book Sale** on Saturday, Oct. 3 in the library's meeting room. We are happy to report that lots of school teachers brought their own children to shop! The Teen area is taking shape, offering a creative space for neighborhood teenagers, and branch manager Stephanie Vazquez asked for help with some final touches in the 2027 Donation Plan. *—Lucy Poludniak*

Why Renew your Membership with the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library?

It's a good question, and honestly, your $15 or $25 annual fee or $250 Life Membership is great, but your personal commitment to supporting our libraries is what's important. Libraries are neighborhood hubs.

Library

They are safe places to be yourself, learn new things, experience art and culture and community via the programs. In this era of online-induced loneliness, the library is a place to connect IRL (in real life). And as budgets get tighter and more of the money must go to utilitarian things like fixing HVAC systems, the libraries need our help to sustain and enrich their programming and community events. We also advocate for libraries, adding our voices to a powerful network that champions equality through access to information.

Libraries are so very important for a positive future. Please renew your commitment today.

— Membership Secretary

Donations & Memorials

Send your check to FOSAPL at PO Box 461523, San Antonio TX 78246 or **click here**. *—Sheila Figueroa*

DONATIONS

Major Denise Barlow
Caroline Wolff

IN MEMORY OF

Major Russell "Pat" Smutz
by the Friends of Tobin
Judalon Holmes by Emily Flores

Arts & Letters *(from page 1)*
Best Children's Book Award. Xavier has taught art at the public school and college level for 33 years and presented to and worked with students in Texas and throughout the nation.

Photo by Sarah Brooke Lyons

Xavier is a graduate of the University of Texas Pan American and UTSA. Born in McAllen and raised in Rio Grande City, he and his family have called San Antonio home for 27 years.

LEGACY

Hailed by the San Antonio Current as "consistently brilliant and impossibly cool," conductor/composer **Troy Peters** has been Music Director of YOSA (Youth Orchestras of San Antonio) since 2009. Musical America featured him in their 2016 special issue, The MA30 Professionals of the Year: The Innovators. He is passionate about building connections across musical genres and inspiring performers to take creative risks.

Formerly Resident Conductor of the San Antonio Symphony, Troy has been a guest conductor for national orchestras, and conductor for college orchestras, including Trinity University, UTSA, Texas State University, and Middlebury College. He has led summer festival orchestras, as well as All-State Orchestras in Alabama, Nebraska, and Washington.

Troy gained international attention for his orchestral collaborations with rock musicians, including Blind Pilot, Jon Anderson (of the band Yes), and Trey Anastasio (of the band Phish), with whom he recorded two albums. Working with dozens of San Antonio rock musicians, he created YOSA's Classic Albums Live series, winner of 2016's Centropolitan Award from Centro San Antonio and a Best of the City Award from San Antonio Magazine.

His work has been the subject of national media attention from CBS Sunday Morning, National Public Radio's Weekend Edition, Symphony, and The New Yorker.

Troy holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the University of Pennsylvania. Born in 1969 in Greenock, Scotland (of American parents), he grew up in Tacoma, Washington, but makes San Antonio home.

EMCEE

The recognition of these influential and inspiring Arts & Letters recipients will be hosted by Friends with guest emcee **Michael Quintanilla**—Mr. Fiesta himself! Michael is an award-winning journalist and former fashion and style writer for the San Antonio Express-News. He also wrote for the Los Angeles Times, Dallas Times-Herald and El Paso Herald-Post. Michael is proud to have been born and raised on the city's Southside. He is a graduate of Trinity University.

The Arts & Letters Awards were first presented in 1972. To see a list of past recipients, visit FOSAPL's Arts & Letters Events web page.

Sad News from Friends at Landa Branch

It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of our beloved Judy Yaeger, president of the Friends of Landa Library. Judy devoted many years to supporting the Landa branch, leading the Friends group with dedication, purpose, and heart. From every book sale to each funding request, she met every challenge head-on, always striving for success on behalf of the library she loved.

We are deeply grateful for Judy's years of service and the lasting impact she made. Her leadership and friendship will be dearly missed, and her legacy will live on in the library and community she helped strengthen.

Kimberly Mirelez at the September Board Meeting

BOARD MINUTES • 27 September 2026
Friends of the San Antonio Public Library
Pan American Branch Library

Call to Order: Liz Alves Presley, President, at 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call: conducted by Ana Flores, Secretary. A quorum was present.

Introductions: Jo Ann Molina introduced Pan American Friends and introduced library staff who provided an overview of the branch.

President's Report: Liz reported on attending City Town Hall and Friends meetings, noted that donation plans should be submitted and that book sales going well. She added that Linda Cheatum has moved to Dallas to be with family. The last FOSAPL board meeting of the year is scheduled for Nov. 22, with new board members set to be announced.

Approval of Minutes: as printed in the SAPLings. Anna Cleave moved to approve the minutes, Becky Benesh seconded, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: John Costello presented the financial reports. FOSAPL total YTD income was reported at $179,749.19. Several significant expenses remain outstanding, including library support, Book Cellar payroll and insurance. Branch net income totals $61,034.70. The organization remains in a strong financial position, with two-thirds of the year completed and additional income opportunities ahead.

The financial team is revising the account structure to separate CPA and bookkeeping functions and provide more detailed reporting. The 2023 and 2024 tax returns were filed and penalties were waived by IRS.

Membership Report: Laura Glueck reported that membership grows. Renewal letters with bookmarks will be going out mid-October.

Current membership stands at 511 (591 total): 232 Individual; 80 Dual; 7 Teen; 192 Life. A total of 154 memberships have lapsed.

Social Media Report: Ana Flores The FOSAPL Instagram page following continues to steadily increase, up to 307 followers from 274 since May. Facebook followers have increased to 1,653, up by 12 since the last meeting. Ana encouraged members to continue submitting content, noting that book sale flyers perform best.

Book Cellar Report: Ben Durocher Ben reported a successful August, attributing much of the performance to social media. Revenue doubled compared with the previous month. The October sale has been postponed until spring due to reduced inventory and a shortage of volunteers.

LIAISON REPORTS

Board of Trustees: Beth Graham (District 10) reported that the September meeting included the election of officers for the upcoming year. The holiday and closure schedule was approved and will be posted Oct. 1. Board meetings for the upcoming year are open to the

public and scheduled for the fourth Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at Central Library or a branch.

A new bond issue is anticipated in 2027, with opportunities for public comment. The board also approved naming teen spaces at Guerra, Pan American and Cody libraries in recognition of $75,000 gifts to each location. These gifts were made possible through the work of the San Antonio Public Library Foundation (SAPLF).

San Antonio Public Library Foundation: Liz Alves Presley reported that the SAPLF luncheon is scheduled for Oct. 4. A caravan is planned, and fundraising efforts for Carver are ongoing.

Library Administration: Sukrit Goswami thanked FOSAPL members for their continued support and noted that September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month. A digital library card was also introduced.

He discussed the recently approved City budget, noting the challenges of the budget process and the goal of implementing the approved budget while maintaining library services. Despite reductions affecting 18 city departments, including losing 39 library positions, the library budget increased by 4%.

Key investments include $379,000 for new facilities, development of a tween space and digital studio, $2.1 million for computer systems, funding for four HVAC projects and a ramp and railing project at Tobin Library.

Since December 2025, the department has conducted a comprehensive budget review to evaluate changing library usage and service needs. Circulation has increased 24% since 2019. Library hours and programming will not be reduced.

Additional revenue measures include increasing processing fees from $5 to $10 and implementing a $30 annual fee for non-San Antonio residents in Bexar County.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Marketing Committee: Kim Cauthon reported on promotion of the Willie's fundraiser at the 281/San Pedro location. The "spirit night" is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 22, with a designated code for fundraising proceeds. The committee recruited and hired a University of the Incarnate Word student to serve as a social media intern and continues to research customer relationship management (CRM) systems, including options from a local San Antonio company. The committee is also looking to migrate from Gmail to a SAFriends.org email system. Newsletter submissions are due Oct. 5.

Financial Committee: John Costello reported that the committee is reviewing financial statements and developing the 2027 budget, which will be presented at the November meeting.

Nomination Committee: Members interested in serving in an executive or board position were asked to submit names to Laura Glueck.

2026 Arts & Letters Awards Event: Liz Alves Presley reported the 2026 Arts & Letters Awards is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 15, at 2:00 p.m. at Las Palmas. A few entries have been received, and additional details will be shared as they become available.

Presentation
Kimberly Mirelez, Public Arts Program Manager with the City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture, presented on upcoming library public art projects.

Old Business
Board members were asked to complete the nomination form for the 2027–2029 officer elections. The Nominating Committee will meet to identify candidates for open positions, with nominations to be announced at the November meeting.

New Business
No new business was reported.

Announcements
The hot spot program is in its second week, and the waiting list continues to grow. The Chihuly art installation at Central Library is expected to be removed in mid-to-late October to accommodate roof repairs. The Willie's fundraiser is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 22, and the Arts & Letters Awards will take place Sunday, Nov. 15, at 2:00 p.m. at Las Palmas. The next meeting will be held at Parman Branch Library. Pat and Becky have books available for donation.

Adjournment: Chloe Galvan moved to adjourn the meeting; Anna Cleave seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Fundraising Fun with Friends at Willie's!

The weather on Thursday, Oct. 22 was tourist-bureau perfect and the company engaging for the Friends fundraiser at Willie's off 281N on San Pedro. The restaurant's open-air dining room made you forget the traffic of a big city and the occasional breeze over tasty eats and drinks echoed vacation mode.

We hope you spotted a few Friends when you made your stop at Willie's. Some of us were there early and some of us much later, but we had a great time no matter the hour. A few were there to meet longtime friends for a regular gathering, while some chose to order food for take-out. Some of us spoke to strangers in the order line to encourage them to mention the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library when placing their order. But Willie's also had a sign at the order counter so people knew it was our Spirit Night fundraiser.

Thanks to your efforts and happy bellies, we raised $247.97! Thanks for getting the word out.

Now that Friends had its first foodie fundraiser, do you have feedback? Is this something you'd like to repeat on a regular basis? Would you like to do one on your side of town? Do you have other ideas to share?

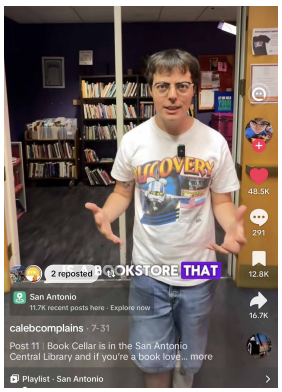
Email your feedback, ideas and requests to fosaplmembership-chair@gmail.com. Thanks!

A Viral August at The Book Cellar

August was an incredible month—and one we won't soon forget! A TikTok creator visited our store and shared a video that quickly went viral—receiving more than 48,000 likes and 16,000 shares—and introducing thousands of people to our little basement bookstore.

Our incredible team of volunteers stepped up to meet the unexpected increase in traffic. From keeping books on the shelves and processing donations to helping customers and keeping everything running smoothly, their hard work made this extraordinary month possible. Thank them when you visit.

And they came to see the Book Cellar for themselves! We welcomed an enormous increase in customers with August sales doubling to approximately $26,000. We got to experience the power of social media in attracting business.



It has been wonderful to see how many people love the Book Cellar—they think it's something special, something worth visiting, and something worth sharing.

Holiday Market Coming Soon!

Keep an eye on our **social media** for details about our upcoming Holiday Market! If you would like to participate in any way—whether by helping with the event, shopping our holiday sales, or donating Christmas crafts, décor, or other items for us to sell—please contact us. We'd love to have our Friends help make the season special!

—Ben Durocher

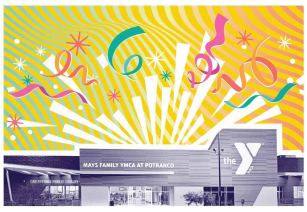
Library Director *(continued from page 1)*

The adopted budget also includes a new $30 fee for a library card for Bexar County residents who live outside the City of San Antonio. Bexar County contracts with the City of San Antonio for its residents to access library services. However, these costs have increased over time, and the fee paid by Bexar County only covers a portion of the cost per person of providing services to Bexar County residents, who represent about 26% of library usage overall. This new fee will partially close that gap while maintaining a high standard of library services.

The budget also includes approximately $2.5 million to address systemwide needs for security, safety, furniture, equipment, and the replacement of computers and mobile devices. Several facility improvement projects were also included in the budget, including work at Central, Mission, Thousand Oaks, Tobin at Oakwell, Potranco, and the Texana Resource Center.

TEXANA RESOURCE CENTER GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

I am especially excited to announce that the Texana Resource Center will open to the public this November at Central Library. The $4.5 million facility project includes a complete transformation of the space on the 6th floor, a new classroom, and a gallery and exhibit space. Improvements to the vault will ensure enhanced protection and preservation of rare and valuable historic materials. The highly anticipated grand opening will include a ribbon cutting ceremony and a week full of special programming. Join us for our **Grand Opening Celebration on November 16, at 1 p.m.**



We are also celebrating two major milestone anniversaries this November and December. The **Potranco Branch celebrates 10 years** of community service in partnership with the Potranco YMCA on November 4 starting at 10:30 a.m. Then on December 12, **Landa Branch celebrates 80 years** of service to the community.

It has been a busy and important year at SAPL, and I hope this holiday season brings you time to relax and unwind with your loved ones. Thank you for your support throughout the year, and for all the hard work you do for our library system. May you have a restful and joyful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Sukrit

From Your Nominating Committee

Hooray! Nominations have come in for every officer position.

I love to see so many people excited to take part in the future of our organization. If you would like to make a nomination or self-nominate, please do so without delay.

Email your nomination to Laura Glueck at fosaplmembershipchair@gmail.com

We will read the nominations at the November 22nd meeting. Voting and installation will take place in January at the Annual Meeting.

Friends of the San Antonio Public Library
Established 1964

The Friends were inaugurated on March 23, 1964, to promote public use of the San Antonio Public Library in appreciation of its value as a cultural and educational asset to the community and encourage the extension and improvement of its services.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
President Liz Alves Presley
Vice President Barbara Ma'at
Secretary Ana Flores
Treasurer John Costello, Immediate Past President
Membership Secretary Laura Glueck
Memorials & Donations Sheila Figueroa

BOARD MEMBERS 2025–2027
Becky Benesh ▪ Kim Cauthon ▪ Beth Crabb ▪ Laura Glueck ▪ Rochelle Lefton

BOARD MEMBERS 2026–2028
Sylvia Breland ▪ Norma Haro ▪ Sofia Holl ▪ Pat Mendiola ▪ Lucy Poludniak

SAPLings is published every two months and is available at www.friendsofsapl.org. Submit articles of interest and photos by email to saplingseditor@gmail.com
Editor Lucy Poludniak

DEADLINES are February 5, April 5, June 5, August 5, October 5, and **December 5**. All submissions are subject to space available and editing for adherence to style.

Love your library?
Become a Friend!
JOIN FOSAPL TODAY!