



# CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Friends of the Castro Valley Library  
February 2025

OUR NEXT BOOK SALE IS APRIL 25-27



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Robin Olivier

**Happy 2025, Friends!** We are very proud of our accomplishments last year and look forward to another very successful year.

**Our December Book Sale** was enthusiastically received by our reading community. So many happy faces when they saw that our fiction books were selling 2 for 1! It's so nice when community members express their appreciation to our volunteers! We had gift quality books for sale that weekend and then again during two children's events at the library. We're so fortunate to receive books in such wonderful condition. As always, the logistics of getting hundreds of boxes of books from storage to the library is complicated. It takes a number of hardy volunteers to deliver them. Then the onsite volunteers place the books in the proper categories. After the sale is over, the remaining books are given to a company that redistributes them. We've had some challenges in the past with this part of the sale, but thanks in a large part to board member, Roger Caswell, this went off without a hitch in December! Thanks again, Roger!

**In November**, we held our annual meeting and election of officers. This year, one of our directors at large stepped down. Stephanie Dorward served the past two years and was an extremely productive member. Thankfully, she is continuing in her role as chairperson of the Book Store Committee. In this, she has been proactive in heading off problems and instituting new procedures as necessary. Thank you, Steph, for all your contributions to our organization. Our new director at large is Scott Morgan. Scott is a hardworking member of our eBay team. He also works a regular shift in our bookstore. Our Board looks forward to working with Scott!

**Castro Valley Reads** is right around the corner. This is a program that the library and Friends are very proud of. Kickoff is Sunday, February 2 from 2-3 pm. That's when you can pick up your book and sign up for dis-

## COMING EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY!

### Ongoing Events:

Homework Help Center: Monday through Thursday 3:30 to 5 p.m. when school is in session. For primary and secondary students.

Advanced Math and Science Tutoring: Mondays from 5:30 to 7 p.m. when school is in session. High school and college level tutoring in math, physics, and chemistry.

Computer Crew: Saturdays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Young at Heart Book Club: First Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Registration required.

Page Turners Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Registration required.

Mystery Book Club: First Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. Reg. Required

Practice Your English: Sundays 2:00-3:00 p.m. Reg. Required.

Genealogy Study Group : First and third Wednesdays of the month at 10:30 a.m. (registration is not required)

### Coming Events (check the library website for a complete list and description of events):

2/3 Paws to Read (two sessions, 6:30-7:00 and 7:00-7:30 p.m.)

2/5 10:30-11:30 a.m. Signing & Musical Storytime (6 week prog.)

2/6 10:30-11:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime (multiple week prog.)

2/26 11:00-12:30 Financial Assistance for Health Care Costs

*Events are subject to update or change. Some events require advance registration. Please check the library website for the latest information or registration requirements.*

### Upcoming Holidays:

The library will be closed on the following days:

Wednesday February 12th for Lincoln's Birthday

Monday February 17th for President's Day

Monday May 26th for Memorial Day

cussion groups. Chris Selig, Adult Services Librarian does a great job leading this program. (See page 2 for more information.)

**The new year** means that it is time to **renew your membership!** You may do so at our bookstore or on line. There is a form on page 3 of this newsletter. Your membership dues are the foundation of our annual budget and allow us to sponsor activities for both children and adults. Please renew soon!

## CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, PAGE 2

### MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY MANAGER

By Dawn Balestreri, Branch Manager

**Our book choice(s)** for our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Castro Valley Reads were announced in early January. *The House of Broken Angels* by Luis Alberto Urrea is our selection for 2025. We are so pleased to be able to provide the community with another opportunity to come together, read and discuss the same book. Please consider joining other community members for a book discussion group at the library or in your homes. Tell your neighbors. We'll provide the books!

**We have had** a lot of wonderful programming planned for CV Reads this year, tamale making classes, Mexican History of California, music, dance and more!

**In April, we will interview** the national bestselling author, Luis Alberto Urrea to discuss *The House of Broken Angels* in person. We are very excited to have our author in person for the first time since 2019. Join us at the Douglas Morrison Theatre for a lively discussion about our 2025 Community Reads pick. Your free book (while supplies last) and program guide will be available at the library anytime beginning February 2 during or after our kick-off event (see Chris Selig's column for more information).

**This is also our 6th annual Tweens Read event.** The tweens are reading *THE CIRCUIT*, a graphic novel adaptation of Francisco Jimenez's novel *THE CIRCUIT: STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF A MIGRANT CHILD*, which was one of four of his middle grade (award-winning) autobiographies. "The exquisite illustrations are warm and weathered, perfectly complementing the emotional storytelling. A poignant, beautiful story of family, endurance, and appreciation." — *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review). Tweens will have the option between two discussion groups to discuss the selection.

**Of course, the Friends** have played a primary role in providing funding for most of the events this year. As usual, this library wouldn't be the vibrant community gathering place without the funding of our Friends. Thank you for continuing to support their efforts and consider volunteering if you are able. It's truly a community here at the library.

**March is Flood Safety Month.** The October 2024 Spanish floods brought over a year's worth of precipitation to several areas in Spain and unfortunately, people were not prepared. San Francisco recently had a tornado warning; these are unprecedented weather events. Please check out Ready.gov (<https://www.ready.gov/floods>) for more information on floods (and other emergencies). Some advice from [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov):

- Evacuate immediately, if told to evacuate. Never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.
- Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions regarding flooding.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. **Turn Around. Don't Drown!**

(Continued on Page 5)

### Castro Valley Reads 2025

By Chris Selig, Librarian II

**We need stories.** We need stories to understand ourselves. We especially need to read stories about people who are different from ourselves. We need to open ourselves up to those stories and find ways of thinking of "others" as having commonalities with "us."

**That's an opportunity** we've tried to provide with Castro Valley Reads, now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year. Thank you for the trust you've placed in us to choose our featured book and to design the programs. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for the continued funding!

**For 2025 we've chosen** a work of contemporary fiction called *The House of Broken Angels* by Luis Alberto Urrea.

The plot is simple enough. In his final days, beloved and ailing patriarch Miguel Angel de La Cruz, affectionately called Big Angel, has summoned his entire clan for one last legendary birthday party. But as the party approaches, his mother, nearly one hundred, dies, transforming the weekend into a farewell doubleheader.



**The magic of this book** comes in the telling. Imagine a tornado picking up speed as it whirls through and around each character: Big Angel, his wife Perla, his half-brother Little Angel, his children, parents, in-laws, grandchildren, and neighbors. The tornado dislodges and blends their memories, foibles, regrets, desires, joys and grief through rapid fire dialogues and interior monologues. As we learn tales that have passed into family lore, we are treated to a depiction of the de La Cruz family that is at turns tragic, bawdy, funny, joyful, and, ultimately, about love and grace.

**Luis Alberto Urrea's** amazing book will allow us to celebrate Mexican American culture and history and to think about immigration and the border. Understanding these characters and his fast-paced writing style offers you a chance to reach outside of your own culture and experiences, to practice empathy, and have a lot of laughs.

**The author of 19 books** in various genres, Urrea is most well-known for *The Devil's Highway*, his nonfiction account of a group of Mexican immigrants lost in the Arizona desert, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Urrea is also the author of *Hummingbird's Daughter*, *Into the Beautiful North*, and his latest, *Good Night, Irene*. In 2017, Urrea won an American

(Continued on Page 5)

## DONATIONS ALWAYS NEEDED!



The Friends of the Castro Valley Library depend on your generous donations of books, CDs, and DVDs. We are happy to receive your donations any time the BookStore is open. If your donation is more than a few bags or cartons, we will appreciate your contacting us ahead of time to make sure we have staff available to receive it. We are happy to lend you a cart or help you bring your donation inside. Bring your donations directly to the BookStore office door. **Please do not leave donations elsewhere in – or outside the Library.**

**Please note that we may not accept** donations the 2 weeks prior to a big book sale due to time and space constraints. If at all possible, save your donation until the weeks after the sale. (Thank you!!)

**At this time, we are accepting** donations of most types of books, DVDs, and music CDs as well as magazines that are **no more than 4 months old**. We may also accept jigsaw puzzles, board games, unused greeting cards, and stationery items. We **do not accept** sets of encyclopedias or similar books, condensed books, older textbooks, or books that are dirty, moldy, smoky, or otherwise damaged. We also **cannot accept** VHS or cassette tapes (music or audiobooks) or vinyl records. A good rule of thumb on condition: if you would purchase the item yourself, we will most likely accept it.

**Your donation is tax-deductible.** We are happy to give you a receipt for your donation. The receipt will specify the number of cartons or bags of books or other items received (so you don't have to stand there and wait for them to be counted.)

**Funds received from the sale** of these items pay for many library programs and amenities that would not otherwise be available.

**If you have questions** about donating or how the donations are used, please let us know! [Donation guidelines](#) are available at the BookStore or on our website.

## 2025 Memberships Available Now!

**Your Friends of the Castro Valley Library membership** is renewable as of January 1st each year. Even if you are already a member, we still need a new application form filled out in order to verify that your information is correct. You may renew at the Friends BookStore office inside the library, by mail, or through our website. When renewing by mail, if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope, we will mail your membership card to you; otherwise, please arrange to pick it up from the office. Please allow a couple of weeks for processing time before picking up your card.

**Scan the QR code** for more information. Individual memberships are only \$10, and you receive the following:



**\$7 in discounts** for the Friends' BookStore. (\$14 in discounts for Family memberships.)

**\$2 discount** for each of our 3 book sales. (\$4 discount for Family memberships.)

**Our quarterly newsletter** *Circle of Friends* (e-mailed or snail mailed). The newsletter contains timely announcements, library news, book reviews, and more.

**Remember** that your dues support library programs that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

**Not a member yet?** New memberships may be purchased any time of year.

**I want to join the Friends of the Castro Valley Library as a  new  renewing member (IMPORTANT—so that we have accurate information, PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!)**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Make tax-deductible check payable to  
Friends of the Castro Valley Library  
3600 Norbridge Ave.  
Castro Valley CA 94546

**I  do  do not wish to receive the newsletter and other Friends' information by e-mail**

### MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

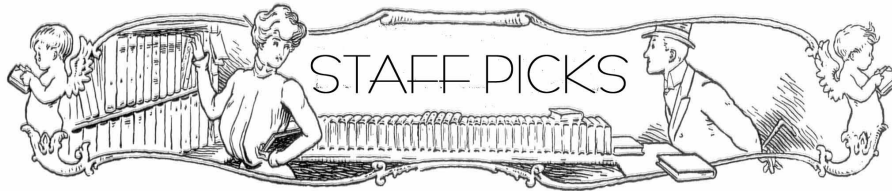
- \$10 Individual    \$20 Family    \$5 Youth    \$35 Corporate Sponsor  
 \$50 Benefactor    \$200 Lifetime—Individual    \$300 Lifetime—Family  
*Membership renewals are due January 1st.*

I would like to be an active Friend and help with:

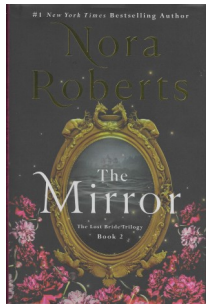
- Book store    Sales events    Membership    Publications  
 Information Technology/Website    Public Relations/Advocacy

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Card Issued  
By \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_



***The Mirror*** by Nora Roberts (2024 fiction): This is the second book in the “Lost Bride Trilogy.” The first book, *The Inheritance*, was released about a year ago. Starting at the beginning, Sonya MacTavish inherits a mansion in Maine from an uncle she did not know she had. There is a condition to the inheritance that requires her to spend a certain amount of time in the house, a murder scene for seven family brides. Having broken her engagement and left her job in Boston at the same time, she decides to move in and discovers she is living with many benevolent spirits and one angry ghost. Thus far in the series, Sonya has started her own

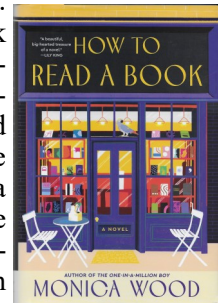


business. Her best friend has moved in with her, and being a Nora Roberts book, each is in a successful relationship. Sonya discovers she has a wonderful family she didn't know existed. She has also discovered a “magic mirror” that gives her access to the past. The fly in the ointment is Hester Dobbs, the angry ghost who has caused the deaths of the seven brides and stolen their wedding rings. If Sonya can get the rings back, Hester will be gone. Yes, there is a lot of the supernatural in this series, but I am finding it to be reasonably realistic and a darn good ghost story. I do recommend reading *The Inheritance* first. And now I am impatiently waiting for the third book to come out. (Ginger Russell)

***Rules of Civility*** by Amor Towles (2011 fiction): Towles, who is the well-known author of *A Gentleman in Moscow* and *The Lincoln Highway*, began his literary career with this book. Mostly set in New York City during the late 1930's, it brings to mind all the famous movies we watched glorifying “old New York”. The story is told by Katey Kontent, real name, Katya. She comes to New York with hopes for her future. Like many young women of that era, she lives in a boarding house for women. There are clear rules about who enters the building and when meals are. The other women living there have many interesting stories. Soon, Katey shares a room with Eve. Eve comes from plenty of family money but chooses to be independent from her parents, sending money back when they offer it. The girls go out on New Year's Eve with the plan of stretching their \$3 as far

as it would go. Their plan had been to drink early and then go to a Ukrainian diner whose late-night special was “coffee, eggs, and toast for fifteen cents”. By 11:00, they had twenty cents left between them when “he” came into the club. The girls were immediately impressed and lucky for them, so was he. Without giving away the story, meeting him placed the girls in a whole new world that is so much fun (mostly) to read about. If you read this book, which I hope you will, there is a follow-up book that Towles recently wrote entitled *Table for Two*. It is comprised of a few short stories and at the end, a novella telling the story of Eve after she leaves New York. Towles is a powerful narrative writer and a keen developer of characters. It's hard to believe that this was his first book. (Robin Olivier)

***How to Read a Book*** by Monica Wood (2024 fiction): Harriet Larson, a retired English teacher, conducts a prison book club. One of the prisoners is Violet Powell, who has served 22 months for a drunk driving crash that killed a local teacher. She is about to be released. Frank Daigle is the widower of the kindergarten teacher who died in the accident. They all have their ghosts and their family secrets, and when the three of them meet accidentally at a bookstore, some of the secrets are released. This is a big-hearted novel which demonstrates that even when life has handed you a difficult situation, someone will help you succeed. One of the most enjoyable parts of the novel relates to a group of amazing African Gray parrots, and it's worth reading just for those chapters. But you become invested in all of the characters, so start at the beginning and read to the end. It is a quick, enjoyable read. (Ginger Russell)



**BOOK REVIEWS WANTED!** Send your reviews of books, movies, and music to our email address or drop them off at the BookStore at any time. We will print as many as possible in each issue. Reviews can be up to approximately 250 words in length and should include the publication date. New contributors are always welcome, so please let us know if you've read a wonderful book!!

*Library Manager's Message cont'd from Page 2*

- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water. Fast-moving water can wash bridges away without warning.
- Stay inside your car if it is trapped in rapidly moving water. Get on the roof if water is rising inside the car.
- Get to the highest level if trapped in a building. Only get on the roof if necessary and once there, signal for help. Do not climb into a closed attic to avoid getting trapped by rising floodwater.

**Preparedness is the best move** to protect yourself and others. Be safe and hope to see you at the library this year!

*Castro Valley Reads, cont'd from Page 2*

Academy of Arts and Letters award for literature. He lives with his family in Naperville, IL, where he is a distinguished professor of creative writing at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

**Castro Valley Reads discussion group registration is underway.** You can register for a Library-facilitated group or you can form your own group with three or more people. To learn more about discussion groups and to register, visit [aclibrary.org/castro-valley-reads](http://aclibrary.org/castro-valley-reads).

**Through the beginning of April**, we have a great line up of programs related to the themes of the book. And on Friday, April 11, our featured author will be joining us in person at the Douglas Morrisson Theatre for the Finale event.

## CHECK OUT OUR BOOKSTORE MONTHLY THEMES!

*By Marie Blackmon*

**Our special theme books** are found on the center of the Honesty Shelves.

**February:** Black History Month, American Health Month, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, Lunar New Year



**March:** National Women's History Month, National Nutrition Month, Irish Heritage Month, St. Patrick's Day

**April:** National Poetry Month, School Library Month, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Easter



**May:** Mother's Day, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, Jewish American Heritage Month, National Bike Month, Memorial Day

## NOW SELLING ON eBay

**The Friends of the CV Library are now** selling books, DVDs, and CDs on eBay. Many selected unusual, rare, and higher-value items are offered at reasonable prices. We have over 400 listings.

**Our seller name is *friendscvlibrary*.** Some of the items we currently have listed are: Bikepacking, The Saga of Lake Tahoe Volumes 1 and 2, Miles Davis Bitches' Brew CDs, Night Court DVDs, Stick Dog Books 1-8, Havana Modern, The Occult World (1887), and many sets of comics and graphic novels. You can see our entire online store by scanning this QR code, using the link <https://www.ebay.com/usr/friendscvlibrary>, or by searching one of the titles and then clicking on our name when you reach that page. More items are added every week. We are happy to have these items available for you. Please let us know if you have any questions.



# Thank You CORNER

By Robin Olivier, President

**One of our longest standing** and loyal volunteers isn't always in evidence in our BookStore. She works full-time and has a BookStore shift on Monday nights. She works all of our book sales. But what Marie Blackmon is most notable for is our monthly theme shelves! Marie has been doing this job since at least 2012!

**Themes are determined for each month**, and Marie collects appropriate books from all of our categories. For example, February's themes are Black History Month, American Health Month, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, and Lunar New Year. Beginning on February 1, books featuring these themes will be on display on our Honesty Shelves.

**Throughout the month**, Marie updates this shelf as Items are sold. We so appreciate the work Marie does! Do check out the Monthly Theme Shelf! Thanks, Marie!!

### A Gaggle of Giggles

(reprinted from the Reader's Digest)

Laughter is universal. "LOL" is not. English speakers use shorthand such as "haha," but here's how to convey chuckling in other languages:

*MDR*: French acronym for *mort de rire* (dying of laughter)

*Memeo*: Spanish for "I'm peeing myself" (as in from laughter)

*555*: Pronounced "hahaha" in Thai

*WWW*: Repetition of the "w" sound at the start of the Japanese word for laughter.

*askfhsjkd*: keyboard gibberish indicates amusement in Turkish, as if the speaker is overcome by laughter and can't type properly.

- Restofworld.org

## MEET YOUR FRIENDS

Scott Morgan

**Scott has been a member** of the Friends for 3 years and a volunteer for 2 years, starting with support for the book sales. He now works in the BookStore on Thursday afternoons and is also a vital part of our online sales team. In addition, he manages our liaison with Operation Book Support, another online seller. This past November, Scott also joined the Friends Board as an At-Large Director.

**Scott and his family** have lived in Castro Valley since 1997. Their children attended Castro Valley Schools. He worked for Kaiser Permanente for 30 years, primarily in their national regulatory compliance department.



**His hobbies include** woodworking, coffee roasting, traveling, gardening, and spending time with his children, who currently live in Sacramento and Santa Cruz.

**Stop by the BookStore** on Thursday afternoons to meet Scott!

### HOW TO CONTACT CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

**If you have** any comments or suggestions for regular columns or features that you would like to see in *Circle of Friends*, please let us know.

**We also welcome** brief news items or articles. Deadlines are typically two to three weeks prior to the issue dates: the first of February, May, August, and November. Keep in mind that time-sensitive items must fit within the publication schedule.

**Please call** 510-733-3285 or e-mail us at [Friends.CVL@gmail.com](mailto:Friends.CVL@gmail.com) if you have any questions or want to submit an item.



Mark your calendars now—the Spring Book Sale is

**APRIL 25—27**

As always, the sale will be at the following times:

**Friday night Member Preview—6 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

**Saturday—10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Sunday Bag Sale—1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (\$5 per bag)**

We will have our usual selection of fiction, nonfiction, and children's books, as well as audio books, CDs and DVDs, all at bargain prices. We may also have jigsaw puzzles, board games, journals, and other educational and stationery supplies.

Look for our \$2 coupon in the April 23rd Castro Valley Forum (good on Saturday only).

We anticipate having over 250 cartons of books at the sale. You will be glad you came!

Prices for most books and media items are as follows:

Hardback and Large Paperback	\$1.00
Small Paperback	\$ .50
Harlequin Romances	\$ .25
Children's & Young Adult Books	\$ .25
Comic Books	\$ .50
DVDs (per disc)	\$ .50
Music CDs (per disc)	\$ .50
Sheet Music	\$1.00

There may be a limited selection of gift quality, antiquarian, and special price books that are priced as marked.

Volunteers will be needed for all sale days as well as for the set-up and clean-up days. Contact us at 510-733-3285 or [Friends.CVL@gmail.com](mailto:Friends.CVL@gmail.com) if you can volunteer or if you have any questions about the work or requirements. A signup sheet will be available in the Friends office approximately one month prior to the book sale date.

***Planning to attend?***

***Please remember to bring your current (2025) Friends of the Castro Valley Library membership card in order to take advantage of your \$2.00 discount. You can join or renew at the door or purchase a membership ahead of time.***

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

**Book Sale Dates for 2025 are:**

**April 25—27**

**August 1—3**

**December 5—7**



We may have pop-up sales of certain types of books from time to time. Follow us on Facebook to get timely notice of pop-up sales.

**LIBRARY HOURS**

**Monday & Tuesday** 12 noon to 8 p.m.  
**Wed. & Thursday** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
**Friday** Closed  
**Saturday** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**Sunday** 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Please call 667-7900 or visit the Library website at [www.aclibrary.org](http://www.aclibrary.org) for more information.

**BOOKSTORE HOURS**

**Monday** 12 noon to 7:30 p.m.  
**Tuesday** 12 noon to 5:30 p.m.  
**Wednesday** 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
**Thursday** 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
**Friday** Closed  
**Saturday** 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
**Sunday** 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Please call 733-3285 or e-mail [Friends.CVL@gmail.com](mailto:Friends.CVL@gmail.com) for more information.

**FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD**

Robin Olivier, President  
Amy Fain, Vice President  
Barbara Kissling, Recording Treasurer  
Elizabeth Rinehart, Operational Treasurer  
Rose Kish, Secretary  
Scott Morgan, At-Large Director  
Roger Caswell, At-Large Director  
Wayne Ainsworth, At-Large Director  
Joan King, At-Large Director

**Board members may be contacted** by calling the Friends office or emailing us as noted under the BookStore information to the left. You may also contact us through our website or by visiting the BookStore during normal operating hours.

**MEETING SCHEDULE!!!**

**Friends meetings** are held on an as-needed basis. *Circle of Friends* is published quarterly. Please check your newsletter or our website for upcoming meeting dates and other events. Our annual meeting is held in November.

Printed by:  
**Select Imaging**

6398 Dougherty Road Suite 27, Dublin CA 94568  
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Castro Valley CA 94546  
[www.aclibrary.org](http://www.aclibrary.org)

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

