



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Friends of the Castro Valley Library
February 2026

THE NEXT BOOK SALE IS APRIL 10 – 12!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Scott Morgan

Happy New Year! I am honored and grateful to have been elected president of the Friends at our annual meeting last November. The Friends is an amazing group of committed, talented, and often long-serving volunteers devoted to our library and community. I've been volunteering at the Friends for over two years, but I'm still learning everything that's involved in this role. Our last president, Robin Olivier, accomplished so much during her tenure and has been helping me get up to speed. At the same meeting, Sue Israel joined the Board of Directors as At-Large Director, replacing Wayne Ainsworth. Welcome, Sue and thanks much Wayne!

Thanks to our members and other shoppers, our December Book Sale was the best ever. We didn't raise our sale prices, so that means shoppers bought more books, CDs, DVDs, puzzles and games! To make the sale successful, approximately 50 volunteers were involved in planning, marketing, hauling over 400 boxes of books from storage, managing the layout and sale of all the items, and cleaning up afterward. Amazing, and whew! Thanks everyone!

We have another busy year ahead of us, taking in and cleaning donations and triaging the items to the bookstore or this year's three book sales. We continue to need newer fiction books, so please think of us when you want to pass them along!

Our main purpose is to support the Castro Valley Library and many of its programs, including this year's programs across all ages, CV Reads, and Storywalk. We will also continue to increase our support to literacy programs and educational scholarships.

The new year means that it is time to renew your membership if you haven't already. You may do so at our bookstore or online. 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 to get your full 2026 benefits!

COMING EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY!

Ongoing Events:

Homework Help Center: Monday through Wednesday 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 7:00 p.m. Registration required.

Page Turners Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Registration required.

Mystery Book Club: First Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. Registration required

Practice Your English: Sundays 2:00-3:00 p.m. Registration required.

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

Read the World Middle Grade Book Club: Second Thursdays 4:00-5:00 p.m. (registration required). First meeting is Wed. 2/11, Thursdays thereafter.

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

February 2nd, 6:30-7:00 and 7:00-7:30 Paws to Read

February 4th, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Signing and Music Storytime (ongoing program)

February 5th, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime (ongoing program)

February 14th, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Princess Tea (for children)

February 15th 2:00– 3:00 p.m. Dave Rocha Jazz Trio

February 21st, 10:30-11:45 a.m. Yoga for Beginners and Beyond

March 29th 2:30-4:00 p.m. Mary Lincoln and Women's Mental Health (see article on page 6)

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:

February 12th for Lincoln's Birthday

February 16th for President's Day

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, PAGE 2

MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY MANAGER

By Dawn Balestreri, Branch Manager

2025 was a great year at the library! We offered so many relevant, interesting and fun programs. We capped off the year with a Life-Size Candyland®.

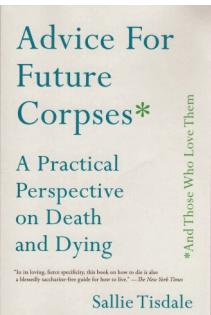
We want you to read! Come browse the last free public space (inside at least) and check out our shelves for a book that catches your fancy. Recent studies have found older adults are reading less and spending more time on social media, yet reading is associated with reductions in stress and improved mood (when's the last time you felt LESS stressed after scrolling online?!). Especially if you are an older adult, we want to see you.

The book choice for our 9th annual Castro Valley Reads was announced in early January. *Advice for Future Corpses (and those who love them)* by Sallie Tisdale is our selection for 2026. 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 a lot of wonderful programming planned for CV Reads this year, a cleaning and organizing, digital legacy, art, music and more!

In March, we will interview the national bestselling author, Sallie Tisdale to discuss *Advice for Future Corpses* in person. We are very excited to have our author in person and will be hosting the finale at the library for the first time. Space will be limited so make sure you register for the finale. Your free book (while supplies last) and program guide will be available at the library anytime beginning February 1 during or after our kick-off event (see Lyn Leone's column for more information).

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.



Castro Valley Reads 2026

By Lyn Leone, Librarian II

Books help us make sense of the world, but they also help us make sense of ourselves. They offer new lenses, invite reflection, and encourage us to sit with perspectives that may feel unfamiliar or even uncomfortable. Through Castro Valley Reads, now entering its **9th year**, we aim to create shared experiences around books that expand our understanding of one another.

Thank you for the trust you place in us to select each year's title and design meaningful community programs. And special thanks to the Friends of the Library for their continued and generous support.

For 2026, we've selected a powerful and thought-provoking work of nonfiction: *Advice for Future Corpses (and Those Who Love Them)* by Sallie Tisdale.

Tisdale's book is an invitation to talk openly about something that touches every one of us but is often pushed aside: the end of life. Drawing from her decades as a palliative care nurse, she offers a clear-eyed and compassionate look at what dying can be—physically, emotionally, and socially. Rather than dramatize or soften the subject, she provides a grounding presence, blending practical guidance with deeply human stories.

The strength of this book lies in its balance: it is both pragmatic and philosophical, direct yet comforting. Tisdale moves between clinical insight and personal reflection, helping readers navigate the realities of caregiving, the complexity of family dynamics, and the ways we prepare—often imperfectly—for loss. Her voice is steady, warm, and at times surprisingly humorous, creating space for honesty without fear.

Reading *Advice for Future Corpses* gives us an opportunity to consider how we care for one another, how we talk about vulnerability, and how we might approach mortality with greater courage and compassion. It encourages conversation and introspection—exactly the kind of shared exploration Castro Valley Reads is meant to inspire.

Sallie Tisdale is the author of several nonfiction works, including *Violation*, *The Best Thing I Ever Tasted*, and *Talk Dirty to Me*. A widely published essayist and former MacArthur Fellow, she brings clarity, curiosity, and tenderness to every subject she takes on. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

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.

Through the end of March, we have a great line up of programs related to the themes of the book. And on Friday, March 27, our featured author will be joining us for the finale, in person at the Castro Valley Library.

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.**

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. Please feel free to call us if you have questions about acceptance of specific items.

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.

JOIN US! 2026 Memberships Available

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.

LIFETIME MEMBERS—PLEASE SEE PAGE 5.



BYOB (bring your own bag) to the Bookstore and book sales! As you may have heard, California has banned the use of plastic bags at checkout in certain types of retail stores effective January 1, 2026. The Friends of the Castro Valley Library encourage you to bring your own reusable bags when shopping at the Bookstore or book sales.

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:

Bookstore Sales events Membership Publications
 Information Technology/Website Public Relations/Advocacy

FOR OFFICE

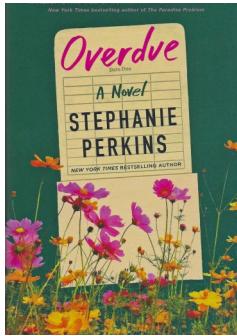
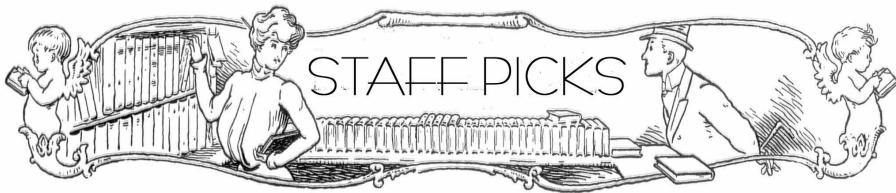
USE ONLY:

Card Issued

By _____

Date: _____

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Overdue by Stephanie Perkins (2025 fiction): I am not normally a big fan of love stories, but this is a good one. Ingrid Dahl works at the public library in the small North Carolina town of Ridgetop. She likes, but doesn't love, her job. She is good friends with her co-worker, Macon Nowakowski, on whom she has secretly crushed for years. She and her boyfriend of 11 years, Cory, are "taking a break" for a month to see other people before they decide about the permanence of their relationship. Ingrid quickly makes a big mistake with Macon, alienating him, and then Cory isn't ready to get back together after the month has elapsed. Her story continues through a round of dating, and then Cory announces the unthinkable, that he has found someone else, forcing her to examine her future, not only in relationships, but with her living arrangements and ultimately, her career. This is a lovely story, at times poignant and at times very funny. The characters are all delightful, including her co-workers, the library patrons, her friends, and a tuxedo cat named Edmond (Dantes). Ultimately, Ingrid decides to open a bookstore, and she and Macon resume their friendship. I won't say any more than that. This is also a beautiful book edition, with illustrated endpapers and the logo of the bookstore stamped on the front. I recommend it for anyone who likes both books and romance. (Ginger Russell)

The Lives of Others is a 2006 subtitled German drama that won the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film in 2007. Even though this film was created twenty years ago it can serve as a warning for the times in which we are currently living. The film is set in 1984, right before the fall of the German Democratic Republic. The main character, a Stasi agent, is ordered to spy on a successful playwright. Over time the agent becomes disgusted when he finds out the real reason behind the surveillance, resulting in a series of tragic events. The film is truly riveting, and I could not pry myself away from the screen despite the film's 2+ hour length. The subtitles do not interfere with the narrative and the acting is superb. The film centers on an autocratic government's need to know everything that goes on in the lives of its people to preserve its hold on power, and the possible consequences of government power taken to extremes. The brief end piece shows the post GDR lives of the main characters. There is a sense of lingering sorrow for all that went before that stays with you. This film serves as a warning against the abuses of autocracy and the lives that it destroys. Well worth the watch. (Jane Wolford)

All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me by Patrick Bringley (2023 memoir). This is a book for those who love museums, for those who have always wanted to visit the Met in New York City, and for those who can't wait to get back! As he mourns the loss of his dear older brother, Patrick decides to leave his job and do something quite different. He applies for a job as a guard at the Metropolitan Museum. He visited it first as an 11-year-old with his family and always remembered going up the Grand Staircase. Both of his parents were interested in art and with a couple of art history classes in college, his art background might have been considered minimal. But his passion for art was great and only grew exponentially during his years at the museum as a guard. We are introduced to the various rooms—the Egyptian, the Astor Court where a scholar's garden from the Ming Dynasty has been recreated, African art, and a Picasso Exhibition that attracted more than 10,000 visitors some days! Patrick is accessible to the patrons with questions, but it's his time absorbing the amazing beauty of his surroundings that I will always remember. My Book Club read this book and all are excited to visit one of our local museums again—and hope to find a guard with Patrick's love for the job. (Robin Olivier)

Sky Fall Series by Shannon Messenger (YA fiction): The Sky Fall Series starts with Vane Weston, a 17-year-old who lost his parents in a freak storm when he was younger. He survived, but with almost no memories of the event or anything before it. The one memory he still has is of a girl, Audra, who seemed to be part of the wind. Then one day he meets her and she tells him he isn't human; he is a sylph - a wind spirit - and that he is the last of the western wind sylphs. Audra then trains him to use the wind abilities that come with his heritage. She trains him to stay alive when people seeking Vane come. As they train, a forbidden love rises between them, one that Audra tries very hard to ignore. This book series was amazing, I loved the twists and turns, and each encounter with the villain was written astonishingly well. It had detail and was written so that you could lose yourself in the story. The series only has three books, but all three are packed full of adventure and fun. Sky Fall is a fantasy aimed at teens. The order of the books is Let the Sky Fall, Let the Storm Break, and Let the Wind Rise. This series is seriously amazing and I very much recommend it if you are into fantasy. (Evan Marsh)



FOR LIFETIME MEMBERS:

About a month ago, you should have received a letter asking that you pick up your 2026 lifetime membership card at the Friends office (at the Bookstore) in the library. The reason we are asking this is to verify that we have your correct address information in our files.

This is a reminder for those of you who have not yet picked up your cards. The Bookstore hours are listed on the last page of this newsletter, and you can obtain your card any time we are open. It only takes a few minutes.

If you didn't receive the letter, that may mean that we have incorrect information, so it is all the more important to stop by.

When we update our membership information this November, if you have not picked up your card, your name will be taken off our lifetime membership list. We will, however, mail the 2027 cards to all those who have verified their information.

Thank you for your understanding. If you have any questions, please let us know.

If you do not already have a lifetime membership and would like more information, please contact us. Lifetime memberships are \$200 for an individual or \$300 for a family.

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 Heart Health Month, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, Lunar New Year.



March: Women's History Month, National Nutrition Month, Red Cross Month.



April: Easter, Passover, Autism Awareness Acceptance Month, Alcohol Awareness Month, National Poetry Month.

Happy Mother's Day!



May: Mother's Day, Asian-American + Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Mental Health Awareness Month.

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 many listings.

Our seller name is ***friendscvlibrary***. Some of the items we currently have listed are: *Glinda of Oz*, *Twentieth Century Posters*, *Self-Sufficient Life*, *Hollywood Quarterly*, *Mad Magazine*, *Naval History of the Civil War*, *Highlights Favorite Puzzle Collection*, and more. 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.



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THANK YOU CORNER

By Scott Morgan, President

Kay Wetherwax is one of our former presidents and leads our book sales. She has been volunteering at the Friends since 2009! Her work on our book sales is nothing short of amazing. As noted on the first page of this newsletter, there are many functions and people to organize and mobilize, all of which she does in a calm, collected, and friendly manner. She makes time before and during the event to talk with our many volunteers to provide guidance and encouragement. She is also leading an effort to bring together Friends groups from across the East Bay. Thanks for everything Kay!

Robin Olivier has been a Friends volunteer for many years and served as our last president for five years. She helped lead the organization out of the pandemic, and our success has only grown under her leadership. I have been pestering her with questions about the running of the Friends for several months now, and she has always been gracious, patient, and insightful in her guidance, including when she has to tell me something twice! Last year alone she started leading an effort to expand our funding to library programs, librarian education, and literacy improvement. I'm very happy that she will continue to head up that work as well as our committee on bookstore policies and training.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES: If we are not already notifying you about the chance to get free books at the end of our big book sales, please send us your email address! Sponsors of Little Free Libraries in our area are invited to stop by the library on Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. when the book sale closes to pick up free books for your little library. You must register in advance, though. Our contact information is on page 8 of this newsletter.

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 if you have any questions or want to submit an item.

IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



AN "ALTERED WOMAN": MARY LINCOLN AND WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Sunday
March 29, 2026
2:30 – 4 pm



Castro Valley Library
3600 Norbridge Ave
510-667-7900
Register at www.aciblary.org
(click on events)

Mary Lincoln is considered the most controversial First Lady in U. S. History. Her life was filled with tragedy and loss. Fifteen years after witnessing her husband's assassination, her only surviving son worked with lawyers and physicians to legally commit her to a mental institution. Against her son's wishes, she worked with attorney friends to secure her release and then fled to Europe, fearing another forced recommitment. Historians and physicians are still debating what caused her physical and emotional challenges.

Please join us to learn more about her life, and the public condemnation she suffered for behaviors that are still misunderstood.



Presenter:
Jane Wolford is Professor Emerita of U. S. Women's History. She retired from Chabot College in 2023 after a 40-year teaching career. She holds a B.A. and M.A. in U. S. History, with a concentration in U. S. Women's History. Jane has lived in Castro Valley with her family since 1979.

The library is wheelchair accessible. An ASL interpreter will be provided for this program if requested at least 7 days in advance. Please contact your local AC Library or accessibility@aciblary.org.



Speaking Of is a series of events sponsored by the Castro Valley Library. Our 2025 line-up was very successful. The 2026 Speaking Of schedule of events is in its planning stages but co-coordinators Carla Mill and Bookstore volunteer Jane Wolford have the following dates/topics to share with you:

- Mary Lincoln and Women's Mental Health in the 19th Century, March 29, 2:30-4 pm, Jane Wolford, Professor Emerita of Women's History, Chabot College
- Screening of the documentary film "The Librarians" + panel discussion featuring local librarians following the film, date TBA (late May-early June).
- Dr. Kin Yuen, Physician in Sleep Medicine, Stanford University, September 27, 2:30-4.

All events are held in the library's Chabot Room by the Bookstore. Events are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required.

If you want to join our mailing list for to find out more about future **Speaking Of** events please contact janewolford6@gmail.com



Mark your calendars now—the Fall/Winter Book Sale is

APRIL 10—12

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 8th Castro Valley Forum (good on Saturday only).

We anticipate having over 300 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 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 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 2026 are:

April 10—12

July 31—August 2

December 4—6



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.

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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 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 for more information.

Printed by:

Select Imaging

6398 Dougherty Road Suite 27, Dublin CA 94568
925-803-1210

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD

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Stephanie Dorward, At-Large Director
Roger Caswell, At-Large Director
Sue Israel, 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!!!

Board Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month, January to October, at 5:00 p.m. in the library.

Our annual meeting is held in November. The date and time will be posted in our Bookstore two weeks before the annual meeting.

Circle of Friends is published quarterly.

Friends of the Castro Valley Library
3600 Norbridge Avenue
Castro Valley CA 94546
www.aclibrary.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL