

FOCL POINT

Friends Encouraged To Talk Up Their Libraries



State Sen. Cathy Osten of Sprague said libraries are one of the important things people consider when deciding where to live. So it makes sense that a community would support its library.

Let Local, State Officials Know You Care

Friends groups can support their libraries by more ways than financially. They can also support them by talking with officials about what the library means for their communities.

Libraries "set the community spirit for a town," said Sen. Cathy Osten of Sprague. Osten spoke at the Friends of Connecticut Libraries Fall Conference in November at Central Connecticut State University.

(Continued on page 9)

Inside this issue:

Valuable books?	2
Friends Around The State	4
Awards	9
Regional meetings	12

How Does Your Book Sale Compare?

The average price of a hard-cover book at Connecticut library book sales is \$2.

The average price of a mass market paperback is 50 cents.

Those were just two conclusions from a survey

that the Friends of Connecticut Libraries took this year of Friends groups.

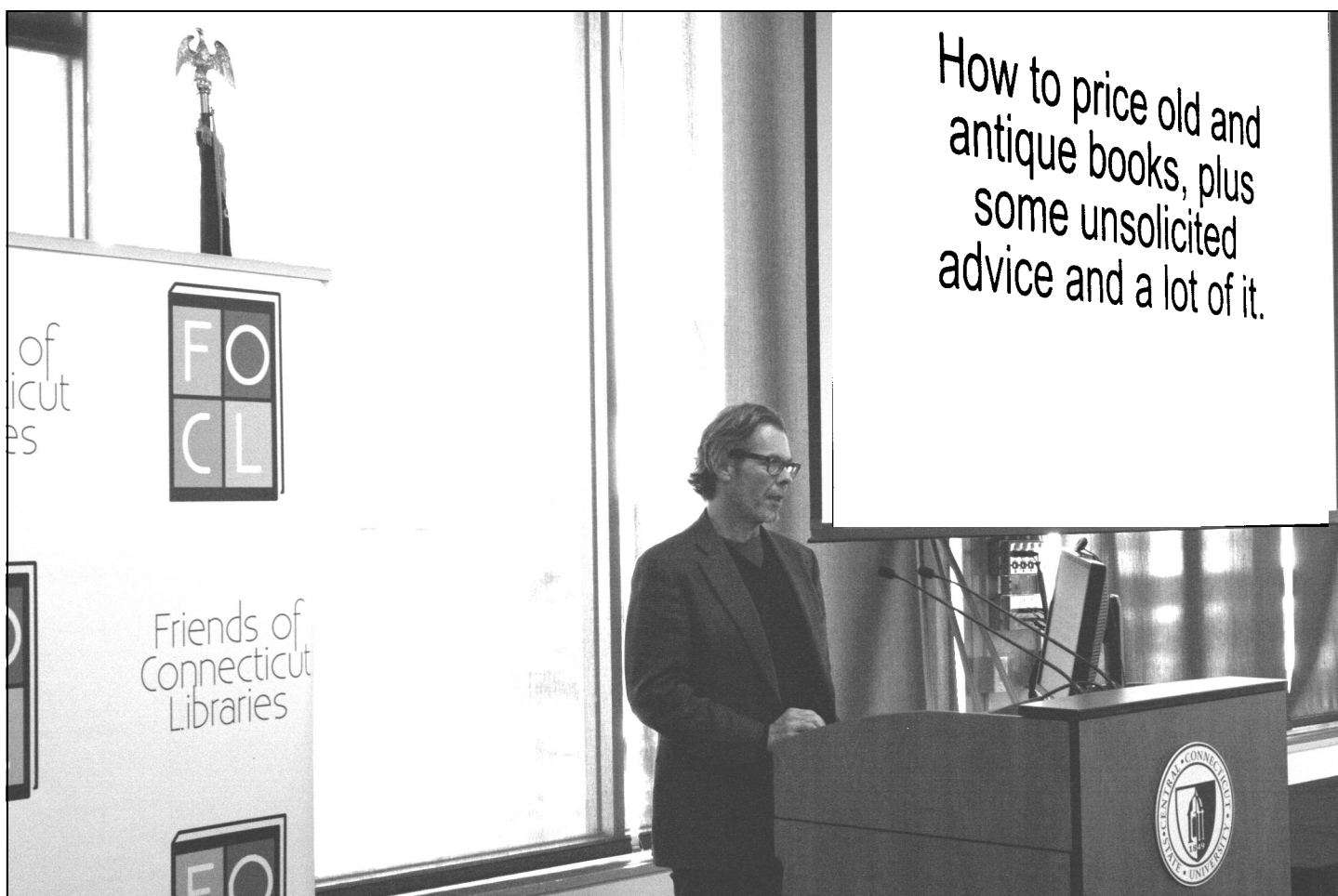
A total of 65 groups responded, said Carl Nawrocki, of the FOCL board, who presented results at the Fall Confer-

ence in November at Central Connecticut State University.

The average price of DVDs is going up from \$1 to \$2.

The average price of CDs -- \$1 or \$2.

(Continued on page 6)



A dealer in antique books, John Kehoe of Norwalk, says a lot of old books are just old and should be tossed. He said Friends need to recognize what makes a book worth something to a collector.

Just Because a Book Is Old Doesn't Mean It's Valuable

You find a first edition of “Angela’s Ashes” in with donated books.

Eureka! You think. It’s worth a fortune.

But antique book dealer John Kehoe of Norwalk will tell you that not only is it not worth thousands, it’s not worth even \$1.

Kehoe shared a lot of other lessons about what makes a book valuable when he talked to the Friends of Connecticut Libraries at the Fall Conference Nov. 14 at

Central Connecticut State University.

The most important thing is the condition of the book.

“Condition is to rare books what location is to real estate,” he said. “Collectors want a perfect copy.”

A perfect “Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test” will sell for \$750 but a bad one you can’t even give away. Three things that used to drive book values were scarcity, content and appearance. Now appearance is the most important.

“The money is in the dust jacket,” Kehoe said. A book with a dust jacket in pristine shape can be worth 95% more. There is only one known copy of Theodore Dreiser’s “Sister Carrie” with a dust jacket and it is worth \$100,000, he said.

“Take care of those dust jackets!” Kehoe said. If a dust jacket is starting to chip, you might get a few dollars more for the book if you put it in a plastic cover.

(Continued on page 3)

Valuable, continued

(Continued from page 2)

It's even harder to find children's books in good condition. A pristine copy of "Make Way for Ducklings" could sell for \$12,000, he said. And very rare is a pre-1960s book with a dust jacket.

He did find one valuable book in the 30 or so that Friends brought to him – one by

Charles Darwin. "Any copy of Darwin before 1900 sells," he said.

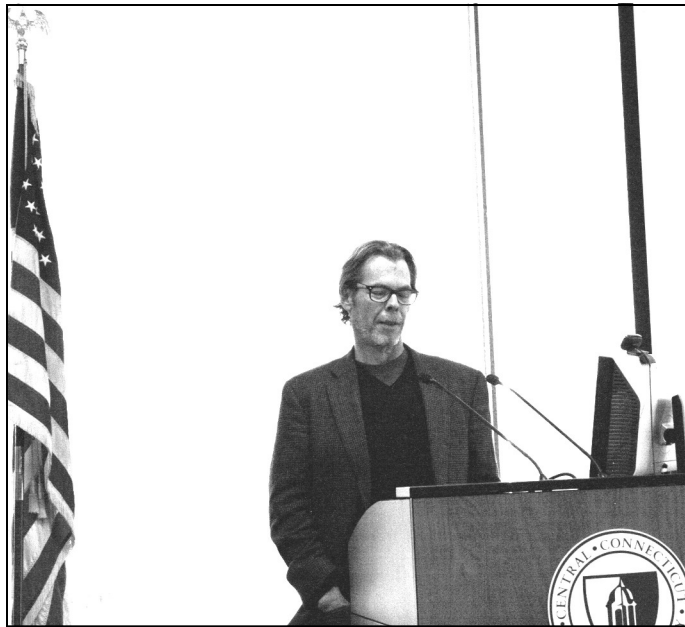
One of the most important things you can do at sales is price items appropriately, Kehoe said.

"You can't run a sale with overpriced books. Buyers are too smart." A successful sale has little left at the end, he said.

People who try to find what a book is worth by looking it up on the Internet often get the wrong idea. Dealers will put up the price they would *like* to get for a book, not what it is actually worth.

"What you see are the unsold books," Kehoe said. "A first edition of 'Valley of the Dolls' will sell for \$100. People who list it higher won't sell it."

You can pay to get access to a site such as Rare Book Hub, which gives the actual selling price of rare books. And the site ABAA.org will show you what



Kehoe found a few valuable books in the 30 or so that Friends groups brought to the Fall Conference including one by Charles Darwin.

professional book sellers are asking for rare books.

"If you have a really good book, price it so it will sell," he said. "If you price it too high you won't get it. The important thing is to just get more than you paid for it." And remember, you got a book as a donation.

A few other tips:

- Don't use stickers on books because they can damage the dust jackets.
- Don't stock unsaleable books such as "The DaVinci Code" or "A Day in the Life of America." (Anyone who wants to read them already has.) "The idea of throwing out a book is not that bad," Kehoe said.
- Don't waste time alphabetizing fiction because it has no impact on sales.

The way to get better at pricing valuable books is just like anything else – practice. Set prices

and see if books sell for what you ask. A few books on book collecting include "The ABC for Book Collectors" by John Carter and "Among the Gently Mad" by Nicholas Basbanes.

Signed books can be more valuable unless it's an author known for signing easily. Even if the signature includes a note to someone, that wouldn't hurt the price.

Who collects rare and antique books? Kehoe said he doesn't know because it really isn't a good investment. Books that were valuable 100 years ago often are no longer worth anything.

"Some people collect books because they have a socially acceptable form of OCD," he guessed.

Kehoe said he got into book selling by accident, just wandering into second-hand bookstores and asking questions. When he found it more interesting than his job at the time – industrial construction management – he made it his career.

He used to pick up books at library book sales but said things are changing. Libraries have gotten better at pulling out valuable books before dealers such as he can find them. And some people go through sales with scanners, picking anything valuable.

Kehoe recommended not consigning books to an auction house because they generally take 25% of a sale and make you wait 90 days for the money. And dealers don't like to buy at auction, so you'll end up losing a lot of money.

Friends Around the State

We encourage all Newsletters editors to put us on their mailing lists so we can have a rich exchange of information to pass on to fellow Friends organizations. If you'd like to see your news here please put Friends of Connecticut Libraries, Middletown Library Service Center, 786 South Main St., Middletown, CT 06457 on your newsletter mailing list, or send by email to friendsctlibraries@gmail.com. Note: We only include events run, sponsored, or funded by Friends Groups. To make our job easier, in your newsletters, please include that information when describing events.

Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington will hold their annual *Wine & Cheese Social @ the library* on



Jan. 22. Included are a wine tasting, a beer tasting, and, for the first time, a cheese tasting.

There will also be a tea cup auction of themed baskets. For entertainment, live jazz will be provided by the DeChamplain Trio.

Friends of the Simsbury Public Library enhanced the library's new teen section by providing two Macs and two personal com-



puters. More than a year ago, the library added a teen librarian; since then the number of teens at the library has increased tenfold. With a generous bequest from a special Friend, the library had all

the funding to construct a seamless, beautiful, windowed wall to create a separate Teen Space. The Friends added the computers essential to any Teen Space. These gifts have made the difference in a new generation's love of libraries! A ribbon cutting ceremony for the Teen Space was scheduled for Jan. 9.

Friends of the Watertown Library were congratulated by the Watertown Library Association as the Book Nook began its 25th year. A champagne gala was held at the library and Book Nook. Eleanor Edmond,



chair of the founding Book Nook Committee 1990 and Queenie Mraz, 24-year fundraiser and Book Nook manager, were presented with the Edith Campbell Pelletier Award for outstanding service to the Watertown Library Association. In addition, the State of Connecticut General Assembly presented the Friends group with a citation in recognition of the 25th anniversary of the Book Nook providing quality literature to the community and for the outstanding Friends volunteer work over the 25 years. Music was provided by Quartetto Vivo. Sweets and savories were provided by Hello Sweetie! Bake-shop.

Friends of the Bethel Public Library sponsored *Witchcraft Panic in Connecticut* with actress, voiceover artist, and historic interpreter/storyteller Virginia



Wolf. She brought to life -- fully costumed, fully incensed and fully frightened -- stories of five 17th century women accused of witchcraft. They also sponsored a classical guitar concert featuring award-winning guitarist Francesco Barone.

The Book Friends of Beekley Library in New Hartford held a Holiday Marketplace at the library with the New Hartford Business Council. There was a tea cup raffle, a silent auction that included pre-lit, decorated, three-foot Christmas trees to bid on, as well as local artisans and vendors and live entertainment. The Friends provided refreshments.



The president of the **Friends of the Library in Oxford (FOLIO)** posted this message on Nov. 3 on FOCL-Forum: "Oxford voted tonight to build a new library!!!!" After she calmed down, Laurie

(Continued on page 5)

Friends, continued

(Continued from page 4)

Abbot thanked all the Friends that had posted congratulations, and wrote, "This is not just a win for Oxford, but is proof positive that in the age of the Internet, libraries still hold a very important place in a community. The vote wasn't even close...." She then offered to answer questions about the successful campaign leading to passing the referendum with anyone in a similar situation. Congratulations, and thank you for your offer!

Friends of the Scranton Library in Madison hosted the 10th Annual Parade of Pooches to benefit the library. Dogs were judged on

the size of their ears and paws, and on their height. Ribbons were also given for the oldest and youngest dogs in their breed.

There were also fun activities for the dogs and their owners. The dogs were happy to do their part to support the library!

The Friends of the Scranton Library also held an Appraisal



Roadshow inviting people to "Bring what you can carry" to the Community Room and get verbal appraisals from the three participating experts on art, textiles, china, collectibles, jewelry, and antique books and documents. A fee was charged based on the number of items. Light refreshments were

provided. Holiday gifts, books, CDs and DVDs were available for purchase.

The Harwinton Library Friends sponsored a Holiday Open House & Craft Sale with crafts and gifts created and donated by "your Friends and Neighbors." A Tea-cup Auction included an eReader,



gas and gift cards, a hand crafted Shaker table and quilts, an American Girl doll bed and handmade clothing, and many other items.

And there was a Holiday Book Cart with "our best" adult and children's selections for sale.

You never know what Friends you might run into at the FOCL Fall Conference



Book sales, continued

(Continued from page 1)

The average number of books at sales is 5,000 to 10,000.

The prices charged for children's books is pretty much the same as for adult books, although some libraries charge just 25 cents for paperback fiction.

Some groups separate books into categories, such as mysteries, fiction, romance, business, cookbooks, politics, history, etc.

The number of categories averages 20 to 30.

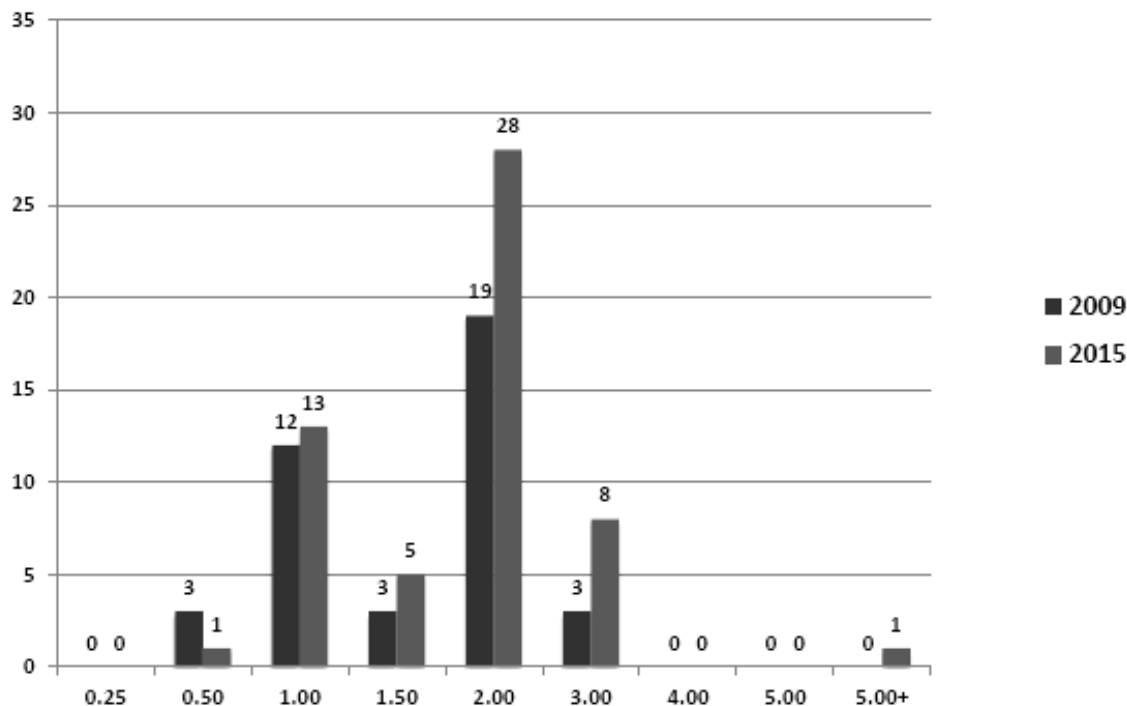
For children's books: young adult, preschoolers, board books, science, reference, animals, humor, etc.

"We separated children's books into categories and tripled sales," said a Friend from Russell Library, Middletown.

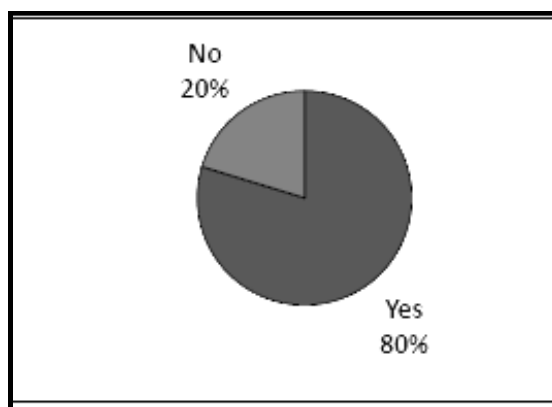
Others said sorting through a mass of books is part of the fun for buyers.

Most libraries don't charge for early admission to a sale, which Nawrocki said he

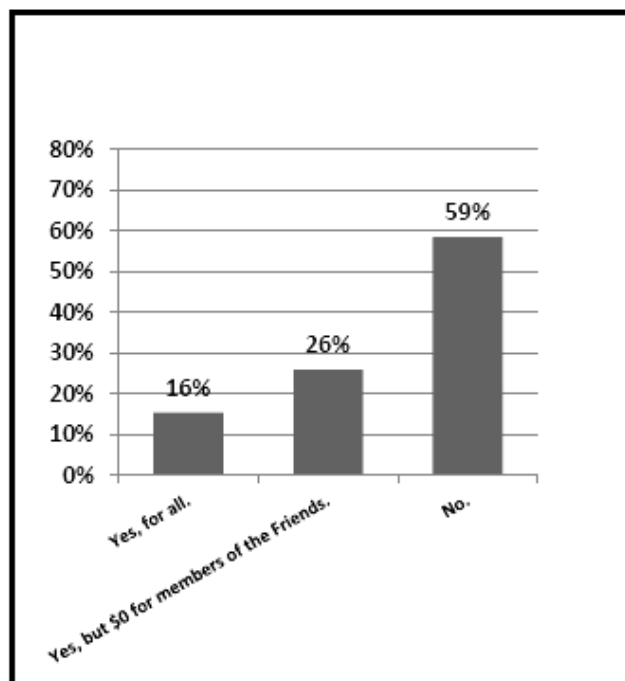
Hardcover Nonfiction



Average price for a hardcover book: Fiction or nonfiction both averaged \$2.

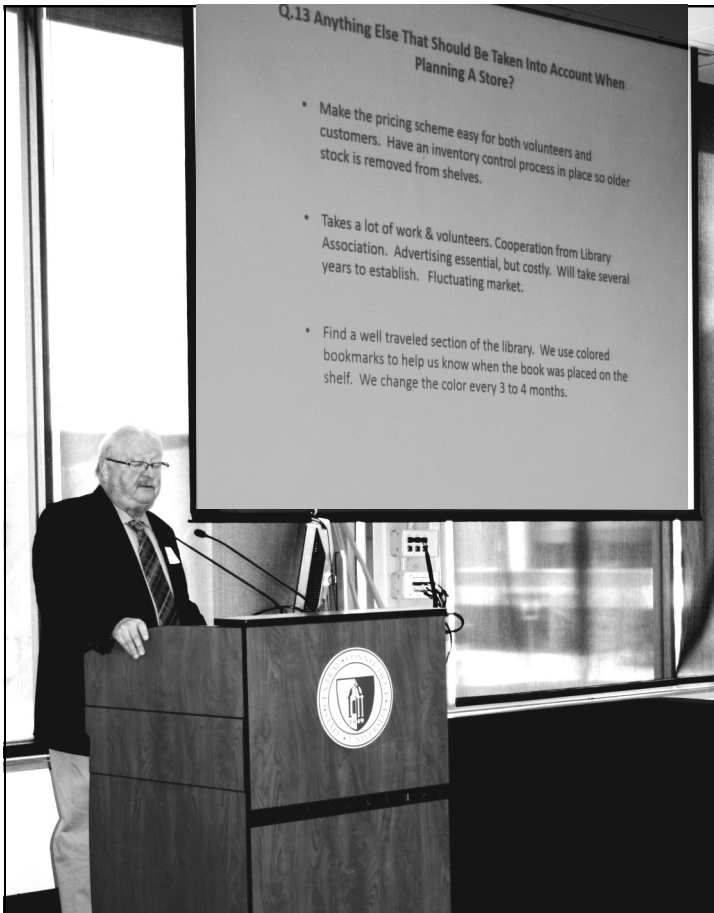


Do you have a non-staffed space to sell books on a regular basis?



Do you charge for early admission?

(Continued on page 7)



FOCL board member Carl Nawrocki surveyed Friends groups throughout the state to find how they conduct book sales.

Book sales, continued

(Continued from page 6)

couldn't understand, adding it was an easy way to make money.

Those who do charge often ask \$5.

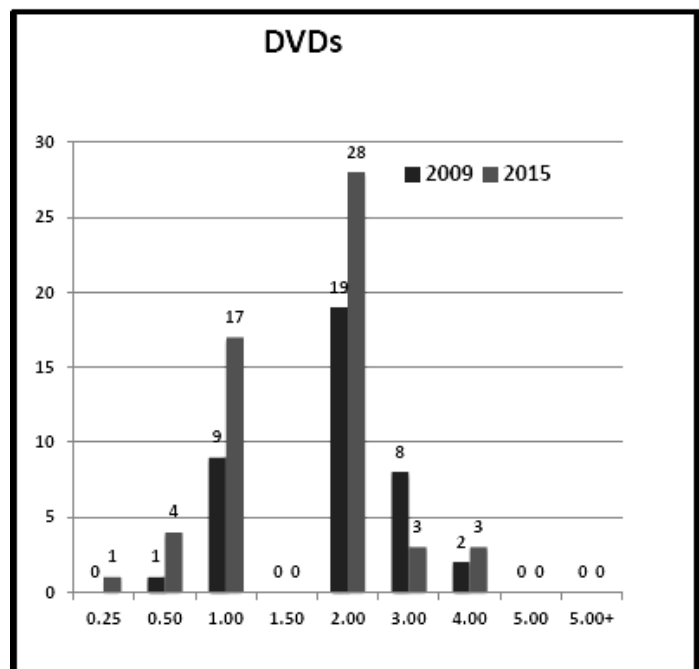
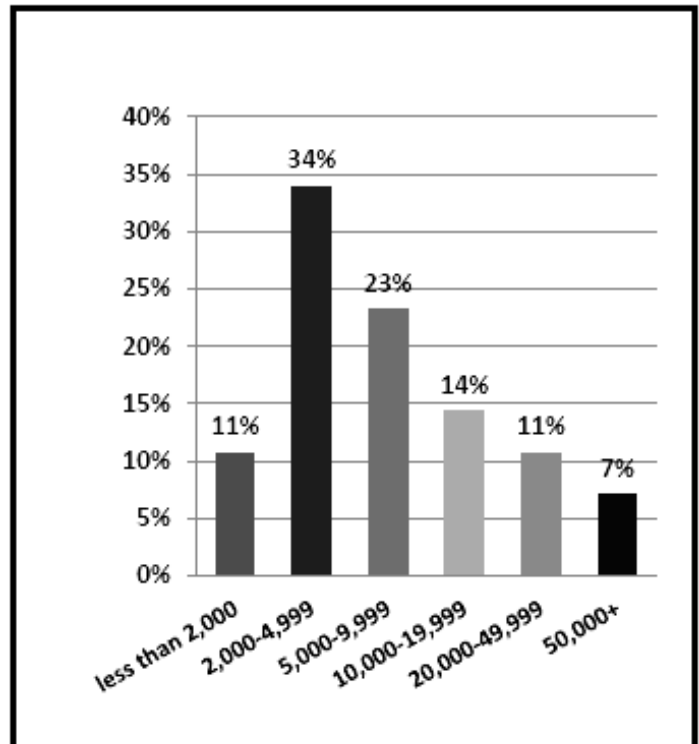
A Farmington Friend said dealers told them they were happy to pay \$10 to get in before the sale opened to the public because there were fewer people.

The Friends group was glad to do it because dealers tended to buy more.

Cheshire calls their early opening a "members-only preview;" that prompts many dealers to join the Friends, they said.

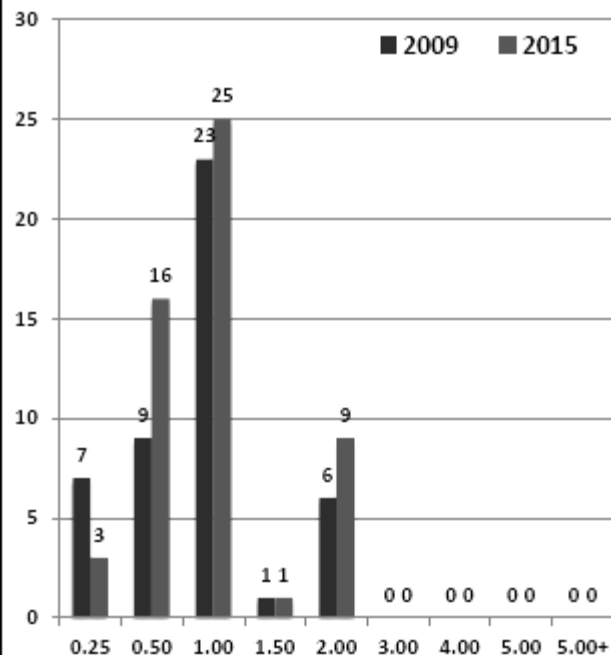
(Continued on page 8)

Average number of books in your main used book sale

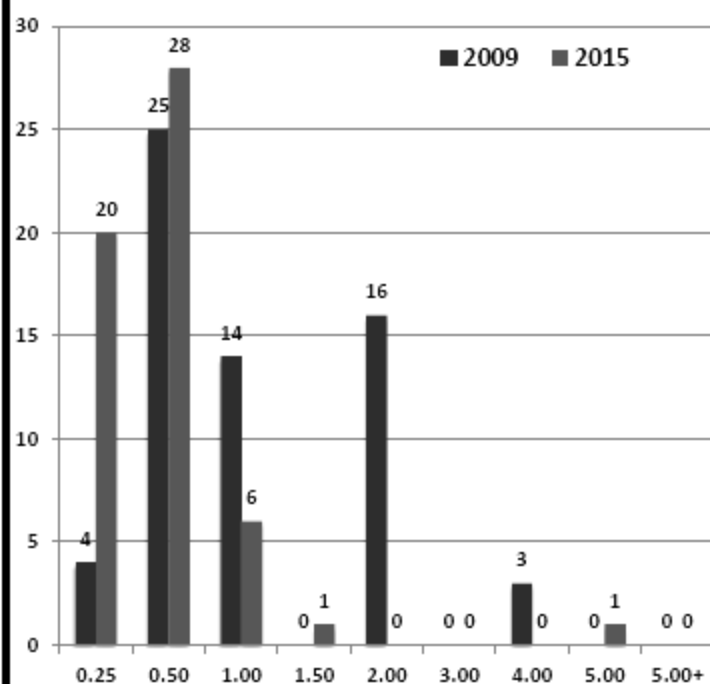


The average price for DVDs at Friends book sales is \$2, with some still charging \$1 and a few raising the price to \$3.

Children's Hardcover



Children's Paperback



Book sales, continued

(Continued from page 7)

Enfield Friends allow handicapped people to come in the afternoon before the crowds, saying it brought "really, really, really good press."

Two thirds of the groups hold bag sales the last day, with the average price of \$5. However, South Windsor charges \$8 a bag, said a member of their Friends.

Granby doesn't hold a bag sale on the last day because a lot of senior citizens can afford only a couple of books, said a member of their Friends. Instead they ask for donations per book.

Profits from book sales range from under \$2,000 to \$50,000 a year, according to the survey. And most groups hold one or two sales each year, for an average of three days at a time.

Other than book sales, 18% of Friends said they operate a book store year round.

And 80% said they have some space set aside in the library, such as a bookcase, where they sell books all the time.

More details of the survey can be found at www.foclib.org.



Want To Get More Free Publicity for Your Book Sale or Book Store?

Contact our Webmaster Adam Delaura at Adam@AdamDelaura.com. He will add your sale to the list on the foclib.org website. And who knows how many more people will see it then!

Advocacy, continued

(Continued from page 1)

Real estate agents will tell you that if a library is dingy, it isn't inviting for someone considering moving to town.

"When you ask them why

"When you ask [real estate agents] why people move there, what attracts people, the library is always mentioned."

—State Sen. Cathy Osten, Sprague

people move there, what attracts people, the library is always mentioned as a key asset," she said.

Her local library in Sprague came up with a booklet, using state statistics, to explain how many people use the library and why.

"It's not just that repository (of books) but used for job searching," she said. It's where senior citizens and Girl Scouts often meet, where middle-schoolers hang out and where she often meets with constituents.

As the first selectwoman of Sprague, Osten is also in charge of local funding for her local library. She said they got more than \$1 million from a variety of funds to

renovate an old grist mill that houses the library, which included installing an elevator.

Talk to your state legislators and let them know that you, as a constituent, want them to support libraries. Tell them why your library is important and deserves more funding. But keep your message short.

"Don't write long emails to people because they won't be read," Osten said. Instead use simple bullet points and get to the message.

Contact people in different ways -- one-on-one, at a public meeting, at some board meeting. You can't expect others to do this.

"If you want your library saved in the state budget, you need to be active. You can't just let lobbyists do it," she said.

"Usually it takes twice or three times to get people to respond to you."

Osten said the worst time to get legislators' attention is in the middle of a crisis.

The upcoming special legislation session from February to May won't allow much time.

You could band together with people from nearby towns and meet with two or three legislators at the same time. Or host a



"If you want your library saved in the state budget, you need to be active," Osten said.

breakfast for your legislators to come talk with constituents and hand them a one-page report with your key points.

One area vital to small town libraries is borrowing items from other libraries. It gives them access to books they might never be able to see without it. The state funds this service.

Advocacy training for Friends groups is available from the state, said Dawn LaValle, director of library development for Connecticut.

"We already know how well (libraries) serve our community," LaValle said. "We just need to get the word out."

The size of your group doesn't matter, Osten said. Just be concise.

Coming Soon!

Early this year, Friends groups will be receiving a letter asking them to nominate individuals, projects and their group for the Annual FOCL Awards to be presented at our Annual Meeting on June 11 at Middlesex Community College in Middletown.

Did your group try something new this year?



Did you realize a major goal?

Do you know of people who made things happen or provided extraordinary support to your Friends organization?

It is a wonderful way to honor members who work hard and effectively for your organization.

Please consider someone from your group for an award. They will be very happy to receive it.

**There's
Always Plenty
of Time To
Compare Notes
at the FOCL Fall
Conference**







Friends of
Connecticut
Libraries

Middletown Library Service
Center
786 South Main St.

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #379
MIDDLETOWN, CT

We're on the web!
www.foclib.org/

Newsletter edited
and designed by
Marjorie Ruschau

Would Your Friends Group Like To Host a Regional Meeting?

This year FOCL will be promoting regional meetings throughout the state.

Four Friends groups have each initially agreed to host a meeting. The groups are located in the eastern and northcentral parts of the state.

To cover the state, we need groups from the northwest corner and the shoreline, west of the Connecticut River, to step up and host a meeting.

Hosting a regional meeting is relatively easy:

1. The host group selects a date in the spring, usually a

Saturday morning, and a place, usually a library meeting room.



2. Next they contact Friends groups within a 30- to 40-minute drive from their library. FOCL can help with this.

3. At the meeting they provide coffee and some goodies, and participants talk about subjects of mutual interest, most often used book sales.

Please discuss holding a regional meeting with your group. If you are interested, get back to Carl Nawrocki at carlybilly@aol.com or 860 859-1641.