

# F O C L P O I N T

## It's Time To Talk Library With Your State, Local Officials



**Kate Robinson, a lobbyist for many nonprofits in Connecticut including the Connecticut Library Association, urges people to contact and meet with their local representatives, especially the 33 who were just elected in November. She said this spring is crucial. "Everyone is going to be fighting for survival."**

**F**or almost 20 years Kate Robinson has been a lobbyist for Connecticut nonprofits. "I represent an army of people in every community in the state," Robinson said.

Now "we're in the worst economic situation we've ever been in in my career" with a budget deficit

forecast at \$1.5 billion. It's a very stressful time for all, she said.

In 2017 the state government will set a budget for the next two years. In 2016 the General Assembly had to revise budgets down because of the economy.

*(Continued on page 8)*

### Inside this issue:

Membership	<b>2</b>
Friends Around The State	<b>4</b>
Photo Roundup	<b>10</b>
Credit Cards at Book Sales	<b>11</b>

## Follow These 10 Steps To Grow Your Friends

**L**ibrary supporters have skills they want to share, said Deb Hoadley, past president of the New England Library Association of New Hampshire and a partner in Hoadley Consulting. But

they don't want to go to Friends meetings.

"No one likes meetings," she said. Instead, Hoadley came up with 10 steps for growing your Friends group:

**1. Organize.** Friends don't set policies for li-

braries and shouldn't conflict with the director or the board. So set two or three goals for your Friends group to accomplish and a time frame for finishing. Identify what benefits these goals would

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Membership in Friends Groups Remains Steady

Here's the good news or the bad news for Friends groups -- their size really hasn't changed since the last survey was taken six years ago.

That seems to mean that once people join, they stay with the Friends, said Carl Nawrocki of the FOCL board, who conducted the survey.

"Having people like that are vital to your organization," he said. "That means you're getting your message across, and people will help."

The size of a Friends group seems to have no relation to the size of a community, Nawrocki said. The Newington Friends have about 600 members in a town of about 30,500.

Most groups don't have a membership committee, finding the best way to recruit new members is one-on-one. A flyer or website can be effective but nothing beats the personal touch.

"Sometimes it consists of asking people to do a specific job, such as transporting books," Nawrocki said.

The average dues are \$10 for individuals, \$10-\$20 for families and \$5 for seniors, according to the survey. But one group doesn't list any specific amount.

"When we said they could join for \$10, they gave us \$10," said Peg Busse, of the Ellington Friends. "When we said



**Carl Nawrocki of the FOCL board, presents the results of a membership survey he conducted.**

they could join for any amount, they gave us \$20."

However, no Friends group seems completely happy.

"We're happy with the numbers but not the ages," said Rob

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Membership in CT Over Time

Year	My Friends Group Increased	My Friends Group Decreased	My Friends Group Stayed the Same
2000	33%	33%	33%
2012	16%	16%	67%
2016	40%	30%	30%



Those at FOCL's Fall Conference not only asked questions but contributed what worked for their Friends group.

## Membership, continued

*(Continued from page 2)*

Sweeney, a member of the Enfield Friends and the FOCL board. Senior citizens can be great members but younger adults are also needed.

And even teens and children can help at book sales. One way to get them is to recruit groups to help, such as a Girl Scout troop.

"We allow these young girls to do things their mothers would never let them do," Nawrocki said, such as help at sales. They always come with a leader who makes sure they are safe and keeps them in line, he said.

Friends need to use the media to publicize them and their library. Get to know your local reporter. Call them when you have something that might make a good story or write them an article, he said.

And use Facebook to recruit new members, not just to advertise events.

Some groups used to require book dealers to join to get into sales early; then realized that was costing the Friends extra for mailing newsletters and other things to dealers that they didn't want.

Now they just charge dealers to get in early.

## 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 Enfield Library** are funding 10 sessions of opera presented by Michael Cascia, an articulate professional with a common touch. The call went out: "If you enjoy opera or would like



to learn more about this wonderful art form, Join Mike Cascia as he shares his understanding of opera, its history, the music, the stories and the composers." There were doubts about how this program would be received in this former mill town, but the response has been terrific, with every session to date well attended. Cascia's next talk is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 19 at 2:30 p.m. on Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette."

For their September meeting, the Friends, who usually invite an author, invited Enfield police dog Bruin and his handler Officer Christopher Dufresne. Having



completed 15 weeks of intense training, Bruin is trained in tracking, area searches, evidence recovery, narcotics detection and handler protection. Law-abiding citizens seldom witness what this audience saw. Bruin is faster, tougher and more determined than any criminal.

### Friends of the Cromwell Belden Public Library



participated in Halloween on Main, an annual event held by the Cromwell Merchants Association and the Town of Cromwell. Roads are closed. There are hayrides, games, food vendors, a haunted house etc. The Friends had a table (and by lucky chance the use of an antique farm truck). They spread out an array of kids books chosen from those donated to the library for their sales. Each child could choose a book. (The Friends also gave out candy.) Five Friends helped out, one dressed as a very good witch.

### Friends of the Meriden Public Library



funded several programs over the past few months. Marina Forbes, a lecturer on Russian arts, history and culture, presented a program on Imperial Russian Faberge Eggs. She focused on the life and work of Russian master artist Peter Carl Faberge, included a photo-tour of Faberge collections around the world, and emphasized the unique development of this Russian art form from a traditional craft to exquisite fine art.

Ehris Urban and Velya Jancz-Urban demonstrated how to make a Fire Cider Cold and Flu Remedy, an apple cider vinegar infusion that helps prevent cold or flu symptoms and/or shorten their duration. Attendees got to sample a variety of recipes and then create their own concoction.

The documentary "Alice's Ordinary People" was introduced by filmmaker Craig Dudnick. Alice Tre-gay was an important part of the civil rights movement in Chicago, refusing to stand still for injustice, and bringing others together to change what was. A question-and-answer period followed the movie.

Campbell Harmon portrayed Edgar Allan Poe in a one-man show that included dramatic performances of "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Raven." Campbell spoke in character as Poe as he talked about the author's life, death and influence on American literature.



Author Martin Podskoch presented "Connecticut Civilian Conservation Corps

(Continued on page 5)

## Friends, continued

(Continued from page 4)

Camps: Their History, Memories and Legacy.” He described the public works program as experienced by the men who passed through cleansing days of hard work, Army discipline, and camaraderie to help support their families during the Great Depression.

The Friends also funded two music programs.



Hungrytown, a folk duo with lyricist Rececca Hall and producer/multi-instrumentalist Ken Anderson

performed a variety of songs from their CDs. Marc Berger presented

his RIDE music program, exploring the deserts and mountainous areas of the West.

**Friends of the Watertown Library** gave Madeleine “Queenie” Mraz the title of “Consultant to the Book Nook” when she moved into Masoniccare at Newtown last year. She died there Dec. 23 at age 92. Queenie, who managed this special bookstore for more than 25 years, was an integral part of the Friends and the Book Nook, sharing her knowledge with those learning the jobs that she did all those years. She was also a member of the Watertown Library Association Board of Directors, which gave her their Edith Campbell Pelletier Award for Extraordinary Service in September 2015. FOCL honored her

with a Special Recognition Award in 2000.

The Friends had a small fundraiser for the holidays, selling one pound bags of Fancy Mammoth Pecan Halves from Priester’s Pecans. The nuts arrived fresh, with recipes, and could be frozen for later use.

**Friends of the Bethel Public Library** provide museum passes,



for reduced or free admission, to some interesting locations, including the

Danbury Railway Museum, the EverWonder Children’s Museum in Newtown, the Norwalk Aquarium and the Stepping Stones museum for Children.



Friends members at the Fall Conference have plenty of time to socialize.

## Ten Steps, continued

(Continued from page 1)

bring to the library and the Friends.

2. **Recruit** volunteers. Look for people of all ages who have skills you need. The work should be meaningful for them, appeal to their interests and fit into their schedule. Someone who likes to shop might contact stores for donations for a sale.

3. **Train.** Make sure volunteers know what you expect them to do. As part of their orientation, introduce new volunteers to library staff and to other volunteers. It helps them feel part of the group.

4. **Sustain.** Stay in contact with them. Make sure they continue to be interested in what they're doing and successful. Make sure your volunteers know that you appreciate their contributions.

"This makes people happy," Hoadley said, and they stay with the Friends.

5. **Celebrate** your group's accomplishments, no matter how small or big.

"Absolutely thanking everyone is really important," she said. You might want to put a poster at your circulation desk, thanking someone who has helped the library.

6. **Engage.** Talk to your neighbors and others in the community; listen to them and find out what they care about.

"Everyone's job is to promote the library and its activities," Hoadley said. "You're not selling them on the Friends."



**Deb Hoadley, past president of the New England Library Association, says that in recruiting volunteers, Friends groups need to look for people of all ages with all types of skills. Then have assignments for them that fit those skills.**

7. **Partner.** It could be with a business, a school group or a hospital.

"If you can partner with someone, you're making each other stronger," Hoadley said.

The Salem Friends partnered with the senior center, Carl Nawrocki said. The seniors provided plants for a sale that made \$1,800. They also knitted and sold items, which gave the library more than \$600. His group also partners with a school, using the gymnasium for book sales.

Her Friends group partnered with a hospital and asked for a speaker for a program on breast cancer, said Jane Reardon of Granby. Next year they plan to set up a tea at the hospital.

Friends of the Welles Turner Memorial Library in Glastonbury partnered with the high school sports team, asking coaches to get students to lift books for sales, said Linda Obedzinski, of Glastonbury.

8. **Promote.** Create a logo for your Friends. Create stickers or buttons promoting your library for your Friends to wear. Or get tote bags, bookmarks or posters.

"You can get them from the American Library Association but you might want to produce your own," Hoadley said.

The Meriden Friends bought a button-making machine, said Frank Ridley, president of their

(Continued on page 7)



**Hoadley encourages Friends groups to use Facebook and Twitter to communicate with members and promote activities. Pat Smith of Enfield encouraged reaching out to high school students for help.**

## Ten Steps continued

(Continued from page 6)

group, while the Mystic Noank Friends make buttons on the town council's machine.

Or you can just put stickers onto buttons so you don't need a special machine, Hoadley said.

And make sure you have a newsletter, both online and print, because people want both, she said. Maybe this is something you can get high school or college students in your town to design. You might even be able to get this printed at a business in your town that has an in-house print shop, such as an insurance company.

**9. Technology.** If no one in your group is familiar with Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, get people in your town who are to help.

"Technology is a way for you to have communication," she said. "Facebook is your online newsletter." Share your posts and more people will see them.

"When you see something that someone has shared, share it or 'Like' it so that it will spread," said Jewels Hadman of the Friends of the Belden Library in Cromwell. Social media is important when trying to reach younger people.

"Check out your high school," said Pat Smith of the Enfield Friends. They might have a technology design department to help you with a project.

**10. Innovate.** Spread the word about your Friends with others, Hoadley said, such as to the Chamber of Commerce or the PTA. Or host a library booth at a local festival. Have your meetings at restaurants or other public places as a way to get out into the community. Don't hold meetings in a home because that's closed to the public.

Your Friends group can succeed as long as you evolve, adapt, change and survive, Hoadley said.

To get free help with your group, including fact sheets and idea sharing, go to <http://www.ala.org/united/friends>.



## Talk, continued

(Continued from page 1)

The state had asked every agency to cut its budget request by 10 percent.

This is how it works: In mid-fall agencies submit budget requests to the Office of Policy and management. In late fall the governor and that office devise a budget request to submit to the General Assembly on Feb. 8.

The appropriations committee hears testimony for agencies Feb. 13-24. Then the finance and appropriations committees have to reconcile what agencies want with the money available.

That's the "room where it happens," Robinson said, referring to a song from the popular Broadway musical "Hamilton."

Spring is the crucial time for Friends to speak up for their libraries. "Everyone is going to be fighting for survival," she said.

The Connecticut Library Association will be organizing people to testify before the appropriations committee. But even if you aren't the one addressing the committee, you can support libraries by just going to the hearing when the issue of libraries comes up. If everyone dresses in the same color -- in 2015 time red was chosen -- it shows a visual presence.

You can also call or meet your local legislators and advocate for libraries. Friends could organize a meeting at their library with a group of patrons to discuss funding.

## How To Talk With Officials

### You are the Expert! Remember to:

- **Introduce yourself – every time**
- **Have a fact sheet/know your opposition's argument**
- **Explain why you care**
- **Ask if they have questions**
- **Be honest (and get back to them if you need to)**
- **Be as kind to staff as you are kind to an elected official**
- **ALWAYS say thank you, and write a follow-up note**

### Please don't:

- **Speak negatively about opposing viewpoints, other than to provide counterpoints**
- **Assume you know their position**
- **Threaten to pull your vote/withhold your support from an elected official**
- **Forget to write a follow up thank-you note**

In this past election, 33 new people were elected.

"It's important that you reach out to these freshmen," Robinson said. Get to know them and their priorities.

"Don't get nervous about

---

*"One thing they coach us on is to present only one fact" per meeting.*

— **Jane Reardon,**  
*Granby Friends*

---

meeting with them," she said.

"Legislators are people, too!"

Congratulate them for winning their election. Follow up by meeting with them in their district or at the State Capitol. Introduce yourself and wear a nametag.

Find out what you have in common with your legislator -- sports teams you both follow, a school you both attended, a book

you both like. These elected officials represent you so you need to build a relationship with them.

Make sure they know that libraries provide core services to their communities and help solve local problems. Quote facts -- the number of items borrowed, the number of computer hours, the programs for the elderly, for children. If they ask you a question that you can't answer, tell them you can get that for them later.

If you can't talk with your elected official, speak to her aide. If you call and get a recording, leave a nice message and ask for them to call back, Robinson said. Expect them to do so.

In addition to the Friends, ask any community groups that use your library to speak with an elected official on your behalf. Write letters to newspapers

(Continued on page 9)





"Don't get nervous about meeting with them," Robinson said. "Legislators are people, too!"

## Talk, continued

(Continued from page 8)

because that's what your local legislators are reading.

Friend your legislators on Facebook. If they are featured in a news story, cut it out and send it to them with a note because personal notes matter.

## HOW TO REACH LEGISLATORS?

SENATE DEMOCRATS: 1-800-842-1420

SENATE REPUBLICANS: 1-800-842-1421

HOUSE DEMOCRATS: 1-800-840-8267

HOUSE REPUBLICANS: 1-800-842-8270

"Just because we're good at what we can do doesn't mean we're going to get all that we need," Robinson said.

One Friend from Granby, Jane Reardon, said she also talks with legislators on behalf of the American Lung Association.

"One thing they coach us on is to present only one fact" per

meeting, she said, "but also tell a personal story."

Don't forget your local elected officials, said Frank Ridley, president of FOCL and the Meriden Friends group.

"Once you develop that relationship you can build on it," he said. "I meet regularly for coffee with local and state legislators."

## OTHER METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

### Organizations

- Fact Sheet
- Coalition Action/Sign on letter
- Action alert (e-alert)
- Press Conference
- Advertisement
- Website

### Individuals/Organizations

- Fact Sheet
- In person meeting
- Phone call
- Email
- Social Media (FB, Twitter, Instagram)
- Letter to the Editor, clipped and sent with note to your legislators
- Newspaper article, sent with a personal note to legislators
- US Mail (when's the last time you got a REAL letter from A REAL person?)



**FOCL's Fall Conference  
Gave People Chances  
To Actively Take Part  
or Just Listen**



## Do You Take Credit Cards? Some Friends Do at Book Sales

Some Friends groups have found an easy and cheap way to take credit cards at book sales.

They use Square -- a tiny, simple card reader that plugs into a smart phone, tablet or computer. You can use it to scan credit cards; then the total that has been punched in -- minus 2.75% fee per swipe -- is sent to the group's bank account.



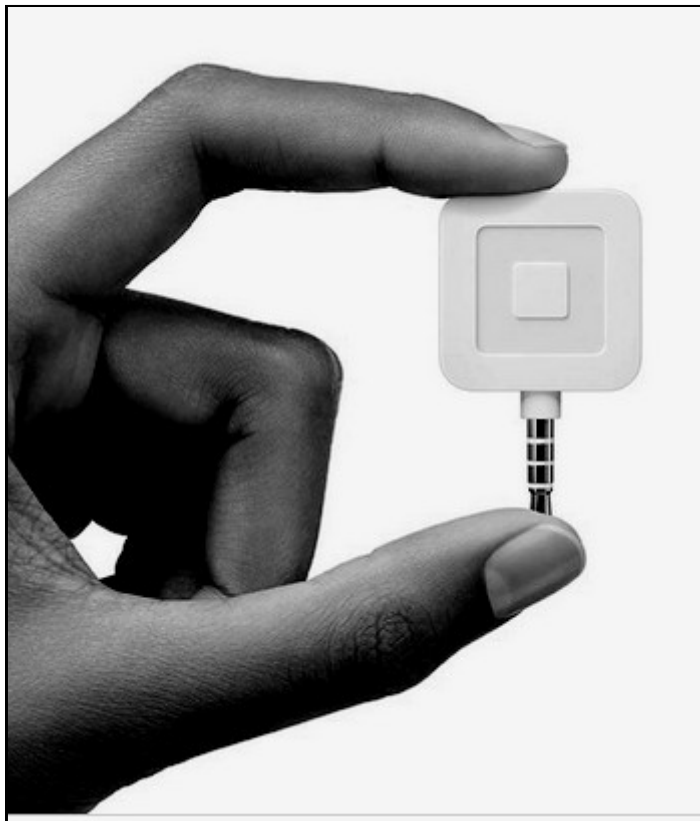
**FOCL President Barbara Leonard says the Avon Library Friends use a credit card reader.**

Square costs about \$10 at any store that sells technology equipment. At this time the device's manufacturer is reimbursing buyers for this cost. Or you can order one free from the manufacturer -- Square Up at [www.squareup.com](http://www.squareup.com).

It may not increase sales because people who shop library book sales are generally careful with their money, said Carl Nawrocki, of the Salem Friends.

But a representative of the Enfield Friends disagreed. "I know we've increased our sales," said Pat Smith. "The younger people use it a lot."

For three Friends groups that have used Square, the percentage of sales by credit cards is:



**Square is a brand of tiny credit card reader that some Friends groups are using at book sales.**

- Avon - 22%
- Salem - 18%
- Simsbury - 17%

Some libraries have found it most effective when selling books

*"We had a member who was giving \$1,000 and we used it then!"*

— **Laura Riley,**  
Simsbury Friends

after an author talk or for raffle sales because it processes sales so quickly.

There are a few things to be aware of, said Barbara Leonard, president of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries and a

member of the Avon Friends. You have to have an Internet connection, and you can't use it for anything under \$1. But the only other thing you need is a bank account. If the purchaser wants a receipt, he or she can add an email address and it can be emailed. But most people don't want a receipt, Leonard said.

Another device is the Apple Pay scanner for \$40 to \$50.

Even though Friends groups are nonprofits, they still have to pay that 2.75% fee, Leonard said.

You *could* use the scanner to take Friends membership dues but Leonard says that would be inconvenient because you don't have the rest of the information that would be on a form. But the Simsbury Friends made an exception.

"We had a member who was giving \$1,000 and we used it then!" said Laura Riley.

Nawrocki said FOCL was not endorsing Square or any brand but explained how it worked at the request of several Friends groups.



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/](http://www.foclib.org/)

Newsletter edited  
and designed by  
Marjorie Ruschau

## Awards Time Coming!

**F**riends groups will soon receive 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 10 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.

## Everyone Who Is Anyone Attended



**State Librarian Kendall Wiggins, left, and Carl Antonucci, director of the Elihu Burritt Library at Central Connecticut State University, attended FOCL's Fall Conference in November at CCSU. Antonucci welcomed FOCL to the university.**