

# FOCL POINT

## Lovers of Libraries Statewide Honored for Accomplishments

**S**ome people who love libraries gathered on the campus of Middlesex Community College in Middletown in June to honor those who have done so much to help libraries.

"The library is the center for the college and that's what your libraries are for your communities," Anna Wasescha, president of the college, told the approximately 60 people. "Libraries are so critical for the quality of life in this country."

Those honored included individuals and groups, for everything from increasing the size of membership so that they could better help their town library to creating a unique program to highlight their town's sense of community, centered around the library.

The organization doing the honoring was Friends of Connecticut Libraries. President Paul McIlvaine highlighted what

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Above, Helen Wong, president of the Friends of the James Blackstone Library in Branford, shows photos from their "Downton Abbey" tea to FOCL secretary Linda Grayson.

At left, Marge Storrs receives the Lillian Levin Award from Levin herself.



FOCL President Paul McIlvaine welcomes everyone to the annual meeting. To his right is board member Rob Sweeney.

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## Awards, continued

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the group has accomplished this year starting with updating the logo.

"We wanted to update the logo to reflect everything that we stand for," he said. "If you look closely you'll see that FOCL is the cover of the book."

FOCL also substituted regional meetings for some of statewide meetings, holding seven so far. And, he said, "we've established contact with the Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped."

Once again Lillian Levin was there to present the award given in her name to a woman who has been active with FOCL for almost 20 years.

### **The Lillian Levin Meritorious Service Award: Marge Storrs, Simsbury**

Marge Storrs joined the FOCL Board in 1998 and has served with enthusiasm and dedication.

During her years on the board, she has been president, chair of the awards committee and chair of the nominations committee. In fact, Storrs recruited most of the present board members.

In addition, Storrs has served as FOCL liaison on political committees including lobbying the Connecticut Legislature to raise the reimbursement rate that libraries receive when loaning books to other libraries. She represented FOCL in Washington and spoke with Congressman



**Paul McIlvaine presents an award to Wolcott Friends member Liz Santos and President Ann Graveline.**

John Larson on national library funding.

While active with the FOCL Board, Storrs did not neglect her home library in Simsbury. She served as the Friends president, as the program chair, hospitality chair and vice chair of the committee to get the vote out for library expansion.

For the expansion, she chaired the Simsbury Capital Fund Campaign, working with the major donors and then the decorating committee. Meanwhile Storrs also founded the homebound program at Simsbury Library.

Storrs has an unwavering support for libraries. Whatever the task -- fundraiser, book sale or an envelope-stuffing party -- Storrs shows up and digs right in. Her actions and attitude personify the type of person the Lillian Levin Award celebrates. FOCL been privileged to have Storrs on our board for 16 years.

"This is very exciting and I'll tell you why," said Storrs in accepting this award. "It's because of that little lady," Storrs said, indicating Levin.

"When I first came on the board I didn't have a clue as to what was going on with libraries and that little lady guided me."

### **Focused Project Municipalities 15,000 to 25,000: Friends of the Wolcott Library**

The Friends of the Wolcott library decided to establish a craft sale that would partner with their regularly scheduled book sales in June, September and December.

They called upon Elizabeth Santos to drive this project. Santos drove all over Connecticut, wherever there was a weekend craft fair. She designed flyers and handed them out to recruit vendors. Wolcott now has a cli-

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Friends of the Bakerville Library, New Hartford, are raffling off a 2015 Dodge Challenger R/T Plus in September. Shown from left are Paulina Auclair, Pam FitzGerald, Elaine Murphy, Pat Smith and Joan Auclair.

## Awards, continued

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ent base and vendors and crafters call them six months before the next sale to ensure a space is saved for them.

In addition to recruiting the vendors, Santos creates all the signs, puts them up and takes them down after the sale. She is there from opening to closing to make sure vendors have everything they need.

These efforts have resulted in thousands of dollars in additional revenue for the Wolcott Friends, and in these times it is sorely needed.

"We have here a tireless worker," said Ann Graeline, president of the Wolcott Friends. "She came up with the craft idea, and

she ran with it. We've very glad to have Liz as a Friend."

## Focused Project Municipalities Less Than 15,000: Friends of Bakerville Library, New Hartford

Four years ago, the Friends of the Bakerville Library were presented with an opportunity to buy the building next to the library. To raise the money for this, the Friends would need a new fundraising strategy and decided on a car raffle.

This was a very big task; so, in 2012, they asked the Beekley Library, also in New Hartford, to join them for a joint fundraiser. It took courage to see this undertaking through and was a huge learning process with some risk.

In the end, each library netted close to \$10,000.

In 2013, the Beekley Friends opted out. Now, a group of eight people from the Bakerville Friends spend June 1 to Sept. 30 selling tickets. For the past few years they have exceeded expectations, selling all the tickets at least two weeks before the drawing and making close to \$40,000. They go to car shows and solicit from patrons, and use their website and Facebook to drum up interest. They have developed a great working relationship with a local graphics company and hand out custom temporary tattoos of the car at events.

The first big bash in the building was the 65th anniversary event. They now hold monthly Game Day afternoons and weekly

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## Awards, Continued

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Ping-Pong. They recently hosted a chocolate and wine tasting event. Even though the event took place in the middle of a snowstorm, about 100 people attended.

The Friends continue to raise funds for renovations to the building, but the best result has been the positive publicity for the library. People are excited to see the car pop up in different places in New Hartford and surrounding towns. Businesses want to participate and have asked to have the car parked in their lots.

"For me this group means so much more," said Elaine Murphy, who accepted the award along with four others from the Bakerville Friends. "There are only eight of us but boy do we have fun.... Who doesn't want more friends?"

The group has no officers.

"We all work as a team, and we all bring something to the table," Murphy said. "We inspire and encourage each other"

### Group Award Municipalities Greater Than 25,000: Friends of the Enfield Library

Enfield's Pearl Street Branch Library celebrated its centennial in 2014. The library planned an ambitious year of programming knowing that the Friends would be needed.

The Enfield Town Council authorized a celebration committee, and the president of the Friends became the chair when no one else could be found. One of the com-



**Enfield Friends organized a reception to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Enfield Public Library's Pearl Street branch. Proceeds were used to renovate the branch and update the collection. Shown are, from left, Georgiana Tippo, Susan Rudd, Betsy Pillitteri, Pat Smith, Rob Sweeney, Library Director Henry Dutcher and Joan Pacheco.**

mittee's major goals was to raise enough money to renovate the branch's basement with new tables, chairs, blinds and carpeting. The Friends' president, Rob Sweeney, said he would engage the Friends group; fundraising was ultimately successful with the bulk of the effort falling to the Friends.

The signature event of the year was to be a public reception on the 100th anniversary of the branch's opening. Former Friends' president Joan Pacheco stepped in to coordinate the reception just two weeks before the event. She recruited a number of other Friends and hosted a lovely reception despite the difficult timing.

In addition, the Friends wanted to celebrate the centennial with a new, and needed, collection. The branch manager requested a collection of "discovery packs" that the Friends promptly donated. These consist of mesh backpacks with

books and items on such themes as dinosaurs, marine animals and counting and colors.

And even that was not all. Another former Friends' president, Betsy Pillitteri, wanted to update the grounds to the same level as the interior and coordinated landscaping of the front lawn with the help of the Enfield Garden Club and many volunteers from the Friends.

"One of the first things I did as director in 1999 was to resurrect the Friends group," said Library Director Henry Dutcher. They have been a great addition, he said, especially with the small group that organized the 100th anniversary celebration of the Pearl Street branch.

"They put it together in about two weeks," he said.

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## Awards, Continued

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State Librarian Kendall Wiggins said, "I thought you spent months planning it."

### **Group Award Municipalities Less Than 15,000: Friends of the Oxford Library**

In 2014 three quarters of the Oxford board was newly elected and immediately faced a number of issues. Diminishing membership, stagnant fundraising and low community awareness needed to be addressed.

Also, the Oxford Friends (FOLIO) did not have any insurance. That fact added \$1,000 to their annual budget.

The new board increased membership by 50 percent by organizing community projects and using direct marketing. They promoted opportunities for the community to support the Friends and library.

The FOLIO team began to regularly update their Facebook account and highlighted all the great programs offered at the Oxford Library. Facebook "Likes" increased by 85%.

They created an email database of FOLIO membership and built relationships with the local press that dramatically increased coverage of library and FOLIO activities.

To increase interest and excitement in the youth of the community and get them involved in library activities, FOLIO held an art contest open to all Oxford

elementary students. They also created a series of rewards for middle school students who excelled in community and academic activities. For high school students, FOLIO sponsored an art show at an evening gala event. FOLIO worked with the library to reinstate a Junior Friends program.

To pay for the changes, FOLIO increased marketing efforts for their book sale leading to increased revenue. Increased marketing and donations from local businesses raised revenue from its holiday fundraiser by 25%. FOLIO developed the Corporate Friends as a means to allow local businesses to support the library.

It was quite a year for the Friends of the Oxford Library.

### **Group Award Municipalities Greater Than 25,000: Friends of the Blackstone Library, Branford**

Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library members see their mission as more than fundraising. They strive to make the public aware of the resources that the library offers for a lifetime of learning and to show the public library as a warm, welcoming part of Branford life.

While the 2014 book sale netted \$40,000, it was designed to reach beyond dollars. It is held in a big tent on the village green, creating a holiday atmosphere. The local garden club runs a plant and cut flower shop outside the tent. Local musicians performed. Main Street provides a steady stream of traffic from shoppers and diners.

Fundraising allows the Friends to help make the library a resource for learning, culture and entertainment. The Friends have contributed to the new Maker's Lab (including a 3D printer), six

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**Friends of the James Blackstone Library in Branford organized a "Downton Abbey" Tea. Accepting the award are, from left, Pam Roy, Helen Wong and Betsy Klarman.**

## Awards, Continued

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new laptop computers, digitizing the reference collection, the 1,000 books before kindergarten program and museum passes.

The Friends also contribute books to the Community Dining Room. No one should go hungry, and no one should go without a good read, is their motto.

Adding to the social life in Branford, the Friends operated an Italian ice booth at the Branford Festival. And last year they organized a "Downton Abbey" tea party, including food, decorations and publicity with a float in the Branford holiday parade and a presentation explaining the art of dressing for high tea.

"We get a lot of support from the library," said Friends President Helen Wong, speaking for the group. The Downton Abbey event raised \$2,100. "We didn't do it as a fundraiser but to generate publicity. We got 30-something new members."

One of most time-consuming things they did in preparation was make watercress sandwiches. They learned they had to wash and dry each piece of watercress if they didn't want soggy sandwiches.

"If you have a chance and are in Branford, stop by to see our beautiful library," Wong said.

### Individual Achievement Municipalities Under 15,000: Susan Zirlen, Chester

Last summer, Sue Zirlen came to the library with a new idea: create a Human Library in Chester.

The Human Library originated in Scandinavia, designed to help people address life situations be they religious, economic, health, life-style or other issues. Zirlen reasoned that Chester residents have a wide variety of skills and life experiences and that sharing these would make Chester a more connected community.

Zirlen explained that the Human Library uses the traditional library as the vehicle to connect people throughout the community and across generations, lifestyles, religions and ethnicities to increase understanding of community resources and awareness of differences.

A Human Library is a place where the books are living people who volunteer to share their stories, passion, and/or life experiences with members of the community.



**President Paul McIlvaine presents Susan Zirlen of Chester with an award for creating the Human Library project.**

Zirlen set about identifying people who would be willing to share their life experiences. She designed a logo, promotional postcards, and T-shirts for the "Books". She promoted the program at several Chester venues.

Working individually with each Human Book, Zirlen wrote book descriptions, available at the library. Each book was entered into the library's catalog, searchable by author, title and subject. Currently, the Human Book collection includes such diverse subjects as social activism, fantasy team sports, living gluten free, beekeeping, and economics. The book on the ukulele comes with a ukulele

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## Awards, Continued

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ready to play. Books are available for a 30-minute, in-person "checkout" at the library.

Zirlen's vision, creativity and energy have resulted in a great idea implemented at the Chester Library. She shined a light on many faces of her community and helped the library grow as a place for people, ideas and activities.

"Chester is a small town with a very small library but lots of readers," Zirlen said. She got the idea from Denmark, where it began in the year 2000 as a way to bring people together to understand each other. "It was a way to deal with a lot of violence [there] at that time," she said.

"I thought that this was a great idea but how would this work in Chester?" I transformed it and sought out experts in many fields."

Zirlen said she was lucky enough to go to Denmark and speak with the person who came up with the idea.

"It inspired me to go forward with this idea and hopefully spread this idea around the state," she said.

### Individual Achievement Municipalities 15,000 to 25,000: Carolyn Vallieres, Wethersfield

While serving as co-president, volunteer coordinator and chair of the book sale for the Friends of Wethersfield Library, Carolyn Vallieres has made an extraordinary



**Carolyn Vallieres of Wethersfield helped her group's membership grow by 98% with 55 new volunteers.**

effort to grow the Friends membership and volunteer contingent.

She contacts potential members by mail and telephone and makes them aware of volunteer opportunities at the library. She then identifies their areas of interest, such as sorting, book sale set up and tear down, board membership and special events.

With the cooperation of the library director, Vallieres implemented a townwide mailing. She developed a flyer that was sent to every household in Wethersfield. The flyer included information about Friends membership, a list of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. As a result of the town mailing, new membership has grown by 98% and 55 town residents have expressed an interest in volunteering.

Vallieres has organized the volunteer effort by developing a description and schedule for each opportunity. She has also provided hands-on training for all book sale activities.

Vallieres is an inspiration to all who work with her, and she makes all volunteers feel welcome and appreciated. Her efforts have greatly improved the Wethersfield Friends organization.

"I couldn't have won this without a lot of people," Vallieres said. "I think this thing with me and books is inherited," she said, explaining that she learned her love of books from her father.

### Individual Achievement Municipalities Over 25,000: Linda Chapron, Farmington

Linda Chapron organized local Friends groups to promote sharing by holding a regional meeting. She began by inviting just a couple of towns near Farmington. The idea was so popular that by the end of the first quarter of 2014, she extended the invitation statewide.

Chapron's passion for helping Friends organizations become more efficient and provide greater returns to their communities was evident from the start. She created agendas for these regional meetings that encouraged sharing ideas and lessons learned so that each organization was not re-inventing the wheel.

This information sharing is crucial for smaller Friends groups and provides ideas and reminders for

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## 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 Avon Free Public Library** helped organize a weekly farmers market in the library's parking lot. Every Monday afternoon in July and August, about a dozen farmers, along



with a baker, a gelato maker and others, display prod-

ucts for sale. On some days along with the market there is a local author tent. On others there is "Summer Music" on the library patio after the farmers market. The farmers market is advertised as "Grown by farmers. Run by librarians." An indoor holiday market is planned for Nov. 16.

**Friends of the Guilford Free Library** raised enough in 2014 through sales and membership dues to support two new initiatives:

- The first, "1000 Books Before Kindergarten," is a reading incentive encouraging early literacy.



- The second, the "Digital Archive of the Edith B. Nettleton Historical Room," has digitized more than 300 photographs dating back to the late 1800s in Guilford.

They are now accessible to the public through the Internet.

**Friends of the Watertown Library Association** held their annual spring luncheon at the Watertown Golf Club. The attendees were entertained by Jeremy Driscoll and Isabel Carrington who paired storytelling and music, weaving together ancient folktales and mesmerizing music that transported listeners to a distant place and time.

**Groton Public Library's Circle of Friends** presented a musical performance by the Cellar Gang. This unique group of musicians performed on hand-made,



wire-strung instruments, entertaining listeners of all ages.

The Circle of Friends also sponsored "A Sunday Afternoon" with the Gillettes. Harold and Theodora Niver transformed themselves into William and Helen Gillette, educating, entertaining and captivating their audience with their authentic and period-correct costumes, theatrical performance, extensive knowledge and music.

**Friends of Beardsley & Memorial Library, in Winsted** — with the help of an enthusias-

tic library staff, a generous board of trustees, and a start-up grant from Northwest Community Bank — turned the beautiful 1899 building into an elegant Parisian salon of the 1920s for a fund-raising Soirée combining good food, fun and suspense in an interactive, improvisational departure from the classic dinner theater mystery.



Barkhamsted resident Ginny Apple, who has been writing and producing "Murder Without Pain" mysteries for 30 years, described

it as "a zany, imaginative enterprise that provides participatory whodunits and history-twisting mysteries that not only involve guests, but depend on them for the completion of the game." Guests who registered as "actors" representing the artistic scene of the period, arrived in costume and maintained their creative identities throughout poetry readings, painting and even a boxing match as clues were dropped before the discovery of the "victim" and the distribution of a ballot to name the "murderer." Prizes were awarded in several categories. *Murder at Beardsley* was a success, and no patrons were harmed during the event.

## Awards, continued

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members of larger groups. For example, Chapron visited many of the permanent bookstores founded by larger Friends organizations and was able to share what she learned through a regional meeting.

Chapron spends hours for her local Friends group, and is extremely supportive of all Friends organizations. She does all this with a smile on her face and encouragement in her voice.

Chapron's vision for a repeatable regional process for sharing ideas and solving common problems has taken hold. Many Friends groups are now hosting regional meetings. If these meetings are as successful as those hosted by Chapron, the payoff for all Friends groups in Connecticut will be great. She has provided a model that works.

Lisa Berman of the Avon Friends and Betty Coykendall of the Farmington Friends accepted the award on Chapron's behalf.

"She wants you guys to make as much money as possible for your libraries," Berman said.



**Linda Chapron of Farmington was honored for promoting the idea of a regional meeting for sharing among Friends groups in the Farmington area. The idea was so well received that she extended her invitation to Friends groups statewide. Accepting for Chapron is Lisa Berman, left, and Betty Coykendall.**

"Thanks to you dedicated people who are willing to share."

## It's Almost Time To Renew Your FOCL Membership!

The Friends of Connecticut Libraries annual group and individual membership forms will be mailed at the beginning of September. Printable forms and online renewal will also be available at the FOCL web site then.

### Why Join FOCL?

As a member, you become a part of a community of approximately 100 Friends groups throughout Connecticut. We support Friends functions such as fundraising, programming, advocacy for libraries, membership, volunteering and organization through newsletters, regional meetings, workshops, and conferences and advisory visits to new Friends groups.

### Membership Categories

**Friends Groups:** Group membership is \$50 per year.

Membership for groups supporting a particular library, be it a public, academic or special interest.

**Individual/Corporate:** Individual/corporate memberships range from \$15-\$100, with additional donations and sponsorships welcome. For individuals and organizations who recognize and appreciate the value of libraries and wish to support the library community throughout Connecticut.

## Author Tracked Down Devious Butterfly Smuggler for Book

Author Jessica Speart did not start off wanting to write about crime or mysteries. She didn't even start out wanting to be a writer.

But when her short career as an actress ended with her character getting killed off a soap opera, she decided to give it a try.

That led to a career writing nonfiction articles for magazines, a mystery series and eventually her nonfiction book "Winged Obsession."

Speart was an avid reader as a child in New Jersey and had decided she could live out the stories if she became an actress. When that ended, a trip to Africa hooked her on wildlife.

Then her former boyfriend and now husband lent her money to interview a zoologist at the San Diego Zoo about black rhinos. She sold a story about them to Omni magazine (no longer printed.) Then she got an idea for another story while watching "The Today Show" and sold another story.

After writing science stories for a few years someone said she should write about the 200-some special agents for the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. One agent told her of the \$12 billion to \$15 billion in illegal sales of endangered species, specifically alligator skins. She wrote about it and other topics for wildlife and conservation magazines.

"After 10 years I became angry about how people got off so easy" after they were convicted, she said.



Sally Murray of the Chester Friends meets author Jessica Speart.

So she decided to write a mystery where a Fish and Wildlife agent caught the person responsible who then got the kind of punishment Speart wanted. She ended up with a 10-book deal for the Rachel Porter mysteries.

She got the idea for "Winged Obsession" when she learned that butterfly smuggling was a \$200 million-a-year trade; some sell for \$15,000 to \$60,000 a pair. One of the most wanted of smugglers was a Japanese man named Yoshi Kojima, sometimes called the Hannibal Lector of butterfly smugglers.

Officials went after him but he went from country to country, getting museum workers to smuggle butterflies into the United States for him.

"The only way he got caught is that he was underselling other

dealers and they got mad," Speart said.

A young agent met Kojima at a bug fair in Los Angeles.

"So begins a twisted, tangled three-year-case," she said. "After three years and much insanity, Yoshi was finally caught."

He was imprisoned for less than two years and deported to Japan.

Speart got access to all the undercover tapes and researched everything she could find on him. Then she flew to Japan to track him down. A PETA representative helped her find Kojima's home and antique shop and she talked her way inside, meeting with him over three weeks.

"I was feeling bad about my plans to betray him but then he

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## Spring Regional Meetings Prove Successful

When FOCL asked members for feedback on our programs and communications this spring, two comments topped the replies.

First, our members really like getting together, especially when there is an opportunity to interact, discuss issues and share ideas.

Second, they did not like to travel great distances to meetings. FOCL became aware that the Farmington Friends were holding successful book sale meetings that were drawing Friends groups from central Connecticut. FOCL decided to see if they could promote similar regional meetings in other parts of the state.

Thanks to Friends groups in Mystic/Groton, Ashford, Ellington and Oxford, regional meetings became a reality in April and May.

The first meeting was at the Groton Public Library on April 11. Twenty-seven Friends representing nine Friends groups from southeastern Connecticut attended the morning meeting. Peggy Brissette, the meeting leader, said participants broke into two groups.

"Those interested in discussions on book sales to the back of the room and those interested in everything else to the front," she said.

The "everything else group" held wide-ranging discussions on programming, working with a unionized staff and relationships between the Friends and library boards. The book sale group explored all aspects of a sale. All agreed that they should have

another meeting, but not too soon. Many groups indicated they would like to host a future meeting.

In the northeast corner of the state, Friends of the Babcock Library in Ashford hosted a regional meeting April 18. Thirty-six people from 16 Friends groups attended, mostly from smaller libraries in the "Quiet Corner." They split into four groups and each discussed book sales, membership, technology and programs/fundraising. Each topic had a secretary who posted notes. This allowed the groups to build on previous ideas.

"We have received some great comments and answers to 'What did you like about today's meeting and did it meet your expectations?' said Sue Harkness of the Babcock Friends. "Fun, lots of laughs, shared concerns, learned about new programs, etc. VERY nice refreshments wow! Another one. ... Everything! really. A gathering of good people with like hearts for love of Libraries."

Friends of the Oxford Library hosted on May 8. The group recently received a FOCL Outstanding Group Award for resurrecting their Friends Group. In the midst of all their efforts, they found time to host a regional meeting. Adding to the obstacles in hosting, their scheduled meeting place suddenly became unavailable. Thank goodness room became available at the Southbury Library, so the meeting was moved. Ten Friends discussed fundraising ideas and book sales. Afterwards the

meeting got high marks for sharing ideas and networking.

Friends of the Ellington Library hosted a meeting May 6. Ten people representing five Friends groups attended. Each group shared the demographics of their group in terms of membership, meeting attendance and volunteers. Knowing a little about each group allowed others to relate.

The groups discussed fundraising at length including book sales. Having Friends groups with the demographics of north central Connecticut was plus.

"We are all in a much lower income bracket (compared with much larger Friends groups)," said one participant. "You may ask how that helps. It can't be quantified, but it's nice to know that you are not a last-place team, you are just in a different division." The north central group decided to meet again in late July.

The last regional meeting was in Farmington. Ten Friends groups representing large and medium-sized libraries discussed book sales topics including pricing, bag sales, publicity, donations and volunteers. The Farmington meetings are popular, with another set for September. While the meeting attracts Friends around the Hartford area, all are welcome.

Having Regional Meetings across the state has proven very useful. FOCL intends to help promote these meetings and seek hosts for another round of meetings in the spring 2016. We



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## Regional, continued

*(Continued from page 11)*

especially are looking for groups to host smaller libraries in the northwest corner and along the shoreline in the New Haven area.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Saturday mornings appear to be best for meetings.
- Personal invitations via telephone to presidents of Friends groups is good way to invite them to a meeting. Follow up by email or letter.
- If you break up into groups, make sure there is enough distance between so that everyone can hear.
- If you stay in a single group, you need a strong moderator who ensures that no one dominates the discussion. Go around the room first and write down all the questions, then proceed down the list.
- Meetings with Friends groups with like demographics work best but are not always possible.
- Make sure that the names of those attending and a contact list is available at the end of the meeting.
- Assign secretaries to take and publish notes.
- Homemade refreshments are always a plus.

## Author, continued

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pressured me to set up an Ebay site to sell for him," she said.

Her book "Winged Obsession" was published in 2011 to much acclaim. She said if Kojima could get into this country she would be worried that he might try to get revenge on her for the book. But that's just part of it when you write nonfiction, she said.

She said she was told a lot of butterfly dealers have the same profile as serial killers.

"As you can tell, I'm passionate about it."

Speart lives in Connecticut, teaching fiction and mystery writing workshops in Westport.

"I am going to go back to Rachel," she said. But not before she writes another book on something completely different -- a 15-year-old with a Ouiji board.