

# FOCL POINT

## 2011 Annual Meeting Held in South Windsor

On June 4, FOCL held its Annual Meeting at the South Windsor Public Library with nearly 90 Friends attending. President Carl Nawrocki called the meeting to order and introduced Mary Etter, Library Director, who welcomed the attendees. Next, State Librarian Ken Wiggin shared a brief status of the State Library budget and the potential cuts in state funding. Ken thanked the Friends for all their support during these difficult fiscal times.



**High Points**

- Awards.....5
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Carl then reviewed the past year at FOCL by describing the success of the Fall Conference at Central Connecticut State University and the “Boot Camp” held at the University of Hartford in the Spring. The new Web site ([www.FOCLib.org](http://www.FOCLib.org)) is a success, receiving many compliments. The number of Friends on FOCL Facebook has nearly tripled and continues to grow. In all, it has been a good year for giving Friends statewide opportunities to be involved with each other.

Polly Fitz, awards chairperson, was introduced and presented the 2011 Annual FOCL Awards. The Friends of the Weston Public Library won a Group

Award for revitalizing their group. Focused Project Awards were presented to the Friends of the Rathbun Library from East Haddam, the Friends of the Scranton Library from Madison and the Friends of the Blackstone Library from Branford. Individual Achievement Awards acknowledged the contributions of Jean Tatro of Cromwell, Sarah Leighton of Guilford and Doris La Rese of Southington.

To complete the program, the attendees were treated to a captivating talk by Connecticut’s State Archeologist, Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni. the investigation concerning how an I. D. tag of a Union soldier from Connecticut ended up in a Confederate submarine.

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## State Archaeologist Spins a Civil War Tale

Call it the “Case of the Mysterious ID Tag” or “How Did a Connecticut Yankee End Up on a Confederate Submarine?”

This was the tale told by Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni, the Connecticut state archeologist (and

Friend of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington) at the annual meeting and award ceremony of the Friends of the Connecticut Libraries.

Bellantoni chose to tell the story of the H.L. Hunley submarine be-

cause this year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War. He thanked the Friends for supporting libraries of Connecticut because libraries preserve the past as well as document the present.

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## Seven Friends Groups Win Awards at Annual Meeting



**Friends of the Weston Library:** from left, Joan Lazer, Susan Scher, Karen Tatarka, Ellen McCormick, Margaret Block, Marina Coprio, Lisa Pesco and Leslie Geller.

### **Group Award Municipalities less than 15,000 Friends of the Weston Library, Weston**

The Weston Library is quite small and does not have anyone on staff to handle programs. When asked how the Friends of the Weston Library could serve the library, the previous director asked them to help provide programs. To that end, the Friends of the Weston Library have brought speakers and events to the library for the benefit of the town. The Lunch and Learn Series meets at noon in the community room. Residents bring a bag lunch and listen to speakers who are well known individuals.

They also have partnered with the Weston Women's League to bring even more speakers to this series. The Friend's hospitality volunteers provide coffee and light desserts. They have shown two documentary films with attending directors for a discussion after the screening. They sponsor

two monthly book clubs, one led by an English professor and another by an author. They sponsor many and unique children's programs. One, a theater program titled "Play with Your Food", was executed with only a charge for the lunch. They run a chess program for children with the masters at Fairfield County chess. Halloween and summer programs bring enthusiastic audiences! All are repeated because of interest and attendance. A sold-out gala with a Broadway musical director provided needed funds and fun. After not having a Friends group for some years, the current Friends of the Weston Library revived the organization in the past 5 years with a board of 10.

### **Individual Achievement Award**

### **Municipalities less than 15,000**

### **Jean Tatro Cromwell**

Jean Tatro has a long history of involvement with the Cromwell Belden Public Library. She is a lifetime resident of Cromwell and has participated in the li-

brary's activities throughout her life. There are four generations of Tatro who have also enjoyed programs. She is a longtime member of the Friends of the Cromwell Belden Public Library and has served as chairman and membership chairman. The Friends primarily raise revenue through book sales that have been numerous each and every year. Jean's artistic talent makes the posters and flyers very attractive; but her service does not end there. She also works with the set-up, breakdown and sorting for each sale. Jean also participates in many outreach activities including historical society events. At the annual Cromwell Festival, the Friends group has a book sale, offers information about the organization and provides chil-

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**Friends of Cromwell Belden Public Library: Jean Tatro**



**Friends of the Guilford Free Library: from left, Donna Funteral, Pam Knowles, Alma Cain, Sara Leighton (Individual Achievement Award recipient), Jane Marshal, Linda Brouard and Penny Colby.**

## Awards, continued

*(Continued from page 2)*

dren's games. Her artistic work is evident at any and all events. In addition to the local organizations, Jean has obtained the support of local businesses with one business featuring a donation jar for the library. Like all dedicated Friends leaders, Jean's work results in learning and enjoyment for many in Cromwell. Her hallmark may be art, but her efforts result in important library programs and recognition for the Friends of the Cromwell Belden Public Library.

### **Individual Achievement Award Municipalities 15,000 to 25,000 Sara Leighton, Guilford**

In 10 years as a member of the Friends of the Guilford Free Library, Sara (Sally) Leighton has accomplished a lifetime's work.

She has served as secretary, treasurer and co-chair of the annual Friends of the Guilford Free Library Book and Bake sale. In addition, she has organized the sale of books online, and organized and run a book group that has grown into three groups. She has served as a member of the board of directors of the Guilford Library Association for two terms. When Sally began to help run the annual Book and Bake sale, she was described as "kicking it up a notch". This sale is now entering its 30<sup>th</sup> year and recognized as a major shoreline weekend event, with proceeds topping \$40,000. Her willingness to take on a new task, learn new skills, and change the mode of selling books led to the capability to sell online. Specialty books are sold online, with sales totaling about \$20,000 for the past five years. Sally is also a developer and innovator in program services. In addition to her book sale leadership, she contributed to the library programs by organizing and running a book group

that continues to sub-divide. This has resulted in creating more learning and enjoyment for increasing numbers of library patrons. Her organizational abilities, work ethic, and time commitment are the gifts she gives so generously.

### **Individual Achievement Award Municipalities over 25,000 Doris LaRese, Southington**

In the late 1960s Doris LaRese served as treasurer of the Southington Library Board of Directors. For the past 14 years, Doris has been the driving force behind the revitalization of the Friends of Southington Library. She has also served as a representative of the Friends of the Southington Library on the library's community-based, long-range planning committee.

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**Friends of Southington Public Library: Doris LaRese receiving her award from President Carl Nawrocki.**



**Friends of the Rathbun Library: from left, Kelly Marszycki, Jane Lewis, Maureen Tarbox and Joel Wright.**

## Awards, continued

*(Continued from page 3)*

Under her direction as president, Friends of the Southington Library runs one of the most successful library book stores in the state with revenues of more than \$200,000 in the past 15 years. Doris supervises and trains the more than 35 volunteers working in the bookstore. She spends at least 10 hours per week ensuring the bookstore is organized and always staffed with informed volunteers. Her energy, efficiency and military-like precision are a large part of the success of the bookstore operation. She is the first to say that she does not accomplish this alone. Her team includes Virginia Siton, Claudia Judson and Terry Bernard, who meet weekly to make decisions, plan for special events and solve problems. The resulting funds contributed to the Southington Library support many children's

programs, scholar-led book discussions, on-going programs, as well as new initiatives. Doris LaRese is a results-oriented leader who shares her skills easily and consistently over time.

### **Focused Project Award Municipalities I less than 15,000 Friends of the Rathbun Library, East Haddam**

In April 2010, the Rathbun Library began its celebrations for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the library with the Friends of the Rathbun Library publication of "East Haddam Artists", a beautiful full-color book highlighting the many creative people who live and work in their town. Maureen Tarbox and Jane Lewis, Friends of the Rathbun board members, had the vision for this project. These two knew of the library's ongoing art exhibits over the years. Their diligence resulted in the participation of more than 30 artists. The work involved collecting images of the art and working with the publishers on layout and production. Upon publication, the Friends of the Rathbun Library hosted a Sunday afternoon art reception/gala with the artwork displayed throughout the main room of the library. More than 100 people attended this event. That day the sales of this book covered the expenses for the project, and from then on the Friends of the Rathbun Library

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**Friends of the Scranton Library :from left, Ann Ward, Carol Robinson and Caroline Guenther.**

## Awards, continued

(Continued from page 4)

realized a profit on this important project. They had sold more than 250 copies by February 2011. This wonderful project brought a sense of pride to the residents of East Haddam and recognition to the Friends of the Rathbun Library.

### **Focused Project Award Municipalities 15,000 to 25,000 Friends of the Scranton Library, Madison**

The Friends of the Scranton Library are always searching for new fundraising ideas. The group helps close the gap between the town budget allocation as well as supporting needed programs. In March 2010, the assistant treasurer, Caroline Guenther, proposed the ideas of a perpetual or “forever” calendar -- a book to record birthdays, anniversaries, and other important dates. Caroline organized a committee that brought the project to life. It needed to be beautiful, reasonably priced and ready by November 2010 so that it could be sold at the holidays. They sought an experienced printer and graphic designer, people who had helped them before. To offset some of the costs, 12 businesses each provided \$200. Another Friends board member, Ann Ward, served as art director for the project. She found 26 local artists willing to contribute their

work to illustrate the calendar. There are photographs, drawings and paintings of Madison scenes appropriate to the month on every page. The calendar also includes a brief history of the library, a brief description of the Friends of the Scranton Li-

brary and two recipes for “Sally’s Not-So-Secret-Anymore Library Punches”, often served at Friends events. The calendars are sold at the library and at four of the sponsor locations. By December 2010, the sales had more than paid off the printing costs. When all the calendars are sold, the Friends of the Scranton Library will realize a profit of \$5,000.

### **Focused Project Award Municipalities over 25,000 Ann Tartaglione and Andrea Schieckel, Branford**

Ann Tartaglione and Andrea Schieckel head the children’s section of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library annual book sale. This includes receiving, sorting, pricing, organizing and selling the books as well as recruiting people to help do these tasks. The customer base for children’s books at the sale includes families who are home-schooling children; school librari-



**Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library: from left, Andrea Schieckel and Ann Tartaglione.**

ans and teachers from the region; parents and children; book dealers, and many other smaller groups of customers. In 2007, the gross revenue from children’s books was \$3,400. Ann and Andrea agreed to take responsibility for the children’s operation after that sale. Their goal is to reach gross revenues of \$10,000. Their progress toward this goal is reflected in gross revenues of \$4,300 in 2008 to \$9,600 in 2010. To accomplish this, they have recruited an excellent team that works seamlessly and effectively all year. Books are organized into more than 25 categories; by doing so, the people moving the books to the sale on the town green say they have cut the time in half. The children’s section of the book sale is a separate section in the big tent with its own cashiers. It is beautifully organized with effective signs, colorful displays and a team who knows books and can help anyone.

## 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.

**The Friends of the Westport Library** sponsor many cultural events at the library. Recently, Sue Matsuki, a multi-award winning, 25-year veteran jazz and standard singer, performed a heartfelt tribute to the first lady of song, Ella Fitzgerald, focusing on Ella's Great American Songbook Album series. She was accompanied by a world-class jazz pianist from Chicago, Jon Webber, and bassist-to-the-stars Tom Hubbard. In the spring the ensemble Espiritu Andino performed a variety of traditional and new age melodies from the South American Andean Mountains. The arrangements included a mixture of both indigenous and Spanish-influenced music – Incan music uses a pentatonic scale -- with a distinctive and driving syncopated beat. At their annual meeting, the Friends of the Westport Library presented a Special Friend Award to the music committee – Sally Berry, Linda Collins and Lynn Goldberg – in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the library. On Snapshot Day, the Westport Public Library encouraged patrons to “Like” the Westport Public Library on Facebook. As a thank-you, everyone who “Liked” the Library got \$2 off any purchase in the library that day, compliments of Friends of the Library.

**The Friends Book Shop at the Ferguson Library in Stamford** celebrated the Fourth of July by featuring all things patriotic: Revolutionary War history, biographies of the Founding Fathers, music from the Colonial days and much more. For Father's Day they featured special dad-themed books ranging from vintage cars to thrillers to hiking in the Adirondacks. For the summer they stocked many titles on the Stamford schools' reading lists for all grade levels. The Friends of Ferguson Library held a gala fundraiser: Eat Play Read -- an evening of food, spirits, entertainment and an auction -- to benefit the library. The Book Shop was open to attendees during the fundraiser. A number of special items, including beautiful art books and Easton Press leather-bound editions, were on sale for the first time. Since April 2007, when the Friends of Ferguson Library began keeping computerized records of volunteer service, 457 volunteers have contributed 70,000 hours. That represents nine full-time workers per year, unpaid. This fiscal year 89 active volunteers have contributed 10,800 volunteer hours so far.

**The Friends of the Hamden Library** hosted Connecticut author Dan DeLuca's discussion of

his book “The Old Leather Man: Historical Accounts of a Connecticut and New York Legend” with more than 100 in attendance. Also, the Friends funded a pilot project to loan three e-readers loaded with books to Hamden patrons and the purchase of X-Box games and teen DVD programs that are circulating heavily.

**The Friends of the Fairfield Public Library**, as part of the Soundwaves Concert Series, sponsored a special spring concert. The internationally acclaimed ensemble the Lions Gate Trio performed works of Beethoven, Brahms and award-winning contemporary French composer Nicolas Bacri. The trio has toured in Germany, France, Belgium, Finland and most of the eastern United States. They are the trio-in-residence at both the Hartt School (University of Hartford) and the Fairfield Public Library.

**The Groton Public Library Circle of Friends** sponsored TLC for Textiles with Evelyn Kennedy of Sewtique. Kennedy, a textile specialist and appraiser, talked about the proper care and maintenance of contemporary and vintage textiles and apparel. Participants were encouraged to bring one article for examination and evaluation.

## Ballantoni, continued

(Continued from page 1)

And libraries played a part in solving this mystery.

In 1995, the Hunley was found resting on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. It was undamaged and well preserved, considering it was buried deep in the sand and silt of the harbor of Charleston, SC. It was a mystery where the Hunley had disappeared to on a night in 1864.

Also an ID tag was discovered on one of the Hunley crew. The name on it: Ezra Chamberlain, private, 7<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Infantry, Union Forces. Southern folks wanted to know: What was a Connecticut Yankee doing on the sub?

That's when Bellantoni started digging for evidence.

Bellantoni, with his energetic style and good humor, brought us back to the time of the North and South conflict. Northerners wanted more control of Southern ports. Union Gen. Winfred Scott formed a plan to defeat the Confederacy by blockading Southern ports and then sending an army down the Mississippi Valley to outflank the Confederate army. Blockading prevented most sea vessels from leaving or arriving along the Confederate coast.

The Southerners had a plan of their own – to construct a water vessel. Horace L. Hunley helped invent a small submarine, a project developed in Alabama. By 1863 the nearly 40-foot-long H.L.



**State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni tells the tale of the Confederate submarine, the H.L. Hunley.**

Hunley was ready to launch.

On Aug. 12, 1863, the Hunley was shipped to Charleston. It sank on Aug. 29 during a training exercise, killing five crew members. It was raised, but sank again in October 1863, killing not only 7 crew members but also Horace Hunley.

The third attempt worked. On Feb. 17, 1864, when the moon was out and there were no clouds, the Hunley attacked and sank the USS Housatonic, which was on Union blockade duty. This was the first submarine that successfully attacked an enemy sea vessel. However, the Hunley never returned from this mission.

The mystery of the missing Hunley remained in the Atlantic Ocean for many years. In 1995, author Clive Cussler found the Hunley resting on the ocean floor. It was 100 yards from the remains of the Housatonic. A

team of underwater archaeologists raised the vessel and shipped it to Charleston.

Anthropologists examined the remains of the crew and were able to determine that four men were American born, and four were European born. This was based on the chemical signatures left on the men's teeth and bones from their diet. The position of the men indicated that they died at their stations.

Bellantoni told several stories of the Hunley crew. One was of the ID tag with the name of a Connecticut soldier. That's when Bellantoni got involved.

Using sources from libraries and the Killingly Historical Society, Bellantoni was able to trace Ezra Chamberlain's roots. Ezra was 21 to 23 years old when he enlisted and his father was a carpenter. The family died out in 1952. Ezra was listed as MIA or taken as prisoner since he never returned from a battle in South Carolina. Was he taken as a prisoner of war and put on the Hunley? DNA samples taken from the dead crew members showed none was Ezra Chamberlain. It was Joseph Ridgeway who found the ID tag and kept it as a token of war.

This mystery was finally solved forensically. Ezra died on the battlefield.

If you are interested in the Hunley, you can become a Friend of the Hunley, which is in South Carolina.

Even though Connecticut was not so much involved, it was a good story, especially the way Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni told it!

## Just Who Is This Mary Engels?

Who is Mary?

Her name appears on much of the correspondence from the Friends of Connecticut Libraries. She is often the contact for responses or questions. But who is she?

Mary Engels plays a vital role in the existence of FOCL. We often feel that without her we would be lost. She is our liaison from the State Library, our adviser, the person who has been with FOCL for longer than any of the board members, the individual who has all the answers, or at least most of them. She is the director of the Middletown Library Service Center where FOCL holds most of its board meetings.

Here, mostly in her own words, are answers to some questions we asked to get more insight into who Mary is, where she works and how she got to where she is now.

I see you are Director of the Middletown Library Service Center. What is it, what is its relationship to Connecticut State Libraries, and what do you do there as director?

"We like to describe the Middletown Library Service Center as a library for librarians. Library staff from all sorts of libraries throughout Connecticut borrow materials from us to supplement and enhance what they have already in their collections. Our collection focuses on the kind of library material that it may be too expensive for libraries to buy on



**Mary Engels can be found wherever there is something going on with books and reading. Above center, Mary staffs the Information booth at the Connecticut Book Festival in May. Behind her is Sharon Brettschneider of the Connecticut State Library.**

their own and they benefit by, in essence, sharing a collection with others. Our specialties are unabridged audiobooks, large print books, children's materials and professional library materials.

The service center also serves as a training center for library staff.

We are a part of the Connecticut State Library's Division of Library Development, the part of the State Library that provides leadership, funding, education, and statewide services that enhance a local library's ability to deliver high-quality library service to their community. So the service centers are an integral part of the support that DLD provides to libraries throughout Connecti-

cut. Sharon Brettschneider is the director of DLD. I might add that both Sharon and Kendall Wiggins, the State Librarian, are very supportive of Friends groups, and they are really the reason that I can devote so much of my time and energy to FOCL.

As director of the center I'm responsible for the development and management of the professional collection, large print books and audiobooks. I also act as a sort of reference librarian for other librarians. When a librarian is looking for professional information on a particular topic they often turn to me for help finding answers.

The rest of the staff who work with me are Judy Crooks, who is in charge of circulation and interlibrary loan, and Diane Stielau, who also works on circulation, processing and maintenance of the collection.

I became involved with the Friends of Connecticut Libraries shortly after I came to work for the state library (let's just say that was 25+ years ago and not say how much more than 25). The director of library development at the time, Pat Owens, asked me to be the state library's liaison to Friends. She knew that I had been very involved with the Friends of the Cora J. Belden Library in Rocky Hill where I worked before. I was on the staff there when the Friends group was formed, and then when I took the job at the state library, I

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## Mary, continued

(Continued from page 8)

served a couple of terms as president of that Friends group. About 5 years ago that group was in a transitional period and I became president again for 3 years. That experience has helped me enormously in working with other local Friends around the state. It really helps when I need to give advice or provide resources to have shared similar experiences with the local group.

Beyond providing support and resources to local Friends I work very closely with the board of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries. Actually their office is literally in my office (a nice 5-drawer filing cabinet). I help them plan state-wide programs, produce their newsletter, maintain their web page, serve on most of the FOCL committees and schlep things back and forth to the post office as well as a number of other things.

I have also been involved with the Connecticut Library Association for many years. I am a past president and currently serve as

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*“I love working with Friends because they show me every day how important libraries are to their communities and how much folks really do appreciate what we as librarians do.”*

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the chair of the Americans with Disabilities committee. The committee provides information and assistance to the association as well as local libraries on how to make programs and services accessible to people with disabilities. My brother was developmentally disabled and making libraries accessible to all the members of their communities is an interest of mine. I also serve on the CLA Publicity Committee and the Public Libraries Section helping to coordinate the Excellence in Public Library Service Awards, PR public relations awards and the display of library photographs at the legislative office building.

I also work at another library part time, very part time. I am a reference librarian at the Cora Belden Library just one night a week and one Saturday a month. Like my involvement with their Friends, working at a public service desk helps me understand the issues library staff grapple with first hand and I think it keeps me grounded about what good library service is really like. I never want to forget what it's like to work with the public, what a great feeling it is when you've helped someone find the answer to a question.

I love working with Friends because they show me every day how important libraries are to their communities and how much folks really do appreciate what we as librarians do. They're volunteers and they are passionate about library service.

I also am grateful to work for an organization that allows me to pursue my professional interests and supports them.

As I said before, the state library has always been very supportive of Friends in a very practical way.

## It's Membership Renewal Time

It's that time of year when Friends of Connecticut Libraries asks you to renew your membership.

Last year, FOCL held three well-attended events, the Annual Meeting, the Fall Conference and the first “Boot Camp.” We presented awards to seven individuals and groups and communicated important, time-sensitive

information to all our members via FOCL Point, our Web site ([www.FOCLib.org](http://www.FOCLib.org)), Facebook and FOCL-Forum.

This year we are planning to do even more.

Please renew your membership today, so we can continue supporting you.



Friends of  
Connecticut  
Libraries

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## Annual Conference Scheduled for Nov. 5

FOCL's Annual Conference will be held Saturday, Nov. 5 at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. The conference will start at 9:30 a.m. and conclude mid-afternoon; a buffet lunch is included. Building on the success of last year's conference, interesting speakers will cover relevant topics with plenty of time for discussion.

Leading off the day will be Kate Houlihan, an insurance consultant for Bearingstar Insurance. She will address the perennial question: "Do Friends groups need insurance?" Kate will differentiate the types of insurance a Friends group might need and present some steps each group

can use to decide whether they need insurance.

The second question is: "How do we define and achieve our goals?" The Ridgefield Friends have recently undergone thorough review and planning process, and Ann Jepson will share their experiences. She will go over their process and identify how it might help other groups discover new important relationships and create organizations that focus on achieving their goals.

After lunch, Sally Neale will present information on "Trends in Friends Fundraising." As a master's of library science candidate at Southern Connecticut State University, Sally has collected

some of her research from you through her FOCL-Forum request. By the end of the day, her work, coupled with information from the upcoming FOCL membership survey, will provide the audience with a myriad of fundraising ideas that their Friends group might try.

In addition, we will solicit questions during registration and at the beginning of the conference and will answer them as long as we have an audience. Last year, questions led to great discussions and possible solutions to nagging problems.

Registration will start in September, so be on the lookout for notices in the mail, on Facebook and on FOCL-Forum.