

FOCL POINT

More than 100 people attended the FOCL Fall Conference in November at Central Connecticut State University. But first they had to find their nametags.



Highlights of Fall Conference

- How do you make sure your library really gets to keep any donations? P. 2
- What do you do with those leftover books now that Pro Quo is no more? P. 4
- Can your Friends group make any money selling books online? P. 5

Rah! Rah! Rah! Our Library Rocks (And It's Time You Knew It)

Live from New York, it's Rebeckah Smith-Aldrich!"

That was the introduction for the energetic coordinator of library stability for the Mid-Hudson Library System in Poughkeepsie who told how Friends groups can gain support.

"It's an extremely exciting time for us to be involved with libraries," Smith-Aldrich said.

For libraries going forward it's like a person driving home at night in the fog, trying not to hit a deer, and wondering what's ahead. Change is coming, as it

(Continued on page 10)



Before they can gain the support of the community, Friends groups need to make sure they are strong and well-organized, said Rebeckah Smith-Aldrich, coordinator of library stability for the Mid-Hudson Library System in Poughkeepsie, NY.

Inside
this
issue: **FOCL Forum**
Keep IRS Happy

4
7

Around the State
New Board Member

8
11

Make Sure Gifts Really Help Your Library

No Friends group wants to raise money for the town library, only to have officials cut its budget by an equal amount.

But that can -- and has -- happened.

"You don't want the Friends to pay for electricity unless that's your purpose," said Barbara McGrath, executive director of the Urban Legal Initiative at the University of Connecticut Law School.

"People are allowed to make gifts to the town that go directly to the library," McGrath said.

To ensure strong support for a library, Friends should start by having a good relationship with town officials.

But beyond that, sometimes they can put restrictions on gifts such as:

- For library construction
- For books, programming or other specific activities
- Not for operating expenses
- To supplement maintenance and operation of the library
- Or adding a phrase, "in case that intent is impracticable" the gift can be used for other purposes.

Just make sure it's not for something that is already in the library budget, she said. Otherwise that item could be cut.



Lawyer Barbara McGrath, executive director of the Urban Legal Initiative at the University of Connecticut Law School, says gifts have to be structured so they really help the library.

And a restriction has to be placed on the gift before it comes in, not after. When someone makes a gift for a specific purpose, the law says it must be spent on that, she said, unless it's impossible.

For example, Yale University had to return a \$100 million gift because it could not do what the givers wanted.

Even if someone gives to the Friends instead of the library, the town could still cut the budget unless that gift is restricted, McGrath said.

Phyllis Prokop, of the Portland Library Friends, said her group gave the library \$5,000 for books but made sure the town knew it was a one-time gift. If a town

knew the Friends did this every year it might cut the library's budget by that amount.

"Building better relationships is probably the best way" to protect donations, McGrath said.

Get your membership to talk with town officials and maintain a good relationship, she recommended. Friends should also have a liaison to the library board and not just go through the library director.

"Think of your membership as an important political tool," she said.

Send different people each year to talk with officials so they know it is not just a small group that cares.

(Continued on page 3)



The FOCL Fall Conference is a great place to get your questions answered by an expert.

Gifts, continued

(Continued from page 2)

But no one will give to a group that doesn't seem to know what it's doing or doesn't appear capable of handling money, McGrath said.

Friends should have a committee responsible for finances, not just one person. Something could happen to that person and then your group would be in trouble,

she said.

"You guys have to have it together enough so that someone says 'I am comfortable giving you \$1 million,'" McGrath said. "You can't attract funds and execute your strategies unless you have your house in order."

That means having 501c3 status and filing tax forms (usually Form 990) on time, she said. Internal Revenue Service requirements shouldn't scare a group.

"They just want to be sure

you still exist and aren't handling so much money that they need to keep a special eye on your Friends," McGrath said.

Should the Friends incorporate?

If you partner with an existing agency it can be helpful and you could be more protected, she said.

For specific legal questions about your library, McGrath can be contacted at barbara.mcgrath@law.uconn.edu.

Remember to check our Facebook page — Friends of Connecticut Libraries — or our webpage — www.foclib.org — for the latest FOCL news.

What Do You Do With Leftovers After the Book Sale?

Pro Quo Books is no more.

That was the sad news that Carl Nawrocki, former president of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries and a Friends member from Salem, dealt with Nov. 10 at the FOCL annual Fall Conference.

Many Friends groups who once made a little extra money selling books left from their book sales to this company are now left with a dilemma. What do they do with the leftover books?

This can be a big issue. Of the approximately 1 million books for sale at state Friends groups' sales each year, about one third are left after the sales, Nawrocki said.

Unfortunately, he could find no company that would do the same thing as Pro Quo.

The only businesses he found that would buy books were small used book sellers, such as the Book Barn in Niantic.

Another option is a recycler.

However, the one Nawrocki talked with -- Willimantic Waste Paper -- paid \$20 a ton if Friends took the books there.

"The transportation costs may be greater than the money you get for your leftover books," he said.

Friends groups could get rid of leftover books by putting them in dumpsters after sales. However, that can be discouraging for people who donate to sales.

Another option to get rid of a small number is to put them on carts with a cash donation box nearby, so people could decide how much to give.

Nonprofit organizations may be the best option.

"At Farmington we make a very strong effort to donate books," said a member of the Farmington Library Friends. "We donate to a school in Hartford." A teacher there helps choose which books the students might appreciate.

Other Friends members said they give to different charities including overseas groups, homeless shelters, hospitals and even prisons. However, it is a lot of work because books must be boxed and moved.

Nawrocki praised the local effort.

"If you donate books to people in your community, they will support you," he said.

If you want to give large numbers of books to nonprofits who will pick up the books, Nawrocki found the four organizations listed below. For most of these groups, you need to box the books.

Park City Green, based in Bridgeport, covers most of the state. It will pick up everything including videotapes and textbooks. It usually picks up on weekdays only. The group employs people who have difficulty gaining employment. Contact: Marilyn Ondrasik at mondmask@greenteambpt.com or 203-362-8632.

Salvation Army, based in Hartford, covers most of the state, depending on the size of the donation. It takes everything but will pick up on weekdays only. The group supports adult rehabilitation in Hartford. Contact: Schedule a pickup at www.hartford.satruck.com or 203-362-8632.

Big Hearted Books, based in Sharon, MA, covers all of Connecticut. It takes everything except encyclopedias, magazines and newspapers and will pick up seven days a week. The group recycles books to other nonprofit groups. Contact: Kevin Howard at info@bigheartedbooks.com or 508-203-9483.

Easter Seals/Goodwill, based in North Haven and Bridgeport, covers most of the state. They will collect everything but pick up on weekdays only. The group helps those with disabilities and employment challenges. Contact: For south central and southeastern Connecticut -- Richard Bovel at goodwill@esginh.org or 203-777-2000; for western and northern Connecticut -- Vicki Valpano at 203-368-5511.

Friends Can Sell Books Online — If They're Willing To Do The Work



Speakers at the Fall Conference said selling books online can bring in money, but it also drives book dealers away from your regular sales.

Friends may make hundreds or thousands of dollars at their book sales, only to see a book they sold for 50 cents being resold online for \$50.

Is it worth it for your group to sell online?

Two Friends groups use different methods to do so, one selling the books themselves and the other using a seller who takes a percentage of the profits.

The Friends of the Meriden Library decided to do it themselves in 2002, said Frank Ridley of that group. He handled it all, working six to seven hours a day for five to six days a week. The group made about \$300 a month from the sales.

Was it fun?

"It wears on you quickly," he said.

Meriden sold through Amazon, Ridley said, because it was simpler. Amazon produces photos of the book and accepts credit

Frank Ridley, a Meriden Friends member, was asked if selling books online was fun? 'It wears on you quickly,' Ridley said.

cards. He set up a separate bank account just for Amazon sales because they require the ability to go into your account if you owe them.

Ridley had to choose books from donations that he thought would sell. He looked at 75-100 books for each one he would choose to sell. The key was

whether he thought it would sell for more than it would in the group's bookstore. A volunteer who had experience with rare books helped in the selection.

Then these books were locked away so that other volunteers wouldn't sell them in the store.

It was a steep learning curve, he said, as he set up an inventory control where he numbered each book to keep track of what was offered. When it sold, each was wrapped in bubble wrap and taken to the post office. Postal regulations frequently changed, Ridley said, adding another frustration. He set up a debit card to pay for postage.

Purchasers were emailed when a book was shipped, telling them that it could take up to 10 days

(Continued on page 9)

From FOCL Forum —

A Discussion About Selling Vintage Books

Friends of the Cheshire Library acquired a large collection of vintage books. They were considering holding a separate sale and had many questions.

Fellis Jordan, their president, submitted questions to FOCL Forum, hoping to benefit from the experiences of other libraries. After all, "What better resources to take advantage of than the other Friends groups?"

1. What criteria do you use to decide if a book is vintage?
2. Do you research and price every book individually?
3. Have you tried selling anything online? Any success?
4. What sources/sites do you use to determine prices?
5. How do you organize the books for ease of browsing?
6. What avenues do you use to advertise the vintage sale?
7. Would you be willing to share a sample news release?

The first to respond was



Suzanne Zinnkokso of the **Friends of Killingly Public Library:**

The sale of vintage books has always been an area of great debate among Friends groups. Groups often hold on to vintage books in hope of a big sale. Often the books are overpriced, in bad

condition and withheld from the normal book sale.

This practice is completely wrong. Book dealers come to our book sales in hopes of finding books they can resell. They have already begun staying away from library sales as more and more of you pre-scan your books and remove them prior to the book sale. To keep the dealers or any bibliophile coming to our sales we have to keep the appeal. Vintage books are very enticing!

A vintage book means a book from another era and popularity, like "The Great Gatsby" (1925). It's collectible because the author has attained great fame, a first edition being most collectible.

Book values are enhanced by small first press runs and by author signatures (depending on how well known they are). Value is also determined by scarcity and popularity, such as Civil War literature.

Other books are valued because of their illustrator, for example, "The Wizard of Oz" books illustrated by W.W. Denslow, or books with Tasha Tudor or Arthur Rackham illustrations.

One of the best websites is Abebooks.com. It gives a range of prices for the same title from low to high. This is where sensible comes into play! A book can often range between \$10 and \$200, depending on condition and availability. One must stay in the

lower pricing range, as who will buy from you if they can get it cheaper online!

Ebay is not a good source for book prices as most sellers do not know their books and massively overprice. It is, however, a great place to sell! Many libraries sell via Ebay. If you have a member willing to run this, do so.

If you come across vintage books that, after researching, you know are scarce and extremely valuable, the group should consider contacting local book dealers....

For regular book sales, vintage and collectable books should be included in the book sale advertising. They should be separated from the rest and marked individually.

If you have a number of books, holding a vintage-only book sale is the way to go.

The most important thing to remember is that the books need to be sold; the prices have to be reasonable so there will be buyers, and the buyers can make a profit. Then the friends will get their money and the books will live on!

Jean Oliva of the **Friends of the Stafford Library** added:

The information provided above is very good. I would add that Amazon is a great place to look up the going price for vintage books. If you go to the Amazon

(Continued on page 7)



Friends of The Stafford Library, shown above, recommend Amazon for onsite selling.

FOCL Forum, continued

(Continued from page 6)

website, click on "Shop by Department" and then "Books & Audible" and then "Books." The page that opens will have a header that includes a choice of "Advanced Search."

When you click on that, the search page that opens will allow you to enter the author, title, publisher and date of publishing, so you can see results specific to your book. (This is especially of value when you're researching the price of a book that has had many publishers or printing dates.)

Once you find the Amazon listing, you can look at the "used &

new" prices that it's selling at. Listings also indicate the condition of the book, so you can evaluate what your copy may be worth, given its condition.

Also, if you click on "Sell on Amazon" or "Have one to sell?" a page will open for listing a book for sale. If you scroll down and look under "Product Details," it will show you the book's Amazon sales ranking.

Needless to say a sales ranking of 5,000,000 means the book could sit on your shelf a long time before it sells, even if you price it to sell!

Selling vintage books can be rewarding.

I recently sold (on Amazon) a 1938 book in very good

condition titled "Market Milk and Related Products." I noticed the buyer had the same last name as the author, so I asked whether they were related. It turns out the book was purchased by the author's grandson to give to one of his own children.

I was happy to learn that the book would end up with someone who would have an emotional bond to it. If we had sold it in our regular book sale, I'm sure it would have ended up in the leftover discards at the end of the sale.

That said, I think the book was on the shelf for three or four years before it found that special buyer.

Here Are Some Tips To Keep the IRS Happy With Your Group



As a new year begins, it is time to review Internal Revenue Service recordkeeping requirements.

Our friends at Pro Bono Partnership, which provides legal service to nonprofits, have provided the following guidelines:

- Maintain Form 990's permanently.
- Must maintain all fundraising solicita-

tion information for three years.

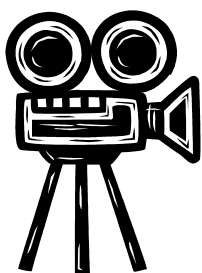
- Must maintain acknowledgements to donors for their contributions for seven years.
- Maintain reports to grantors/funders for seven years.

FOCL reviewed the State of Connecticut recordkeeping requirements, and they are the same as the Federal.

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 Mystic & Norank Library has been busy. In September the Friends held a Local Authors Expo, giving 18 local published authors a chance to present their books directly to the public. The books were available for purchase, with the authors available to sign them. In October they held their Third Annual Pumpkin Festival, All Things Pumpkin,



with a costume parade, games, stories and songs, a magic show and themed raffle baskets. In October and November, they sponsored an International Film Club Series with foreign films from Germany, Italy, Iran, France, and Spain. And in December they held their Like-New Book Sale with books suitable for gift giving.

Friends of the Watertown Library worked with the library association on the Town-Wide Read *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam, Jr. and helped finance the author's appearances at several locations in town. To raise money for library programs, they made and raffled two quilts. The Friends concluded their annual meeting with a trip to the nearby Miranda Vineyard for a wine tasting.

Norfolk Library Associates held a fundraising weekend in August. Friday evening's Extravaganza celebrated 25 years of summer reading and included a children's book fair, face painting, an ice cream social, circus arts and magic. Saturday evening's Annual Silent and Live Auction was replete with fine food and drink. And Sunday was the Friends 37th Annual Book Sale.

Friends of the New Britain Public Library administer the library's participation in the



Campbell's Labels for Education Program to "help us get free stuff for the Library!!"

Friends of the Bethel Public Library sponsored an Evening with the Gillettes, a dramatic musical performance by professional musicians Harold and Theodora Nivers. The Nivers bring William and Helen Gillette to life in words and music! The audience met the first couple of Baker Street, learned about their Connecticut castle and enjoyed rousing English music hall songs.

Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington

partnered with the Newington Children's Theatre Company to present *Desserts Ever After: Dessert with Storybook Characters*. Guests



were greeted by members of the Theatre Company portraying the Cat in the Hat, Rapunzel, Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother, Snow White, Belle, Harry Potter, Spiderman, Little Red Riding Hood, and Dora the Explorer. Guests could photograph children with their favorite characters, and children could collect the characters' signatures in autograph books provided. Locally made ice cream was served. The Friends also sponsored a bus trip to the annual Pumpkin Festival in Keene, NH, where every year the residents try to beat the world record for the most lit jack-o-lanterns in one place. The festivities included fireworks, music, crafts and food.

Friends of the Brookfield Library presented the library with a grant to buy new paperbacks to fill a spinner by the new book shelves. Romances, thrillers, mysteries, science fiction, fantasies

(Continued on page 9)

Online, continued

(Continued from page 5)

for it to arrive. If it arrived earlier, a purchaser was a satisfied customer. Shipping charges were built into the Amazon account. Textbooks were not sold because of the shipping expense.

A bookmark was included with each shipment, asking purchasers to post good remarks if they were satisfied and to let the Meriden Friends know of any problems.

A team of four now sells online for the Meriden friends, averaging 25 to 30 books a month for \$200 to \$300 in sales.

The Friends of the Woodbury Library had a seller come to them and offer to sell online, said Linda Grayson of that group. The seller takes 25% of the profit. Both Amazon and eBay get about 10 percent of a sale, with 3 percent going to Paypal, if that is used.

The Woodbury Friends made about \$2,000 so far this year, with

\$600 of that coming from a rare Booth Tarkington book with a collectable jacket, Grayson said.

The Friends put aside books they think their seller might be interested in. They realize they could sell online themselves but the convenience of this works for them so far.

The seller researches prices for similar books, photographs items, prepares descriptions, lists them on Amazon or eBay, answers buyer questions, processes the payments and packages the sales. She lists items for 30 to 60 days, then returns what doesn't sell. About 100 books were sold this year.

The Woodbury Friends learned that popular items include autographed books, those with leather or other fine bindings, vintage children's and sports books, historic copies of Life magazine, old religious books and Playbills or other entertainment memorabilia.

The Friends of the Woodbury Library had a seller come to them and offer to sell online, said Linda Grayson of that group.

Both groups said that dealers may not come to your book sales anymore if they know you are selling online.

"When we first started doing this we lost every dealer," Ridley said. "But we made more this way."

Some people will offer books for sale for 1 cent because they make their money through shipping, charging more than it costs. Ridley said even though Meriden didn't sell for a price that low, they did sometimes make a profit from shipping.

Because this is a new venture for Woodbury, Grayson said, they will evaluate at some point whether it is worthwhile for the Friends to continue.

Friends, continued

(Continued from page 8)

and more are now organized so that they are easy to find.

Friends of the Danbury Library added to a generous grant from the Praxair Foundation to help complete a project on the library's main floor consolidating and expanding computers for the public.

Friends of the Lyme Public Library presented a talk by local author Nick Hahn on his first novel, *Under the Skin*.

Though fiction, it makes a strong statement for women's rights in the guise of a political thriller.

The Friends also sponsored a breakfast and bus trip to the governor's mansion for a tour of the residence and sculpture garden.

Save the Date

Boot Camp will be held April 26 at the University of Hartford.

The program is in the early planning stages. We will supply more specific information within the next couple of months.

We made sure that the 2014 Boot Camp will not compete with Spring Weekend this time.

We hope you will not be "carded" to get on University grounds.

Rah, Rah, continued

(Continued from page 1)

already has with ebooks, computers, databases, computer classes and other technology.

Most people, even library supporters, don't know what libraries offer, according to the latest Pew

research. Libraries have a public relations problem, Smith-Aldrich said.

With new inventions, people keep saying that you won't need libraries, she said. But the same was

said about radio, movies, television, computers, the Internet and self-publishing.

Libraries still reach people in many ways. They are a critical part of self-education, open to all. They offer intellectual freedom, where people can explore what they want without judgment. They cater to your community, designed for its needs, for the challenges your children face.

When people "see what you are providing, they will support you," Smith-Aldrich said. "I do this because I believe libraries are necessary for this country to move forward."



Friends were told how to make their groups stronger.

But Friends group also need to make sure they are strong and well-organized. Every so often they should assess what and how they are doing to make sure things are run well. If not, they need to make some changes.

Smith-Aldrich offered these five steps:

1. Review your library's long-range plan.
2. Discuss your Friends' vision for the future of your group.
3. Identify internal and external forces that could affect your group.
4. Reaffirm your Friends' mission statement. Make sure it's lively and accurate AND on the library's website.
5. Develop goals and an action plan for how to achieve those goals.

Another way a Friends' group can evaluate itself is by doing a SWOT analysis of the group -- its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (See table below).

Set SMART goals for your Friends: specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time-relevant.

Your board meetings should have an agenda, be well run, productive and last less than two hours, Smith-Aldrich said. Your committee heads should be on the board but you can recruit anyone to be a member. You can have temporary committees, maybe just for one event.

Your group should have a liaison who attends library board meetings, and the board should have a liaison who attends your meetings.

Encourage the director to attend but that director should not be the liaison.

"It's not us vs. them," with the board, the director and Friends, she said.

"We are all one" in our desire to help the library succeed.

Try new things as a group; if they don't work, cut them out.

And when something goes well for your group, whether it's a successful book sale or a sponsored program that drew praise, get the word out. It could be with Facebook, your library's website or a press release.

Analyze Your Friends Group

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
External	Opportunities	Threats

Introducing A New FOCL Board Member From Enfield

I am originally from Boston, the home of the World Champion Red Sox.

I moved to Connecticut 45 years ago when I married a school teacher from Enfield. We celebrated our 45th anniversary in August. I spent more than 20 years in systems management at the Travelers Insurance Company and the next several years as a consultant for electronic health care transactions.

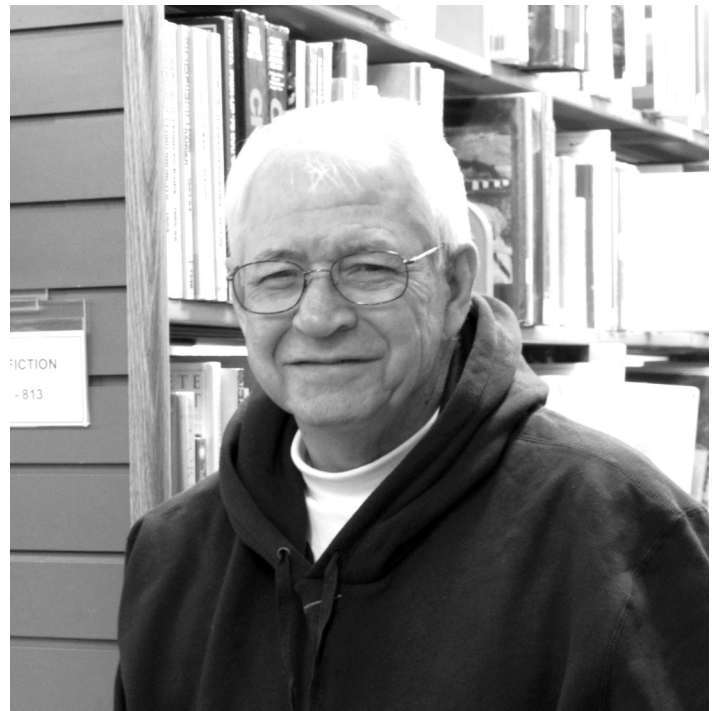
I have always loved to read. My plan was to either own or work in a small bookstore when I retired. When I did retire eight years ago, to my dismay the small bookstore had vanished.

"My slogan is 'A meeting should never be boring.'"

That year I noticed that the Enfield Library was having a book sale. I could enter free the first night if I joined the Friends. Well, of course I would, and I did. I was then invited to monthly meetings and then to work at the next book sale. This was almost as good as working in a bookstore. I loved it!

Some time later I was asked to serve as vice president of the group. I served in that role for two years. I am now in my third year as president.

The Enfield Friends was well established when I stepped in. Of course everyone's goal is to increase



Rob Sweeney first joined the Friends of the Enfield Library so that he could get into the book sale early.

membership. To do that, I have tried to make every meeting an event. We always have an author, book groups, or other guests such as local environmentalists or historians. And refreshments are always served.

My slogan is "A meeting should never be boring."



A Time To Chat

Two who attended the Fall Conference of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries find a little time to chat in between guest speakers. The conference gave Friends members a chance to meet people from other libraries and compare ideas.



Friends of
Connecticut
Libraries

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Newsletter edited
and designed by
Marjorie Ruschau

Make Some Friends Smile — Nominate Them for FOCL Awards

Notice the beautiful smiles from Enfield Friends Betsy Ellery and Joan Pacheco (at right) after receiving Individual Achievement Awards at the 2012 FOCL Annual Meeting in Hamden.

Is there someone in your Friends group deserving of statewide recognition and a big smile?

In late January FOCL will mail award nomination forms to the presidents of Friends groups and librarians. We are pretty sure that you know a person or team who deserves a FOCL award.

Many of you are proud of the work your Friends group has accomplished. Why not recognize your entire group? Nomination forms are due back to FOCL in mid-April.

But do not procrastinate, as forms must be postmarked before the deadline to be considered.

Awards will be presented at the Friends annual meeting, June 7, at Middlesex Community College in Middletown.

For more information contact Mary Engels at 800-437-2313 or email her at mary.engels@ct.gov

