A Note From New FOCL President

The past six months have been very difficult for Friends’ groups across the state. Many activities had to be cancelled, and most libraries are only open on a very limited basis. The Friends of Connecticut Libraries also had to cancel activities including our annual meeting and fall conference, but we have NOT stopped working on your behalf. Our

(Continued on page 2)

FOCL Board Changes for 2020-2022

New officers and board members were elected to two-year terms on the Friends of Connecticut Library Board on July 14 via Zoom. Frank Ridley of Meriden was elected president and Pamela Monahan of Prospect, was elected vice president.

Laure Riley of Simsbury was re-elected as secretary and Peggy Brissette was re-elected as treasurer. Ridley succeeds two-term President Barbara Leonard of Avon who served with distinction and dedication.

In other actions, the FOCL Board accepted the resignation of Jennifer Hadley of Wesleyan University. As membership chair, Hadley helped install and manage a new software tool that vastly increased FOCL’s efficiency in keeping track of and communicating with membership.

Her smile and dedication will be missed.

Finally, Ashley Volkens of Milford was elected to the FOCL Board. Ridley brings a wealth of management and volunteer board

(Continued on page 3)
During these challenging times, we hope that you and your families, your communities and your libraries are doing well. Just as libraries have stepped up to develop innovative programs to serve the public, Friends groups are also exploring new ways to support their libraries and communities.

The mission of the non-profit Friends of Connecticut Libraries to facilitate communication, collaboration and advocacy among Friends groups and libraries throughout the state is even more important at this moment.

We invite you to join/renew your membership in FOCL, along with more than 100 other local Friends groups, individual library friends, library directors and organizations, to support this effort.

Members can take advantage of FOCL’s centralized resources for Friends groups:
- The FOCL website, which includes an extensive resource section about Friends topics, a newly revised Friends handbook which will be available this fall, a listing of member groups, and book sale information.
- An active FOCL Facebook community.
- FOCL-Forum, an email listserv on which you can ask questions, share information and post announcements.
- Events on topics of interest to Friends groups. When we return to in-person events, FOCL members will receive a discounted rate.
- FOCLPoint, our newsletter, with important news and ideas for Friends throughout the state.
- Recognition of outstanding individuals, groups and projects at FOCL’s annual awards meeting in June 2021 (including those nominated in 2020).
- Grants and consultations to Friends groups in need of organizational support.

We encourage you to fill out your membership information and make your donation online at foclib.org. (If you need help logging in or have both a group and an individual membership, email friendsctlibraries@gmail.com.)

If you prefer, you can mail your membership form and payment to FOCL for the 2020-2021 membership year. For groups, this will ensure earlier inclusion of group information in our online directory and calendar.

Individual donations may be tax deductible.

Thank you for all you do for libraries in Connecticut and for supporting FOCL’s work!

Please let us know if there are any other ways we can serve your group and library.

Linda Grayson
Membership committee chair
friendsctlibraries@gmail.com
Officer, Continued

(Continued from page 1)

experience to the office of president. He is a retired senior executive from the insurance industry and owned the largest insurance agency in the state.

Upon retirement, Ridley has spent his time giving back to the state and his home community of Meriden. Most notably, he was appointed to Board of Governors for Higher Education for the State until the function of the board was changed in 2013.

He has served on numerous state and local non-profit boards mostly in Meriden, where he is president of the Friends of the Meriden Public Library.

The FOCL Board looks forwards to working with Ridley during these challenging times to help support our Friends groups throughout the state.

Monahan succeeds Ridley, who served two terms as vice president.

Monahan is president of the Friends of the Prospect Public Library and has been a FOCL board member for the past view years.

The Prospect Friends had planned to open a used book store. But the day before the opening, the pandemic forced the closing of the Prospect Town Offices. The offices, including the library and the building that houses the bookstore, remain closed.

Prior to her "retirement" four years ago, Monahan was executive director of a nonprofit organization that provided training to workers in the drinking water industry in Connecticut. She was also administrative secretary to a U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals judge in New York and Connecticut.

A resident of Naugatuck, Monahan now works part time at ORTV and WJMJ, the Catholic television and radio station for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

Volkens is vice president of public relations for the Friends of the Milford Library and has previously chaired their community engagement and fundraising events. She works full time at Save the Children, where she manages their School Club program.

Some fun facts about Volkens are that she:
- Is a lifelong CT resident,
- Ran her first half marathon last year,
- Skydived earlier this year.

Her favorite books include the Harry Potter and American Girl series.

Ashley Volkens of Milford is a new member of the FOCL board.

The only thing your absolutely have to know is the location of the library.

—Albert Einstein
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 Andover Library is selling tickets for a handmade quilt they are raffling off. The quilt is on display in the library. The drawing is scheduled to be held Dec. 12. Tickets can be purchased at the library, at the town clerk’s office or by mail.

Friends of the Avon Library sponsored a virtual author event in September with Wendy Walker, author of Don’t Look For Me.

Friends of the Beacon Falls Library is sponsoring a Thanksgiving holiday pie sale. Orders for either apple or pumpkin pies had to be placed by Nov. 4 and pies picked up at the library’s parking lot two days before the holiday.

Friends of the Bethany Library are selling memorial bricks to help enhance the library’s reading garden and contribute to the renovation of the children’s room.

Friends of the Bethlehem Library recently funded computers for patrons, a new circulation desk, solar window shades, refinished chairs in the children’s room and renovations to staff offices.

Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford held 5 weekends of mini-book sales rather than their usual one huge book sale over 4 days on the town green. Sales were held in a warehouse where their books are stored. A few books were put outside for people to browse while waiting to enter. Sales featured a specific genre each weekend.

Friends of the Bristol Public Library teamed up with Boscov’s department store at the Meriden mall for a fundraiser Oct. 14 and 15. Shoppers received a discount. For each one who mentioned the Friends when checking out, the group would get money equaling 5% of the total purchase.

Friends of the Chester Library were able to collect a grant from the Essex Savings Bank for $838 this year, one of 72 non-profit organizations that requested money.

Friends of the Danbury Library held a smaller book sale instead of their usual huge sale over Columbus Day weekend.

Friends of the Hall Memorial Library in Ellington are in need of volunteers to staff their Book Cellar. It is still open by appointment one afternoon a week.

Friends of the Farmington Public Library held a large outdoor book sale for 2 days in September.

Friends of Welles Turner Memorial Library in Glastonbury offer a $5 Grab Bag of Books to Go program. Because they have a large inventory of donated book and have had to cancel two book sales, they decided to try something new. Books are ordered and paid for on their website. Bags have 4-7 books in the requested category selected by a Friend. A Surprise Me! bag is also available. An email is sent to the buyer as to when the books are

(Continued on page 5)
Friends, continued

(Continued from page 4)

ready to be picked up in the library.

Friends of the Groton Public Library are inviting people to make an appointment for a private visit to their Circle of Friends Book Sales Room.

Friends of the Lyme Public Library sponsored several Zoom talks including:

- Election 2020: The State and Fate of American Constitutional Democracy by Wesleyan University professor of government emeritus John E. Finn.
- New England’s vampires and witches with paranormal experts
- Crafting a set of decoupage coasters, felted sheep, a holiday kissing ball
- New England at 400: From Plymouth Rock to the present
- Fisher cats in Connecticut

The Scranton Library Friends of Madison scheduled an everything-must-go book sale in October, before they were scheduled to move back into the library building. The library building had been closed for several months for renovation.

Friends of the Meriden Library reopened their bookstore in September.

Friends of the Milford Library continue to fund programs for children, teens and adults but for now they’re through Zoom.

Friends of the Bakerville Library of New Hartford were scheduled to raffle off a 2020 Dodge Challenger R/T in October. They printed 550 tickets that they sold for $100 each either at the library, from a Friend or from their website.

Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington established the Anita Wilson Memorial Concert Series in honor of their longtime volunteer.

They also held a children’s book grab-and-go sale where people could call the library and request a grab bag for $5.

Friends also held a fundraiser for their board of trustees in which prizes intended for the Newington 5K Challenge road race, which was canceled, were raffled off.

Friends of the Otis Library in Norwich gave away books over the summer to families who participated in the summer grab-n-go meal program run by the Norwich Public Schools. Friends asked if people were interested and the ages of children. Then they provided appropriate books.

Friends of the Case Memorial Library in Orange held a mini-book sale on a Sunday afternoon followed by a concert in the library parking lot.

Friends of the Shelton Libraries received a $3,500 grant from Newman’s Own Foundation in support of the Plumb Memorial and Huntington Branch libraries.

Friends of the West Haven Public Library held a book sale in the library’s parking lot.

Friends also held a sidewalk chalk art show.

Friends also held a Virtual Bake Sale, inviting people to donate whatever they would pay if they were actually buying something at a bake sale. They suggested $10 for brownies, $15 for a cake and $20 for a pie.

Friends of the Westport Library held a three-day indoor book sale over Labor Day weekend. Only one person wouldn’t wear a mask, was denied entrance and left without a lot of fuss. They were pleased with total revenues. Their greatest challenge was finding enough volunteers.

Friends of the Woodbridge Library have two book sale carts -- for adult and children’s books -- that the library staff roll out every day. Payment is on the honor system. Friends restock the carts every few days. This has been very successful.
The Friends of Connecticut Libraries is a statewide support group whose members believe libraries are essential. FOCL exists to promote library enrichment by helping Friends groups support their libraries through education, advocacy, training and resources.

Friends of the Connecticut Libraries Board

**Board of Directors**

**President:** Frank Ridley, Meriden  
**Vice President:** Pam Monahan, Prospect  
**Secretary:** Laura Riley, Simsbury  
**Treasurer:** Peggy Brissette, Mystic & Noank

Janice Hollywood, Waterbury  
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Ashley Volkens, Milford

**Board Members**

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Dawn LaValle