



MFOL NEWS

MASSACHUSETTS FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES

Fall 2014, Volume 24, No. 3

Friends of the Boxford Library Receive the 3rd Annual Fantastic Friends Award

Winner of the Fantastic Friends Award for 2014 is the Friends of the Boxford Library. The event that earned them this award was a fund raiser titled *Flavors of the Farm*. Drawing on Boxford's rural character, their event was held in a barn at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. It included displays of local products and equipment, a discussion with a professional chef and country and western music. There were a number of donations from local merchants offered as prizes and appetizers from products sold at the farms that were part of the display were served. Members of the community who participated in this event included local farmers and farm stands, landscape architects, professional chefs, bee keepers, nurseries, artisans, and local residents. The event not only succeeded beyond their expectations as a fund raiser but brought together people in the community who had not known each other before working on and attending this event.

Members of the MFOL Board were especially impressed by the quality of the programs submitted as candidates for this award. Take a look at a summary of the entries beginning on page 5. You are sure to find some great ideas.

Friends Sharing with Friends in Townsend

The first of our fall workshops was held on September 27 at the Meeting Hall of the Townsend Library complex. Friends of the Townsend Library president John King welcomed the group to their library and joined the discussion with information about their



Guest speaker Mary Ann Cluggish (on the right) chats with MFOL President Alice Welch (on left) and Katherine Dibble, MFOL Board member at the workshop

programs. Mary Ann Cluggish, a Library Commissioner and active member of the Wellesley Friends, talked about fund raising and advocacy.

She began by emphasizing the importance of Friends groups in the current economic environment. Library usage has increased by 40% over

the last ten years but municipal budgets are squeezed and libraries are often seen as an easy area to cut funds.

Acknowledging that for most libraries book sales are the primary source of fund raising, she said that availability of books to sell is likely to decrease in the future as e-books become increasingly popular. She suggested expanding the sales beyond books, mentioning educational toys, puppets and used professional kids sports jerseys as a possible addition. She mentioned the Arlington Friends group as an innovative organization and recommended that people check out their website for ideas.

But - beyond book sales - she talked about other fund raising options. Mini-golf in the library has been a successful fund raiser for many libraries. Murder Mystery nights have also been successful, especially when you can find prominent town residents to play the part of villains and victims.

At the Friends of the Salisbury Library. One of their Trustees - also an artist - painted a picture of a local scene. A photo of the painting was made into a puzzle to be sold. Everyone buying the puzzle got a ticket and when all the puzzles are sold, a drawing will be held for the original painting. One of the puzzles will be completed and framed for display in the library. They sold half their supply in two weeks.

They also had a successful BrewHaHa. Brewer allowed them to sell 50 \$25 tickets which included a t-shirt and refreshments along with the beer tasting.

With the popularity of Downton Abby, several libraries have held Downton Abby teas with guests dressing the part. While having lovely teapots and cups is nice, it isn't essential. She said it's really all about the hats.

One critical point of Mary Ann's presentation was the importance of publicity. She said a publicity committee should be created at the same time as the event committee and should be given equal attention and funding. Each person you want to attend should be reached a minimum of 6 times. Reaching could include a phone call, an e-mail, a flyer, a poster, a facebook or twitter notice, a bookmark at the library, a banner, a newspaper article, a notice on the local cable channel or a personal chat. She cited one Friends group that doubled their booksale revenue by hanging a banner across their main street for 2 weeks.

Referring again to the Salisbury Friends group she talked about the publicity campaign they created to get approval for a new library. The theme was *Vote YES Twice* and the campaign included lawn signs, a bill board, folders at the library, Q&A sessions, and door knockers on the front door of every house in town.

Moving on toward a discussion of Advocacy she said that libraries are a major part of the economic health of the country - the other half of the educational

system. There is a need to make people at every level of government understand the value they present. There are many Friends of the Library in Massachusetts. If every one of them contacted their legislators and their town or city officials to urge them to support library funding, it is guaranteed to make a difference.

Talking about techniques, she said that phone calls get more attention than e-mails. She and Katherine Dibble demonstrated a



Mary Ann Cluggish suggesting that selling used sports jerseys in good condition might be a profitable fund raiser.

brief phone conversation that you could have with an aide to your legislator. She did say the likelihood of actually talking to your legislator with a phone call was low but their staff members will pass the information on. The best time to contact them is mid-January to mid-March when budgets are being prepared. However, getting to know your legislators is important and she recommended you invite them to a library meeting or function. She also recommended attending legislative breakfasts held around the state and the Legislative Day that will occur in March at the State House.

In the Q&A session, the question was raised about charging for events held at the library. She made a distinction between core services which should always be without charge and fund raising events. She said that some libraries have a “memo of understanding” with the Friends group which covers this issue. United for Libraries has helpful information on their website.

In the Second presentation **John Tavares**, President and Treasurer of the **Acushnet** Friends, talked briefly about the reporting requirements for Friends Groups. He covered the Internal Revenue Service requirements and those of the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. Different levels of reporting are required based on the amount of funds received in a year. He provided handouts with details. Check <http://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/friends> for more information.

He also talked about the need for adequate record keeping, the requirement to set up controls on who can sign checks, and the need to obtain and file receipts for your expenses.

Questions were raised about the process of becoming a 501c3 organization. John said they had a member who was a professional in this field who had helped them. Soliciting free advice among your Friends was recommended.

The floor was opened to attendees to talk about their fund raising programs.

Woburn had a successful ice cream social on the lawn with ice cream and people to dip it donated by Whole Foods and other snacks donated by Starbucks. People brought games and the fire truck showed up. It was an excellent family event.

Acushnet puts a small envelope in each DVD that is circulated asking for a donation of a quarter to maintain the collection. They raised \$600 last year.

Pepperell puts a note on each museum pass asking if people are aware that the Friends pay for passes and inviting them to become Friends. They also have a Toy yard sale every year - separate from their book sale. They used to clean and price each item. Now they just let people drop them off during the week before the sale and ask for a donation for the children’s programs from purchasers.

They have a successful annual wine tasting. You need a one day liquor license and a certified person to do the pouring. Everything is donated and with the admission attendees get a wine glass with a picture of the library.

Belchertown is lucky enough to have space for storing and displaying books for their two sales each year - each a week long. They have 40,000 - 50,000 books for each sale and they raise between \$18,000 and \$22,000 for each sale. They solicit donations and offer pickups for collections of books.

Worcester talked about their bookstore and cafe staffed totally by volunteers. It has been not only a fund raiser but a community developer.

Lunenburg - has a successful OctoberFest. They also have a membership drive during Friends of Library week with the opportunity for all people who join or renew to win one of two Kindles.

Friends Sharing with Friends in Middleborough

Ashland has had very successful film programs that are self supporting - attendees make donations. They work to create collaborations with other town organizations including the schools and the Farmers' Market. They sponsor an art exhibit and a candidates forum.

Townsend has had successful craft supply sales, inviting crafters to bring their unused items like yarn and fabric. They have Thursday band concerts in Townsend and different organizations take a night to be the sponsor.

Medford has a gift book sale in December, pulling the best books donated. They worked with the Historical Society to host a Fannie Farmer tea and hosted a plant sale with the Garden Club. They have a good relationship with the Family Network and they have offered book plates for people wanting to donate items in memory. They participate in the Jingle Bells Festival for Alzheimer's and they do a Library Christmas tree every year.

Dracut has an on-going book nook sale that raises about \$600 a month. In December they have a baskets and wreath sale.

Fitchburg talked about their Nancy project. Crafters in town are asked to create items to donate for a sale at the library staffed by the Friends in the 3 weeks after Thanksgiving. Items include scarves, mittens, bags and bird houses. They raised \$4,000 last year.

Leominster created a small cookbook printed internally on plain paper and sold at a local farm stand. They raised \$2,000. They also have a poinsettia sale at Christmas in conjunction with a local florist.

The event ended with Amy Woo from **Lowell** talking about the event that won them the Fantastic Friends award last year. It is a children's shopping day. Specific items are requested in donations from residents and priced very affordably. Children can come and shop with a teen helper and they leave with wrapped presents. Not a big fund raiser but a wonderfully received benefit in town.

A full house of library enthusiasts joined our guest speaker Sue Hall of Library Strategies on October 25 at the Middleborough Public Library for another day of information and sharing. Library Strategies is a consulting group of the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library in Minnesota. They have helped libraries in 38 of the 50 states as well as several overseas locations.

In her presentation, Sue Hall talked about advocacy, the visibility of your friends group, and the process of working together with your library trustees and the library director and the foundation board (if you have one).

She emphasized the need for good communication, recommending that a joint meeting should be held each year to talk about priorities and develop a funding plan.

Must have's for Friends Groups include a clearly defined mission and a strategic plan with a three year planning window as a good choice. Other important factors are strong board leadership with term limits, supportive committees and a nominating process to recruit those strong leaders and committee chairs. The Friends should be clear on what activities will support their mission. Strong on-going communication with the Library Director is critical.

Visibility in the community is equally critical for Friends Groups and Sue Hall pointed out that people don't give to organizations. They give to people so having your group and its members involved in the community is important. Your Library provides important services and you need to make sure everyone in the community knows about them. Highlighting specific services and the number of people who use them is a good tactic. In addition to your patrons, you need to make sure that the people who decide on the library budget are aware of this information.

In discussing these services, make sure that it is very clear what the Friends do to fund and support those services.

She finished her talk by saying that one of the most important committees a Friends group has is the marketing or public relations committee.

John Tavares, President and Treasurer of the Acushnet Friends, repeated the presentation on reporting requirements for Friends Groups that he had given at the meeting in Townsend (see page 3) He also answered questions on how Friends groups might invest some of the money they raise.



Following the presentations, Alice Welch,



president of the MFOL Board, led the annual meeting. Board members reported on financial and membership numbers. Approximately 150 libraries belong to MFOL. The current slate of officers was accepted and voted to remain in place. Alice then gave a brief overview of all the 2014 Fantastic Friends Award nominations and announced this year's award to the Boxford Friends for their Flavors of the Farm event. (see page 1)

The floor was then opened up to attendees to talk about their fund raising ideas. Items shared included a wine & cheese event in Bellingham, a turkey dinner in Shutesbury and a spring clean-up project in which teams of four Friends volunteers spend one hour doing yard work for local residents who donate \$100 to the Library Friends group.

Cindy Roach gave contact information for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for any Friends group in need of assistance. Attendees then enjoyed a lunch provided by the MFOL and the opportunity to network with their colleagues at other libraries.



A Brief Look at all the entries for the Fantastic Friends Award

This Year's entries were so impressive we wanted to give you a brief look at what these libraries are doing.

The Friends of the Boxford Library located in a rural setting held a Flavors of the Farm event to raise funds toward a new library and to showcase the importance of sustaining agriculture. The group recruited participants from all aspects of the community to join in the event held at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. Agricultural displays, a discussion with a professional chef demonstrating cooking with local produce, a silent auction and a CSA Raffle and country and western music were all part of the event. Flavors of the Farm was not only an exceptional financial success but it created a great sense of community.

The Friends of the Fitchburg Public Library have created The Nancy Project, named after the mother of a president of the Friends. Creative people in the community are asked to knit, crochet or sew items that they give to the Friends for a sale that runs for three weeks after Thanksgiving, staffed by Friends members. Everything was donated and items for sale included hats, scarves, mittens, socks, blankets and clothing for toys as well as tote bags, wine gift bags, fabric wallets and even three unique birdhouses.

Friends of the Hull Library held a year long celebration to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the library. Happy Birthday, Hull Library kicked off with a party at the historic Paragon Carousel and a cancellation of a stamp on an envelope featuring a rendering of the Hull Library by artist Judeth Van Hamm. A special donation request letter, an evening with Ron Della Chiesa, a Trinket and Treasures sale, a lecture on the life of John Boyle O'Reilly by author Peter Stevens, a library photography contest and a year-end Thank You Party were all included in this very successful celebration.

Friends of the Flint Public Library in Middleton held Vehicle Night at the library. Participants included the electric company, the Department of Public Works, the Police and Fire Departments and the Sheriff's office. The event raised funds and collected food donations in memory of their former Fire Chief David Leary. The Friends rented a Dunk Tank and three firefighters agreed to be dunked. They filled a large cart with food and raised \$122. for the pantry.

REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE A FACEBOOK PAGE WHERE YOU CAN HAVE YOUR EVENTS LISTED. On Facebook, look for Massachusetts Friends of the Library.

Friends of the Snow Library in Orleans created and sponsor a program called Lifetime Learning. The 2013 fall session offered 14 courses and had an enrollment of 853 people. The winter session of 2014 had 15 courses and 884 enrolled. Individual programs run from 3 - 5 sessions and are offered during the week with some evening classes for working people. Classes are taught by retired professionals and other experts in their field. Classes are free with a suggested donation if desired. Subjects offered include art, music, literature, the environment, mental health, nature, history, current events, finance, cooking and others. As the Cape has become a retirement area this program has been a huge success and sufficient funds have been raised to support other programs at the Library such as museum passes and children's programs.

The Friends Group of the Rockland Memorial Library offered a free band concert on the front lawn of the library on June 27th. The goal was to introduce members of the community to the library and demonstrate that the library offers a wide range of services. The concert was performed by the 50-member Satuit Band and funded by a grant from the Rockland Cultural Council. Music selections included Broadway tunes as well as patriotic pieces in an early celebration of the 4th of July. This is the third annual concert the Friends have offered and it was the best attended.

The Friends of the Walpole Public Library manage an on-going book sale at the library. Funds from this sale are used to fund individual programs as well as the library's Summer Reading Program. Individual events include movies, author presentations, job training programs and they have sponsored impersonators and revolutionary war re-enactors. They have also recently purchased five metal tables and twenty chairs for the library's garden area. The Friends also coordinate the art exhibits held in the library.

Friends of the Weymouth Public Library celebrated the re-opening of the historic FOGG Library - closed for repairs for many years - with a fund raising preview party the evening before the official opening. The party featured a buffet of finger foods and desserts donated by a local market and a long red carpet loaned by a local rug merchant. A professional musician from Weymouth donated his time to provide classical guitar music and was joined by members of the Weymouth High School Band. Flowers and LED candles were donated to enhance the atmosphere and \$5,000 was raised to improve the FOGG collection.

The Friends of the Worcester Public Library were nominated for their significant contribution to enhancing the library's mission of ensuring a gathering place for all. The Food for Thought Cafe moved to an inviting spot adjacent to the welcome desk. The Friends worked with the architects to make color, seating and shelving decisions. The library offers a bookstore that sells quality used books in the only centrally located used bookstore in the city. The store and the cafe are run exclusively by 20-30 dedicated volunteers. As a gathering place, both the store and cafe serve the entire range of patrons who visit the library. Patrons can make purchases in the cafe but they are also welcome to bring their own food. There are always "conversation groups" in the cafe and at times there are those engaged in literacy tutoring or job interviews.

This is the third year that the Fantastic Friends award has been presented by the Massachusetts Friends of Libraries. Entries are judged on impact of the activity, degree of creativity, cost effectiveness and community involvement.

This would be a good time to begin planning for next year by thinking of activities your Friends group does that should be recognized with an award - that includes a plaque and a \$300 award for the Friends and a \$200 donation to your library.

Some Resources provided by the MBLC to help your Friends group

Friends email discussion list

(sign up here: <http://mblc.state.ma.us/sympa/info/friends>)

This opt-in email list is meant to be a forum for Friends of libraries who want to ask questions of other Friends or share information with other Friends. The listserv is moderated by MBLC staff, but anyone with an interest in Friends groups is welcome to join the list.

Friends Resource Guide:

<http://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/friends>

This resource guide, put together by MBLC staff, provides information about topics important to and common among Friends of Libraries groups in Massachusetts, ranging from sample operating documents to upcoming events of interest. We welcome feedback from Friends about what should be included in this guide.



Sue Hall discussing critical issues for Friends groups at the Middleborough Friends Sharing with Friends event in October

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← Your expiration date

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