

FLS Connections! E-Newsletters and Email Marketing Thursday, March 9, 2023 | 4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Presented by:

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* **Tony's slides will be made available on the [FLS webpage](#).**

Many thanks to Amy Discenza, FLS Second Vice President, for these taking these great notes!

50 individuals registered with FLS to attend and 38 people logged in, representing **26 Friends groups**. Some logons included groups participating together, equaling **41 in attendance**.

Glossary and Nonprofit Offers:

The following distribution services and email marketing software were mentioned during Tony's 35-minute talk. You will want to investigate some of these, especially if your organization has 501(c)(3) status.

Constant Contact®

This digital and email marketing platform provides both phone and chat support, as well as video tutorials and step-by-step guides. Constant Contact® offers expert advice and checklists to create emails plus tips to grow your email list of contacts. The **Constant Contact® Association Program** provides a **complimentary account** for this online marketing tool. Apply online to join. Association partners receive technical support and access to extensive educational materials to drive member engagement. <https://www.constantcontact.com/partners/association>.

Mailchimp

(Note: several of Tony's slides reference SurveyMonkey. That was an error and he corrected that during his remarks. This is a different "monkey"!)

Their **free marketing plan** can reach up to 500 contacts and 1,000 "sends" per month. This is ideal for beginners who create campaigns while testing out Mailchimp's tools and features. Next level up: Essentials (\$13/mo.) and Standard (\$20/mo.). **Nonprofits and charities can receive 15% off** these rates. To request the discount, sign up for a free account and then contact the Billing team.

<https://mailchimp.com/pricing/marketing>

Canva

Canva is an online graphic design and publishing tool that can be used to create social media posts, posters, logos, and presentations using templates, stock photos, and graphics. Friends groups that have 501(c)(3) status (registered with the IRS) **qualify to receive a Canva Pro account at no charge**. See their eligibility guidelines here: <https://www.canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits>.

- Reasons to embrace e-newsletters and email marketing
 - It's a good way to reach a younger or mail-averse demographic
 - It's less expensive
 - It's more immediate, you can get your message out quicker
 - People are more likely to click a link to donate than put a check in the mail
 - It's easier to conduct surveys and get feedback
 - More interactions equals better retention of your members

- Uses for Email
 - Welcome new cardholders or Friends. (New patrons at Tony’s library receive a series of four emails over the course of two weeks to inform them of library services and programs.)
 - Promote interesting (and sometimes under-used) library collections or services
 - Distribute newsletters
 - Fundraising and reminders of annual dues
 - Event invitations and follow-ups (e.g., what did you like about the event?)
 - Thank you messages and recognition of volunteers
 - Surveys
 - Promote the library budget vote. (Tony cautions these messages should come from the Friends of the Library’s email account, not the library’s.)

- Professional Tools Worth Exploring
 - Email Marketing Software: Try [Constant Contact](#) or [Mail Chimp](#)
 - Online Payment Platforms: [PayPal](#), [Square](#), and [Venmo](#) are popular options
 - Design Software: [Canva](#)—it’s the gold standard
 - Tip: Have your 501(c)(3) information ready; some of these companies offer discounts to nonprofits [see notes under Glossary on page 1.]

- Why Professional Tools are Worth It
 - Improved email deliverability (your messages won’t end up in spam)
 - Easily manage your contact list
 - Customizable templates
 - High quality tutorials and support
 - Built in analytics -- Access to data such as who’s opening, sharing, and clicking links in your emails and e-newsletters; what date and time people are reading your messages; and even mobile versus desktop open rates

- Professional Tool Pricing
 - Constant Contact®: [Starting at \\$9.99/month](#), price based on the number of contacts
 - Mail Chimp: [Free and up](#)
 - PayPal, Venmo, Square: Charge a percentage of sale and credit card fee (you can charge the credit card fee back to donors though)

- Step 1: Sign up for the professional tool of your choice. Don’t forget to have your 501(c)(3) ready.

- Step 2: Collect email addresses. You can do this:
 - In person | Have a sign-up sheet available at library and/or Friends events or even put a fishbowl at the circulation or reference desk to collect business cards
 - Online | Add a widget to sign up for the Friends email/e-newsletters on your library and FOL websites, share a link to sign up for your e-newsletter on social media (keep this link posted all the time), or ask staff to help get the message out via the library e-newsletter so patrons can opt in to receive Friends information
 - Tip: Create segmented lists by breaking up your email list into several, smaller, more targeted lists (e.g., members 2022; members 2023; book sale shoppers; a ‘book centric’ list of people who attend author visits). Your lists will always be growing. Constant Contact® weeds out duplicate emails when you send to multiple lists.

- Step 3: Create an email template and an e-newsletter template.

- Tony logged into his Constant Contact® account and showed attendees a few templates he commonly uses as well as the analytics dashboard. Constant Contact® refers to these as “campaigns.” Any template can be customized, replacing stock photos with your own; inserting your text.
- Analytics: statistics could include the number of emails sent; the number of messages that were opened; bounces; a “heat lamp” (i.e., in your message, what hot links did they open?); click rate (perhaps 60 people opened, but only 10 clicked—how many made a donation?)
- Tips:
 - It’s important to have a strong email/e-newsletter **subject line** – use actionable language (e.g., Take our survey)
 - Only make the message as long as it needs to be
 - Use graphics and images to draw people in
 - Personalize (Hi Terry > Greetings)
 - Write in the second person – you, you, you. Talk directly to your reader, “Hope that you will join us.”
- Step 4: Plan and schedule
 - Tips:
 - Test, and then test again. Test the links; send a test message to yourself before distributing widely.
 - Review the analytics
 - Target (i.e., if you have an annual plant sale, keep a marketing list and inform the buyers of the next sale)
 - Perfect your timing-- experiment sending your message on different days and times until you find the sweet spot
 - Schedule emails ahead of time (e.g., holiday greetings; celebrating National Friends of Libraries Week in October)
 - Consider re-sending messages to those “non-openers” (you can see on the analytics who read the message and who didn’t)
 - Clear the bounces/bad email addresses from your contact list
 - Use the tutorials -- both the ones provided by the professional tools and instructional videos on YouTube
 - Use library resources – check out a book about email marketing.

Questions:

Q: Can you import email addresses to Constant Contact®?

A: Yes, you can upload email addresses from a file or spreadsheet, integrate from other apps, or even cut and paste.

Q: How is personal data kept secure in Constant Contact® to prevent a spammer from harvesting from your list?

A: From Constant Contact®: All of your account, credit card, and subscriber information and content is encrypted via industry-standard Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) connections over HTTPS. Users may consult their web browser’s address or location bar to determine if the currently accessed page is encrypted via SSL.

Q: Does one subscription with Constant Contact® allow more than one Friends user? Same question on Canva?

A: It depends on your subscription level. You might be able to get around this by using a shared email address like FriendsOfLibrary@gmail.com.

Q: Is there an option to integrate social media on Constant Contact®?

A: You can integrate your Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts.

Q: When someone unsubscribes from your Constant Contact® e-newsletter do you see a reason?

A: Yes, if the person chooses to answer the optional question of why they're unsubscribing.

Q: Do you have one Friends member assigned to do the mailings?

A: Yes, but Tony anticipates giving out more access as it's good to have a backup.

Q: Are subscribers charged a flat fee when using Constant Contact® or are they charged based on usage?

A: Subscription rate is based on the number of contacts you have, not on the quantity of messages you send. (Tony believed that up to 500 contacts was included in the subscription price; 501+ contacts moved you into the next price bracket.)

Open Mic: Lisa Wemett opened the conversation up to the group and supplied the following prompts:

- How have your Friends marketed their activities?
- How successful have these efforts been?
- What other ideas you might try?

Wilma Jozwiak (Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library): Wilma and her Friends group use Constant Contact® and integrate with social media. They've also had success using Nextdoor, an app for neighborhoods where you can get local tips, buy and sell items, and more. They've found some great volunteers this way, posting that they were looking for help with the Friends.

Ann Poelma (Friends of the Fairport Public Library): Ann celebrated the benefits of having a Staff Liaison to the Friends on your side, to help market Friends events and membership. The Friends of the Fairport Public Library are regularly referenced and linked to in the library's emails and weekly e-newsletters. A QR code will take readers directly to the Friends webpage.

FLS Announcements:

- **FLS Survey:** FLS is distributing a survey to help guide the Section's long-range planning and future projects. The FLS Board wants to know what member benefits help you the most. The survey is fifteen questions (mainly multiple choice) and should take less than 10 minutes of your time. You will find the survey link on the FLS homepage (www.nyla.org/friends) or follow this direct link to the survey: <https://forms.gle/7tYQyon8ARQAGLscA>. **Note:** For FLS organizational members, multiple responses from members of Friends groups are encouraged. Please urge your key volunteers (i.e., officers, committee members) to participate in the survey. The FLS Board wants to receive input from a broad cross-section of Friends groups, especially those who have not yet joined FLS. Please **respond by Friday, April 28**. We appreciate your time and your support of the Section!
- The FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award recognizes outstanding Friends volunteers and groups. If you know someone who fits the bill, please consider applying. Applications are due by June 1, 2023. Read more about the [Daniel W. Casey Advocacy Award](#).
- Mark your calendars! **National Friends of Libraries Week** is October 15 - 21, 2023.

- Join FLS: www.nyla.org/join. Perks include:
 - Friends News and Notes quarterly newsletter
 - Reduced NYLA membership rates
 - Inspiration for new ideas to promote your Friends group and your library
 - Engage in advocacy for libraries
 - Network with other Friends groups
 - FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award
 - Eligible to receive FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship
 - Special NYLA Annual Conference registration rates
- The 2023 **NYLA Annual Conference** is Nov 1-4, 2023, in Saratoga Springs. Friday Nov. 3 is Friends Day.
- Save the date for the next FLS Annual Membership meeting on Wednesday, November 15, at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Watch for notices to register in late October.
- Do you have an idea or topic you'd like to see explored in the next FLS Connections? Please contact us with ideas: FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com. Want to see what we've discussed previously? Head to the FLS webpage (www.nyla.org/friends), select Events and then "FLS Connections! Previous Minutes and Resources."

Wilma Jozwiak says: DO join the FLS Section - they are wonderfully helpful! [Thanks for the endorsement, Wilma!]

The Friends of the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Public Library (north of Albany in the Southern Adirondack Library System) uses Constant Contact® to distribute their e-newsletters, which are also posted on their website. See issues here: <https://www.friendsofcphlibrary.org/newsletters.html>. Besides sending the newsletter, FCPHL uses Constant Contact® for thank you letters, "perk" coupons for the book sale for new and renewing members, promoting Friends events, and "get out the vote" messages for the library's budget. Messages are simultaneously posted directly to Facebook and Instagram.