Annual Report 2014-2015 - Friends of Libraries Section

Time period: November 2014 – October 2015

Lisa C. Wemett, FLS President 2014-15

We lived through building a new Section of NYLA from the ground up! Here are many of our key accomplishments during this first year:

1. The Empire Friends Roundtable, 22 years “young,” began the transition to become a NYLA Section in mid-2014, and on November 6, 2014, the assembled NYLA members voted unanimously at their annual membership meeting to change EFR’s status from a Roundtable to a Section, to be named the Friends of Libraries Section.

2. The FLS President was appointed to NYLA Council, giving Friends of Libraries a seat on NYLA’s Board of Directors for the first time. FLS Representatives have also served on NYLA’s Membership, Awards, and Legislative Committees this year.

3. EFR/FLS offered four programs at the 2014 NYLA Annual Conference in Saratoga Springs, partnering with Library Trustees Association and the Public Library Section/NYLA. President-Elect Sarah Sachs has served as the FLS Conference Programmer for the 2015 Annual Conference, organizing four programs for Lake Placid: Morristown Public Library’s community arts festival, the merger of the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library, a showcase of volunteer projects in libraries in northern NYS, and accounting for nonprofits.

4. Throughout the year, effort has been expended toward increasing FLS membership. EFR had 108 members in November 2014 and now has 129 members, with 54% of these members selecting FLS as their primary section.

5. After ten years and 30 issues, Susan Swanton, Newsletter Editor since 2003, passed the “red pen” to Terry Mulee as “Friends News and Notes” began with volume 1, issue #1, in December 2014. FLS was able to boost the number of advertisers to help offset newsletter printing and postage costs. The Board voted to increase the number of newsletters to four six-page issues annually, with expanded (8-page) coverage once a year. A Communications Committee was established, chaired by Terry Mulee, to optimize and maximize the appropriate use of information technology to support the events and initiatives of the Section via the FLS website, newsletter, social media, membership recruitment materials, mailings, and e-mail communications.

6. The by-laws were updated for FLS in early 2015, changing language from “roundtable” to “section” and using terminology to comply with NYS’s Nonprofit Revitalization Act. A Leadership Manual for Section officers was developed including job descriptions for all positions.

7. FLS established its first annual budget for FY 2015-16.

8. Marie Orlando volunteered to give additional effort to awareness and participation in National Friends of Libraries Week. FLS was able to secure a NYS Senate resolution in March from Senator Joseph Robach recognizing NFOLW (October 18-24, 2015). Facsimile copies of the proclamation were made available for purchase.

9. Starting in the summer of 2014, Lisa Wemett coordinated a year-long project to nominate two sites in northern New York for Literary Landmark™ status, in honor of NYLA’s 125th anniversary and conference in Lake Placid. This designation was conferred by United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, in early 2015 for the Wilder Homestead in Burke and the Robert Louis Stevenson Cottage and Museum in Saranac Lake. Fund-raising with all eight NYLA Sections was successful to cover the costs of plaques for both of the museums.

10. FLS established meet-up opportunities in two areas of the state. Ten representatives of Friends of the Library groups from eight public libraries in three public library systems gathered to talk with the FLS Board at the Vestal Public Library on May 28, 2015. In April, the FLS officers in the Rochester region hosted the Friends Council meeting for the Monroe County Library System. In September, the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public
Library hosted a Book Sale Volunteers meet-up in partnership with FLS to discuss issues related to book sale events and FFRPL’s Internet book selling program.

11. The Section established the position of archivist to hold records of the Section. Sue Swanton volunteered to become the FLS Archivist.

12. FLS participated in NYLA’s online election process, holding the Section’s first online election in June 2015. The slate submitted in May offered candidates for four Members At Large seats for 2015-2017, a candidate appointed in 2015 who was required to stand for election for Member At Large to fill out this one-year term, a new Secretary, and President-elect. Nearly half (46%) of the FLS Board members are officers in their hometown Friends organizations.

13. The 2015 Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award was presented posthumously to Don Riplinger, a volunteer for the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library (Monroe County Library System) for nearly 15 years. The nomination was made by Chelsea Lingrel, Book Sales Manager for FFRPL. This was the first award given in FLS’s name. An ad hoc task force, chaired by the award coordinator Joyce Laiosa, reviewed and established the procedures for the award.

The thirteen members of the inaugural Executive Board of the Friends of Libraries Section made this all possible. Please thank them for their volunteer service!

Front row: Randall Enos, Immediate Past President and President Emeritus (Middletown); Marcia Elwitt, Treasurer (Brighton); Leslie Riley, Member At Large (Cornwall-on-Hudson); Terry Mulee, Second Vice President (Rochester).
Second row: Frank Van Zanten, Member At Large (Poughkeepsie); Lisa C. Wemett, President (Macedon); Vicki N. Kosovac, Member At Large (Hudson); Betsy Sywetz, Secretary (Richmond Springs); Sarah Sachs, First Vice President/President-Elect (Potsdam); Maria Orlando, Member At Large (Valatie); Susan Swanton, Member At Large (Rush); Ristiina Wigg, Member At Large (Corning).
Unable to join us at this meeting in Vestal, NY: Elizabeth Olesh, Member At Large (Baldwin).