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We present the JLAMS special issue on library friends groups, the second themed issue of JLAMS. Friends of libraries organizations provide valuable support to their libraries and to their communities and many libraries see the rewards of collaborating with an actively engaged friends organization. Working with friends organizations, starting a friends organization, revitalizing a friends organization are sometimes challenging issues for library organizations. Authors of this JLAMS issue provide sage advice, best practices, and handy toolkits for working effectively with Friends organizations.

We introduce several new features in this issue. Former JLAMS editor Richard Naylor re-appears as a regular columnist for JLAMS. He will contribute a regular column On Leadership. “Leadership is in our name,” says Richard, “and we really need to do more focusing on leadership issues.”

Under the guidance of Dr. Carol Anne Germain, graduate students will prepare a regular Internet Resources column, identifying key resources for library managers to develop concepts and ideas of each issue’s theme. Think of the Internet Resources column as your go-to toolkit.

We are pleased to publish Brett Bonfield’s Failure FTW (“For The Win”) presentation which he delivered at the 2015 LAMS luncheon at the New York Library Association Conference in Lake Placid on Friday, October 23, 2015. Brett has sound advice for library leaders in all levels of an organization. “It’s an experiment.”

Addressing the issue’s theme are several colleagues from New York State. Kathleen Naftaly’s “All for One and One for All.” Administrators, Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library Are Fundraising Musketeers describes a synergistic fundraising process between library administration, trustees and friends. She identifies having a strategic plan as key. Naftaly comments: "creators of our Library's vision and mission included staff, administration, Trustees and Friends." All players are stakeholders and working towards common goals.

The 2015 edition of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State, by Jerry Nichols and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, has a brief and very informative piece on Library Friends and Foundations, with recommendations regarding the role of library boards or trustees in supporting and working with friends groups. We share the excerpt in this issue.
When we first solicited articles for a themed issue on Friends organizations and libraries, Lisa Wemett responded enthusiastically with so very many ideas. She identified a number of issues and topics to address regarding management and administration of friends groups. In her article, she addresses the roles of Friends, Directors, and Boards of Trustees. provides sample policies and suggests core documents. She highlights group management and dynamics, including board structure of Friends Boards of Directors, attracting board members, and by-laws. Included are three helpful appendices: tips about memberships for Friends organizations, annotated bylaws for friends organizations, and resources to learn more about friends organizations.

Finally, thanks to Richard Naylor's fine work and dedication, you are reading this issue. We are working on bringing JLAMS into the University at Albany's Scholar's Archive. However, the process is taking a bit longer than anticipated. Richard performed all the technical publication work and created the cover art. We say a hearty and heartfelt "thank you" to Richard.

_Carol Lee Anderson and Carol Anne Germain, Co-editors_

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**GET PUBLISHED! SHARE YOUR LIBRARY RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCES**

Fall 2016 Theme -- Libraries using social media: communicating with your communities

The focus of this issue of JLAMS is the use of social media in libraries. The editors seek research studies and case studies addressing the evolution of social media use to communicate with library users, other libraries, library service providers and vendors, and serving a community. Case studies illustrating service delivery through social media outlets are also welcome. Studies including or addressing social media metrics are welcome. Topics may include use of social media through marketing, information literacy, reference, collection development as well as organizational policies regarding social media. Proposals due no later than September 2, 2016 [4 sentences or longer describing the topic of your article]. Refereed article submission: October 12, 2016. Non-refereed article submission: October 31, 2016. Issue publication goal: November 15, 2016.

Send queries and proposals to Carol L. Anderson canderson@albany.edu or Carol Anne Germain cgermain@albany.edu University Library, University at Albany, SUNY 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany NY 12222.
Leadership Essay

Library Friends Groups and Leadership

By Richard Naylor

Working in an organization brings together a variety of personality types with varying levels of skill and emotional intelligence. To add to the complexity, each organization has somewhat different challenges based on staff profiles, community needs, external issues, and the unexpected. Leaders need to adjust their behavior to meet a variety of challenges and opportunities. This is true of the dynamics between a library director and members of a Friends group.

In one sense, a Friends group is a part of the library. Its very existence is predicated on the library and its name usually simply adds the words “Friends of the …” to the name of the library. But a Friends group is a community partner; it has its own bylaws and its own board. This puts an aspect of the library outside of the official library structure and brings issues that require a varying mix of leadership qualities to make the most of the relationship.

By utilizing the key dimensions of leadership, a library director can maximize the group’s success and outcomes. The main leadership aspects in working with Friends groups include developing strategy (i.e., an analysis of the organization with a review of the mission, culture and strengths and weaknesses; and implementation plans); team building; adjusting to personality types and behaviors; and encouraging networking and community involvement. My experiences indicate that the use of these techniques fosters more collaborative and coherent relationships between the library director, a Friends Group and the Library Trustees Board.

If a library leader has the luxury of being involved at the start of a Friends group, s/he has the luxury of establishing the relationship management with a clean slate. My first experience with developing a Friends group provides such an example. In that case, I was very fortunate to have help from a State Library and Archives librarian who travelled 150 miles to help with the start-up. This individual introduced the kick-off meeting with a speech in which he told the gathered group how important their role was in supporting the library. Perhaps most important for me, he identified to them how they would recognize their success: it would be a smile on my face. Obviously he made an impression because the harmony of that evening carried over into the day-to-day work of the Friends, and by continuing to reinforce their benchmark by praising their positive efforts, the relationship was carried forward. In this case, the Friends attitude and contributions were also appreciated by the Library Trustees and several Friends “graduated” to the Library Trustees Board.

Another dimension of leadership requires affiliative skills: self-control, team building, and conflict management skills. These are important in trying to correct problems with Friends. In another experience, I encountered a group with members who lacked teamwork skills. One person would make a suggestion and another would immediately say why it was not a good idea, while other people in the group tried to compensate by saying “yes” to everything. These interactions produced tension in the general group and
emotional deflation in the person making a suggestion. As an ex officio, I could not tell the group what to do; however, I could discuss the problem with individual members. From these conversations, we decided that at the next similar occurrence we would follow through with an immediate constructive response. Rather than immediately saying “yes” to an idea, members of the group helped the “idea person” flesh out the proposal and provided encouragement, thus the group could work toward a consensus. In this case, the gradual result was that the disruptive member resigned and the group immediately showed an improved emotional state and more energy. It might have been better if the disruptive person had learned from the exchanges, but the result was still positive for the Friends.

My final experience came from an older case that created a situation that continued throughout my tenure. When I arrived, a trustee informed me that the library would never have another Friend’s group. He recounted that there had been a Friends group at the library’s formation and its members had been active with a building project. Over time, issues arose regarding the library’s differing governance structures. Other people concurred with the story and highlighted the conflict between the Friends on the completion of the new library building. There is no definitive evidence as to exactly what had happened but perhaps some conclusions were drawn from the reaction of the library trustees.

Assuming that the Friends did try to acquire more control than appropriate for the group, we can consider and understand the Trustees Board attitudes. One interpretation of the Library Trustees response indicates a lack of confidence to satisfy the need for recognition by the Friends without feeling diminished. Even if some of the Friends did want to take more public credit and exercise control over library activities, the Board of Trustees actually had the power to set policy and make decisions.

The Library Director and the chair of the Friends need to be self-confident, as well as secure in their own power and roles. What is also needed is a library leader with the ability to manage conflict resolution and facilitate team building. The director can mediate the activities of the Friends based on the library’s needs and the Friends talents and resources.

Because of the different governance structures, the library director must guide a Friends group without a command function. This library administrator can set schedules, choose who to hire, and change procedures, but needs to work cooperatively with the Friends group to make it effective. This limits the use of more traditional leadership tools, yet through resourceful and creative approaches the library director can lead by relying on skills such as inspiration, empathy building, and relationship management.

Whether a library director is starting with a new Friends group or working with an established unit, affiliative, inspirational, and relationship management skills are the main tools for the leader to use in keeping the members of the Friends satisfied with their contributions and feeling like a part of a larger, positive effort.
Failure FTW (“For The Win”)

By Brett Bonfield

There are a lot of variations on this line by TripAdvisor founder Stephen Kaufer: “If we’re not failing at something on a regular basis, we’re just not trying hard enough.” These quips resonate with us because failure is something we tend to evaluate poorly from a mathematical perspective since humans are innately awful at probability.

So let’s talk about failure, figure out how to go about failing, and how to work failure into our schedules and budgets!

In 2005, Harvard University Press published a book by Scott Sandage, Born Losers: A History of Failure in America. Reviewing the book a month later in the Atlantic, Benjamin Schwartz wrote that Sandage shows how, in the 19th century, “ambition evolved from a discreditable to an admirable quality. And over the century the meaning of the word ‘failure’ broadened significantly, from an incident in commercial life ... to an identity (a wasted or ruined existence)....”

At the beginning of the 21st century, “failure” was still the worst thing you could call someone. For over three years, from December 2003 until January 2007, if you searched Google for the words “miserable failure,” the first result was George W. Bush’s biography on the White House website. This was the first widespread Google bomb. A lot of people with popular websites hyperlinked the words “miserable failure” to George W. Bush’s biography page, elevating it to the top of Google’s search results.

Clearly, we want to avoid causing failures or being failures. The problem is, we tend to be pretty bad at estimating the likelihood of failure, primarily because of a well documented cognitive bias known as loss aversion, the idea that losing money or something else you care about is twice as powerful as gaining the “equivalent” gain. In other words, losing $1,000 or your favorite cardigan elicits a pain response that’s twice as powerful as the pleasure response we get from winning $1,000 or getting a new, favorite cardigan.

Here’s a practical example I see all the time. I work in libraries and serve on nonprofit boards. The idea of hiring a professional fundraiser comes up all the time and, in general, we feel like we can get a pretty


Brett Bonfield, Executive Director at the Princeton Public Library, was the guest speaker at the LAMS Annual Luncheon at the NYLA Conference on Friday, October 23, 2015. Named a Mover & Shaker by Library Journal in 2012, Bonfield is a former editorial board member and founder of In the Library with the Lead Pipe http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/ and a founding advisory board member and a co-chair of Library Pipeline.
good fundraiser for about $100,000 give or take, once you factor in benefits. Probably somewhat more, because benefits are expensive and so are pretty good fundraisers, but let’s keep it simple. If the fundraiser brings in exactly $100,000 more than you would have brought in anyway, you’re exactly where you started, no better and no worse. If the fundraiser brings in $150,000 more than you would have had otherwise, which isn’t really all that much for a pretty good, full-time fundraiser, you’re $50,000 ahead. Anything a fundraiser brings in above what it costs to employ the fundraiser is a net win. But, in my experience, many managers and boards seem to fixate on the small chance — the small chance in their own estimation — that they will hire a dud. They think it’s very unlikely they’ll hire a dud, but they don’t want to risk it.

I need to make an important point about loss aversion. During the last major economic downturn, when layoffs and furloughs were widespread, open positions were going unfilled for years, and our materials budgets were getting slashed, it wasn’t the time to gamble. If someone had offered me 10 to 1 odds, but told me I had to bet a quarter of the library’s budget, I would have been a fool to take that bet. The upside would have been lovely, but the downside would have been devastating.

Loss aversion is not about the healthy, rational value we all should place on survival. Instead, what I am talking about is discretionary funds, as well as a principle, an urge that’s hardwired into most of us to believe that a little embarrassment or a bit of failure is worse than the upside we might gain if we’re willing to risk the modest, appropriate amount of embarrassment that goes along with having failed. “It’s an experiment”

Megan McArdle, the author of The Up Side of Down³, put it this way when she appeared on the EconTalk podcast⁴: “The price of admission to success is the willingness to fail. Being willing to fail does not guarantee that you will succeed; but not being willing to fail guarantees that you won’t succeed.” What she’s getting at is a redefinition of failure. Essentially, it is an acknowledgement that, even if you fail, the effort is itself a kind of success.

When I was in library school, I had a chance to go to North Carolina State University and conduct a field research study on its library. At the time, NC State was by far the most innovative library in the United States, and it may still be. In the preceding two or three years, they had won every library of the year and library innovation award our profession has to offer, and its university librarian, Susan Nutter, had recently been named Library Journal’s librarian of the year. What a lot of the managers I met with that day wanted to talk about was an early failure. Back when NC State was just starting to have the money to innovate, they brought in a few of the first eBook readers, a project by Sony that was years ahead of its time. Unfortunately, the devices weren’t all that good, the titles people wanted weren’t yet available electronically, and users just weren’t yet ready for eBooks.

Part of the reason the managers at NC State brought up the eBook failure was because they felt vindicated—by the time we spoke, eBooks were already a big part of what libraries were doing. But mostly they brought it up because they had worked hard to make the project a success, and they had learned from it, and what they learned had not disappeared when Sony discontinued its eBook reader and the project ended. They were seen on campus as the place to experiment with technology. Their failure elevated the way others saw them and how they saw themselves.

Talking to the leadership at the NC State libraries, and thinking about the way they set themselves up to fail successfully led to a magic, three-word phrase I use all the time in my work as director of the

Collingswood Public Library. It’s a phrase I share with every new director or manager I meet. It’s a phrase that’s changed my career.

“It’s an experiment.”

The great thing about that phrase is the person you say it to almost always buys in, no matter how they feel about the project itself. If they’re just interested in seeing how it turns out, they’re all in. If they’re sure the idea is a good one, they’re confident the project will succeed quickly and decisively and everyone will learn they were right all along. If they’re sure the idea is awful, they’re confident the project will fail quickly and decisively and the thing they don’t like will go away. That’s how I introduce almost all changes at the library where I work—when we change our hours, move the materials around, add checklists for the tasks associated with opening and closing, adjust our computer use policies—it’s an experiment.

When things work out, we’re pleased, even the people who thought the experiment would disprove our hypotheses. And when an experiment fails, I admit to having been wrong and give credit to the people who anticipated the issues we would encounter. Sometimes my colleagues talk me into an experiment, and sometimes they’re right to try the new project or procedure I didn’t think would work out. There’s no better feeling than being proved wrong.

I want to offer two additional, practical applications of this idea. I’ll give one example of how it applies in management, share a few ideas about budgeting, and then we’ll wrap this up.

A couple of years ago, when the library community was experiencing a series of high profile, awful incidents that highlighted just how badly we, as a profession, were dealing with sexism and racism and other forms of bigotry and harassment, I read something that struck home for me. I wish I could find and cite this critique, but even though I haven’t been able to track it down, I’ll never forget the gist. If you’re a manager, especially if you’re white or male or both, and no one you supervise has ever reported an incident of racism or sexism or another form of harassment to you, maybe you aren’t trusted. Because there’s very little chance your colleagues and the people who use and rely on the library where you work never have to deal with racism or sexism. Really, the odds are staff are dealing with micro-aggressions all the time, maybe multiple times per day. If that’s not part of the conversation you’re having with them, if you’re not doing things as a manager to deal with these issues in partnership with your colleagues and your community, you’re failing at your job in an important way.

I spent a lot of time thinking about this for the next week after I was exposed to that idea, because I wasn’t having those conversations very often. There had been a few incidents, but not many. It seemed pretty clear to me that I was failing, but I wasn’t sure what to do about it. As I was trying to figure out the best way to initiate this kind of conversation, one of my colleagues asked if she could speak with me privately.

She said that in the rest of her life, she just felt like herself. But every time she worked at the reference desk, she felt like Lady Godiva. There was a cardholder who just wouldn’t leave her alone. The Lady Godiva line was great, and it was impressive that she could bring a certain amount of humor and whole lot of cleverness to a really bad situation. But the important thing is, we worked on it as a group and helped create a safer work space.

I was embarrassed that we hadn’t done more beforehand, and that things had gotten really bad for my colleague and for a time I didn’t know anything about it. As a manager, that was an enormous failure on my part. But I was fortunate, at least in this instance with this colleague, that I hadn’t committed the greater failure of making it impossible, at least for her, to talk to me about it. And I think I have that relationship now with all of my colleagues. I think they’ll let me know if I’m failing them in this way or in other important ways. I can never know for sure, because it’s a fool’s errand to prove something like this.
doesn’t exist, and that’s not the point. The point is, I learned a lot from that discussion and the discussions that resulted from it. And I think my colleagues and I made the library a better place to work and a better resource for our community.

So let’s talk about budgets. One of the lessons I’ve learned is from an economist, Arnold Kling. He recognizes that failure is inevitable, so he suggests that, rather than focusing on creating systems that are hard to break, we should instead focus on systems that are easy to fix. Kling is talking about regulation and financial reform, but it applies to the systems we use in libraries—specifically, integrated library systems. We can spend a lot of money on monolithic, turn-key systems, or we can use modular, open source systems that we can fix ourselves. That’s the decision we’re making right now where I work. We belong to a little consortium, along with other area libraries. The contract on our monolithic, expensive, commercial system is about to expire. And we’re replacing it with a bunch of Koha instances, one for each library or library system. We know that Koha will break. All ILSes break. But when Koha breaks, we’ll be able to fix it ourselves or hire consultants to fix it in the way we want. For us, it’s a sensible move.

Set aside money for experiments. If you can do it up front, if you have a few thousand dollars you don’t really need, or even more than that, more power to you. I think the best thing you can do with this sort of discretionary budget is work with your colleagues to figure out what might offer the greatest upside, rather than worry about what’s least likely to fail. I mean, you can offer a program in which you give away free food and bring in a few dozen or a few hundred people, and that’s great. But maybe, instead, you can use that money to try a crazy experiment that, if it succeeds, will change the way people see the library, or opens up the library to a whole group of people who aren’t currently using it.

Many of us can’t just set aside $5,000 or $50,000 or more when we’re setting up our budget for the year. But what a lot of us can do is create provisions. If the library is under budget ten months into the year, or even if a single department is under budget, or if we have a successful fundraising letter or event or land a grant or whatever, make the commitment to using some or all of the money in an experiment. Relinquish as much control over the nature of that experiment as you can. Encourage your colleagues to think as much as possible about upside, about creating an experiment that will make a lot of people happy if it succeeds. Promise to take all the blame if it fails and give them all of the credit if it succeeds. Clear it with your board or supervisor or whoever else needs to sign off on it, but give your colleagues an incentive to create the necessary space in the budget and the kind of environment for the library that allows everyone to dream big. Give them a chance to work together on something they’re really excited about. Give them, and yourself, a chance to exceed everyone’s expectations. Give them, and yourself, permission to fail.
“All for One and One for All”: Administrators, Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library Are Fundraising Musketeers

By Kathleen U. Naftaly

ABSTRACT: For a public library to improve fundraising prospects, the administration, the Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Library should share the same goals and objectives to reach optimum financial security. This article will describe: 1) which shared guidelines and responsibilities need to be established so that fundraising efforts are harmonious and not discordant; 2) possible obstacles to the instilling of these shared beliefs; 3) the details of implementing annual appeals as a fundraising strategy; and, 4) a current example of a library’s synergistic appeals strategy. At the conclusion of the article the reader will have a better understanding of how cooperation between administration, the Board of Trustees and the Friends is achieved and how this informs the genesis, implementation and success of annual appeals.

Introduction

Those of us who manage within the public library realm truly understand that, “...the merit in all things lies in the difficulty.” 1 Overseeing libraries is not easy. Everyday issues concerning security, facilities, access, personnel, vendors, customers, materials, technology, and other specific tensions vie for our attention. These issues float in the ether. They rise up, sink down, implode, grow unfettered, explode, grind along and disperse; but perhaps nothing is more entangled—as an ever-present concern—than the demands of nourishing the fiscal foundation of the organization. Yet there is no need to despair—confederates who can share these responsibilities already exist in many public libraries. Thank goodness for those embedded in a natural alliance: the library administration, the Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Library. In order to foster growth and sustain library

operations, a spirit of cooperation must exist between these musketeers who are simultaneously crusading to secure the resources needed to nourish the library and the services it provides.

**Developing a Synergistic Fundraising Methodology**

Groups who work together in a creative, innovative and productive manner produce enhanced results. When administration, Trustees and the Friends are equally dedicated to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, a synergistic fundraising process will begin to emerge.\(^2\) When parties have questions about how to construct a fiscal strategy, having a strategic plan provides an anchor for decision making. Allocation of resources becomes prescribed and not a free-for-all. Most successful military campaigns have battle plans to direct troops. Fortunately librarians have strategic planning processes and the resulting plans that create and mobilize the companies engaged in procuring and allocating assets for the library. There are many ways to integrate administrators, Trustees and Friends. For instance Sally Gardener Reed suggests, “A Friends executive board member should always attend Trustee or Library governance meetings and the library director or his/her designee should attend Friends executive board meetings...Friends should always be invited to participate in a library’s planning process.”\(^3\) If the community is skeptical of administrative and Trustee intentions because they are “government,” the Friends can be the lead phalanx because, “At their core, Friends organizations are among the most grassroots of all American institutions.”\(^4\)

An excellent example of the type of framework that can inspire synergy, regardless of the content of a library’s strategic plan, is the 2003 Connecticut State Library’s succinctly defined fiscal responsibilities for each hierarchal group:

- **Administration**—Prepare an annual budget for the library in consultation with the Board and Friends; present current report of expenditures against the budget at each Board meeting; make the Friends aware of the special financial needs of the library.
- **Trustees**—Secure adequate funds to carry out the library’s program; assist in the preparation and presentation of the annual budget.
- **Friends of the Library**—Conduct fundraising that complements the library’s mission and provides funding for special library projects.\(^5\)

This type of organizational scheme facilitates administrative efforts to cultivate a directed fundraising process with the volunteers who serve on the Board and on the Friends by adhering to these tenets. The roles during the appeal period range from Trustees who lead by example with 100% contributing; staff or volunteers designing marketing materials; and, the Friends stuffing envelopes and paying for postage. Fundraising is advocacy.

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\(^2\) For the purposes of this narrative, fundraising refers to contributed, not earned income (grant-writing excluded), and not the sale of promotional or functional items such as book bags, t-shirts, ear-buds, flash drives etc.—although these items may be sold at fundraising events.


\(^5\) Connecticut State Library, Working Together (May 2003)
Obstacles and Pitfalls

However, if issues of fiscal control are not responsibly delineated, synergy will not occur, advocacy is lost and the financial stability and sustainability of the library will be placed at risk. Without guidance from the strategic plan and the responsibilities assigned to administration, Trustees and Friends may each emphasize their own special interests to the detriment of the whole. This type of implosion does not only come from poorly planned activities (e.g., ignorance of budget voting procedures and last-minute election preparation; lack of event volunteers or staff for a fundraiser; not having an sheltered alternative for outdoor events or dangerous travel, legal discrepancies, etc.) but rather from the dynamics of human relationships.

Further problems that have to be overcome, although they are rarely formally announced, include the following ethical disruptions. When only the loudest voice prevails, resource allocation is scattered and usually ineffective. An expected but unannounced policy of give-or-get might skew the socioeconomic representation on the Board of Trustees or the Friends Board; community stakeholders become disenfranchised. Some people will not be able to get along; committees self-destruct, “parking lot” decisions are negotiated, transparency erodes, and the potential for maleficence increases. Not all working relationships are easy or constructive; natural leaders must do what they can to alleviate the friction. Nepotism can and will erode confidences. The fundraising promoters, be they administrative development directors, Board treasurers or Friends volunteers must understand how their profits fit into the whole and not individually dictate expenditures; proceeds from their activities serve the needs of the library and its community. (Often, depending upon the structure of the library’s budget monies raised by the Friends supplement, rather than supplant, the library’s budget.) In the fight for resources the last thing we need to do is to fight among allies.

Annual Appeal Strategies

Fundraising is the solicitation of contributions or pledges. Fundraising is also the process of creating pathways of least resistance to garner donor backing. These pathways are generally based on levels of emotional resonance. The supporter’s motivation may be based on altruism, sincere interest in the library and its mission, personal memories or connections, political capital, an event’s entertainment value, guilt, fulfillment, or a sense of obligation. Paraphrasing Paul Schervish, it comes down to the donors’ identification with the library and their inclination to be catalysts for the library. Library fundraising is usually accomplished through annual appeals, targeted campaigns, special events and Friends book sales. This paper’s focus is on annual appeals.

An appeal is a sustained direct solicitation to the whole community including non-library users. An annual appeal usually has a start and end point within a Library’s fiscal year and it is accounted for in that year’s annual budget. This is distinguished from a capital campaign which may last over several years. Capital campaigns are usually initiated with specific goals in mind (i.e., upgrading and expanding facilities, saving for an integrated library system migration or upgrade, or RFID implementation). Long-term goals for an appeal or capital campaign may include building an endowment by targeting large contributors, bequests and gifts; fundraising techniques are not mutually exclusive. Library administration or Friends groups usually organize appeals. However, Trustees may assist in these efforts. If the library and the Friends both

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6 Paul G. Schervish, "The Modern Medici: Patterns, Motivations, and Giving Strategies of the Wealthy" (paper presented at the University of Southern California Nonprofit Studies Center, Los Angeles, California, January 20, 2000), 7.
want to organize appeals they must coordinate their efforts so as to not diminish the earnings potential of either drive. The Friends appeal may also offer membership in the Friends.

Annual appeal letters are generally mailed at the same time each year. Year-end appeals are common. Prior to the letter launch, the local media is alerted. This prepares the community to embrace letters or electronic pleas. The inclination is to just add new names to the address list but it is imperative that mailing lists be kept up-to-date whether they are shared between the administration and Friends or as stand-alones. These lists should be maintained in an electronic format so that they can be easily updated or exported to different platforms. Microsoft Access or Microsoft Excel will suffice but more sophisticated web-based programs such as eTapestry, Raiser’s Edge or BasicFunder are more flexible. Purchased mailing lists may be cost prohibitive. Librarians are “purveyors of unbiased information” in a community’s culture. Accuracy is expected; thus, if a solicitation is sent to a deceased resident or to a surname from three marriages ago our “coinage” is tarnished whether the contact came from the Library or the Friends.

The appeal goal to be raised may or may not be included in the correspondence depending upon the tone of the letter. The goal is directly linked to a pre-planned amount set in the yearly budget, however, emergency appeals can also be organized as needed. Yearly appeals should not routinely be couched as an emergency need for funds. Methods of payment should be designed to be as simple as possible. An easily returned card and envelope is ideal. The envelope need not be stamped. Responses should be readily identifiable if someone sends cash, as tracking is vital. Always have one designated person’s contact information on the card. Also arrange for accepting credit or debit card payments.

A parallel but equally important part of any modern appeal is the online operation. Your annual appeal should be front and center on your web page with links to supporting documentation, pictures and payments. Do not make the reader drill down more than two or three clicks to get to the payment page. Create a link to a printable .pdf of the return card so the giver can seamlessly send it in. Make sure there is a credit card payment option too. This can be worked out with your bank or an e-commerce provider like PayPal. Make the appeal ubiquitous on your social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, tumblr, Snapchat, Instagram, and Vine. Be creative. The initial set-up is labor intensive but updating is easy, efficient and vital.

Annual appeals should demonstrate the library’s vitality by reinforcing the relationship between customers and the library. Colleagues Leah LaFera’s and Lynn Shanks’ presentation at the 2014 New York Library Association Annual Conference described techniques that encourage intimacy and giving including:

- If administration is running the appeal, once letters are printed and signed give to staff and Trustees to write personalized notes on the bottom of each;
- Include on your appeal card a space where people can donate “in honor of” or “in memory of” a loved one. Encourage patrons to do this as a thoughtful holiday gift or remembrance;
- Create a “high donor” recognition wall in you library or on your website [tiered listings are also effective];

Additionally, they recommend supplementary techniques such as:

- Encourage donors to take advantage of employer’s matching gift programs where available (e.g., GE and IBM);
- Work with schools or other large employers to have payroll deductions for the library taken out of teacher’s paychecks. [Your local United Way may have information on logistics];
Give donors the option to have their donation auto-drafted monthly or quarterly rather than donating one lump sum per year.\(^7\)

Once the appeal is over, a thank you from the director or chair of the Friends is mandatory. They are missed if not sent; donations will drop for the next round if they are not written. Even if the donation is through electronic means send a physical note, card or letter. Customize the responses. If the gift is substantial a phone call from the Board President or Friends chair is also warranted. Personalized email responses are also acceptable. Donors should be listed in annual reports and on a library’s web page. Be aware of your Library’s tax status. If you are a designated charitable organization include language such as, “[Your Library] is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. You have received no goods or services in return for your contribution. Please keep this letter as a receipt for tax purposes,” as a footnote in your thank you.

Example of a Synergistic Appeals Strategy

Crandall Public Library is the Central Library of Warren, Washington, Saratoga and Hamilton County, New York. Our governance structure is that of a special library district made up of the City of Glens Falls and the Towns of Moreau and Queensbury. We are mandated to serve approximately 57,329 customers. Over 400,000 people entered the facility in 2014 and our wireless network was accessed over 847,000 times. Approximately 700,000 items circulated in 2014. We have a staff of roughly forty-three FTEs, fifteen Trustees and twenty-three Friends Board members. Our 2014 budget was $4,271,057 with $109,917 coming from fundraising—the annual appeal, Henry Crandall Award Gala, raffle, and miscellaneous contributions. Our Friends of the Library collected over $9,060 in their 2015 membership appeal. Success from our fundraising is directly correlated to the mutual support each of our musketeers has for each other. Working relationships are fostered and our future direction is shared. Input is solicited from all players. Methods of communication are multiple, if not always productive. Board meetings are faithfully attended by a Friends ambassador. Creators of our Library’s vision and mission included staff, administration, Trustees and Friends. All parties operate under the shared auspices of:

- **Vision:** Crandall Public Library will cultivate a forward-thinking community that pursues knowledge, embraces inclusion, inspires creativity and values civic responsibility.

- **Mission:** Crandall Public Library creates programs and services to educate, enrich and encourage our thriving community.\(^8\)

In addition, our new Strategic Plan was again created by the partnerships of the aforementioned stakeholders along with community representation based on diverse demographics.\(^7\)

Both our administration—Crandall Public Library is privileged to have a Development Director on staff—and the Friends of the Library hold annual appeals. Each party respects the other’s territory; they do not run simultaneous crusades. Techniques are variations of the preceding strategies section. Both parties are successful. The community prospers. We are proud to be a library organization that understands and lives by our strategic plan. As a result, our fundraising appeals generate positive outcomes and we do not

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have to squander our energies by parrying and reposting with each other. The three musketeers live in harmony. In conclusion, our tag line could be “All for One and One for All.”
“Library Friends and Foundations”¹

by Rebekkah Smith Aldridge and Jerry Nichols

Libraries are for the people, by the people. Libraries represent a hopeful future when citizens work together
to provide smart, practical, democratic and essential services for themselves and their neighbors. It takes
many devoted citizens to create a library that is able to adequately respond to the needs of its community.
Friends and members of library Foundation boards are among those wonderful neighbors who step up and
give of their time, energy, and passion alongside library trustees and volunteers. No paycheck are to be had
other than community pride and the satisfaction of ensuring the sustainability of an essential community
institution. Their community connections, hard work and devotion to the library often make the impossible,
possible.

A solid, respectful working relationship between all library stakeholders is key. Only by working together
can we create the libraries our communities need to endure, bounce back from disruption and thrive. This
chapter from the 2015 edition of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State
[http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/index.html] is devoted to setting the stage for a
positive working relationship between a library’s board of trustees and its Friends and Foundation. The
“Working Together” chart in the appendices of the Handbook (pp. 98-99) may also be of interest.

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Library Friends and Foundations

Many libraries form a Friends of the Library organization to help achieve a variety of short and long-term
goals. The role of a Friends group is distinct from, but related to, the role of a board of trustees. The
members are civic-minded people who know that quality library service is important to the life of a
community and who are willing to volunteer their time and talents to help the library succeed.

Friends of the Library groups are independent organizations, separate and distinct from the library and the
library board. While their purpose is support of the library, the “Friends” have a separate corporate
existence. They should have a separate federal tax exemption and their funds should not be mingled with
the library’s operating funds. Depending on local needs, Friends of the Library do many things:

- Create public support and awareness for the library and its programs;
- Raise money for capital campaigns or for direct gifts for items not in the library’s own budget;
- Work for library legislation or increased appropriations;
- Sponsor and support library programs and events;
- Volunteer to work in the library or on specific tasks and projects.

The independent corporate and financial status of Friends of the Library can be especially helpful in
fundraising and budget vote campaigns. A library cannot use public funds to influence the outcome of an

election, but a Friends group may use funds they have raised, within the Grassroots Lobbying limits set by the IRS.

Friends of the Library can be valuable members of the library team when they are organized carefully and when their purpose is clearly defined and structured. Trustees provide citizen control and governance of the library as required by law. The library director manages the operations of the library. The Friends of the Library provides an opportunity for interested citizens to assist in developing the library in ways identified in consultation with the board and the director.

It is essential that all parties in this arrangement understand the responsibilities and the limits of their roles. Frequent, clear, open communication about needs and expectations is the key to a successful partnership between the board, director and Friends of the Library.

Library boards can do a number of things to help and support a Friends group:

- Be certain that there is a written policy statement about the Friends, their role and their relationship to the board of trustees (a sample operating agreement is available from United for Libraries);
- Work with the Friends and the library director to be sure that Friends have clear and appropriate assignments and that their talents are being used well;
- Meet with the Friends board formally (perhaps semi-annually) to help the Friends plan and define their goals;
- Appoint a library trustee to act as liaison to the Friends board;
- Be open and welcoming to suggestions, questions and communications from the Friends;
- Have an annual joint meeting with the Friends to review the library’s plan, budget and the Friends’ role for the coming year;
- Ensure that the members of the Friends are routinely shown sincere appreciation for their efforts.

More information on library Friends groups is available through the American Library Association’s United for Libraries. Information on New York Library Association Friends of Libraries Section.

**Library Foundations**

Many of the state’s largest libraries and a few smaller libraries as well, also utilize a library foundation to attract support. While the Friends may handle the “day to day” fundraising typical of libraries, foundations are generally established to solicit major contributions for capital projects or ongoing programs beyond the scope of normal library activities.

Foundations tend to be more sophisticated in their legal organization due to the number and variety of tax laws and regulations to which they are subject.

For these reasons libraries are advised to thoroughly research the pros and cons of establishing a foundation and to seek advice from similar libraries that have done so before embarking on such an endeavor.
Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Privacy

Public libraries play a unique role in the support and preservation of democracy by providing open, non-judgmental institutions where individuals can pursue their own interests. To the extent that their budgets permit, libraries attempt to collect materials and information that represent varying points of view on controversial topics. But as the repositories of our culture, both the good and the bad, libraries sometimes contain information or ideas that are controversial or threatening to some people. Expressions of disapproval, dismay and even outrage over library materials are not uncommon, even though public libraries explicitly avoid doctrinal positions or the espousal of a particular point of view. As difficult as it may be in some cases, trustees must be very careful to separate their personal opinions from the philosophy of the library as an institution.

The first amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees freedom of speech, and the courts have long held that this guarantee extends to the right to receive information freely. Free access to information is the cornerstone of the American public library and trustees must ensure that their libraries have policies and procedures that prevent any form of censorship. Every person has the right to read, or not to read, any book; to view or listen to any media. The responsibility for children's reading and viewing falls to the parents, not the library.

The library board and director should prepare comprehensive collection development policies to guide the selection of materials. This policy should reflect the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rightsexternal link opens in a new window, found in the Appendices, and Freedom to Read Statement.external link opens in a new window

Library access to the Internet raises a variety of challenging intellectual freedom issues. While the library has made a conscious choice to acquire the items in its collection, no such decision has been made about the resources on the Internet. The library merely provides an access point to billions of databases, Web pages, chat rooms and other resources without making a judgment about the reliability, accuracy or appropriateness of any of them.

The Internet is the broadest information resource available, and it belongs in every public library. However, the Internet also contains material that is illegal; material that is illegal for children but not for adults; and material that may offend community standards. Some very complex first amendment questions are at stake in public libraries' use and provision of Internet access. It is essential that every library adopt a carefully considered and judiciously written policy statement tailored to the library's own community (Education Law §260 (12)). This statement should include:

- The purpose of library Internet access;
- A disclaimer about the nature of the information on the Internet;
- Prohibitions against engaging in illegal activities or accessing illegal materials;
- Access allowances and restrictions, such as time limits, sign-ups, etc.;
- A statement of parental responsibility for children and children's access;
- Explanation of appropriate use;
- Penalties and consequences for misuse;
- Explanation of privacy issues;
- An explanation of filtering software, whether or not the library uses it.
Staff procedures should forbid any comment on patron choices and guarantee the privacy of patron information requests. The state's Library Records Law (Civil Practice Law and Rules [CPLR] § 4509) prohibits access to any information that links the name of a library user to any library material, information request, or any other use of the library, unless the library is presented with a subpoena or search warrant from an authorized legal entity. The library should have a Law Enforcement Inquiry policy to ensure compliance with the state law on patron confidentiality (guidance is available [external link opens in a new window]). Additional sources on intellectual freedom and privacy issues can be found through ALA (Intellectual Freedom Committee [IFC] [external link opens in a new window] and IFC Privacy Subcommittee [external link opens in a new window]).

A standardized procedure to handle patron complaints must be a component of the library's policies. Trustees must recognize and acknowledge a citizen's right to question any board action and every trustee must be willing to listen to challenges and explain the library's policies and the reasons for them. The board should project an open, concerned image without accommodating censorship demands. Responses to challenges must be rooted in the library's policies, regardless of the issue. No person or group should dictate what materials are suitable for others in the public library, nor should limitations be imposed based on the format of materials.

Censorship challenges can be difficult, but they are an inevitable consequence of the commitment to provide open and free access to all of the world's information resources. If a censorship issue arises, the library can obtain additional help and advice from the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Office [external link opens in a new window] and the New York Library Association.

**Board Development**

Library boards are groups of volunteers working together to create a quality public library to meet the needs of their community. The board needs to deliberately develop itself into a dynamic, high-performing group through education, self-assessment and active recruitment. Your community deserves no less.

**Trustee Education**

Trustees must learn and grow during their entire tenure on the board, developing an ever-deepening awareness of the affairs of their own library and an appreciation and understanding of other libraries and library organizations. The public library is a multifaceted organization functioning in a complex world.

Though the first critical step in the learning process is the orientation of a new trustee, education cannot cease once a person has reached the board table. Board meetings can be an excellent forum for continuing education. Many boards set aside time at every meeting for a presentation or discussion of some aspect of the library's work or programs. Such a session might include a training webinar, an overview of a staff member's work responsibilities, a presentation by a representative of the public library system or simply a few minutes of philosophical discussion and reflection on the role and purpose of the library.

Trustees should seek out educational opportunities through their director from their public library system. Understanding the context in which your library operates and reviewing the roles and responsibilities of trustees, while having the opportunity to network with other trustees regionally, will greatly enhance your value as a local library trustee.

There is an extensive body of literature on trusteeship and board development, as well as public library operation and management. A small sampling is included in this Handbook. Trustees should also ask the
library director to let them know about articles or books in all fields that may be helpful to an understanding of the library's affairs. The New York State Library has a number of webinars focused specifically on trustee issues.

In addition to statewide organizations such as the Library Trustees Association of New York State (LTA), the New York Library Association (NYLA) and regional public library system support, many American Library Association divisions such as the Public Library Association and Library Leadership and Management Association, as well as United for Libraries, offer extensive resources for trustee education.

Outside the library field there are many organizations concerned with non-profit administration and management.

Workshops, conferences and webinars provide an excellent opportunity for continuing education, both from the program content itself and from the opportunity to meet and share experiences and ideas with other trustees. The Library Trustees Association of New York State sponsors an Annual Trustee Institute and most public library systems offer workshops and seminars specifically aimed at trustees. The annual New York Library Association Conference offers an excellent opportunity to learn about new developments, programs, and activities across the state. The Library Trustees Association of New York State always offers a special package of trustee-oriented programs within the NYLA conference. On a national level, United for Libraries offers a program track for trustees at the annual ALA Conference as well.

Financial constraints or the perception of public disapproval make some boards reluctant to approve dues, registration fees and travel expenses for continuing education. However, these expenses are essential to keep libraries alive and vibrant through a better-informed and more effective board and staff. Every library should have a written policy regarding staff and board training and budget sufficient funds each year to assure that both the library board and the library staff can take full advantage of educational opportunities and remain aware of new trends and best practices in the library world.

Effective and knowledgeable trustees undergo a constant process of growth and learning. Attending board meetings and voting on current questions is not enough.

Continuing education, for trustees as well as staff, represents an important investment in the library's future and demonstrates good stewardship of the organization by the board.

**Board Evaluation**

A healthy board will make the time to evaluate their own performance. This is an opportunity, just as the evaluation of the library director’s performance is an opportunity, to celebrate what is going well and to find ways to course correct when something could be going better. The board should evaluate themselves against the duties and responsibilities found in this Handbook as well as the library’s charter, bylaws, policies and procedures and strategic plans. Is the board moving the library forward? Are board operations streamlined? Is there additional education or support trustees need to feel confident and comfortable in their roles as public library trustees? There are sample board evaluation tools available in the Resources section at the end of this Chapter.

**Recruitment of Trustees**

While the trustees of all municipal, school district and special district libraries, as well as a growing number of association libraries, are elected by the public or appointed by an elected municipal body, most
association libraries in New York still appoint their own board members. Therefore, an important part of every association library trustee's job is to be on the lookout for potential new board members who can help keep the library and the board strong and move it confidently into the future. A board should seek out and encourage qualified candidates who can complement board strengths or fill a gap in the current board’s expertise. It is essential that board composition reflect the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of the community. A clear, generic trustee job description (such as found in the earlier chapter on Trustee Duties and Responsibilities) should always be available for interested persons and the news media.

When a potential trustee has been identified, he or she can be invited to board meetings to learn more about the library's governance. It is also important to bring such people to the attention of appointing authorities if the library is dependent on them for new trustees.

What are the qualifications for a library trustee? The most important qualification is a strong and genuine belief in public libraries and their mission in the community as centers for information, recreation, culture and lifelong education. Good library trustees are also good library patrons. A candidate must also be willing to devote appropriate time and effort to carrying out the duties and responsibilities of trusteeship. These duties will include regular attendance at board meetings, committee service and activities, visibility in the community on behalf of the library, and learning about the library and the social, legal and political context in which it exists.

Conclusion

Libraries are essential to our citizens, to our communities and to our democracy. The local public library is a focal point for intellectual curiosity and learning in every New York community. It enhances the quality of community life while providing a path to success for many. As the most credible public institution in America today, it can be a critical leader in finding community-based solutions to local issues.

The American public library works because of dedicated volunteers willing to serve on the board of trustees. We thank you for your service and your dedication to ensuring all New Yorkers are empowered, engaged and energized by their library. The world is a better place for your efforts.
Getting Started: Creating and Sustaining a Friends Group for Your Library

by Lisa C. Wemett

Abstract: Organizing a community Friends group to support a library’s programs and services produces many benefits. Initial work requires following a variety of steps: recruiting a core group of volunteers for a steering committee, determining the Friends’ purposes and mission, developing by-laws, and holding a public meeting to found the Friends. Once established, expanding the group’s membership and implementing steps to grow the group’s leadership over time serves to sustain an active organization.

“Friends of the Library can be valuable members of the library team when they are organized carefully and when their purpose is clearly defined and structured.”

Introduction: Why a Friends Group?

Why might a library want a Friends group? What can this group do for a library and its community? The civic-minded individuals that become involved in the Friends intrinsically want to encourage their community to “buy into the library”: to make it a community center and gathering place, to bring more residents into the library to witness and participate in its vibrant activities, and to encourage more involvement in the library’s services and programs.

With this expanded awareness and support, Friends become effective fund-raisers to augment the library’s annual budget. Friends are able to work with local and state advocates to press their elected representatives for increased appropriations for all libraries. Local Friends organizations provide a place where volunteers are welcomed and contribute, making the library “everyone’s library.” Volunteers broaden the library’s reach to a wider range of age groups, attracting people who are aware of the library’s importance in the community and consequently, support it with their time and energies.

1 Nichols and Smith Aldrich, 2015. (p. 81)
Establishing a volunteer support group is beneficial to any library where the library’s Board of Trustees encourages changes to help the library manager and, in turn, the library. If the library already has volunteers and needs more staffing, starting a Friends group may provide eager residents with tasks library personnel are unable to tackle. A Friends group could bring attention to the library’s staff/volunteer model and help to recruit additional volunteers to assist with current services, carry out a wider range of programs, work behind the scenes, or provide outreach to the community. The Friends might eventually become a charity for fund-raising purposes, helping the library raise money toward a capital improvement plan for the library building or setting up an endowment.

There are several schools of thought on starting a Friends group. Many models cite United for Libraries: The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations at (www.ala.org/united/friends), a national organization which is a large and active division of the American Library Association, dedicated to library Friends groups, trustees, and foundations. Their work gathers library advocates under one umbrella encompassing the various volunteers supporting libraries. The United for Libraries website offers helpful resources for establishing a Friends group, including a series of fact sheets. When starting a Friends group, the first resources most people access are Fact Sheet #1 “How to Organize a Friends Group,” and a downloadable toolkit, “Libraries Need Friends.” (www.ala.org/united/friends)


Connecticut’s model is called “Friends: From Concept to Reality” and provides essential steps, which flow through a schedule of meetings to found a Friends of the Library group:

1. Recruit a core group of supporters
2. Hold an invitational meeting of supporters
3. Establish a steering committee of three to five people
4. Lay the groundwork for the organization In a series of meetings of the steering committee, outlining the purpose(s) of the Friends, its mission, by-laws, membership categories, dues structure, and ultimately, recruiting officers and committee chairs
5. Hold a public meeting where Friends are officially established, the first “annual meeting” of the Friends
6. Hold the first meeting of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Library, with monthly meetings thereafter
7. Celebrate the Friends once a year at an annual meeting.

The approach is basic and provides a blueprint that can easily get a Friends group underway within six months’ time. For the library director, the task requires powers of persuasion to recruit dedicated people, plus organizational skills with a little bit of knowledge from Robert’s Rules of Order (2011) thrown into the mix.

The library personnel along with the volunteer members of the steering committee need to avoid obvious pitfalls that occur if the process is rushed or suitable volunteers do not come forward. Allow enough time to carry out careful planning and to complete the necessary steps to give the organization a firm foundation:

- Determine the benefits to the library and the purpose(s) for establishing this type of volunteer service group
Identify a core group of supporters to form a steering committee and gather them together to talk and plan. Recruit enthusiastic leadership to carry out the work outlined by the steering committee. Dedicate staff time to the work of building a solid base for the group's activities.

Two strategies repeatedly referred to by United for Libraries emphasize writing an operating agreement, a document also known as a Memorandum of Understanding, and filing for tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service, generally referred to as 501(c)(3). These planning steps are important and depending on the purpose(s) that are ultimately identified for the Friends, achieving nonprofit status through the IRS may be very important for the future of the group.

Preliminary Steps:

A Friends group is usually established in one of two ways. The library director, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will raise the possibility of involving volunteers to support the library. Another scenario might be that volunteers from the community see the need for a group and approach the library director. A community service group, such as the Rotary Club, members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Junior League, a parent-teacher association, a Women’s Club, or a local foundation might determine to focus their volunteer time and energy to get a group started.

Dolnick’s “The Ten Commandments of a Successful Friends Group”\(^2\) provides a framework for establishing a Friends group. The list uses the word “must” very liberally. Although it could seem like heresy to not accept the statements verbatim there are two commandments to follow.

**Commandment #1 -** The library director must be in favor of a Friends group. If this is not the case, do not proceed any further. There is no use in continuing.

If a trustee, a dedicated staff member, or a community volunteer thinks the library should have a Friends group, the first person that will need to be sold on the idea is the library director. If there is resistance and the director requires much convincing to develop a Friends organization, this group of volunteers is never going to get off the ground. Period. It is essential that the director decides that the library needs a Friends group. In order for the organization to succeed, the director must be resolved to give the Friends his/her full support. “Resolved” is defined as “determined” or “resolute” and not to be confused with “resigned” as in “resigned to your fate or lot in life.”

**Commandment #5 –** A committed core group must exist. This core group may be only two or three people.

The core group may be only two or three people, yet their actions can change the library and community in positive ways. For instance, groups such as Neighborhood Watch or Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) started around a kitchen table and became nationwide movements. Some library directors may think that a half dozen people are needed, which seems like a monumental recruitment task. However, do not underestimate the power of a few committed individuals.

The other commandments state that the Friends cannot be exclusionary and must be open to all community members. Other statements encourage collaborations between staff and volunteers and that the library

will need to provide resources to support the group (e.g., work space, book sale storage, supplies, computer, telephone, etc.).

**What Do Friends Do?**

I recently got re-acquainted with a co-worker who retired within the last ten years. When I mentioned my involvement in Friends organizations on the State level, she looked very puzzled and asked “What do Friends do besides book sales and mending books?” When we had worked together, the library had an active volunteer group that mended books. Once a month, the volunteers came to socialize, bringing glue in hand, and helped keep up with a seemingly never-ending pile of books the staff felt could be “saved” for more circulations.

For many people “book sales” = Friends groups. Although many Friends groups are library fund-raisers, Friends bring many skills to the table and can be so much more when they become involved in the life of the library. Friends can help the library support or expand its services through the gift of volunteer time. Some libraries have volunteer Download Coaches who teach patrons how to use their personal electronic devices for downloading library books. Other volunteers provide home delivery of library materials to those who cannot physically access the library.

Tap into Friends creativity: volunteers may see a gap in library services and develop ideas to meet the void. Friends can lighten the load of staff tasks, such as shelf reading with an Adopt-a-Shelf crew. As advocates, Friends carry the library’s message, promoting the value of the library. By advancing the library to family, neighbors, elected officials, and community groups, the Friends’ word-of-mouth marketing may lead to increased usage of the library’s programs and services. A Friends group can extend the library’s reach, giving it more visibility when members put library bumper stickers on their cars or go into the community, bringing the library to festivals, parades, and/or farmers’ markets.

I heard the New York Library Association Friends of Libraries Section’s past president, Randy Enos, say “Being a small library or rural library is not an excuse to not have a Friends of the Library group.” He cited the Sunshine Hall Free Library in the Ramapo Catskill Library System. Sunshine Hall, in Eldred, New York, serving a population of 2,530 residents, has a Friends group numbering 75 members! When Randy asked how the group had achieved this, the answer was “there isn’t much to do here in the winter!” People come out to Friends-sponsored programs and Sunshine Hall Free Library serves as a free and fun gathering space. Friends groups do more than run book sales. Just like the library, Friends are a reflection of their community. One small Friends group in the Adirondacks has their Board get together to talk business over breakfast at a local café. The Groton, Connecticut, group calls themselves Groton Public Library’s “Circle of Friends.” Each group is unique while having much in common with other Friends groups.

**Friends Activities**

Active and engaged Friends groups sponsor many activities. Some common categories include:

- **Volunteer services and projects**: Friends provide the volunteer labor for specific projects and ongoing tasks, writing grant proposals, delivering library materials to homebound patrons, and other forms of community involvement.

- **Programming**: Friends underwrite the funding to sponsor library programs for all ages and may also coordinate workshops, book discussion groups, and children’s/teen events. Friends also represent
Getting Started: Creating and Sustaining a Friends Group

the library at community fairs and festivals. They offer simple social events at the library like teas, soup luncheons, or covered dish suppers.

- Publications and Marketing: Volunteers write and produce a Friends newsletter and an annual report of Friends activities and achievements. Volunteers can develop a directory of community volunteer opportunities or library services.

- Community Relations and Advocacy: Friends promote the library to family and neighbors through membership campaigns. The Friends build community awareness and public support for the library’s services and programs, sometimes in the context of annual budget votes. Friends members monitor and lobby the legislation that affects libraries statewide and nationally; they could also host candidate forums.

- Fund-raising: A natural for most volunteer groups are book sales. Some Friends also sell promotional items such as book bags, T-shirts, or cookbooks. In partnership with the library trustees, Friends may host special events and assist with fund-raising for capital campaigns. If the Friends designate a “business” level of membership dues, soliciting corporate contributions is a possibility. Friends groups with IRS nonprofit status could encourage memorials and endowments for the library.

Clarifying Roles

Friends carry out their mission working in tandem and through consultation with the Board of Trustees and the library director. This support may be in the role of fund-raising, volunteer service, marketing, and library advocacy. More succinctly, the division of labor is:

- Governance: Board of Trustees
- Operations: Library Director
- Support: Friends

Friends offer many avenues of support for the library, yet have limitations. Friends support the library and their community with activities such as those mentioned previously, but Friends cannot set library policies. Library policies are written and approved by the library’s Board of Trustees. In some instances, the Friends officers or members may not agree with decisions made by the library’s governing board. Ultimately the policies of the board and decisions by the librarian are not subject to Friends’ approval, however the Friends can make their opinions known providing valuable feedback. (Reed, 2012). The Friends steering committee and front line volunteers need to understand the library’s chain of authority.

The library’s Board of Trustees provides citizen oversight and governance of the library as required by law. For example, the trustees hire the library director, adopt policies that will help the library run smoothly, develop a strategic plan, and provide fiscal oversight. The library director, the chief operating officer, manages the daily operations of the library, implements Board of Trustees policies, prepares the annual budget in cooperation with the trustees, and educates the board about the library’s services and collections.

In Nichols and Smith Aldrich’s (2015) *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*, the “Checklist for Effective Library Trustees” advises understanding the roles of library entities: the library board, the
director, the staff, and the Friends of the Library. The Handbook for Connecticut Library Friends includes a
detailed table entitled “Working Together: Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines,” clearly defining the
distinct roles and responsibilities of the library director, trustees, and Friends. (http://foclib.org)

Establishing a Steering Committee

Organizing a steering committee is necessary to establish a Friends group. The library director, assisted by
the trustees, is responsible for recruiting this core group of supporters. These individuals may be faithful,
energetic volunteers who currently assist with the life of the library. The make-up of the group should
reflect the diversity of the community. To learn about Friends initiatives, the director should begin reading
up on Friends organizations and their potential roles and activities. Telling everyone—family, personal
friends, acquaintances, community members—“We’re going to have a Friends group,” gets the ball rolling.

The library director should contact people who use the library regularly and other community leaders. The
library director needs to look beyond the library and seek out current leaders of other community groups
with a record of civic involvement. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, the adage to “ask a busy
person” is exactly the tactic to employ to establish an active steering committee. Even if the person does
not join the leadership team, that individual provides powerful connections in the community and further
serves as an advocate in the recruitment of the new Friends group.

Choosing and recruiting people to help the organization prosper is vital. Think carefully about the
background, skills, and abilities of the group members. Good examples include members of a church vestry
or a deacon, a past or present officer of the school’s parent-teacher-student association, a committee chair
serving the Chamber of Commerce or the local Merchants Association, someone who heads up an annual
festival, or the Treasurer of the Fire Department Auxiliary. As the Friends are in the development stage, an
accountant with financial acumen, an attorney who has knowledge of the law for not-for-profits, and a
volunteer with fund-raising expertise would bring welcome skills to the steering committee. Another asset
would be a journalist or a writer to assist with writing for the local media, crafting fliers on library
programs, or establishing a Friends newsletter.

Are there retired public or school librarians, former members of the library’s Board of Trustees, or former
staff members that might enjoy supporting the library in a new way? These community members are
potential members for the steering committee. The library director should discuss the search for steering
committee members with the chair of the library’s Board of Trustees. Sometimes there are potential
trustee candidates but a lack of Board vacancies. These civic-minded individuals may become outstanding
volunteers for establishing the Friends.

At the initial invitational meeting, representatives of the library will formally discuss the establishment of a
Friends group with the volunteers forming the steering committee. This committee selects an interim
chairperson and an interim secretary to serve as a “temporary” board until a formal election takes place at
the first public meeting of the Friends group. (See the Handbook for Connecticut Library Friends for
planning steps and a sample agenda for the invitational meeting of the core group of supporters.)

The goals of the steering committee are to form an independent Friends organization and to decide the
vision and mission for the Friends. The steering committee determines the direction of the Friends,
including collaborative roles with the Trustees and library staff. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, a
member of the library’s Board of Trustees or a paid staff member cannot serve as an elected officer of the

3 Friends of Connecticut Libraries (FOCL), 2006, p. 8-9
Friends. “Though it is the case that a Trustee Board member may take a leadership role in creating a new Friends group and therefore have a decision-making role in both [organizations] for awhile, this should be considered a temporary necessity.” (Reed, Fact Sheet #11, 2015).

At the initial organizational meeting, the steering committee members may choose to stay on in their various leadership positions. Asking these individuals to consider a 4- to 6-month term prior to the Friends first election would be beneficial and provides continuity to the fledgling organization following the initial meeting. After the first six months, it may be wise to ask these leaders to go on the ballot for a full-length term.

Led by the interim chair, the steering committee proceeds with the necessary steps to build a solid foundation for the organization. The committee establishes a schedule and agenda topics for a series of organizational meetings for the group, possibly with a few pairs of volunteers working as ad hoc committees to execute the groundwork.

The steering committee needs to accomplish the following steps:

- Establish the initial purpose or role(s) and a clear mission statement for the Friends;
- Plan the organizational structure needed to carry out this role/mission, e.g., officers, committees, task forces, and to encourage volunteer engagement;
- Write basic job descriptions;
- Review samples and draft the by-laws; and
- Establish membership criteria/categories and a dues structure that will optimize the number of members, e.g., student, family, senior rates.

**Purpose and Mission Statements of the Friends**

The steering committee needs to give careful consideration in establishing the initial purpose(s) of the Friends organization. The purpose(s) vary depending on the library’s and the community’s needs as well as the active members’ interests.

Possible roles for the Friends include:

- A source of active volunteers;
- Organizers of programs for adults, providing coordination of the publicity and supplying funding for library programs;
- Fund-raisers, earning money for library “extras” such as new collections, services, or equipment not covered in the library’s capital budget;
- Advocates, carrying out an established public relations or advocacy strategy, such as assisting with a “get out the vote” effort to pass the library’s budget.

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4 Reed, S. G., 2012.
Some Friends groups opt for incorporation; the legal documents require the group’s purpose. However, the legal language of the purpose is different from the Friends mission, which should be succinct, lively, and fully understandable by the general public.

Compare these two statements formerly used by the San Bernardino County Library:

*The group’s purpose:* To maintain an association of persons interested in the library, to focus public attention in a positive manner on library services, facilities, and needs, to help promote the use and enjoyment of the library, to develop supplemental funding for the library and actively support the policies and procedures of the San Bernardino County Library in the community and the local branch library.

*The group’s mission:* To build a partnership between the library and the community to advocate for quality library service for all of the people of San Bernardino County.

The mission statement is less grandiose and clearly describes the group’s core reason for existence. When read by a member of the Friends board, a trustee, or a library staff member, it is easy to answer the question, “What do the Friends do?” Here are a few additional samples of mission statements:

“The purpose of the corporation is to advocate for the Irondequoit Public Library by bringing the services of the Library to the attention of the public and by raising money to sponsor programs and otherwise assist the library. The Friends of the Irondequoit Public Library is an independent, all-volunteer, 501(c)3, tax-exempt, non-profit organization.” (http://www.irondequitoilibrary.org/welcome-to-the-irondequoit-public-library/friends-of-the-library/)

“Friends of Bethlehem Public Library, Delmar, NY, supports cultural and educational programs for the community and assists the library with special projects and purchases not covered by traditional funding.” (http://www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org/friends_of_the_library.asp)

“The mission of the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library is to raise public and private funds, enhance marketing and public relations services, and provide timely and innovative programming to support the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County and the Rochester Public Library.” (http://www.volunteermatch.org/search/org554528.jsp#more_info_tab)

The mission statement is utilized in most of the Friends public relations materials, such as: Solicitation letters to potential donors; Press releases; Friends membership fliers; Informational brochures; and Friends web site.

**Identifying Interested Volunteers**

To recruit potential Friends, the steering committee should create interest forms. The content of the interest form reflects the group’s purposes and prompts people for their availability and areas of expertise to become involved in the new organization. These forms should contain spaces for contact information (i.e., name, address, telephone, e-mail address) and query for activity support level. Offer a checklist of potential volunteer opportunities, such as working on fund-raising projects or special events, furnishing refreshments for meetings, staffing the book sale, coordinating social media and other marketing efforts like a newsletter, and assisting with mailings. “Assist in leading the group (i.e., willing to be an officer)” is
an item that should definitely be included on the checklist. Since the Friends group is not formally established, a bank account cannot be opened yet and this initial form must not include a request for dues.

The form is a tool for gathering e-mail addresses to develop a listserv for communication purposes. Upload the form on the library's website to bring attention to the start-up of the Friends and to further expand the library's reach to patrons online. Some “shopper” papers offer a “Who Can Volunteer” column for charitable organizations. The publicity should state “adult” volunteers. Many students need community service hours for their Scouting organization or high school graduation requirement. The steering committee or library staff might not be in a position to offer these young people the supervision they may initially need.

Once the forms have been collected, a steering committee member or other designated contact needs to act upon them. The committee should have a protocol for reviewing the offers of help and for reaching out to these potential volunteers. The committee also needs to decide who contacts the volunteers and who performs the computer work to create an e-mail list.

**Organizational Structure of the Friends**

The steering committee plans the organizational structure needed to carry out the group’s purposes and mission, encouraging volunteer engagement with various committees and task forces as well as elected officers. This includes how the Friends Board of Directors or Friends Council will be formed, with the number, position, and term limits of elected officers, e.g., president, vice president, secretary, members at large or directors, and the desired committees. Electing co-presidents may better serve the group.

Functioning without elected officers is another option. For example, the Friends of the Bakerville Library is run by a team of eight people. The library serves New Hartford, Connecticut, a municipality of less than 15,000 residents. Over the last four years, this “team” of Friends earned over $40,000 annually through a car raffle and other fund-raisers. The Friends of Bakerville won a statewide award for their efforts from the Friends of Connecticut Libraries. [http://foclib.org/annual-meeting/annual-awards/](http://foclib.org/annual-meeting/annual-awards/)

The steering committee drafts simple job descriptions outlining tasks of the officer positions. Job descriptions and committees are not included in the organization's by-laws. This method makes it easier to change the job description as needed. The job descriptions should be included in a leadership manual and reviewed once a year by the Friends Board of Directors.

The next order of business is the discussion of potential candidates to be on the slate. The officer descriptions assist volunteers in their decision-making process when they consider being on the ballot.

The Friends Board of Directors also has ex officio members. The library director may serve or choose to appoint another staff member as the Friends Staff Liaison. In addition, the library’s Board of Trustees appoints a Trustee Liaison. These positions are pivotal to the Friends success; representatives attend Friends meetings. Ex officio appointments have non voting status.

Once established, the members of the Friends Board should discuss the appointment of a Liaison from the Friends to the library’s Board of Trustees to attend the library’s board meetings. A Friends presence is vital at the Board of Trustees’ meetings, reminding trustees a volunteer corps is available to assist the library. The Liaison from the Friends keeps the trustees well informed about Friends projects. Rotate this duty
among the Friends officers and committee chairs. It is often an eye-opener for these volunteers who
attend, as they begin to understand the complexity of the library board business.

Committee Structure

An abundance of committee opportunities is one way to connect volunteers with the Friends and by
extension, the library. Directors or Members At Large may serve as committee chairs or co-chairs to carry
out specific tasks for the following committees:

- Membership Committee coordinates membership drives or campaigns and maintains all
  membership records.
- Program Committee offers programs for adults, if this is a role the Friends determine to take.
- Book Sale Committee manages book sales of all kinds: online sales, ongoing sale in the library
during regular library hours, or large-scale semi-annual sales. The group can delegate tasks, such
as publicity and signage, set up, and training.
- Marketing & Publicity Committee identifies public relations and marketing opportunities, including
  writing and distributing press releases. It develops an activities calendar and maintains a Friends
  bulletin board. Other roles might include the cultivation of event sponsors and editing a Friends
  newsletter.
- Volunteers’ Committee receives volunteer applications and other offers of assistance for library
  projects. It identifies projects to accommodate volunteers’ schedules. Committee members might
  create a database, separate from memberships and dues, to track individuals’ interests and
  availability. The committee develops recognition initiatives for the volunteers; these can be as
  simple as posting a congratulations sign stating: “Great job last month!”

Other possibilities for committees or task forces could include managing fund-raisers such as house tours,
bus tours, or opportunities where the Friends volunteer at local festivals, run a community’s ballpark
concession stand, or coordinate a golf tournament. In cooperation with the Friends Treasurer, there might
be a Finance Committee to keep track of the proceeds from book sales, fund-raisers, membership dues, and
arranging audits and tax reporting. Another committee might be in charge of grants and awards, writing
proposals for grant funds, or coordinating opportunities for member scholarships to attend library
conferences and other professional development activities.

By-Laws

The steering committee will write a draft of the by-laws incorporating the decisions made about the
organizational structure along with the group’s purpose and mission statement. Make the draft available
for review, both at the library and online, so interested parties may make comments or suggestions before
the document is presented for adoption at the inaugural meeting of the Friends. Send drafts to the library
director and the library’s Board of Trustees.

Make the by-laws as basic, concise, and flexible as possible. Broad, general statements like “the Board of
Directors will meet once a month” will serve better than stating “the second Tuesday of every month,”
given that the officers may change and have conflicts with specific dates. For annual meetings, the quorum
should be small enough to achieve business objectives such as elections or by-laws amendments.
Similarly, a by-laws change will not be needed for simple organizational changes such as a new membership category or establishment of a new committee.

The New York State Nonprofit Revitalization Act (NPRA) of 2013 has specified language and other considerations for by-laws for nonprofit organizations. The NPRA also outlines rules for electronic communications of the board, protocol for meetings, and Board votes by e-mail.

As a nonprofit board, the Friends adopt a conflict of interest policy. A review of the by-laws of the library’s Board of Trustees and its conflict of interest policy is required for alignment. Consult a nonprofit law expert regarding the advantages and responsibilities of nonprofit organizations. If the Friends group decides to incorporate as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation at a later date, the by-laws will need to be in place for that process.

Annotated By-Laws: What Should Be Included in By-Laws for Friends Organizations? (Appendix B) contains key by-law components and examples. The United for Libraries website links to additional by-law samples. http://www.ala.org/united/friends/orgtools/samplebylaws If the steering committee bases the by-laws on documents from other Friends groups, select current resources (within three years) that are in compliance with the respective state’s legislation.

What about Dues?

There are various models for Friends groups’ dues. Some groups determine that all contributing donors automatically become “Friends.” Some groups set a $5 fee as the base amount for all memberships. Another common model offers tiered levels of dues for a variety of membership statuses. Groups can get creative with their these levels and higher donation amounts designating “Good Friend” or “Special Friend” for sustaining members, “Best Friend” for sponsors, or “Friend for Life” for benefactors. General practice is to establish categories of membership with different dues rates for individuals, families, students, seniors, and organizations/businesses.

Keep membership dues affordable to attract the largest number of participants while still covering expenses. The dues structure should not be included in the Friends by-laws. Amounts should be reviewed annually by the Board.

Promotional materials for membership recruitment at the launch of the Friends are vital when there is peak interest. Create a simple but professional-looking brochure outlining the Friends purpose and mission, benefits of membership, and specific involvement activities. Often people want to know “What’s in it for me?” and the steering committee should highlight perks of a Friends membership, possibly tied to higher tiered levels. (See Appendix C: “Membership-Raising”: Tips about Memberships for Friends Organizations for ideas on incentives that could be offered for Friends members.) Later editions of the membership brochure can outline the Friends accomplishments, such as programs, projects, and activities.

If the Friends are not a 501(c)(3) entity, dues and donations are not tax deductible. Until the Friends become a nonprofit charity, membership literature should clearly state that condition. The library’s 501(c)(3) status is not the Friends’ status.
Public Meeting to Found the Friends

The steering committee begins preparations for the public meeting approximately eight weeks prior to the date. Inform the community about the start-up of the organization, as well as the date, time, and purpose of the public meeting. Marketing efforts should utilize community calendars such as the local shopper newspapers, the local television and radio stations, and online venues including an invitation on the library’s home page.

The public meeting is the first “annual meeting” of the Friends membership; it is a combination of a business meeting and a library promotional event. Hold the meeting in conjunction with a program to attract higher attendance. The event is open to the public in addition to people who have expressed interest in supporting a Friends group. The steering committee issues invitations with the meeting agenda to the email list created from the interest forms. Library staff members and library trustees should be in attendance to show their support of the new organization.

The main purpose of the gathering is to adopt the by-laws, put the organizational structure in place, and elect the group’s first officers. The meeting agenda should include welcoming remarks, a formal resolution to establish the Friends, the adoption of the new by-laws by a vote of those assembled, election of officers, membership recruitment, volunteer sign-up, and entertainment, followed by a reception for new officers and Friends: it’s time to celebrate! (Consult the Handbook for Connecticut Library Friends, p. 16-19, for step-by-step instructions to develop the agenda for this first public meeting.)

Following the establishment of the Friends, regular meetings of the board and committee chairs are scheduled. The group discusses projects and events, looking about one year ahead, to set dates for programs, fund-raisers, and other activities.

Start Membership Recruitment

Membership is pivotal in creating a base for activity and a source for Friends operating income. Membership building occurs by establishing relationships with the community and library users. It is necessary to continuously recruit new people into the organization, especially community leaders. The “personal ask” is vital. In personal conversations, the library staff member or volunteer should always work in the question, “Are you a member of the Friends?” Have membership brochures at hand to seal the deal!

Though it may be tempting to use the patron database for recruitment purposes, most state confidentiality laws prohibit the library from sharing that information. (New York N.Y. CVP. LAW § 4509 : NY Code - Section 4509: Library records. http://codes.findlaw.com/ny/civil-practice-law-and-rules/cvp-sect-4509.html) Other strategies will serve to identify potential friends. Add a Friends membership form to the library’s “welcome” packet for new patrons. Include Friends information in the library’s newsletters. It is easy to think the Friends would naturally publicize activities and programs in the library’s newsletters, but it is imperative to provide information on how to join the Friends.

Plan organized membership drives and distribute brochures in public places throughout the community. A sign-up week for the children’s summer learning program will garner lots of traffic at the Friends table, encouraging young families to join the organization. The Friends might sponsor an open house to celebrate National Volunteer Month in April, Children’s Book Week in May, National Friends of Libraries Week in October, or a library anniversary. The open house could serve as a kick-off for a month-long membership drive. A slogan, such as “Friends membership is your investment in the future”, provides a theme for the
membership drive. “We love our Friends” could tie the drive to Valentine’s Day. Offering a prize drawing to new members joining during a drive may be an incentive; a Valentine’s drive could have a gift basket containing a variety of “romantic” gifts like artisanal chocolates and a gift certificate for dinner for two.

**Keeping Members Involved**

Throughout the year, coordinate regular contact with Friend members and strive to be visible in the community. The Friends need to “toot their horn” and not hang back from involvement with community events: attend town meetings; promote the library’s message to local leaders; or host a booth at the farmers’ market. Expressing enthusiasm, along with sponsoring fun and engaging activities, keeps team energy high and attracts like-minded individuals to the group’s ranks. There is power and pride in accomplishing a goal, whether it is a successful book sale, a great float in the Memorial Day parade, strong attendance at a book discussion group, or opening a renovated library. The Friends can be powerful advocates and give the library a positive public persona.

The Friends Board needs to constantly communicate information regarding Friends activities and accomplishments to its members. They should plan member recognition events in cooperation with the library staff and trustees. Volunteers need to receive attention and credit for their work. A “thank you” breakfast, strawberry social, or other party can be planned for National Volunteer Month in April, National Friends of Libraries Week in October, or the month following a large scale book sale.

Publicize continuously to keep the Friends in the forefront of the community. Cultivating good relations with personnel at the local newspaper and other media outlets will help the Friends and library’s messages reach area residents. It is expected that the group will use social media. Electronic contact, with content updated regularly, can broaden the Friends reach, encouraging attendance at monthly meetings, shopping the book sale, and attending program events.

Communication, whether electronic or print, can also be accomplished through a newsletter, an annual report, or a mail campaign, such as postcards announcing special events. Beyond an annual book sale, special projects involving a large number of members keeps the momentum going. For example, the Friends could sponsor a county-wide book discussion (“One Community, One Book”) with an author reading or a local professor discussing the book. (http://www.ala.org/programming/onebook)

Another activity to garner publicity includes sponsoring a logo design contest. Logos help community members identify the Friends. The logo might encompass a phrase from the Friends mission, an architectural element of the library building, or mirror the library’s own logo. A contest will attract attention and allow community members of all ages to show off their graphic talents. Once the logo has been selected, use it liberally to brand the Friends. Use it on the Friends stationery, the organization’s newsletter masthead, on the membership brochure, and as a link on the library’s Website. The logo could also appear on fund-raising items such as tote bags and T-shirts.

**Sustaining Your Friends of the Library Group**

Once the Friends are underway, a key to maintaining group continuity includes scheduling meetings at times convenient to both the officers and volunteers. Take into account time of day, day of the week, and the regularity as well as whether to alternate schedules so more library supporters may participate in the meetings. The Board of Directors and the organization need flexibility to accommodate different segments
of the community, including volunteers with full-time jobs. If the Board meetings were held at 5:30 p.m. instead of 1:30 p.m., would that work for the group?

Meetings can make or break a group; the gathering should be time-limited, lasting less than two hours. Putting an end time on the agenda will encourage everyone in the group to help keep the meeting on track. The Friends Staff Liaison should provide basic training for the Friends Board on parliamentary procedure and how to keep meetings running smoothly and efficiently. All participants should use “good job skills,” that is, clear communication, common sense, careful listening, and polite negotiation during discussions.

Establishing an annual calendar of meeting dates helps members plan and fosters better attendance; distributing a written agenda a week before the meeting informs attendees about the planned business. At the conclusion of each meeting, hopefully everyone will feel productive, pointing to a list of accomplished items.

Experienced Friends officers know that there is often a small cadre of working members although the organization may have a large membership roster. These members eagerly volunteer their time and talents. Other members show their support through financial contributions. In the future, a sustaining member may have more time to give to the organization. Appreciate all support small or large.

Always remember that the group’s name is the “Friends,” which should reflect the tenets of inclusiveness and friendliness. Relationships with volunteers are strengthened with personal contact and by building rapport. In one large library, the director and staff often referred to several volunteers who spent every Tuesday morning combing through piles of new donations as “the sorters.” When pressed, staff members did not know these volunteers by name. How friendly was this? Staff should make a concerted effort to learn volunteers’ names, greet them, and thank them for their efforts. The volunteers will not get tired of hearing “thank you.” Be careful not to criticize. Praise is the only “pay” volunteers receive.

Friends Annual Meeting

Nonprofit organizations have a by-laws requirement to hold an annual membership meeting. The meeting provides an opportunity to inform the Friends members and the general public about their activities. Each year, the Friends can sponsor a different activity in an effort to attract various demographic segments of the community. Present the program following a short business meeting.

Ideas to increase the attendance at annual meetings:

- Invite a guest speaker (e.g., a meteorologist from a local television station)
- Hold an open house, with wine and cheese tasting
- Honor a local artist or author
- Sponsor a concert with local musical groups, like a college jazz ensemble, an a cappella group, or show choir
- Feature talented high school students in a student dance or chamber music performance
- Invite a speaker from another country to talk about his or her culture and display related items
- Present a Friends award or certificate of appreciation to a community member
Recognize a specific group of volunteers that assist the library, e.g., volunteers who mend library materials, people who deliver materials to homebound residents, program presenters, etc. This tradition can continue year-to-year, acknowledging a different corps of volunteers each year.

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Unfortunately, like marriages, difficulties can arise in the three-way relationship between the Friends, the director, and the trustees. It might be beneficial to have the equivalent of a prenuptial agreement. In this context, a prenuptial agreement is called a memorandum of understanding. “It is essential that all parties in this arrangement understand the responsibilities and the limits of their roles. Frequent, clear, open communication about needs and expectations is the key to a successful partnership between the Board, the director, and the Friends of the Library”. (Nichols and Smith Aldrich, p. 83).

In the *Handbook for Connecticut Library Friends* (p. 29), the authors state the items the Friends and library administration need to agree upon when developing this type of operating agreement:

- Initiatives the Friends will support
- Disbursement of money raised by the Friends
- Support the library will give to the Friends (e.g., space, supplies, staff time)
- Role of the Friends as advocates for the library
- Role and responsibility of the Friends in planning and presenting programs

The Memorandum of Understanding should be signed by all parties and reviewed on a regular basis (e.g., every three years or when the Friends officers change). A sample Memorandum of Understanding is included in the appendix of the Libraries Need Friends Toolkit from United for Libraries. Another useful resource is Fact Sheet #27, “When Friends Aren’t Friendly,” from United for Libraries.

Gathering the stakeholders annually to review the library’s long-range plan, the library’s budget, and the Friends support for the coming year goes a long way to maintain a good working relationship. The Friends officers and its Liaison to the Board of Trustees should outline the group’s projected plan of work to the library administration and ask for consensus on the proposed efforts of the Friends.

**Banking and Financial Procedures**

Immediately following the elections, the new officers need to complete the paperwork for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). Do not be confused: if the Friends never, ever, hire an employee, this number is a requirement to establish a bank account for the Friends.

Visit the Internal Revenue Service’s website, United States Department of the Treasury, 2016, at www.irs.gov to review IRS Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number. There is no charge and the EIN is issued immediately. The group needs to supply:

- Legal name: what the group is called in the by-laws
- Mailing address: use the library’s mailing address
Establish the group’s bank accounts under the Friends legal name. The Friends treasurer, the Friends president, and as a safeguard, the library’s accountant, should be registered signers on the accounts. Both a checking account and a saving account are advisable. Many Friends groups deposit their dues revenue into a checking account for ease of paying operating costs. Select a financial institution where these transactions can be conveniently handled by the Friends officers.

The library may have New York State tax exempt status. Friends groups in New York State also need to apply for recognition as a tax exempt organization. Use the ST-119.2 form, Application for an Exempt Organization Certificate. (New York State Department of Taxation and Finance: www.tax.ny.gov/forms) The application requires the following:

- Signature of a Friends officer and title
- Copy of the Friends by-laws
- The Friends’ EIN

If the Friends are not a 501(c)(3) and have no determination letter from the IRS, additional items must be provided (see the form’s instructions concerning line 11; there are also notes on what not to send, e.g., copy of a bank statement): a statement of activities; a statement of receipts and expenditures (an sample to follow is given); and a statement of assets and liabilities (also see the sample provided).

The Friends will be issued form ST-119.1 for their records once they successfully complete the application process. The Friends use the form to have sales tax waived as long as the purchase is by cash or the Friends credit card or check. The shopper cannot use a personal check or personal credit/debit card to make a tax-exempt purchase, even if the person is going to be reimbursed by the Friends.

Form ST119.1 is completed by the Friends treasurer and then photocopied as needed. Purchasers give the form to vendors when buying items. Some stores have various ways of handling tax-exempt purchases; check with customer service for the procedures. For example, Walmart creates a local file and provides a card to show to the cashier at point of purchase, while Staples requires registration with corporate headquarters and issues an identification card.

**Using Funds Raised by the Friends**

“It is a tough thing when Friends begin to think that it’s ‘their’ money and they can do whatever they want with it. They are actually trustees of the money that is raised on behalf of the LIBRARY! In fact, I believe that Friends are breaching faith with their donors who believe their money will go toward library needs as defined by the library – not sitting in a bank account.” (Retrieved from listserv correspondence of Sally Gardner Reed at statefriends@lists.ala.org)
The Friends of the Library are an independent group that handles its own funds. The Friends Board, the library director, and library’s trustees need to discuss how monies will be expended to best meet the needs of the library and a schedule of disbursement, e.g., quarterly or annually. Staff members may make written requests for funding to the Friends President, Treasurer, Staff Liaison and/or Library Director no less than two weeks prior to next Friends meeting. Alternately, the library director may regularly draft a prioritized wish list of library needs with input from the library staff and trustees. In either case, the Friends will report the outcome of the vote to appropriate parties.

Consider establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on Friends’ expenditures comprised of the Friends President, Treasurer, an active member of the group, and the Friends Staff Liaison to develop a procedure for spending decisions. One strategy may be to use the annual membership dues for the basic operating expenses and depositing all other proceeds from book sales and other fund-raisers in a savings account to draw upon for library needs as they are requested.

All parties should discuss the library’s long-term needs rather than planning to pay bills month to month. The Friends may say no to some requests. Do the Friends see a need they would like to address? For instance, they might notice that the planters by the library’s front entrance could use flowers. The Friends could decide to take this step as a beautification project.

The extreme scenario is the Friends Board opts to retain raised monies. If the group has 501(c)(3) status, the Board needs to be aware of the tax laws governing nonprofits as there may be tax consequences to holding a large nest egg. United for Libraries recommends that Friends organizations “divest themselves of approximately 80-100% of the funds they raise each year (minus operating costs) by giving the money to the library.” (United for Libraries 2016, Fact Sheet #22, “Guidelines for Giving.”)

**Guidelines for Expenditures**

When the Friends discuss their fund-raising projects and the expenditure of their monies, the mission of the group should always guide the use of the funds for the library. Supporting extra services, programs, equipment, and furnishings outside of the scope of the library’s annual operating budget will strengthen the library’s offerings to the community.

The Friends should discuss broad categories of expenditures and possibly prioritize how to disburse funds as requests are received. Here are some items generally funded by Friends groups:

- Programs for all ages (i.e., honorariums, consumable supplies, refreshments, door prizes, etc.)
- Equipment purchases for public use (i.e., public access computers, 3D printer)
- Equipment to enhance the library’s environment (e.g., literature racks, bookcases, program sign board, memorial plaque, shopping baskets, laminating machine for signage, self-serve coffee machine, etc.)
- Materials for the library’s collections or its maintenance (e.g., audiobooks, DVD collection, disc inspection and repair equipment, subscriptions for e-book downloads)
- Promotional items to be sold as fund-raisers (e.g., canvas tote bags, T-shirts)
- Recognitions, thank you gifts, or contributions to receptions for individual Friends members or staff for outstanding service (e.g., books donated to the collection in honor of a volunteer, retirement
gifts). Examples of covered expenses include party refreshments for a gathering of teen volunteers; customized candy bars for book discussion leaders; key rings for volunteers whose role is to provide delivery of library materials to shut-ins. These gifts generally cost less than $5 per person.

- Nominal registration fees, meals, and mileage for attendance by Friends officers or appointed representatives of the Friends at library conferences or the state library association’s advocacy day in the state’s capitol
- Supplies for Friends’ projects and fundraisers (e.g., flowers for landscaping, book sale publicity, canopy rental for the Friends’ booth at community events)

The Friends will also need to discuss potential purchases that they might not cover:

- Supply costs (e.g., general office supplies, craft supplies, photocopying, printing, toner cartridges), unless these items are used by the Friends (e.g., copier paper and toner to produce Friends membership fliers and newsletters, postage)
- Gifts for individual volunteers for regularly offered services unless as recognition for service of a group of volunteers
- Accommodations in conjunction with library conferences or lobbying efforts
- Equipment for staff use in the work room area (e.g., printers, task chairs)

These guidelines should be adopted by the Friends and presented to the library’s Board of Trustees for their information. Guidelines assist both the staff and the Friends Board in decision-making. Periodically review the guidelines; any changes or amendments should be communicated to the library director and trustees.

**Consideration of Becoming a 501(c)(3)**

At some point, the Friends may want to apply for tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), also known as 501(c)(3) status, in order to receive charitable contributions. The nonprofit status is not necessarily a first step for a Friends group just starting out. A group may function for many years without truly needing this designation if the membership dues for all donors are just $5. A Friends organization may be urged by the library’s administration to make this application to the IRS. Some libraries must show proof of 501(c)(3) status in order to apply for and receive government grants; the Friends can be the “agent” for those grants. If the Friends choose to seek tax-exempt status, all the work done so far will ease the way. The organization’s by-laws, EIN, and financial records all must be in place to begin this process.

The Friends would first need to become incorporated as a not-for-profit group, which will require the expertise of an attorney with broad knowledge of nonprofit law. The 501(c)(3) process itself can be expensive (requiring a filing fee with the IRS of several hundred dollars). Depending on the assets of the Friends group, the application can be done with careful planning by a dedicated volunteer such as the Friends treasurer or a library staff member. Review IRS Form 1023, Application for Recognition of Exemption, as an initial step in the application process.

Once established as a nonprofit, there are reporting forms to the Internal Revenue Service and New York State Charities Bureau, called 990s. (New York State, Office of the Attorney General, 2012). Some Friends groups have a tax preparer or accountant complete these forms, but this annual accounting can also be done by a volunteer. Filing these forms annually is vital to maintaining 501(c)(3) status with the IRS.
There is an alternative for Friends organizations is to apply for nonprofit status on their own. The New York Library Association has developed a program that assists smaller Friends groups (with a minimum of ten members) to join forces with NYLA, coming under the association’s 501(c)(3) umbrella. This Administrative Support Services program is just one way NYLA strives to accommodate the important work Friends groups provide in their local communities. (See “NYLA Administrative Support Services for Friends of Libraries Groups.” in Appendix D.)

**Success!**

One might say a successful group would have a steady hand at the helm led by a capable president with assistance and encouragement from the library director, trustees, and staff. A successful group would have an engaged corps of officers and volunteers. There would be careful delegation of tasks along with regular, concerted efforts to involve the volunteers in the life of the library.

At a regional meeting of Friends groups, I put forth this question: What makes a Friends group “successful?” I passed around a graffiti sheet and suggested people write quick note responses. Here are some of the replies:

- Using the talents of the members to contribute toward activities
- Continued advocacy and fund-raising
- Working for the benefit of all age groups
- People are valued for their individual contributions
- Taking pride in contributing significantly to the library

It was interesting to see similar threads pointing to the heart of these groups: talented members, whose individual contributions are welcomed and recognized, working together for a common cause. No one mentioned having “a large number of members.” Success sounded a lot more like teamwork with a common goal to serve the community. I couldn’t agree more!

**References**


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<th>Reference</th>
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<td>Reed, S. G. (2012). Libraries need friends: A toolkit to create friends</td>
<td><a href="http://www.alan.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/friends/orgtools/libraries-need-friends.pdf">http://www.alan.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/friends/orgtools/libraries-need-friends.pdf</a></td>
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Appendix A
Where Can I Learn More About Friends Groups?
Resources about Friends of Libraries


At a time when budgets are getting cut, public libraries are seeing an increase in demand for services. Douglas County (MN) Library librarian Karen Simmons is especially grateful to volunteers and the Friends who make her job easier. The Friends Vice President explains how the organization supports the library through an annual book sale and a used bookstore.


Organizational tools for Friends Groups include a sample operating agreement and a document on understanding the roles of Friends, trustees, and directors. A free webinar on how to start a Friends of the Library group (2013) is available for viewing at http://www.ala.org/united/training/webinars. Under the “Resources for…” tab, select Friends groups. On the left sidebar, check out their fact sheets http://www.ala.org/united/friends/factsheets on more than two dozen topics such as forming a Teen Friends Group (#5); Getting and Keeping Members (#17); and the distinct roles of the Friends (#10) and trustees (#11). Parts of the United for Libraries website are open to the general public and parts are only accessible to members by password.


This site is a book sale resource. Click on a state and find book sales, ongoing sales in libraries, and library bookstores. Libraries may list traditional book sales at no cost. This specific extension goes to sales in Upstate New York. Includes dates, hours, size of sale, pricing, and more.

Dolnick, S. (2004). The essential Friends of Libraries: Fast facts, forms, and tips. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions. The subtitle says it all! The entries in this easy-to-use dictionary are entitled “Fast Facts for Friends in a Hurry.” The book includes a CD with 75 forms, guidelines, and sample easily customizable documents in MS Word format. Entries are cross-referenced to related topics and linked to the CD. Topics include finances, legal aspects of Friends groups (e.g., incorporation), programs, committees, raffles, and volunteer management.

Dolnick, S. (1996). Getting organized. In S. Dolnick (ed.) Friends of Libraries Sourcebook (3rd ed., pp. 27-41). Chicago, IL: American Library Association. Expert advice from a former executive director of United for Libraries and one of the few titles to address the needs of academic, school, and special library Friends groups. Well indexed, with many examples of case studies (noted as “Focus”) and graphics from Friends groups around the country. Although geared to large and multi-branch libraries, most ideas are scalable. Sample letters, brochures, publicity, and fund-raising activities. In general, still quite useful even 20 years later, although exercise caution about the chapters on the IRS nonprofit rules and the computer advice.

Watch *50 nifty ideas - A webinar for Friends,* presented February 7, 2013 by Deborah Hohler and Faye Roberts. Download the archived slides. The site also includes basic ideas on fund-raising, recruiting, and special projects, plus links to other agencies’ websites.


This statewide organization supports Friends groups and exemplifies what FLS/NYLA wants to be when it grows up! The website includes “rich content” of value to all Friends groups. You will be “surfing” for hours with this as your starting point. Be certain to look at “Resources for Friends,” a collection of hotlinks on book sales, fund-raising, by-laws, volunteers, and advocacy. The calendar of book sales and used book stores all over Connecticut is a thing of beauty! Be sure to look at the *Handbook for Connecticut Library Friends* (August 2006) [http://foclib.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Handbook-for-CT-library-friends.pdf](http://foclib.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Handbook-for-CT-library-friends.pdf) and a valuable table entitled “Working Together” which outline roles and responsibilities of the library director, trustees, and Friends. The *Handbook* is 80 pages long, well written, with information your group needs to start; an absolutely invaluable resource! Be certain to read pages 8-9 for planning steps and a sample agenda for an invitational meeting of your core group of supporters and pages 16-19 for step-by-step instructions to develop the agenda for the first public meeting. (These two resources are also on WebJunction. See OCLC entry.)


The Friends of Saint Paul Public Library is one of the nation’s premier Friends organizations, with over 3,000 members. Founded in 1945, The Friends of the Saint Paul (MN) Public Library did things so well and marketed themselves so widely, everyone wanted to know their planning techniques for book sales and more. So they started their own consulting group, Library Strategies, to provide services (at a cost) to library support organizations. The site has hotlinks to ALA toolkits, suggestions for coalition building and fund-raising, and a downloadable tip sheet, *Donor relations for libraries.*


LTA has been the statewide organization for New York public library trustees since 1949. Its expansive database of New York public library policies (more than 3,000 items) has current samples to use as models and best practices to consider. Policies are searchable by multiple criteria, e.g., area served (municipal, special district, school district library). Topics range from collection development, social media, by-laws, and long-range plans.


The MHLS site provides an assortment of resources for trustees and Friends of the Library and offers local Friends groups staff consultation on by-laws and policies, long-range planning, and advocacy. The goal is to make library Friends “viable, vital, and visible” in the community. The links provide much to consider, such as samples of Friends groups’ brochures, a Board policy on Friends, fund-raising resources, and volunteer management. The *Friends Group resources* page has links to notes from the System’s Friends Support Group discussions.


Getting Started: Creating and Sustaining a Friends Group

2015 (vol. 63, no. 3). On the Career Resources tab, select Sample Policies, Procedures and Forms to view examples of policies collected from various libraries in New York State.


Originally founded in 1992 as the Empire Friends Roundtable of the New York Library Association, the Friends of Libraries Section (FLS) has been the statewide voice of Friends of Libraries groups for more than 20 years. FLS is a volunteer support organization assisting libraries of all types across the Empire State, helping promote the value of local Friends of the Library groups as advocates in their communities.

Check here for current program offerings at the NYLA Annual Conference and archived presentations and handouts. Locate information on joining FLS, the Section’s current officers, election information, and awards. Under “Publications” see the archives of the current and past newsletters with itemized content lists. Of particular interest, “Annual Reports: Tell Your Story!” (*Empire Friends: News and Notes*, issue no. 56, Spring 2014, p 1, 7,); “What’s So Scary About a Memorandum of Understanding?” (issue no. 57, Fall 2014, p.5-6.); “Cutting Edge Technology in Your Library” (March 2015, vol. 1, #2, p.5.); several articles on planning for National Friends of Libraries Week (held annually in October).


Friends groups that have received 501(c)(3) status from the IRS and plan to solicit contributions must register with the Charities Bureau and follow its reporting requirements. The Attorney General’s Charities Bureau is responsible for supervising charitable organizations to protect donors and beneficiaries of those charities. The Bureau also oversees the activity of foundations and other charities to ensure that their funds and other property devoted to charitable purposes are properly used. The Bureau works to protect the public interest in charitable gifts and bequests contained in wills and trust agreements. The website includes a section of FAQs and links to guides, publications, and helpful websites. A search function locates registered charities and fund-raising professionals. Financial reports of active charities in New York State are posted in PDF format. Site has statutes and regulations governing charities in New York State and links to New York State laws regarding not-for-profit corporations. Revised in February 2015, the guide “Procedures for Forming and Changing a New York Not-for-Profit Corporation” is posted on [www.charitiesnys.com/guides_advice_new.jsp](http://www.charitiesnys.com/guides_advice_new.jsp) as a PDF.


The Act applies to any nonprofit organization incorporated in New York State that solicits charitable contributions within the State. Nonprofit organizations need to review their by-laws and policies to
implement the changes (e.g., adopt a Conflict of Interest policy). For additional information on the Nonprofit Revitalization Act and libraries, visit NYLA’s site at:

All the key players provided assistance in preparing this book: the Division of Library Development of the New York State Library, the Library Trustees Association, and the Public Library Systems Directors Organization of New York (PULISDO). A section is devoted to Library Friends and foundations emphasizing communication (e.g., appointing a Trustee Liaison to the Friends), written policies (operating agreement), and joint planning sessions.

Offers free library-specific courses for staff, friends, and trustees. The page pulls together resources from several state libraries and contains several full-text booklets in PDF format. Topics include fundraising strategies, trustees and Friends, advocacy, and marketing. A weekly feature *The social library* highlights amazing programs from libraries that WebJunction follows on Facebook. Take a tour of these social media resources – you’ll glean tons of ideas for programs and library services the Friends could offer to your community!

The Pro Bono Partnership site provides free business and transactional legal services to nonprofit organizations serving the disadvantaged or enhancing the quality of life in neighborhoods in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The website indicates they specifically serve the lower NY Hudson Valley, but other groups may make inquiries (see “Client qualifications”). A Nonprofit FAQs section provides answers to frequently asked questions unique to nonprofits, including incorporation. The Partnership charges a flat fee to assist a group with incorporation and tax exemption applications. The Pro Bono Partnership’s 2014 presentation and handouts on legal issues for Friends organizations at the NYLA Annual Conference in Saratoga Springs are archived at www.nyla.org/friends

Links to the RCLS Member Library Friends Groups go directly to the individual groups’ websites, many with contact information for officers, membership forms, dues, meeting times, and activities.

Flipping through this title, one idea is more arresting and exciting than the next! Strategic plans, “member-raising” tips, planning for advocacy, bookselling, and community outreach efforts are just some of the topics. For both new and established Friends groups.

A concise article on the basics, from the decision to establish a Friends group through membership recruitment. A useful starting point. See Appendix B for a sample operating agreement (Memorandum of Understanding). This toolkit is also included in its entirety in Reed’s 101+ great ideas.

A “recipe book” for success: financially rewarding and fun ideas for any group to utilize. Step-by-step instructions will help Friends replicate the ideas compiled from groups’ submissions about high profile programs, advocacy campaigns, increasing memberships, and efficient group operations. Includes examples of by-laws, missions, and duties of officers.


United for Libraries: Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, a division of the American Library Association. (2016). Retrieved from www.ala.org/united. Organizational tools for Friends Groups include a sample operating agreement and a document on understanding the roles of Friends, trustees, and directors. A free webinar on how to start a Friends of the Library group (2013) is available for viewing at http://www.ala.org/united/training/webinars. Under the “Resources for…” tab, select Friends groups. On the left sidebar, check out their Fact Sheets http://www.ala.org/united/friends/factsheets on more than two dozen topics such as forming a Teen Friends Group (#5); Getting and Keeping Members (#17); and the distinct roles of the Friends (#10) and trustees (#11). Parts of the United for Libraries website are open to the general public and parts are only accessible to members by password.

United States. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service. (2016). Retrieved from www.irs.gov Under “State Links,” access to IRS offices in each state for charities and nonprofits’ regulations, tax filing, and business filing information. Find here IRS Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number (also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number). The IRS encourages online applications; there is no charge and the EIN is issued immediately. If the Friends choose to seek tax-exempt status, use Form 1023, Application for Recognition of Exemption (which is also part of the 501(c)(3) application process).


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Appendix B

Annotated By-Laws
What Should Be Included In By-Laws For Friends Organizations?

What are by-laws?
Robert’s Rules of Order states “Having a constitution and by-laws as separate documents is not necessary; one document suffices, generally referred to as the by-laws.” By-laws are an organizing document, a formal statement defining the primary characteristics of the organization, how it operates and is governed, and the relationship of the members to the organization as a whole. By-laws contain a concise statement of purpose. By-laws state what rights the members have, who has power to make decisions, and the limits of that power. These key operational procedures and rules of the organization cannot be changed without previous notice to all the members and require a large majority for the vote. It is not within the purview of the officers to change the by-laws at a monthly Board meeting.

Before you begin
Consult a new edition of Robert’s Rules of Order. The “simplified and applied” editions devote considerable coverage to constructing one of the most important documents of the organization. By-laws are legal documents and there are legal requirements for what should be included. The New York State Nonprofit Revitalization Act (NPRA) of 2013 has specified language and other considerations for by-laws for nonprofit organizations. For example, “committees of the board” has replaced “standing committees;” the Executive Committee or Finance Committee are examples. Other language includes “committees of the corporation,” e.g., nominating committee, program committee, membership committee. The NPRA also outlines rules for electronic communications, meetings, and voting by e-mail. As a nonprofit board, the Friends will need to adopt a conflict of interest policy.

If you wish to incorporate your Friends group as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation at a later date, the by-laws will need to be in place for that process. Incorporation of a Friends group is not required, but the process can lead to advantages for fund-raising. Contributors to nonprofit groups are able to deduct donations from their income tax if the group has been granted tax-exempt status by the IRS. Consult with the library’s attorney or an attorney with experience in the area of nonprofit law about the advantages and responsibilities for nonprofit organizations. There are very specific requirements for obtaining tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service.

The organization should not need to go through a by-laws change every time a new membership category is established or a new committee is appointed. It is best to make the by-laws as basic, concise, and flexible as possible. Broad, general statements like “the Executive Board will meet once a month” will serve better than stating “the second Tuesday of every month,” given that the officers may change and have a conflict with a proscribed date. Too many details may require more frequent amendments to the by-laws.

All interested parties should have an opportunity to review the by-laws and make comments. If the Friends group is just beginning, the steering committee may write a draft, make it available for review (i.e. at the library or online), and then present it at the inaugural meeting of the Friends. Drafts should be sent to the library director and the library’s Board of Trustees before they are formally adopted by the Friends membership.
These samples of by-laws for the Friends of the Library contain comments to explain some of the nuances of language, sequence of the information, and sometimes cautionary notes. They are illustrative only and not a complete set of by-laws.

Name of the Organization, Purpose, and Mission
The official name that is used on your legal documents (e.g., certificate of incorporation, application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status) needs to agree, document to document. Be careful with your name: is it THE Friends of the Idyllic Free Library, or just “Friends of Idyllic Free Library”? Is there a THE before the library’s name? That is, “Friends of the Anytown Public Library” or “Friends of Anytown Public Library”? Use the library’s proper name, i.e., not just “Anytown Library”. The organization’s purpose and mission will guide future decisions on planning, programming, and spending the Friends funds. It defines who will be served by the group. The purpose should reflect long-term support for the library (rather than “raising funds for a new library building”).

By-Laws of the Friends of the Anytown Public Library

Article I: Name
The name of the organization shall be known as “Friends of the Anytown Public Library,” hereafter referred to as the “Friends.”

Article II: Purpose
The Friends is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable purposes, in general, as set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as now in effect or hereafter amended. The purpose of the Friends shall be to maintain an organization of persons interested in libraries, to encourage and receive funds for the benefit of the Anytown Public Library (“the Library”), and to support and cooperate with the Library in developing library services and facilities for the community.

Article III: Mission
The Friends of the Anytown Public Library supports cultural and educational programs for the community and assists the library with special projects and purchases not covered by the library’s operating budget.

Members
The by-laws indicate who can join the organization, what the membership categories are, how to join (e.g., pay dues), the duration of the membership year, and any privileges afforded to the members. The amount of membership dues should not be included. Considerations: do you want to accommodate rolling registrations or only bill members once a year for their memberships? If your book sale offers a preview night for members, if people join on April 15, will their memberships go only through August 31 (the next billing period in four months) or through the following fiscal year?

Article IV: Members
Section 1: Eligibility. Membership is open to any individual, family, organization, or business that has indicated their willingness to be involved in the Friends program by paying their membership dues.
Section 2: Dues. There shall be a membership fee established by the Board of Directors for each class of membership covering the fiscal year of September 1 through August 31. Friends joining after May 1 shall be members for the following fiscal year.
Section 3: Privileges. Members shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Friends Board of Directors.

Governing Body: Officers, the Executive Board, and Committees
What officers will the group have (e.g. president or chairman)? How will they be chosen and what are their terms of office? Help the Board be self-perpetuating with staggered terms and limits for length of service. How many people will serve on the Board of Directors? The attendant duties and their general responsibilities should be outlined (e.g., attend each meeting). How will vacancies be filled? The nomination and election process needs to be detailed along with committees.

Do not include the personal names of the officers. Rather than outline full job duties in the by-laws, other documents, like a Leadership Manual, can contain the operating details of the Friends group (e.g., officers’ and committee chairs’ job descriptions, a procedural manual for the book sale, any guide for day-to-day operations).

Article V. Officers and Elections
Section 1: The officers of the Friends shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
Section 2. Officers shall be nominated by a nominating committee of no fewer than three members appointed by the Executive Board at least two months before the Annual Meeting. With the consent of each nominee, the nominations shall be submitted in writing to the membership at least one month prior to the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee.
Section 3. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of those present at the Annual Meeting, for the term of two years, commencing upon election. An officer may not hold the same office for more than two successive terms.
Section 4. All requests for withdrawal from office prior to the end of the term should be submitted in writing to the Executive Board. The Executive Board may appoint a person to serve out the unexpired term of an office rendered vacant. Any officer, upon leaving office, must relinquish all documentation, monies, and other properties to his/her successor.

Article VI. Executive Board
Section 1: The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the organization and the chairpersons of committees of the corporation. The Library Director shall serve or appoint a staff designee as an ex-officio member of the Executive Board without voting privileges.
Section 2: The Executive Board meetings to conduct the business of the Friends are held in accordance with a schedule approved at the annual membership meeting.
Section 3: The Executive Board shall transact business by a majority vote of the members present.
Section 4. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum. A quorum will be required to approve all financial and business transactions of the organization.

Meetings
The by-laws do not note the meeting calendar dates for a specific year; the location does not need to be specified. They do outline how the meetings are scheduled, to whom they are open, and what notice must be given.
Article VII. Annual and Special Meetings
Section 1. An Annual Meeting open to the general membership shall be held each year, at a time to be determined by the Executive Board, for the purpose of electing officers as scheduled and hearing reports on the business of the organization from the previous year. Members shall be notified in writing at least one month prior to the date of the meeting. Voting at the Annual Meeting is open to each paid membership.
Section 2. Special Meetings may be called at any time by the President, by any three members of the Executive Board, or by fifteen members of the organization for the purpose of conducting business.

Fiscal Matters
The fiscal year needs to be defined, along with auditing procedures and how financial matters will be conducted. Research what state requirements apply to the financial governance of nonprofits.

Article VIII. Fiscal Year and Finances
Section 1. The fiscal year of the organization shall be concurrent with that of the Anytown Public Library. A budget for the fiscal year shall be approved by the Executive Board prior to the year's commencement.
Section 2. No officer, committee, task force, or individual member shall incur any expenses on behalf of the Friends unless duly authorized by the Executive Board.
Section 3. The official financial records of the organization shall be maintained at the Anytown Public Library. The Friends accounts are subject to the audit practices of the Library.
Section 4. The Treasurer shall present a financial status report and a budget status report at each Executive Board meeting.

Parliamentary Authority and Amendments
What rules will be followed in official meetings? How are the by-laws amended?

Article IX: Parliamentary Authority
In all instances when they are applicable and not inconsistent with the by-laws and any other special rules the organization shall adopt, the rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of this organization.

Article X: Amendments
The proposed amendments may be ratified at the annual meeting of the general membership, by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the persons present who are eligible to vote. Each paid member shall be notified in writing one month prior to the meeting at which the voting is to take place and provided with a copy of the proposed changes to the by-laws with recommendations from the Executive Board.

Dissolution Statement
What happens to the organization's assets if the organization disbands? Where would the funds go? This provision is required by law.

Article XI: Dissolution
In the event of a dissolution of the Friends, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed to the Anytown Public...
Library or, if at the time of dissolution, the Anytown Public Library is no longer in existence, then said assets shall be distributed to an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code upon majority vote of the Executive Board members present at the last meeting of the Friends. Further, no member of the Friends shall be entitled to share in any assets upon dissolution of the organization.

By-laws should be reviewed annually to make certain they accurately reflect the current way of work for the Friends. A task force may be appointed by the Executive Board to review the document, looking for points that are no longer relevant or detailed statements that could be generalized. Proposed changes are brought to the full Board of Directors for discussion. Ask a parliamentarian and an attorney with experience in nonprofit law to review your proposed changes. The by-laws are then amended by a vote of the members at the annual meeting.

Always keep a hard copy of the current by-laws. The original date of the adoption of the by-laws for the organization should be noted, followed by the date(s) of any revisions. The latest official by-laws should be signed by the current Board President and Secretary. Every board member should receive a copy of the current by-laws for their own reference. Consider posting your by-laws on the Friends website.

Resources:
Sample by-laws can be found on the United for Libraries website:  
http://www.alav.org/united/friends/orgtools/samplebylaws


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Appendix C

“Membership-Raising”
Tips about Memberships for Friends Organizations

Growing membership support for the Friends is just as vital as fund-raising. Membership is pivotal in creating a base for activities and a source of operating income. Membership building happens by establishing a relationship with the community and library users. It is necessary to constantly recruit new people into the organization, especially community leaders.

**Membership dues** should be kept affordable to attract the largest number of participants while still covering expenses and providing operating funds. Many organizations set up categories of membership with different rates for individuals, students, seniors, families and businesses.

**Make it easy to join.** The bulk of Friends members are library patrons. Post signs in the building. Keep Friends membership brochures in the library’s literature racks and in holders on the public services desks (i.e., circulation counter, reference desk). The staff does not have time to make these photocopies at a moment’s notice; help the staff help a potential member of the Friends by having a good supply of the membership brochures there at the desk. A Friends volunteer can be assigned to regularly check the quantities and restock the forms as part of their volunteer duties. Not having forms can make it difficult for the patron, who has to remember to join and may not have the ability to download a form off the library’s website. Some people will make the effort, but most won’t. Strike while the interest is high—hand them a form! The “personal ask” is vital: encourage staff members to ask “Are you a member of the Friends?”

There are a wide variety of ways to attract new members:

- Solicit members at all library programs, for all ages, if the Friends underwrite the programs. Whether it’s an author reception or a toddler storytime, a Friends volunteer should have Friends brochures in quantity to hand out to audience members.
- Identify Friends members at library events with a button or sticker: “I’m a Friend of the Library.”
- Tap into “all residents” mailings by the town or school district by including an article about the Friends, their activities and accomplishments, and how to join.
- Hold an open house at the library, hosted by the Friends, with a membership table.
- Place Friends membership forms in library materials as they are checked out.
- Buy a display ad in the high school yearbook or other student publications (e.g., theatre or sports programs).
- Send a mass mailing to all residents. A town-wide mailing could include a Friends membership form, a list of upcoming events at the library, and a cover letter asking for assistance, itemizing volunteer opportunities (“where we need help”).
- Have a “members only” pre-sale event for the book sale and sell memberships for admission to those folks who have not joined yet.
- Promote the organization at Friends social events.
- Participate in community groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, service groups, Welcome Wagon, and Newcomer’s Club.
- Contact participants in Friends raffles with membership literature – ask for a mailing address on the raffle form.
- Design bookmarks with a message about the Friends and distribute them at the library’s circulation desk.
- Include a message from the Friends on the bottom of printed date due receipts.
- Ask local merchants to include Friends membership information in their mailings and place of business. Have Friends literature at a variety of community locations (e.g., the town recreation center).
- Send speakers to other community groups whenever possible to talk about the library and Friends membership (e.g., Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, merchant organizations). Build credibility: take along a packet with membership forms for everyone, a goals statement on Friends stationery, a sample newsletter, and the Friends annual report.
- Submit press releases regularly to the local media. Constantly stress the benefits of membership and the Friends active involvement in making the library a better institution for the whole community.
- Publish a Friends annual report. The report should itemize the group’s accomplishments and outline goals for the next year. Remember to send it to the Town Council, local and state legislators, the school superintendent, Board of Education members, other “movers and shakers” in the community, and of course, the local newspaper, along with a membership brochure!
- Have a column in the Friends newsletter to say “Welcome New Members!” and list their names. Always include a standard paragraph in the newsletter about joining the Friends and links to membership forms on the library’s website. Encourage “recycling” the newsletter to other family and neighbors.

A law in NYS requires school districts to distribute information to students about the public library and applications for a library card. This information is to be given annually to every student entering kindergarten, grade six, and grade nine, and to all new students in the district regardless of their grade. This literature is to be available at all times in the school library for students and their parents. Make sure information about the Friends of the Library is included in the brochure that outlines the library’s services and programs.

**Membership drives**, with a table in the library staffed by Friends volunteers, should be held several times a year, focusing on peak times for the library (e.g., sign up days for summer reading program). Offer an incentive prize or raffle basket that only new members can enter to win.

**Keeping in touch** with your members on a regular basis is important. This effort can be accomplished through a newsletter, an annual report of Friends activities, or postcards announcing special events. Library staff should help plan member recognition events. Volunteers need to receive regular attention and credit for their work.

**Incentives, perks, or “deliverables”**—whatever they are called, everyone likes to receive something for their donation. There should always be benefits to Friends membership that can be anything from a “members only” book sale preview to discounts on book bags. A donation at a higher level (e.g., $50) might receive a free canvas book bag. Does your membership form or website answer “Why should I join?”
In general, so much of the membership literature of Friends of the Library organizations focuses on “what the Friends do for the library” and sometimes “what we do for the community.” Furniture purchases, technology, movie licenses, and programs for all ages top the lists. Far fewer brochures outline benefits for members of the Friends. Make sure potential members know their involvement can be rewarding in many ways!

**Some ideas for perks for becoming a Friend:**

- Free admission and early bird buying privileges at book sales (“Friends only” night)
- A monthly (or quarterly) newsletter and notices of upcoming events
- A book donated to the collection in the member’s name for a $25-50 contribution with a bookplate recognizing that member
- A discount on purchases in the Friends bookstore. What about other discounts? e.g., a Friends member price for book bags; if you hold a golf tournament fund-raiser, can Friends members play for a reduced fee?
- Participate in social and cultural events. Joining the Friends will provide the chance to meet fellow community residents with the same mission to help the library, support literacy, and insure information access for the community.
- Opportunities to volunteer for fund-raisers, landscape the library’s grounds, serve in a leadership capacity, lead book discussions, or deliver materials to homebound patrons
- Membership contribution is tax-deductible **if the group has its 501(c)(3) status**
- Member’s name published in the Friends annual report
- Borrowing benefits (e.g., an extra title loaned from the library’s best sellers collection, reduced reserve fees for materials loaned from other libraries)
- A coupon for a free book once a year at the Friends’ book sale or store
- Discounts at local businesses by showing a Friends membership card
- Used Book Sale Search Service for Friends: specific books, works by a certain author, or books on a particular subject are located for members

**Membership Renewals:** Keep the momentum going and make it easy to renew! The more times the member sees your message, the more likely they will renew. If you have a newsletter that is mailed, mark the membership renewal date on the mailing label. Consider including a self-addressed envelope in the renewal notice. Ask Friends officers to add a handwritten, personal note to the letter to those members who have lapsed, “We miss you.” Always send second notices as a follow-up: one renewal letter is not enough. If space, thank renewing members in your newsletter and list them by name.

**Up-to-date record keeping is essential** to maintain good relations with members. It is embarrassing to receive a phone call: “You deposited my check, but I haven’t received a receipt” (or a newsletter or a book bag or whatever the perk might be). It is vital to acknowledge the receipt of dues quickly and is required by law if the Friends group is a nonprofit organization.

**Your Friends Group Can Do This, Too!**
Friends of the Oxford Library (FOLIO) in Connecticut have a community of less than 15,000 residents to draw upon for support. The Friends had diminishing membership numbers and they were able to turn it all around within a year.

Here are some of the things they did; note that nearly every one of these ideas did not cost anything:

- Regularly updated the Friends Facebook account which features library programs (“likes” increased 85%).
- created an e-mail database of members
- built relationships with the local media to regularly cover library activities
- held an art contest for elementary students and sponsored an art show for high school students with an opening reception gala for family and friends
- reinstated their Junior Friends program
- developed a “Corporate Friends” category of membership for local businesses to support the library

Resources:


*Originally written by Geoffrey Meek for “Library Friends: How to Form or Revitalize a Library Support Group” (1995). The booklet was a companion manual to a video program created and produced by the Empire Friends Roundtable, based on the “Friends Workshop Road Show” by Geoffrey Meek. Editing and additional updated content provided by Lisa C. Wemett, Friends of Libraries Section, New York Library Association, 2015. All rights reserved.*
Appendix D

NYLA Administrative Support Services
for Friends of Libraries Groups

From NYLA Web Site

Many libraries in NYS receive support from volunteers organized together into Friends of the Library groups. These groups vary greatly in their level of organization, volunteer participation, and scope. In order to advance the efforts of Friends groups statewide, the New York Library Association (NYLA) has implemented a new structure of recognizing and supporting Friends of Libraries groups, providing for greater collaboration among the groups, sharing of infrastructure with an established nonprofit organization, and efficiency.

Logistics – How It Works

In order to participate in NYLA’s Administrative Support Services program, a Friends of the Library group must have at least ten individual Friends memberships and become an organizational member of the Friends of Libraries Section of NYLA ($50/Annually). A further requirement is that the library supported by the Friends group must become an organizational member at the appropriate level based on the library’s operating budget. Once the Friends group is enrolled, the dues and donations collected on behalf of the group would be considered tax-deductable under NYLA’s own 501(c)(3) status. For Friends groups with a small number of members who do not want to tackle the step required by the IRS to receive not-for-profit status, this arrangement provides nonprofit status through an established organization.

What the Program Will Provide

Support Services:

- professional support staff to serve all members
- all required accounting services (monthly financial statements, an annual audit, filing of the required IRS 990 form for nonprofits)
- membership database management and tracking with both mail-in and online membership sign-ups and renewals. Dues processing can include personal check, purchase order, or credit card.
- printing and postage for membership renewal notices
- e-mail notifications (“e-blasts”) to all members of the Friends group. This could include the distribution of the group’s electronic newsletter or announcements of Friends events.
- online membership directory
- password-protected online elections for Friends officers
- hosting of a webpage on the NYLA website
- all other benefits afforded to NYLA members (discounts with our featured vendors, NYLA’s bi-monthly online journal, The e-Bulletin, and a weekly online newsletter, “News You Can Use”)

Communications:

- NYLA would provide a participating Friends group with a webpage on the NYLA.org website (optional). A representative of the group would be granted editing rights to the page, along with training on using the webpage’s content management system. Example:

Getting Started: Creating and Sustaining a Friends Group

http://www.nyla.org/APLfriends. (If a Friends group wishes to keep their existing webpage URL or wants to establish a custom URL for the group, those webpages can be configured to “point” to the NYLA-hosted pages.)

- NYLA will gain the ability to message the individual Friends members during advocacy letter writing campaigns. Friends members may choose to participate in this important activity to support libraries statewide.

**Benefit to Friends Groups**

- This model allows the volunteers involved in the Friends of the Library to support their library, focusing their time and energies on more fruitful and fulfilling activities than the administrative tasks of membership database management.
- It supplies easy-to-use tools to facilitate polished communications (for example, a personalized web site for the group and e-mail communications to all members simultaneously as needed).
- The program provides for easy payment and tracking of dues, allowing Friends groups to promote memberships and donations to their group as tax deductible without the additional burden of applying separately for the group’s own tax exempt status with the IRS. Dues are submitted to NYLA via mail (using a personal check or credit card) or online (credit card).

**Initial Participation**

To enroll in this program:

1. a Friends group needs to become an organizational member of the Friends of Libraries Section of NYLA ($50)
2. the library supported by the Friends group must be an library/organizational member of NYLA at the appropriate level (based on their operating budget)
3. the Friends group must submit dues for the a minimum of ten Friends at $10 per member ($100), NYLA’s portion of the joint membership dues outlined below
4. the Friends group must have official bylaws governing their operations in place (NYLA has a template available)
5. a memorandum of understanding (MOU) must be in place between the Friends group and the Library Board of Trustees (NYLA has a template available)

All Friends members submitted at the time of enrollment of this program will receive a renewal date based on the date of the program enrollment.

**After Enrollment**

Participating Friends groups will agree to solicit membership from individuals at pre-set program rates, the “Joint NYLA-Anytown Library Friends” membership rates.

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<tr>
<th>Type /Rate</th>
<th>NYLA Portion</th>
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<td>Student $15 (Maybe)</td>
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Friend members would receive all the standard benefits of NYLA Friend level membership, including automatic enrollment in the Friends of Libraries Section (FLS).

The Friends group can also solicit donations during the enrollment / renewal process.

The treasury of the Friends group would be maintained by NYLA, with all invoices and payments processed through the NYLA office. The Friends group’s treasurer would be required to approve all payments.
Topics Arranged by Type

Starting a Friends Group

Title: Toolkit for Building a Library Friends Group
URL: www.friendstnlibraries.org
Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewers: Jennifer Ohenewah Obeng-Ampomah, Zenab Bello- Osagie
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

The Toolkit for Building a Library Friends group website provides detailed information on creating a friends group. As an overview, this website organizes the information into important sections providing multiple resource links with examples and explanations. The sections assist users in starting up of a friends group; these include a list of the basic needs to begin a friends group followed by information on creating rules and policies within a group. These are essential for the effectiveness of a friends group.

In addition, one of the core activities of friends groups is to raise money for libraries. The site provides information on funding friends groups and fundraiser ideas to help with financial support for the organization. Other pertinent information included drafting annual reports, recruiting members; and formulating membership requirements. Additionally, there are resources to help group creators to form a foundation for their individual friends group.

Title: Libraries Need Friends: A Toolkit to Create Friends Groups or to Revitalize the One You Have
URL: http://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/friends/orgtools/libraries-need-friends.pdf
Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewers: Zenab Bello-Osagie, Jennifer Ohenewah Obeng-Ampomah, Hannah Ricottilli,
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

This site features a Toolkit to aid potential friends' group members on how to efficiently build and/or revive a library friends group. The kit is separated into several parts including benefits, decisions, getting started, going live, and revitalizing your friends group. There are also references for further reading. The website highlights six strong objectives to consider that can assist with empowering group members with handling and confronting issues. These main points include advocacy; fundraising; library promotion and marketing; creation of a library foundation; and the development of a strong library volunteer force.
The site notes that the best library supporters are often parents, staff, and students. Sally Gardner Reed’s suggestions are vital to groups undertaking common problems associated with creating and revitalizing a friends group. It is essential for groups to stay together and grow for the benefit of the libraries. Libraries need their ‘friends’!

### Friends of Public Libraries

**Title:** Starting a Library Friends Group  
**URL:** [https://www.railslibraries.info/members/announce/20150601/94298](https://www.railslibraries.info/members/announce/20150601/94298)  
**Date Visited:** Fall 2015  
**Reviewer:** Samantha Berry  
Information Studies/ English Departments Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

This brief posting on the RAILS (Reaching Across the Illinois Library System) was created by Pamela Kampwerth, the Head of Volunteer and Outreach Services at the Huntley Area Public Library. Kampwerth takes an economic and detailed approach to the starting a friends group, highlighting the foundational elements of building an effective friends group. She notes that the group leaders must determine what the goal of their enterprise will be (fundraising for the home library, advocacy, and/or volunteering.) The author recommends that the friends group must start by recruiting a strong base of library patrons. Additionally, the group should hire an attorney and accountant to ensure that the group files the appropriate documentation.

Pamela Kampwerth’s blog posting concludes with a concise, five-bullet point plan to get your friends group started, noting marketing, membership and technology tools. The entry is brief, easy to understand, and inspiring for anyone looking to start a library friends group in their hometown.

**Title:** How to Organize a Teen Friends of the Library Group  
**URL:** [www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/friends/factsheets/unitedfactsheet5.pdf](http://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/friends/factsheets/unitedfactsheet5.pdf)  
**Date Visited:** Fall 2015  
**Reviewer:** Joelle Adler  
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

ALA has released twenty-nine factsheets as part of a series for their United for Libraries Resources for Friends Groups. Factsheet #5, *How to Organize a Teen Friends of the Library Group*, is a short list of tips for starting and maintaining a friends group for teens. The list gives numbered tips for the entire process in forming a teen friends group. These include brainstorming, developing membership requirements and dues, building organizational structure, planning activities, and providing the teen members with a mixture of work and fun.

This online factsheet would be very effective for an adult friends group in a public library looking to create a teenage initiative. The list raises points in a concise manner, making it easy to read and understand, yet each idea has enough depth to be helpful for implementation. Though the list is very comprehensive, it does lack advice about how to reach out to teenagers to ask them to join the teen friends group. This can be challenging in a community without a highly active teenage population at the
library. However, the factsheet is a great resource to help generate discussion and begin planning for a
teen friends group.

**Friends of Archives**

### Title: Friends of Libraries and Archives of Texas
**URL:** [http://www.texaslibraryfriends.org/](http://www.texaslibraryfriends.org/)
**Date Visited:** September 22, 2015
**Reviewers:** Alexander M. Dumas and William N. Villano
**Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY**

The Friends of Libraries and Archives of Texas website demonstrates what a state level non-profit
organizations offers. It provides resources, with a focus on users, potential friends, archivists, and
librarians. This friends initiative serves a variety of purposes and promotes cultural institutions very
effectively. The by-laws are very clear in their layout, providing information in a well-organized manner
that concisely gives important information that people need to know before joining this friends group.

The affiliates are numerous and reliable and the events are what one would expect from a friends group. For instance, on April 25th of 2013, the organization participated in the annual conference of the Texas Library Association for the Maximizing Social Media for Marketing program; this is the biggest conference for state libraries in the United States. Attendees were shown how to use social media to make their marketing and advocacy strategies more personal at no cost. This site offers pertinent information for current and potential friends of archives.

### Title: The National Archives Foundation
**URL:** [http://www.archivesfoundation.org/](http://www.archivesfoundation.org/)
**Date Visited:** September 22, 2015
**Reviewers:** Alexander M. Dumas and William N. Villano
**Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY**

The National Archives Foundation (NAF) is a sterling example of what a supporting group can become. Offering exciting events, newsletters, and training, the NAF represents the pinnacle of friendly support for the repositories of Washington D.C. and the fourteen other NARA repositories, as well as the thirteen presidential libraries. While the NAF boasts a high level of prestige and more financial resources than other Friends groups, their example is notable.

The website provides convenient access to membership, ways to contribute, and most importantly
information serving to advocate for archival repositories throughout the nation. The organization offers
several tiers of membership, with a variety of reward benefits, ranging from publications, to private tours,
and even priority seating for ceremonial readings of the Declaration of Independence. One of the most
thoughtful features of this site is the “Featured Records” section, which highlights interesting documents
such as the original patent for Coca-Cola bottles.

The resources of the NAF are certainly well beyond what most archives can draw upon, which is the sole
draw back for those hoping to match the success of their programs and resources. The composite parts and
the structures of their website, however, are worth emulating.
Friends of Museums

Title: US Federation of Friends of Museums
URL: http://www.usffm.org/
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewers: Elizabeth Kelly and Chelsea Roy
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

The U.S. Federation of Friends of Museums (USFFM) website is a useful site for members of the public interested in founding a museum “friends” organization. It outlines the history of the federation, and also provides information about its mission, objectives and defines the term ‘friends of museums.’ The U.S. Federation of Friends of Museums publishes a newsletter linked from the organization’s main page. It provides current information on worldwide museum events, grants and contracts.

Additionally, hyperlinks provide access to other friends-related sites for those interested in learning more about joining a friends group and the benefits. The benefits include affiliations with other museums and opportunities across the country and globally.

Some information about the USFFM was difficult to find, including important information such as membership fees. This website could be improved by adding a guide or tip sheet on starting a new museum friends group; this information would benefit museum friends at the national as well as the local level. Overall, this webpage is a good resource for obtaining knowledge about friends of museums information without being overwhelming.

Title: Standards and Best Practices for Museum Volunteer Programs
URL: http://www.aamv.org/resources/standards-and-best-practices/
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewers: Elizabeth Kelly and Chelsea Roy
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

The Standards and Best Practices for Museum Volunteer Programs is a website of the American Association of Museum Volunteers (AAMV). While this page is directed toward volunteer programs run by museums, the information is adaptable to museum friends groups. This article outlines the ideal practices followed by museum volunteers as well as volunteer program directors.

This in-depth site covers topics including: recruitment, evaluation, and risk management for both volunteers and friends programs. The information would be of particular interest to individuals wishing to create a new museum friends group since it outlines in detail the strategies for developing a core volunteer group - a necessity for friends’ organizations. Existing museum friends groups will also find this of value.

The AAMV states that these practices are to be thought of as a goal rather than a list of requirements for friends groups to meet, so there is flexibility in the selection of requirements a friends or volunteer group would incorporate. Should a reader like to investigate further, the AAMV provides additional resources for people wishing to find museum volunteer organizations and opportunities in their area.
Revitalizing an Existing Friend Group

Title: Become a Library Friend
URL: http://www.ilovelibraries.org/get-involved/become-library-friend
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Emily Wierzbowski
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

Ilovelibraries is an American Library Association initiative to keep the United States informed about its libraries. The Become a Friend page discusses the importance of library friends and their fundraising efforts. It also includes a link to the electronic discussion list where Friends from all types of libraries from across the country may discuss fundraising strategies. Further down the page, is the most pertinent content, Ideas for Existing Friends Groups. This list contains different ways a friends group can stay active with fundraising, networking, and general library advocacy efforts. The suggestions offer many easy to understand options, yet are not highly detailed.

The list is separated into three main groups. The first group, labeled Plan Fundraising Campaigns, includes suggestions on how to cultivate long-term gifts or donations, and reaching out to local politicians for endorsement for a library fundraising campaign. The Network and Strategize heading includes suggestions on creating a strategic plan and revitalizing a friends group using techniques such as changing when the group meets to find new members. Finally, Other Ideas for Friends Groups suggests new ways to advocate for the library, with a focus on community engagement by a friends group. Several suggestions mention developing literature about the library and addressing issues for distributing these materials to the community or at a town budget meeting.

This page is a good starting point for friend groups that need new ideas to reinvigorate fundraising and advocacy efforts.

Title: South Central Library System: Know More about Revitalizing Your Friends Group
URL: http://scls.typepad.com/ce/2014/03/know-more-about-revitalizing-your-friends-group.html
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Kristen Higgins
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

Lore Ponshock, director of the Lester Public Library of Rome, NY and Jeanne Osgood, a friend of that library, speak in this video. Each provides tips on what has worked for their library and friends group to revitalize interest in the friends group to help it to grow. The video has great ideas and includes pictures from people with firsthand experience revitalizing a friends group.

Just over 30 minutes in length, the video is easy to understand, and gives great examples for revitalizing a friends group that anyone can use. Some examples include networking with other clubs that the library friends are involved in, like a golf club or a book club; and making sure fundraisers provide excitement for its members and the community. Fun fundraising opportunities that worked for this particular library included hosting an annual triathlon, wine tastings, and performances put on by members of the friends group.
The Lester Public Library of Rome’s friends group originally started with six members with each member paying five dollars to join, the organization has grown to over 100 members by using the suggested ideas to help their friends group expand. Other friends groups could certainly benefit by following this friends group’s examples.

The end of the video provides other resources; viewers who want to continue researching the topic have access to additional materials. In short, it is a great source for getting ideas on revitalizing an existing friends group.

Title: How to Revitalize Your Friends Group
URL: http://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/friends/factsheets/unitedfactsheet7.pdf
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Shaunice Miller
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

United for Libraries, also known as the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, is an expanded division of the American Libraries Association. Their main goal is to provide a voice on behalf of library friends and to provide resources for success. The How to Revitalize a Friends Group factsheet provides tips on how to stimulate and revive a friends group.

The site acknowledges common issues found within older friends groups. Challenges that affect friends groups include stagnant energy, inactivity, low productivity, high workload on a same small percentage of active group members, a lack of variety in official positions, and reduced membership.

The website contains thirteen main points on how to repair common problems found in long-term established groups. Specifically, it mentions identifying key problem areas, expanding an overall presence to the public for recruitment purposes and establishing a “leadership team” to help in the creation of new projects and programs appealing to a newer target audience. The last two tips provide links to other websites pertaining to revitalizing friends groups. This website is a good resource for those looking to bring life back to their friends group using basic strategies.

Grant Writing and Fundraising by Friends Groups

Title: Library Fund Raising: A Selected Annotated Bibliography
URL: http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet24
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Timothy J. Furgal
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

The selected annotated bibliography on the American Library Association’s website offers a wide variety of fundraising materials for librarians looking for traditional and nontraditional sources of funding. These include online tools for crowdfunding and charity shopping, a comprehensive grant writing guide, and a curated bibliography for print sources of information on the topic. These resources can be used and adapted by library friends groups to run an effective campaign at the local level and to engender new ideas for raising capital. It would be in the best interest of any library friends group to take these suggested strategies and apply them in their fundraising endeavors.
The fact sheet presents the information in a clear and purposeful manner. The well-researched selections convey a strong understanding of both theory and practice. The sheer volume of information available may be overwhelming to a new friends member with limited experience and would presumably involve a larger time investment to distill the contents of, when compared to a non-aggregate style website. There are many non-friends specific choices, which could be informational to friends; and there is a section entitled, Library Friends and Foundations.

Title: Solving the Mystery of Grant Writing: Clues for a Successful Proposal
URL: http://www.txla.org/sites/tla/files/CE/docs/Solving%20the%20Mystery%20of%20Grantwriting%20Notes.pdf
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Eric Montanez
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

Library friends groups can become a major funding resource for libraries. Extra state funding through grants can assist libraries in providing more programs and assistance. This web guide provides friends groups with information on how to find appropriate grants and tips on how to organize a group to create a successful proposal.

The guide contains 12 key points for creating a successful proposal. The key points are: Building Your Case, Gathering Evidence, Executive Summary/Abstract/LOI, Organization Description/Mission, Needs Assessment, Project Plan, Project Impact, Timeline, Staffing, Budget, Project Evaluation and Sustainability. Each point includes questions that the friends group should take into account throughout the grant writing process. The site also provides insight into options to avoid and tips on how to handle the topic.

Providing the users with the best questions to ask is a major strength of the guide. One weakness is that the guide does not fully explain the information it provides since it is a bulleted list of key grant writing points. It leaves the reader with a broad understanding of what to look for but could benefit with more specific details.

This guide is great resource for library friends groups who would like to apply for grants. It provides them with a useful outline on how to write a successful grant.

Title: Idea Popcorn 2013: Ideas For Friends, From Friends
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer(s): Caitlin Decker, Timothy J. Furgal, and Eric Montanez
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

Idea Popcorn 2013 is a direct, bulleted summary of highlights from a friends' panel at the 2013 Minnesota Library Association Conference. The website is very easy to understand, provides the reader with experiential tips on running an effective book sale, suggests branding a mascot to help bolster community visibility, and offers several other thoughts on community fundraising, (e.g., a library boutique and a calendar sale). At the end of the summary, there is a section for outside resources such as grant aid, legal aid, and friends' incorporation, respectively provided by United for Libraries, MAP for Nonprofits, and the Minnesota Department of Education.
The web page is a quick read, overflowing with practicality. The language is straightforward and as a pure brainstorm works well. The outside resources section is missing links to the relevant agencies mentioned, but the lack of links does not deter from its usefulness. It is a shame that this useful website does not show up in a Google search for ‘friends of the library.’ Search engine optimization would be valuable for extended use. Overall, the ideas presented in this web resource are geared toward friends of the library groups and can be easily executed to raise funds for a library.

Programming by Friends Groups

Title: 50 Nifty Ideas – A Webinar for Friends
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Samantha Cesario
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

Created by the Florida Library Association, 50 Nifty Ideas is a webinar covering three main areas of focus for library friends groups: fundraising, special programs / projects, and programs for recruitment. While Internet resources for programming by friends groups are limited, this webinar is a great option for groups looking for fresh ideas.

In addition to the typical book sale fundraising ideas, the site includes new “fun”draising ideas such as an “Antiques Roadshow” type public appraisal program; a literary festival; and specific teen event nights that include video gaming and movies. The site provides many other ideas that could fit a variety of budgets.

The special projects portion of the webinar holds the most valuable information for groups looking for new programming ideas. The session provided a myriad of programming opportunities. Favorites from the webinar include auctioning off literary themed baskets; a history of tea event and tasting; and poetry evenings. Library outreach events provide an excellent venue for recruiting volunteers, board members, or advocates. The webinar provides a recommended structure for retaining recruits - get them involved in the library, get them the information they need to help others, and connect them to other involved individuals in the community.

While this webinar has several advantages there are a few overlooked areas worth noting, including the lack of audio with the webinar slides, no implementation resources and no links pertinent to programming information by library friends groups. Overall, the Florida Library Association put together an interesting and helpful webinar presentation on programming ideas for friends groups that friend neophytes to long standing group members should find useful.

Title: Programming Librarian
URL: http://www.programminglibrarian.org/
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Julia Brandel
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY
While many resources have been created for library friends groups, there is little focus on the programs these groups might offer. Thus, this site provides a more general approach to programming information that could be easily adapted and used by library friends.

Considering that the *Programming Librarian*’s website is run out of the ALA’s Public Programming Office, one might expect the site to be dry and academic. But instead the website does a marvelous job of combining blog elements with a professional website. Thus many individual libraries can share their ideas in a cooperative environment.

One of the most helpful aspects of the *Programming Librarian* is that it provides many ways to search through programming ideas. This includes budget, library type, topic, program type, and age group. While each category can be looked through individually, the categories can be combined and searched to find a specific program that would suit your programming needs. The programming ideas are also separated into two categories. The first, browse ideas, gives a general idea of the program and how it could be run. The second, program models, gives specific information about the program, including advance planning, marketing, budget, and more. Many program models also include flyers and videos that could aid a programmer in facilitating the program.

In addition to programming information, *Programming Librarian* also provides webinars that can help a library friend group learn about programming, as well as other topics. Unfortunately, not all of the webinars are free, so special attention must be paid to cost. Overall, *Programming Librarian* is an excellent resource that combines individual libraries creativity with professional resources. The site is recommended for both friends of libraries, as well as librarians in general.

### Information Technology Initiatives Sponsored by Library Friends Groups

**Title:** Great Technology Initiatives for Your Library: Want to incorporate new ideas into your library’s digital strategy? Here are some tips  
**URL:** [http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2013/02/27/10-great-technology-initiatives-for-your-library/](http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2013/02/27/10-great-technology-initiatives-for-your-library/)  
**Date Visited:** Fall 2015  
**Reviewers:** Nick Damore and Andrew McBean  
**Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY**

Our brainstorm: a great library initiative would be implement a cloud-based services system within a current library system. Specifically, the library could host a cloud-based collection online. In some cases there is a repository that holds books and other storage items for users. Among the advantages would be the ability for users to access media from a variety of devices. The new technological alternatives each utilizing cloud computing are vast allowing an individual to utilize a Kindle, IPad, mobile device or even a desktop or laptop for accessing the content.

Friends groups can be involved in these projects such as this one by providing funding and participating in the process. This *American Libraries* article lists several different options on how to implement a cloud based system into your infrastructure. The *American Libraries* also has recommendations on how to attract the friends to support the project; this includes two cloud based options noted on the website: the Amazon S3 cloudfront service and the DuraSpace DuraCloud service. A great advantage of a library
implementing this technology is that it provides users with the power to access library resources at home and when travelling. If you need to do research or decide that you want a specific book to read it can now be accessed from across the globe; physical location really doesn’t matter. As long as a user has access to the Internet, they can connect with a library of choice and retrieve the information they required. It also renders the opportunity for many people to have immediate access to a source. This increases the opportunities for collaboration. In the past, if there were only one copy of a book and it was borrowed, then you would need to wait for it to be returned to have the ability to check it out. However, with this technology, it is not a factor! If your collection is online and cloud based then several people can access the same file at the same time. This would be a highly beneficial project for a friends group to sponsor.

Title: American Library Association - Electronic Discussion Group for Friends Groups
URL: http://www.ala.org/united/friends/electronic-discussion-group
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewer: Jiong Yang
Information Studies Department Graduate Student, University at Albany, SUNY

The Electronic Discussion Group site is designed to invite library friends from all types of libraries to participate in online discussions. In this way, no matter where friends are, they can share advice and real world experiences through the Internet. The site creates an environment in which users can feel comfortable asking questions and therefore will not miss out on valuable information, and are likely to meet users with similar interests. By searching the archives, friends can look at many topics of interest, from policy to information technology. The weakness of this website is that the archives only go back to 2012, so friends might miss out on older content that may have been of interest.

Creating a Friends Group Website

Title: How to Make a Website
URL: http://www.websitesetup.org
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewers: Emily Kinney, Peter Zoellner, and Philip Frisbie
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

Websitesetup.org, developed by Robert Mening provides a straightforward, free guide for building a website with little hassle. The website takes users through web building platform applications (e.g., WordPress, Joomla, and Drupal), selecting a domain name, and customization protocols. The accessibility of this easy and free guide could make a big difference to friends groups with members less experienced in website development.

This guide is for beginners and is updated monthly. Mening wrote this guide in an easy to understand fashion – with each step accompanied by picture references, advice, and additional relevant resources (e.g., a website that checks the availability of domain names). The author also includes a comparison of several website platforms, guides to different markup languages used in web design, and articles relating to making a website work for its creators. The inclusion of a more in depth navigation tool would improve the site’s organization for more ease of use, but currently users can find most of what the site offers with a little exploration.
Not only is the site free to use, but Mening offers support via email to anyone struggling with building a website. If a friends group is unsure about the technical aspects of starting a website, this guide details effective solutions.

Title: Network for Good
URL: http://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/how-start-website-your-organization/
Date Visited: Fall 2015
Reviewers: Emily Kinney, Peter Zoellner, and Philip Frisbie
Information Studies Department Graduate Students, University at Albany, SUNY

The Nonprofit Marketing Blog offers insight on how to create a well-organized and practical website for non-profit organizations such as library friends groups in the article How to Start a Website for Your Organization. The article makes it clear to readers that all not-for-profits should sponsor a website. It keeps its advice specific to those working in such organizations in regards to budgeting, fundraising, and networking online. The article points readers toward useful external resources for not-for-profits such as obtaining a domain name with little or no cost and outsourcing web development.

Dealing with the organization of the site, the formatting needs to be fixed or updated to ensure clarity for the user. The Nonprofit Marketing Blog should be updated to include services more applicable to not-for-profits for donation pages; while most of the external resources shown in the article are free or available for a minimal charge, the tool suggested for collecting donations online is a more expensive service. Friends groups today are likely to have free services available to collect donations.

Finding applicable information on creating a friends group website was surprisingly challenging.

Developing a web presence for friends groups is perhaps something that ALA or other library organizations could dedicate more resources to in the future.