From the President

Dear Friends,

“If you have a garden and a Library, you have everything you need.” — Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106 BCE - 43 BCE

I’m not sure about the condition of Cicero's garden, but in this month of triple-digit temperatures, mine is almost nonexistent. How does your garden grow? One thing we can count on, however, is our fabulous public library. One could say it is “drought-resistant” and flourishing with new growth.

In recognition of the valuable role that our Library plays, our City Manager, on August 6, presented the Proposed Budget for FY 2016. It includes:

- $560,000 to operate two new branches
- $1,000,000 for library enhancement technology

Thank you for contacting your City Council representatives and for showing up and speaking up at the district budget hearings. It was well worth your effort.

In anticipation of the approval of the recommended budget, I ask you to send a thank you letter to your city representative in appreciation of the additional $2.9 million in added resources for Library improvements. City Council approves and adopts the budget on Thursday, September 10.

After all this activity, or whether it’s just the Texas heat, we may be feeling like we're in a “pause” mode at FOSAPL. But here are some upcoming events that will help us stay connected to each other and to our stated mission. Please join us in:

- Supporting the winners of the 2015 Arts & Letters Reception on October 25
- Celebrating the next 50 Years Anniversary of FRIENDS (date to be announced)
- Recruiting a FRIEND at the Next Generation Membership Drive in November

Can I count on you to help us “grow” a vibrant FRIENDS organization?

In FRIENDship,
Karen Matson

The “21st Century FRIENDS: Silver, Gold, and Green” Workshop
previously scheduled for Sept. 19, 2015, has been POSTPONED

The 2015 Arts & Letters Awards Recipients
Robert Mason

Once again the Arts and Letters Committee had the exciting but daunting task of selecting the FOSAPL Arts and Letters Award recipients for 2015. This year's recipients are:

- Bernice Appelin-Williams – a visual artist
- Carol Coffee Reposo – a San Antonio poet
- Craig Sorgi – a San Antonio violinist
- Enedina Casarez Vasquez – a multimedia artist, poet and playwright

We invite all our FOSAPL membership, as well as the general public, to celebrate with us as we honor these four outstanding San Antonio artists at the Arts and Letters Ceremony to be held at the Central Library on Sunday, October 25, at 2 p.m. A wine and cheese reception will follow.

Bernice Appelin-Williams, a native of San Antonio, is a multimedia visual artist who reflects many modes of self-expression through cultural themes, values, societal practices, mores, and spiritual influences. Ms. Williams’ artistic expressions are communicated through collages, installations, and assemblages. She attended Columbia University in New York before receiving her B.A. from Incarnate Word College (now University) and her M.A. from Trinity University, both in San Antonio. Through her work, the artist hopes to “connect with [her] ancestral spirits and pre-

A&L cont on p 5.
The Board of the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library met on Sunday, July 19, 2015, at the Pan American Branch Library. President Karen Matson called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. Secretary Nancy Gandara called the roll, and declared that a quorum was present.

Board members present were: Karen Matson, Robert Mason, Nancy Gandara, Liz Alves, Elizabeth Bircher, Beth Graham, Beverly Harris, Pat Konstam, Mary McAfee, Pat Mendiola, Pat Peak, Ronnie Retzloff, Mark Robinson, Rowena Rodgers, Stephanie Serrata, Ann Springer, Delia Trimble and Jill Zimmerman.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded to accept the Minutes of the meeting of May 17, 2015, as printed in the July-August 2015 issue of SAPLings, and the motion passed unanimously.

President’s Report: Karen Matson mentioned many events and meetings she had attended during the prior two months and showed a brief, lively video of a Friends-sponsored program for teens at the Pan American Branch.

Treasurer’s Report: Judy Wilson, former Treasurer, presented the Treasurer’s Report of June 30, 2015 (which had been prepared by Treasurer Beverly Duran). As of June 30, FOSAPL had total assets of $219,753.84, of which $102,773.18 was designated for branch groups, and checks in the amount of $3,703.72 were outstanding. It was noted that sizeable donations had been received for Brook Hollow, Encino, and Mission Friends’ groups, and that the Mission Branch Friends received a grant from Union Pacific ($12,500).

A report was made concerning the bequest from the estate of Jay L. Adelman – in Dec. 2014, FOSAPL received $12,500 from the first part of funds distributed, and it is anticipated that approximately $2,202.49 will be received from the second, final, distribution before the end of 2015.

LIAISON REPORTS

Library Trustees’ Liaison: Pres. Matson introduced Andrea Sanchez, speaking for the Trustees’ liaison to the Friends, Lupe Ochoa. Ms. Sanchez thanked the Friends for their attendance at recent budget hearings and noted that the next one would be on July 22 at the Pan American branch.

Library Administration Liaison: Kathy Donellan, assistant library director, reported that the FY2016 Budget process had been going well, and attributed to that good support from library stakeholders and from City Manager Sheryl Scully, who had indicated her interest in full funding for two new branch libraries (in District 2 and District 6), and for the Library’s request for technology funds.

Ms. Donellan noted that recent awards were received from the American Institute of Architects and American Library Association for the design of the Mission branch, and from the Urban Libraries Council for SAPL’s “digital walls.” She thanked the Friends for having funded the technology kiosks in the S.A. airport, which are well used and increase awareness of library resources.

Library Foundation Liaison: Lacey Fischer, director of development, noted that the Library Foundation is still raising funds to supplement the Encino Branch and has begun soliciting funds to support the new Schaefer Branch and the new branch to be built in District 6 (Potranco Rd. area). The Collins Garden Branch’s “extreme makeover” and the expansion of the Central Library’s Latino Collection are also projects that the Library Foundation is supporting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arts & Letters Awards Committee: Committee member Beverly Harris reminded the FOSAPL board members that Aug. 1 is the deadline for submission of nominations and urged their attendance at the Awards event, on Oct. 25.

BookCellar: Richard Morales noted that 15 new volunteers started recently and that YTD income is approximately $3,000 higher than this time last year. Linda Cheatum, chair of the search committee to advertise the BookCellar manager vacancy, reported that the position advertisement would close on Aug. 1, and that they had received 21 applications.

Membership: Linda Cheatum, Membership Secretary, noted that after the membership rolls were purged on May 31 of all names who have not renewed for 2015, the current roll shows 921 active members, of which 60 were “new” in the past two months.

NEW BUSINESS

Amended bylaws of the Friends of the Cody Branch Library: Pat Mendiola moved that the FOSAPL board approve the updated and revised bylaws of the group (which had Minutes cont on p 3.)
Minutes, from p 2.

been emailed to all members prior to the meeting), and Beth Graham seconded her motion. There was no discussion, and it passed unanimously. The new Bylaws will be added to the list of Friends group bylaws on the FOSAPL website.

Task Force to plan a Fiesta 2016 Medal for FOSAPL: Karen Matson requested board support for accepting an offer by Lyn Belisle to design a medal that the Friends could either sell or give away and called for volunteers to work on this project. Ronnie Retzlaff and Liz Alves volunteered. Beth Graham moved that the task force be formed; Pat Peak seconded the motion, and Mary McAfee called the question. The motion passed.

“Next Generation” Membership Drive for 2016: Karen Matson noted that we would need to start the annual membership drive soon and that creative efforts to expand our traditional support base should be made. She urged interested board members to contact her as soon as possible.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liz Alves reported on the recent groundbreaking for the Schaefer Library, to be built on Highway 87/Rigsby Ave. near China Grove (outside Loop 410). A construction trailer is on-site now, with the new branch expected to open in Aug. 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

President Karen Matson thanked the Friends of the Pan American Branch for providing refreshments for the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

Carver

Carver Branch Manager DL Grant represented San Antonio Public Library at the 9th Annual Conference of African American Librarians in St. Louis, August 4-8. His presentation, which highlighted the need for libraries to work closely with friends groups and community partners, attracted a large audience of delegates seeking to establish such support organizations in their own communities. Jeanne Johnson, Learn@SAPL adult basic education instructor, was a co-presenter at the Tex-BEST Workforce Literacy Summit 2015 held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Aug. 11-13. Assistant Branch Manager Monty Holcomb organized a chess tournament, which attracted nearly 30 enthusiasts. The event also attracted the attention of local media who captured the fun. Responding to the needs of the community, Carver Branch began a partnership with the San Antonio Food Bank to distribute lunches to children in the community. The effort has been a success. Manager DL Grant hopes to continue the program next summer.

DL Grant

Las Palmas

The Summer Reading Program at Las Palmas had the added bonus this year of giving the children books donated by the HEB Literacy “Read 3” Program. HEB also donated gift cards that were used to provide snacks for the different events. The Friends group continues to research other resources that can add to planned Library projects.

An “End of Summer” staff appreciation luncheon was hosted by the Friends to thank all the library staff for their hard work on behalf of the surrounding community.

The Library has welcomed a new teen librarian. Recently, participation in the teen program increased as a result of outreach to theYWCA, located adjacent to the library.

The Lego Club is moving right along. The children’s librarian requested more mini figures (little people) and wheels to increase the possibilities for Lego-land creativity by the children. So, those items are on the Friends’ “shopping list.”

Las Palmas Library gained a new Friend in the business category, the management company from Port San Antonio. Port SA has offered the Friends from the branch libraries in City Council Districts 4 and 5 (Port SA is in both districts) the opportunity to hold a combined book sale at their location. The book sale has been tentatively scheduled for November 9–13. We are looking for volunteers who can help us on the day(s) we’re staffing the sales area.

Delia Ramirez Trimble

Maverick

Summer is winding down once again. Summer reading has ended, school has started, and it’s almost time for the Maverick Friends’ autumn book sale!

We had a great book sorting in July. Between three guests—Karen Matson, Homer Waring, and Becky’s friend, Carmen, and six Maverick Friends’ members—Elizabeth Birch, Kim Henage, Roe Klepac, Barbara Steinhauser, Becky Vargas, and Sue Ratliff, we had fun and made short work of the donations that accumulated since our last sale.

Our next sale is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on September 19 and 20 in the Nani Falcone Room at Maverick Library, 8700 Mystic Park. In addition to the sale, we’re looking forward to raffling off another great book, and maybe a mystery treasure or two. Don’t forget to stop by, even if it’s just to say “Hi!”

Maverick Friends meet at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month, and we invite all Friends, prospective Friends, and folks who are just curious about the Friends to join us.

Sue Ratliff

McCreless

The Friends of McCreless Library are planning for cooler days so not much to report going on since the last SAPLings. We had a successful book sale in June that added $460.45 plus a generous $33.50 in donations to our treasury. In addition, the “Book Nook” brought in another $47.25. These funds will be put to good use toward whittling

Branch Leaves cont on p 4.
down library Branch Manager Cammie Brantley’s, wish list. The next general meeting will be held on Monday, September 21, at 6:00 p.m. in McCreless Library’s meeting room. And be on the lookout for our next fantastic book sale. It is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, September 26 and 27, from 10:00–5:45. Volunteers are needed for setup on Friday and breakdown on Monday, as well as staffing during the sale.

Jill Zimmerman

Tobin Library at Oakwell

It was a busy summer at Tobin at Oakwell Branch. 150 people attended Summerfest on Saturday, July 25. This family fun event celebrating summer reading featured face painting, balloon art, power snacks for heroes, The Twister Dancers, and a special performance by the Bluebonnet Scottish Country Dancers. A special guest was the Scholastic Sister, and a special performance by Craig Anderson. Margy Bernstein will read from her new book of poetry, the second edition of The Poet and the Wolf, selected by the Montana Historical Society for their permanent collection. N.B. Miller will read excerpts from his latest political thriller, A Shipment of Arms. A discussion of current events in Mexico and questions and answers will follow. Admission is free and refreshments will be served. All profits from the sale of signed copies of the books, at $16 each will go to the Friends of the Tobin Library. Our Assistant Library Manager Rhonda Woolhouse will have more information at (210) 207-9040.

We welcome our new Teen Librarian Karen Barton, who arrived August 3 after training at the Central Library. Our book cart has been busy, and the new paperback display has increased sales this year. Friends of the Tobin Library will meet on September 15 at 1:30. Our next book sale will be held on November 14.

Arlene Braswell

Selfie of Cortez Friends Group

Ray Saldana holds a Back-to-School event every year. His office contacted Cortez to participate in it this year. The Book-Cellar provided the books for the sale. The volunteers sold more than 400 books making a profit of $213.56.

Book Review

The Silent Sister
by Diane Chamberlain
(St. Martin's Press, 2014)

Review by Stephanie Serrata

Riley McPherson knows two things about her older sister, Lisa: one, she was a music prodigy and two, Lisa committed suicide at 17. After her father’s death, Riley returns home to handle his estate and uncovers dark family secrets buried in piles of his paperwork. Convinced that her brother and friends are withholding pertinent information, Riley goes on a quest to discover the truth about her sister, her family, and herself.

Diane Chamberlain delivers a fast-paced novel told in two parts. Even though the plot unravels half way through, and the outcome becomes obvious to the reader, Chamberlain manages to save a few small surprises for the end. This novel is perfect if you don’t mind predictability. If you’re looking for twists and turns you don’t see coming, skip it.

Do I recommend this novel? Overall, it’s an easy read. Chamberlain’s prose is clean and flows easily. I didn’t need to read between the lines or flip back through the earlier parts of the novel for something I might have missed. It’s a good pick if you need to unwind at the end of a busy day.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS:
Tell me what you’re reading and/or share with me titles you’ve enjoyed recently. Email your responses to: SSerrataAlvarado@satx.rr.com.

Proposed FY 2016 City Budget

Tracey Bennett

On August 6, the City Manager presented the proposed budget for FY 2016. The budget includes the funding recommendations for the SAPL. Recommendations were based on several criteria, including: alignment with City Council goals and objectives, funding availability and past performance. In anticipation of the approval of the recommended budget I would like to ask you to contact City Hall and show your appreciation of the additional $2.9 in added resources for Library improvements. City Council should approve and adopt the budget on Thursday, September 10.


Many thanks for your advocacy!
serve as well as merge [her] ‘unknown’ past with [her] known and vibrant present while leaving an imprint for future query.”

Carol Coffee Reposa earned her B.A. and M.A. in English at the University of Texas at Austin and has taken postgraduate courses at University of Texas at Austin, Trinity University (San Antonio), and the University of Texas at San Antonio. Her poems have appeared in Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review, The Formalist, Blue Mesa Review, San Jose Studies, Descant, Amarillo Bay, Context South, The Texas Observer, Concho River Review, Southwestern American Literature, and River Sedge, among others. She has authored two books of poetry, At the Border: Winter Lights and The Green Room, with a third manuscript, Facts of Life, in press. She was a finalist in The Malahat Review Long Poem Contest (1988), winner of the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center Poetry Contest (1991), and second prize winner of the Blue Unicorn Poetry Contest (1992). Twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize, she also has received two Fulbright/Hays Fellowships, the first for study in Russia (1995) and a second for research in Peru and Ecuador (1999). She taught English at San Antonio College.

Craig Sorgi has been an active chamber music performer and solo recitalist in the South Texas area for the last 31 years. He has served as the concertmaster for the San Antonio Symphony, the San Antonio Opera and the Mid Texas Symphony. He is a teacher and mentor to budding musicians, serving in the San Antonio public school music programs as a teacher and guest clinician, and has served on the Trinity University music faculty since 2003. Craig’s passion for promotion of the musical arts is further demonstrated in his frequent performance of new music (the classic and contemporary favorites were at one time new music) and his service for the past seven years as the education director, Young Artist Program for the Cactus Pear Music Festival.

Enedina Casares Vasquez is an author, playwright, and a visual artist all in one person. She is also a lay minister with a ministry in the Episcopal/Lutheran Church as a mission developer. Her visual art is her most important focus. Ms. Vasquez was honored to be featured on the Texas Country Reporter Show where she talked about why she creates. To her, working as an artist everyday is like breathing and praying at the same time. She uses her art to teach others about her culture. Through her art, short stories, poetry, and folk art, she attempts to teach people to stop and take time for beauty, to discover it among themselves, and to celebrate it. Ms. Vasquez also encourages others to create art, music, and dance, to use the arts to release themselves and to find inner peace. A native of San Antonio, her work, which includes beautiful stained glass pieces, can be found in art galleries, museums, and gift shops throughout the United States and has been included in a traveling exhibition of the Smithsonian Institute.

Bilingual Storytime—Summer Finale at Las Palmas

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Dear Friends,

The summer is ending, and with it, another successful run of the Mayor’s Summer Reading Club and Summer Reading Program in their 2015 edition. Additionally, Fiscal Year 2015 is ending, presenting a great opportunity to take a moment and reflect on another extremely successful FY2015 for the San Antonio Public Library.

This fiscal year (October 2014 to September 2015) saw a thriving library system with important expansion projects, including another addition to the LEARN Centers, a partnership with the YMCA for a new library, the opening of the new Encino Branch Library, the new Teen Library at Central, and the groundbreaking in District 2 for the future Schaefer Branch Library.

All of the success that the San Antonio Public Library enjoys comes as the result of the hard work and collaboration by many individuals and great organizations partnering with the Library in meeting the needs of an ever growing and greatly diverse city. Among those organizations supporting the Public Library, the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library have played a distinctively important role in the success of the Public Library for many years.

So, we take this unique and important opportunity to thank all the Friends for the hard work and remind you that we’re here to respond to your expectations as well. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome.

Ramiro Salazar

Hispanic Heritage Month: A time to celebrate San Antonio’s cultural heritage

The San Antonio Public Library is celebrating the diversity and rich heritage of the Alamo City during Hispanic Heritage Month. This year, the San Antonio Public Library features fun and interesting events to commemorate this important time, between September 15 and October 15, that celebrate the contributions of the Latinos to mainstream culture.

Several events take place at different branch libraries, including “A Tribute to San Antonio in Poetry and Photographs.” This tribute will combine readings of Texas Poet Laureate Carmen Tafolla, PhD, and contemporary photographs of some of San Antonio’s personal, cultural, and physical treasures to provide a fun and educational tour of this special city’s past and present.

Hispanic Heritage Month events will take place at different SAPL locations and include:

- **Curandero Secrets**
  - Sept. 12, 11 a.m., Johnston Branch Library (6307 Sun Valley, 78227)
  - Sept. 26, 11 a.m., Pan Am Branch Library (600 Soledad, 78205)
  - Oct. 3, 11 a.m., Bazan Branch Library (2200 W. Commerce St., 78207)
  - Oct. 8, 6 p.m., Cortez Branch Library (2803 Hunter Blvd., 78224)

- **Tribute to San Antonio in Poetry and Photographs,**
  - Sept. 19, 2 p.m., Carver Branch Library (3350 E. Commerce St., 78220)

- **Bless Me Ultima**
  - Sept. 19, 3 p.m., Bazan Branch Library (2200 W. Commerce St., 78207)

- **La Noche del Gallo: Artist Joe Lopez**
  - Sept. 22, 6 p.m., Central Library (600 Soledad, 78205)

- **80 Years of Dance!**
  - Sept. 26, 1 p.m., Cortez Branch Library (2803 Hunter Blvd., 78224)
  - Oct. 5, 6 p.m., Igo Branch Library (13330 Kyle Seale Pkwy., 78249)
  - Oct. 10, 2 p.m., Carver Branch Library (3350 E. Commerce St., 78220)

- **The Plaza that Never Slept in 1880’s San Antonio: A Story of Chili Queens**
  - Sept. 26, 3 p.m., Central Library (600 Soledad, 78205)

- **Hispanic Heritage Movie**
  - Oct. 1, 6 p.m., Mission Branch Library (3134 Roosevelt Ave., 78214)

- **Stranger Than Fiction Book Group**
  - Oct. 8, 2 p.m., Westfall Branch Library (6111 Rosedale Ct., 78224)

- **Voces Cosmicas**
  - Oct. 10, 2 p.m., Memorial Branch Library (3222 Culebra, 78228)

For more information about these events visit the calendar section at mysapl.org.
Memorials and Donations

Sheila Figueroa

In Memory of

Jim Matson  Karen Matson

Donations

Kay Fitch
Ernest A. Garcia
Pat Hammond
Jesse and Jean Pacheco
Paul Rode

Youth, Imagination, and Poetry with ‘Young Pegasus’

The San Antonio Public Library celebrates the inspired skills of local young writers with the Young Pegasus Poetry Competition. Bexar County poets who are 18 and younger are invited to submit their work, which will be reviewed by a panel of independent judges. Each poet may enter as many poems as desired. Poems should be submitted separately, either online or hard copy. To find out more information about the rules, visit mysapl.org.

Judges will choose their favorite poems to be published in the Young Pegasus Anthology. Selected poets will be invited to attend an awards ceremony in the spring where they will receive an award certificate and a copy of the anthology. The selected poems will be read aloud during the ceremony, either by the poets themselves or a member of the judging panel.

For additional information about the Young Pegasus Poetry Competition, please contact: Viki Ash, children’s services coordinator San Antonio Public Library (210) 207-2620 viki.ash@sanantonio.gov

FOSAPL Board Meeting Locations—2015

Sunday, 2 p.m.

September 20  Westfall Library
November 15  Encino Library

BookCellar News

Pat Konstam

The BookCellar
Central Library Basement
Open 11–3 every day plus 3–7 Thursdays.
Telephone (210) 227-9519

At press time, the BookCellar Committee was still interviewing candidates for the job of BookCellar manager, following the August 1 application deadline. By the next issue of SAPLings, the committee expects to have a new manager to introduce. Andrea Mason’s service as interim manager ended August 15.

The committee has adopted a revised set of policies reflecting what has been learned since the last policy revisions in 2012. The subcommittee that worked several months to draft the new policies included Andrea Mason as chair, Richard Morales, Stephanie Serrata, Linda Cheatum, and prior to his death, Aaron Konstam. The document will be presented to the FOSAPL Board at its September meeting.

After almost five years of dedicated service, Stephanie Serrata has resigned from the BookCellar Committee but continues as a regular volunteer staffing the cashier’s desk. Ann Springer was elected to the committee, maintaining the number of members at 10.

The week-long Juvenile Patio Event in late July brought in $3,308 as teachers, parents, and kids loaded up on clearance-priced books for children and young adults. The sale also significantly reduced inventory, making room for a fresh supply of books in the children’s section.

The September special is a buy-one, get-one-free sale of regularly priced adult and juvenile non-fiction in three Dewey Decimal categories: 300s (political and social issues), 600s (health and technology), and 800s (literature).

The October buy-one-get-one special will be regularly priced adult and juvenile books in the 500s (science) and 900s (geography and history). The store always has a selection of 10¢ children’s books and 25¢ adult books on sale. Check Facebook or email notices for short-term flash sales in other categories.

At the request of the library administration on behalf of District 4 City Councilman Ray Saldana, the BookCellar benefited from its collection of review books from publishers. Fresh new books are always popular with customers.

Several high school students worked at the store during the summer to earn their 20 hours of volunteer credit. A new group of adult volunteers has been through orientation, but people who can work Sundays are still needed. Contact Linda Cheatum at (210) 888-3002 or (214) 280-7488 for more information.

www.facebook.com/book.cellar

The Friends Treasurer’s Reports are available online at friendsofsapl.org/treasurers-reports.html
CALENDAR OF BOOK SALES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Because dates and times change occasionally, please call to verify information.

September 12–13  Memorial Friends book sale, 10–5
September 15  Tobin Library at Oakwell meeting, 1:30
September 19–20  Maverick book sale, 10–4
September 20  FOSAPL Board meeting, Westfall Library, 2
September 21  Friends of McCreless meeting, 6
September 22  An Evening of Book Readings, Tobin at Oakwell, 6-8 pm
September 26–27  McCreless book sale
October 3  Semmes book sale, with a preview for Friends on Oct 2, 10
October 8–10  Cody Fall book sale. The preview for members of FOSAPL will be from 2–4 Friday, Oct. 8; Sale on Saturday from 10–4; and “bag of books” on Sunday from 1–3.
October 10  Brook Hollow book sale, 10–4
October 17–18  Friends of Igo book and bake sale, Oct. 17, 10–5; Oct. 18, 1–4
October 25  Arts & Letters Awards, Central Library, 2
November 14  Friends of Tobin Library at Oakwell book sale
November 15  FOSAPL Board meeting, Encino Library, 2

Note: Each branch Friends group has a designated representative to the Board. However, these Board meetings are open to the general membership. All members are invited and encouraged to attend.