



Engaging Community  
Expanding Minds  
Enriching Lives

# Report to the Board of Trustees

July 13, 2022

## From the Director

The library held a Shred-A-Thon event on June 4 with The Shredding Source, which brought in \$951 for the library. Thank you to Maryann Amore for chairing the event, and to all the volunteers who came out to help make the event run smoothly. The next Shred-A-Thon will be held June 2023.

On June 13, we welcomed the newest addition to the Blackstone Circulation staff, Jared Torello. He hit the ground running and is a pleasure to work with.

Karen Jensen's last day and my first day as Library Director was June 14. Karen and Jeff Vosburgh from Downes Construction gave a presentation to library directors, staff, and board members from across the state, discussing their experiences during 2019 renovation.

The Strategic Plan team met with Dr. Michelle Blank to finalize the handout that was shared at the 125th Birthday Bash, and is drafting writeups for each initiative for inclusion in the compiled framework.

Adam Spilka and I attended the Friends of the Library Annual Meeting on June 21. At the meeting, the Friends announced a special gift of \$20,000 to the library. We deeply appreciate all the Friends do to support the library.



Former Director Karen Jensen presented to an audience of library directors, staff, and trustees from around the state, as well as associates from Downes Construction, about the 2019 renovation.



Above: First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove poses with Timothy Blackstone (Jon Nichols) at the 125th Blackstone Birthday Bash. Right/below: Master storyteller Bill Harley (sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library) entertained an all ages crowd to start off the day. Photos: Bill O'Brien.



The 125th Birthday Bash was a huge success, with an estimated crowd of over 250 people attending throughout the day. Thank you to Dr. Michelle Blank and the 125th Planning Committee, and everyone who helped make this day so very special: The Friends of the Library, sponsors of the Bill Harley program and lawn games; all of the trustees, Friends, and volunteers who worked hard to make the event happen and run smoothly; Jamie Cosgrove for attending the ceremony and delivering his proclamation; Bill O'Brien for doc-

umenting the day; the Town of Branford for supplying refuse and recycle bins to help keep the grounds clean; staff who helped with the event or held down the fort during the festivities; Horner's Nest, Ashley's and Covergirl; Timothy Blackstone for gracing us with his presence; and a HUGE thank you to everyone in the community who came out to enjoy the day with us!

I attended my first Libraries Online (LION) Board Meeting on June 28 at the Wallingford Public Library.

Katy McNicol

## Highlights from the Youth Services Department—May

Throughout the month of May the Youth Services Department worked together to solidify our summer reading program. Miss Mary and I visited merchants on Main Street to secure participants for our StoryWalk® map. We were able to secure 19 businesses — one for each page of the book — which might be our longest book yet! Then we created our StoryWalk® panels so that families could take part in our Creative Writing Contest. To encourage participation we purchased a large number of creative writing journals.

Families can pick them up in the department while supplies last and use them while reading the book along Main Street. We also included creative writing prompts at the bottom of each panel. Families can use these to discuss what is happening in each illustration or might want to write their favorites down so that they can complete their submissions at a later date. We have also included a QR Code on the panels, that once scanned, will take the user to a Google Form where they will learn the meaning behind our StoryWalk® and be asked to participate in our Creative Writing Contest. Those with a smart device can actually write as they walk and submit their pieces to the contest with a touch of a button! This same form will be fully accessible from our website so that everyone has the option to submit their pieces virtually. The Youth Services Desk will also accept hardcopy submissions.

I also worked with Shoreline Adult Education (SAE) to begin helping them integrate our StoryWalk® into their English as Second Language summer class curriculum. Participants in the program will bring their families to our walk and then use all of our resources to create their own short story, poem or illustration which they may use in their classroom discussions. I will attend one of their planning meetings next month so that I can see how we can best assist them on this integration. I cannot wait to see the kinds of ideas they have in the works. This is exciting and exactly why we created the StoryWalk® in the first place, a space to facilitate community connection and discussion.

Miss Sarah's final Take & Make of the school year was a success. Teens and tweens took home all the ingredients to create their own vegetarian chili! We received the coolest photos and parents could not express how much they love the kits because they can complete them as a family on their own time. Plus, they have been learning to cook on their own throughout the spring. This summer we are expanding the program to grades K - 4, so that we can introduce new families to this concept. All of the projects are already planned and have an underwater theme.

Miss Mary and I took part in a two day seminar provided by the Connecticut State Library. This continuing educa-

tion workshop focused on school readiness and all the components children need in order to be successful. One of the biggest takeaways from the seminar was that school readiness goes well beyond the fundamentals, with a social and emotional element that has to be met in order for children to feel safe and ready to learn. Part of that process can be introduced during our storytimes as families get to know us and the routine. During class we empower children to take on new tasks as we introduce new elements, encourage them to wait their turn, model kindness and show them firsthand that they are not always going to get their first choice. The workshop also focused on the fact that we as a society are always concerned with "the product" instead of the process, not considering what happens when the end result does not look like the sample or is too difficult for children to complete without assistance. Research shows that children that are encouraged to focus on process and not the end results will continue to push through roadblocks and/or work towards goals since they know that achievement is within reach even if it takes them a little longer. We are now modeling speech that promotes discussion and zeroes in on their thought process or how they worked to achieve the end result. Modeling these types of discussions can improve confidence and promote trying one's best in the future, which they will need to be successful in kindergarten.

Carly Lemire



*Miss Mary & Miss Sarah hosted a Blackstone Library booth at the Branford Festival on June 18.*



*Four generations of library patrons got new library cards at the Branford Festival.*

## Highlights from the Reference Department-May

May's programs included a Branford Historical Society presentation titled Secret Connecticut, a Harriet Beecher Stowe program by actor historian Kim Hanley of the American Historical Theatre, Bill Keane's exploration of image making, and our monthly line-up of book groups, Latin class, poetry discussion, Saturday Cinema, Game Night, tech drop-in sessions, knitting and coloring groups.

The Reference staff continues to work on our Digital Archives and Community Webs

projects. There are several digitization projects of the library's archives and local newspapers being worked on by reference and circulation staff. We continue to add Branford High School year-books and newspaper articles to the Archives website.

Everyone on the Reference staff has been working especially hard on collection development over the past couple of months. The purchase of new books is very important, but we also strive to keep our regular nonfiction stacks in good order, making

sure our collection is up to date and in proper call number order. We are working on updating and increasing the titles in our Travel collection with more people resuming international travel.

*Deborah Trofatter*



New rotunda furniture, sponsored by the Friends of the Library, was delivered in June, with new chairs and lamps making the main floor rotunda a cozy place to sit.

## Architectural Fun Facts About the Blackstone Library

The Blackstone Library is a superb example of popular architectural motifs of the 1890s. Every piece of the building, no matter how functional or utilitarian, is decorated in some way. You



The anthemion in the mosaic tile floor.

would be hard pressed to find a single plain surface in the library and it's one of the things we love most about it. If you look closely, you'll notice the same decorative accents repeating throughout the building in wood, metal, and stone. One example of this is the anthemion, found in the mosaic tile floors.

The anthemion was an extremely popular decorative motif and is very common in Greek inspired architecture like the Blackstone. According to the Encyclopedia Britanica, the design consists of a number of radiating petals, developed by the ancient Greeks from the Egyptian and Asiatic form known as the honey-

suckle or lotus palmette. The anthemion was used widely by the Greeks and Romans to embellish various parts of ancient buildings. The Greeks originally decorated only pottery with the motif, but they soon adapted it to ornamental architecture.

The next time you're at the Blackstone Library, see how many you can spot!

*Jenna Anthony*





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## July 2022 Program Highlights

### Drop-In Tech Session

Thursday, July 7

@ 2 - 4 pm

Confused about your new iPhone or iPad? Need help formatting a Word document? Drop in to the library between 2 & 4 pm to get a tech question answered. First come, first served. Sessions will be limited to 15 minutes per person. Registration is not required.

### Downloading Ebooks and Audiobooks Through Hoopla & Libby

Wednesday, July 13

@ 2 - 3 pm

Come learn how to access ebooks and audiobooks through two great apps – Libby and Hoopla – free with your Blackstone Library card! You'll learn how to sign up for each app, search for and check out titles, place holds, and more. Registration is required.

### Building the Blackstone: The Architecture of the Blackstone Library

Wednesday, July 13

@ 6 - 7 pm

The Blackstone Library is one of the most impressive buildings in Connecticut, but it's home to so many beautiful details it's almost impossible to take them all in. Join Branford Town Historian Jane Bouley for an in-depth look at the architecture and craftsmanship of the Blackstone. She'll take you on a journey through details big and small that's sure to inspire a new appreciation for the library and all it's architectural glory. Registration is required.

### Scrapbooking with Plants in the 18th Century

Tuesday, July 19

@ 6:30–7:30 pm

Alicia Petersen, Yale Universi-

ty graduate student, discusses her attempt to create a herbarium (book of dried plants) following manuals written by 18th-century naturalists. She will also explore early modern naturalists to consider how scientific knowledge was made in the West. **Sponsored by the Yale Peabody Museum Speakers Bureau.**

### Shoreline Jazz Quartet Presents: a Tribute to Thelonious Monk

Saturday, July 23 @ 2–3 pm

The Guilford-based Shoreline Jazz Quartet will pay tribute to the music of the great Thelonious Monk, featuring Mike Bimonte on drums, (Deepak) Cyril D'Souza on saxophone, Steve Roane on electric guitar, and Adam Anderson on acoustic bass. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

*Programs require registration—see our website at [blackstonelibrary.org](http://blackstonelibrary.org)*

## May 2022 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

### Total Circulation: 6,871

May 2021: 4,850

### borrowIT: 1,422

March 2021: 1,080

### Renewals: 4,772

### Computer Sessions: 623

WIFI Logins: 3,392

### Facebook: 2116 Likes

Instagram: 1096 Followers

MailChimp: 7,579 Subscribers

### Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1,529

Overdrive audiobooks: 862

Overdrive Magazines: 168

HOOPLA: 1,271

Kanopy: 271

Pronunciator: 603

Ancestry Library: 387

New Haven Register: 142

Creative Bug: 2

### Total Downloadable: 5,235

### Children's Programs

24 programs/299 attendance

### Teen Programs (12+)

5 programs/20 attendance

### Adult programs

35 programs/270 attendance

### Lucy Hammer Room & Conference Room

156 meetings

### Average Daily Visitors: 290

Days Open: 30