



# Report to the Board of Trustees

October 7, 2015

## From the Director

We spent much of September finalizing CaddyStacks—planning hole decorations, publicity, ticket sales, catering, raffle prizes, and securing sponsors and scorecard ads. The event was fun for all, and we've had many requests to repeat it next year (or sooner!)

### *Friends of the Blackstone Library Annual Book Sale*

With the good fortune of a beautiful weekend, a great spot on the green in the center of town, and many, many talented volunteers, the Friends' annual book sale continues to be a success and major source of income for the library.

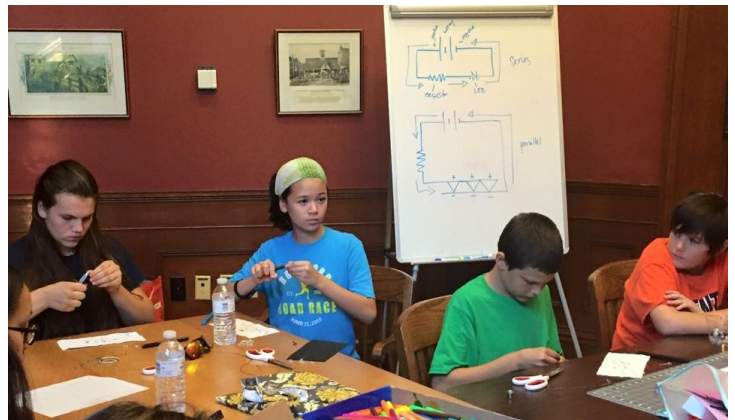
This year's sale gross revenues totaled over \$55,000, which will be used to fund the library's museum passes, continuing education for staff, enrichment programs, summer reading, MakerLab materials and programs, our Mango Languages database, and our new bestseller book club.

Thank you Friends!

Dr. Nicholas Nickou, who was responsible for the beautiful design of the library's landscaping with rare specimen trees, passed away this month, and the library received donations in his memory.

Staff were able to attend several professional development workshops in September. Kathy Oxsalida and I attended a project management and capital planning workshop offered by the State library. Kathy also attended a human resources management program. I attended an advocacy workshop with Libby Post offered by the State library (Libby is also presenting at the ACLB workshop in November).

Several board members attended the Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit Council's workshop on board development with Anne Yurasek, and we are scheduled to attend part two in October.



*Teens participating in the final session of this summer's Learning Labs, made possible with a grant from the Connecticut State Library and the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences.*

At the end of the month, Carly, Katy and I attended a two-day forum called MakerSpace 3.0 at the Westport Library. The event was very fast-paced, where we learned about sewing with conductive thread, Arduino programming and circuitry, Makey Makey & Scratch, and other up-to-the minute maker tools.

The keynote speaker was David Lankes, and we were especially privileged to participate in a small breakout session with him, where we explored the idea of our community as our collection. Along with books and other traditional sources of information, this way of thinking incorporates partners in our community to engage in hands-on learning opportunities. During our two days at

the Westport library, we felt the space alive with activity—patrons are making, sewing, inventing, learning and transforming. Some programs are led by library staff, and many more are initiated by community partners. The first day ended with a maker showcase—library members displayed items that they had designed in the maker lab, talked about their inspiration, and in some cases were able to relate how they were bringing their inventions to the market. The three of us who attended talked for a long time afterwards about how we could shift to a collaborative, transformative community space. Stay tuned!

*Karen Jensen  
Library Director*

## Summer Reading in the Youth Services Department

The Branford Schools, James Blackstone Memorial Library and Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library have built a strong collaborative relationship over the past five years, through projects that promote reading and hands-on learning opportunities.



Children had an opportunity to participate with actors from the Hampstead Stage Company.

The most recent partnership between the libraries and schools happened this summer with our summer reading program. Librarians from both Branford libraries were able to demonstrate the Evanced Summer Reader software to the school's reading specialists, who were immediately on board. All Branford students were enrolled in the program before school ended. Parents also received instructions on how to log in and record their books on the last day of school, creating a smooth transition from school to the public libraries.

Librarians from the Blackstone Library and the Willoughby Wallace libraries promoted the program in all three elementary schools with a superhero-themed skit starring Book Lady and her arch nemesis Dr. TV. Both characters required costumes and were played by school employees which the students thoroughly enjoyed. As a matter of fact, the librarians were asked to return in the fall to congratulate everyone on their efforts and bring Book Lady and Dr. TV back for a final summer reading act to celebrate students' reading achievements.

Incentives are an important component of all summer reading programs. In Branford, children were able to set personal goals as to the number of books they would read, and they were able to post reviews and comment on reviews posted by others.

Children also checked in with their local library on a weekly basis to receive small prizes and marbles for our marble machine. Built by Joe Kobylanski, a school employee, the incredible magic marble machine is a replica of the original 1896 iron library stacks that are still present in the Blackstone library reference department. The stacks are enclosed in plexiglass with chutes entering on all sides, which funnel the marbles into large tubes. The tubes are marked with numbers that reflect the amount of books read by Branford students over the summer. Despite 24/7 access to technology, the children were ecstatic to see the marbles roll down the chutes to the tubes.

When children completed the goal they had set for the summer, they were invited to stop into the library and print a prize on our new 3-D printer. This was a real treat for all of our participants, especially elementary school children, since most of our 3D printing classes are meant for middle school students and up.

One of the advantages of the online reading program using Evanced Summer Reader

software was the ability to produce individualized reports for each school, in order to track the number of books read by each grade. Based on sheer numbers, the program was a huge success—a total of 1,942 readers who completed 12,927 books! In comparison, we saw 259 children read 5,000 books last summer. Having the teachers embrace the program and support our effort by empowering students to register for the program before school let out for the summer made all of the difference. Letting the software do the work of tracking freed up our library staff to interact in meaningful ways with the students, giving them more time to make recommendations and talk about what they had read. The incentives of the marbles and small prizes were another way to encourage visits to the library; staff remarked that they met many families who were new to the Blackstone.

Through these shared experiences the James Blackstone Memorial Library, Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library and the Branford Public School District are able to highlight our offerings, pool our resources and expand awareness to benefit the community. We are excited to continue to expand our partnership through new services and projects.

*Carly Lemire*

## Caddystacks@Blackstone

Our first annual Caddystacks event is over, and preliminary results indicate success!

There were many creatively decorated holes, with law firms, car dealerships, banks and a specially engineered obstacle in the children's room. The 18th hole wound down the spiral stairs from the children's floor to the landing outside the auditorium. Families had a great time playing throughout the library on Saturday and Sunday-over 200 mini golfers played the course, some played multiple times.

Golfers came to the 19th Hole Party in pairs, foursomes and solo to test their skills for the grand prize of \$50 Branford bucks, plus the Caddystacks trophy, and chance

to wear the Masters Book Jacket. With low scores ranging from 60 to 61, the top three golfers played off, with Justin Strickland winning the 2015 title!

Local artist Ray Mathews donated a glass putter and created a putting contest where guests could compete to win one of his creations valued at \$250. Jeb Bobbin was the lucky winner.

Many thanks to our community partners:

Guilford Savings Bank, Friends of the Blackstone Library, Susan Barnes and Dan Cosgrove, Brandfon Honda, CELC, Connex Credit Union, Dr. Norman Dahl, Dunkin Donuts, Engineering Specialties Inc,

Polly & Al Fitz, Attorney Richard Florentine, Hammonasset Ford, Jersey Mikes, Kaiser Whitney Staffing, Andy McKirdy & Attorney Robin Sandler, Attorney David Minicozzi, New Neighbors Realty, Weichert Realtors, Anderson Krause, Rotary Club of Branford, Richard Squeri Agency, and the Thimble Island Brewing Company.

And a huge thank you to the many local merchants and board members who donated raffle prizes.

And kudos to our wonderful volunteers-we couldn't have done it without you!



Hole #2 sponsored by Hammonasset Ford.

## Highlights from the Reference Department-August

August was a month filled with summer reading, genealogy, stack maintenance and new projects. The Reference Department is nearing the end of its section-by-section weeding and collection development project. Once completed, we will have enough room to shift the nonfiction DVDs downstairs, to be shelved by call number.

As we prepare for that move, we are also spearheading a DVD inventory and replace-

ment project. The circulation staff has been extraordinarily helpful in completing this project, which involves inventory lists, checking the shelves, verifying checkout dates, and much more.

One of the greatest strengths we have as a library is the extraordinary cooperation and participation of all employees, across departments. The Youth Services department is also working on their collection development and

inventory and we share ideas and strategies with them.

This cross-department cooperation fosters a closer bond among employees in different departments and enhances our knowledge of the entire library collection. The Reference staff is very grateful for the assistance and we look forward to completing more projects together.

*Deborah Trofatter*



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## October/November 2015 Program Highlights

### Living with Dementia

10/8 & 11/12 @ 11 AM

10/13 & 11/17 @ 6 PM

For caregivers of people with any type of dementia. Presented by Maria Tomasetti, South Central Regional Director of the Alzheimer's Association, CT Chapter. Please register by calling 203-230-1777, ext. 14.

### Healing Through Prose & Poetry

10/10, 17, 24, 31 @ 10 AM

Amy J. Barry, a writer and expressive arts facilitator, will engage participants in writing poetry and short prose followed by group discussion about what we read and write, in order to heal through loss or transition. Writing experience is not required.

### Lisa Reisman: 5 Months, 10 Years, 2 Hours

10/14 @ 2—4 PM

When a NYC attorney leaves the law, buys a red converti-

ble, and hits the road, she doesn't expect to wake up in a hospital room with a brain tumor and a prognosis of one year to live. Or that ten years later, she'll be competing in a grueling triathlon. Books available for signing and purchase.

### Menunkatuck Audubon:

#### 2014 CT Birds Photo Journal

10/14 @ 7—8 PM

Presented by Patrick Comins.

### Demonology & Occult in the Civil War

10/19 @ 7—8 PM

Presented by Matthew Bartlett, a graduate of American Military University with a Master's in Military History with a specialization in the American Civil War.

### Eerie Connecticut: Local Myth & Mystery

10/28 @ 6:30—8 PM

Rob Nelson explores the history of the Fairfield Witch Trials, the "White Lady" of Monroe, and Dudleytown,

the "most haunted place on Earth!"

### Writing Your Family History

11/7, 14, 21 @ 10—11:30 am

Sarah Bradley hosts this series of writing workshops focusing on helping you write your family's history.

### Rave On!

11/8 @ 2—3:15 PM

The music of Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison and other legends of early rock and roll. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

### Charge or Retreat at Gettysburg—You Decide!

11/10 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

Learn more about those who commanded the Union forces and decide for yourself: order Pickett to advance, or, heed the advice of Longstreet. Presented by COL (Dr.) Richard Young, Connecticut Army National Guard.

## August 2015 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

### Total Circulation: 17,071

August 2014: 17,391

ConnectiCard: 3,451

August 2014: 3,081

Renewals: 3,735

### Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 629

Overdrive audiobooks: 165

Axis360: discontinued

Zinio: 191

IndieFlix: discontinued

### Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 11 Loaned 37

### Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

8 programs/138 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

6 programs/119 attendance

School-age (6-11)

9 programs/161 attendance

All Ages

2 programs/70 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 25

Total Attendance: 488

### Teen Programs (12+)

5 programs/40 attendance

### Adult programs

24 programs/482 attendance

### Lucy Hammer Room

58 meetings/222 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2422

Facebook: 1192 Likes

Constant Contact: 4999

Average Daily Visitors: 516

Days Open: 26