



# Report to the Board of Trustees

April 7, 2021

## From the Director

Strategic planning staff met throughout March and began identifying motivational segments in preparation for an April 12 meeting with Jeanine from Innovation Builders. Identifying motivational segments entails looking at patron groups to learn what they are trying to accomplish functionally and emotionally. For instance, Job Seekers/ Career Builders, Wellness Seekers, People Looking for a Third Place are some of the segments we are exploring. Our goal is to create a screening tool and questions for community interviews that will be conducted in May/ June. We expect to have 7—8 segments to interview in total. Staff will receive intensive training and mentorship from Innovation Builders in order to conduct the interviews. An exciting “bonus” is that some of the training will be shared with the Ferguson Library in Stamford, CT. This library also participated in the EXCITE! Pilot that JBML took with Innovation Builders in 2017. It is always helpful to network with other libraries for inspiration and problem solving.

In other news, the Computer Lab and Reading Room opened on March 15. Nearly all library services are available during regular hours at



*Anna Barnes, browsing in the Youth Services Department. Photo by Kelley Fryer, The Sound*

this time.

At their March 16 meeting, the Friends voted to make a special donation to the library in the amount of \$30,000. It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to vote on the designation of major gifts and the Finance Committee will make a recommendation for the funds’ use. The Friends cited the success of the book sales they had held in the spring as well as exceeding their goal for online sales as the reason for the increased funding.

100% of staff in the eligible age group have been vaccinated. The rest of the staff were eligible for vaccines on April 1 and are working to get appointments.

Miss Carly will be taking family leave at the end of the month. She has done an

amazing job of preparing her department for her absence. Miss Sarah will complete the monthly report, and Miss Carol, who works on Wednesday evenings, will fill in for additional hours over the summer. Miss Mary will continue providing story times and programs. All YS staff will collaborate in choosing and ordering materials for the children’s collection.

Finally, Library Giving Day is April 6th, during National Library Week, (April 4—10). On May 3—15, the Blackstone Library’s first online Experience Auction takes place. Katy and the Development Committee have done a fantastic job preparing—there is literally something to suit just about anyone’s taste for adventure.

*-Karen Jensen*

creativebug®

If you have a Blackstone OR Willoughby Wallace Library Card, you can now access Creativebug for free! There are over 1,000 online arts & crafts classes available to choose from through Creativebug, all taught by expert Instructors.

Some of the classes available include but are not limited to:

- Knitting & Crochet
- Art & Design, Paper
- Quilting & Sewing
- Jewelry
- Kids crafts
- Food & Home
- Holiday & Party

Classes never expire, so you can complete your crafts at your own pace.

There is an inspiration page where you can get crafty fun ideas, plus videos for you to meet the artists and take a look into their lives.

## Highlights from the Youth Services Department—February

This month the Youth Services Department was busily preparing for spring. Not only was our program lineup due but we also received the list of the 2022 Nutmegs. Miss Mary spent a fair amount of time researching what we owned and marking the titles that we were missing. The new titles will be made public in May. Having this list also made it possible for me to pre-order books that fall under a series. So, knowing that certain titles are going to be popular allows me to order each book's continuation ahead of time - this way readers do not have to wait to see what happens.

Miss Mary and I also wanted to get a head start on summer reading so we researched this year's theme, Tails and Tales (all about animals) to see how our town-wide StoryWalk could apply. After reviewing a large pool of books that had to do with pet adoption, rescues and therapy applications we settled on one that could span a wide age range and is actually based on a true story (We aren't revealing the title just yet!). We then worked together to come up with thoughtful questions for each spread and asked Katy for her graphic expertise in making our StoryWalk template that will be blown up and laminated with each spread and corresponding question. These pages are placed in the windows of Main Street businesses so that family and friends can get outside, create meaningful conversations and hopefully check out a lot

of what our downtown has to offer.

I also started diving into this year's virtual summer reading game, which will be similar to last year where individuals and/or families will be asked to complete a series of challenges that are literacy based. To go along with the theme we have also devised a plan to get animals, nature and the great outdoors involved in some pretty cool ways and we are excited to see how this year's iteration will be compared to last. Working on challenge creation, setting up the timeline and the overall aesthetic is exciting and being able to collaborate with co-workers in different departments keeps things fresh during this period of isolation. This year's game will also be announced sometime in May, so keep a lookout!

Every February we take part in the nationwide initiative of Take Your Child to the Library Day. This year the theme altered a bit to Take the Library to Your Child Day, so we worked with the Riverside Reptiles Education Center to provide a reptile meet and greet. The organization included an interactive component that was SO simple but also totally awesome! Every child that signed up had to color 2 - 3 geckos and then hide or camouflage them in their ZOOM screen background. Participants could not wait to have their screen highlighted to see if others could guess where their lizards were hidden. It was amazing to see how a tiny

idea could spark so much joy and got me thinking about different ways we can share or interact even though we are separated by a computer screen.

The other animal program we featured this month brought in a wide age range. It was called Life Under the Ice and our friends at the Denison Pequotsepos Center shared different animals that maintain their existence even though their homes are frozen solid. The topic was pretty intriguing and actually brought in a large number of adults that wanted to see the various ways animals can survive above and below frozen ponds. The Center shared a wide variety of live animals and featured their various adaptations. It was fun to see the kids and adults listen and then ask their various questions in the chat box, who knew the topic would be so popular?

Miss Mary also did some personal summer reading prep this month by taking a ZOOM informational class. She knows the basics and can help families log in but she wanted to be able to create classes from scratch, set up recurring meetings and learn a more about different settings. It honestly has been awesome to see everyone on the Youth Services staff obtain new skills and find new ways for us to remain connected to the community. We have maintained our relevance because we were willing to adapt.



*"Cece can't wait to go to the library this Saturday! She has talked about it all week! So thank you thank you for giving her "the best day ever!!!!" She told me she wanted to sleep with her library card!!!! <3<3"*

Diane Pappacoda  
Director, Branford  
Early Learning Center

## 125th Anniversary—Accession Records

This month we're sharing another library artifact that makes us thankful for computers! In our Blackstone Library archives we have a collection of original Accession Records dating from the earliest days of the Blackstone to approximately the 1940s. What exactly is an Accession Record? They're massive hand-written ledgers of every book purchased for the library collection and in-

clude information on purchase dates, prices paid, publication information, and even when the book was eventually removed from the collection—known as Condemning according to the stamp that was used at the time. These ledger books were specially designed by Melville Dewey (of Dewey Decimal fame) and include a handy list of standardized abbreviations to help save

time and space. These books are a real gem of library history, but we think we'll stick with our computerized catalog!

*-Jenna Anthony*

## Highlights from the Reference Department-February

The Blackstone Library provides a wide variety of free digital resources. Included are ebooks and audiobooks from OverDrive and Hoopla, as well as SimplyE (which provides access to the CT State collection, New York Public Library's Classics Collection and the Digital Public Library of America).

Over 3,000 magazines are available for unlimited, concurrent use through the Libby or OverDrive app. Patrons can watch movies, TV shows and documentaries (for both adults and children) with Hoopla and Kanopy.

Blackstone Library cardholders can access the New Haven Register (1988 to the present) from home as well as the following from the CT Digital Library: the Chicago Tribune (1985-present), CT Digital Newspaper Project (includes 38 historic CT newspapers),

the Hartford Courant (1992-present), the Los Angeles Times (1985-present), the New York Times (1985-present), the Wall Street Journal (1984-present) and the Washington Post (1987-present).

Log into Gale Legal Forms and find a wide selection of state-specific and multi-state legal forms; examples include real estate contracts, wills, premarital agreements, bankruptcy, divorce, landlord, tenant, and many others. There are also Legal Definitions, a Law Digest and Legal Q&A.

Petersons Test Prep provides standardized test preparation, tools for researching and selecting college and graduate schools, and information on tuition assistance. There are resources for jobs and careers, practice tests, online books, advice on re-

sumes, cover letters, interviewing and networking and much more. Our JobNow service provides assistance and live coaching with resumes, cover letters, interviewing and much more.

If you want to learn a language, try Pronunciator, which offers 163 language programs as well as courses to learn English in 120 home languages. Pronunciator also offers ProCitizen, a citizenship prep course, in English and in Spanish.

While ordinarily only available within the library, ProQuest has provided at-home access to AncestryLibrary throughout the pandemic and they have promised access through the end of June 2021.

*-Debby Trofatter*

THE BLACKSTONE MEMORIAL LIBRARY Branford, Connecticut Lecture Course At The Library Hall Lectures Begin At 8 P. M.	
<b>3</b>	Monday January 26, 1920 DR. HENRY W. SEARS Lecture GRUMBLERS
<b>2</b>	Monday January 19, 1920 ALPHA MALE CHORUS of New Haven CONCERT
<b>1</b>	Friday January 9, 1920 DR. HENRY R. ROSE ILLUSTRATED LECTURE THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The library has a long tradition of hosting lectures and concerts in our auditorium (and we look forward to the day that we are able to do so again!). Here is what was happening a hundred years ago. Be sure to check out our new spring calendar to see what's happening now!



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## April 2021 Virtual Program Highlights

### East Rock, West Rock, & the Triassic-Jurassic Extinction *April 10 @ 2:00 - 3:00 pm*

Some 200 million years ago, an extremely productive bout of volcanic eruptions formed East Rock, West Rock, and many other rocks, together known as the Central Atlantic Magmatic Province. Join Sophie Westacott of the Yale Peabody Museum for a talk that will explore this tale of ancient climate change and mass extinction, told in part through familiar places around New Haven.

### Branford Forum Presents Frederick Douglass: In his time and in our own with Professor David Blight *April 11 @ 2:00 - 3:30 pm*

The Branford Forum, a community organization that brings nationally renowned figures to the Shoreline, is returning to the Blackstone Library for a series of virtual

conversations.

### Intro to JobNow *April 15 @ 2:00 - 3:00 pm*

Applying for a job but confused about where to start? Learn about JobNow, free online resource offering resume assistance, interview tips, live coaching and more. All you need is your library card.

### After the Hunger: A Virtual Author Event *April 17 @ 2:00 - 3:00 pm*

The Blackstone Library is pleased to host author MaryEllen Beveridge for a discussion of her short story collection *After the Hunger*. Set mostly in New England, her stories explore the complexities of family life and their changing dynamics. MaryEllen Beveridge is an honors graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her short stories have appeared in several literary magazines.

### House History Part I: Accessing Connecticut Land Records *Part 1: April 22 @ 6 - 7:00 pm* *Part 2: April 29 @ 6 - 7:00 pm*

This two part series presented by Bryna O'Sullivan of Charter Oak Genealogy, will help you trace the history of a historic home. The first session covers building a timeline of the home's ownership. The second will help you discover the home's story through maps, photos, local histories, and more. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.*

### The Midnight Call: A Virtual Author Event *May 1 @ 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm*

Jodé Millman discusses her book *The Midnight Call*, an exciting legal thriller featuring plenty of twists and turns! *The Midnight Call* is a winner of several awards including the 2020 American Fiction Award for Legal Thriller and a 2020 Bronze IPPY Award for Suspense.

*All programs are virtual—please visit our website for registration information: [www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)*

## February 2021 Statistics

**Total Circulation:** 4,306  
*February 2020: 9,720*

**borrowIT:** 1,024  
*February 2020: 2,734*

**Renewals:** 3,701

**Computer Sessions:** N/A  
**WIFI Logins:** 845

**Facebook:** 1948 Likes  
**Instagram:** 1124 Followers  
**MailChimp:** 7,667

### Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1430  
Overdrive audiobooks: 641  
Overdrive magazines: 379  
HOOPLA: 1021  
Kanopy: 320  
Pronunciator: 560  
Ancestry Library: 2418 searches

**Total Downloadable:** 6,769

### Children's Programs

*14 programs/131 attendance*

### Teen Programs (12+)

*4 programs/ attendance*

### Adult programs

*19 programs/863 attendance*

**Lucy Hammer Room** N/A  
**Conference Room** N/A

**Days Open:** N/A

**Average Daily Visitors:** N/A