



#### Friends Holiday Basket Sale

Stop in to the new Library lobby on Wednesday December 11th at 5:00pm for prosecco, cookies, and the opportunity to shop from a wide array of gift baskets donated and artfully wrapped by members of the Friends of the Library. There is bound to be something for those hard-to-shop-for people and all proceeds benefit the library!

# Report to the Board of Trustees

December 4, 2019

## From the Director

This month we moved into our new Fiction area! After months of planning by Kathy, Deirdre and Deb, and two intense days of moving by our wonderful staff, the collection was available to our patrons on newly cleaned, brightly lit shelves. Having our staff pitch in to complete the moving saved the project tens of thousands of dollars, and we all felt proud that we accomplished the task in just a few days. The old fiction space is now ready to be transformed into the new children's space, and then finally, the entire youth services area can work on one floor in an expanded space. We cannot wait!

In other project news, the elevator refurbishment continued and is starting to look great. It is on track to be finished by mid-December. The area outside of the elevator on the ground floor has been newly carpeted.

Finally, as work progressed on the rear roof area, the contractor discovered that the structure has seriously deteriorated, and will need significant repair. Until that can be accomplished, the roof will be sealed so as not to incur further damage from the elements.

The Branford Rotary Club made a \$10,000 pledge at the



*Staff moved into the new fiction area on November 14 & 15.*

beginning of the capital campaign, and they will be using that funding to provide an informational kiosk on the ground floor at the foot of the spiral staircase. The kiosk will guide patrons throughout the building and display digital flyers advertising library programs. I met with a committee at the end of the month to plan for this equipment.

In November, I also attended the annual FOCL fall conference, the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce nonprofit workshop with Katy, and the annual ACLB workshop with board members.

As the year draws to a close and we reflect on how fortunate we are, staff has been

very generous in giving to local causes. *Be a Santa to a Senior*, which is represented by a tree in our lobby with tags suggesting gifts that would be appreciated by seniors in need, has been very popular. Staff also chose to provide gifts through the Counseling Center to a local family in need this year and we have donated several baskets to the Friends holiday sale. Our staff is also participating in the Town Center Merchant's Holiday Wreath silent auction to benefit local charity *Feed Branford Kids*.

Finally, we are looking forward to the Branford Garden Club's annual display of hand-made wreaths and decorations.

*Karen Jensen*

## Highlights from the Youth Services Department—October



This Halloween, our patrons met Tiger, Kanga and Piglet

October's first event was the town's annual Trunk or Treat program for preschoolers. Every year we dress up and decorate a staff member's car. With the help of our tween and teen groups we were able to transform my car into the Hundred Acre Woods and Miss Mary, Sarah and I became different characters from the popular Winnie the Pooh series. We met 50+ children and gave out candy and information about our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program in hope of bringing in more readers.

The following week we held our annual Halloween Parade with the help of the rest of our staff. The parade took place in the Reading Room and families saw the building's most recent updates by parading around all three levels! We had around 40 families participate and it was fun being able to prepare for a storytime, try out new songs and some of our families again—**PLUS** the adorable costumes did not hurt. Miss Mary and I were also impressed with Miss Sarah's willingness to jump in. She sang, danced and read books all while pretending to be Piglet. She really got to see the other end of the Youth Service's spectrum and it was fun being able to share something we look forward to each year. See our facebook page for some snapshots from the event. See if you can spot my daughter as Winnie the Pooh and Katy's son as the sweetest grey rabbit!

The week of Halloween I arranged a mini storytime at the Community Dining Room. I brought books to read along with monster door hangers and bookmarks for the kids to decorate. Going forward we have committed to reading at the Community Dining Room the third Tuesday of every month, which is their family meal night. Next month I am going to bring library card forms, program calendars and brochures so that I can talk a little more about what we do and create cards for families that have never come to the library before. We hope that this new partnership will bring more families into the building.

Miss Mary ran our annual pumpkin painting program the day before Halloween. The program runs pretty seamlessly; we have tried to include craft books and stencils in the past but kids just want to go with their own designs which I respect. We packed about 15 people in the Lucy Hammer Room, which was pretty tight but everyone left happy, proudly showing off their designs.

Miss Sarah also held her own Halloween program for teens. Realizing that we are within walking distance to downtown and that Light the Night is such a huge event, she invited tweens and teens to come to the Library to watch the *Addams Family*. Once the clock struck 5:30 pm she sent them on their way to trick or

treat as a group and enjoy the festivities downtown.

The Library also participated in National Chemistry week by being an experiment site on October 27th. The week is celebrated nationwide to spread awareness on how chemistry is used in our day to day lives. This year, Science Outside the Box came fully stocked with three different hands-on experiments and a group of scientists to discuss how each of them worked! The program was a drop-in format so families could come at anytime between 1:30 and 3:30pm to do one or all three experiments. Jane Copes, the director of Science Outside the Box, had around fifteen families walk through and said that everyone was fully engaged from beginning to end.

Finally, Miss Sarah did tons of program promotion this month by attending the high school's community service fair and working with me on ten freshmen visits. During each session we talked a lot about programming, what your library card can do and how they can rack up the forty community service hours they need in order to graduate. The response was fast and furious with large program counts and a bustling brand-new teen space that keeps the youth services department on their toes!

Carly Lemire

## Factual Fridays—The Hosley Block

Until the 1950s Branford had many neighborhood grocery stores where the shopper could obtain personal service or have their groceries delivered on a weekly basis. One of the many old time grocery stores in Branford was operated by Chet Prann.

The Hosley Block was built at the west corner of Main and Park Streets in 1891 by local contractor Benjamin Hosley. The first tenants were Prann and Stannard both of Westbrook. Chester "Chet" Prann ran the grocery store and his brother-in-law George R. Stannard ran a hardware business. George Stannard retired in 1920 and Chet moved his grocery store to the former St. Mary's Church building at 112 Montowese

Street in 1925. Only a few years later the Hosley Block was destroyed by fire.

Customers entering Prann's store were greeted by the stout gentleman singing songs such as "Can She Bake A Cherry Pie" or "The Horse Marines". Customers were enticed by a free nibble of the huge rounds of cheese which stood in back of the big, red coffee grinder. Brother Fred Prann filled the pastry case with fresh bread and other baked goods. There were barrels of molasses, vinegar, pickles and apples. Penny candy was a popular item for the youth of all ages. The immense ice box was filled twice a day by the local iceman and was filled with butter, lard, cream and milk.

The news of the day was exchanged and the local sports scene was discussed. Chester Prann was an avid supporter of all Branford sports and sponsored many teams.

Chet and Alice Prann raised their four sons in Branford and all of them had successful careers in engineering after graduating from Yale. Chet retired from the grocery business in 1938 after 47 years and died the following year at the age of 75. (Photo credit: Branford Historical Society)

*Jane Peterson Bouley*

*Factual Fridays will continue to run on Instagram and Facebook through the end of the year.*



Prann's Grocery Store

## Highlights from the Reference Department—October

The Reference Department continues to be busy with a wide variety of questions and tasks. This variety is what makes coming to work every day fun and challenging. Collectively, we had eight tech appointments with patrons, hosted a drop-in tech help session at the library and at Canoe Brook Senior Center, taught classes, hosted Game Night, Dungeons & Dragons and book clubs and completed the rest of the year's Friday Fun Facts.

The Reference staff is regularly contacted by other staff to assist with technology, local

history, programming questions and assisting patrons. This cooperation is one of the reasons we as a library are as successful as we are in serving patrons. Everyone on staff knows that they can contact us for help and we know that we can reach out to other departments if we have a question. The way in which we respond to our colleagues' needs is also reflected in how we serve our patrons; it is a culture of friendliness and a willingness to go the extra mile that makes Blackstone a very special place to work and to visit.

We are looking forward to our last couple of months of renovation and we can't wait to see and share all of the completed spaces. It will be a bit of an adjustment for our patrons as they learn where the collections are; the Reference Department is working on ways to make that easier for them. We are providing three computer areas until the elevator is back in service, we are making ourselves available at the lobby desk as much as we can and we are roving throughout the building to assist patrons during this transition.

*Debby Trofatter*



## December 2019 Program Highlights

James Blackstone Memorial Library  
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Branford, CT 06405

203.488.1441  
[reference@blackstonelibrary.org](mailto:reference@blackstonelibrary.org)  
[facebook.com/blackstonelibrary](http://facebook.com/blackstonelibrary)  
[twitter.com/blackstonelib](http://twitter.com/blackstonelib)  
[www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)

**...more than books**

Join our email list for more information about programs  
[www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)

### Uncover Branford\*\*

**December 14 @ 10:30am-12**

Share your favorite Branford spots and plan an outing as a group to visit and uncover new places in town.

library's sewing machines and 3D printer (free!) and work together on building costumes for cons, ren fairs, LARP, and everyday life!

RSVP @ <https://blackstonelibrarycosplay-club.eventbrite.com>.

County Bar Association. First-come, first-served. Sign up at Reference up to 30 minutes before program begins.

### Adult Coloring Group

**December 16 @ 6 - 8:00 pm**

Come relax and socialize with our adult coloring group! Coloring is a great way to keep the brain engaged and the body relaxed—plus it's a great place to make new friends! All materials provided, just bring your creativity.

### Books 'n' Brews Book Club

**December 18 @ 6 - 8:00 pm**

Each month, Books 'n' Brews offers 2 titles to choose from, each with its own discussion group to take part in. We bring next month's books to each meeting. Come out and grab one for next month's group. New members welcome. Read one of the titles and come out and join the fun! *Books 'n' Brews meets at Thimble Island Brewery*.

### Cosplay Club\*\*

**December 18**

**@ 5:30-7:30 pm**

Mature teens and adults are invited to join veteran cosplayer, Denny McDermott, for a monthly opportunity to show off your latest creations, get tips and tricks from fellow cosplayers, use the

### Ask A Lawyer\*\*

**December 19 @ 6-8pm**

Free consultation with a lawyer, from the New Haven

### Handmade Spa Products Workshop

**December 21 @ 2—3:30 pm**

Bring the spa to you with our DIY spa products workshop! You'll learn how to create your own sugar scrub and bath salts so you can enjoy a relaxing evening in. Not in the mood to treat yourself? Make one for someone you love instead! *Registration for this program is not required, but supplies are limited. Workshop is first come, first served.*

*The Library will be closed on December 24 & 25 in observance of the Christmas holiday.*

*The Library will close at 5pm on December 31 and will be closed on January 1 in honor of New Year's Day.*

*Check our website for more programs! Programs with \*\* require registration.*

## October 2019 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

### Total Circulation: 9,445

*October 2018: 10,296*

### borrowIT: 2,436

*October 2018: 2,328*

### Renewals: 6,222

### Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 910

Overdrive audiobooks: 552

RB Digital: 375

Hoopla: 501 plays

Kanopy: 96 plays

Pronunciator: 462 users

### Children's Programs:

*Babies (0-2)*

*3 programs/109 attendance*

*Preschool (3-5)*

*8 programs/239 attendance*

*School-age (6-11)*

*3 programs/14 attendance*

*All Ages*

*2 programs/20 attendance*

### Total Children's Programs: 14

**Total Attendance: 378**

### Teen Programs (12+)

*22 programs/223 attendance*

### Adult programs

*16 programs/131 attendance*

### Hammer & Conference Room

*128 meetings/360 attendance*

### Computer Sessions: 1,871

### Facebook: 1,777 Likes

### MailChimp: 7,783 subscribers

### Average Daily Visitors: \*\*

**Days Open: 29**

*\*\*Count resumes in Nov. 2019*