



Report to the Board of Trustees

December 2, 2020

From the Director

The building committee met on November 5 and 19. The steel supporting structure has been installed on the roof. The copper coating is expected to be installed and the project complete by end of this month. The auditorium ceiling plaster has been repaired, the trim is set to be painted with Sherwin Williams 7562—Roman Column (white). The committee has been exploring several colors for the coffers, ranging from lighter pink thought to be close to the original color, to shades of yellow, green, blue, and purple. A decision is expected soon.

LION announced that membership fees would not increase in FY 2021. LION is a consortium of approximately 28 libraries that share an integrated library computer system. LION provides the ability to share resources easily and quickly among member libraries, share subscriptions to electronic resources, and utilize shared technical services.

The Garden Club is planning to install wreaths at all of the library entrances. Since there are few people in the building, we decided to forgo the interior decorations this year.



The pieces making up the steel supporting structure were delivered on November 5 and lifted one by one.

STAY VIGILANT



Wear Mask



Personal Hygiene



Social Distancing

✓ protect yourself ✓ protect your loved ones ✓ protect others

The Governor rolled back CT's reopening guidelines on November 6 as COVID cases increased across the state.

The Rotary Club's wayfinding kiosk is up and running!

Trustee Michelle Blank, Yale SOM Fellow Eloise Owens and I worked on the LSTA Grant application for strategic planning funding and are almost ready to submit it to the grant administrator at the State Library for review.

The fall appeal was mailed the Saturday before Thanksgiving and we are beginning to receive donations.

We have signed paperwork for Guilford Savings Bank in order to apply to the SBA for PPP loan forgiveness.

The Library recently received a Kill-A-Watt meter from Eversource. This device allows residents to calculate the energy usage of appliances in their homes and identify which may be causing spikes

in their monthly bills. The Kill-A-Watt meter is available to borrow as part of the Library of Things.

As we enter the holiday season, the Governor has strongly discouraged travel and extended family gatherings. The entire State of CT has seen a spike in COVID-19 cases, and some area libraries are reducing hours and access to their buildings. The Town Hall is requesting appointments, and the Willoughby Wallace Library has closed access to its computers through December 4. At Blackstone, we are seeing 20-30 people throughout the day at the most—usually people who have an urgent need to use the computers or to print documents. There is little foot traffic in the stacks and we continue to offer contactless pickup, zoom programs, and telephone help.

-Karen Jensen

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—October



October is always an exciting time at the Library since we get to dress up and host our annual PreK and younger Halloween Parade. Realizing that our COVID cases were escalating we knew that Halloween was going to have to look different for us this year. After throwing around ideas Miss Sarah, Mary and I decided that we would put together grab and go kits that contained candy-free prizes that parents could hide around the house, yard or even hand out throughout the day. We also created a community scavenger hunt where participants needed to find certain Halloween items around their town or street. Items included: jack-o-lanterns, mums, skeletons and other decorations that businesses and families typically display outside. We also shared the idea of placing candy inside plastic eggs and then hiding them in the yard or house for kids to locate. My sister-in-law took this idea a step further by writing out riddles or clues as to where the candy would be hidden! We felt good knowing that we could provide some normalcy and safe ways for families to take part in the day. In the end 25 families took kits and shared that they were putting our ideas to good use.

Miss Sarah hosted her second virtual Paint Night for teens and had great success! The night was hosted by Pam's Picasso and was super simple to work with when it came to arranging all the necessary materials and having them available for pick up. The

class signed onto ZOOM at the same time to learn how to compose an autumn sunset complete with pumpkins and a black cat! The coolest thing about these sessions is that even though everyone is using the same supplies and following the instructor, everyone's paintings are still 100% unique, whether it is the shading, placement of objects or how they interpret the artist's instructions. Miss Sarah was able to share some of their completed paintings on social media.

This month's Take and Make's were also a huge hit. Since it was the week of Halloween we decided to put together some yummy treats! Miss Sarah got all the necessary ingredients for oreo mug cake while Miss Mary and I showed everyone how to make the traditional "worms in dirt" recipe BUT with a twist since we included sugar pumpkins to go along with the season. Both sets of bags flew off the entryway shelves the day of which was exciting to see. Our "how to" instructions can still be found on our YouTube page if you are in need of a good laugh.

Miss Sarah also got into the Halloween spirit this month by hosting a LIVE stream of *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*. The movie is based on the popular book trilogy that still circulates today and is filled with, you guessed it, scary stories, but also these awesome black ink drawings that really set the mood. Sarah chose this title because it was spooky but not too

spooky and also for the love of the trilogy since most of her teens read the titles in middle school. Sarah was able to add to her viewing by including a LIVE chat that showed up on the computer screen while the movie was playing. This way, everyone could be in on the conversation and make comments as a group, which made everyone feel like they were in one big room. Sarah said that it could not have gone better and now feels confident streaming movies in the future.

Miss Mary and I also hosted our first group tour since closing the building back in March. Every year the high school's Community Life Skills Program has worked with us to create volunteer opportunities for students that are looking for job experience. Due to COVID that group has not been able to volunteer anywhere in Branford but the Life Skills coach still wanted her students to experience the Library and all it has to offer. So, we decided to split the Life Skills class in half and hosted two in-house library tours so that they could experience the layout of the building, apply for library cards and learn about the resources we currently have online. The first set of students were fantastic listeners and it was fun being able to talk to some of the students we worked with last year face to face. The second half of the class will experience a similar tour come November.

-Carly Lemire

BACA's Painted Doors of Branford

This pair of doors was created by Branford Artist Marta Reisman for the Branford Art & Cultural Alliance's The Painted Doors of Branford, which took place on the Town Green on November 7 & 8, 2020.

Proceeds from the sale and silent auction of the doors went toward funding a scholarship for a Branford High School student pursuing an education in the written, visual, and performing arts in 2021.

Marta's design is "about the magic of reading and about

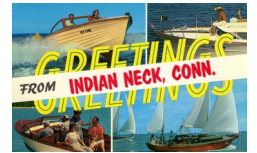
how Blackstone Library has been such an important fixture in Branford, enriching our town not just year after year, but even through this pandemic."

We owe a special thanks to Judy Stebbins, Al Bertoline, and the Friends of the Library for sponsoring these doors.

We would also like to thank artist Marta Reisman for painting this beautiful piece, and also the special donors responsible for its display at the library.



Photo by Marta Reisman



Jane Bouley presented a virtual historic tour of the Indian Neck area of Branford through her collection of postcards. The heyday of the travel postcard lasted from 1905 until World War I with tourists staying in Indian Neck's summer hotels or shoreline cottages. They came to swim and boat, go fishing and clamming, or just have fun. The 200-room Montowese House, called the "Queen of the Sound", was the largest summer hotel between Newport and New York City.

Highlights from the Reference Department-September

The library provided another great month of virtual programs that included Financial Planning for Long Term Care, How to Use Your iPad, Spirits of New England, an author event, poetry and Latin classes, book discussions, Friday Night Game Night, a calligraphy class, Branford Forum, a program on W. B. Yeats and the Occult, and a presentation on F. Scott Fitzgerald.

People attended some of our virtual programs from such faraway places as Russia, South Africa, Israel, Ireland, the UK, Wyoming, San Francisco, Florida, and Michigan.

The Reference staff is excited to be working on a number of archives projects. Jenna has begun a project indexing library card applications that date back to the early 1900s.

These handwritten applications are a goldmine for genealogists because in addition to the patron's name and address, additional information such as place of business and occupation are given.

Since patrons had to sign the card, there are signatures that researchers might not find in any other location.

One example was for a gentleman who applied for a card in 1904; he lived in Hartford but worked at the "All Right" Cottage in Indian Neck for William Lounsbury, the hotel proprietor, who vouched for him. In addition to indexing the applications, we are considering a scanning project for them as well.

-Debby Trofatter



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December 2020 Virtual Program Highlights

Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care Information Session

December 3 @ 6:30 pm

Do you know how to protect your assets should you need long-term care? It's a fact: Just one year in a Connecticut nursing home can cost more than \$162,100. Medicare and health insurance may only cover a fraction of these costs. Even if you've put aside money for your retirement such as through a 401(k), these assets are vulnerable should you need long-term care. Aldo Pantano from the CT Partnership for Long-Term Care with the State Office of Policy and Management will tell you how the State's Partnership for Long-Term Care can help you plan ahead for your future long term care needs.

Virtual Game Night

December 4 @ 6:00 pm

Join us for a night of silly online games with some fun, laid-back people, without

having to leave the house! Get all the info you need and RSVP on our Meetup page.

Little Sister:

Virtual Local Author Event

December 12 @ 2:30 pm

CT author Patricia Walsh Chadwick shares her memoir of growing up in a religious cult in the 1950s and 60s with no access to the outside world or its influences. A tale of resilience and grace, Little Sister chronicles, in riveting prose, a surreal childhood and does so without rancor or self-pity.

Virtual Branford Forum:

Creativity in Art and Science

December 13 @ 2:00 pm

Corina Alvarezdelugo, the gallery director of the Ethel Walker School, and Leonard Kaczmarek, a research professor of Pharmacology and of Cellular and Molecular Physiology at Yale, will speak on Creativity in Art and Science – What Lights the Spark and Leads to Innovation?

Know Your Roots: Genealogy Basics with the US Census

January 9 @ 1:00 pm

Getting started with your family history can feel overwhelming. Do you join a website? Listen to your relatives? Something else? This one hour virtual program will introduce participants to the workings of the US census. A foundational source for the research of US based ancestors, the census can allow a researcher to follow a family over time. It can also provide hints for other useful sources. Participants will access the census on the website FamilySearch.org, so that they can do further research from home. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library*

**Library Closed for Christmas
Holiday: December 24 & 25
Library Closes at 5:00 pm on
New Year's Eve and closed on
New Year's Day**

All programs are virtual—please visit our website at www.blackstonelibrary.org for registration information.

October 2020 Statistics

Total Circulation: 4,390
October 2019: 9,445

borrowIT: 942
October 2019: 2,436

Renewals: 3,417

Computer Sessions: 285
WIFI Logins: 958

Facebook: 1895 Likes
Instagram: 957 Followers
MailChimp: 7,668

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1445

Overdrive audiobooks: 563

RB Digital: 469

HOOPLA: 728

Kanopy: 153

Pronunciator: 549

Ancestry Library: 1,772
searches

Total Downloadable: 5,679

Children's Programs

16 programs/116 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)

5 programs/36 attendance

Adult programs

18 programs/480 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room N/A
Conference Room N/A

Average Daily Visitors N/A