



Report to the Board of Trustees

February 3, 2016

From the Director

One of the happiest days this month was when C-Car resumed delivery service. Rebranded as DeliverIT, the service will be completely taken in-house by the State library in March of this year. All indications are that the program should run more effectively in the future.

On January 14, I participated in LION's best practices task force. Our initial meeting included library administrators from most of the member libraries. We set a goal to determine the best lending practices in terms of duration, fine structure, amount of time to hold requested items and how often or whether to renew certain items. While the task to bring all member libraries to a consensus felt daunting at first, we left confident that we could at least make a solid recommendation, and that a set of guidelines would encourage more libraries to adopt consistent practices. This may mean that member libraries, including Blackstone, will need to update some of our lending policies to fall within these recommended guidelines. We hope to have a recommendation sometime in the spring.

I also attended a meeting of the Fairfield Library Admin-



The monthly c-car delivery averages 4000-5000 items loaned/returned from libraries all over the state. We are glad to have it up and running again!

istrators Group, where the featured speaker was Elanah Sherman of the State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. The talk was a good refresher on ADA requirements, and offered plenty of resources for more information.

It felt like we got an entire winter's worth of precipitation all at once, when we had to close early for a foot of very rapidly falling snow on January 23. To make matters more complicated, there was a wedding scheduled that evening. With the help of our snow removal contractor and Frank, the couple was able to go ahead as planned.

The Finance Committee prepared a budget request for the 2016/2017 fiscal year which represents an increase of 2.75%.

Sadly, one of our very active Friends of the Library, Fred Biamonte, passed away this month. From attending his service and meeting his family, it was apparent how important the library was to him.

It is now possible for staff to place holds on the wifi hot-spots, and the list is growing. If you are interested in trying one out, please visit one of the desks and ask a staff member to place a hold.

Finally, Katy and I were interviewed for the Greater New Haven Community Foundation's newsletter. I will share the article as soon as it is available.

Karen Jensen



Concerts were a popular draw this month. On January 9, jazz quartet Argyle Sax drew over 70 audience members with music that ranged from classical to classical rock.

On January 10, The Elegant Primates performed original world-beat pop music influenced by ska, Afro-pop and the Beatles, with a nod toward Paul Simon and Brazilian dance sounds.

Photo by Kelley Fryer/The Sound

December Highlights from the Youth Services Department

One of our favorite parts about winter break is reconnecting with families we have not seen for awhile. Whether they are busy with school work, sports or transitioning to the teen room they still take the time to say “hi” and grab books. This gives us a chance to catch up, make book recommendations and talk about age appropriate programs.

Our first event this winter break was our annual showing of the *Polar Express*. Every year we show this film because it really speaks to the holiday spirit and what it means to believe. It is also a film that the entire family can enjoy. We add to the program by providing hot cocoa with whipped cream. This year Miss Mary and Kat ran the movie and sweetened the pot by including candy canes. We had a total of 16 families at the viewing, which was not bad since it was scheduled the day after Christmas.

Our next program brought in quite a crowd since it was springing with live animals. Every year Animal Embassy does a marvelous job talking to families about the importance of pet ownership and how taking on any animal requires a lot of research, time and dedication. Animal Embassy rehabilitates an array of animals—mostly exotic since owners do not always know how to adequately care for say crocodiles or snakes. The organization also works with injured animals, caring

for those that can not be reintroduced to the wild. This month’s presentation focused on motion and asked the audience to talk a little about how they get from point A to point B. The presenter explained that animals have multiple ways of traveling - crawling, slithering, climbing, hopping, flying, etc. Each method of locomotion included a live animal, which got everyone excited and ready to hear more.

Miss Mary and I also held our annual cookie decorating and gingerbread house building programs for our K—4th graders. Every December we put together special storytimes for our elementary school students. We talk a little about the holiday season and then read a couple of baking and gingerbread stories. We really look forward to these events because we can dive into lengthier and more sophisticated picture books due to the wide age range. After talking a little bit about what we read we send the kids on their merry way to decorate sugar cookies with an array of edible sweets and foam gingerbread houses with stickers, sparkles and more. Both programs are always a hit and a great way to reinforce reading aloud to children of all ages.

Kat and I also held our first NOON Years Eve party which involves celebrating the New Year at 12 PM rather than AM. We thought this idea would work well with our

weekly storytime crowd. PLUS, the history room lends itself perfectly for a balloon drop! The event included music, fingerplays, movement activities and stories about the holiday. We also put together a mini photo booth so that families could take their picture with balloons, party hats and New Years sayings. We even created two crafts—a New Years Eve newspaper hat to decorate and a paper plate counter that we would all use to count down to the balloon drop at 12 PM. When Kat and I entered the auditorium, it felt like our annual Halloween parade - with a total of 80 or more participants. We were elated with the turnout and had to transform the program from being station based to a 100% hands-on as families spread out across the entire room. Despite the chaos all of our families remained focused and participated, making the program a success. Plus, seeing their faces at the balloon drop made the program that much more worthwhile. We cannot wait to make our NOON Years Eve party an annual event and will plan for 80 families rather than our predicted 30 next year.

Carly Lemire



Paper Gingerbread
Creations

Myths About Connecticut Libraries 2016

The CT State Library recently released a series of reports based on statistics compiled from CT public libraries for FY 2015. Below are some common myths about CT libraries, along with the correct information. The full report can be found at: bit.ly/1QXt72D

E-books are having a real public impact in public libraries. In fact, e-book circulation represents only 4.7% of total circulation.

Circulation in public libraries falls after a recession is over.

Actually, the decline in circulation may have more to do with libraries recovering after budget cuts in hard times. A library that purchases fewer books will have less circulation, even though the library is as busy as ever.

With all the new media available, books aren't as popular as they were: Yes, audio and video collections are better and internet availability is a draw. But book circulation was 67% of total circulation in FY 2015, a num-

ber that has remained constant for the past 6 years.

Children's materials circulation is just a small part of total circulation. Children's circulation is 36% of total circulation, yet the average children's materials budget is just 23% of the total materials budget.

The number of staff in public libraries doesn't change much. The number of FTE per 1000 population has decreased by 13% in CT since 2003.

Highlights from the Reference Department-December

December in the Reference Department saw our usual variety of tasks, displays, programs and meetings.

Debby attended the LUX committee meeting; the possibility of purchasing text messaging software was discussed, to expand ways in which we can communicate with our patrons. The committee is also looking into purchasing additional shared kits (LION currently has one shared kit, KEVA planks), including Magna-Tiles/Magformers, littleBits, robots, Lego Mindstorms, Arduinos and Raspberry Pis.

Our new Sharp copier was delivered and installed in the Reference Department; it is networked to both staff and public PCs for black and white and color printing.

Debby organized the map collection in the Branford History Room with Jane Bouley. Jane continues to work on organizing the generous donation from George Noyes of Pine Orchard and Young Company papers, photographs and maps.

Our initial, extensive weeding of the nonfiction collection is complete; we are shifting the collection now to maximize space and make the collection more appealing. Debby is also working on weeding the Reference collection.

Whitney sent out invitations to 30 local authors for our spring Local Author Expo. She attended the quarterly programming committee meeting where the spring 2016 programs were discussed and selected. Included are Fly Fishing, Sewing for Adults and

Cupcake Decorating. Whitney continues to lead the Best-sellers Book Club and show a monthly new release film.

Christina and Kirsty are expanding their offerings of computer classes. Upcoming classes include Computer Basics, Internet Basics and Email Basics. Christina updated our tip sheet for downloading e-books and audiobooks to tablets, in anticipation of the usual influx of patrons who receive tablets as holiday gifts.

Interesting question this month: a patron asked for an article and/or reviews on log splitters. Although we found nothing in Consumer Reports, we used iCONN, the CT Digital Library, to find articles in *Texas Fish and Game* and *Mother Earth News*.



Maps in our collection include this city map published by D.H. Hurd in 1893.

Deborah Trofatter



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February 2016 Program Highlights

Hula Hoops to High Fashion: G. Fox in the 1950's 2/9 @ 7—8 PM

In the 1950s, just about every major city had a landmark department store. Step back in time to Fox's heyday as we go from floor to floor and recall departments ranging from designer dresses to Toyland. You'll also learn about Beatrice Fox Auerbach, the remarkable woman who set the standard for customer service. With CT Historical Society's Joe Waxman. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Anatomy of a Romance 2/13 @ 2—3:30 PM

With local author Regina Kyle and fellow writers Jamie Schmidt, Sugar Jamison, Sparrow Beckett and Gail Chianese. Want to know what makes a romance novel tick? How to apply the lessons learned in them to spice up

your own love life? Join romance writers from Branford and surrounding towns as they take you from first meeting to "I do" in a panel guaranteed to be fun and informative for aspiring authors and readers alike. Book signing to follow.

sFOUR-zando: 4 Pianists, No Rules!

2/21 @ 2—3 PM
sFOUR-zando : Four pianists, no rules! Piano music for 4-8 hands on one piano! Including music by Debussy, Rachmaninov, Ganz, Barber and Lavignac. A fun musical program for all ages. Featuring pianists Margaret- Ann Martin, George Melillo, Laura Richling and Victoria Reeve. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Coloring & Conversation*

2/25 @ 6:30—7:45 PM
Coloring is a great stress buster and a way to tap into your inner artist! Join instructor Sally E. Bahner for a night of coloring and conversation.

Saturday Cinema

Saturdays @ 1—3 PM
February 27: *Bridge of Spies*
Come see a hot new release that you've been dying to get your hands on. Refreshments provided.

Bestseller Book Club

2/27 @ 3—4 PM
February's title is *The Swans of Fifth Avenue* by Melanie Benjamin. Books are available at the library.

*Registration is requested for programs with an *.*

December 2015 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 11,658

December 2014: 13,276

ConnectiCard: 2,360

December 2014: 2,368

Renewals: 3,041

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 514

Overdrive audiobooks: 186

Zinio: 127

Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 13 Loaned 26

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

16 programs/224 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

11 programs/281 attendance

School-age (6-11)

11 programs/238 attendance

All Ages

0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 38

Total Attendance: 743

Teen Programs (12+)

2 programs/29 attendance

Adult programs

19 programs/401 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

40 meetings/129 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2100

Facebook: 1234 Likes

Constant Contact: 4984

Average Daily Visitors: 477

Days Open: 29