



Report to the Board of Trustees

January 8, 2020

From the Director

We finished out 2019 with a whirlwind of activity as our project neared its conclusion. By the end of December, we had the elevator back up and running in its improved capacity. The new Youth Services space was complete and staff once again pitched in to move all the books, supplies and equipment. Deirdre, our associate librarian for access services, and Patricia, who now handles all of the technical processing for the library, moved in to their new space on the ground floor, adjacent to the new circulation desk. This streamlined space is now a very busy hub where new materials are delivered, cataloged and processed for each department. Materials from our collection are also routed to bins located here for delivery to other LION libraries.

In November we learned of extensive damage to the structure of the roof area above the auditorium stage ceiling. At that time, the roof was sealed so as not to incur further damage from the elements. Our December project meeting included an in-depth discussion of various strategies for repair. The decision was made to put the project on hold temporarily until a solution is designed and agreed upon by the Library and the Town. Since the project is essentially com-



Auditorium carpet in progress; celebrating the project's near-end; new display case with exhibit of library china.

plete, areas affected by this decision are the auditorium ceiling and balcony conference room. All involved agreed that the painting, ductwork and structural work needed to complete these two areas should wait until the roof damage is addressed. We hope the repair and completion of the renovation will be accomplished expediently — it is most important that it be done correctly. We may have to make difficult decisions about how the auditorium will be used in the upcoming months.

In other news, our development department sent out the end of year appeal, which has earned over \$40,000 so far for library operating expenses. We have also been busy designing and installing

donor plaques throughout the building. The development committee is planning for Caddystacks on March 28 & 29 as well as the fall fundraiser.

The Friends' annual holiday gift basket sale was a roaring success, despite some inclement weather. The most popular time was the opening evening which featured prosecco and cookies to provide holiday cheer for shoppers. Our gratitude goes to Barbara Barrett and Pam Roy for once again exceeding fundraising expectations!

We also owe a huge thanks to the Branford Garden Club, as always, for providing festive holiday decorations!

Karen Jensen

Rotary Club Purchases Information Kiosk

Thanks to a generous donation by the Branford Rotary Club, the library will soon install an information kiosk in the new lobby!

The kiosk was purchased from Empire Digital Signs, and will feature an interactive map, event listings, slides advertising library programs, and a link to search our online catalog. A committee of Rotarians met in December to research available options and negotiate pricing. The kiosk will be installed in mid-February.



Highlights from the Youth Services Department—November



Spending time in the lower rotunda - everyone is hustling and bustling.

By November, our new “home” in the lower rotunda was really starting to take shape. Not only is the teen area in full swing but we have been manning our brand-new circulation desk. The adult fiction collection has also cleared out so we have been able to visualize what the preschool/elementary area is going to look like and are working hard measuring shelves and reworking collections so that everything will fit down below.

During this transition our Teen and Tween advisory groups moved a small portion of our collection to the lower rotunda. The kids worked really hard considering that the elevator is still under construction so there was a lot of going up and down the stairs! Once the elevator is operational we are planning on moving most of our maker supplies front and center so that patrons have direct access to our 3D printers, sewing machines, Arduinos and more. This is especially exciting since most of our maker supplies have been pulled out for particular programs but never 100% on display.

Realizing that we are heading into a bigger and better space in 2020 Miss Mary, Sarah and I came together to create additional programming to get everyone excited about the new area. Miss Mary and I have added two additional storytimes to our rotation in January. One will be for ages

2 to 5 on Fridays right before lunch and the other will be held once a month on Saturdays for working families. We have also been partnering with the Family Resource Center for a number of years. Miss Mary has been a guest reader once a week for as long as I can remember so their brand new Parent Liaison, Amanda Evans has agreed to provide a monthly storytime for ages two to five. The storytime will be theme-based and will tie in tactile projects and hands-on activities to reiterate what they just learned. It will be unlike any storytime we have provided in that it will be center based, creating a lot more freedom and allowing children to zero in on their favorite way to learn.

We are also starting a book club for upper elementary school students but with a twist! One of the most popular kids biography series is entitled “Who Was” or “Who Is.” The series talks about famous legends, trailblazers and innovators but they are filled with timelines, illustrations and pop culture references. In this book club participants have the choice between two different influential people. We will then meet to essentially pit them against one another and see which historical figure has more clout. Our first faceoff is between Black Beard and Sacagawea, so it will be interesting to see what facts each group brings to the table and

essentially which historical figure they enjoyed more.

Miss Sarah is also adding two additional programs to her teen/tween running list, a monthly movie showing and an Anime Club. Anime is a style of Japanese film and television animation, this term is also associated with graphic novels. Since talking to her teen/tween advisory boards she has been able to expand our graphic novel and anime collection so she thought why not bring fans of the genre together to talk about their likes, watch a series or even draw? I think this will be an exciting group to watch progress.

Miss Sarah and also I spent two Thursdays at Walsh Intermediate School with 5th graders to talk about the library, programs we offer and how they can access digital resources from home. I really enjoy going to these “info sessions” because the kids get a chance to ask us questions and it’s great to be able to pick their brains and see what they are most interested in doing, watching and/or reading. Everyone present is also eligible for a library card so if they have never had one or lost theirs they will be able to get a new one and access everything the Blackstone has to offer. Since we are meeting the entire 5th grade in small groups we will continue these information sessions through the month of December.

Factual Fridays—Innovations

Branford industries contributed many innovations to their fields. The Branford Lock Works, started by Thomas Kennedy in 1862, held many patents for lock and window hardware. Many BLW products are still being used in homes today and are prized among lock collectors.

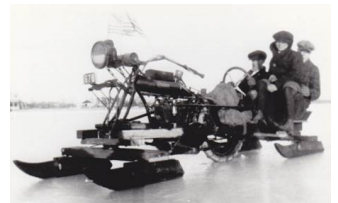
Thorvald Hammer (1825-1901) of the Malleable Iron Fittings Company invented the tapping or threading machine which was used for pipe fittings. MIF built tapping machines and leased them to other companies. His son Alfred Hammer (1858-1935) established the

first chemical control and research lab in the country at MIF in 1875. He vastly improved the use of iron during processing and shared his findings with others in the industry.

Thomas Doolittle (1839-1921) owned Thimble Farms in Pine Orchard and was a pioneer in the telephone industry. He was the first vice president of AT&T and designed the first telephone switchboard ever manufactured.

Several local men were active in the early years of motor boat engines. Edwin Baldwin

(1886-1964) had a shop on the Indian Neck Avenue bridge and built boat engines. Claus Johnson (1861-1955) of Short Beach was an early builder and racer of motor boats winning many prizes. Earl Bradley (1886-1964) had a garage on Bradley Street where he repaired automobiles and probably built Branford's first tow truck. He was an avid boatman and with Claus Johnson built a 35 mph engine out of a Curtis airplane motor. Much to the delight of the local children he created various motorized winter apparatus such as a motorcycle with skis.



Earl Bradley in his "Motor Bob" which was a motorcycle with skis he built in 1917.

Highlights from the Reference Department-November

This month the Reference Department assisted in the latest collection moves, including the new nonfiction, new biographies and nonfiction Books on CD collections. Although located on the ground floor and therefore separated from the regular nonfiction collection, we feel that this location is appropriate given that they are with other high demand collections, including new fiction, large print and fiction Books on CD. We also created a special area on the ground floor for language learning and a display for immigration and citizenship.

Debby completed two new sections of the library's website, including all of the Friday Fun Facts at [https://](https://www.blackstone.lioninc.org/branford375)

www.blackstone.lioninc.org/branford375 as well as the drawings on the commemorative map at <https://www.blackstone.lioninc.org/branford375print>. She will continue to work with Jane Bouley on adding additional information and photographs to each individual page created for each drawing on the map.

Jenna confirmed our Winter programs, including Home-made Spa Products, DIY Hot Chocolate, lock picking, cosplay, 3D print club, census information sessions and book clubs. She continues working on the photograph archives project, the millennial newsletter, event listings and flyers, and nonfiction displays. Jenna was inter-

viewed by The Sound about her Books 'n Brews book club and a very nice article was published on November 21.

Anne has updated our obituary index (over 4,000 obituaries from 2003 to the present) and we are considering putting the index online. She is organizing our vertical file and working on archives scanning.

Christina had another incredible month of tech, with a drop-in tech help session, a class on mail merge and eight individual tech appointments. She continues to update our technology tip sheets, create newsletters, enter on order records and manage book groups, in addition to her regular reference duties.

Debby Trofatter



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...more than books

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January 2020 Program Highlights

Become a Census Taker

January 15 @ 6:00 - 8:00 pm

The 2020 Census is fast approaching and the U.S. Census Bureau is looking for people to act as census takers. Stop by their information booth in the library to learn about employment opportunities and what it means to be a census taker.

Knitting Group

Wednesdays @ 6 - 7:30 pm

Beginners and experienced knitters are welcome. Meets in the Lucy Hammer Room each Wednesday.

iPad Basics **

January 16 @ 2 pm - 3:30 pm

Confused about how to use your iPad? Come to this class and learn how to get started! This class is geared towards beginners, covering the basic functions and features of the iPad and apps. Feel free to

bring your own iPad or use one of ours. iPads must already have gone through initial set-up process and be registered with an Apple ID and be running the most current operating system

Ask A Lawyer

January 16 @ 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Have a legal question? Get a free consultation with a lawyer, brought to you by the New Haven County Bar Association. Each month, lawyers visit area libraries to provide free consultations. Consultations are first-come, first-served. Sign up at Reference up to 30 minutes before program begins. Free and open to the public.

Sparkling Joy with KonMari**

January 25 @ 2 - 3:30 pm

Does the state of your home spark joy? If not, start the new year off with our Marie

Kondo workshop! Christine Thorn of Wolcott, CT's first certified KonMari consultant, will share the benefits of the KonMari Method™ of tidying and decluttering to help you experience the life changing magic of tidying up! She'll help you get your house in order for 2020 and beyond.

3D Print Club**

January 28 @ 6 - 8:00 pm

Are you curious about 3D printing? Are you a 3D design master looking to share your skills? Join our 3D Print Club! Once a month makers of all abilities can come together to learn new things, teach others, and work collaboratively on their 3D printing skills. We provide the printers, filament, and computers, just bring your creativity. Our 3D printing instructor Jim Davis will be on hand to help if you get stuck, so all skill levels are welcome!

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

November 2019 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 9,903

November 2018: 10,180

borrowIT: 2,391

November 2018: 2,522

Renewals: 6,145

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 822

Overdrive audiobooks: 484

RB Digital: 385

Hoopla: 496 plays

Kanopy: 116 plays

Pronunciator: 463 users

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

2 programs/60 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

10 programs/179 attendance

School-age (6-11)

0 programs/0 attendance

All Ages

2 programs/22 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 14

Total Attendance: 261

Teen Programs (12+)

11 programs/78 attendance

Adult programs

12 programs/80 attendance

Hammer & Conference Room

111 meetings/330 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1,678

Facebook: 1,788 Likes

MailChimp: 7,761 subscribers

Days Open: 29