



Report to the Board of Trustees

July 10, 2019

From the Director

Work is complete on the first floor and Reference staff have moved back to their newly painted office. All of our scrapbooks were moved from the high density shelving and are located in the Branford room. Genealogy materials have been moved to the mezzanine area. Reference staff have been working with our summer intern to organize and scan library history resources. Once we were able to collect all of our materials in one place, we discovered multiple copies of library bulletins that were published in the library's early years. They will be scanned and made available on our website at some point in the future.

Trenching was completed in the lower rotunda and that area was closed for a day on June 26th.

Our new computers have been delivered and are waiting for setup and installation by LION staff. We will use folding tables temporarily until new furniture is secured.

The nonfiction collection will be moved to the first floor this summer and the elevator will be refurbished in August; unfortunately the process takes 4-6 weeks during which time the elevator will be out of service.



Major progress was made on the new entry space this month. The stone pavers were laid, marble cladding is being set, and the windows have been delivered for installation. Here, workers are having an inaugural lunch!

Sarah and Carly have been running weekly teen & tween advisory groups. Both groups are at capacity and a waiting list has started. The teens recently helped the reference staff move genealogy materials to the mezzanine area.

The Friends of the Library held their annual meeting at Orchard House on June 18. Ellen Carucci, Doug Hanlon, Andy McKirdy and Judy Stebbins have joined the Friends Board. Joe Genua and Barbara Barrett have been working hard to plan

the Fall Book Sale. They will make a presentation to Trustees at the September meeting.

Staff completed the annual review process this month. It is rewarding to see our staff achieve the goals they set for themselves at the beginning of the year. We have a strong group of dedicated professionals who continue to learn and grow in their respective fields of expertise.

Karen Jensen



The Shredding Event on June 22 was a great success! Over 9,000 pounds of documents were safely shredded, earning the library approximately \$2,000 for programs and services. Thanks to our Trustees who organized and volunteered for the event, and all of those who brought their paper!

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—May

Summer reading is upon us and we have been working hard to prepare with two different summer reading options for families and elementary school students. The first is our second annual StoryWalk® that takes place along Main Street. This year's book is *Sun and Moon* by Lindsey Yankey. The book reads like a folktale and focuses on the moon wanting to trade places with the sun since she thinks he has more fun. The sun convinces the moon to hang out one more night to see what she would be missing a lot and decides to remain the moon! The process of picking this title was a communal effort. We knew that we wanted a space themed book but believe it or not a lot of books dealing with space are heavy on information rather than "story". We also wanted something that would appeal across a wide age range with illustrations that would draw attention to storefronts. After searching for titles, reviewing with staff members and then polling for a winner we found that *Sun and Moon* was striking and had the family friendly message of appreciating what you have! So, a quick thank you to everyone that read through the Youth Services pile of books and gave your opinion, it really helped the process. We also want to thank the Main Street merchants for being so supportive and jumping on the StoryWalk® bandwagon. This entire program would not be possible without your support and we are so lucky to

live in a town where we work together to build each other up. Finally, and most importantly we would like to thank the Guilford Savings Bank and Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library for believing in our summer reading mission and supplying us with the financial support that makes these extras and programming possible. Without you we would not be able to serve Branford's families to the best of our ability.

Our second summer reading program option coincides with the school's summer reading initiative for students to set and complete a summer reading goal. When kids complete their goal they turn in their book list to the library so that they can pick up a lawn sign saying that they are amazing readers. We are hoping to fill Branford's lawns, front doors and windows with these signs so that they can get recognition for their reading and encourage others to achieve their goal. So, a big thank you to the public schools for believing in our idea. This felt a little out of the box but also something that could be spectacular! From the get-go they jumped on board and are planning to support the program by bringing the signs to each classroom to create buzz.

Miss Sarah has also followed suit, creating a summer reading program meant for teens. Since this year's summer reading theme is a Universe of Stories she decided to create a story sharing platform

for teens - asking for creative submissions of poems, short stories, photos and even videos. Each online submission is a chance to be entered into an end of summer reading prize drawing. We'll feature some of the work on our Instagram and Facebook pages.

We celebrated Sarah's joining the Blackstone staff with a middle and high school open house (they came for the cake!) where she could introduce herself, talk about community service opportunities and play games. I believe we had around 30 teens drop-in over a span of two hours which was exciting and a great way to kick-off her first few weeks. Good news is there are a lot of teens interested in taking an active role in programming and ordering at the Library. Even better news, the number of teens interested in participating merits two separate advisory boards, one for high school students and the other for our middle schoolers. Going forward we have decided to designate different days for the high school and middle school teen advisory meetings; this way Sarah and I can work together if we get overloaded with teens and we will be able to focus on what two distinctive groups are interested since after our first few meetings it is clear that they have different needs and interests. Either way, we are excited and want to keep the "teen train" rolling by bringing in as many members of the community as possible.



StoryWalk
ON MAIN

Summer Reading
is in full swing!

More Factual Fridays

A popular event in Branford at the turn of the century was the annual **Branford Carnival**. The first carnival was held October 7, 1880 on the Branford Green and featured a cattle and dog show, vegetable exhibit and a parade with floats. A collection of carnival photographs is available on the library website.

In an article in the New Haven Register, published in 1898, it was reported that a young lieutenant of the pirate **Captain Kidd** was in a duel with the brother of **James Blackstone**, who was visiting from England. Blackstone's brother was quite the

swordsman, and but for his fear of the pirate, would have vanquished Kidd's lieutenant.

There once was a street in Branford called **Pig Lane**. It was built by the first settlers at about where 116 Montowese Street is today. It ran from Hammer Field to the Branford River behind Center Cemetery. Interested in more history of Branford's street names? Stop by and pick up a copy of Town Historian Jane Bouley's book "The Origin & Naming of Branford's Streets" on sale at Blackstone Library.

Carolina Lazzari was a famous opera singer who made

her premier performance in Chicago in 1918 and her Metropolitan Opera debut on Christmas Day in 1920. Jane Bouley wrote in a Branford Review article "She was an immediate success as 'the phenomenal contralto who has flashed meteor-like into operatic and concert glory.'" In 1920 she made more than 100 concert appearances throughout the country under the management of Charles L. Wagner. Rave reviews followed wherever she performed." **Lazzari was raised in Stony Creek and died there in 1946**; she is buried in St. Agnes Cemetery.



The Branford Carnival

Highlights from the Reference Department—May

Christina had another busy month of tech classes and one-on-one tech appointments. She also began entering our On Order records for nonfiction titles. These early cataloging records allow our patrons to see what we have ordered and also allows them to place early holds on our new items. Christina and Sarah had another successful Game Night, with more than twenty people participating.

Jenna is busy getting acclimated to her new Programming position. She has begun preparing programs for the fall and made arrangements for our end of summer reading outdoor movie at Foote Park. She continues to repost

our Factual Fridays for Branford's 375th and find fun spots for our weekly Worm Wednesday post to Instagram.

We are all working on a substantial archives project involving Connecticut Scrapbooks, miscellaneous library records and a large collection of Blackstone Library history that Jenna will be spearheading. She will work closely with Anne, who is revamping our vertical file and with Rachel, our summer intern who is returning for her third year with us. We hope to begin digitizing some of these items over the summer.

Debby worked with a woman

who was adopted and had discovered her biological family through AncestryDNA. She visited the library from Georgia, trying to find a death certificate for her great-grandmother who had lived in Branford. She had searched many sources but was not able to find it. Debby was able to find her obituary in the Branford History Scrapbooks Database and discovered that she died in Massachusetts, not in Connecticut. The patron was thrilled to have additional information and a way to continue her search.

Debby Trofatter



James Blackstone Memorial Library
758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405
203.488.1441
reference@blackstonelibrary.org
facebook.com/blackstonelibrary
twitter.com/blackstonlib
www.blackstonelibrary.org

...more than books

Join our email list for more information about programs
www.blackstonelibrary.org

July 2019 Program Highlights

Knitting Group Wednesdays, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 @ 6:00 —7:30 pm

Join us for a weekly knitting group. Beginners and experienced knitters are welcome. Meets in the Lucy Hammer Room each Wednesday.

Uncover Branford** July 13 @ 10:30am — 12

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

Apollo 11 50th Anniversary** July 15 @ 4—5 pm

What was the sequence of this incredible mission? Where on the Moon did they land? And how did they return safely to Earth? Join us for a guided recreation of Apollo 11's journey to see

how this mission was executed by crew members and mission control in Houston.

Ask A Lawyer** July 18 @ 3:30—5:30 pm

Free consultation with a lawyer, from the New Haven County Bar Association. First-come, first-served. Sign up at Reference up to 30 minutes before program begins.

Bestseller Book Club** July 27 @ 3:30 pm

We'll discuss *City of Girls* by Elizabeth Gilbert. Copies available at the library—all are welcome!

Books & Brews** July 31 @ 6 — 8 pm

Each month, Books & Brews meets at Thimble Islands Brewery to offer 2 titles to choose from, each with its own discussion group to take

part in. New members are always welcome. Thimble Islands offers a selection of craft beers (must be 21+ to drink alcoholic beverages), wine, soda, and water. No purchase necessary to take part in the book club—feel free to bring snacks. This month we're discussing *The Feather Thief* by Kirk Wallace Johnson or *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern.

Adios Coco Chanel** August 3 @ 2 — 3:30 pm

Ditch your store-bought perfume! Most contain dozens of chemicals that do not have to be disclosed on the label. Join Velya and Ehris, the mother/daughter Grounded Good-wife duo, to experiment with base fragrances, mid-tones, and top notes. Create your signature scent, mad-scientist style!

*Check our website for more programs! Programs with ** require registration. Please note that during construction, the auditorium will not be available. Programs will take place in other areas of the library, or off-site as indicated.*

May 2019 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 9,408
May 2018: 10,884

borrowIT: 2,303
May 2018: 2,443

Renewals: 2,768

Downloadable Circulation:
Overdrive ebooks: 975
Overdrive audiobooks: 450
RB Digital: 442
Hoopla: 503 plays
Kanopy: 112 plays
Pronunciator: 415 users

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)
4 programs/105 attendance

Preschool (3-5)
5 programs/176 attendance

School-age (6-11)
2 programs/10 attendance

All Ages
1 programs/25 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 12
Total Attendance: 316

Teen Programs (12+)
3 programs/31 attendance

Adult programs

10 programs/137 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

34 meetings/170 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1,802

Facebook: 1,642 Likes

Instagram: 562 Followers

Twitter: 793 Followers

MailChimp: 7,400 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: N/A*
Days Open: 29

* The people counter at rear entrance is disabled until new entry is complete