Report to the Board of Trustees

June 1, 2016

From the Director

The Friends of the Library have nominated Hatsie Mahoney to run for President, and Alpha Coiro for Vice President. All other board members agreed to continue serving in their present positions. Elections will be held at the Friends annual meeting on Tuesday, June 7 at 5pm.

The RFP for the next phase of the renovation project was advertised, and architects were invited to tour the library during the week of May 16th. 11 firms were present; bids are due to the Town of Branford by June 3.

Our operating budget request was approved by the RTM this month. Funding for repair of the rear roof and gutter above the stage in the auditorium was also approved, and we will work with the Town to issue an RFP for the project.

I attended the State Library Board meeting and LION meeting in which the state of deliverIT was discussed. We are still facing significant backlogs; however it was encouraging to hear that the state librarian understands the seriousness of the problem, and promised to dedicate resources to improving the service. LION members had a variety of suggestions, including contributing more funding to the service. If anything, working for so many weeks with a very low-functioning service has made us realize anew the importance of it. Without space to store a backlog of holds waiting to be picked up, we were forced to stop pulling holds several times in order to allow the backlog to clear.

LION is still recommending that we complete paperwork for e-rate discounts, and plan to have a fiber connection installed at no charge in the upcoming fiscal year. The CEN will continue to provide DSL service until June 2017 at no charge. At that point, we will need to commit to fiber service, or enhance our cable service as an alternative.

I have been on site visits with the CLA 2017 conference committee in order to select a date and venue for next year.

The library held an author expo on Saturday, May 21. Over 30 authors were here to sell and sign their books at tables in our Reading Room. We had a keynote talk by Ann Nyberg—she also stayed to sell and sign her books, and was so gracious with our patrons. The afternoon continued with an adult author panel, and then a children’s author panel. Patrons loved seeing such a wide variety of local authors all in one place.

Karen Jensen

Murder at Blackstone Abbey was a hit on Friday May 13th.

Railing Installed

A new brass railing has been installed on the granite steps on the south side of the library grounds. The railing was custom fabricated and installed by Matt Goodwin of Goodyfab, LLC.
May Highlights from the Youth Services Department

This month we worked closely with the Branford Early Childhood Collaborative (BECC) and a large number of Branford volunteers to celebrate the Week of the Young Child (WOTYC). Every year the BECC works in conjunction with the Community Dining Room to create an event based around a picture book for our smallest residents. This year, *The Artist Who Painted A Blue Horse* by Eric Carle, was given out to all preschoolers in Branford.

Many area preschool programs used the book to inspire a series of art pieces created by children. Eric Carle’s artwork lent itself to some imaginative pieces and the best part was that the book featured an orange crocodile, pink rabbit and green lion—allowing each class to envision animals of various shapes, sizes and colors. Each school discovered a unique way to replicate Eric Carle’s famous style.

Once the children’s artwork was complete, the WOTYC committee distributed it to the merchants downtown to display in their windows for the artists, families and community to see! The Blackstone Library had 50 pieces of art featured throughout the rotunda! Families stopped in throughout the week to see their child’s work and snagged pictures of the accomplished artists next to their pieces. It was wonderful seeing the kids get excited about their work and a nice way to bring families into the building that may have never visited us before.

To close out the week the WOTYC committee hosted a Little Artist event on the green on Saturday April 23. During the event preschoolers and their families read books on picnic blankets, took part in sensory activities, created headbands and contributed to the community mural! We had a nice turnout despite the rain.

Our mural was inspired by the idea of what art means to different people, particularly little people. The BECC reached out to the Branford Arts Center and came up with the idea of creating a community mural out of fabric with a prompt stating - I Feel Like an Artist When... Children were invited to draw or write something about what it means to be an artist. Children were able to fill the entire sheet and it will be on display in Town Hall and the Library in the near future. We would like to include a notebook with the mural so that community members can add to the prompt by detailing when they feel like an artist so we can keep the “idea” forever changing and growing!

The Youth Services Department also put together a series of special programs since Branford was on spring break. One of our most exciting and well attended programs was provided by Mystic Aquarium. The program was entitled Amazing Sharks and brought in shark artifacts and pictures to talk about different types of sharks, where they live and what they eat. The aquarium also brought a small touch tank where participants could see and feel sea creatures that sharks commonly eat. One of the most interesting parts about the presentation was when the representative talked about the number of sharks that are killed and eaten around the world versus how many people face a shark attack. The number of sharks eaten was mind blowing while the number of shark attacks was tiny in comparison. These attacks are usually caused by confusion (they think your leg is a tentacle!) or the fact that a shark may have gotten “lost” or migrated to an uncommon area so their food sources are sparse.

We also had local art teacher, author and illustrator Frank Dormer visit us for a book reading and art activity. Frank Dormer teaches at John B. Sliney Elementary School, right across the street, and is an accomplished picture book illustrator and author. His works are featured in our children’s collection so kids that have not had him as an art teacher have still experienced his work. One of the most exciting things about his book/art visit was the fact that he read from his brand new picture book entitled *Click!* The story features a dog that wants nothing more than to catch a cat but to his dismay keeps coming up with animals that rhyme with cat - gnat, bat, rat! The wordplay was delightful and the kids could not stop laughing.

-Carly Lemire
Every member of the Reference Department attended the Connecticut Library Association conference in Hartford this month. It was a great opportunity to hear from interesting speakers, network with other librarians and participate in relevant workshops. Talks and workshops included customer service, technology, gaming in the library and the future of reference.

Final preparations were made for our Author Expo in May and for our adult summer reading program. This year’s theme is “Exercise Your Mind. Read!”

Classes and programs this month included: 3D printing, writer’s workshop, an eating disorder talk, Shoreline Arts Alliance presentation of The Shakespeares, a Menunkatuck Audubon lecture on fungi, a standing room only talk on the history of Atlantic Wire by Jane Bouley, a Land Trust program on bird watching, a showing of the movie The Revenant, and Opera Appreciation.

We had a few particularly interesting questions/requests for help in the Reference department this month. One was from a Facebook user whose page had mistakenly been switched to Portuguese. We were able to figure out the steps to take to reset the page to English, despite not having any Portuguese speakers on staff! A patron asked us exactly where in Short Beach the poetess Ella Wheeler Wilcox’s ashes are interred. There is a condo complex called Wilcox Estates on Bungalow Lane in Short Beach, on the property where Ella Wheeler Wilcox lived. If you turn into the condo complex, there is a boulder where you can find her ashes and her husband’s. There is a photo on the website: ellawheelerwilcox.org

An elementary school student needed information on The Twilight Zone; not the TV show, but the disphotic zone, or middle layer, of the world’s oceans.

Bridgette: Olivia Fiedler
Jacqueline: Anna Meglin

Special thanks to all who attended, and our sponsors:

Blakeslee Prestress
Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
Mathnasium
Star Power
Livella Care
Van Wilgen’s
Milano & Wanat LLC
Sarah’s Cupboard Thrift Shop

Deborah Trofatter
June 2016 Program Highlights

Romance & Erotic Writing Workshop*
June 4 & 11 @ 10AM
USA Today bestselling author Jamie K. Schmidt will show you how to use your creativity to get words down on the page in this two-part course. She’ll show you a quick plot outline that works for “plotters” as well as “pantsers” to make the most of your writing time. She’ll go over finding time to write, getting motivated, finishing your project and where and how to send your manuscript. You’ll leave the class with a list of websites and resources that will help you in your writing journey.

Art Advice
June 9 @ 1 PM
Need help finding exhibition space/opportunities, performance/rehearsal space or developing new ways to promote your work or creative event? Stop in for a free, one-on-one consultation with artist Debbie Hesse from the Arts Council of Greater New Haven.

Bestseller Book Club*
June 25 @ 3—4 PM
We will read Don’t You Cry by Mary Kubica. Books are available at the library.

Saturday Cinema
June 25 @ 1—3 PM
Come see a hot new release that you’ve been dying to get your hands on. Refreshments provided.

Intro to 3-D Printing*
June 29 @ 6 PM
Learn how to design and create your own 3D files for printing. Jim Davis will walk you through the free 3D modeling software 123Design, from the makers of AutoCAD. Once you learn this software, you’ll be able to design and 3D print your very own creations. For all ages. Space is limited.

*Programs with an * require registration. Call us at 203.488.1441 ext. 318 or visit our website at blackstonelibrary.org

Check our website for more programs!

April 2016 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 13,151
April 2015: 13,965

ConnectiCard: 3,055
April 2015: 3,231

Renewals: 2,999

Downloadable Circulation:
Overdrive ebooks: 661
Overdrive audiobooks: 236
Zinio: 202

Interlibrary Loan
Borrowed 5 Loaned 11

Children’s Programs:
Babies (0-2)
14 programs/258 attendance
Preschool (3-5)
11 programs/176 attendance
School-age (6-11)
14 programs/256 attendance
All Ages
0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children’s Programs: 39
Total Attendance: 690

Teen Programs (12+)
6 programs/25 attendance

Adult programs
21 programs/475 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room
85 meetings/249 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2147

Facebook: 1280 Likes

MailChimp: 4833 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 538
Days Open: 30