From the Director

Painting and plaster repair is mostly complete on the first floor. The reference office is waiting for the egg & dart plaster moldings to be repaired and will then be painted. The history room and new café millwork is finished; staff are making plans to move the non-fiction collection to this floor in the next phase.

Also over the next month, we may see some construction in the lower rotunda, as trenching is added for electricity to children’s desk.

Our Spring appeal and participation in The Great Give earned over $15,000 in donations. The development committee has planned a Shred-a-thon for Saturday, June 22 from 9am-12noon. Tickets for shredding will be sold in advance; $7 for the first box and $5 for each additional.

Sarah Mallory joined us on May 14 as Teen Librarian; she has already been to the High School and Middle Schools to introduce herself to the School Media Specialists. She held her first teen advisory group meeting on May 31 with over 25 students participating. Some had followed her from East Haven, and many others were teens who regularly use the library. Others had heard of the program through flyers Sarah sent to the school libraries.

The Friends of the Library held a very successful mini-book sale on the Town Green on May 18 in collaboration with the Garden Club’s annual plant sale and the Compassion Club’s community tag sale. Between 9am — 1pm, the Friends earned almost $2,000 and generated much goodwill for their members and the library. The event was fun, and my gratitude goes out to Joe Genua and Barbara Barrett, who organized the event, along with all who volunteered.

Staff submitted self evaluations as part of the annual review process. All will be complete by end of the month.

Karen Jensen
Highlights from the Youth Services Department—April

Next month Sarah Mallory will be joining the Reference and Youth Services team as our teen librarian. This is the first time the Blackstone has had a librarian 100% dedicated to our teens/tweens and we cannot wait to see how our program offerings and services will grow. Sarah started working at the East Haven Public Library as their teen librarian. She built her program from the ground up, providing volunteer opportunities for middle and high school students so that they could take ownership of their “corner” of the building. Her interactions led to a series of successful programs including an afterhours café where teens could share their talents and socialize. These evenings can bring in 30 - 40 participants! She truly transformed the library into their home away from home. Sarah is not a total new face since she works Monday nights on our reference desk and has helped with special programming, including our adult game night. She realizes that East Haven and Branford are different communities and what works in one area may not necessarily work in another, but she is ready to dig deep and make those connections so that she can see what will.

We also introduced some new programs this month. One of our most successful additions was “Cooking with You” a book club for families with children in 3rd through 6th grade. The club stemmed from reading about an adult book club that brought lovers of all things “kitchen” together to share in a meal created from a single cookbook. Knowing that breaking bread is essential to creating community, I thought the same could be applied to families, especially those that have children old enough to follow directions and handle a stove. Our first meeting brought in four families and we worked with a young adult cookbook from America’s Test Kitchen. Sure, everyone was excited to eat but our youngest participants couldn’t wait to talk about their cooking experiences, so everyone was asked to introduce their dishes. Family members then talked about the ease of cooking and whether or not they altered the recipe to fit their spice drawers. Many children had never helped their family cook before and said it was eye opening to see how their meals started, only to be transformed into full dishes. One young man even thanked his mother for all of her hard work, never fully realizing how much prep time and care were put into his meals. Parents also enjoyed their time in the kitchen, realizing that their children could take on more responsibilities and they felt good about expanding their life skills. Everyone left our first meeting happy and full only to say that they could not wait for the next cookbook. They also said that they found the program extremely beneficial and wanted to spread the word. So, we will have to wait and see how many new faces next month will bring.

This month the Blackstone Library partnered with the Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library at two community events. Both libraries promoted their programs and services all while making library cards for new community members.

Our first stop was the annual English Language Learners (ELL) Night held at Murphy School. During this event anyone in the ELL program was invited to take part in a series of literacy activities. The evening provided food, music, crafts and read-alongs for the entire family. Events like this not only bring the community together but allow families to celebrate how far their children have come while getting some one-on one time with their teachers.

The second event was held at the Soundview YMCA and is known as Healthy Kids Day. During this event families from across the shoreline are invited to learn about the YMCA and partake in physical activities. Laura, from the Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library and I used a coding activity that allowed families to write a line of code through a series of movements. Essentially, breaking down coding into physical terms so that they could better understand how computers and humans connect. Families really loved the flashcards and enjoyed taking part in the project. They were surprised that libraries supplied these types of opportunities and we made sure to let them know that this is just a different form of literacy.

Carly Lemire
More Factual Fridays

The Leather Man
He first appeared on Connecticut roads about 1857 and was a familiar sight for the next 30 years. He wore only leather from his head to his toes; his entire outfit weighed over 60 pounds. He followed a precise 360-mile course through Connecticut and New York, which took exactly 34 days. He passed through Branford, stopping at Harding’s Grocery Store at 116 Montowese Street. His health began to fail during the blizzard of 1888 and his body was found on March 24, 1889 in a cave near Ossining, N.Y.

Hurricane of ‘38
The hurricane of 1938 (September 21) hit Branford hard. The town had received 12 inches of rain the previous week so waters were already high and the ground was very soft; many trees came down in the 80 to 100 mph winds. Shore cottages were destroyed and seven people died on the Thimble Islands.

Shipwrecks and The Ark
The most famous of Branford’s shipwrecks was that of the “Jenny Lind,” a 70-foot schooner from Sag Harbor that hit Morris Rocks off Sumac Island in Indian Neck on July 12, 1878. It sank and scattered its cargo of pine boards into the Sound. The crew abandoned ship and were rescued by a passing fishing boat. George Averill laid claim to the boat and hauled it to the shore at the end of Linden Avenue. The boat was converted into a restaurant known as the “Ark,” - Jane Peterson Bouley

On January 25, 1943 a plane crashed on Sagal Lou Farm on Cherry Hill. Actor Robert Young was a guest of the farm’s owner that night; Young and the pilot exchanged autographs and sent Christmas cards for years.

Highlights from the Reference Department—April

We had another great, busy month in the Reference Department. Christina, Anne and Jenna all attended the Connecticut Library Association annual meeting. Christina taught two classes on iPhone basics at Evergreen Woods Retirement Center and hosted one drop-in tech session at the Branford Senior Center. We are actively working to provide more services, both in the library as well as outside of the library, to the senior community. Christina also taught a Word Basics class, had five individual tech help appointments and three board game sessions at the Adult Education Department as well as the usual Friday Night Game Night at the library.

Anne continues her work on the vertical file; once complete, we hope to digitize at least a portion of the local history articles that we own. Anne has also taken on additional nonfiction sections for maintenance and purchasing.

Jenna is familiarizing herself with the programming coordinator position; she led her first programming committee meeting and began planning our adult summer programs. She created a summer reading bingo card and has taken over running the Bestseller Book Club as well as continuing with Books ’n Brews. She met with the Uncover Branford group and attended a social media workshop.

Debby has assisted in a number of staff moves, setting up staff computers in temporary locations as the renovation continues. She continues to provide the Branford 375th committee with Friday Fun Facts and is working with Karen, Jane Bouley and two artists to complete a map handout for the 375th celebration. She is working with Jenna on programming choices and is working with Jane Bouley on a large, ongoing digitization project with the goal of providing much more local history and genealogy on the library’s website. She has also taken over processing all interlibrary loan items.

Debby Trofatter
June 2019 Program Highlights

Keeping Family Informed**
June 6 @ 7 — 8 pm
Attorney Christian Edmonds will offer practical advice and tools for planning and organizing estate documents. Chris has 35 years of experience in service to Connecticut families, with law offices in Branford since 1991. He is admitted to the Connecticut and Florida bars, and is a member and past president of the New Haven County Bar Association. Chris is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Estates and Probate section of the CT Bar Association, and a Certified Public Accountant.

Uncover Branford**
June 8 @ 10:30am — 12
Share your favorite Branford spots and plan an outing as a group to visit and uncover new places in town.

iPhone Basics**
June 13 @ 2 — 3:15 pm
Learn the basics of using your iPhone. Downloading apps, using Safari, changing settings and more will be covered.

Ask A Lawyer**
June 20 @ 6 — 7:45 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.

What is Opera?**
June 22 @ 2 — 3:30 pm
Opera is a smorgasbord of the arts. Charlotte D’Aniello will guide you on an exploration of all the elements that combine into this amazing art form. Whether you’re an expert or a complete beginner, you’re sure to learn something new!

Tax Documents: Which Ones and How Long?
June 20 @ 7 — 8 pm
The CPAs of Amore and Beatman will answer all these questions and more in an informal presentation. Anthony Beatman is a certified public accountant, small business owner, and Adjunct Professor of Accounting at Central CT State University. John Amore, CPA, has been in business for over 45 years, servicing thousands of individual tax filers and small businesses over the years.

Bestseller Book Club**
June 29 @ 3:30 pm
We’ll discuss Confessions of Frannie Langton by Sara Collins. Copies available at the library-all are welcome!

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.

April 2019 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 10,558
April 2018: 11,766

borrowIT: 2010
April 2018: 2,437

Renewals: 2,768

Downloadable Circulation:
Overdrive ebooks: 999
Overdrive audiobooks: 453
RB Digital: 365
Hoopla: 480 plays
Kanopy: 84 plays
Pronunciator: 409 users

Children’s Programs:
Babies (0-2)
0 programs/0 attendance

Preschool (3-5)
2 programs/48 attendance

School-age (6-11)
3 programs/35 attendance

All Ages
2 programs/180 attendance

Total Children’s Programs: 9
Total Attendance: 263

Teen Programs (12+)
5 programs/15 attendance

Adult programs
12 programs/141 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room
28 meetings/1083 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1,908

Facebook: 1,642 Likes
Instagram: 553 Followers
Twitter: 789 Followers

MailChimp: 7,414 subscribers

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

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