



# Report to the Board of Trustees

March 7, 2018

## From the Director

### *Campaign for the Blackstone*

Almost one year ago, we launched Campaign for the Blackstone, the fundraising effort designated to pay a portion of the capital cost of renovation and redesign.

With your help, we have raised \$686,000 toward our goal of \$800,000. The Town of Branford has approved funding for \$3.4 million toward the project; the State Library has awarded a \$1 million grant, leaving us with just \$14,000 left to go! Compared to the total cost, this is a small amount; for us it is very significant. We'll continue to work toward raising those funds and we appreciate your support. To donate, visit our website and look for the Campaign for the Blackstone badge, or request a donation envelope on your next visit to the library.

Every amount helps, and donations up to \$1,000 will be matched by the Branford Community Foundation!

The renovation planning group met this month to discuss next steps for the project. Richard Greenalch, a local engineer, has agreed to join and offer his expertise. Due to concerns by the State Historic Preservation Office about the design and the fact that the State Bonding Commission has not approved the state grant request, the project bidding will be moved back to April from March. So far we do not expect an adverse impact from this.

Our budget request was submitted to the Town of Branford. It calls for an overall increase of 1.22%, or \$19,703 for FY 2018. Special programs and venue rental will be unavailable while the library is under renovation. This translates into less income, which will be balanced by a smaller budget for our collection materials. That line will be restored once the renovation is complete.

The library's budget, unlike regular town departments, includes health insurance, retirement, FICA, utilities, building and grounds maintenance, etc. Because the Friends of the Library is such a successful organization, the Blackstone Library is able to offer many more resources to the community than we



*Miss Mary and Miss Katy visited the Mary T. Murphy School on March 2 to read to students as part of the United Way's Read Across America on Dr. Seuss' Birthday.*

would if we were to rely only on the Town's appropriation, and fundraising by the Board of Trustees.

Our Town's Police and Fire departments deserve special thanks this month. Officer O'Connor gave a presentation on personal safety to our staff on February 7, and on February 22, the elevator failed while a patron was on board. She was very upset, but recovered with the help of the Fire Department which responded quickly and helped her regain her composure. Occasional incidents are bound to happen when 500-600 people visit the library every day, and it helps to know we have the support of highly trained and profes-

sional public safety officers when we need it.

Kathy Oxsalida and I are working on two grant proposals due in March. Both are capacity building grants that can be used for the renovation project. One is through the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the other is with the Greater New Haven Community Foundation.

Miss Carly has returned from her extended leave. We are so happy to have her back; and very grateful to the very talented and dedicated team of Miss Mary and Miss Jenn who worked extra hard to make sure the all Youth Services activities went smoothly while she was away.

Karen Jensen

## Renovation Preliminary Timeline-*Moving Forward*

Throughout the next year, the library will undergo a renovation and expansion project in order to offer 21st century services to the entire Branford community.

The library will remain open during the project, with most regular programs that take place in the auditorium relocating to other venues in Branford, or on hiatus for the year.

The following is a tentative plan for the phases of the renovation:

**March 2018** – The State Bond Commission is scheduled to meet on March 29. This is the body that must approve the State Library grant request of \$1 million. Upon approval, the State Library and Town of Branford enter into a contract to expend the funds.

The State Historic Preservation Office is reviewing the design, which must also be approved in order to receive the State grant funding.

Downes Construction is working on creating bid packages.

**April 2018** – Assuming Bond Commission and SHPO approval, The Town of Branford will issue invitations to bid on the project. The process takes approximately 1 month.

**May 2018** – The contractor with the winning bid will be

awarded the contract, and necessary permits will be obtained.

### **June 2018 – Phase I**

The Youth Services Department will move to the auditorium for the duration of the renovation project, expected to last approximately 12 months.

A temporary public entrance will be constructed at the current staff entrance, and will lead patrons through what is now the administrative office. Demolition begins in order to make room for the new entry and terrace.

A portion of the rear parking lot will be marked off for construction equipment and materials.

### **June 2018 – Phase II**

The current Youth Services area on the 2nd floor will be renovated to become the administrative offices and computer lab. Two new meeting rooms will also be created—one located at the front of the building, the other by enclosing the auditorium balcony.

### **September 2018 – Phase III**

The administrative staff will move into 2nd floor offices. The 2nd floor computer lab will be opened and the Reference staff will move to a temporary location in the 2nd floor front meeting room. The CD/DVD and teen collection will move to a temporary

location on the ground floor and all areas on the 1st floor will be renovated.

### **November 2018 – Phase IV**

The 1st floor is complete. Move in to new café, Local History room and Reference Office. The new addition entry and bathrooms are opened. Ground floor at rear of building is renovated for Adult Fiction collection.

### **January 2019 – Phase V**

Adult Fiction area and new CD/DVD room are complete. Non-fiction area on 1st floor is complete. Renovation of ground floor area for youth and teens begins.

### **April 2019 – Phase VI**

Move in to new Youth & Teen areas. Renovation of auditorium including carpet and ceiling painting begins.

### **May 2019 – Project is Complete!**

Thank you to Silver Petrucelli & Associates for architectural services, Downes Construction for construction management services, our Town Engineer Janice Plaziak, the renovation planning group, and JBML staff for their input and patience as we all work to build a better library!

*Karen Jensen*



**Teen Café Tuesdays  
beginning March 13!  
From 3-5 pm, grab  
a friend or come  
alone for free ac-  
tivities and snacks.**

## Most Anticipated New Books of 2018

On February 24th, Program Coordinator Whitney Gayle met with a group of avid readers for a fireside book chat and tea. Here are a few of the most anticipated books coming out this year:

### **Varina by Charles Frazier** **Release: 4/3/18**

The little-known story of Varina Howell Davis, married to much older widower Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, & her escape with her children from Richmond with bounties on their heads. Frazier returns to the Civil War era for the first time since his National Book Award-winning 1997 debut, *Cold Mountain*.

### **White Houses by Amy Bloom** **Release: 2/13/18**

Using letters as reference, Bloom re-creates the love story

between first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and journalist Lorena "Hick" Hickok. The best-selling author (*Lucky Us*) wades for the first time into an increasingly popular genre, historical fiction about women's lives.

### **My Lady's Choosing: An Interactive Romance by Kitty Curran** **Release: 3/3/18**

You are the heroine in the center of 18<sup>th</sup> century society & courtship season has begun. Will you flip forward fetchingly to find love with the bantering baronet Sir Benedict Granville? Or turn the page to true love with the hardworking, horse-loving highlander Captain Angus McTaggart? Make choices, turn pages, and discover all the daring delights of the multiple (and intertwining!) storylines.

### **A Higher Loyalty by James Comey** **Release: 3/6/18**

The former FBI director shares for the first time the details of his career in government during the past two decades.

### **Eat the Apple by Matt Young** **Release: 2/27/18**

This bold memoir explores "how war transformed [Young] from a confused teenager into a dangerous and damaged man." Visceral, ironic, self-lacerating, and ultimately redemptive, Young's story drops us into Marine Corps culture and lays bare the absurdism of 21st-century war, the manned-up vulnerability of those on the front lines, and the true, if often misguided, motivations that drove a young man to a life at war.



Roku Express—now available at Blackstone!

## Highlights from the Reference Department-January

January was another busy month for the library and the Reference Department. Whitney hosted a very successful Adult Board Games Night with 20 attendees and lots of new faces. She also created a Make Your Own Board or Card Game project for the Maker Monday group. Whitney is a member of the High School Nutmeg Award Committee this year and is taking an American Sign Language course so that she can communicate more easily with our deaf and hearing impaired patrons.

Christina and Sarah taught a

Gmail 101 class and both worked with patrons individually to provide tech assistance with Excel, importing photos from a phone to a laptop, applying for jobs online, and troubleshooting OverDrive. They are working on a schedule of upcoming classes in the spring. Although we won't have the auditorium available for classes and programs during the renovation, we are planning to continue teaching smaller groups in the Lucy Hammer room. Sarah and Andrea continued working on photograph and archives projects.

Debby enjoyed working on a challenging local history question about the Branford Community House. During the 1940's the possibility of dedicating the Recreation Department/Community House to Branford's veterans was discussed. Using the library's vertical file collection of local history articles and the online Branford History Scrapbooks database, she was able to locate several articles from the 1940's that discussed the possibility of a memorial to Branford veterans.

Deb Trofatter



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...more than books

Join our email list for more information about programs  
[www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)

## March 2018 Program Highlights

### First Friday Game Group (F2G2)\*\*

**March 3, April 7 @ 6-9 pm**  
Join us for game night! We'll be playing all types of board games, from fast-paced, hilarious party games to highly strategic, thinking games that will leave your head spinning! We've got games for everyone, no matter your experience level. Feel free to bring your own games too. Adults of all ages welcome.

### Lock Picking 101\*\*

**March 10 @ 2-4 pm**  
Using transparent padlocks and some basic picks, you'll get hands-on instruction with Jim Davis to learn a variety of techniques for opening basic locks—and the legalities involved.

### Drop-in DIY: T-Shirt Grocery Bag March 15 @ 3-5 pm

Drop in anytime between 3-5 pm and make your own t-shirt grocery tote bag, or we'll make it for you. Bring your own t-shirt and transform it in minutes. For all ages.

### Ask A Lawyer\*\*

**March 15 @ 3:30 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.

### Uncover Branford\*\*

**March 17 @ 10:30-11:30 am**  
Share your favorite Branford spots and plan an outing as a group to visit and uncover new places in town.

### Bestsellers Book Club\*\*

**March 31 @ 3:30 pm**  
We'll discuss *The Woman in*

*the Window* by A.J. Finn. Copies available at the library -all are welcome!

### Intro to Social Media\*\*

**April 5 @ 2-3:15 pm**  
Learn the basics of the most popular social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. We'll teach you how to create an account, control your privacy settings, and create your own posts.

### Sewing 101: Tote Bags\*\*

**April 7 @ 1-4 pm**  
Join us for a 3 hour introductory sewing class. You'll learn sewing basics such as how to read a pattern and how to choose the best fabric for your project. You'll leave knowing how to make your own unique tote bag in the fabric of your choice!

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

## January 2018 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

### Total Circulation: 11,522

January 2017: 11,766

### borrowIT: 2,440

January 2017: 2,681

### Renewals: 2,917

### Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 932  
Overdrive audiobooks: 323  
RB Digital (Zinio): 212  
Hoopla: 219 users  
Kanopy: 84 plays  
Pronunciator: 203 users

### Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 5 Loaned 12

### Children's Programs:

*Babies (0-2)*  
10 programs/304 attendance  
*Preschool (3-5)*  
8 programs/107 attendance  
*School-age (6-11)*  
5 programs/79 attendance  
*All Ages*  
0 programs/0 attendance

**Total Children's Programs: 23**  
**Total Attendance: 490**

### Teen Programs (12+)

4 programs/30 attendance

### Adult programs

20 programs/327 attendance

### Lucy Hammer Room

50 meetings/210 attendance

### Computer Sessions: 2,086

### Facebook: 1,511 Likes

### MailChimp: 7,076 subscribers

**Average Daily Visitors: 457**  
**Days Open: 28**