



Report to the Board of Trustees

October 3, 2018

From the Director

After the last Board of Trustees meeting, the Blackstone Project Planning Group met with the First Selectman and Town Finance Officer on September 6. After thorough discussion, the Project Planning Group decided to re-bid portions of the project where the bids came in significantly over budget. The group directed Downes Construction and Silver Petrucelli & Associates to review the plans and current estimates for the various scopes of work, then re-advertise the invitation to bid on these portions. Bids on the sitework, drywall/plaster and millwork are now due on October 16. Downes Construction will revise the phasing plan as necessary in order to start immediately after the bids are awarded and put to contract. The project planning team feels strongly that this is a positive step in the process. The slight delay will not jeopardize the project funding at all, or its timeline significantly. Robin Sandler, Rick Mahoney, Mike Macdonald from Downes Construction and I attended the September 24 Board of Finance meeting to provide this project update to the Town.

Fundraising for the Capital Campaign continues. Residents are still contributing based on a town-wide mailing sent in September, bring-



Library Director Karen Jensen and Trustee Pat Sanders at the Friends Annual Book Sale. Photo by Diane Puchalski

ing us to approximately \$720,000 toward our goal of \$800,000.

An Evening with the Spirits is almost here. Katy McNicol and Beth Law have secured an impressive list of whiskies and mediums for an eclectic evening that promises to be a lot of fun. 47 tickets have been sold so far.

Katy and I attended the 2nd annual Harvest Festival and sold raffle tickets. Trustees also sold tickets at the Friends annual Book Sale. The lucky winner will have the opportunity to name the upper rotunda art gallery.

Our new 3-week loan period for most items begins on October 4. We welcome renewals in person, by phone, through your online account and via text, through the Shoutbomb app.

The Friends Book Sale was on track to be one of the best ever, with a pumpkin decorating contest, music, and over 70,000 books! The Friends provide necessary funds for “extras” that our patrons enjoy, including the popular HOOPLA and Kanopy downloadable materials. A huge thank you to all who volunteered!

Karen Jensen



Win Naming Rights In the Renovated Library

Raffle tickets are currently on sale in support of the library renovation. The tickets cost \$20 each—the grand prize is naming rights to the Upper Rotunda art gallery.

Tickets are available at blackstonelibrary.org and at the library Reference Desk.

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—August



Life in a Rock Wall

The month of August was filled with end of summer reading and preparing for our renovation! Staff members throughout the building helped us with a long overdue weeding project in order to prepare for our temporary location in the auditorium once the renovation begins. A big thank you to staff members and volunteers alike who hunted for books that had not circulated the last couple of years. With everyone's help we were able to open up space for new books and we'll have a little less to pack when it comes to moving down below!

This month was also everyone's last chance to take part in our StoryWalk® along Main Street. The community response was 100% positive and we made sure to send a thank you note to all the businesses that participated in hope of them signing on next year. Many reached out to us as soon as the pages went up in June; wondering how they could get involved. With such a high level of interest we are hoping that the program will continually grow.

Those that completed the StoryWalk® on Main packet were entered for a grand prize at summer's end. We were able to pull three winners this time around and they received their own copy of *Ada's Violin* as well as an iTunes gift card in hope of expanding their love of music.

This month our digital design program for those in middle

school ended with our participants using a combination of the skills they learned to create their very own music and/or sound based videos. Participants were asked to create an interactive video that displayed what they liked about the class. Everyone was able to pick their own characters, backgrounds, movements and sounds to display throughout. Once they were complete we used our projector and large screen in the auditorium to share what they created. This final project was cool because everyone's videos were totally different. Some used sound bytes, others recorded voices or downloaded their favorite songs.

Everyone was able to display what they learned about music and SCRATCH without assistance and the results were fun, heartwarming and silly. A couple of participants even thanked me in their videos for hosting the class. Seeing everyone take what they learned and put it to use on their own reinforced the fact that they had taken the class to the next level. Those that were really into the class were encouraged to continue exploring from home since SCRATCH is a free online site.

The Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center visited with their Life in a Rock Wall program. The event was held outside, which was fitting since the Center brought a variety of mammals and reptiles that make their homes inside and under rocks! A representative discussed the

benefits of living amongst rocks and how they can provide protection from predators as well as camouflage. Kids were encouraged to create rock walls (big and small) using sugar cubes, Legos and bricks that looked like rocks. Kids got a kick out of creating the larger walls and using a variety of puppets to showcase which animals lived among the walls. This brought the program full circle since everyone could demonstrate what they learned through this group activity.

My favorite activity this month was our MaKey MaKey program for middle school students and up. Grant funding from the Guilford Savings Bank allowed us to purchase a classroom pack of MaKey MaKey kits, which are project invention kits that use circuits, coding and more to transform everyday objects. Since this summer's reading theme was based around music we decided to transform recycled materials into usable instruments with these innovative materials! Using SCRATCH (our favorite online coding program) participants were able to program sounds to the MaKey MaKey circuit board and connect them to the recycled instrument they created. Envision an egg carton transformed into a piano as each egg slot signifies a different note. The group had the best time creating their instruments and got the most fun out of programming the strangest sounds out there.

Highlights from the Reference Department-August

This month the Reference Department had two fascinating WWII related interactions with patrons.

The first involved a donation of Iwo Jima related materials, donated by Vinnie Thomas, including letters, photographs, and more. Mr. Thomas met with Karen and with Lisa Reisman (who had written an article on Mr. Thomas for The Sound), to donate two books containing the journals of the Iwo Jima Survivors Association.

Vinnie Thomas is one of approximately 200 living Iwo Jima survivors. In the 1980s, he was among 900 survivors who reunited to form the Iwo Jima Survivors Association, which established the nation's only Iwo Jima Memorial Monument honoring those who fought in the battle, located on the campus of Central Connecticut State University. Vinnie organized the last U.S./Canada reunion of Iwo Jima Survivors (held in Branford) and for the past 11 years, he has served as editor and publisher of the association's quarterly Journal of the Iwo Jima Survivors. (source: zip06.com)

We are grateful for Mr. Thomas' gift, and know it will be used often for research about this important WWII battle.

Our second interaction happened when a patron

brought in a photograph of a young man from Branford by the name of Austin Dean Ryer, Jr. (Austin Ryer Lane in Brushy Plains is named after him.) He wanted to see if we could help him locate relatives of Austin so that he could send them the photograph. Austin was a Branford resident who went missing and was then presumed dead during WWII. He was a B-29 gunner whose plane was shot down over the Pacific in 1945. He heroically held a bay door open, despite being wounded and despite the intense heat caused by a fire on the plane, so that crew members were able to parachute to safety. Two of those crew members, Dino Ruggeri and Guy Winks, were later rescued and told the story of Austin's heroism.

Using a variety of sources, including our AncestryLibrary subscription and AtoZ Databases as well as Google and other internet sources to locate relevant newspaper articles, family records, and obituaries, Debby was able to locate Austin's daughter in Texas. Our patron then got in touch with her and Austin's granddaughter, learning that they had no photographs of Austin at all. Our patron sent them the photograph as well as a collection of local newspaper articles and copies of the Branford High School yearbook pages that pictured Austin.

Our patron subsequently asked Debby if she could possibly locate any information on Dino Ruggeri and Guy Winks, the two men Austin saved. Using the same types of resources, Debby found Ruggeri's daughter in California. It turns out that Dino passed away less than a year ago, had attended reunions of the squadron and the daughter had a number of photographs of Austin. She has been communicating with our patron and is sending these photographs so that he can send them to Austin's granddaughter. It looks like Guy Winks did not have any children, but Debby located a niece and grand-nephew and passed that information along to our patron as well.

Although the story of Austin's death in WWII is very sad, we are happy to have helped facilitate getting information and photographs to his relatives.

Debby Trofatter



Austin Ryer Lane named after WWII Hero



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

October 2018 Program Highlights

First Friday Game Group (F2G2)**

October 6 @ 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.

ERACE Information Session

October 9 @ 10—11 am

October 11 @ 7—8 pm

Join a representative of ERACE for this informational meeting with a focus on their free courses leading to a high school diploma, GED, NEDP and ESL programs.

Ask A Lawyer**

October 18 @ 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.

Uncover Branford**

October 20 @ 10:30am-12

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

Books & Brews

October 24 @ 6—8 pm

Each month, Books & Brews offers 2 titles to choose from, each with its own discussion group to take part in.

We bring the following month's books to each meeting. Come out and grab one for next month's group. You can also borrow one from the library (place a hold on our online catalog), or purchase your own copy.

New members welcome. Read one of the titles and come out and join the fun!

Find us on meetup.com to connect with the group and RSVP to the meeting.

Books 'n' Brews will meet at Thimble Island Brewery.

Feel free to bring your own snacks. 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. Come have some fun & get lit...erary at Books 'n' Brews!

Bestsellers Book Club**

October 27 @ 3:30 pm

We'll discuss *Tanscription* by Kate Atkinson. Copies available at the library—all are welcome!

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

August 2018 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 15,238

August 2017: 14,983

borrowIT: 2,878

August 2017: 3,196

Renewals: 3,019

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1,028

Overdrive audiobooks: 383

RB Digital: 130

Hoopla: 358 plays

Kanopy: 107 plays

Pronunciator: 384 users

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

14 programs/393 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

9 programs/93 attendance

School-age (6-11)

3 programs/38 attendance

All Ages

0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 26

Total Attendance: 524

Teen Programs (12+)

5 programs/17 attendance

Adult programs

24 programs/310 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

60 meetings/207 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2,199

Facebook: 1,556 Likes

MailChimp: 7,353 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 567

Days Open: 27