

# Report to the Board of Trustees

October 2, 2013

## From the Director

September has flown by and we are in the midst of the fall season already! We have a variety of programs planned for October which are sure to be popular.

We had two programs filled to capacity attendance in September: Jane Bouley's talk on the Hurricane of '38 and Lessons Learned from Famous Cases with Dr. Henry Lee. Our October online program listing featured a new registration component; to date we have over 46 people registered for the G-Zen program on October 8.

I spent some time working at the reference desk in order to meet more of our patrons and become more familiar with our resources. I'll help cover the desk on October 4 so reference staff can attend a roundtable workshop on managing various devices.

Our staff were surveyed and while we know they put their all into helping our patrons every day, it was encouraging to find that the climate is moving in a positive direction. One thing we can and will concentrate on improving is our internal communications.

A preliminary check revealed that the welcome packet we began mailing to new residents in May has started to generate some new patron registrations.

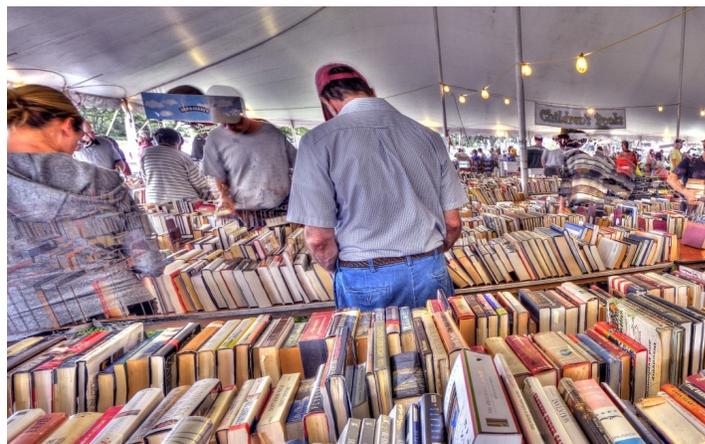


Photo by Rev. Bill Keane

## 2013 Book Sale

*September's book sale was the most successful in Friends history, with over 70,000 books to choose from. It was a lot of fun to help out on pre-view night; I met some interesting patrons and book dealers, and also had the opportunity to talk with Joan Armstrong, library director from 1968-1986. One member of the friends observed that the sale was a celebration of reading and books—he saw the sale as giving new life to books, as they would be rediscovered by new owners. Thanks to all the Friends of the Library, the members of the staff and Trustees who helped, and most of all the Hally family—Mary, Matt and Mark, who are so dedicated to making this sale run smoothly year after year.*

The library will be closed on Sunday October 13 and Monday, October 14. The Columbus Day Parade makes it debut in Branford with over 100 marching units, making it the both the largest parade in Branford's history, and the history of the Columbus Day parade itself.

More furniture will be sent to the Department of Corrections for refurbishing in October. This last group will complete the project.

We have received a proposal from Sandra Vlock of AKV Architects to continue with the pre-design phase of our renovation project. The modifications to our renovation project were submitted to the State Library and approved by the State Librarian, which means the library is still eligible for the \$1,000,000 construction grant received in 2008.

The Development Committee has scheduled a planning meeting with Ron Katz on October 2.

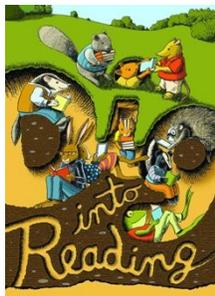
An RFP for website design was sent out this month; proposals are due by October 16.

New offerings: Zinio digital magazines and Axis 360 ebooks will go live in October with links from our website. Axis 360 ebooks can be downloaded to most devices, but it is limited to the Kindle Fire. The Axis 360 collection contains over 100 titles which we plan to add to each month.

Finally, I attended my first Connecticut Library Association meeting as the chair of the Procedures Committee. I look forward to active participation at the state level.

*Karen Jensen  
Library Director*

## Youth Services—*Dig into Reading!*



**"Over 320 children participated in the 2013 summer reading program! Thanks to Guilford Savings Bank, Loeb Foundation and Friends of the Library for making this possible."**

We closed out our summer reading program with a variety of popular events for lots of different ages. One of our most popular programs was provided by local artist Katie Stevenson who used a variety of outdoor materials to create gnome homes. Children started with a recyclable planter inverted to create a mushroom-like home. Using leaves, sticks, pinecones and moss, they created some of the most interesting homes I have ever seen – one even had a diving board and pool for the gnomes to play in! See our facebook page for more photos.



**Gnome Homes!**

We also had a nice showing for the Pequotsepos Nature Center's Inspect an Insect program which introduced participants to different invertebrates and their similarities and differences. Families were shown how to use bug catching gear and led outside of the library to see what they could find! Children had the best time searching our grounds for various bugs and I would have to say the most exciting find was a cricket that continuously jumped around. Once everyone got a

chance to catch something the group brought their findings together to talk about each bug, how they survive and what they have in common. Pictures of our kids and parents bug hunting can also be found on our facebook page.

The Children's Museum of West Hartford presented *Wiggle Worms*, for preschoolers and their caregivers. The audience was given a short worm introduction and their own worm to investigate. Families were encouraged to touch, move and experiment with their worms to experience their traits and motion. Once the audience was comfortable, they were introduced to various elements like dark paper and water to in order to learn how worms would adapt to new environments. Children took their time explaining whether or not the worms would like being near water or dark surfaces and were then asked to introduce the elements to their worms and sit back and watch the results! It was wonderful seeing children at such a young age participate in these simple scientific studies and be able to express their observations and results! We are hoping to feature similar workshops for preschool aged children in the future.

Over 320 children participated in our summer reading program this year. The Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library had over 50 children

participate in their program, making this a successful summer for Branford children.

I would like to thank my staff for all of the hard work they put towards the program. We would not have been able to serve some kids and provide the number of programs we created without their support. Thank you for not only being ready to implement new ideas but also for handling our families with care, which will surely bring them back to the library once the new school year begins.

Families were raving about our programs and really enjoyed the variety that the Dig into Reading theme created.

All of our summer reading prize winners can be found on our facebook page. Our weekly prize winners were treated to Barnes and Noble gift cards and they were: Ayden Hafidi, David Regan, James Kropf, Mckayla Zacharias, Liam O'Keefe and Dominic Esposito. Our grand prize winners received Kindle Fires to help with their myOn, the school's online reading program and they were: Chloe Cassello and Mridwa Chinnagurawager. Both were extremely excited about their win and guessed closest to the number of jellybeans in our summer reading jar without going over. For those of you who are curious about the total number of jellybeans in our jar – it was 962!

—Carly Rencsko

## August Highlights from the Reference Department

Helping students (K through high school, Branford and beyond) locate their summer reading materials is an important part of our summer routine. *We make locating a book for a student of any age a very high priority!*

Deb and Katy investigated best practices solutions for using multiple iPads in the library. After much research they came up with a plan which included installing specific programs on a MAC, creating a master iPad setup with desired configurations and apps and then cloning them onto all the iPads. *Our version of the genius bar!*

Deb worked with LION staff to create a demo pc which mirrors our public computers to be used in conjunction with our Tech Tuesday initiative. *We want to be able to help patrons feel comfortable using our library computers.*

In anticipation of our new ebook initiative, AXIS 360, Barb and Deb met with representative from Baker & Taylor to get some hints and suggestions for using this service which has a lot of features. *It is important and necessary for the reference staff to be informed and prepared before we roll out a new service!*

Our Adult Summer Reading Program has been fun. We had 148 entries into our end of summer drawing. *Summer is a great time to sit back and relax with a great book!*

When a patron with macular degeneration came into the library Whitney reminded them that they could still enjoy books by borrowing from our audio book collection or requesting audio books from our library consortium. *We think audio books count as reading!*

Katy received a phone call from a patron who was reading a book and came across a word or term that they couldn't find in the dictionary: "haint" or "haint blue". She used google and found that "Blue porch ceilings are prevalent all throughout the South. The Gullah culture of the Low Country believes that spirits, known as "haints," can't cross water. Using light blue paint to symbolize water, the Gullah people applied the shade to porch ceilings and doors preventing evil spirits from entering." *We love learning new things!*

We assisted a patron who was researching his father's military company during World War II. *The reference department has an extensive collection of local military information!*

We corrected tags in our online historical photo database after receiving input from a patron who recognized her grandfather's house in a photo - his name was Archer, but the tag, which was transcribed from handwritten titles, said Arthur. *Patron input is very important to us!*

We have been continuing our inventory of the high density area and identified items which can be moved to the reference area. *Better location for better access for our patrons!*

Learn something new every day: Whitney: Rosetta Stone webinar; Katy and Whitney: Using Twitter in The Library webinar; Barbara: Introduction to WordPress; Katy: Intermediate WordPress; Katy and Whitney: Civic Engagement Programs in Libraries webinar. Katy and Whitney met with Karen and a consultant to discuss new and better ways to format our online events newsletter. Deb researched Drupal and WordPress web design ideas as well and worked hard to find and develop help sheets for Axis 360. *Professional development and continuing education matter!*

Katy Dillman, reference librarian, is working with Carly Rencsko to develop new teen programs for the fall and the inaugural Teen Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for October 23.

We were honored as the 2013 Best Library in the New Haven area by *New Haven Living Magazine*. Barbara, Karen and Kathy attended a celebration held by the magazine and picked up our plaque which we will hang in a prominent place at the library.

—Barbara Cangiano




---

**September was  
banned book  
month.**

---



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 2013 Program Highlights

**Tech Tuesdays @ 10am**  
one-on-one sessions with a librarian for tech help.

**Knitting: Wednesdays 6:00 PM**

**Mystery Book Club 10/2 3pm**  
*Honeymoon* by James Patterson

**App/Tablet Tips 10/2 @ 6pm**

**VNA Blood Pressure Clinic 10/3 @ 12noon**

**Book Signing: Susan Conley**  
Author of *Paris Was the Place*  
Friday, October 4 @ 2:00 PM

**Community Discussion**  
Sunday, October 6 @ 2:00 PM

**Yoga: Mondays @ 5:00 PM**  
October 7, 21, 28

**G-Zen Restaurant 10/8 @ 6:30pm**  
Vegan! Organic! Local!

**2nd Tuesday Book Club 10/8 @ 6:45 PM**

**Menunkatuck Audubon Society: 10/9 @ 7pm**  
*Eastern Canada: Journey of Discovery*

**Evan DeCarlo: Teen Author, Children of the North – ALL AGES 10/12 @ 11:00 AM**

**MS Support Group 10/16 @ 5:30 PM**

**Ask A Lawyer 10/17 @ 6pm**

**Branford Historical Society: Curse of Micah Rood 10/17 @ 7:00 PM**

**Branford Musical Arts Society Friday, October 18 @ 7:30 PM**

**Poe, Times Two 10/19 @ 2pm**

**Witchcraft: Songs for an Autumn Afternoon 10/20@2pm**  
With The Harris/Roane Duo.

**Eating Well: The Chefs of La Cuisine 10/24 @ 6:30pm**

**Opera Appreciation 10/28 @ 7:00 PM**

**CT Works Networking Group 10/29 @ 10:00 AM**

## August 2013 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

**Total Circulation: 18,387**  
(August 2012: 20,231)

**ConnectiCard: 3,325**  
(August 2012: 3,732)

**Downloadable Circulation:**  
Overdrive ebooks: **686**  
Overdrive audiobooks:  
Axis360: launching in October  
Zinio: launching in October

**IndieFlix** (streaming independent films): **37 patrons added; 67 films viewed**

**Interlibrary Loan**  
Borrowed **38**/Loaned **71**

**Average Daily Visitors: 649**

**Facebook: 753 Likes**

**Constant Contact: 2821**

### Children's Programs:

*Babies (0-2)*  
6 programs/302 attendance

*Preschool (3-5)*  
15 programs/303 attendance

*School-age (6-11)*  
12 programs/204 attendance

*All ages*  
2 programs/70 attendance

### Teen Programs

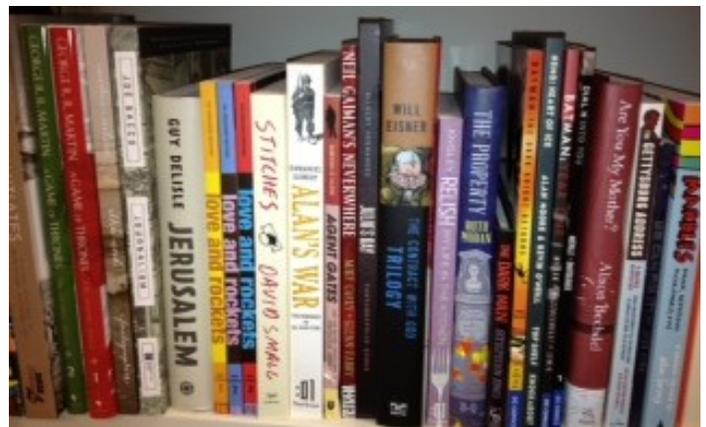
*Beginning in October*

### Adult programs

11 programs/122 attendance

### Lucy Hammer Room

57 meetings/125 attendance



Graphic novels coming soon to a shelf near you!