

Director's Report

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March/April 2011

JAMES BLACKSTONE MEMORIAL

ConnectiCARD/ConnectiCAR

Why were librarians and the patrons we serve, up in arms over the possible State cuts to ConnectiCARD and ConnetiCAR? For more than 30 years, Connecticut residents have had the privilege of using their hometown library cards in other town libraries all throughout Connecticut. With 169 towns and 187 public libraries, it makes it quite convenient, whether you are a commuter or someone in search of a specific title at a specific location, to stop in any town and use their library by using your hometown library card. The additional convenience is that you can then return these items to your hometown library knowing that they will make their way back to their rightful owner, saving you time and gas.

This is all possible because the state of Connecticut funds these programs through the State Library. C-CARD reimburses libraries for serving non-residents. Because of the C-CARD program the Blackstone, on average, checks out over 2,000 items per month from our collection to non-residents. C-CAR is the transit system for library material throughout the state. This transit system allows us to borrow and loan materials from other libraries, especially those in our consortium, with as little as a 24 hour turnaround. Being part of LION enables us to borrow from a collection of over a million items, giving our patrons a huge "library" to chose from and saving us a great deal of money by not having to purchase everything for our patrons. These two programs have, so far, escaped the State budget hatchet, but only because Ken Wiggin, State Librarian, has found other places to cut in the State Library budget.

I realize that all State budget cuts affect someone and everyone has their own pet program, but keeping C-CARD and C-CAR in place not only makes fiscal sense, but allows all libraries in the state of Connecticut to be better than just average. These programs also give the public that we serve a vast amount of materials to help them achieve their life-long learning goals.

Kathy Rieger—Library Director

Statistics

Circulation February 2011	14,778
Circulation February 2010	15,485
CT Car February 2011	2,055
CT Car February 2010	2,049
Books added	355
Audio Visual added	78
Deleted items	789

Youth Services Numbers for March

- Miss Mary's class for babies—3 classes—120 attendees
- Miss Mary's class for 2 yr. olds—3 classes— 64 attendees
- Miss Mary's class for Pre-K—4 classes 210 attendees
- Miss Mary's outreach classes—5 classes—121 attendees
- Grade School classes—4 classes—18 attendees
- Make it or take it classes—4 classes—146 attendees
- **TOTAL—686 attendees**

Reference, Circulation and Technical Services—February Report: *Contributors: Barbara Cangiano, Deirdre Santora and Gennett Grinnell*

Reference staff:

- Regularly assist other departments during staff vacancies and absences.
- Coordinate and prepare materials for homebound patrons.
- Provide technical support for library staff.
- Ongoing collection maintenance and development of non-fiction, reference and media collections.
- Manage monthly area book groups.
- Barabara attended a Google docs Workshop which gave weight to several projects: a library survey; Google Docs for various applications; a QR code on our website; Registration for YELP and

FourSquare.

- Reorganized books on CD Collection with the addition of shelving in that area.
- Deb and Carly launched a new page for the Youth Services website.
- Facebook—331 users
- Constant Contact—1,193 subscribers
- ILL—Borrowed 42; Loaned 88
- Overdrive Downloadable Audio Books—78
- Overdrive Downloadable EBooks—115

Circulation staff:

- Checked out/Checked in, renewals and holds = 35,295 items in February.

Technical Services staff:

- Cataloging—747 total
- Processing—491 total
- Orders received—450 total

Additional duties:

- Linda cataloged, checked in, and ordered 917 items and deleted 90 periodicals from our collection.
- Gennett cataloged, processed, and deleted 544 items, processed 42 ILLs, and loaned 89 ILL requests.
- Patricia B. cataloged, processed, checked in and mended 644 items and received and processed 3,869 C-Car items.

Statistics

Circulation February 2011	14,778
Circulation February 2010	15,485
CT Car February 2011	2,055
CT Car February 2010	2,049
Books added	408
Audio Visual added	83
Deleted items	357

Youth Services Numbers for February

- Miss Mary's class for babies—2 classes—84 attendees
- Miss Mary's class for 2 yr. olds—2 classes— 66 attendees
- Miss Mary's class for Pre-K—3 classes 92 attendees
- Miss Mary's outreach classes—4 classes—132 attendees
- Grade School classes—11 classes—208 attendees
- Make it or take it classes—4 classes—194 attendees
- Tours—2 groups 17 attendees
- **TOTAL—833 attendees**

Youth Services—*Carly Rencsko*—February

This month was very exciting in the youth services department starting with the announcement of the 2012 juvenile and teen Nutmeg nominees! These books are special to me since I was part of the teen Nutmeg selection committee. The experience was not only wonderful because I was able to talk to other professionals in the field, but it also kept me current, reading a good eighty plus titles throughout the year. Patricia B. was a huge help when it came to getting the books cataloged, prepared, and set in their proper location for circulation. For the past couple of years all of the Nutmeg titles have been held upstairs, in the youth services department. This year, we decided to split them, displaying the juvenile titles upstairs and the teen titles in the teen space. We hope that this change will make both sets of books more accessible to their intended readers.

We also launched our brand new youth services website at the beginning of this month. Debby T. and I have been working really hard to revamp the site to not only give it a fresh look, but also to update links, information, and gain greater access to our department. For example, we added two new tabs: one detailing volunteer opportunities as well as a printable application, and another stating library tours and how teachers, scout leaders, and parents can use the library as a teaching tool. The past couple of months we have scheduled

quite a few Scout historical based tours as well as research tours for small groups working on specific projects. Mary and I are also trying take photos of special children's events and then posting them on the website so that everyone can see the youth services department in action! Sarah E. has been extremely helpful when it comes to uploading photos and showing us how to label and separate them into specific categories. To check out all of Debby's handy work head to "Youth Services" at the top of the website page.

In the middle of the month we hosted our very first Pre Valentine's Day party geared to Young Adults. The afternoon consisted of a variety of games like: Pictionary, Bingo, and MadLibs, but with a Valentine twist. We also setup a craft station where participants could use hearts and other scraps to create valentines. We then watched *Little Manhattan*, which shows a 10 ½ year old couple in their first "relationship," and how falling for someone is not as easy as it seems. The film was well received and perfect for the entire family. We had eighteen participants, which is great, and only encourages us to host similar themed events in the future!

February brings winter break, so we kept busy with a variety of special events. A few included a CT based singer and songwriter Chris Keithan, but known to the kids as Mr. Gym! Chris uses his own songs, and a variety of instruments to promote physical movement in creative ways. With a masters degree in Physical Edu-

cation and over ten years of teaching experience Chris was able to keep track of over 80 people who he got up and moving. While watching the program you could tell that he loves to perform and uses his sense of humor and talent to pull listeners in. I was most excited by the fact that Chris took the time to incorporate books. He introduced movements and songs through stories allowing participants to experience the program in different formats and promoting the use of books in creative ways.

Mary and I had a little of our own fun; putting on a dual story hour for babies



thru age five. We incorporated teddy bears, asking participants to bring their bears from home to partake in the fun! We put together a variety of teddy bear stories, songs, and rhymes, and even used teddy bear puppets to illustrate the stories we read. At the end of the program, everyone made their own paper teddy bear to enjoy at home. This program was a special treat, especially for Mary because she was able to see many of the kids that were in her classes in past years who are now attending preschool or elementary school. These older participants fell right into place and were able to encourage younger listeners to follow along. All and all, a wonderful way to close out the colder months while we push forward into spring!

Reference, Circulation and Technical Services—March Report: *Contributors: Barbara Cangiano, Deirdre Santora and Gennett Grinnell*

Reference staff:

- Regularly assist other departments during staff vacancies and absences.
- Coordinate and prepare materials for homebound patrons.
- Provide technical support for library staff.
- Ongoing collection maintenance and development of non-fiction, reference and media collections.
- Manage monthly area book groups.
- The Reference Department has always been the go to department when questions about new computers, tech tools or software is introduced or advertised in the media.

Lately, we have been inundated with questions about new e-book reader technology and Overdrive (which, through LION, offers the software for free downloadable books used at our library). We live in a society obsessed with instant gratification This is particularly true when it comes to new tech toys like e-books or IPADs. However, very few devices come out of the box ready to use. For example, experts who follow the e-book industry have determined that there is a **21-step process** to download and read an e-book through Overdrive! Our reference staff, Deb, Katy, Sarah, Shauna and I have worked very hard to

learn all we can about these emerging technologies: prepared cheat sheets for staff and public use, experiment daily with the library's NOOKs, help patrons troubleshoot their personal devices – in an attempt to make their experience with new services and products a positive and hopefully, simpler one. It is a challenge to keep up with the rapid and daily advances in technology and respond to patrons demands for all the new bells and whistles available.

Circulation staff:

- Checked out/Checked

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Statistics

Circulation March 2011	16,807
Circulation March 2010	17,481
CT Car March 2011	2,325
CT Car March 2010	2,349
Books added	675
Audio Visual added	86
Deleted items	645

Youth Services Numbers for March

- Miss Mary's class for babies—5 classes—182 attendees
- Miss Mary's class for 2 yr. olds—4 classes— 185 attendees
- Miss Mary's class for Pre-K—4 classes 161 attendees
- Miss Mary's outreach classes—12 classes—315 attendees
- Grade School classes—13 classes—114 attendees
- Make it or take it classes—4 classes—188 attendees
- **TOTAL—1,141 attendees**

Youth Services—*Carly Rencsko—March Report*

This month the Youth Services department was buzzing with activity; holding a large number of story times, craft groups, and book clubs along with introducing a couple of new programs. Over 1,000 kids participated in at least one of our programs during March.

One of the new events is our EARLY RELEASE DAY program meant to provide positive experiences for those in 4th grade and up looking for things to do after their early release from school. For this program, we load a Wii videogame system with a couple of different games like: Mario Kart and Wii sports and then hook the system to our projector so that participants can play on the huge free standing screen! Participants bring in additional controllers so that four kids are playing at once. We also have a couple of gaming stations with board games. Surprisingly, the kids gravitate more towards CLUE - Harry Potter Edition than the actual Wii. The board game allowed them to work together, test their problem solving skills,

and interact without a video or computer screen. I think a lot of the participants chose the board game over the videogame simply because they had never played CLUE before (which they fully admitted!) and getting the chance to try something new automatically trumps the videogame system that they have at home. I also found that they enjoyed being together and interacting in a different setting. When playing a videogame you need to follow a strict set of controls and keep up with the designated pace, BUT a board game allows participants to set the pace and gives them the power to decide their next move all while socializing with their peers.

Mary and I put together a caregiver/child infused craft the last Friday of March that asked everyone to work together and create a foam kite! We were happily surprised to see 30 participants on a sunny Friday afternoon, and were grateful for the caregiver help given to the younger participants, which freed Mary and me to help some of the older children. Next year we want to incorporate a kite

and flying activity that will allow caregivers and participants to test live kites on the library lawn! The best part of the entire experience was watching the interactions occurring between the caregivers, and participants; giving them a chance to enjoy one another without the common household distractions. All and all the craft was a success and was featured on the front page of the *Branford Sound*. We are thinking of featuring a monthly caregiver/child craft that will have both parties working together to create a more complex task.

We have seen an increase in the number of participants in our PJ STORIES class held every Thursday evening. Seeing some of the same families from week to week has been wonderful as the caregivers and children have become more confident and boisterous since they know what to expect and feel comfortable participating. I love the fact that we are able to offer this class in the evening giving caregivers who may not be able to participate in our daytime classes a chance to interact with their children at the library.

(Continued from page 4)

in, renewals and holds in March—
40,790

Technical Services staff:

- Cataloging—931
- Processing—1033
- Orders received—394

Additional duties:

- Linda cataloged, checked in, and ordered

1,295 items and checked in 136 periodicals.

- Gennett cataloged, processed, and deleted 433 items, processed 111 ILLs, and loaned 51 IIL requests.
- Patricia B. cataloged, processed, checked in and mended 1,185 items and received and processed 4,775 C-Car items.
- Volunteer Mary Angeleti processed 108 books.

JAMES BLACKSTONE MEMORIAL

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Door~to~Door Service from the Blackstone Library and S.A.R.A.H. Inc:

Do you know someone who recently had a joint replacement and can't get up and about for awhile? Do you know anyone who is permanently homebound and unable to come to the library? Would they like to take advantage of our Homebound Services? The library averages around 10 households a week who receive this service. We supply books, movies and magazines for Branford residents who are unable to come to the library and have no other support system in place to obtain library materials. Some residents have specific titles that they would like; others ask our librarians to pick materials for them based on what genres they enjoy. We partner with S.A.R.A.H. Inc. for deliveries. Their driver comes to the library every week with usually five of the men in their residency program and pick up the bundles of materials that we have put together. This partnership has helped us tremendously because the S.A.R.A.H. group is very consistent. There was a time when we used volunteers to make deliveries for this program. The volunteers, even though good, were not consistently available to make deliveries and often deliveries fell on staff to do after work hours. The patrons in this program appreciate it immensely and thoroughly enjoy the S.A.R.A.H. group that pays them a weekly visit. As a bonus to S.A.R.A.H., the staff collects empty bottles and cans to give to the workers for recycling! Everyone wins in this distinctive library service!

The library auditorium features a wide variety of free programs for the public!

Tuesday, April 26—1:00 p.m. "New Release Movie"
Academy Award winning movie *The King's Speech*.

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Wednesday, April 27—7:00 p.m. Branford Land Trust
presents "The Bat Lady." While educational with
slides and a lecture, this program will also feature a
live bat.