

Director's Report to the Board of Agents

Silas Bronson Library

August 16, 2021

Raechel Guest, Director

COVID Update

We returned to regular service (no appointments needed) on May 11. Since then, we have seen a steady increase in circulation of physical materials, from about 2,300 items per month to just under 8,000. The increase in circulation of ebooks and downloadable audiobooks that happened during the shutdown has held steady: we are now seeing about 1,000 digital items circulating each month.

Following changes to State regulations on May 19, only unvaccinated people were required to wear a mask inside the library. However, as the pandemic has worsened, a City directive was issued on August 2 requiring masks to be worn by everyone in the library and other City buildings.

Due to the pandemic, we continue to limit programs to outdoors and online. The newly renovated Library Park offers a lovely shaded seated area for outdoor story times, and the front plaza was used for Harry Potter Day activities.

Mobile Library

We are still working with Public Works to select a van to purchase for the mobile library. In the meantime, Michael Tierney has been making deliveries to homebound patrons, building on his experience delivering meals for the Senior Center during the pandemic.

Library Construction Grant Application

We are closing in on finishing the grant application to the State Library for the replacement of our elevator. The application is due September 1, with supporting documents due later in September. Corporation Counsel has been assisting us with the process.

Book A Librarian

We have added a new feature to our website called Book a Librarian, which allows patrons to request one-on-one appointments with our librarians for assistance with computers or research. Although we have always offered this service, it is now more visible. We also offer the one-on-one appointment option for patrons using the public computers who require assistance with creating a resume or filling out applications.

Fine Free Libraries

More and more public libraries in Connecticut are ending their policy of charging late fees. Although we suspended late fees when the pandemic started, our policy has not been revised to permanently eliminate them.

Studies have shown that late fees primarily serve as a deterrent to low-income patrons who struggle to afford the fees, while elimination of late fees typically increases circulation and decreases unreturned items. Lost fees are still charged for items that are not returned after the items are due back.

The American Library Association has urged all public libraries to eliminate late fees.

We have heard from some Waterbury residents that they are choosing to go to libraries out of town to borrow books, since those libraries do not charge late fees.

Connecticut libraries that have permanently eliminated late fees include: Hartford Public Library, New Haven Free Public Library, Southbury Public Library, New Britain Public Library, Wallingford Public Library, and Stamford's Ferguson Library.

Museum Pass System

After learning that LibraryInsight would no longer be available to host our museum pass system, we researched the available options and selected TixKeeper. The new system is up and running with our renewed museum passes.

Databases

We no longer subscribe to LinkedIn Learning/Lynda.com. They made some changes to their system which meant that we stopped having access to the database in June. We spent a very long time trying to resolve the issue, but their service representative never followed through with fixing our account.

We are instead subscribing to a database called Universal Class, which is offered through Overdrive at a fraction of the cost of LinkedIn Learning. While it does not offer as many tutorials, it is designed specifically for libraries.

We are also adding Ancestry.com Library Edition, which will enhance our librarians' ability to assist with genealogy questions and can be accessed by the public at the library using either our computers or our wifi.

Staffing and Saturdays

We currently have six vacancies: three Librarian IIs, one Librarian IV, one Admin I, and one Page. We have been approved to fill three positions: two Librarians IIs and the Librarian IV position. The other positions are being left temporarily vacant by Finance for budgetary reasons. Additionally, we have two other employees who have been out on long term medical leave, creating a nearly 30% reduction in staffing for the public service desks.

We are scheduled to resume our Saturday hours on September 11. Being open on Saturdays is essential, as many of our patrons are unable to come to the library during the week. However, due to our current low staffing levels, we are unable to be open on Saturdays without reducing our hours on another day. After reviewing logs of computer usage, reference assistance, and checkouts, we have determined that temporarily closing the library at 5 p.m. on Mondays would cause the least disruption to our patrons. This would reduce our staffing needs on Monday from two shifts to one shift, making it possible to be open on Saturdays (the Saturday workers would have Monday off). The reduction in hours would end once we filled at least three of the vacant positions. We will also be reducing our program offerings until we increase our staffing levels.

Circulation Division

April Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 256,820
Total Items Added to Collection: 1,133
Total Items Circulated: 2,013
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,540
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 355

Total Active Patrons: 6,852
Total Expired Patrons: 34,806
Total Patrons Added: 91

May Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 259,073
Total Items Added to Collection: 2,652
Total Items Circulated: 3,966
Total Circulation In-House: 49
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,387
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 269

Total Active Patrons: 41,749
Total Expired Patrons: 7
Total Patrons Added: 76

April Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,105
Total Items Added to Collection: 41
Total Items Circulated: 352
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 77
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 247

Total Active Patrons: 223
Total Expired Patrons: 1,116
Total Patrons Added: 0

May Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,159
Total Items Added to Collection: 72
Total Items Circulated: 357
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 91
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 209

Total Active Patrons: 1,339
Total Expired Patrons: 0
Total Patrons Added: 3

June Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 260,310
Total Items Added to Collection: 1,816
Total Items Circulated: 7,168
Total Circulation In-House: 49
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,451
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 375

Total Active Patrons: 41,831
Total Expired Patrons: 7
Total Patrons Added: 120

June Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,164
Total Items Added to Collection: 47
Total Items Circulated: 508
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 93
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 277

Total Active Patrons: 1,341
Total Expired Patrons: 0
Total Patrons Added: 4

July Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 260,095
Total Items Added to Collection: 214
Total Items Circulated: 7,403
Total Circulation In-House: 21
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,739
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 360

Total Active Patrons: 41,954
Total Expired Patrons: 9
Total Patrons Added: 152

July Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,155
Total Items Added to Collection: 6
Total Items Circulated: 594
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 98
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 297

Total Active Patrons: 1,347
Total Expired Patrons: 0
Total Patrons Added: 6

OverDrive Circulation: April

Audiobooks: 423

Ebooks: 676

Total Checkouts: 1,099

Adult: 875

Teen/YA: 107

Children: 117

OverDrive Circulation: May

Audiobooks: 276

Ebooks: 625

Total Checkouts: 901

Adult: 705

Teen/YA: 93

Children: 103

OverDrive Circulation: June

Audiobooks: 394

Ebooks: 562

Total Checkouts: 956

Adult: 712

Teen/YA: 103

Children: 141

OverDrive Circulation: July

Audiobooks: 435

Ebooks: 609

Total Checkouts: 1,044

Adult: 849

Teen/YA: 91

Children: 104

Museum Pass Use - Summary by Month

Year	Month	Museum	Pass Type	Number Reserved	Checked Out	No Shows
2021	June	Children's Museum / Roaring Brook Nature Center	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	June	Institute for American Indian Studies	Print from Home	2	2	0
2021	June	Mattatuck Museum Art and History Center	Print from Home	3	3	0
2021	June	New Britain Museum of American Art	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	June	New England Air Museum	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	July	Barker Character Comic and Cartoon Museum	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	July	Beardsley Zoo	Pick Up/Return at Library	4	0	4
2021	July	KidsPlay Children's Museum	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	July	Mattatuck Museum Art and History Center	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	July	Mystic Seaport	Print from Home	1	1	0
2021	July	New Britain Museum of American Art	Print from Home	3	3	0

Online Presence

Facebook Followers as of 8/9/2021: 2,548
Facebook Reach July 12 – August 8: 10,356
Facebook Post Engagements July 12 – August 8: 1,191

Instagram Followers as of 8/9/2021: 947
Bronson Teens Instagram Followers as of 8/9/2021: 275
Twitter Followers as of 8/9/2021: 454

Wowbrary Active Subscriptions as of 8/9/2021: 95
Wowbrary Customized Newsletters as of 8/9/2021: 6
Wowbrary Webpages Viewed July 1 – July 31: 958
Wowbrary Clickthroughs to Catalog July 1 – July 31: 57

Website Visitors July 1 – July 31: 1,771
Website Sessions July 1 – July 31: 2,799
Website Pageviews July 1 – July 31: 5,847

Most Visited Website Pages (July 1 – July 31):

Home Page: 2,746	Digital: 119	Business Resources: 34
Programs: 311	Children's Division: 111	Geekdom: 31
Program Registration: 212	How to Get a Card: 100	New Movies: 24
Genealogy/Local Hist.: 182	Borrowing Questions: 66	Friends: 23
Museum Passes: 175	eBooks: 58	Computer Classes: 26
Ask A Librarian: 173	Library History: 37	Board of Agents: 22
Research: 170	Calendar: 48	Directions: 31
How to Find Books: 147	Teen/YA: 44	Book a Librarian: 15
About Us: 124	Home Delivery: 36	Delivery Application: 9
Bunker Hill Branch: 119	Hall of Fame: 22	Wowbrary: 7
Take Out: 119	Book Sale: 35	Requests: 4