How Does Your Library Make CT Better?

By Marjorie Ruschau

If you've been reluctant to advocate for your library in the past because you didn't want to deal with that dirty little issue called money, you're in for a treat.

"This is a year when the campaign is not about asking for money or passing a bill," said Mary Etter, co-chair of the CLA legislative committee and director of the South Windsor Library.

"It is about spreading an understanding of what libraries do."

As the state legislature comes into session, the goal is to make sure all legislators and state government officials realize the effect of libraries on everyday lives, Etter said.

They do everything from helping people hunt for a job to helping them deal with government agencies to offering literacy classes for babies and their parents. A list of 100 things that libraries offer their communities is available on the CLA website in the fact sheet under the Advocacy tab.

Libraries go beyond recreational reading, Etter said. They help people deal with the pressures of this fast-moving and often complicated age.

The Connecticut system of "libraries services is so successful that it could be a model for others," she said.

State Librarian Kendall Wiggin is scheduled to testify before the joint Connecticut House and Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday, Feb. 21 between 10:30 and 11 a.m.

At 4 p.m. that day the public will get a chance to speak to the committee at the Legislative Office Building. Anyone who plans to testify on behalf of libraries needs to sign up before that. If you would like to testify, contact CLA legislative committee co-chair Carl Antonucci at antonucci@ccsu.edu or 860-832-2097 by Feb. 17.

Even if you don't plan to testify, it is still important to show up as library supporters. They are asked to wear red to stand out from other groups that will be testifying.

"We hope as many as possible will come," Etter said.

After the committee wraps up hearings, it meets with the finance committee to reconcile what agencies want with the money available.

In addition to the hearing, it is important for libraries to make themselves known to their local legislators by:

- Inviting them to address residents at the library
- Making space available for them to meet with constituents
- Calling them and offering to gather

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You recently presented a program at ALA Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta! Congratulations! Was it your first time at an ALA conference? What motivated you to submit a presentation?

We have been honored to speak at two ALA Midwinter Meetings. Last year, at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, our library was represented on the panel for Curiosity Creates: Research and Best Practices in Creativity Programming for Children. We also presented in 2016 at state library conferences in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Speaking at the Symposium on the Future of Libraries at the ALA Midwinter Meeting offered an irresistible opportunity to reach a national audience to share a comprehensive overview of our creativity programming.

What was the response to your presentation?

Our "Creative Edge" program was well attended with over 100 in the conference room. Libraries were represented from all over the country. Audience members described our talk as “inspiring” and asked how to begin to set up similar programs. We were very pleased when Miguel Figueroa, Director of the ALA Center for the Future of Libraries contacted us later to say, “I have heard nothing but great things about your presentation.”

Tell us a little about the overall experience of attending annual conference, as a presenter and as an attendee. The conference was so immense that it was awe inspiring! We wished that we could have taken part in all that the conference had to offer an attendee. We realized that our focus needed to be on the quality of our upcoming presentation. This meant dealing with unexpected problems involving our displays and issues with both the technology and the lighting in the room. We had to come up with some creative solutions!

When did the Art Studio at Avon Library open? What inspired this approach to art?

The Art Studio opened in January of 2015, but the library had been offering art based creativity programming long before we had an art studio. Mary Fletcher, Creativity Specialist at the Avon Library began these programs years ago. She has an M.A. in Art Therapy, and designed programs to foster creativity inspired by the approach of the Italian preschools of Reggio Emilia and the Art Studio of the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts. Crafts with young children have been replaced by open-ended art experiences that emphasize the art process, creative decision making and self-expression.

Do you have scheduled programs in the Art Studio or open times?

Creative Art groups for school age children require registration and currently meet on Tuesday afternoons. On Wednesdays, during the scheduled hours for Open Art Studio, children and their caregivers are free to come and go. It is held for three hours, one hour in the morning and two in the afternoon. It is important to note that this is not passive programming. Because it can become quite busy, one to two staff members are needed to facilitate the groups.

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Message from the President

A lot has changed in the past few weeks. We have a new government administration with a very different style from its immediate predecessor. The overall mission of libraries has not changed however. We are committed to ensuring that our patrons and communities have access to quality vetted truthful information. Fake news and yellow press are certainly not new, but they seem to have proliferated exponentially in the digital age.

Libraries also serve other very important functions such as information access via the internet and other media to the elderly, the less fortunate or disadvantaged, as well as students of all ages. Libraries also provide tax services, and assistance for residents seeking employment or advancement. Many libraries also serve as warming and cooling centers during extreme temperatures for many citizens including the homeless and charging stations during power outages.

The State budget does not look promising overall as the proposed budget would seek to eliminate the Connecticard reimbursement program. I would strongly urge that you be present at the Legislative Office Building on February 21, 2017 to show support for those who are testifying about the effects of this cut and what impact it will have on our ability to provide services. The hearing starts at 4 PM, however you need to be present sooner in order to be allowed entry into the building. There is a parking garage in the rear of the building and carpooling is encouraged.

In closing I would ask everyone to keep focused on our core values and not to lose faith. We have all heard the proverb, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." We have many opportunities ahead to take action and make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. ♦

Karen Jensen is the director of the James Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford
Take Your Child to the Library Day Roundup

At Lyme Public Library, Braiden Sunshine shared his songs and story with the crowd of families. TYCTLD co-founder Nadine Lipman was also on hand to talk about the history of the day and the importance of libraries.

Glenn Costello visited Bill Library in Ledyard with a speed stacking program & workshop. He demonstrated several different combinations of cup stacking and then taught the kids the rules and how to stack.

Sherman Library had a fun Purple Day to celebrate, including purple play dough creations and a purple drawing.

Milford Public Library welcomed Milford educator and children’s author Bonnie Feuer and illustrator Sharai Platt who read and talked about their newest book, Voice from the Woods. Throughout the day children to play Legos, color, do puzzles and read books with their grown-ups, and every child got to take home a free book!

Scranton Library in Madison had their most successful Take Your Child to the Library Day yet. They had 108 people for a performance by Eric Girdi "Bending Gravity." There were also 120 people participate in our all day Build with Lego’s event. The children’s room was buzzing all day long.

Rockville Public Library in Vernon gave out 106 "I Love Books" bag to children. 101 children and parents attended the CT Science Center presentation on "Roboscience" and 33 children read books to four Alan Angels therapy dogs!

February 4, 2017, marked the 6th annual Take Your Child to the Library Day. Now an international event, it was started right here in CT by Caitlin Augusta and Nadine Lipman. See how libraries around the state celebrated.
Hall Memorial Library in Ellington had their 2nd annual Mini Golf event with face painting and magicians, Dan Scare and Bryan Flint. Forty folks came Norfolk Library to see Soro Bindi who is fabulous.

Ferguson Library patrons enjoyed a fun-filled day of programs, crafts, raffles, and more. One highlight of the event was a unique program featuring incredible shadow puppets by Nappy’s Puppets!

Thompson Public Library hosted an Under the Sea Day with a storytime and sing along with Ariel, games, activities like “what floats?” a scavenger hunt to find Dory, an octopus counting craft, and a chance to play in Captain Nemo’s yellow submarine.

East Lyme Public Library is celebrating all week long. There were “make and take” bookmark crafts available on the craft table and free ”READ” book bags. The children’s librarians dressed like different book characters every day. On Wednesday evening there was a sing-along movie program, Music Man.

Kids got to take a photo with Pete the Cat at Russell Library in Middletown.

The Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington had crafts all day and a taekwondo demonstration at 2:00. Master Yang from U.S. Taekwondo in Newington donated his time and expertise to give kids a sampling of taekwondo skills. ♦

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Thompson

Madison

Norfolk
CLA Annual Awards

It’s awards season. Golden Globes, SAG Awards, Oscars…and CLA Awards!

Do you have a person in your library who should be nominated? This is your opportunity! Awards include:

- Outstanding Librarian
- Special Achievement
- Excellence in Public Library Service
- Support Staff
- Supporter of Support Staff
- News Media
- Adeline Mix
- Intellectual Freedom
- Edith B. Nettleton Award for volunteer service.

Any questions, please contact Christy Billings: cbillings@russelllibrary.org or Kymberlee Powe: kpowe@fergusonlibrary.org

Click here for description of awards and entry form.
Deadline: March 3rd

Save the Date
CT Info Lit Conference
June 16, 2017 at Manchester Community College

Proposals for breakout workshops now being accepted! Deadline is March 10, 2017.
More information

Connecticut's professional organization of librarians, library staff, friends, and trustees working together: to improve library service to Connecticut, to advance the interests of librarians, library staff, and librarianship, and to increase public awareness of libraries and library services.

CLA Today is the newsletter of the Connecticut Library Association. Published every other month, it is posted to the CLA website. Please send submissions for future issues to editor Jennifer Datum at editor@ctlibrarians.org.

www.ctlibraryassociation.org
How do you tie the art experience in with books and literacy?
Young children develop fine motor skill lines though making art. These lines, circles and dots will be the basis for letter formation, so early literacy can go beyond supporting early reading to supporting early writing. Older children in our art groups are given the opportunity to write and illustrate their own books. We see art as a language, an expressive medium. It is, in fact, a universal language. Art is an essential component of children’s literature. In picture books, the artwork is the primary means of expression. Many of our art groups are inspired by children’s literature, such as the work of Eric Carle and Lois Ehlert among many others illustrators. Groups with older children are often based on art history books: cave paintings; medieval illuminated letters; Da Vinci’s inventions; the paper cuttings of Matisse; the pastels of Cassatt; and Calder’s mobiles. The art of artists and illustrators offer endless possibilities for inspiration!

How do the two of you work together?
We work well together because we share similar values and concerns. We recognize the crucial importance of creativity in childhood development and understand that creativity needs to be nurtured or it may not survive. Facilitating creativity begins by respecting and listening to children. We are not librarians who say, "Shhhhh!"  

We believe that libraries can go beyond being places for information to become places for inspiration. This will not be easy. As the artist Matisse said, "It takes courage to create." If libraries are to move forward, we must encourage each other to envision new possibilities and take the risk of bringing them into being. If we wish to see a change in the world, we must begin with ourselves. This is what we shared at the Symposium on the Future of Libraries.

What has been the reaction of library patrons (both adults and children) to the Art Studio?
Without a doubt, the art programming has been an unparalleled statistical success. On a recent Wednesday over 90 patrons attended Open Art Studio. Children often wait outside the door in anticipation of the art room opening, staying as long as possible and not wanting to leave. Many caregivers plan their library visits around the art studio hours. According to their children, libraries are about books and art!

How did each of you become involved in the library field? How long have you been at Avon Library?

Kari Ann: I began working in libraries in 1993. I chose to work in libraries because they are free. Regardless of your social/economic background, no matter who you are...everyone is welcome. I have been the Children and Teen Services Manager at the Avon Library since 2012.

Mary: I previously worked as a psychiatric clinician. For a few years after the birth of my daughter, I chose to stay at home. In 2001, I began working part-time at my local library, because it was my daughter’s favorite place. This transitional job evolved into my second career. I have been working at the Avon Library for over 10 years.

If you could spend time with any artist (living or dead) who would it be and why?
Mary: I would visit William Blake. He was a visionary and mystic who illuminated his words with intertwining art, inseparable from one another. I am fascinated and inspired by Blake’s 1789 book, Songs of Innocence and of Experience.

Kari Ann: I would spend time with Bob Fosse. He was an incredible artistic force who brought a new dimension to dance with breakthrough choreography and expressive storytelling. I see the library as a place that can reach into the visual and performing arts and offer the community opportunities to experience something beyond books - something that will inspire families to paint, move and be creative.

Anything else you’d like to tell our readers?
We would like to add that our creativity programming extends beyond the visual arts. Kari Ann has developed yoga based storytimes and is bringing creative movement into her programming. By taking the words off the page and placing them into our bodies we connect the body and mind on a whole new level. This is inspir- ing, nurturing and energizing the future of our Creative Edge philosophy at the Avon Library.
Residents of Madison voted by a 78% margin to pass a bond for $9.1 million to help fund the Scranton Memorial Library renovation and expansion plan. This plan has been five years in the making and will add 20,000 square feet to our current library, an expanded children’s room with their own dedicated program room, a 1,700 square foot teen center, three additional meeting rooms and onsite parking for 45 cars among other improvements. The total cost of the project is $15 million.

A massive bench made from the largest elm tree in Connecticut is a new gathering place at Hartford Public Library. It sits on the main floor near the new books section of the downtown location. It is a pleasant place to sit and read and will be used as a performance area in the library’s new @thebench series.

The Harwinton Public Library has been selected as one of 25 libraries nationwide to receive a $1,000 Children’s Literacy Grant from TEI Landmark Audio! The library will be using our grant to host a R.E.A.D. (Reading Education Assistance Dogs) program for children in grades K – 4.

An exciting new opportunity is available at the Danbury Library! The aptly named Studio 170, a brand-new recording studio, has been built and generously funded by the Friends of the Danbury Library. As the Danbury Library continues to support its vision to foster creativity, discovery, and personal growth, this will be a valuable asset to promote lifelong learning in our city’s diverse community. This service opens up a great opportunity for the library to partner with more local organizations to create community projects.

Connecticut librarians Hali Keeler and Marie Shaw are the proud authors of a new series of books designed for library support staff. The “Library Support Staff Handbook” series includes four titles: Foundations of Library Services, Library Technology and Digital Resources, Working with Collections and Cataloging Library Resources. The series, published by Rowman and Littlefield, is designed for students in a library technology program as they are aligned to the Library Support Staff Certification Program of the ALA (ALA-LSSC). Additional titles are forthcoming.

Hali and Marie, both longtime Adjunct Professors in the Three Rivers Community College LTA Program, are retired from the Bill Memorial Library and East Lyme High School, respectively.

The Trustees of C.H. Booth Library announce that Karen Tatarka will be joining the town’s library as director, effective March 1. Ms Tatarka is currently director of Weston Public Library. She has served in that role since 2011, and has nearly 20 years of library experience in both the academic and public library fields. Read full article here.

Anna Eisen has been named children’s librarian for the Farmington Libraries.

Jane Connolly is joining the Meriden Public Library as a part-time reference librarian. Connolly also works at the New Haven Free Public Library.

The Ridgefield Library is pleased to welcome Shay Samuel Glass as our new children’s services librarian. Shay comes to Ridgefield from the Sherwood Public Library in Sherwood, OR. He has both his Masters in Library Science and Masters in Children’s Literature from Simmons College.

People in the News

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CLA Today February/March 2017
May 4-5, 2017
Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa, Groton
Registration is Now Open!

Featured Keynotes:

**Annabel Beerel**, Annabel Beerel Consulting
Dr. Annabel Beerel is an organizational consultant with expertise in Leadership and Change Management, executive and organizational effectiveness and analyzing Ethical issues across a wide range of professions. She is the founder and President & CEO of the New England Women’s Leadership Institute, an organization that helps women advance in their careers and advises on organizational leadership capacity building. The flagship event of the Institute is the New England Women’s Leadership Summit, a major leadership and professional skills development event for professional women across New England.

**Lauren Comito & Christian Zabriskie**
*Urban Libraries Unite and authors of Grassroots Library Advocacy*
Christian Zabriskie is the Founder and Executive Director of Urban Librarians Unite and was named a “Change Maker” as a Library Journal Mover & Shaker in 2012. The co-author of Grassroots Library Advocacy: A Special Report available from ALA Editions, he writes and speaks about library advocacy, graphic novels, and public librarianship in large urban centers. Christian spends his days happily running the Will Library Branch of the Yonkers Public Library system.

Lauren Comito is a cape wearing, ukulele playing, tech training, activist librarian in NYC. From her day job as Assistant Community Library Manager for the Rochdale Village branch of Queens Library, to her position as the Board Chair of Urban Librarians Unite she has a real problem turning down work. Lauren is a key figure in modern urban library activism and has been instrumental in developing an organization which has received international attention while scoring political victories at home. She is creative, passionate about connecting library patrons to services, and a true believer in the ability of the library to change people's lives and communities for the better. If you aren’t a believer, get the hell out of her way.

**Conference Co-Chairs:**
**Sara Martone; Guilford Free Library**
smartone@guilfordfreelibrary.org

**Kristina Edwards; Central CT State Univ.**
kedwards@ccsu.edu

126th Connecticut Library Association Annual Conference
Scholarships Available

Important Information About the Scholarships

- To be eligible you must be 1) a CLA member and 2) a CT resident or employed in a CT library. A CLA Student Membership is available for $25 per year. The institution where you are currently enrolled does not have to be based in CT.
- The deadline for applications is April 3, 2017. Award recipients will be notified no later than April 21, 2017. Apply online here.
- You must be enrolled in, but have not yet graduated from, (with at least one course remaining to complete your studies), one of the following programs:
  1. An ALA certification program (i.e. Certified Public Library Administrator)
  2. An LTA program
  3. A bachelor’s degree (BA or BS) in Library Science
  4. A Library Media Specialist degree
  5. An ALA-accredited MLS/MLIS degree
  6. A PhD in Library Science
- Please send evidence on school or institutional letterhead of your enrollment in a qualified program. A copy of your letter of acceptance is required if you are enrolled in an advanced degree program (MLS/MLIS, Library Media Specialist or PhD). Scholarship funds will be sent directly to the institution being attended by the award winners for deposit in their student accounts.
- A minimum of two (2) references must be submitted with the application. Greater weight will be given to references supplied by persons who are, or have been, professional librarians or who are engaged in teaching library course work.
- Please include only professional affiliations (i.e. ALA, ACRL, YALSA, etc) or academic honors (i.e. Phi Beta Kappa) in the “memberships” portion of the application.
- If you have received an ALA Spectrum Scholarship, please submit an official notification of the award.
- Please send official transcripts of post-secondary education by the deadline. Advanced degree students need only send official transcripts of completed Baccalaureate and other advanced degrees and should forward an official transcript of any work completed toward current advanced degree studies thus far.
- Scholarships are not automatically renewed; students must reapply.
- Individuals will be eligible to receive awards valued at a minimum of $500 up to a maximum of $1,500 depending on the quality of the pool of applicants and type of program in which the applicants are enrolled. The scholarship applications are judged by the CLA Career Development Committee, which has sole discretion over the types of scholarships to be awarded and the amounts to be granted.
- Award recipients will receive complimentary 1-day registration and lunch for the 2017 CLA Annual Conference.