Otis Library Goes to Washington

Just next to the reference desk at Otis Library in Norwich, a well-lit area with a large table is surrounded on three sides by full bookshelves, with signs in many languages. Hanging above the shelves are flags from around the world. The emphasis of this space is on new Americans – folks who want to study the English language or learn how to become citizens. It includes ESL materials, information on citizenship and immigration issues. There’s also a collection of fiction and non-fiction titles in many languages, including Haitian, Creole, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Polish, and Portuguese – the list goes on. Add to that a similar collection in the children’s room, and you can see that Otis Library is a welcoming place for all.

Another addition is the newly created position of multicultural services coordinator. It was a combination of circumstances along with deliberate development that led to the creation of the position, filled by Bassem Gayed, who is tasked with being the liaison to new Americans. While living in Egypt, he had experience working in a library. His ability to speak three languages (Arabic, Spanish and English) and his outgoing manner make him an excellent part-time coordinator.

Otis was recently awarded the 2016 National Medal for Museum and Library Service – one of only 10 recipients in the nation. According to Teresa DeVoe, Senior Library Program Officer at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), in a typical year, they receive between 50 and 100 library applications, of which 5 are generally selected. Otis had applied once before in 2014 and was selected as a finalist, but did not receive the top award.

DeVoe had the chance to visit, and says, “Otis Library has adapted creatively to its changing community and has stepped in to fill gaps following the closure of neighboring institutions, including the recreation center and a facility for the mentally ill. They serve as a summer meals site to bridge nutritional needs when kids are out of school, and they provide collections and services in multiple languages to ad-

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Paths to Social Justice: School Librarians Who Make a Difference

By Gayle Bogel, Ph.D.

What makes a school librarian tick? What motivates both experienced teachers and those who have pursued successful careers in other fields, to decide to make mid-career changes? This is the first in a series of articles on new school library media specialists in Connecticut.

Vocational studies of librarians point to multiple factors that motivate mid-career professionals from all disciplines to pursue a degree and a career in library science. Forty-three percent of recent applicants to SCSU’s school library media program are career changers, and fifty-seven percent are teachers broadening their options in education. Along with a love of reading, libraries and interest in technology—many have noted the commitment to community service and social justice issues as reasons for their career choices.

One extraordinary example of this vocational choice is Rebecca Deotte—a community organizer in Middletown, a member of SCSU’s graduate program in Information and Library Science, and one of Connecticut’s newest school librarians.

Rebecca’s long interest in serving her community began with her parent leadership work within the Middletown public schools focusing on civics, advocacy, and service learning for parents. In 2011 she became involved with a unique volunteer opportunity—serving on the committee to run the Middletown bookmobile that brings books to families and children. She has unbridled enthusiasm for reading, coupled with a deep understanding of the value of libraries in underserved communities.

She currently is the bookmobile liaison and manager, and in spring 2016 wrote a grant that resulted in a $100,000 award from the William Caspar Graustein Foundation. The grant includes expanding bookmobile service to year round operation, adding mobile hotspot capabilities for up to 20 Wi-Fi connections, pop-up mobile civics education with voter registration, and workshops on the achievement gap and educational equity.

In June 2016 she attended the National Family and Community Engagement Conference in Pittsburgh, hosted by the Institute for Educational Leadership, as a representative for the North End Action Team (NEAT), a small non-profit in Middletown that serves as a grass roots organization that advocates for the residents and families of the north end community.

As she worked on the bookmobile and organizing parent leadership opportunities in her home school district—she realized that working with libraries, and partic-
Message from the President

I’ve officially been handed the gavel, and it is truly a privilege to represent you as members of our association. Already I have had the pleasure of thanking Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy for supporting the nomination of Dr. Carla Hayden as Librarian of Congress. By all accounts Dr. Hayden is a fearless leader who deeply understands the issues of public libraries, technology and community engagement. As the librarian who brought Baltimore’s library system into the 21st century, her skills and experience are just what the LOC’s technology and organizational needs demand.

Our committees and sections are working hard to make sure your membership provides maximum value. The Customer Service section has already secured John J. Huber to present The Purpose-Based Library: Finding Your Path to Survival, Success and Growth at the Wallingford Library on October 27. On October 28, CLASS presents its annual conference at the University of Hartford. These are two great opportunities for library staff at all levels to hone their skills and keep on the cutting edge. Remember that members get the best workshop rates.

Our sections and committees are also planning free meetups; the Young Adult Section meets on September 6 and November 16 in Wallingford; Public Libraries on October 20, also in Wallingford. All members and prospective members are invited to attend the membership meetup on September 9 at the Blackstone Library in Branford, for networking, light refreshments, wine and beer, followed by a screening of the librarian’s cult classic: Party Girl. Check the CLA website to register for any of these events.

As you look ahead to the coming year, please know it is never too late to be more involved. Every one of our committees and sections can use your help. If you are not sure where you fit in or who to contact, take a look at our website where all of the sections, committees and their chairs are listed. I welcome your feedback about the association any time – reach out to me at kjen-sen@blackstonelibrary.org and I will reply as soon as I can.

In closing, I thank each and every one of you for your membership. It is because of you that we are able to advocate behalf of our communities, provide exceptional professional development opportunities, and mentor future library leaders. I am honored to work with a group of dedicated professionals, on behalf of such a noble profession.

Karen Jensen is the director of the James Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford.

CLA Meet-Up

The Connecticut Library Association is pleased to announce a meet-up on Friday, September 9th, at the historic Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford.

CLA members and non-members: come from 6 PM to 7 PM for a FREE social and networking hour with light bites and beverages, including wine and beer.

Then at 7 PM stay for a screening of the classic independent film Party Girl. Many thanks to the Blackstone Memorial Library for sponsoring this event.

Please sign up here so we know how many to prepare for, because we are really looking forward to seeing you then.

2017 CLA Annual Conference

Mark your calendars now for the 2017 CLA Annual Conference!

May 4 - 5 at the Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa.

The theme will be: Uncharted Waters Navigating the Changing Tides in Librarianship.

More details to come.
Harkening back to the time before computers made it obsolete, the old card catalog at the Huntington Branch Library had stood for years unused, unnecessary and, more often than not, in the way. Branch director Marcia Austin had been using the large wooden structure as a de facto wall to her office behind the main circulation desk. According to Marcia, "It worked fine as a separator from the main desk but it also just took up so much physical space." One day Ms. Austin and circulation supervisor, Scott Brill were sitting in her office talking about changes they could make to improve the library. Looking at the old card catalog, together they came up with the idea to repurpose it as a possible home for the library's CD collection. The CDs had been displayed in two different areas of the library, one of which was a very low bookcase that most people just passed by. "Neither place was in a high traffic area of the library, so we thought this might be a way to highlight the CDs by creating a new use for the card catalog..." continued Scott, "...we just had to be sure that the entire CD collection would fit well." Happily, not only did the CDs fit perfectly in the drawer space of the card catalog (once the original rod pins that used to hold the cards in place were removed) but the bulk of the collection is now all in one location. "And one of the best parts of this transformation," Marcia added, "is that it did not cost anything to do this."

The newly repurposed card catalog holding the CDs is now in a convenient and well-utilized section of the library near the New Books display, the daily newspapers, the DVD collection, the public computers as well as the library’s new charging station. Marcia commented, 'We wanted to keep both the retro feel of this familiar piece of library furniture but also make it clear that it had a new purpose. It also helps create a unifying feel to this area of the library.'

Several genres of music like Opera and Folk were kept in a spinning display rack that originally had held most of the entire CD collection. Because of the huge amount of CDs weighing it down, the spinning rack used to be very difficult to turn for both patrons and staff. With fewer CDs on it, the rack is now easy to move and stands next to the newly repurposed card catalog with each musical genre clearly labeled. Patrons and staff can now readily find CDs in the collection and patrons have expressed that they enjoy the tactile feel of pulling out the old drawers. Some patrons even opt to take the entire drawer out and sit in one of the nearby chairs to look for their favorite music. Scott adds, "While we are aware that one day in the future CDs may also become obsolete, many of our patrons here at the Branch still like to check them out."

So if your library has an old card catalog (or other same such relics from the past) lurking in storage, it might be worth taking a fresh look at them to see if they can be reused in an inventive way that may benefit the library and the public.

By Scott Brill, Circulation Supervisor, Huntington Branch Library
CLA Today August/September 2016

CLA Upcoming Fall 2016 Programs

10-7-2016
Children’s Services Annual Meeting
Thinking Outside the Box
Wallingford Public Library

10-20-2016
Public Libraries Section Annual Meet-Up
Wallingford Public Library

10-27-2016
The Purpose-Based Library: Finding Your Path to Survival, Success and Growth
Customer Service Fall Workshop
Wallingford Public Library
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
John J. Huber of J. Huber & Associates will be the presenter. There are three main learning objectives:
1. the difference between a mission driven library and purpose-based library;
2. the benefits of value driven service metrics;
3. how the purpose-based library’s community pyramid can drive your success and growth.

10-28-2016
CLA Support Staff (CLASS) Professional Development Conference
University of Hartford, Harry Jack Gray Center
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

11-16-2016
Young Adult Librarian Meet-Up
Wallingford Public Library

Imagine, Innovate, Inspire!: NAHSL 2016

Come one, come all, and step right up to this year’s greatest conference on Earth: NAHSL 2016! It’s my pleasure to invite our CLA friends to the Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries (NAHSL). It will take place at the Omni Hotel Yale in New Haven, CT, October 23-25, 2016. The Conference Planning Committee has been hard at work to make this year’s conference one you’ll never forget. Dr. Jack Hughes, Susan Keane Baker and William Powers will speak about access, costs and quality of health care; customer experience; and using data for social good. Our members and friends will share their knowledge through breakout sessions, presentations, posters, and lightning rounds. Continuing Education classes will be offered on presentation skills, making presentation posters, and meaningfully measuring impact. We will also provide plenty of opportunity for you to network with colleagues and visit exhibitors.

Our conference highlights Connecticut’s diverse and interesting history through the legacies of a handful of our most notable people. The Cushing/Whitney Medical Library,

Early bird registration is now open! Be sure to register by 9/1 to receive early bird pricing! Please click HERE to register!
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ularly school libraries, would allow her to continue to develop her deep commitment to family and school partnerships and continue make significant contributions to her community.

She completed her undergraduate degree in sociology and psychology in 2015, with a senior thesis titled "Broken Pipes: Connecticut's School to Prison Pipeline and the Desperate Need for Reforms", and enrolled in the graduate program in Information and Library Science at SCSU in fall 2016. Although not yet finished with her graduate work, she has been hired by the Middletown School District under a Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP) to be a school library media specialist at two elementary schools.

When asked what she is most looking forward to as she begins her new career, Rebecca shared this comment:

Nothing makes me happier than seeing kids get excited about books—so I am looking forward to seeing and creating that excitement [about books] for kids every day!

Rebecca begins her position as a school librarian at Wesley and Snow Elementary Schools in Middletown this fall, and plans to complete her MLIS degree at SCSU in 2018.

Dr. Bogle is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the School Library Program in the Department of Information and Library Science at Southern Connecticut State University.

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
Maintaining Focus @ the Connecticut Information Literacy Conference

On June 17th, the College and University Libraries Section (CULS) of the Connecticut Library Association sponsored the 5th Annual Connecticut Information Literacy Conference at the University of Hartford bringing together instruction librarians from all over Connecticut as well as from Massachusetts and New York. Also in attendance were a couple of school librarians from Connecticut who brought new perspectives on instruction literacy to our discussions throughout the day. This year’s theme, “Maintaining Focus in a Changing IL Landscape” allowed librarians to come together and share the ways that they “maintain focus” given the continuous changes within higher education and information literacy practice.

Effective July 1, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges instituted new accreditation standards for higher education after a year of meetings with administrators from institutions from all across New England. With these new standards, information literacy continues to gain importance within curriculum but does not yet recognize the major role that academic librarians take in providing information literacy instruction to students. Between new accreditation standards, continued work using the new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, changing views on instruction methods, increased use of Digital Humanities in instruction, and the increased need for assessment and outreach; our conference program aimed to provide instruction librarians both practical ways to “maintain focus” as well as expand on existing pedagogical theory.

The day began with our keynote speaker, Lana Jackman, former president of the National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL). Before its Board of Directors were disbanded, the NFIL advocated and worked to get information literacy and its importance recognized on both the local and national levels. One of the most notable accomplishments for Lana Jackman and the NFIL resulted in President Obama signing a proclamation establishing October as the National Information Literacy Month in 2009. Given the recent revision of NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) standards, Jackman provided our attendees with a new perspective on the revised standards as well as illuminating areas within the new standards that are prime areas for academic librarians to illustrate how we contribute value to our campuses.

Each year we try to find something new that will allow attendees to share and most importantly gain new ideas that they can take back to their institutions and use in class. Last year our conference was to put out a call for poster presentations related to our conference theme. This year’s conference first for us was an Instruction Swap led by Joy Hansen (Middlesex Community College). Attendees were asked to indicate when registering if they would be interested in participating and then contacted before the conference to bring a handout on 1 instruction technique, game, or instruction tool to share with the others. In the end, attendees of this session brought 1 instruction tool or technique to share and left with 15.

Complimented by the well-known and delicious buffet offered at the University of Hartford, this conference continues to provide a valuable opportunity for instruction librarians to come together to learn from each other. It also allows local librarians an opportunity to be exposed to new pedagogical theories and various other aspects of instruction especially in cases where librarians have limited opportunities to attend national conferences like ACRL or LOEX. Our planning committee works hard every year to make sure that the conference provides strong programming and new opportunities for librarians to present their work with others. Much like other programs sponsored by the Connecticut Library Association and its sections, it is important that CULS recognizes and takes advantage of all the talented academic librarians here in the state of Connecticut.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

For donating the conference giveaway item (beautiful padfolios) that each of our attendees received

For more information about the Connecticut Information Literacy Conference check out our website: http://ctlibraryassociation.org/content.php?page=CT_Information_Literacy_Conference__About_Us
address their community's shifting demographics. They are truly engaging with and serving Norwich in a way that we wanted to lift up as an example for other libraries.”

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Bob Farwell, director of Otis Library since 2006. They submitted an updated application this year, and Farwell said he received the great news when he returned to the office from a Rotary Club meeting. His challenge was to keep the news to himself for over a month, until the winners were announced publicly.

The emphasis of the IMLS application is on how the library serves the community. How does it change lives, make a difference and make Norwich a better community? Norwich is a distressed municipality, and Farwell noted that the library's goals need to fit with the city's goals.

Outreach and services to new Americans are a large part of Otis Library's efforts to make that difference. Farwell noted that what can get muddied in the greater conversation about immigration are the stories of community members – many of them new citizens – that reflect struggle in order to achieve some station in the U.S. The work that goes on at Otis and many other libraries to support ESL learning, tutoring, and the striving to make a better life is much more reflective of what immigrants represent. Another “community anchor” aspect of the medal for Otis was easing the stigma of mental illness.

The medal was awarded at the White House by First Lady Michelle Obama on June 1. Farwell, Gayed and a third instrumental figure, Cathleen Special, represented Otis at the ceremony. One memory that Farwell relayed of the day was making a connection with an Army officer at the White House who served in the same brigade in Afghanistan at the same time as his son. One of Farwell's regrets was that he had no opportunity at that ceremony to make a speech. Since then, he has been able to publicly acknowledge and celebrate the work of the many people and all of the elements that got them to D.C.

One of Farwell's axioms for Otis is: The status quo is there is no status quo. He said his staff has heard that from him more than a few times. The status quo is change. He is always trying to stay in touch with the community through surveys and outreach. The very young and very old can have particular trouble getting to the library, and Otis offers a popular outreach to seniors and local daycare centers.

Services don't end at the entryway; if there is a need, Farwell views it as an opportunity not an impediment. The library should not be seen as “the city on the hill.” It is not defined by its physical plant. Librarians should not be the gatekeepers. The emphasis should be on collaboration and cooperation. The library should help facilitate knowledge and creation.

What does the future hold for Otis? Farwell plans on using the Aspen Institute report as an extension of their strategic planning. It will be used with the entire staff and the director's advisory committee. Specifically, through the new CLC contract, Otis hopes to be able to offer portable hotspots to patrons. The library's Wi-Fi is kept on 24 hours a day and many folks take advantage of that even when the library is not open. And the library just subscribed to "Pronunciator," an ESL database with over 80 languages developed by librarians.

Another exciting prospect is the Smithsonian exhibit, “Exploring Human Origins: What Does it Mean To Be Human?” which will be coming in January. It will be one of 19 libraries nationally to host the exhibit, and Farwell hopes it will continue the community conversation and global discussion at Otis.

Read about all ten recipients of the IMLS award here.

As for other libraries in Connecticut, IMLS is now accepting applications for the 2017 award. The deadline is Oct. 3.
Congratulations to State Librarian Kendall F. Wiggin for receiving the Bice Clemow Award from the Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information for his support of CCFOI’s historical records legislation, as well as his demonstrated commitment to the cause of open government over many years.

Pequot Library in Southport hires new Executive Director, Stephanie Coakley. Stephanie J. Coakley joins the Pequot Library with nearly 20 years of experience working as a museum educator, fundraiser, and non-profit administrator. Coakley most recently served as Director of Education at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, where she expanded the museum’s programs for all ages and curated and managed art and history exhibitions for the museum’s Community Gallery. Prior to that role she was the Executive Director and Director of Development with Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, where she was responsible for curating and organizing art exhibitions and oversaw all of the non-profit contemporary art organization’s operations. In February 2016, Connecticut Magazine nominated her for their selective 40 Under 40 issue about the state’s up-and-comers in the arenas of television, art, business, sports, movies, and philanthropy.

At Ridgefield Library, Sonta Frindt has joined the staff as a children’s services library assistant, and Connie Marsala is our new development associate.

Lois Baldini, director of the North Haven Library, has retired after 38 years of service. Pat LaTerza has been named the new director.

The Durham Public Library welcomes new director, Cyndi Shirshac and new assistant director, Christine Michaud.

New Canaan Library welcomes the following new staff:
-Tina Kennedy our new Reference and Instructional Librarian who joins our information services team filling the vacancy created by Alexa Roy’s move to the west coast where she joined Stack Map, a startup servicing the library sector.
-Pam Szen in our newly created role of Raiser’s Edge Specialist as a Development Associate.
-Rebecca Williams, Administrative Programming assistant who replaces Marie Gorbenko.

The Information Services Department of the Russell Library welcomes Kimberly Spachman to our professional team. She is a recent graduate of the MLS program at Southern Connecticut State University. Kimberly brings to the library her extensive research background, having worked in development and other capacities at Wesleyan University and as a paralegal and legal assistant. She already has shown tremendous ability in teaching technology, space planning, and in her very even and pleasant demeanor with library customers. An eclectic array of talents, Kimberly also has a background in theater design, organizational behavior and literature. Welcome, Kimberly.

A lot of changes at the Waterford Public Library:
-Assistant Director Judy Liskov retiring, effective Sept. 2 with 43 years of service at Waterford.
-Laura Erickson was promoted to Department Head/Technical & Circulation Services
-Jill Adams was promoted to Department Head/Adult Services.

Anna Taylor has joined the children’s services team at the Darien Library as the new Children’s Librarian, Early Literacy & Outreach Coordinator. Anna previously worked at the New York Public
Library as their Children’s Educational Programming Coordinator.

Amy Lilien-Harper, after 21 years with the Ferguson Library/Harry Bennett Branch, has accepted a position with Westover School (Stamford Public Schools) as their new media specialist. We are sad to lose her, but we are very happy for her! Amy lives in this neighborhood so we will still see her – in fact she’ll need to get a teacher card!

Ellen Cartledge-Janpol, currently a part-time reference librarian at the Simsbury Public Library and co-chair of the Customer Service committee of CLA, has opened her own firm, Transition Services for You, which provides career services, including resume assistance and counseling. Ellen for six years was the manager of the JETS Program, the largest educational and networking program for people “in transition” in CT. In addition to her MLS, she has an MBA and recently received her Career Development Facilitator Certificate. For more information, go to www.transitionservicesforyou.com.

At the invitation of the Patent Information Users Group, a professional association of patent searchers and analysts, Barbara Hampton will present at the plenary session of the PIUG 2016 Northeast Conference, which brings together experts in the areas of chemistry, biology, other sciences, engineering, and legal topics relating to patent information. Her topic is “Value & Visibility: Beyond the Patentability Search.” Barbara Hampton served as a patents & trademarks librarian at the USPTO’s Patent and Trademark Resource Center at Sacred Heart University from 2008-2016, designated as the PTRC Representative, 2014-2016. She left academic librarianship this summer to focus on custom research, information services, teaching, and writing.

where our welcome reception will take place, was named for Harvey Cushing, the “father of modern neurosurgery” and John Hay Whitney, Yale alumnus and philanthropist. Tours of the Cushing Center will be the highlight of the Sunday reception. On Monday evening, we will pay homage to a different group; few know of P.T. Barnum’s ties to history of the health sciences in Connecticut. He was instrumental in founding Bridgeport Hospital and served as its first president. We hope you’ll find time to enjoy our historical and cultural attractions: see dinosaurs at the Peabody Museum, sample our famous “apizza”, or eat at Louis Lunch, home of the hamburger. Then join with our colleagues as we share our knowledge and look to our future. Visit our website (NAHSL2016.com) to register and find more information. Registration closes October 3rd. Hope to see you in New Haven! ♦

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