

THE LIBRARIAN

Newspaper of the Stonington Free Library

Spring/Summer 2018 Issue

AN UPDATE ON SUSTAINABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY

As reported in the previous issue of *The Librarian*, this past October the Library held a Community Conversation and Open House week to present its recently completed Strategic Plan to the community. President of the Board Nick Kepple and several Trustees including Kate Randolph, Allegra Griffiths and Denise Easton reported on the goals of the Strategic Plan, the Library's financial situation and a proposed addition to the building to make the Library accessible and ADA compliant.

Since the Community Conversation, the Library has continued an advocacy campaign to town leaders and submitted two funding requests to the town. The first request was for an increase to the Library's annual municipal funding, which supports Library operations. The Library's current annual budget (2017-2018) is \$568,009. Funding sources are the Annual Appeal (\$177,000), the Town of Stonington (\$147,000), the Borough of Stonington (\$24,000), the endowment draw (\$152,109) and other income (\$67,900). The Library requested a 75% increase to annual funding from the town for fiscal year 2018-19, as the current funding model cannot support the 21st century library requested by the community during the strategic planning process. The requested increase would put Stonington on a path toward a funding level consistent with libraries in comparable communities.



The proposed elevation of the accessibility and ADA compliance project on the eastern side of the building. Please stop by the Library to view all the plans in person.

Article continued on the following page.

DINNER AT ANTOINE'S - RATED 5 STARS!

On a mild Saturday evening in April, over 150 guests strolled up a path lined with shutters and Spanish moss to the tune of "When the Saints Come Marching In," performed by our very own two-man jazz band featuring Teddy Leamon on trumpet and Campbell Gray on sax. Upon entering the Library for the 10th annual Mystery Dinner, patrons were welcomed to Antoine's Restaurant in the French Quarter of New Orleans circa 1948, inspired by Frances Parkinson Keyes's bestselling novel *Dinner at Antoine's*.



Teddy Leamon and Campbell Gray



The Library transformed



Dinner Co-Chairs Allegra Griffiths, Elizabeth Leamon and Alejandra Welch

AN UPDATE ON SUSTAINABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY – CONTINUED

The second request was for town capital improvement funds to assist with making the building accessible and ADA compliant. The estimated cost of the building project is \$420,000. The Library asked the town to fund two-thirds of the project or \$280,000 with the Library raising the remaining \$140,000 privately. The addition would redesign the entrance on the east side of the building with a new ramp, elevator and accessible bathrooms on both levels, while also allowing the repurposing of the middle rooms of the Library.

After submitting these two requests, Library board, staff and supporters attended and advocated for the Library at a number of Board of Finance meetings between January and April. The Library recognizes that the town is coping with numerous factors in crafting a budget for fiscal year 2018-2019. Uncertainty about state funding levels, increasing debt service and the tax impact of the recent town-wide revaluation are but a few of the challenges.

Given these uncertainties, the Library thanks the town profusely for supporting its accessibility and ADA compliance project at a total of \$50,000. An annual funding increase was not received, but we thank town leaders for signaling their recognition of the need to reconsider the town's level of support to the Library and for their willingness to continue the conversation towards a solution to meet the needs of the residents we both serve. In the meantime, the Library will continue to tirelessly (and creatively) pursue private sector support. All recent efforts to educate the community about the Library's financial constraints and increase annual operating revenue work toward Goal C of the Strategic Plan: **Ensure the sustainability of the Stonington Free Library for future generations.**

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TRIBUTE TO NICK KEPPLE

By Kaylan Randolph, Vice President, Board of Trustees

If you live in Stonington, then there is a darn good chance that you either know Nick Kepple or benefit from his tireless work. If you have not yet met him, please allow me the pleasure of introducing you by characterizing the many roles he plays in our community. He is the father of four, a dedicated husband (it will be 44 years this July), a beloved probate judge who consistently demonstrates kindness, compassion and a steadfast drive to do what is right for those who come before him. When it is Christmas, he is Santa; he portrays St. Nick so effectively because Nick Kepple embodies the spirit of joy, generosity and commitment so completely. Among many other things, he is the President of the Board of Trustees of the Stonington Free Library. By now, you undoubtedly see a pattern in these roles that describe his character—selfless community servant and leader, with a love for family and community at his core.

Nick has great passion; his true talent is bringing us all, with our diverse perspectives, together to determine and reach a common goal.

role of their library and the importance of investing in it. Nick has great passion; his true talent is bringing us all, with our diverse perspectives, together to determine and reach a common goal. In doing this he is a champion for Stonington and all of us who live here but in the true Library way, gently and humbly. For that, from the bottom of our hearts, we thank Nick Kepple for his great service; its impact is certainly not lost on us.

Nick's efforts have had remarkable impact on our Stonington Free Library (SFL) at a time when many small libraries are in decline. He has served as president of the SFL Board of Trustees during a time of dramatic change, when a great leader is essential. Nick has been building on the legacy of his mother Bettie—a devoted SFL librarian—by inspiring a whole community to understand the anchoring





STONINGTON FREE LIBRARY

Stonington Free Library

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10am-6pm Monday-Tuesday

10am-7pm Wednesday

10am-6pm Thursday

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BOOKWORMS: SPRING – SUMMER 2018

By Maris Frey, Youth Services Director

Our **Read Bold** (One Book Winter Reading Challenge) wrapped up with a joint adult/teen book discussion at Stonington High School on April 5. Our book, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, generated lots of conversation and Stonington Human Services supplied delicious food from McQuade's Market. In all, we were pleased with the program and hope to fine-tune it for next year. We are most grateful to the Rotary clubs of Mystic and the Stoningtons for making this program possible!

Parents and children were pleased with our "Year of the Nursery Rhyme" theme for 50 to Grow On, our early literacy Winter Reading Challenge. Exposure to nursery rhymes enhances all early literacy skills, as well as promoting listening skills, rhyming word recognition and memorization skills. The finger plays, that accompany many of them, promote both gross and fine motor skills. We had a great time incorporating them into our weekly story times and preschool outreach programs.

UPCOMING PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

There will be two Teen Volunteer Orientation sessions June 13 at 5:30 pm and June 14 at 4:00 pm. These are training nights for our Summer Reading Program Teen Volunteers (students entering grade 7 and older) and will last about 30 minutes. Volunteers only need to attend one meeting and their applications are due **BEFORE** these meetings (preferably by the end of May). Teens will receive their schedules on the night they attend and we would appreciate knowing how many to expect each night. Please call the Children's Room with your date of attendance, questions or for more information.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

With warmer weather hopefully arriving, thoughts turn to our popular Summer Reading Program, with registration opening on June 18. Our theme is **Libraries Rock** for all age groups. Our youngest group is for children entering kindergarten and younger, students entering grades one through five will be in our middle group, and students entering grade six and older comprise our oldest group. Students in the middle and older groups will earn Musical Notes for their reading time and will have the opportunity to spend them in our summer store. The store will open on June 25. Please remember you must register in order to start counting your reading time. The **LAST** day to earn and spend will be **Friday**, August 3 and our traditional after hours Ice Cream Party and basket award ceremony will be held on August 6 at 6pm. We have wonderful programs planned for all age groups and are again most grateful to everyone who makes this program possible. To date, we have received donations from the Leslie Buck Memorial Fund, Mystic Luxury Cinemas, Mel's Downtown Creamery, Stonington Pizza Palace, the COMO, WalMart, Target, Stop & Shop, Lis' Bake Shop, Indulge, Dairy Queen, Bank Square Books and Mystic Subway. We are also grateful to the families who keep us in mind and donate items for our store. Support our Summer Reading Program and be sure to thank the individuals, families and businesses again for their generosity.

We have again received a generous grant from an anonymous family foundation, enabling us to take portions of our Summer Reading Program "on the road." This will allow children in some of our area's summer camps to enjoy performers, a selection of free books to bring home and an opportunity to register for the Summer Reading Program and participate at their location.

We will be collaborating with the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center again with Read and Feed, our outreach to those in need in our community. Each time a child brings in a food, health or beauty item to donate to the PNC, they will receive a free basket ticket. In order to insure that the PNC is receiving their most needed items, we will continue "Weekly Specials" which we coordinate with the PNC. These high demand items will earn two free basket tickets and will be posted and updated on our Facebook page on Thursdays. We will begin accepting donations in the Children's Room on June 18.

HAPPY SUMMER!

Watch out for new programs and returning favorites by following us on Facebook, Instagram or our webpage.



DINNER AT ANTOINE'S -

The Library itself was transformed, by Sibby Lynch, Polly Dufresne, Caroline Muller, Joanne Caldara and an army of creative volunteers, into a formal restaurant, complete with paneled walls lined with photographs, elegant floral arrangements, and even a small private dining room set with crystal and silver. Hostesses welcomed guests as they arrived, handing out sealed letters with the all-important directions to each Mystery Dinner

The Library was transformed into a formal restaurant, complete with paneled walls lined with photographs, elegant floral arrangements and a small private dining room set with crystal and silver.

home. Tuxedo-clad bartenders served Kir Royales and other refreshments, while Mystery Dinner committee members circulated with delicious Southern hors d'oeuvres of crab cakes, andouille sausage, muffaletta and more.

Trustee Kate Randolph addressed the crowd, thanking outgoing Board President, Nick Kepple, for his tireless service and highlighting the progress the Library has made in recent years. She also provided a vision of future accomplishments: **"Building on the work of individuals who have served the Library in the past - and I see many of you here - we are on a mission to secure the funding necessary to provide a 21st century library for the Stonington community."**

Assistant Director Micayla Hall described the popular materials and programs the Library hopes to maintain through donations to this year's Giving Tree, and illustrated what various donation levels could support.

As shadows began to fall, guests headed out to 19 different "Mystery" dinner destinations, looking forward to NOLA-in-Stonington style hospitality and an evening of celebration with new and old friends for the best of causes.



Decor geniuses Sage Williams, Sibby Lynch, Polly Dufresne, Christine Turrentine and Clare Sheridan. Photo: J. Turner, The Westerly Sun



Belinda de Kay, Library Director, Micayla Hall, Assistant Director and Board President Nick Kepple. Photo: J. Turner, The Westerly Sun



Arrangements by Caroline Muller and Joanne Caldara



Your table is ready



Abby Mann assists at a mystery dinner location



4 Ann Lobdell and Clare Sheridan



Bill White and Dave Purvis



Cheryl Purvis, Spike Lobdell & Michael Schefers

...RATED 5 STARS! – CONTINUED



Luis Alfonso, Michael Schefers and Sibby Lynch



Beth Leamon and Nick Kepple



Sage Willilams



Assistant Director Micayla Hall and Trustee
Kate Randolph describe the Library wish list



Nick Kepple and Alejandro Cifuentes



Rowlie and Carla Stebbins



Rita Nason and Alice Fitzpatrick



Kirby Williams, Joyce and Francis Pandolfi



VIP bartenders Kevin Bowdler & John Leamon



Dinner at Antoine's

Stonington Free Library
Mystery Dinner 2018

DINNER COMMITTEE

Allegra Griffiths (Co-Chair)
Elizabeth Leamon (Co-Chair)
Alejandra Welch (Co-Chair)
Ann Buffum
Susan Clapp
Nan Danforth
Anne Fix
Barbara Ginsberg
Sibby Lynch
Sally McBee
Clare Sheridan
Christine Turrentine
Sage Williams

A DATE FOR YOUR CALENDARS



The Library is once again participating in the Connecticut Authors Trail, now in its 10th Season. This event is organized by a consortium of Eastern Connecticut Libraries and features Connecticut authors who are invited by participating libraries to present their work. The Trail begins on July 10th and ends on September 20th with a Grand Finale at Mohegan Sun.

This year our Connecticut author will be Gail MacDonald, an associate professor in residence in the journalism department at UCONN Storrs. On **Thursday, August 30th at 6:30 pm here at the Library** Professor MacDonald will be talking about her book **“Morton F. Plant and the Connecticut Shoreline: Philanthropy in the Gilded Age.”** Morton Plant was one of the founders of Connecticut College and also the Shennecossett Golf Club.

Passports are available *free* at participating libraries throughout the summer as a guide to the author events. If you miss an event during the summer, you are invited to meet many of the authors from the Trail at the Finale on September 20th. The doors to The Mohegan Sun Cabaret Theatre open at 6:15 pm. Have your passport stamped at each author event for a chance to qualify for a special prize at the finale. Drawing to be held at 6:45 pm. Then stay for a fun-filled evening with the featured speaker starting at 7:00 pm. For more information, visit connecticutauthorstrail.org

PNC BOOK GROUP

The Library continues to grow its collaboration with the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. A dedicated library volunteer now moderates a book discussion group on the third Friday of every month from 12 to 1 pm at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center.

Upcoming Meeting Dates and Titles:

Friday, May 18 -
The Memory Keeper's Daughter
by Kim Edwards

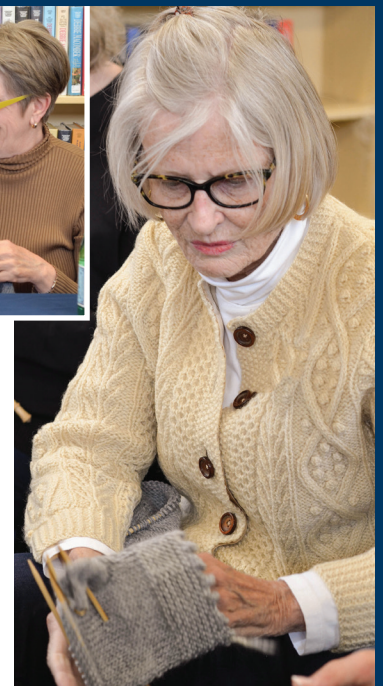
Friday, June 15 -
The German Girl
by Armando Lucas Correa

Call or stop by the Library if you need a copy of the book.



KNITTING GROUP

A Knitting Group has started at the Library! The group meets every Wednesday from 12 to 2 pm. Knitters of all skill levels are welcome. Please bring projects you are working on. These are laid back meetings of knitting, sharing and asking for advice. Can't commit to every Wednesday? No problem - just come when you can!



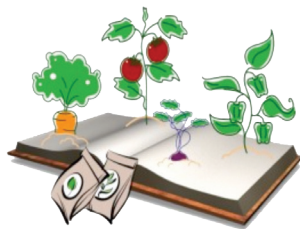
ADULT SUMMER READING PROGRAM 2018

Our Adult Summer Reading Program is back from Monday, June 18 through Friday, August 3. Participating is easy! Each time you visit the Library and check out materials, enter our weekly drawing - entry forms will be available at the front desk. Earn a bonus chance to enter each day you drop off a donation at the Library for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. We will have weekly drawings with three lucky winners chosen each week. Winners will select from a variety of prizes. All who enter will be eligible to win special prizes at the end of the program including Kindle Fires and gift cards to local businesses. Thank you to Indulge and Bank Square Books for their support.

Enjoy Reading This Summer!



SEED LIBRARY



During the growing season (Spring to early Summer) a seed library is available in the front lobby. Stop by and choose a free packet of seeds to plant in your garden. A big thank you to Noreen Kepple, URI Master Gardener, for all her hard work setting up this program.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Please join your neighbors – other local businesses in Mystic, Stonington, Pawcatuck and the surrounding area - as a corporate partner of the Stonington Free Library this year.

Sponsorship enhances your visibility in the community with messages that get noticed! Last year, Stonington Free Library reached:

- 70,000 visitors annually (a great way to reach our summer visitor market)
- 8,750 program attendees – children, adults, teens
- 23,000 unique website visits
- FB followers and Constant Contact recipients: 3,910
- Newsletter, E-newsletter and Annual Report recipients: 4,300

The goodwill that comes from associating your business with Stonington's cherished community library is immeasurable. Please contact Suzanne Kerr, Development Coordinator for more information at: development@stoningtonfreelibrary.org, or at 860-535-0658.



THE LIBRARIAN

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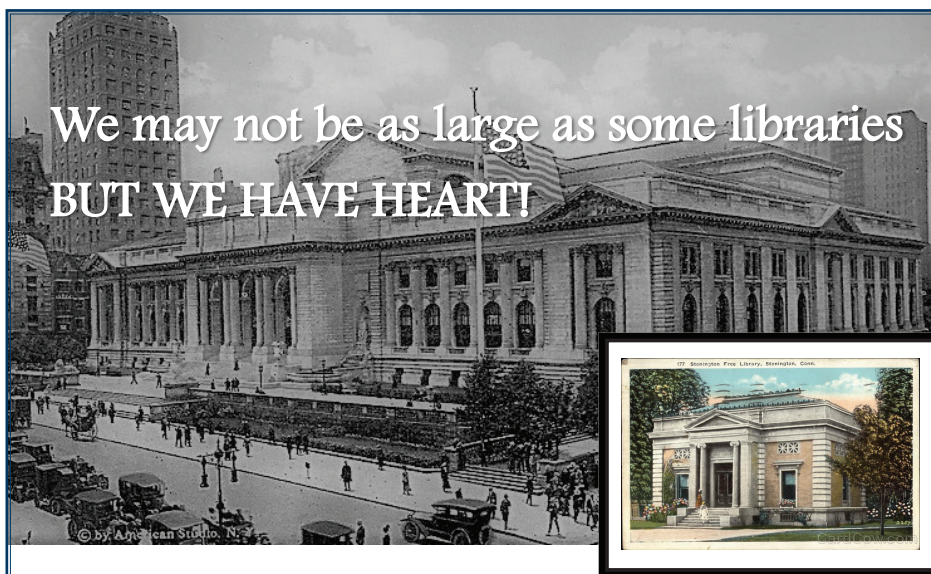
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We may not be as large as some libraries
BUT WE HAVE HEART!



*Every spring,
Stonington Free
Library approaches
the end of our fiscal
year and must take
stock of our strength
and stability.*

*Thanks to our loyal
patrons, 2017-2018
has been a time of
accomplishment and
new endeavors.*

In the next 30 days we need to raise \$18,000 to achieve the goal set for our Annual Fund – the money needed to host book clubs, early literacy programs and lectures, to acquire the newest books, magazines and newspaper subscriptions, audio books, museum passes and - well - keep the lights on.

We depend upon you – our patrons and visitors – who use our services and appreciate what we do.
IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY GIVEN TO OUR ANNUAL FUND, NOW IS THE TIME!

- Go online at www.stoningtonfreelibrary.org/support/support-us
- Send your support to Stonington Free Library, Box 232, Stonington, CT 06378
- Or, please come in – *we would love to see you!* Thank you very much.