

Bill Memorial Library
240 Monument Street
Groton, CT 06340



The mission of the Bill Memorial Library is to meet the needs of the community in a welcoming and unique historic setting by stimulating imagination, providing the resources for lifelong learning, inspiring young patrons; and connecting to the online world.
Revised Oct. 2020, Board of Trustees

From the Director's Desk



Director Wendy Connal with Sharpy, an American Mammoth Jackstock donkey and recent visitor to the library.

With all the many changes in the last year and a half, you may be wondering how COVID has affected the library world, specifically Bill Memorial. Like most people and businesses,

1. We've learned to shift from having everything in control to taking a more laid-back approach. Things change quickly now, and we can change quickly, too.
2. Opportunities to serve our community are changing. We are looking at new models of collaboration with our sister Groton Libraries, and we're more engaged with the City of Groton in serving locally.
3. Our small space and lack of a dedicated program room is more of a challenge now than ever before.
4. There is disruption in the book supply chain. While I don't know where, exactly, this is occurring, the take-away is that it is taking much longer to get books from our sources and into your hands.
5. We've had difficulty getting adequate staffing. This has resulted in the library not being able to provide some programs and services the way we could pre-pandemic.
6. We can see clearly what is successful and we can shift our resources to support what is working.

It feels like we are at a critical juncture - do we go bigger and better, or do we contract? I think the funding we receive will provide the answer to this. Our Friends group just put on a very successful, first-ever Outdoor Artisan Market. We are looking at ways to fundraise successfully in this new landscape, including writing for a grant to work with a fundraising consultant. Our mission is unwavering; to meet the needs of our community and to serve our patrons the best we can. We appreciate your support and generosity as we emerge into this new world—help us write our future with your continued support.

Sincerely,

Wendy Connal, Library Director

Library Trustees

FY 2020-2021

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Barbara Frucht	Vice-President
Jackie Massett	Secretary
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Elizabeth Swindell
Barbara Tarbox



Barbara Frucht, longtime Trustee and former President of the Board (shown with Town of Groton Mayor Patrice Granatosky), received the 2021 Jacqueline B. Nixon Community Service Award and named Bill Memorial Library as the beneficiary of the \$1000 charitable donation that goes with the award.

2020-2021 Donors

The Bill Memorial Library receives 9% of our annual operating budget from the Town of Groton. As a small private library that is free and open to the public, we are dependent on public contributions for a large portion of our annual budget. We are thankful for the financial support of so many in the community who value the programs and services the Bill Memorial Library provides.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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BUSINESS DONORS

Big Y World Class Market
Charter Oak Credit Union
Groton Utilities
Karn's Automotive
Pfizer Foundation
Stop & Shop
Thames Valley Communications /
Atlantic Broadband

Memorial Donations

Gifts made in honor of a loved one

Marge Hollister

By Barbara Frucht

Mary-Jane Stanley

By Peter Stanley

Richard White

By Ms. Joan B. Craig

Kay Gallup

Hali and Gerry Keeler

Alexandra Klee

Mary B. Starratt

Ann Stuart Lloyd

Ralph Stuart

Annette M. Swan



Library Founder Frederic Bill

2020-2021 VOLUNTEERS

We are grateful for the talent and energy that our volunteers generously donated to the Library. Many hours were spent on maintenance projects, fundraisers and programming that enriched the Library's services to our community.

Adults

Brian Bergman	Sue Palmieri
Anuja Dharmadhikari	Beverly Platts
Scott Carle	Christine Post
Marsha Dietrich	Bill Pratt
Tim Jackson	Kathy Spindler
Eileen Johnson	Dane Stevenson
Aditya Joshi	Luke Tedeschi
Colleen King	Sharon Webster
Emily Lavoie	William Welles
Erica Lombardi	Gail Yeo
Christy McElroy	Alexis Zepko
Eric McElroy	
Gideon McElroy	Teens
Molly McElroy	Sophia Cabral
Arthur Nagel	Sian Crespo

2020-2021 Community Partners

Avery-Copp House
 City of Groton
 City of Groton Parks & Recreation (Green Sheep)
 City of Groton Police Department
 Connecticut Humanities
 Conservation Connection
 Girls Who Code
 Groton Bank Day - Groton Heights Open House Day
 Groton Utilities
 PACT- Police and Community Together
 Pro Bono Partnership
 Red Brook Farm
 Riverfront Children's Center
 Rotary Club of Groton, CT
 Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition
 Thames River Heritage Park
 Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA)
 Town of Groton



(L-R) City of Groton Mayor Keith Hedrick, Library Director Wendy Connal and lighting consultant Robert Reynolds receiving the Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credit funding.

2020-2021 Budget

Income

Endowment Income	\$205,272.00
Fundraising/Other	41,828.00
Town of Groton Municipal Funding	<u>25,000.00</u>
	\$272,100.00

Expenses

Personnel	\$170,017.00
Library Materials	20,667.00
Technology, Supplies & Programming	17,885.00
Buildings & Grounds	40,618.00
Other Operating Expenses	<u>22,913.00</u>
	\$272,100.00

Grants Awarded	FY 2020-2021
CT Humanities	CARES Act Grant for physical distancing modifications necessary for library reopening
Groton Utilities / Bozrah Light & Power	NAA--Neighborhood Assistance Act for lighting upgrades
Pfizer Foundation	STEM programming



Friends of the Library Luke Tedeschi, Christy McElroy and Colleen King representing the library at the City of Groton Indoor Farmer's Market.

FRIENDS OF THE BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The Friends of the Bill Memorial Library is made up of volunteers who are integral to the success of many library events including Summer Reading, Book Sales and Adult Take & Make Crafts. In addition, the Friends host several events of their own as well as supporting the library and the library staff. Anyone can join the Friends—we invite you to be a part of this wonderful group of library supporters!

31 DAYS OF READING

March 2 is National Read Across America Day. To further expand on the idea, the library collaborated with The Riverfront Children's Center (RFCC) to create videos of community members reading every day of the month of March. Families were able to watch a story together each night. The videos were posted on the Facebook pages of both organizations and garnered more than 10,000 views! This idea was the brainchild of Christy McElroy, who is the Curriculum Coordinator of Riverfront as well as a Trustee for the library AND is an active member of the Friends of the Bill Memorial Library!



Christy McElroy

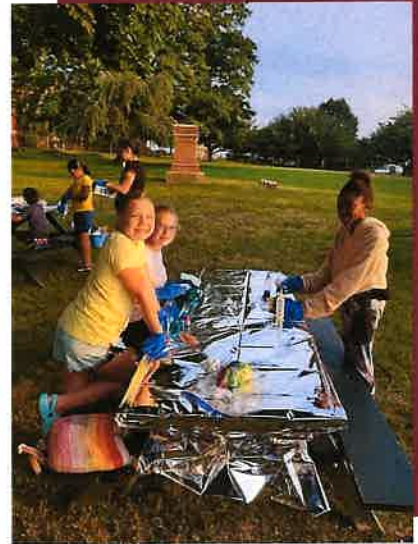
31 DAYS OF READING VOLUNTEERS

Juliette Allen: St. Andrew Presbyterian Co-Director / Teacher
 Riley Boertmann: RFCC School Age Student
 Nicole Broadus: RFCC Board Member
 Jaykwon Burke: RFCC School Age Student
 Madalyn Brooks: RFCC School Age Student
 Mary-Jane Carle: Children's Librarian, Bill Memorial Library
 Britney Curtis: RFCC Teacher
 Bryan Doughty: Kiwanis Club of New London
 Marian Galbraith: Former Mayor, City of Groton
 Xylecia Gentry: RFCC Teacher
 Patrice Granatosky: Mayor, Town of Groton
 Kasey Grundy: RFCC Teacher
 Phoenix Hale: RFCC School Age Student
 Brianna Hamilton: 11th Grade, STEPS
 Elizabeth Hawthorne: RFCC Teacher
 Rashid Haynes: RFCC Board Member

Conrad Heede: Groton Town Council/BML Board of Trustees
 Keith Hedrick: Mayor, City of Groton
 Mary Howard: Staff, Bill Memorial Library
 Bernadette Kunkemoeller: BML Board of Trustees
 Cristina Lijoy: 8th Grade, STEPS
 Christy McElroy: RFCC Curriculum Coordinator
 Julie Monroe: RFCC Teacher
 Keaira Moyle: 8th Grade, STEPS
 Martin Olsen: Kiwanis Club of New London
 Sue Palmieri: Retired Children's Librarian, Groton Public Library
 Camila Roman: 6th Grade, STEPS
 Anastasia Salgado: RFCC Teacher
 Pam Stevens: Kiwanis Club of New London
 Archie Swindell: Patron, Bill Memorial Library
 Jessica Tejada: RFCC Teacher
 Divya Varadharajan: 7th Grade, STEPS
 Savanah Whitaker: 8th Grade, STEPS

TEEN PROGRAMS

In spite of the building closure this past winter, the library ran a successful Girls Who Code club, which was able to continue virtually. Nine girls and their coordinator, Colleen King, met via Zoom on Tuesday evenings over the course of several months to plan and produce a fun and informative website, to do research on Groton's history, and to teach each other coding.



Teen Outdoor Game Tournament

POPULAR SUMMER TEEN PROGRAMS INCLUDED -

- Ice cream social with karaoke
- Henna painting and trivia
- Outdoor game tournament
- Tie-dye Palooza
- Knot-tying and macrame



(R) Bill Pratt mixes sound for Zoom Storytime
(L) Bill Pratt, Brian Bergman, our library mascot Freddie and Children's Librarian Mary-Jane Carle ready for Facebook Live



Volunteer Scott Carle working on the Summer Reading promo video

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

With a grant from CT Humanities, the library was able to purchase audio equipment that was used to produce high-quality programs online, enabling us to provide services to our families while our building was closed.

- Facebook Live Sing-Alongs
- Zoom Storytime
- Original music videos of children's books
- Recordings for Summer Reading

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Throughout the library's opening, winter building closure, and then reopening in the spring, we have continued to provide programs and services to our young patrons. Children's Librarian, Mary-Jane Carle, selected numerous bags of books daily for families using our contact-free pick-up during the winter. Through Zoom and Facebook Live we expanded into virtual programs, and our Take & Make Craft Kits were very popular. We made use of our beautiful outdoor space to begin in-person Story Time again as well as several popular Sing-Alongs. We continued to partner with The Riverfront Children's Center to include their classes in many of our programs.



Throughout the year we created 12 different Take & Make activities and distributed a total of 466 bags or packets to our young patrons.



A fun part of Summer Reading was our Where's Clancy? Challenge.

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

This year we had many young readers complete our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge. This is a national program that promotes early literacy and school preparedness. Children who finish our version of the program choose a favorite book to be added to our Children's Collection in their honor, as well as receive free books and a certificate. Two of our recent finishers, Marley Mallorie and Lincoln Patterson, are featured on the right.

2021 SUMMER READING HIGHLIGHTS

With COVID in mind, we designed activities that utilized the library's beautiful grounds as well as social media and that family members could complete together.

- We distributed 77 Summer Reading packets to kids from birth to grade 5, with a total of 2,166 days read and 370 activity sheets returned towards our raffle.
- We had 28 adults participate in our Adult Summer Reading Program.
- Families enjoyed tracking the whereabouts of Clancy the Great Pyrenees, our unofficial library dog.
- We hosted several outdoor programs for families, including programs by Animal Embassy and the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center.
- Members of the library Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Bill Memorial Library generously donated gift cards to use as prizes for our Summer Readers.



ADULT & FAMILY PROGRAMS

The Bill Memorial Library was able to offer both in-person and virtual programming for families and adults. Our Food For Thought Book Group met continually, beginning with Zoom and transitioning to in-person. The library hosted 8 popular virtual programs this year as well as offered several Take & Make Craft Kits for adults. The library also collaborated with the City of Groton Parks & Recreation Department for the Where's the Green Sheep? city-wide scavenger hunt.



Kimberly Brockett of Tripledale Farm introduces a young visitor to a new friend. The educational petting zoo included alpacas, sheep, goats, and donkeys.



Miss Mary-Jane and Brian Bergman were joined by 65 enthusiastic singers for Make Music Day.



Families from all over the City of Groton participated in the Where is the Green Sheep? Scavenger Hunt. Children's Librarian Mary-Jane Carle worked with Val Koschmieder of the City of Groton Parks & Rec Department to create this fun event.



Staff member Mary Howard with Freddie, the library's new mascot.



Celebrating Jolabokaflod with our patrons (R).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS THIS YEAR ~

- Virtual Beer Tasting with Outer Light Brewing Company
- Virtual Presentation by Aaron McBride of Industrial Light & Magic
- Jolabokaflod Book Giveaway
- Online Cooking Class - Calzones
- Around the World in 80 Gardens (Virtual) with Richard Benfield
- Coffee with a Cop with City of Groton Police Department
- Make Music Day Sing-Along
- Tripledale Farm petting zoo