The mission of the Bill Memorial Library is to meet the changing needs of our community in a comfortable and unique historic setting by stimulating imagination through reading, viewing and listening for pleasure; providing the resources for lifelong learning; inspiring young readers; and connecting to the online world. Revised July 2014, Board of Trustees
“We have been fortunate in being open as usual each library day. The schools being closed so long the boys especially spent hours in the library reading.” Semi-annual report of the librarian of Bill Memorial Library from Oct. 11, 1917 to April 9, 1918.

I found the above quote as I looked back through the minutes of the library Board of Trustees to see if the library had closed during the flu pandemic of 1918. While there was no mention of the flu pandemic or a closure during that time, there were many mentions of the First World War. One of the Trustees, Miss Betsey B. Larrabee, oversaw Bill Memorial’s participation in the American Library Association’s War Finance Committee project “to raise . . . a million dollars for a million books for a million soldiers.” The ledger for that project is still at the library.

Needless to say, Bill Memorial Library, which celebrated its 130-year anniversary this year, has seen many changes throughout its history. When the reference room was added in 1907, the large glass picture windows—a common sight nowadays—were innovative for that time. Still visible are the fittings where blackout curtains were installed during World War II. Perhaps sometime in the future, people will come across our recently installed removable plexiglass shields in the attic and see them as interesting artifacts from 2020.

Bill Memorial Library has also seen many changes to its role in the community. While it was founded as a subscription library, it went to a free library model in 1893. In the winter of 1898-1899, the books were re-cataloged to make them easier for patrons to find, using the Dewey Decimal System, the very latest in library classification.

When we look through the lens of our long history, we gain some perspective on today’s challenging times. Previous librarians and trustees have been acting and reacting to changing times for 130 years. Why should our role today be different?

Sincerely,

Wendy Connal, Library Director

(Clockwise) Board members Jackie Massett, Janet Downs, Robert Zuliani, Mark Oefinger, Barbara Frucht, Lea Doran, Dane Stevenson and Barbara Tarbox.

All of our Board Members dedicate many hours to the library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Trustees</th>
<th>FY 2019-2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Janet Downs</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Barbara Frucht</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie Massett</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Zuliani</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<td>Mark R. Oefinger</td>
<td>Asst. Treasurer</td>
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<td>Lea Doran</td>
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<td>Jane Giuli</td>
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<td>Conrad Heede</td>
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<td>Bernadette Kunkemoeller</td>
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<td>Kenneth McBride</td>
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<td>Christy McElroy</td>
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<td>Naomi Otterness</td>
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<td>Dane Stevenson</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Swindell</td>
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<td>Barbara Tarbox</td>
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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
Virginia Ager
Jo Aldred
Roger Allen
Joellen Anderson
Anonymous
Anonymous
Martin P. Artale, Jr.
Elaine Atad
The Barnett Boys
Charlotte Barnum
Dom and Sherry Bassi
Joseph and Susan Bennett
Richard and Jane Bucklin
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Hans Stukenbrok
Elizabeth and Archie Swindell
Harold and Barbara Tarbox
Charles and Patricia Warrington
Richard White
Grace N. Woodruff
Robert L. Zuliani

BUSINESS DONORS
Charter Oak Credit Union
Groton Utilities
Paul’s Pasta Shop
Pfizer Foundation
Thames Valley Communications

Memorial Donations
Gifts made in honor of a loved one

Arnold W. Avery
By Susan A. and John H. Durham

Susan Bennett
By Joseph Bennett

Mary Ferrell
By Bernard F. Baker
Hali and Gerry Keeler

Members of Marine Draftsmen’s Association

Library Founder Frederic Bill
2019-2020 VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers make things happen! We are grateful for the talent and energy so many in the community donated to the Library. In spite of fewer opportunities due to the shutdown and limited services, we still had **60 people** graciously donate their time and efforts to the library:

**Teens**

Kaleigh Allen  
Ted Allen  
Musharraf Atik  
Rory Badeaux  
Arfa Begum  
Zoe Braco  
Druilolla Burdo  
Samantha Chaix  
Aurora Clinton  
Clare Connal-  
Nicolaou  
Apphia Cui  
Alyssa Dreesman  
Ryan Floyd  
Connor Harris  
Arabella Hatfield  
Katie Houghton  
Natalia Lallis  
Samantha Maiolo  
Gabriela Manuel  
Micaela Manuel  
Haley Murray  
Angelina Palardy  
Paulie Perez  
Avery Rembish  
Isabelle Roode  
Dylan Sheffer  
Brooklyn Steed  
Tyler Steed  
Kevin Tran  
Mary Ann Trant  
Clare Ward  
Jannatul Anika  
Sheryl Atencio  
Annie Baxter  
Ed Berryman  
Sara Bramlett  
Scott Carle  
Abby Casey  
Bob Casey  
Emily Casey  
Ruth Connal  
Amy Havens  
Conrad Heede  
Timothy C. Jackson  
Eileen Johnson  
Shawn Johnson  
Colleen King  
Emily Lavoie  
Sierra Libby  
Natalie Livingston  
Christy McElroy  
Gideon McElroy  
Molly McElroy  
Christine Post  
Bill Pratt  
Keaton Sanborn  
Dane Stevenson  
Luke Tedeschi  
Helga Tolles  
Gail Yeo

(L) Volunteer Timothy Jackson refurbished our outdoor library bench.

**2019-2020 Community Partners**

Avery-Copp House  
City of Groton  
City of Groton Police Department  
Connecticut Humanities  
Girls Who Code  
Groton Animal Foundation  
Groton Public Schools  
Groton Public Schools Summer Food Service Program  
Groton Utilities  
Lyman Allyn Art Museum  
Pro Bono Partnership  
Riverfront Children’s Center  
Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition  
Thames River Heritage Park  
Town of Groton  
Trillium Garden Club

Beautiful holiday wreaths created for the library by the Trillium Garden Club.
The Friends’ annual Cocoa & Crafts event featured alpacas and woolen items from SixPaca Farms.

We took advantage of the closure to do some much-needed building maintenance.

The library had the winning entry for “Community Organization” for the City of Groton’s Scarecrow Trail.

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. 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!

2019-2020 Budget

Income

- Endowment Income $205,272.00
- Fundraising/Other 20,750.00
- Town of Groton Municipal Funding 25,000.00

$251,022.00

Expenses

- Personnel $165,459.00
- Library Materials 19,513.00
- Technology, Supplies & Programming 17,493.00
- Buildings & Grounds 27,307.00
- Other Operating Expenses 21,250.00

$251,022.00

Grants Awarded FY 2019-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chelsea Groton Foundation</th>
<th>STEM programming</th>
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<td>Community Foundation of Eastern CT</td>
<td>Neighbors for Neighbors' physical distancing modifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT State Library, the CT State Historical Records Advisory Board, and the National Archives' National Historical Publications and Records Commission</td>
<td>Traveling Archivist Implementation Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfizer Foundation</td>
<td>STEM programming</td>
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</tbody>
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TEEN PROGRAMS

Coordinated by Colleen King, the library offered many special programs prior to the temporary closure. In addition, the library held a Girls Who Code club (which was able to continue virtually), provided outreach to Groton Public Schools (including a weekly book club at West Side Middle School), and held LEGO Mindstorm Coding with classes from the Riverfront Children’s Center.

(L) Teen Librarian Colleen King celebrates Harry Potter on Take Your Child to the Library Day

POPULAR TEEN PROGRAMS INCLUDED -

- Desktop Zen Gardens
- Literary Pumpkin Patch
- Festive Folds: Holiday Origami
- Pal-entine’s Day: A Celebration of Friendship
- LEGO Lab
- Virtual/Augmented Reality Workshops

(Above) The Haunted Library was planned and executed by the teens.

TAB MEMBERS -
Musharraf Atik
Arfa Begum
Zoe Bracco
Aurora Clinton
Connor Harris
Arabella Hatfield
Natalia Lallis
Samantha Maiolo
Avery Rembish
Mary-Ann Trant

Teen Advisory Board members spent the night in the library along with Director Wendy Connal and Board Members Christy McElroy and Dane Stevenson.
CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

Prior to the library temporarily shutting our doors, our all-ages Story Time, which includes music, puppets and other interactive elements, was held weekly throughout the year and was well-attended. We featured several special music programs for children and hosted an art series led by the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. We continued our partnership with The Riverfront Children’s Center by hosting their classes for story times. Books on autism were added to our Parenting Shelf. Children’s book circulation continues to grow as families take advantage of our expanding and current collection.

2020 SUMMER READING HIGHLIGHTS

Due to restrictions in place for COVID-19, we needed to think outside the box for Summer Reading, so we took it outside! We designed activities that utilized the library’s beautiful grounds as well as social media and that family members could complete together.

- Participants (birth through grade 5) were given Summer Reading packets filled with fun activity sheets and reading challenges to complete for raffle tickets to our prize giveaway, plus free books and coupons.
- We distributed 60 Summer Reading packets, with some families opting to download the materials from our website.
- We passed out over 80 Grab ‘N’ Go Craft Bags.
- We began a StoryWalk™ on the back lawn that continues through the fall.
- Families tracked the wanderings of Gnorman the Gnome through our Facebook page.

2020 Summer Reading Sponsors

This summer members of the library Board of Trustees personally donated gift cards to use as prizes for our Summer Readers. We appreciate their generosity.

Our StoryWalk™ was a hit among our families this summer.
ADULT & FAMILY PROGRAMS

The Bill Memorial Library is committed to offering a variety of quality programming for all ages. Popular programs bring families to the library and introduce them to the many wonderful books, materials, services and other resources we offer. While in-person programming came to a halt mid-March, the library offered virtual programming and will continue to do so for as long as necessary.

The library transformed into Hogwarts on Take Your Child to the Library Day (thanks to Emily Casey and her family for the amazing decorations).

(T) One of the younger fans to visit the library on Star Wars Reads Day.

PROGRAMS THIS YEAR ~

Connecticut Authors Trail with Christopher Wigren
Common Grounds Community Cafes
Star Wars Reads Day
Halloween Trick or Treat at the Library
Take Your Child to the Library Day: Celebrate Harry Potter!
Meet Sarah Marigu: Child of the Amistad
Virtual Program: Frances Manwaring Caulkins: First Historian for the Town of Groton

Trench Art collection of Martin P. Artale, one of the community displays featured in our museum case.

Some of the many trick-or-treaters who visited the library on Halloween to show staff their costumes and receive a treat.

Lt. Eric Jenkins,
City of Groton Police Dept.
Common Grounds Community Café.