

Report to the State Library Board

March 27, 2023

Deborah Schander
State Librarian

This report is prepared bi-monthly in conjunction with the regular meetings of the Connecticut State Library Board. The report, which will be included in the minutes of the March 27, 2023 meeting of the Board, covers the period of January 24, 2023 through March 17, 2023.

Office of the State Librarian

The legislative “long session” is in full swing, and this is proving to be a busy session for the State Library. Staff and I have met with the Appropriations Committee, its Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee’s General Obligation Bonding Subcommittee to discuss various aspects of the Governor’s proposed FY24-25 budget. These discussions center around the proposed inflation increase to support the Statewide Digital Library appropriation and the proposed bonding support for a renovation of the Middletown Library Service Center. In addition, we have engaged with legislators on the overall status of the State Library’s budget in the past 10+ years, the transformative work happening at the Connecticut Library for Accessible Books, the ongoing need for the Public Library Construction Grant program, and multiple ways the state and local communities can support school and public libraries. Several legislators have expressed their deep appreciation for the work of libraries generally and the State Library in particular, noting the quantity and quality of work the State Library continues to produce on behalf of the state despite its significant budget constraints.

There are numerous bills under active discussion which may impact the State Library directly or indirectly. Two eBook bills with the same proposed language are wending their way through the Planning & Development and Government Administration & Elections Committees. The purpose of this legislation is to address fair terms in contracts and licenses for electronic books for libraries, who on average pay 6 times more than other consumers for eBooks and eAudiobooks than other consumers, and with that content licensed for only a short period of time. Bills about the establishment of a Dolly Parton Imagination Library book program, remote notarization, and supporting public libraries facing censorship and book banning challenges are also under consideration. The State Library continues to engage in the conversations surrounding these bills.

A paving project at the State Library’s Rocky Hill Campus is set to begin after several delays due to weather and increased costs. The project is being managed by the Department of Administrative Services and will result in a new driveway, parking spaces, increased lighting, and related improvements to the areas surrounding our facilities in Rocky Hill.

Unit Activities

Partnerships and Community Engagement

Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz provided introductory remarks for the State Library's March Third Thursday program. The program featured a speaker from the **CT Women's Hall of Fame** discussing the roles women throughout our state's history have played in the advancement of social justice. The program was promoted by the Department of Administrative Service's EEO unit to other agencies, with many state employees in the audience along with members of the public.

The Archives Connection System Workgroup met January 19 to watch a demonstration of the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) Islandora system. State Archives and Public Records staff, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS) staff, and CTDA staff attended. The workgroup held meetings on January 11, February 16 and 28, and March 7 and 14 to discuss the project business requirements of the Connecticut State Library and CTDA. Lizette Pelletier, Barbara Austen, Elise Marzik, and Allen Ramsey met with Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) staff on February 27 to discuss electronic records systems used at the agency, any possible permanent records in those systems, and general electronic recordkeeping issues.

The **Historic Documents Preservation Program's** FY2024 guidelines were made available to Municipal Chief Executive Officers (MCEO) and Town Clerks on February 1. The grant award levels have been set at \$6,000, \$8,000, and \$11,000 for small, medium, and large towns, respectively.

LeAnn Power has been working with towns on **vault construction and renovation projects**, including projects for the Town of East Hartford and the Town of Bristol. Vaults provide a high level of fire protection and security for towns' permanent and essential records.

A news story by Diane Orson, Special Correspondent with Connecticut Public Radio / WNPR, on preserving the records related to **the Sandy Hook Shootings** aired on February 15. Allen Ramsey was quoted twice online concerning the collections held by the State Archives that document the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings on December 14, 2012. The two collections are Newtown 12/14 Condolence Letters (RG 062:097) and Letters and Other Submissions to The Newtown Bee in Response to the Sandy Hook Shootings Collection (RG 069:170). The article is available online at: <https://www.ctpublic.org/news/2023-02-16/expressions-of-grief-after-mass-shootings-what-to-do-with-the-outpouring-of-condolence-items>.

Lizette Pelletier, Allen Ramsey, and Damon Munz virtually presented on the **founding documents of the state** for the Red, White, and Blue Schools program which is a civic engagement initiative of the Secretary of the State, Department of Education, and The Democracy Center at Connecticut's Old State House. The video will soon be available online

through the Red, White, and Blue Schools website: <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Education/RWB-Schools/Red-White-and-Blue-Schools>

Lizette Pelletier and Sarah Morin attended a meeting of the **Inclusive Description in Museums/Archives Working Group** through CT Humanities on March 8. The group is discussing projects around the state concerning inclusive, reparative, or re-description efforts in archives, museums, and libraries.

The Division of Library Development (DLD) is partnering with **Libraries Without Borders** (LWB) to create a first-in-the-nation pilot project with a group of six CT libraries that will result in temporary library spaces in their communities, modeled on LWB's other international initiatives and customized for CT.

Through its leadership of **CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity** (CTLPDE), DLD has continued to lay the groundwork for partnerships between libraries and service organizations to meet community digital inclusion activity needs. At the January 2023 meeting of CTLPDE, DLD brought together public and academic librarians with speakers on the AmeriCorps VISTA program for Digital Literacy and Digital Coordinators from Oak Hill, a larger provider of services to people with disabilities. In addition, the Hartford Public Library shared information on the possibility of training digital navigation interns through workforce development programs.

In partnership with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protections (DEEP), a **permanent Storywalk** has been erected at Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill as DLD's pilot location, and families are already enjoying it. Penny age 7: "I thought it was really fun. It was like a mystery and a puzzle and really fun. You get to, like, look for stuff." Max aged 4: "It was really fun to go here because my favorite part is that there is like a lot of fun stuff." Duncan age 45: "A nice walk on a nice morning."

Matt Geeza and Paula McLean conducted 13 **CT Library for Accessible Books (CTLAB) outreach sessions** during the period of January to February 2023. Outreach sessions included visits to a low-vision support group; an interview on the CRIS Radio program, "Focal Point"; a presentation for the Town of Bristol's Commission for People with Disabilities; and visits to public libraries.

CTLAB is partnering with public libraries across CT to establish **CTLAB hub libraries**. Eight of the public libraries that have signed on to serve as hub libraries have received equipment and CTLAB promotional materials for their in-library displays. Matt Geeza has visited each of the eight libraries to provide library staff with training and information about CTLAB resources and services.

On February 8, Kym Powe and Maria Bernier hosted a webinar on "**Making Programs Accessible for All**" that featured partners from the State Education Resource Center, National Federation of the Blind of CT, CT Tech Act Project, and American School for the Deaf. The

panelists gave advice for making specific library programs such as making, coding, and outdoor story times more accessible and welcoming for everyone.

Gail Hurley worked with **CT Saves** partners to plan financial education activities during America Saves / CT Saves week February 27-March 1. DLD staffed a table on March 1st at Hartford Job Corps to work with the young adults there on financial literacy and will manage a table at the Legislative Office Building at an event hosted by the CT Dept of Banking.

Hiking Through History, Patrick Smith's popular program for the Museum of Connecticut History, will return in summer 2023 with seven hikes: April 28th: Windsor Locks Canal (northern end); May 19th: Hartford Downtown; June 9th: Hartford/Focus on African-American History; July 21st: Norwich Waterfront. Native American and Rev War/Industrialization History; August 4th: Hartford Downtown; September 8th: Old Connecticut Path; and October 6th: Windsor Lock Canal (southern end).

Christine Pittsley is leading the effort to organize the **Digging Into History: On the Road** program, which will be happening this summer from July 10-24, 2023. Ten students from the Secheprey area of France will be joining up to ten Connecticut students to conduct an archaeological dig of a Revolutionary War encampment site used by comte de Rochambeau's troops in 1781. [Applications](#) for Connecticut students are now open through April 2, 2023. About \$30,000 has been raised thus far toward the program. Christine Pittsley and Jennifer Matos are working on a fundraising plan to raise an additional \$12,500.

Programs & Trainings

Steve Mirsky gave a tour and overview of the law collection's material pertaining to **researching CT legislative history** to a group of UConn Master of Public Policy students. Approximately 12 students along with 2 professors and librarian Karen Tatarka were presented with pertinent physical items in the collection along with instruction on what's currently available digitally. The group received instruction on how to use these resources for researching acts the class will be focusing on during the spring semester including PA 04-234 (Justice Reinvestment Act) and PA 99-198 (Alvin W Penn Racial Profiling Reduction Act).

Kris Aberly, Lindsey Cawley, Mel Smith, Allen Ramsey, and Damon Munz gave a tour of the Government Information, Law and Legislative, History & Genealogy and State Archives to four staff members of the **Beineke Library at Yale University**.

Kevin Johnson gave the following presentations during the months of January & February:

- **Civil War Soldier William Webb**: CREC School in Rocky Hill (joined by Patrick Smith); Mark Twain Public Library in Redding; Wethersfield Historical Society in Wethersfield; Raymond Public Library in East Hartford.
- **Revolutionary War Figure, Jordan Freeman**: Pleasant Valley Elementary School in South Windsor.

Dawn La Valle presented "**Which World? Using Far Fetched Scenarios to Map Out the Future of Libraries**" to over 130 librarians at the American Library Association's LIBLEARNX23 Conference. Dawn's interactive session used far-fetched Natural Foresight scenarios to play with the future and create functional views of alternative futures for libraries. Dawn's session was featured in an American Libraries article "Thinking Ahead: Librarians hear about, discuss Futures Thinking," by Megan Bennett, January 29th, 2023.

Kym Powe was invited to present a workshop to teen librarians in Wisconsin called "**T(w)eens: Programming, Partnership, and Burnout.**" Fifty-nine people attended.

DLD conducted an **annual Professional Development survey** to the library community in January which yielded 137 responses as to what types of training topics, skills development, and future projects are being undertaken by libraries in the next six to eighteen months. Staff is reviewing the responses to help plan the professional development offerings for 2023. The most requested training topic was Community Engagement.

Jennifer Matos, Christine Pittsley, Patrick Smith, and Kevin Johnson are participating in a program called "**Uncovering the Hidden History in Your Town.**" This four-part program creates a learning cohort to help museums / historical societies make slavery and freedom an integral part of the local colonial story. The State Library's team will be conducting research on Connecticut Governors and their roles related to slavery and abolition, as well as the history of Black Governors in the state. The program runs from February to May.

The Museum of Connecticut History has successfully applied for inclusion in the **American Alliance of Museum's Museum Assessment Program**. Specifically, the museum will receive an Organizational Assessment, which is to help museums create a solid foundation for long-term health and impact, emphasizing thinking, acting, and planning strategically; organizational alignment and capacity; leadership and organizational structure; and risk management and organizational culture.

Resource Updates

Public Records and State Archives staff continue to collaborate to move forward with initiatives for the **management and preservation of statewide electronic government records**:

- Public Records and State Archives staff; Michael Barrera, DAS Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO); DAS BITS staff; and other state agency stakeholders convened a monthly working group to discuss **email management, retention, and disposition issues**.
- Elise Marzik, Allen Ramsey, and Damon Munz convened a working group to revise the **M10 Land Use and Development municipal records retention schedule**. This revision is part of the recommendations made by the **Digitization of Building Code Records Working Group** created under Special Act 22-14. The M10 revision working group includes Mike Glidden, Cheshire Town Planner; Harwood Loomis, Southington Plan Reviewer/Assistant Building Inspector; Raymond Steadward, Enfield Chief Building Official; Omarys Vasquez,

State Building Inspector, Department of Administrative Services (DAS); and Jerry Waters, Architect.

Brian Tamms of Assured Partners, the state's insurance broker, completed his review of insurance requirements for **the Royal Charter and other key documents** during transportation to and conservation of by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). Lizette Pelletier is working with NEDCC to meet the insurance company's recommendations requirements ensure that there is sufficient coverage. Melissa Frank, Risk Insurance Director, provide staff with a list of additional fine arts transporters.

New Haven County Court Records Project Archivist Sarah Morin and Lisa Lew have processed 99.75 cubic feet (199.5 boxes) of the New Haven County, County Court files from approximately 1700-1810. This brings the project halfway through the entire collection (an estimated 198.5 cubic feet, 397 boxes). Staff is currently processing records from 1811-1819. To date, the project has uncovered 232 cases involving African-descended, African American, Black, and Indigenous persons in the court records. Several volunteers from the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council (CPGC) joined the project on January 3 and are currently processing the County Court papers by subject. Student intern Alyssa DePaolis began assisting with processing the County Court files on January 18. Todd Gabriel has scanned 667 court cases (approximately 2,802 pages) for the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). These cases involve African-descended, African American, Black, and Indigenous persons, as well as other selected topics of research interest. Barbara Allen continues to upload cases from 1790-1805 to CTDA as they are discovered and scanned.

Recent Archives Accessions include:

- **Office of the Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz gifts, 1975-2002, 4 cubic feet (RG 005:013)**
The gifts consist of 1 small pillow, 1 medium sized framed letters from Gov. Ella Grasso and Lt. Gov. Robert Killian, 1 wooden boomerang, 1 DVD, 8 books, 2 small framed photos, 1 small painting, 1 decorative dagger with scabbard, 1 motivational quote table piece, and 1 canvas artwork with motivational quote.
- **Office of the State Comptroller records, 6 cubic feet (RG 008)**
The records consist of Comptroller memorandums, 2016-2018; manuals; Internal Revenue Service (IRS) investigation of employee reportable allowances; documentation that led to establishment of various policies; internal control directives; internal control questionnaires; audits; disaster recovery records; various task force records; collective bargaining files; automation of Sloane Stanley Museum records; cash management project records; and investigations of the City of Waterbury fiscal crisis.
- **Division of Scientific Services, Toxicology and Controlled Substances case files and Question document research materials (historical value-methodology development), 1966-2013, 225 cubic feet (RG 161:002)**
- **Division of Scientific Services, Controlled Substances and Toxicology case files** (sexual assault or homicide related) and Controlled Substances and Toxicology

batch paperwork / Quality Control supporting case results (sexual assault and homicide related), **2000-2019, 264 cubic feet (RG 161:002)**

- **Town of Fairfield aerial photographs, 1931-1933**, 13 folders and 6 negatives (**RG 062:051**)

Consists of 13 folders of aerial photographs, 1931, by Fairchild Aerial Survey, Inc.; and 6 sheets of aerial photograph film negatives, 1933, from the Town of Fairfield Conservation Department.

Digital Records Processing Completed:

- Ninety percent of Governor Malloy's 60,000+ constituent emails have been reviewed, redacted, converted to PDFs, and uploaded to CTDA.
- Minutes of the investigation into the Norwich Police Department are scanned and will be added to CTDA on April 6, which is when the closure agreement is fulfilled.

The **Family Search digitization** team, Darrel and Sherry Jones, completed scanning the following records between January 6 and February 10, 2023. During their nearly year-long time here, they digitized a total of 510,257 pages of records. A new digitization team will be starting in mid-March.

- Hartford County Coroner Records, 1931-October 1934, 2,955 images
- Litchfield County Coroner Records, February 1934-December 1944, April 1969-June 1970, 5,969 images
- Middlesex County Coroner Records, January 1963-December 1966, 2,018 images
- New Haven County Coroner Records, June 1930-June 1970, 56,957 images
- New London County Coroner Records, July 1935-January 1942, 1,159 images
- Tolland County Coroner Records, January 1968-June 1970, 1,058 images
- Windham County Coroner Records, January 1933-June 1942, 3,163 images

Maria Paxi has begun updating a heavily used History & Genealogy hand-out of "**Connecticut Towns and their Establishment**" which was created in 1985. This useful tool includes a map of Connecticut along with information on year of establishment and parent town. The new version will include the updated Connecticut State Library logo and a colored map of Connecticut.

Bill Room staff Asaf Aliev, Andrew Bourque, and Steve Mirsky wrapped up the remaining tasks associated with the **2022 legislative session**. Asaf compiled and posted all 2022 legislative histories and posted them to CTDA. He also began incorporating 1,590 pages of missing House transcripts from 2016 not received from the library at the time into existing transcript volumes, compiled histories, and into the digital collection. Andrew trained new legislative aide Tristan Filiano on bill tracking procedures getting him up to speed for providing this service to in-house staff during the 2023 legislative session. He also began indexing Appropriations, the last committee holdout from 2022 which is voluminous but isn't included in many legislative histories beyond the budget act.

Lindsay Cawley began indexing legislation being produced during the **current legislative session**, which convened on January 4, 2023.

Eric Paiva and Elizabeth Esquilin searched and located **9 state and 33 federal documents** that had previously been listed as missing in ALMA/Primo. The items have been located and the bibliographic records updated.

Government Information staff received 14 boxes of **Connecticut State documents** from the Legislative Law Library and 2 boxes of state documents from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The **Federal Documents program** processed 2,226 discards submitted by selective depository libraries in Connecticut and Rhode Island during the January and February 2023 time period. The Federal Depository library also received 7 boxes of federal documents from the University of New Haven and the University of Connecticut.

The Preservation Office has completed 87% of the first phase of its ongoing project to digitize **unique Connecticut state documents** from our collections, for many of which CSL holds the only known copy. So far, 482 documents have been digitized and are publicly available in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). The Preservation Office is also digitizing **historical legislative transcripts**, which will be made publicly available in the CTDA. Since starting the project in October, 33 volumes (80%) from the 1969 Senate and Joint Standing Committee proceedings have been digitized and are now available in the CTDA.

Collection Services has deaccessioned **100 superseded law books**. The books weighed roughly 313 pounds and freed up 14.75 linear feet of shelf space to accommodate new law materials.

The **eGO CT Community Share program for schools** continues to grow. There are now **102** school sites participating in the program. There are approximately 170 school sites that are eligible to join. We continue to reach out to schools and add relevant content for the new school year. To date, **771** new items have been added specifically for this program in addition to the Children & Young Adult (YA) content we already have available from Baker & Taylor.

eGO CT continues to grow. There are now **114** participating public libraries using the Palace Project app and sharing Connecticut State Library ebook content with their patrons.

Ashley Sklar and Maria Bernier created and launched **Experiencing America**, a collection of adult nonfiction book discussion sets ([See the available EA Book Discussion Sets](#)) based on the social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion focus of our new Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Plan with corresponding [EA LibGuide](#) containing book engagement resources, leading discussion resources, and more.

Verna Thomas Green continued her project to **standardize formats of hyperlinks** to electronic versions of tangible state documents. In addition, Verna is adding new original bibliographic records to OCLC which describe the CTDA and CONTENTdm versions of these resources. These new records are available to OCLC member libraries who wish to acquire and catalog the electronic versions. As of December 31, Verna has contributed 2,550 of these new records to the OCLC database.

Jennifer Matos and Dave Corrigan are working to **reorganize museum collections storage areas** at the Van Block facility and on the 7th floor of the State Library. Part of this process will require disposing of unwanted, non-collection related materials. They are also creating a plan for cleaning up the back of the museum, which includes listing old exhibit cases on the state's surplus site. The removal of the unwanted exhibit cases will free up valuable floor space and will assist in the organization of the space.

Jennifer Matos is working with Risk Management and Insurance to evaluate the state's fine art insurance policy, including a possible reappraisal of ***Portrait of George Washington*** by Gilbert Stuart.

The **Colt Whitneyville-Walker revolver** that was stolen from the museum in 1971 has been returned, thanks to the efforts of a 13-year investigation that recovered over 50 weapons stolen from 16 different organizations. A repatriation ceremony was held on March 13, 2023 at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. Jennifer Matos and Deborah Schander were in attendance, and the revolver has been transported back to Connecticut.