

Report to the State Library Board

July 24, 2023

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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 July 24, 2023 meeting of the Board, covers the period of May 23, 2023 through July 14, 2023.

Office of the State Librarian

The legislative session ended June 7, finalizing the State Library's FY24-FY25 biennial budget and bringing several successes: an inflation increase to support existing resources in the CT Digital Library; \$500,000 per year in passthrough grants to support three literacy initiatives in the state; and \$225,000 per year for the restoration of grants-in-aid to public libraries. In addition, the cap on state support of public library construction grants increased from \$1 million to \$2 million per grant, and funding was secured for a renovation at the Middletown Library Service Center. We are coordinating with the Office of Policy and Management on the details of these appropriations. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Connecticut Library Consortium, the Connecticut Library Association, and the State Library, we succeeded in adding statutory language that supports public libraries facing book challenges. Moving forward, public libraries are required to have collection development, collection management, and collection reconsideration policies approved by their governing body in order to receive a grant-in-aid; in the case of a book challenge, these policies govern. This language ensures a transparent process while keeping the details of collection decisions at the local level. Although we did not see final passage of legislation to address the high costs of eBooks and eAudiobooks for libraries, we gained the understanding and support of key legislators, already keen to raise this issue again next session.

On June 15, Governor Ned Lamont, Department of Education Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, and I hosted a press event in Memorial Hall to launch a re-envisioned 2023 Governor's Summer Reading Challenge, which places a stronger focus on increasing summer reading activities and improved literacy outcomes for all students. Thanks to an investment of \$370,000 American Rescue Plan – Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP-ESSER) funds over summers 2023 and 2024, the State Library, Department of Education, and the Connecticut Association of School Librarians will continue to support local school districts and public libraries while building sustainable partnerships between public libraries and school districts that further support improved statewide literacy outcomes and goals.

Unit Activities

Partnerships and Community Engagement

In partnership with Lifetime Arts, the Division of Library Development (DLD) selected ten libraries to learn the foundational principles of the **creative aging educational program** model, which will provide tools for implementing a program at their institution to serve the older adults in their communities. The 10 libraries selected are: Cromwell Belden Library, Cromwell; Danbury

Library; Durham Public Library; Hagan Memorial Library, East Haven; Dwight Branch, Hartford Public Library; New Britain Library; New Canaan Library; Simsbury and Avon Library Team; Thomaston Library; and Warehouse Point Library. Creative Aging programs will be developed and implemented in the pilot libraries in the fall of 2023.

In partnership with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and funded by a generous grant from EBSCO, two permanent **Storywalks** have been installed at Dinosaur State Park and Kellogg Environmental Center.

Through our leadership of CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity (CTLPDE), the Division of Library Development (DLD) has continued to lay the groundwork for partnerships between libraries and service organizations to meet **community digital inclusion activity** needs. The Academic Library work group presented at the annual CT academic librarian conference. In May of 2023, CTLPDE hosted a presentation on how to create a free device distribution ecosystem in a state or town. In June, the membership meeting hosted networking with a team from the City of New Haven that is implementing a unique two-year model of digital skills training via geographically dispersed drop-in centers. Christine Gauvreau has continued to assist the Hotchkiss Library Director and the community organization Sharon Connects in their effort to develop a regional navigator sharing plan with seven libraries as the anchoring organizations. CTLPDE hosted workshops on the lessons of the 2021-2022 Digital Navigator Pilot Projects at the Connecticut Library Association and CT Education Network annual conferences. In addition, CTLPDE tabled at the June CT League of History Organizations annual conference and was able to engage with participants on the idea of integrating digital navigation with community memory projects, co-curation projects, and basic outreach.

DLD partnered with Space Science Institute (SSI) on hosting a special **solar eclipse program** for CT librarians and has received four solar eclipse programming kits to circulate to CT libraries.

The CT Library for Accessible Books (CTLAB) and the Connecticut State Library are partnering with Perkins Access on a pilot program called ***Transforming Libraries and Museums: Collaboration for Accessible Exhibitions, Collections, and Programs***. This program centers around making library and museum exhibits accessible to visitors who are blind or visually impaired. This pilot program will feature a workshop that focuses on the description of works of art, museum artifacts, and other three-dimensional objects for patrons who are blind or visually impaired. Thirteen libraries and museums have committed to participating in the pilot program. They are Gunn Library and Museum; Westport Library; Museum of CT History; Eastern Connecticut State Art Gallery; MOCA Westport; East Hartford Public Library; Mystic Seaport Museum; Kidsplay Children's Museum; Five Points Arts Center; The Maritime Aquarium; Windham Textile Museum; Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum; and New Canaan Library.

By statute, **Town Clerk and Probate Vaults** must be constructed and maintained in accordance with state regulations and approved by the Office of the Public Records Administrator. LeAnn Power and Nicole Besseghir have been working with towns on vault construction and renovation projects, including projects for the Town of Avon, Town of East Hartford, the Town of Farmington, Town of Ledyard, the Town of Lebanon, the Town of Pomfret, the Town of South Windsor, and the Town of Stonington. Vaults provide a high level of fire protection and security for towns' permanent and essential records.

The Archives Connection System Workgroup received a proof-of-concept demonstration from Amazon Web Services (AWS) using actual data from our records allowing us to better understand how the AWS tools work, how the tools identify personally identifiable information (PII), and the redacted records produced by the tools; discussed our automation requirements concerning the identification and redaction of PII with vendors Deloitte and Dataiku and Slalom and AWS; reviewed statements of work (SOW) from Deloitte and Slalom; and decided to move forward with Slalom using AWS. An Information Management Consultant has been hired to support the project and will begin work in early September.

The State's Filing Cabinet, a three-part series sponsored by the Old State House, featured staff from the State Library. Lizette Pelletier and Barbara Austen presented "Recordkeeping in Connecticut, Then and Now," giving a history of how records were created from the early 1600s until today including materials and methods. LeAnn Power, Elise Marzik, Allen Ramsey, and Damon Munz presented "Managing and Safeguarding What's in the Cabinet," a discussion of how active government records are managed and how historically significant records are identified and preserved. Mel Smith, Susan Bigelow, and Steve Mirsky concluded with "A Researcher's Treasure Trove" which focused on the many unique research resources available to the public at the Connecticut State Library both in print and increasingly online. Recordings of the presentations are available at: <https://ctstatelibrary.org/special-event-presentation/>.

The Museum of Connecticut History was listed as a "**Hidden-Gem Museum**" in the June 2023 issue of *Connecticut Magazine*.

Patrick Smith wrapped up **museum outreach visits** for the 2022-2023 school year with a trip to Waterford for a presentation of "Revolutionary Connecticut" for 50 5th grade students. He also finished teaching a nine-session "Colonial Connecticut" course to a group of 19 home school students in Enfield. The group met every Monday for an hour-long course and used as tools for learning a variety of objects and materials from the museum and library.

The museum co-hosted an event, "**Remembering Seicheprey: Honoring WWI in 2023**," at the Second Company Governor's Horse Guard in Newtown, CT. The WWI encampment that honored the service and sacrifice of Connecticut service members (with tents, military equipment, vintage vehicles, and soldiers in uniform) was the result of a collaborative effort between the museum, the Newtown Historical Society, and the Second Company Governor's Horse Guard.

After months of planning, **Digging Into History: On the Road with Rochambeau** took place July 12-24, 2023 with 13 students from the Seicheprey region of France joining 19 students from Connecticut to excavate a Revolutionary War-era encampment in Bolton once occupied by the comte de Rochambeau. Christine Pittsley planned an engaging and immersive itinerary for the participating students. The museum partnered with the Office of Archaeology at the University of Connecticut for the excavation and the Public History department at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) for on-campus activities and housing. Major support came from the Connecticut Heritage Foundation, the National Park Service, the Center for Community Engagement and Social Research at CCSU, and Knee-Deep Into History Battlefield Tours. An Open House was hosted on Friday, July 14, the national holiday of France known as Bastille Day. The public was invited to visit the Bolton Heritage Farm and visit with the French and Connecticut students and State Archaeologist Dr. Sarah Sportman.

Programs & Trainings

Kym Powe presented the Division of Library Development's (DLD) "**Growing Equitable Library Services** (GELS)" at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference to 75 librarians, with one library director from Oakland Public Library (CA) commenting "this was the most engaging, relevant program I have attended at ALA."

As part of DLD's **Strategy Planning Program**, Dawn LaValle and Gail Hurley conducted an EXCITE Empathy Mapping Session for the Mark Twain Library, Redding. Dawn and Gail led Mark Twain Library staff through a targeted Empathy Mapping exercise developed through DLD's EXCITE Transformation for Libraries Institute of Museums and Library Services grant project in preparation for the library's strategic planning process. The next activity will be a Strategic Visioning exercise for the Mark Twain Library Board of Trustees.

DLD presented *So You Want to Build a Library? Capital Planning Strategies for Libraries in CT* workshop in June as part of the series **Leading from the Future: Best Practices in the Administration and Governance of Libraries in CT**. DLD also held a virtual *Hands-on Legal Reference for Public Librarians* workshop in June with plans for additional workshop due to demand in the Fall. DLD offered an additional series of workshops for June and July from Northstar Digital Literacy for libraries new to the service and will be hosting *How to Organize a Community Conversation Aimed at Developing Digital Inclusion Collaborations* in July as well as in-person workshops on *Basic and Advanced Book Repair* in July and early August.

In June, the CT State Library E-Rate Consultant presented a workshop on **E-Rate Basics** for new library directors or librarians newly assigned to explore utilizing the E-Rate discount program to enhance their internet service. DLD also hosted a workshop led by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance for librarians who need to learn how to map community assets as the first step toward developing a program to help close the digital divide in their catchment areas.

The next **CT Library for Accessible Books (CTLAB Book Club)** meeting will be in July 2023 and will discuss *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles. The book club is led by CTLAB Reader's Advisor, Paula McLean.

Public Records staff conducted a training presentation in Greenwich for municipal police departments on June 13. LeAnn Power, Elise Marzik, and Nicole Besseghir presented a **records management training** with staff from the Freedom of Information Commission and the Office of the Chief State's Attorney. The session was attended by approximately 70 police officers and department staff and was hosted by the Greenwich Police Department.

Jennifer Matos was a presenter at a session entitled "**Addressing the Legacies of Discrimination: Making Slavery and Freedom an Integral Part of the Local Colonial Stories We Tell**" at the Connecticut League of History Organizations Annual Conference.

Resource Updates

DLD has welcomed Barbara Ghilardi as the **new State Data Coordinator**. Barbara Ghilardi previously coordinated all assessment activities in the DiMenna-Nyselius at Fairfield University. She holds a master's degree in Library and Information Science from Simmons University as well as a bachelor's degree in History from Quinnipiac University. She assisted students from all levels of the university with their research needs and served as a library partner to the Communication department and the School of Education and Human Development. Prior to this position, she was a Children's librarian at New Haven Free Public Library providing

programming for ages 0-12. Barbara will concentrate on the State Annual Report, borrowIT CT, and helping all libraries with data and assessment needs.

The **eGO CT Community Share program** for K-12 schools continues to move forward. The Division of Library Development (DLD) now has 117 sites participating in the program. There are approximately 170 school sites that are eligible to join. Staff continue to reach out to schools over the summer and continue to add relevant content as we approach the new school year.

The **Virtual Library Card** was launched in June as part of the eGO CT program. This allows patrons to create an account in Palace to access the Connecticut State Library eGO collection without a public library card. Verification is accomplished with geoauthentication. Now libraries that don't have an ILS or a compatible ILS can share eGO content with their patrons.

DLD continues to purchase new content to coincide with **the launch of the Palace app**. Since we launched the Palace app in April 2022, we have added over 6,226 new items. The Palace bookshelf which is available to all participating libraries adds another 16,665 open access titles. A total of 26,833 items are now available in the Palace app. Focus areas include Connecticut authors and Connecticut as subject, children and YA (Young Adult) including simultaneous use titles that support the school curriculum, EDI, backlist bestsellers, biography and memoir, veterans and military families, Spanish language, professional development titles for librarians, and self-help titles. Over 1,413 items have been purchased specifically for the eGO CT Community Share program for schools. Circulation of items from the eGO Collection has more than doubled in FY23.

Mel Smith has begun to assist in identifying and unlocking various Connecticut State Library **digital assets held by FamilySearch** which had been restricted for remote access on the FamilySearch website. Recently unlocked materials on FamilySearch include the following collections: Family & Bible Collection Index; Milita records for Connecticut; Revolution and early federal period; Colonial Land Records of Connecticut, circa 1640-1846, Patents, Deeds & Surveys; and William F.J. Boardman Collection of Manuscripts, 1661-1835

Asaf Aliev, Andrew Bourque, and Steve Mirsky continued **indexing 2023 legislative transcripts** totaling 15,696 pages. In addition, staff prepared transcripts for indexing which include removing duplicate submitted testimony using 2 plugins, performing Optical Character Recognition (OCR), adjusting margins, adding pagination in Adobe Acrobat, and following up with CGA Management when transcripts are visibly incomplete. Additional processing tasks completed during this period included batching and preparing the 2023 engrossed copies of bills for binding; sorting, editing, and quality control on scanned 1959, 1969, and 1963 bill files.

In May the Government Information and Reference Services unit received 4 boxes of **Connecticut Documents** from the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Legislative Law Library. Of the items received, 57 have been cataloged, barcoded, and added to the Connecticut State Document collection. With the assistance of Elizabeth Esquilin and Eric Paiva, the **Federal Documents program** processed 2,890 discards submitted by selective libraries in Connecticut and Rhode Island during the May – July 2023 time period. Eighty-three have been cataloged, barcoded, and added to the Federal Documents collection.

Kris Abery and Elizabeth Esquilin are working on a project to barcode and update the location status for items in the **Federal Documents oversize collection** on level 5B. As of July 5, 680 bibliographic items have been added to Alma/Primo.

Collection Services successfully closed FY2023 having expended \$574,536.96, or 99.99%, of the **legal/legislative library materials allocation**.

The Preservation Office has started the second phase of its ongoing project **to digitize unique Connecticut state documents** from our collections, for many of which the CT State Library (CSL) holds the only known copy. The second phase of the project covers the years 1950 to 1960, and so far, 161 of the 200 selected documents, or 81%, have been digitized. The Preservation Office is also digitizing **historical legislative transcripts** from 1967. Six volumes from the 1967 House Proceedings, Parts 1-6, have been digitized.

For the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project (CDNP), Erin Shapland completed a topic guide on Prohibition in Connecticut, which is available on the CDNP website:
<https://ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org/topic-guides/the-prohibition-era-in-connecticut/>

Verna Thomas-Green continued working on her project **Updating State Document hyperlinks** which lead to electronic versions of tangible state documents, as delivered in Primo from CTDA (Connecticut Digital Archive) and from the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) CONTENTdm digital content management service. 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 June 30, Verna has contributed over 4,000 of these new records to the **enrichment of the OCLC database**.

In the early 1990s, Retro-Link Associates (RLA) in Provo, Utah (a firm no longer in business) keyboarded 3,000 State Library catalog cards representing originally cataloged Connecticut State Documents (titles not found in the OCLC database). RLA received shipments of cards and keyed the cataloging into the MARC (Machine-readable cataloging) format. The RLA records are included in Alma/Primo, but the absence of OCLC record control numbers makes them unusable for linking in CTDA. Discovery Services has begun to **import RLA records into OCLC**, assigning OCLC numbers and enhancing the cataloging as they go. As of June 30, 700 RLA records have been upgraded..

The Office of the Public Records Administrator issued **new records series** for the Personnel State General Schedule (effective 6/20/2023). Elise Marzik is currently working with four agencies on updates to agency-specific retention schedules, and with a municipal working group to update one municipal retention schedule.

LeAnn Power and Cherie Miles processed 489 municipal and 183 state agency authorization forms for **records disposals**.

Doug Yaeger and Mike Soltesz accessioned 1,176 cubic feet of agency records and deaccessioned 2,066 cubic feet at the **State Records Center** in May and June; they processed 111 reference requests in May; 70 reference requests in June; and processed 154 re-files and inter-files in May and 17 re-files and inter-files in June.

Sarah Morin, Lisa Lew, and several interns and volunteers, along with members of the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council (CPGC), have processed 135.25 cubic feet (270.5 boxes) of the **New Haven County Court records**. They have completed the County Court files from 1700-1817 and the following categories of County Court papers by subject: Admission to the Bar, Appointment of Officers, Confiscated Estates and Loyalists, Conservators

and Guardians, Court Expenses, Insolvents, Jurors, Meeting House, Militia, Miscellaneous, Partition Land, Revolutionary Pensions, and Travel. They are currently processing Costs, Equity Bills, Executions, Justices of the Peace, and Licenses. They will begin processing the Superior Court files and papers by subject in July. Digital Records Archivist Barbara Austen continues to prepare cases from 1770-1790 to upload to CTDA. As of July 1, 38 blog posts about the project have been published on the State Library website:

(<https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/archives/uncoveringnewhaven/blog>), and these have been promoted on Facebook and Twitter.

State Archives staff provided **six supervised research visits** to three different groups of patrons (33 individuals total) for a total of 28 hours at our Van Block Facility between May 11 and July 1.

Public Records and State Archives staff continue to collaborate to move forward with initiatives for the **management and preservation of statewide electronic government records**: Elise Marzik, Nicole Besseghir, Nicole Marino, Allen Ramsey, and Damon Munz met on June 20 for a monthly meeting with the 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 municipal town planners, building officials, architects, and legal counsel.

The museum team is working on a “micro” exhibition featuring the 1847 **Colt Whitneyville-Walker revolver** that was stolen in 1971 and returned to the museum earlier this year. Besides the incredible story of the theft and its unlikely return, the revolver has an interesting history to share relating to Samuel Colt, Samuel Walker of the Texas Rangers, and Eli Whitney’s gun factory in New Haven, CT. The exhibit is scheduled to open in September 2023. The back cover of the fall issue of *Connecticut Explored* will highlight items from the Connecticut State Library’s collection that will be used in the exhibit.

Dave Corrigan is working on a cleanup of the **museum’s collection storage area** at the Van Block facility. The team has tagged items that are not a part of the collection and need to be disposed of, with a goal of renting a dumpster this summer. Dave and an intern have been at Van Block multiple times since the last report to tackle the framed artwork in the collection: organizing them in a specific location, tagging all with accession numbers, and updating location markers in the collections management database. Once all the artwork has been completed, the team will turn to other aspects of the collection to sort and organize. This project is likely to take many months to accomplish.

The Museum is working with the Director of Insurance & Risk Management, Department of Administrative Services, to have a conditions assessment and appraisal done of the **Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington** that has been on long-term loan to Connecticut’s Old State House for the past 40 years. Work is also underway to execute an updated loan agreement for the Stuart painting with the Office of Legislative Management.