



Bill Library
718 Colonel Ledyard Hwy.
Ledyard, CT 06339
860-464-9912



Learn | Discover | Create | Connect

Ledyard Public Library Annual Report FY 2021-2022

www.ledyard.lioninc.org



Gales Ferry Library
18 Hurlbutt Road
Gales Ferry, CT 06335
860-464-6943

Mission: Ledyard Library provides valuable resources, friendly, knowledgeable service, and free access to a diversity of ideas, information, and experiences. We strive to enhance the quality of life in our community and encourage the love of reading, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

The Ledyard Public Library continued to slowly recover in fiscal year 2022 from the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. Programming opportunities were held virtually and in person to meet the needs of our community. During January and February, the library followed town guidelines and restricted in-person programming. Library staff quickly pivoted to offering Grab and Go/Take and Make options for youth and online events for adults. Programs were scheduled outdoors as much as possible when the weather allowed, and library staff was mindful of group sizes as we transitioned back to indoor programming.

At Bill Library, a new self-checkout machine was installed, making it possible for library cardholders to check out their own materials if they so choose. In addition, we now have options for patrons looking for a quiet space for personal use. Bill Library has a soundproof, phone booth-sized room that can be reserved for telehealth appointments, online job interviews, or a quiet space to take an exam or study. At Gales Ferry Library, we have a cozy booth in the mezzanine that, while not totally soundproof, provides a quiet space. Funding for this new technology and equipment was made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act, administered by the Connecticut State Library.



There were several staff changes this past fiscal year, including the hiring of a new Assistant Librarian at the Gales Ferry Library, new Library Assistants who work in both buildings, and a new Library Director.

On May 18, 2022, the town of Ledyard celebrated the 42-year career of Library Director Gale Bradbury with a community reception and proclamation from the mayor. The culmination of her retirement was receiving the Outstanding Librarian Award from the Connecticut Library Association at their annual convention. Ledyard Library benefitted greatly from Gale's leadership and her ability to champion growth. Both Bill and Gales Ferry buildings saw expansions of physical space and interior improvements during her tenure. The age of technology brought many changes to the way libraries operate and serve the public from computers to internet access to digital downloads.



Programming for all ages and interests flourished, as did information about Ledyard history. During the pandemic, Gale rethought accessibility to materials and diversified ways patrons could still enjoy their library. She navigated several challenges throughout her four decades, and Ledyard Public Library remains a vital part of the community because of her dedication and commitment.





In May, Jennifer Smith was recommended by the Library Commission and selected by Mayor Allyn III as Library Director. Jen grew up in Manchester, CT, and started her library career as a page (bookshelver) at the busy Manchester Public Library. She earned her bachelor's at Eastern Connecticut State University and her master's at the University of Rhode Island. Over the years, she has worked at eight public libraries, providing patron services, technical assistance, supervising Youth Services, and now taking on library administration. Her passion is advocacy for the importance of public libraries in communities, especially for children. The Ledyard Public Library will continue to build upon the successes over the past several decades under Gale Bradbury's leadership.

Statistics

• Number of items circulated	85,372	• Newspaper Subscriptions	6
• Items borrowed per capita	5.57	• Museum Passes	8
• Visits	29,735	• Children's Programs	98
• Registered borrowers	4,947	• Teen Programs	16
• Children's books borrowed	27,951	• All Youth Program Attendance	2,610
• Young adult books borrowed	2,532	• Adult Programs	64
• Adult books borrowed	21,758	• Adult Program Attendance	1,046
• Movies borrowed	7,918	• Staff – Full time	4
• Audiobooks & music borrowed	2,216	• Staff – Part-time	12

Programming at your Library



The best thing about this year was returning to in-person programming! We were excited to see the library come back to life slowly but surely. In the **Children's** Department, we offered 95 programs and had over 1,100 children participate in the newly offered programs. These included our weekly storytimes, a graphic novel book club, a Let's Create arts and crafts program, a Lego club, and a series of programs in partnership with our Teen Advisory Board. We look forward to the Fall Fun Fest, the Holiday Celebration, and our Spring Spectacular, all yearly programs that families can look forward to attending. The theme for our Summer Adventure Program was

"Tails and Tales: Read, Make, Explore." There were over 300 child participants, and they logged almost 3,500 adventures. Another program with continued success was "1000 Books Before Kindergarten." Many children are very close to finishing, and others continue to sign up each month. We were excited to partner with CT Humanities to provide programming for "Take Your Child to the Library Day" and our 2022 Summer Reading Kick-Off Event. Our priority remains to provide diverse, welcoming, and enjoyable experiences for the children and families in our community.



Our **Teen** offerings, targeting those in grades 7 – 12, are continuing to grow and flourish as we learn what excites and interests the teens in our community. We held a blend of asynchronous activities and in-person programs, which included the popular LitLoot program, a teen photography contest, cooking classes, Teen Advisory Board, and teen trivia events. There were over 100 teens who participated in these programs. Our Summer Adventure Program, "Read, Make, Explore," had around 25 participants who logged over 230 adventures. In addition, a core group of teen volunteers helped with preparing activities, organizing shelves, and assisting with programs for the younger children. We are proud of our accomplishments to support the teens in our community. Our goal is to build on our successes by creating new and relevant teen experiences, providing a space where our teens feel welcome, and offering a voice at the library.



The **Adult** Department held 75 programs this past year with nearly 1,500 participants, both in person and virtually. Our discussions included the Cookbook Club and senior book discussion, and the American Presidents book discussion regained momentum. Regular offerings included the stock discussion and a series of chess programs where participants learned strategies to improve their game. We also held several programs sponsored by the Seed Library, which attracted people from several surrounding communities. Some of the Seed Library highlights included Farm to Table Seasonal Eating, Seeds for Generations, Square Foot Gardening, and Seed Library Invasives in the Garden.



Ledyard Public Library joined with other southeastern CT libraries to form a collaborative programming committee. The mission is to provide more interesting, diverse, and dynamic programs that will attract larger audiences; to get the word out to towns about what programs and services libraries provide; and to share the cost of such



programming. Brainstorming, planning, and marketing strategizing took place over monthly Zoom meetings. This led to the implementation of virtual programs for all participating libraries with one library acting as a host. We hosted Mr. Galen Abdur-Razzaq of Flute Juice Productions and his presentation of “Women in Jazz” in March. Registration totaled 96 people with 59 in attendance. The program introduced the audience to many Jazz greats, some being lesser known artists, musicians, and producers with short-lived but interesting lives.

Support Groups

The **Friends of the Ledyard Library** continued to support programs and purchase equipment for the Library through their fundraising efforts. The well-known Books and More silent auction sale made a comeback this past year. This fundraiser drew in lots of interest, making all the hard work put in by Friends volunteers worth the effort. We are very grateful for the Friends volunteers and appreciate all they do to provide additional support for our Library. Their efforts allowed them to fund programs for children, teens, and adults; museum discount passes; and help support online library resources such as the very popular Hoopla.

The Bill Library Association, Inc. presented a scholarship this past year to graduating senior Leilani Weilbacher. Members continue to gather in October for a potluck-style dinner followed by the annual meeting.

Gifts/Grants The Library often receives gifts from the community in support of our mission, or grants are requested for specific programs. Gifts are given to support a collection, honor an occasion, or remember a loved one who has passed away. We also collaborate with Ledyard Social Services to collect donations which allow us to distribute brand new books to local children and teens for the holiday season. This past year we distributed over 120 books to our local families in need which aligns with our goals of making sure books are present in households. Statistics show when books are in homes, children are more likely to succeed in school and beyond.

Grants

Book Voyagers through CT Humanities
Eastern CT Community Gardens Association

Gifts Donated by

Avery Family Memorial Fund
Glenwood’s Book Club
Ledyard Garden Club
Ledyard Walkers

Gifts in Memory of

Margaret Brown
Ruth Hurlbutt Gardner
Grace Laliberte
Thomas Lees
Mary Phillips
Lance Rockefeller

The Ledyard Historical Society The Janice W. Bell Historical Research Room at Bill Library is overseen and staffed by the Ledyard Historical Society’s Archive Committee, chaired by Andrea Buka, with research assistance from researchers Kit Foster, Carol Gary, and Lee Moore. Volunteers included Rebecca LaPoint, Christian Allyn, David Anderson, and Scott Buka. There were 114 uses of the Bell Room this year. Volunteers answered 39 research requests; several led to a follow-up visit to the Bell Room. Some of the inquirers hailed from as far away as

California and Texas, including a descendent of Nathan Lester, who was named after him. We also had a visit from an Avery-Allyn descendant from Colorado. An exciting exhibit was loaned to us by Charles Riley Jr.: a “catch and release” of land deeds dating from the 1700s-1800s. Approximately 85% of the archive’s book collection may be accessed through the LION catalog and can be used in the Bill Library. The digitizing of the room’s contents was added to the digital exhibit, which will be available online. An unfortunate malware/redirect attack on the website forced an IT security upgrade and an ongoing rebuild. Volunteers worked 291 hours to ensure everyone had access to all historical materials.

Library Commission

The Ledyard Public Library Bill and Gales Ferry are advised by the **Ledyard Library Commission**, which typically meets on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at alternating libraries. The Commission met on Zoom earlier this year, but is now back to meeting in person. The public is welcome at all meetings. The Commission agendas and minutes are posted on the town’s webpage at www.ledyardct.org under “Agendas and Minutes.” Members of the Commission are:

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|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Rebecca Nash, Chair | John Bolduc |
| Elizabeth Rumery, Vice Chair | Barbara Candler |
| Ellin Grenger, Secretary | Brian Cronin |
| Ralph Hightower, Treasurer | Carol Ganz |
| | Cheryl Winston |

Library Hours

Bill Library

Monday – Wednesday	9-8
Thursday	Closed
Friday – Saturday	9-5
Sunday (Sept – June)	1-5

Gales Ferry Library

Monday – Tuesday	9-8
Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday	9-5
Friday & Sunday	Closed

