Gunn Memorial Library, Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020
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Katharine MacLaren - Museum Assistant (Jan-Jul 2020)

LIBRARY HOURS
Monday, Thursday & Friday 9:30AM – 5PM  
Tuesday 9:30AM – 7PM  
Wednesday CLOSED  
Saturday 9:30AM– 3PM  
Sunday 12-4pm thru November

MUSEUM HOURS
Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10AM – 4PM
The first half of this past fiscal year was not unlike many others. The Museum proudly reopened with an award-winning exhibit and the Library saw a steady influx of patrons utilizing services within the building. High attendance at Monday Matinees justified the installation of quality screening equipment. Students flocked to after-school programs in the Junior Library and the new Field Community Room. People could be seen judiciously adding pieces to the public jigsaw puzzle or found tucked into corners reading magazines and newspapers. Visitors could walk into the Museum unannounced. Then life as we knew it changed. As news of COVID19 spread and the alarm became a reality, safety was paramount and Gunn Memorial decided to temporarily shut its doors on March 13.

Planning next steps was a rapid succession of weighing patrons needs with staff capability to provide core services. Communication was key. As we quickly planned for the imminent closure, we initiated curbside pickup of materials, including craft kits for children to complete at home. Circulation periods were extended and fines were eliminated. Boxes of puzzles were given out. Our hours signs were taken down, notices were put up and email blasts were sent telling people how to communicate with us during the lockdown.

The Library had migrated to a web version of our automation software, so we were well situated to be able to work remotely. Jessica downloaded the software to laptops and tablets for staff use offsite. Linda packed suitcases of puppets, books and craft materials to provide virtual storytimes during the sequester. Martie agreed to be the main point person for the public, giving out her home phone number so she could provide reference to patrons. Stephen brought home piles of work and items to catalog. Kate gathered material to work on upcoming publications and to transcribe oral histories. Abigail planned for daily trips to the Library to check the facilities, switch out our computer backup discs, empty the book drop and disinfect materials, and to feed the fish in the children’s library. I scheduled daily team meetings and one-on-one sessions with individual employees on Zoom and FaceTime, developing and overseeing projects that would benefit the institution long-term, as well as keep staff engaged in their new, temporary work environments.

We closed the doors, going home challenged, but resolved to find innovative ways to serve the community remotely and from a distance. We adapted. Online services, downloadable, eBooks and streaming media were expanded. Virtual programming was added and activities via Zoom replaced the familiar. Budgets for print collections were used to increase digital materials and social media was employed to market our new and different services. Our Wi-Fi was kept on so patrons could connect from outside the building.

We reopened in stages, with staggered schedules and alternating work teams to cut staff exposure. Closely following professional guidelines, we welcomed patrons back into our buildings in late June. Children over 12 could come in, museum tours were by appointment and masks, along with social distancing, were required. Curbside pickup continued, and remains available, for patrons who prefer that method of retrieval. A closer to normal exists and we look forward to regaining more.

The unexpected 14 week closure was enlightening. Should our dedicated staff be called on in the future to support distance learning and patrons who telework, we are better prepared to work both on and off-site, providing services and facilitating connectivity with the community and our collections of materials.

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Looking forward to seeing you in 2021
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Gunn Memorial relies on the generosity of patrons to support our many activities. We appreciate all donations, and of special note are the philanthropic contributions of a distinct group, whose cumulative annual donations are significant.

We thank each and every one of our donors for their contributions!

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Preserving the Past, Assuring the Future

Many of our patrons and friends support the Library through our Annual Appeal and other fundraising events. Through gifts by will, transfer, or beneficiary designation under life insurance policies and retirement plan assets, as well as charitable trusts, individuals and families may continue their legacy of support.

Please help Gunn Memorial plan for the future by telling us if you have included us in your plans, or by requesting information for planning a bequest. Our brochure, Preserving the Past, Assuring the Future, is available at the Library and outlines ways a legacy may be created for future generations.

Please contact Executive Director Jean Chapin at 860-868-7586 or jchapin@biblio.org if you would like further information.
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Explore the unique people, places, and events that have shaped Washington’s rich history in our award-winning exhibit.

2020 Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History

2020 Award of Merit from the Connecticut League of History Organizations

2019 American Graphic Design Award from Graphic Design USA

WASHINGTON GARDEN CLUB

The panel gardens at the Museum were created and are maintained by the Washington Garden Club in memory of Adele Worsley.

WASHINGTON CEMETERY TOUR

Thanks to the many volunteers, both adults and students, who came together to make the Washington Cemetery Tour a success!
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The Museum sponsored 20 programs held on and off-site including Washington History Club, the New Year's Tea Party, and the annual Washington Cemetery Tour. Total attendance for these programs was 2,647.

The Adult Library sponsored and collaborated on 69 programs, with a total attendance of over 2,190. Programs included the extremely popular Monday Matinee Film Series, Exhibition on Screen series, music programs, various lectures and discussions, including five author talks and book signings. Virtual programs were initiated and 5 were held during the time the library was closed from March 24 through June 21. When we closed and moved to virtual programs, Margaret Ferguson resigned after many years successfully building a wide array of interesting and well attended programs. We thank her for her dedicated work.

30,808 visits to the Library were recorded. That is 11,000 less than last year, when we averaged 850 visits per week. We were closed for 14 weeks, accounting for the majority of the decline.

The Library’s collection contains 46,264 items, with an additional 11,627 items available through the Overdrive collection of downloadable e-books and audio books. At the end of February GML began purchasing downloadable items specifically for our patrons, to cut the wait time during COVID. Seventy-one new titles were purchased by year’s end. Also available to our patrons through the rbDigital link at the CT State website, there is approximately 4,586 downloadable e-book and audio titles.

More than 100 patrons requested assistance with personal devices, emails, and general technology navigation. Libby, the app provided by Overdrive for digital downloads, was a popular topic.

The Museum cataloged 255 artifacts and updated 1,232 collection records, bringing the total number of artifact records to 13,241. This involved a total of 2,348 volunteer hours for collection documentation and related activities, in addition to work on special events.

The Museum’s 12th annual Cemetery Tour successfully flourished, with 400 plus attendees enjoying this popular annual event.

The Library circulated 31,324 items. Circulation of non-print materials, including audio books & digital downloads of music and movies, declined slightly to 32% of the total. Books, magazines and downloadable digital books (ebooks) made up the other 68%. Breakdown of our circulation is 61% adult, 35% children and 4% young adult - which is almost unchanged from last year.

When COVID became a concerned reality, on March 13 we closed to the public and began curbside service at the Library, continuing until we closed completely on March 24. Curbside resumed at the end of May when staff came back to work on a limited basis. We reopened June 22, and although curbside began to decline, some patrons still opt for that method of retrieval. Patron transactions through June 30 totaled 298 curbside pickups.
Working from home, employees spent increased time reviewing professional materials, reading book reviews, attending online roundtables and regional meetings, planning and implementing virtual programs, and conducting research into various digital services.

GML continues to loan more items than we request. We sent 1,841 items to other libraries and we borrowed 1,105 items for our patrons. Out-of-town patrons from neighboring communities came into Gunn and borrowed 8,532 directly from our shelves. Interlibrary loan was curtailed during closures beginning in March.

The library held 8 sessions of the 4th/5th Grade “After School Gaming” program with a total attendance of 136 children. There were 36 sessions of the middle school “Homework Club” with 93 student visits.

The Junior Library hosted 218 programs with a total attendance of 3,647. Included in these totals are the 124 virtual story-times with attendance of 859, conducted while the library was closed due to COVID-19.

56 prizes were donated by local businesses & individuals to the children’s 2019 Summer Reading Program during which time 181 children logged in nearly 4,251 hours of reading.

The Library hosted 20 community groups, including: the Washington Democratic Town Committee, the Washington Republican Town Committee, the Colonial Dames Book Club, The Greater Washington Coalition for Jewish Life, Census Recruiting, the Sherman Chamber Ensemble, the Washington Environmental Council, and various local schools to provide space for tutoring, lectures, class instruction, meeting space, workshops, and receptions. Many of these organizations utilized our facilities for multiple events. 90 households registered as Friends of the Museum. The semi-annual Washington Chronicles continues to be mailed as a benefit and members joining at the $100 level and above received the Museum's annual calendar.

After being closed for nearly 3 years, the Museum reopened its doors with fanfare on August 17, 2019 with a reception for their exhibit “Washington CT, An American Story.” This comprehensive exhibit won the 2020 Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History, 2020 Award of Merit from the Connecticut League of History Organizations, and 2019 American Graphic Design Award from Graphic Design USA.

Before we closed our doors in March, 643 had people registered to use computers in the Adult Library. Patrons frequently bring in their own digital devices to the library and use our wireless Internet service. We began tracking that usage in October 2019 and recorded 4,227 client device sessions with a total data usage of 1,451.5 GB. We left the wifi active and available while we were closed March-June, so that patrons could access the service remotely from the parking lot.

Patrons logged in remotely to electronic resources and databases available through our website, such as Wowbrary with 4,535 hits, Scholastic Grolier Online with 511 sessions and Bookflix with 44 sessions. These subscriptions are purchased with restricted funds, along with passes to Connecticut museums, and we are extremely grateful for the annual gift.
FINANCIAL REPORT
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020
(unaudited)

Source of Funds for Operations

- Fundraising Events: $253,215
- Town Contribution: $178,500
- Other* (grants, sales, fines, etc.): $90,863
- Total: $522,578
- Transfers from Investment: $147,500
- Total including Transfers: $670,078
Use of Funds by Operations

General Administration $55,556
Library Expense $478,214
Museum Expense $117,225
Total $650,995

Capital Expenditures & Loan Repayment $17,649
Total Including Capital & Loan $668,644
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Washington Food Market
Washington Pizza House
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Our logo was designed by local award-winning illustrator and graphic designer, Wendell Minor. Wendell produced a timeless logo with gracefully entwined G and M letters.

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