

North Branford Libraries

Staff Newsletter

November 2000

STAFF MEETING -- ALL STAFF

Wednesday December 6
9:00 -- Smith Library

Email Requests for Time Off

Starting with the new year, I'll be asking all staff to request time off in a new way. I want everyone to send me an email message, either as your initial request or as a follow-up when I've already approved time off. The email will be required as part of the process of getting time off approved.

An exception will be time off requested on the same day or the next day. When it's that close to the time, email won't be necessary.

In order to send an email, you need an email account, and I know that some of you don't have one. So I've set one up to be shared by any staff who need it. I will send directions for use to everyone.

I know that in some ways this is an inconvenience. So why do it? The advantages to me are:

- Instead of notes taped to my office wall, I'll have a special folder in my email with all requests, accessible to me from Atwater, Smith, and home.
- I won't have to rely on my memory (no comments, please).
- I won't have to worry that the delivery boy lost any notes coming from Smith, or that any notes are buried on my desk.

The advantages to you are:

- You know that your request has been recorded and I can see it whenever I need to.
- If you have internet access, you can make a request from home.

Two Important Patron Entry Rules

1. All patrons entered at either of our libraries are given a North Branford agency code. All patrons entered at Smith are agency NTH; all patrons entered at Atwater are agency NBR -- even out of town patrons.

2. All patrons must have a Stat. Cat. (or scat). Unlike the agency, the scat depends on the town where the patron lives. Northford and North Branford people get scat 213; each other town has its own scat. The state pays us for circulations to people from other towns, so it's important to get the scat right.

Looking Up Rental Books

In case you ever need to check the status of a rental book, or see if we have a certain book in the rental collection, here's how:

Look up "Rental Collection" as a title, or the name

of the library ("Smith Library" for example) as an author. The rental books are entered as items under those titles.

REMINDERS

-- Don't place a system hold for a book that we have on order (in general, don't request a new book from another library if we have it on order).

-- If line 2 at Smith rings, and line 1 isn't busy, don't pick it up - it's probably an incoming fax.

-- Are you counting your reference questions?!

-- In general, don't request anything from WHM. If they're the only owner, it's best to call -- or if you're going to send a request, warn your patron that it might not get sent. Most of WHM's collection is in storage.

Some Rules for Tutors

If a tutor is working with a student in the library and they want to use the Internet, it's OK even if the student is under 18 and has not submitted our parent permission form. The tutor is responsible for the student. If the tutor is working for the school dept., he/she need not be a registered borrower to use the computer.

Tutors should be arranging their schedules ahead of time with our department heads. Each department head should decide one location in her department where tutoring should take place, and make sure tutors use that table.

Handicapped Rights

Because our children's departments are not handicapped-accessible, we may need to make special provisions for some patrons. Staff should be willing to bring to handicapped patrons any materials they may need from the children's department. This could involve bringing up quite a few items for the patron to look through.

Another thing we have to watch for is handicapped children who want to attend story hours. If the child can't get to the department, we are legally required to make a program available in a place the child can get to (i.e., the adult department).

I'm sure these situations won't arise too often, but if they do we need to respond.

REFERENCE

Can you help me find detailed information about Apple Computer Inc.? As with most tech companies, their stock value is way down lately, and I'm thinking of investing, but I want to learn more about them.

North Branford Libraries

Staff Newsletter

May 2002

Fines Increase June 3

The Library Board has voted to increase overdue fines, beginning on June 3. The basic library fine will increase from 5 cents per day to 10 cents per day. The limit on any one item goes up from \$3.00 to \$5.00.

Fines which are now 10 cents per day will go to 20 cents. Materials which now have a maximum fine of \$6.00 will increase to \$10.00. The video fine of \$1.00 per day and the computer CD fine of 50 cents will not go up (but videos and computer CD's will have a new maximum of \$10.00).

Press releases have been sent to the Totoket Times and the Branford Review. We'll soon have signs and handouts at both libraries. As the time nears, please try to remind patrons of these changes -- especially patrons taking out many books or several videos.

For items taken out before June 3, but returned after that date, the new fines will be in effect.

Our delinquency thresholds will not change. A patron will still be delinquent when she has \$3.00 in fines, 3 overdue items, or \$3.00 in bills.

Rentals Also Go Up

Rental collections will see an even bigger increase than fines. The new fee for rentals will be \$1.00 for a 7-day checkout, with a late fee of 20 cents per day.

Since the overdue fine on rentals will be just about the same as the rental fee, I'm thinking of eliminating renewals on rentals. We'd just collect \$1.00 for the initial checkout, and 20 cents upon return for each day after the first week.

Another more radical plan would be to make all rentals due the day after checkout. The initial checkout would be free, and the patron would just pay 20 cents per day (or have it charged to his record) upon return. If he can read the book in one day, the loan would be free! I'd be interested in staff opinions on these ideas.

Magazine Renewal Policy

All magazines -- new and old, 2 or 7 day -- can be renewed, but there is a limit of one renewal.

Index to Plays in North Branford Collections

I bet some staff aren't aware that we have a list by author and title of plays in anthologies in our collections. The list was compiled by former staff member Jan Franco some years ago, but it's still useful since we buy very few new play anthologies and tend to keep our old ones forever. The lists are in a drawer in both adult circulation desks.

Use the list when a patron asks, "Do you have a copy of A Long Day's Journey Into Night?" or, "What plays do you have by Adrienne Kennedy?" This is information you might not be able to get from the catalog, since most plays aren't in separate books.

"Quick Search": a Useful Search Strategy

When you're using Bib/Item Inquiry on a circulation terminal, have you ever tried Quick Search? The option is located near the bottom of the Bib/Item Inquiry screen. Quick Search can be a very effective method of searching for books and other materials, especially when you're not sure of the title or the exact wording of a subject.

Quick Search looks for the word(s) you type on the Quick Search line in various title fields, contents, notes, subjects, lists of performers, and more. Here are a few tips:

- Truncating words with a "\$" can be useful. For example, typing "video\$" will find the words "videocassette" and "videorecording" as well as "video".
- Typing a phrase will find titles that have all of the words you typed, in any one field. Separating your words with "and" will sometimes bring up more titles, which have your words split up among any of several fields.
- When searching by subject, try Quick Search to find one or more useful books -- and from the entries for those books, get the "official" subject headings to use in searching further.

Without going into more detail, I recommend that you do a couple of quick searches, to see what you can find. Here are some phrases to try:

"civil war uniform"
"civil war uniform\$"
"video\$ and swimming"
"john wayne and video\$"
"laser and eye surgery"

REFERENCE!



In honor of the recent Civil War encampment at the Smith Library:

Who was Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore? What famous Civil War song did he compose? Can you find a biography of Gilmore that's more than just a paragraph or two?

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

Sept. 16, 2004

To All Staff:

In lieu of a September Staff Newsletter, I have some other reading material for you. The attached items were discussed at the September Library Board meeting, and will soon be forwarded from the Library Board to the Town Council. I thought you should be aware of the issues.

This latest effort to improve our library facilities began with a letter from me to the Board and the Town Manager. As you can see, the Board decided to add other information to what they sent to the Council. We will be seeking a meeting with the Council at the earliest possible date.

Bob

Sept. x, 2004

To the North Branford Town Council:

We, the North Branford Library Board, agree wholeheartedly with the urgency expressed by Library Director Robert V. Hull in his Aug. 30 letter to us and to the Town Manager regarding the inadequacies of our library buildings. (Please see enclosed copy.)

We disagree, however, with his suggestion that the town has three options available. We could embrace either improving the two current libraries or building a new central library; either of these options has pros and cons regarding cost and convenience. But we believe that the third option, to do nothing about improving our town libraries, is *not* an option. The town desperately needs additional space for its collections and public programs, and both libraries need to provide accessibility for people with handicaps.

In 1997, the Board and Council supported moving ahead with the Atwater expansion by providing \$80,000 to help purchase adjacent land. (See enclosed resolution on One Library Place.) Seven years have passed. Forcing the residents of North Branford to continue "on hold" with current inadequate facilities is incomprehensible to us.

Echoing the plea of our library director, we ask the Town Council to provide a decision and a timetable. We ask that support for library improvements move up dramatically on the list of town priorities.

Sincerely,

Judy Neubig, Acting
Chairperson, and Marion
Bradley, Suzanne Kolakowski,
and Judy Barton, Library Board
Members

Enc: Hull Letter, dated Aug. 30, 2004
Resolution on One Library Place, dated Aug. 6, 1997
Cost comparison regarding centralization

North Branford Library Department

August 30, 2004

To the Town Manager and the Library Board:

Summer is the time to write the annual report for the Atwater and Smith Libraries, detailing the events and accomplishments of the year. Here is a different “annual report”, not quite as upbeat:

- Many children could not sign up for our most popular summer programs, because there was not enough space to accommodate them.
- At least four children from three families, a parent, and two grandparents (these are just the people I have spoken with; there are others) could not use either of our children’s departments because they are not handicapped accessible.
- Lack of space forced the libraries to discard one book or other item for each new addition to our collections. We now must sell or give away books and other materials that really should be kept and used by North Branford’s growing population.
- The Atwater Library roof – planned to be rebuilt in the addition/renovation that has been requested for 12 years – failed, flooding collections and furnishings.
- The staff and Library Friends found their ability to plan cultural and educational programs constrained by lack of a meeting room.
- Tutoring sessions, which have become more frequent each year at the libraries, took place among the public book stacks because there were no quiet study areas.

Most towns recognize the cultural, social, and educational value of their public libraries, even in the era of the Internet. Some towns, looking for ways to save money, see the library as an institution of the past that does not merit investment for the future. Which path will North Branford take?

The North Branford Library Board has advocated a direction for our future, and in 1997 (with the Town Council’s approval) contributed \$80,000 toward the purchase of land to further this dream. Seven years later, the Town Council has neither endorsed the Board’s plan nor proposed an alternative, and has not allocated the funds necessary for library growth. We have an urgent need for direction; we need to know where to focus our energy. As Library Director, I cannot effectively work toward the future with our plans in limbo. What we need from the Town Council is a decision, and a timetable.

I see three possible paths for our libraries:

1. The Library Board recommends preserving and improving the Atwater and Smith Libraries. Keeping two libraries is supported by a strong majority of residents. We will build handicapped access in both buildings. Atwater will be enlarged to provide additional collection, program, and meeting space, while space for an elevator will be constructed in the rear of Smith. This plan allows for growth at a reasonable price.
2. Some townspeople favor building a central library and closing Atwater and Smith. This is a reasonable alternative; having just one library would enhance some aspects of our service. As with many decisions, something would be gained and something lost. It should be noted, however, that construction would cost more, while very little savings would be seen in the annual budget.
3. If the Town Council decides to allocate the smallest amount of funds possible toward keeping our libraries going, we will carry out necessary repairs and renovations without any growth. Handicapped access will either tear into our existing inadequate space, or be left as a very big question mark. This path will hurt public service more with each passing year.

"Not to decide is to decide." By making no decision, endorsing no plan, providing no funding, the Town Council in effect decides to do nothing. All we can do with our buildings is wait for things to break and then fix them. My plea to you, the Library Board and Town Manager, is that you tell the Council that we need a decision. We need to know where we are going.

If the Council can support and fund the Board's proposals for Atwater and Smith – great. On the other hand, if a majority of the Council prefers a central library and is willing to fund it – tell us! Speaking for myself, centralization may not be the best choice, but it is far better than stagnation. If the Council thinks that neither of the above is possible, it is all the more important for us to get that message. I can then start working with the Board and Manager to get the most out of what little we have.

In my 28 years in North Branford, I have never played games with library budgets or services, and I am not about to start now. Whatever course is chosen for our libraries, I will work with our excellent staff to provide the best public service possible. But we need to know where we are headed. We need frank discussion and decisions now. To move toward the future, we need to take the first step. Which direction will it be?

Sincerely,

Robert V. Hull
Library Director

RESOLUTION ON ONE LIBRARY PLACE

WHEREAS, the Atwater Library Trust Fund is legally obligated to be used solely for the expansion, improvement and operation of the Atwater Memorial Library; and

WHEREAS, the Town of North Branford has the opportunity to provide for the future expansion of the Atwater Memorial Library through the acquisition of 1 Library Place; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of this property will provide the necessary land for future expansion of the library; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board is desirous of providing for this future expansion.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that:

1. The Library Board, based on this opportunity to acquire land for the Atwater Memorial Library's expansion, is desirous of facilitating this expansion; and

2. The Library Board, recognizing that this acquisition will facilitate the future expansion of the Atwater Memorial Library, hereby approves of an expenditure of \$80,000 from the Atwater Memorial Library Trust Fund for the purchase of 1 Library Place with the intent that a portion of the land of 1 Library Place will be used for the expansion of the Atwater Memorial Library in the not-too-distant future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Library Board hereby petitions the North Branford Town Council, in its adoption of the Town's Capital Improvements Plan, to address in a timely fashion the actual expansion of the Atwater Memorial Library.

Unanimously adopted by the Library Board this 6th day of August, 1997

TO: North Branford Library Board
FROM: Robert Hull
DATE: 9/3/04
SUBJECT: Information concerning library centralization

In its plans for growth, the Library Board has proposed keeping the Atwater and Smith Libraries: expanding Atwater, and adding handicapped access elevators for both buildings. Another option for the town is to close Atwater and Smith and build a new central library. As the Town Council considers the options, there are some aspects of centralization that will have to be kept in mind. I will summarize them here, but if more detailed information is needed I will be happy to provide it.

Edward Smith Library: Title to the library property was conveyed to the town by the Northford Congregational Church in 1948, "upon the express condition that any building ... erected ... shall be maintained and used only for public library purposes." In 1976 the church obtained a legal opinion that, should the town cease using the property for library purposes, title would revert to the church.

Smith Trust: This trust was established by Clara Smith to support a library in the village of Northford in memory of her father. The fate of the trust is uncertain if the library is closed and a new library is built away from the center of Northford.

Atwater Memorial Library: The Atwater Library was built on land that had been donated for municipal use as a Militia Training Ground. If closing Atwater is contemplated, the town should seek the advice of the Town Attorney regarding possible use or sale of the property.

Atwater Trust: As long as a new central library was named after Charles Atwater, the Atwater Trust would probably be secure.

Atwater Trust money spent on Reynolds/Beers property: In 1997, \$80,000 from the Atwater Trust was spent to help the town purchase the property adjacent to the Atwater Library. As spelled out in the Board resolution at the time, this use of trust funds was only legal if it resulted in direct benefit (i.e., expansion) to the Atwater Library. If the library were closed, the use of this \$80,000 would have to be reviewed.

Construction costs: The estimated cost of renovating and expanding Atwater and building handicapped access for Smith is \$2 million. The estimated construction cost for a central library of 16,000 square feet (not including land acquisition) is \$3 million. This cost might be mitigated by the value of the Atwater Library either for sale or for a different use.

Annual budget: Centralizing would have a minimal effect on the annual library budget. As with all libraries, the lion's share of our budget goes toward staff. Staffing needs are determined by our workload, which is driven by the level of public use. Putting all that use into one building would still require us to keep all of our full-time staff and the great majority of our part-time staff. Some duplication in purchases for our collections could be eliminated, but most items we duplicate now would require the same number of copies in a central library. Here is a summary of possible savings resulting from centralization: Part-time staff: \$5,000; Books and other materials: \$6,000; Utilities, etc.: \$3,000. Total savings would amount to less than 3% of the library budget.

North Branford Libraries

Staff Newsletter

December 2004

Patron Privacy Update

The Library Board has had an interim patron privacy policy in place for the past couple of years. At this month's meeting, they discussed and passed a permanent policy. *A copy of the policy, "Confidentiality of Patron Records", is attached. Please read it and ask me to clarify anything you don't understand.*

At the Board meeting, we discussed current practice here regarding patron privacy. One of the Board members said she was in the library when a staff member was calling reserve books and leaving a message on a family's answering machine. The message included the name of the book, and the Board member thought this violated our policy. After thinking about it, we had to agree. The Board told me to change how we handle recorded messages:

When leaving a recorded message about a reserve book, just tell the patron a book has come in. Do not name the book. The reason there may be cases where a person has requested a book and wants to keep that private from others in the household.

Help People with Internet Reference

When you're helping a patron with a reference question, sometimes an Internet database like iConn may be the best resource to use. In cases like this, please offer to help the person at the library, or at least show them how to get to the resource, even if they have Internet access at home. It is your job to help patrons with Internet tools, just as it is your job to help them with books on our shelves.

Unless you know the patron is skillful at Internet searching, telling him "You can go home and find this on iConn" isn't helpful. Even our young patrons are often surprisingly unskilled at the strategies of Internet reference (anything beyond typing a few words in Google, that is!).

Telling people to find their answers on the Internet – without at least offering to assist – reminds me of a staff member we had in the "old days". When she had

a tough reference question, she'd tell the patron, "You should go to the Wallingford Library."

Friends of the Library Book Discussion Group

The Friends have a new book each month to discuss. January's is *An Hour Before Daylight* by Jimmy Carter, and upcoming titles include *1984* and *The Great Gatsby*.

Try to be aware of the current month's book. When someone asks for it and there isn't a copy at your library, call the other end of town. The computer won't tell you if the other library has it, because they may have copies from other libraries.

Learn GeoWeb

I've said this before, but it bears repeating:

Learn how to use GeoWeb. When you're searching for books or other materials, it's often the best catalog to use. You can limit your search by library, do browse or keyword searches, combine terms (Boolean searching), etc. Also, when you become skillful in using GeoWeb, you're learning about the catalog that patrons can use from home, so you can provide better patron service.

Reminders

-- To change a patron's home agency, click on or tab to the agency field, then hit F8.

-- When Trend Micro anti-virus updates come up on your circulation computer, let them run. You can continue your work by clicking on the page you were working on (the update keeps going behind the scenes.)

-- When you check out library material that's damaged, write a note on the material about the damage with your initials and date. This way the current patron won't be blamed.

Friends Book Sale

Book sale Sat. 6/11/05, 9-3:00, Atwater.

V. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PATRON RECORDS

A. Material offered in or through the library for public use shall be loaned to qualified borrowers as a matter private to the borrower. No information relative to a borrower's use of library material may be provided to any third party (whether individual, governmental, or otherwise defined) except as may be required to retain possession of library property, or as provided herein.

The purpose of this policy is twofold:

1. to affirm the Board's intent that access to information and materials in the North Branford Library Department shall be private, and free from coercive influence; and
2. to state hereby the Board's intent to shield the borrower from possible coercion in the use of library materials, and to protect this privacy.

B. The library will preserve the privacy of personal circulation records (including overdue records and patron registration records) to the fullest extent permitted by law. Section 11-25(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes prohibits disclosure to all third parties, excluding the parents or guardians of minors. Library staff shall not release library records to any person other than the patron named in the record (i.e., the library card holder). Records shall be released to the parents or guardians of minor children only with the approval of the Library Director. Circulation records do not include non-identifying material such as circulation statistics, or non-identifying information on the circulation of specific materials or reference questions asked.

C. Circulation records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigative power.

D. Any employee of the library who receives a request, or who is served with a subpoena, court order, or other legal process, to release or disclose any library records shall promptly notify the Library Director. If the Library Director is not available, the employee shall promptly notify the Town Manager and the Chairperson of the Library Board. The Town Manager, in consultation with the Library Board, shall act on behalf of the North Branford Library Department.

E. The Library Director, in a timely manner, shall review all requests and orders, and respond in an appropriate manner to each such request and order in accordance with this policy. The Library Director shall promptly notify the Town Manager and the Chairperson of the Library Board of any such request or court order. The Town Manager and/or Library Board shall seek the advice and legal representation of the Town Attorney during the execution of any court order.

F. Upon being served with a search warrant, the Library Director, Town Manager or Chairperson of the Library Board shall immediately consult with and/or seek the legal representation of the Town Attorney. The Library Director, Town Manager or Chairperson of the Library Board may also request that the Town Attorney be present during the execution of said search warrant.

G. In the absence of any of the court orders referenced above, the Library Director shall deny, in writing, all requests for the release or disclosure of library records as defined under state statute, unless the Library Director has received the named patron's written consent for such release or disclosure.

News and Reminders

Staff Meeting for All Staff:
Wed. March 15, 9:00, Atwater

We have hired a new part-time Library Assistant! Leslie Meyer lives in North Haven and will start training very soon.

Questions to Improve Internet Reference Skills

More and more of the reference work that libraries do will depend on Internet database research skills. In a small library like ours, without a specialized reference staff, that means every staff member must learn about the most important databases and develop some basic searching skills.

To improve our skills and knowledge, I'm going to hand out questions for everyone to look up. The emphasis will be on resources in iConn (including book searches in reQuest), big search engines such as Google and ixQuick, and our own GeoWeb catalog.

The difference between the questions I'll give you now and the ones I've done before is that these will be mandatory. I will consider them part of the basic training of every staff member. I'll send out reminders when questions aren't done.

You will need to know how to get to iConn, how to do basic searches once you're there, and how to select particular databases.

Advice on using iConn resources

-- Searching on one database separately (Infotrac OneFile, for example) will often produce better results *on that database* than doing a general iConn search that goes to all the databases at once.
-- If you're searching for two or more terms (arthritis *and* acupuncture, for example), use "Advanced Search" or make sure to use the word and in a basic search.

Here's a question for everyone to work on

Scholarly = 1. Reputable publisher (journal or institution);
2. Author with credentials; 3. References to other publications;
4. Scientific studies cited; 5. Printed date of publication.

Some Patron Entry Reminders:

- Replacements for lost library cards are now free (if you don't need a card in hand to check out books, why bother paying \$1.00 to replace a lost card?).
- Don't make C-fly patrons! If the computer wants to do that, CANCEL and then enter the person properly. This can happen when you have an out of town person with a new number, or one who's never used a LEAP library before.
- You can delete a c-fly patron (or any patron) and then re-enter that number. Do this only if things are really messed up!
- Out of town patrons should have their expiration date (the one on their card) entered in our system.
- When registering an out of town patron whose expiration date has worn off the card, give them an ex. date one month from that day. Tell them to get the card *fixed* so we can fix the date.
- When you're entering an out of town patron, the patron scat is the scat for their town and the home agency is the agency where you are working.

I would like to find information on whether or not acupuncture can be an effective treatment for arthritis. I need two things:
1. A short (no more than 4 pages) article or web site than anyone can understand.
2. A longer, more scholarly article/book/web site for me to study.

North Branford Libraries Staff Newsletter

May 2006

Patrons Should Replace Lost Library Cards

Even though patrons can now check out books without a card, that does not mean we should *encourage* them to do so. Replacement cards are now FREE, so I expect that a patron who has lost a card will replace it.

Recently, I had one patron come to the desk and say he was told by a staff member that he didn't have to replace his card because he could check out by name. Then, at the other library, I had a different patron give me a slip of paper, written by a staff member, with her name and number written on it. She had been told to use it instead of a card.

Please urge patrons to replace missing cards!

I. I. I. News

Our new computer system from Innovative Interfaces Inc. is on the way! There are meetings and conference calls going on right now, and formal training starts in June.

Out-of-Town Patrons with No Expiration / No Name on Card: Some towns are using plastic library cards with the patron name and expiration date written in with a sharpie or some other marker. These written parts sometimes rub off. If such a patron comes here and needs to be registered, please ask for i.d. if his name is rubbed off the card. Then you can go ahead and sign him up. If the expiration is erased, enter the patron and check out what they want that day, but put a stop on the card with the message that we need an expiration date. Tell the patron he must get an expiration date put on the card by his library.

Computer "Card Catalogs"

Please make sure patrons know that they are welcome to use our public computers as catalog search tools. You can set them up with GeoWeb. There's no need for Internet permission for children or young adults.

REMINDER: By the privacy rules of the Library Board, we should not tell a patron what book is on hold unless he/she is the patron the book is for. In other words, don't tell a person what book is on hold for another family member.

REFERENCE QUESTIONS: Thanks for all the answers to the question about ulcerative colitis. I'm going to list those who have sent me an answer by email or in writing. Please let me know if you gave me an answer but you're not on this list: MA, PC, CG, HG, MG, KSL, KL, FM, LM, JAR, DV.

*****NEW QUESTION:** One of our libraries has a novel about a young kid who's a clone of a really old drug dealer. Can you tell me what the book is? Possible tools: GeoWeb, Amazon . . . others? Some of you may know the answer off the top of your head, so you get a vacation!