Brewster Ladies’ Library Association

2019 - 2020 Annual Report
BLLA President’s Message

EILEEN BERGQUIST

We all know how dynamic and unsettling the last several months have been. Our current reality almost “reads” like a futuristic science fiction book — a global-reaching pandemic, the shutting down of cities and towns, and the quarantine of the nation’s population!

The fiscal year of 2019-2020 was a busy one. We started out in July 2019 implementing many exciting programs. We held a successful silent Art Auction at The Captains Golf Course. Local artists displayed their work in the Library’s auditorium prior to the Auction for the public viewing. That month, we also held our popular summer Book Sale, which ran through August.

In the Fall, we hosted a Tea for new members of the Association and sponsored the 7th annual Nickerson Lecture with guest speaker Valerie Plame. During her career with the CIA, Ms. Plame managed covert programs designed to keep terrorists and rogue nations from acquiring nuclear weapons. Later, she wrote the best-selling memoir, Fair Game: My Life as a Spy, My Betrayal by the White House, which was made into a major motion picture.

In December, the volunteers outdid themselves with holiday decorations throughout the Library. The popular Nauset High School Honors Choir performed to a full house of enthusiastic patrons.

January 2020 arrived with a long list of planned programs starting with a winter Book Sale that ran from January-March. Needless to say, all of our Spring and Summer programs came to an abrupt halt with the onset of the coronavirus. We quickly adapted and adjusted to the new reality brought about by the state shut down. We launched a new Legacy Program in April and sent brochures to the public. In June, a newly designed and attractive membership brochure was mailed to an extensive list of prospective members, encouraging them to join or maintain membership in the Brewster Ladies’ Library Association.

Our Library Director, Cindy St. Amour, and her staff have continued to work aggressively to reorganize the Library to better facilitate the new services to align with State regulations. Currently, we offer curbside pickup, and are re-configuring the interior of the library to accommodate distancing regulations. Our website has been updated and the Library newsletter advertises new services, new online concerts, book reviews and recommendations and other offerings. Our latest project was installing three seasonal Little Free Libraries at Brewster locations at the start of Summer.

We continue to be very optimistic and proactive as we move forward. I would like to thank all for your continued support of the Library. Your patience is greatly appreciated as we move through uncharted territory.

As my term comes to an end, I want to thank the Board of Directors for their dedication to the Library and their willingness to assume all the volunteer work that serving on the board entails. I look forward to “passing the gavel” to our new president, Joan Pernice.

Eileen Bergquist, President
Library Director’s Report

CYNTHIA ST. AMOUR

While the doors to Brewster Ladies’ Library were closed on March 16, and remain closed, we are continuing to offer databases remotely and have introduced new remote programs — for example, the digital version of *The New York Times*. In early June, we began offering curbside pickup, which averaged 85 items per day at the start; within a month, pickup averaged 282 items daily.

The weekly StoryTime and Friday crafts programs are offered via Facebook. Through an increase in our social media activities, we now have more than 1100 followers on the Library’s Facebook Page, our Instagram account has over 500 members, and the Library’s Twitter account has 560 followers.

The monthly e-newsletter continues to be very successful, with subscribers hovering at 3,000 per month and an open rate of 40%. There were 245 new subscribers this year. During these social distancing times when the building is closed, it has been important to stay in touch with our patrons and keep our programs and activities in the news.

It was a great honor to have Valerie Plame as the keynote speaker for the Nickerson Lecture Series; she spoke in October to a sold-out audience. Her lecture provided a compelling overview of her former career as a covert CIA operations officer. Additional Nickerson programs, which enhanced the understanding of the high stakes world of espionage and intelligence, were held in the Brewster Ladies’ Library auditorium.

An update from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) indicates that the timeline for Brewster’s building project remains problematic. The number of years for wait-listed libraries, such as ours (ranked at #16 [$4,655,737]), to receive a grant will result in a very long wait, while construction costs continue to rise.

Brewster Ladies’ Library received $2,125 for the MBLC to offset our FY20 annual CLAMS membership fees, an increase from FY19’s grant of $1,200. In addition, we were awarded an Eddy Foundation Grant for $10,000.00 to underwrite the new entrance sign to the Historic Library, as well as to make masonry repairs to the Rt. 6A entrance. And the MBLC State Grant in Aid program provided $12,790.00 “to be used for any way that supports library services.”

We are fortunate to continue to have supplemental funding of over 25% of the Library’s budget from the Brewster Ladies’ Library Association, which helped to underwrite painting the Childrens’ Room and Auditorium, and window cleaning. We also were able to replace siding and gutters, point some bricks, and replace carpeting and furniture. The BLLA also provided funding for the books given to children in the Stony Brook School free lunch program.

During these difficult times I am reminded of the privilege of serving as the Director of the Brewster Ladies’ Library, and to have the support of the Board, a small but strong staff and town administration as this institution continues to serve our Brewster community and adapt library services in these “strange times.”

Cynthia St. Amour, Library Director
The Year In Review
2019 - 2020  BY THE NUMBERS - A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

The Library circulated a total of 136,338 items between July 1, 2019 and March 14, 2020, when the Library shut down because of the pandemic. (This is just 20,508 fewer items than were circulated during the entire year 2018-2019.) Patrons downloaded 28,395 ematerials this year, compared to 20,942 last year.

60,004 patrons walked through our doors — until those doors were closed.

The Library sponsored 323 programs in 9 months, with an average attendance of 106 people. Total attendance was 4,087.

There were 393 new borrowers added to the CLAMS system. There were 261 new borrowers registered in Overdrive for eMaterials.

FY 2019
BLLA FINANCIAL DATA

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The Cape Cod Times was viewed 12,195 times via the Library website.

We are now averaging 3,000 subscribers to the Library’s monthly newsletter. There were a total of 26,560 newsletters read in FY20.
A capacity audience attended the annual Nickerson Lecture on October 19 and heard Valerie Plame speak about her experiences as a covert CIA operations officer and the consequences of having her identity revealed by an aide to former Vice President Dick Cheney. The annual event, sponsored by the Brewster Ladies’ Library Association in memory and honor of Frances Mapes Nickerson, was held at Brewster Baptist Church.

During her career with the CIA, Valerie Plame managed covert programs designed to keep terrorists and rogue nation states from acquiring nuclear weapons. She talked about deploying resources around the world, recruiting foreign assets, and briefing US policy-makers, as well as her involvement in covert cyber operations and counterterrorism efforts.

Her presentation was based on her best-selling memoir *Fair Game: My Life as a Spy, My Betrayal by the White House*. The book was made into a major motion picture, *Fair Game*, which was shown at the Library earlier in the week.

Ms. Plame also spoke of the consequences to her and her family when she was “outed,” as well as to the CIA operatives and assets whose identities also were compromised. Many of them disappeared and several likely were executed, she said.

Finding her and her family’s wellbeing jeopardized — including death threats— and her request for security details denied, she and her family fled Washington, D.C. for New Mexico, where they found a more welcoming environment to live, work, and raise twin children. Ms. Plame did acknowledge the irony of now contemplating a return to Washington should she be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, for which she is campaigning.
Former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer Joseph Wippl spoke at the Brewster Ladies' Library on October 17, two days before keynote speaker Valerie Plame. He focused on the Aldrich Ames espionage case, taking his audience through a chronology of events leading up to Ames' arrest and imprisonment.

Wippl said Ames “did it entirely for the money.” Ames had a lifestyle well above his income level, which caught the attention of the CIA and FBI. What finally brought Ames down was a search of his trash by FBI agents dressed in “uniform,” driving a rented trash removal truck.

Throughout his 30-year career with the CIA, Joseph Wippl was an operations officer in Germany, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Spain, Mexico, and Austria. He also served as the Deputy Chief of Human Resources, Chief of Europe Division, and Director of Congressional Affairs at CIA headquarters. Wippl currently is Professor of International Relations at Boston University.
Sarah Hewitt received the Sarah Augusta Mayo Award during the annual meeting presentations on July 16. Named for one of the two founders of the Brewster Ladies’ Library, the award is presented each year to an active adult volunteer member whose service is truly outstanding and is significantly above and beyond the call of duty. Sarah was recognized for her “many years of steadfast work on behalf of the Brewster Ladies’ Library.”

She served two terms on the BLLA board, heading the Nickerson Lecture committee for all six years, and continuing in that leadership role even now as an off-board volunteer. During that time, Nickerson speakers have included Doris Kearns Goodwin, Laura Ling, Robert Edsel, and Valerie Plame. But for Covid-19, Jeffrey Toobin would have been our speaker come October 2020; his appearance has been rescheduled to October 2021.

Sarah Hewitt has been a professional reading specialist focused on childhood education with literacy programs that build language and literacy skills. Throughout her career, she has provided consulting and professional development services to educators and administrators for Pre-K through sixth grade for more than 20 years, until she retired to Brewster.

Since moving to the Cape, she has continued to work with students as a reading specialist at local school districts and tutoring part-time at her home.

In her downtime, Sarah enjoys reading when she is not golfing (usually at The Captains Golf Course), hiking, swimming and spending quality time with her family.

Sarah has received a framed certificate to recognize this honor, and her name has been added to the plaque at the entrance to the Library that lists all recipients of this distinguished award.
WHEN THIS PANDEMIC BEGAN AND WE WERE ALL ISOLATING, FRIENDS WOULD CALL TO SEE IF I WAS DOING WELL. THOSE WHO KNOW ME BEST DID NOT ASK IF I HAD ENOUGH FOOD. THEY ASKED IF I HAD ENOUGH TO READ.

SO THANK YOU FOR THE PICK-UP SERVICE, A TRUE LIFELINE, AND YOU’VE EVEN ADDED "BOOKPAGES" TO MY ORDER.

A GRATEFUL PATRON
The Year In Review

2019 - 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

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**Little Free Libraries**

We are especially proud of our three Little Free Libraries! They are located at Breakwater and Crosby beaches and at Drummer Boy Park. Library volunteer and local artist Molly Savage decorated and painted the Little Libraries. The Brewster DPW installed them. Library volunteers Beth Finklestein and Mark Livermore, and former board member Ross Gorman, have been refilling them weekly. By the 4th of July weekend, we had sent 100 books into circulation and were continuing to reload the libraries every Friday. By the third week of operations, we had dispersed 500 books (from donations to what would have been the Book Sale), and reached the 1000 mark just a few weeks later. Each book also included a bookmark, informing people about the Association and encouraging donations to the Library. The result: many “thank you” comments and several monetary donations.
The Brewster Ladies’ Library was able to deliver 600 books to kids via the Summer Eats program at Stony Brook Elementary School during summer 2020. The books, along with Summer Reading bookmarks, were handed out by the Brewster lunch aides along with free lunches in the “Grab-and-Go” food program.

We were able to make this possible thanks to the generosity of the Brewster Ladies’ Library Association and the Brewster Book Store, as well as the coordinating efforts of the school and town administrations.

Each holiday season, Library patrons generously provide gifts to children whose (first) names, ages, and gift suggestions are on tags hung on the “Giving Tree” outside the auditorium.
A Midsummer’s Night With Local Artists

The Brewster Ladies’ Library Association sponsored “A Midsummer’s Night with Local Artists” — a live auction that offered oil paintings, watercolors, prints, photography, pottery, fiber arts, jewelry and woodcarving. Eldred Auctioneers led the bidding at the fundraising event held at Freemans Grill at The Captains Golf Course.

Outdoor Concert

The first outdoor concert sponsored by the Library featured the “Crabgrass Bluegrass” band in August 2019. Due to the shutdown, plans for summer 2020 had to be cancelled. We all hope we can enjoy a similar community event next year!
The sound of children having fun is a frequent occurrence at Brewster Ladies’ Library. From July 2019 to mid-March 2020, kids and families gathered in the Library auditorium to enjoy programs such as Crafty Corner, Story Hour, Toddler Town, Move and Groove, Amazing Animal Ambassadors, ukulele lessons, a magic show, the LEGO club and many others. Older kids enjoyed the after-school Maker’s Club and Coding Club.

Especially popular were the July and February Tales to Tails program, bringing smiles to the face of anyone looking at these photos of kids reading to very gentle dogs. Summer 2019 featured Harry Potter’s Birthday Party and the Boston Museum of Science Night Sky Planetarium Program. And, of course, the annual Halloween Parade and Stuffed Animal Sleepover are perennial favorites.

Even after the shut-down, the library staff worked to create programs that could be “zoomed” into the homes of toddlers and kids, so crafts and story hour programs — among others — continued to be offered online.
More Kids’ Programs

Stuffed Animal Sleepover

Amazing Animal Ambassadors

Tales to Tails
# Library Supporters

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<td><strong>In Honor of Volunteers</strong></td>
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## Contributions from Clubs and Organizations

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- Brewster Association of Part-Time Residents
- Brewster Chamber of Commerce
- Brewster Men's Club
- Cape Cod Genealogical Society
- Cape Cod View Finders Camera Club
- Captain Joshua Gray Jonathan Hatch Chapter of the DAR
- Deerfield Estates at Upper Mill Pond Homeowners Association, Inc.
- Prevail Studios, Inc.
- Robinwood Homeowners Association
- Sight Loss Services
- The Saturday Sewing Society
- Water's Edge Homeowners Association

## Grants

- The Mary-Louise Eddy and Ruth N Eddy Foundation
- The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioner (MBLC) Offset CLAMS Membership Grant-in-aid for Library Services
# Library Supporters

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