A young boy stands in front of the library in 1903, the year the library first opened its doors.

Celebration begins as Library reaches 100

by JONATHAN SCHUMANN
Press Staff

Libraries promote the sharing of knowledge, connecting people of all ages with valuable information resources. These dynamic and modern institutions, and the librarians who staff them, add immeasurably to our quality of life.

— President George W. Bush

Oh, what a century it has been. Men have walked on the moon, women have sat on the Supreme Court, the nuclear family has come and gone, and the digital revolution has changed the way we communicate and access information. Through all of these milestones of social and historical significance, the Ridgefield Library has served our community. While it houses chronicles of local and world history, the library has become a piece of Ridgefield history itself. After opening its doors on June 22, 1903, it’s time for the library to celebrate its first 100 years.

Since the opening day in 1903 until an addition was made in 1963, this addition, which doubled the library’s size, reflected Ridgefield’s swelling population, which had doubled from 1930 to 1950. A significant renovation in 1984 brought the facility to 24,000 square feet. The library received additional space in 1990, when the Charles Dayton Program Room was constructed. With an extensive renovation in 1997 and the addition of the Storytime Sculpture Room in 2001, the library reached its current size.

From a technological perspective, the shift from the card catalog to an automated, computerized system forever altered the way books and information are accessed. With the digital revolution came public Internet access at the library, which brought to a wide audience a great breadth of information from a broad source base. The library has worked hard to stay current with these technological advancements, as well as to service the public demand for access to all the Internet has to offer. Currently, the library has 28 public computers all linked to the same network, and has subscriptions to several top-knotch online databases which make magazine, newspaper and academic journal articles easily accessible.

To stay current with these and other trends, the library has required the help of the Friends of the Ridgefield Library. Over the past 25 years, the members of the Friends have donated items, volunteered time and raised money for the library. In addition to helping to keep technology current, the Friends sponsor special library events and programs. The Friends have been very influential. The Friends have been very influential in the library’s Strategic Planning process. Since 1984, when the Charles Dayton Program Room was constructed, the Friends have been instrumental in the renovation of the library, and have funded several permanent improvements. The Friends have been very influential in the library’s Strategic Planning process.

The library is also presenting the Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century, which highlights notable American films that debuted during the library’s first 100 years. The series started in February with the 1900s and concluded with the 1940s. May they read works by Fitzgerald and Kerouac’s On the Road, John Updike’s Annie Hall and literary classics like Jack Kerouac’s On the Road, John Updike’s Annie Hall and literary classics like Jack Kerouac’s On the Road, John Updike’s Annie Hall and literary classics like Jack Kerouac’s On the Road, John Updike’s Annie Hall and literary classics like Jack Kerouac’s On the Road. This special presentation, “The Movies Begin,” was held during the library’s first 100 years.

The selections for the library’s Critics’ Circle and A.M. Book Group also correspond with these decade distinctions; in May they read works by Fitzgerald and Faulkner. June will highlight selections from the 1940s, July from the 1950s, and so forth, until the series culminates in November with selections from the 1990s. The library has selected seminal American films such as Breakfast at Tiffany’s, The Graduate and The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. Throughout the rest of the summer and the fall, discussion sessions will talk about the book’s pertinent values and messages, culminating in a Costume Ball to be held on October 17. Five copies of the book will be available starting at the party. (See story on Ridgefield Reads elsewhere in this special section.)

In addition to the launching of Ridgefield Reads, a town-wide reading program, the library will also be launching a year-long Centennial Celebration, as they have sponsored several of the programs and events that are scheduled to occur.

Birthday bash
A Birthday Bash on Sunday, June 22, will kick off a year of special events and programs. The Friends sponsor this event with entertainment, refreshments, games and music. This party will also be the launching pad for Ridgefield Reads, a town-wide reading program. The entire town will be asked to read L. Frank Baum’s classic tale, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

Throughout the rest of the summer and the fall, discussion sessions will talk about the book’s pertinent values and messages, culminating in a Costume Ball to be held on October 17. Five copies of the book will be available starting at the party. (See story on Ridgefield Reads elsewhere in this special section.)

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From card catalogs to Bibliomation computer cards grows

The June 1903 dedication of the Elizabeth W. Sortwell Library marked the first time Ridgefield had its own public library. The library was housed in the old post office building, which was purchased by the Library Board for $1,000. The initial library staff included a part-time librarian and a bookkeeper. The library opened to the public on June 22, 1903, with a collection of 123 volumes, a total budget of $150, and a membership of 40 people. The library was supported by a local tax, with $50 raised in the first year. In 1904, the library moved to a new location on the corner of Main and Center Streets, and in 1906, it moved again to its current location on East Ridge Road. Between 1906 and 1930, the library expanded its collection to 5,000 volumes, and its budget grew to $1,000.

In 1910, the library had 7,000 volumes, and in 1920, it had 13,000 volumes. The library moved to its current location on East Ridge Road in 1930, and its collection grew to 20,000 volumes by 1940. In 1946, the library received $900 from the Estate of Mrs. Alice Palmer, which allowed it to purchase a new card catalog machine.

In 1968, the library received a $1,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, which allowed it to purchase new card catalog machines and automated its cataloging system. The library's first computer, a PDP-11, was purchased in 1972, and it was used to automate the library's cataloging system. In 1977, the library joined the Bibliomation network, which allowed it to share its catalog with other libraries. In 1985, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer.

In 1992, the library received a $100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, which allowed it to purchase a new computer system and automate its circulation system. In 1995, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer. In 1999, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer.

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In 2023, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer. In 2025, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer. In 2028, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer.

The library's computer system is now fully automated, and patrons can access the library's catalog and place holds from their own devices. The library's collection has grown to over 60,000 items, and it serves over 15,000 patrons per month. The library's staff has grown to over 20 employees, and it offers a wide range of services, including book loans, research assistance, and computer training.

In 2030, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer. In 2033, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer. In 2036, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer. In 2039, the library purchased its first online public access catalog (OPAC), which allowed patrons to search the library's catalog from a computer.

The library's computer system is now fully automated, and patrons can access the library's catalog and place holds from their own devices. The library's collection has grown to over 60,000 items, and it serves over 15,000 patrons per month. The library's staff has grown to over 20 employees, and it offers a wide range of services, including book loans, research assistance, and computer training.
The Ridgefield Library plans many events during its centennial year. Following is the Centennial Events Calendar:

**JUNE**
- **June 16, 10 a.m.** — A.M. Book Group — A Century of Books and Reading — The 1930’s: On the Road by Jack Kerouac.
- **June 12, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1960’s: The Graduate (1967).
- **June 22, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1970’s: Humboldt’s Gift by Saul Bellow.
- **June 29, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1980’s: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.
- **July 4, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1990’s: The Shipping News by E.L. Doctorow.

**JULY**
- **July 2, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1960’s: The Fixer by Bernard Malamud.
- **July 10, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1970’s: The Big Chill.
- **July 10, 7 p.m.** — Celebrating Ridgefield’s Creative Spirit: A Children’s Program with illustrator Laurie Krebs.

**AUGUST**
- **August 5, 7 p.m.** — Tuesday Evening Nonfictioneers — Theodore Rex by Edmund Norris.
- **August 12, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1930’s: The Maltese Falcon.
- **August 19, 7 p.m.** — Critical Circle Book Group — A Century of Books and Reading — The 1940’s: Casablanca.

**SEPTEMBER**
- **September 10, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1970’s: The Big Chill.
- **September 17, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1980’s: The Big Chill.
- **September 24, 1:30 and 7 p.m.** — Hollister Film Series: Movies Through the Century — The 1990’s: A History of the World Part II.

**You’re invited**

The Ridgefield Library’s 100th birthday party is on Sunday, June 22, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the library. Re-dedication ceremonies will start at 1:30 p.m. Birthday cake and cold drinks will be available for the first 1,000 visitors. The day will include:
- Children’s crafts and games
- Musical entertainment by Ridgefield High School/A Cappella 8
- Announcement of the “My Dream Library of the Future” contest winners
- Display featuring the past 100 years of the Ridgefield Library
- Commemorative T-shirts, chocolate bars and book bags for sale

Refreshments are sponsored by the Friends of the Ridgefield Library.

**Notes**
- All events are free and open to the public.
- For further information, please contact Lesley Lambton, Director, Adult Programs, The Ridgefield Library, 472 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877, 203/438-2292, or e-mail rdgprograms@biblio.org.
- All events are free and open to the public.

**A CENTURY AND COUNTING: THE RIDGEFIELD LIBRARY CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL**

A library is the delivery room for the birth of ideas, a place where history comes to life. — Norman Caufield
A Century and Counting: THE RIDGEFIELD LIBRARY CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL

Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation. — Walter Cronkite

Administration
Christina Nolan (left) was appointed Library Director in December 2000 — a job that involves personnel management, budget oversight, public relations, Board development, facilities management, strategic planning, and much more. She came to Ridgefield following 12 years as a library director and manager in Michigan and Wisconsin and has quickly become a fixture of the community, from the Newcomers Club to Rotary. Mary Rinklefecht (center) became the Library’s first Assistant Director in 2001 and focuses on development, facilities, and strategic planning efforts, as well as overseeing the Library’s public service departments; she served as Adult Services Librarian from 1997-2001. Administrative Assistant Ginny Canfield (right) is invaluable in helping the library director and the Board stay on top of myriad details necessary for the smooth functioning of an organization with a $1.6 million budget and more than 30 employees.

Information Services
Victoria Carlquist (second from right) has been with the Library since 1983, first as Administrative Assistant and, since the early 1990s, as head of Information Services. She is responsible for development of the adult non-fiction and reference collections and the burgeoning selection of films on videocassette and DVD; she also serves as the Library’s webmaster. She and her staff provide reference assistance in person, by phone, and via e-mail, responding to nearly 18,000 queries last year. They also facilitate patron use of our computerized catalog, Internet functions, and a wide range of electronic information databases and software applications. Information Librarian Lesley-Anne Read (second from left) brings to her duties an extensive body of knowledge based on her frequent travels around the globe and her proficiency with quilting and other crafts, both extremely popular topics of inquiry by patrons. Part-timers Christie Mitchell (left) and Mary Lee (right) help keep up with the flow of questions that range from investment research to planning the perfect wedding.

Adult Services & Programs
As head of Adult Services since January 2002, Dorothy Pawlowski (second from right) selects and promotes the extremely popular adult fiction, audios, book groups, and large print book collections. She is perhaps best known as a provider of reader’s advisory — personalized assistance in locating leisure reading selections to satisfy any mood and taste. Her staff in the Fiction Room includes Karen Kazzi (second from left), who also manages reserves and inter-library loan requests, and Teen Services Librarian Geri Diorio (see Children’s Services photo), who is charged with helping teen readers make the transition from children’s to adult books. Lesley Lambton (second from right) took over this winter as Adult Programming Director, after serving as programming assistant since Fall 2000. She produces a wide range of activities and events for adults and families, including the Ridgfield Folk concert series, the Hollister Film Series, book discussion groups, the Health & Wellness lectures, and this year’s Centennial Celebration. Her assistant, Liz Marcus (far right), is a recent addition to the staff and helps Lesley with publicity, logistics, and rentals of the Dayton Program Room by community groups.

Circulation
This very busy area is headed by Katie Turner (far right), who took on the job of Circulation Supervisor in April, following several years as an Access Services Team Leader in the Carrollton, Texas public library. Her skills in library automation, training, and computer applications equip her nicely to manage this department, whose members interact in some way with virtually every visitor or caller to the Library. Her staff, the largest in the organization, includes: (from left to right) Emily Whittenmore, a cheerful and efficient fixture at the check-out desk since 2000; Florita Nickel, the newest addition to the staff; Lauren Sponzler, who has many years experience as a school library volunteer; Will Shugg, who is back from college to assist as the Summer Reading Program quickens the pace at the Circulation Desk; veteran George Lohman, who has served as circulation clerk (and shared duties with patrons) for nearly 10 years; and Martin Blasco, who is working towards his Masters of Library Science at Queens College. Not pictured are high school pages David Duff, Rebecca Johnston and Caleb Wattley, who keep things on track by shelving returned books, videos, and magazines — not an easy task with an average daily circulation of 1,500 items!
He is wise who knows the source of knowledge – where it is written and where it is to be found. — A.A. Hodge

Maintenance

With a facility dating from several different epochs (including the original 1903 wing), maintenance chief Lem Woolf must contend with a hodgepodge of mechanical systems and interior decoration schemes, to say nothing of the often conflicting facilities needs of the staff and public. Since the Ridgefield Library & Historical Association owns its own building and grounds, Lem is also responsible for performing or supervising all repairs, upkeep, and minor renovation projects, from snowplowing to custom cabinetry. He is assisted by Russell LeClaire and Werner Kaylor (not pictured), whose efforts are important to maintaining a safe, clean, and comfortable library environment.

Network Administrator

Anyone who has ever become frustrated with the quirks of a personal computer can appreciate how fortunate the Ridgefield Library is to have Anthony Cacciola on board as Network Administrator. Anthony is responsible for the upkeep of 31 staff and 28 public access computers, as well as managing the web of outside suppliers that provide our library automation system, Internet access, email, electronic databases, and more. He is constantly monitoring technology trends and working to keep our systems up to staff and public expectations and needs. From troubleshooting “Reader Rabbit” educational software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pre-schoolers to researching new productivity software for eager pres...
Friends of the Ridgefield Library offer a helping hand

by JONATHAN SCHUMANN
Press Staff

If you’ve lived in Ridgefield long, chances are you’ve visited the library once or twice. If you can, imagine no chefs in the lobby, no DVDs humming to motion pictures and severely limited Internet access. Without the help of the Friends of the Ridgefield Library, this barren image could be a reality. For over 25 years, this organization has acted as the library’s helping hand, raising funds and donating items.

“What we are committed to doing is to support the library through whatever we can,” said president of the Friends of the Ridgefield Library, Joan Laspia, adding that the organization’s two chief contributions are raising money and volunteering time.

A significant portion of the Friends’ support comes from their ongoing book sale, those frantic and exciting three-day events that netted the Friends $126,000 last year. An eclectic crowd of literature enthusiasts and bookaholics seek out the Friends’ book sale for its wide variety of books. Ms. Laspia said that donations are accepted all year long and may be turned into the library’s circulation desk. Tax forms are also available so the donation may be cited. The proceeds from these fund raisers go to anything that the library needs. This range from permanent improvements to special programs or events. The Friends’ role provides the library with “a big brother or sister for the extras that they can’t quite find or pull out of their pocketbook.” Over the years, contributions from the Friends have included additions to the library’s DVD collection, computer and Internet upgrades, last minute, popular authors and other special programs such as film and lecture series.

“To me, the library is a very vital part of a community and a child’s upbringing,” Ms. Laspia said. “When my kids were young we would most likely go to the library before picking up books. The stronger the library, the more of a help is for our community activities both for kids and adults.”

Donating and working through the Friends of the Ridgefield Library helps the library reach and impact people in the community. “Who better to do a good job on making the organization as available to the town as possible,” Ms. Laspia said.

“I don’t have any kind of agenda where they think they would benefit from, would like to see us do or initiate, we are as available as the service and membership and service,” Ms. Laspia said.

“The town itself has been very generous and kind to us,” Ms. Laspia said, “contributing enough books in order to get books out there for the public.”

Without the help of the Friends of the Ridgefield Library, the Ridgefield Library helps the library reach and impact people in the community. “What a community and a child’s upbringing,” Ms. Laspia said, “means to us and what we would most enjoy going to the library and reading is that we can,” she said.

“The Friends of the Ridgefield Library, there are membership forms available in the library and people can contribute $10 for an individual or $15 for a family.

Friends of the Ridgefield Library bequests.

Marge Dunnington, corresponding secretary; Peter Laqueur, treasurer; Jo Faiser, past president; Joan Laspia, president; Harold Spratt, treasurer, vice-president; Vivik Enge, recording secretary.

Friends of the Ridgefield Library offer a helping hand

by JONATHAN SCHUMANN
Press Staff

Imagine a world where book information was kept on little cards, and compiled in a system where information had to be searched before obtaining it. Today, searching for information in this world, one would have to get out of the comfort of the desired journal articles and other resources. This is the world that the Ridgefield Library is in.

A trip to the Ridgefield Library of today will not only impress you with its spacious and clean environment, but its ability to fulfill your needs. For nearly the past 20 years, the library’s technology has significantly shifted from archaic to cutting edge. While a computer-based system replaced the card catalog, the Internet and online information databases have made research easier and more efficient.

Perhaps the biggest change the digital revolution brought was the movement from the card catalog to a computerized system. According to Mr. Cacciola, the library’s network administrator, this change was significant. “With the card catalog, any questions that patrons might have were limited,” Mr. Cacciola said. “And it took some time for people to adjust to the change.”

“They were used to the way the card catalog was,” Mr. Cacciola said. “They could hold it and feel it.” He added that the catalog’s tangible quality that a computer system cannot match. “I’m hoping that people who don’t frequent the library but might come in for, your search options were limited. ‘With the card catalog, anything you came in for, your search options were limited. ‘With the card catalog, anything you came in for, your search options were limited.”

He added that the library’s technology has significantly shifted from archaic to cutting edge. While the catalog was highly efficient in the past, now the library’s technology has significantly shifted from archaic to cutting edge.

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Since 1984, the library’s technological advances have been staggering. Here is an abbreviated list of the most significant steps forward.

1. Automated Circulation — With its membership in the Bibliolink system, the library consortium a new, modern approach to circulation. 1989

2. Children’s/Teen/Adult branches

3. Statewide Cooperation — ReQuest, online catalog, accessible by CD-ROM, lists the holdings of most Connecticut public libraries. 1990

4. Library Loans On-Line — Online Library Computer Center reduces the delivery time of inter-library loan items. 1993

5. Card Catalog Retrieval — Public Access Catalog, a computerized system, renders the card catalog obsolete. 1996

6. On-line Ordering — A new on-line ordering system enables patrons to order books, directly from the library. 1999

A Technological Timeline

Public Internet — The first public Internet access becomes available, and is immediately popular. New workflows in Information and Children’s services are added to meet the demand. 1997

Ridgefield Library On-line — The library’s homepage, which provides twenty-four-hour information about services and events, is introduced. 1999

On-line Info from Anywhere — Remote access book information and subscription-based databases become available to any library member anywhere on the Internet. 1999-2003

Computers Everywhere — In this four year span, the library’s number of computers has increased from seven to sixty, while the children’s game computers have gone from one to four. 2002

Virtual Reference — Ask Your Library uses the latest “chat” and “pod” technology to provide 24/7 reference service. 2003

Full Steam Ahead — An upgrade to a T1 to DSL Internet connection allows faster Web access and surfing. 2003

Yesterday and today: Facts at a glance show changes over the years

The library has changed a great deal over the last 100 years. It has grown physically more than six-fold and from its modest collection of just over 3,900 books in 1902 it now houses over one hundred thousand books and other media, some of which were not even drawn of 1902. Below are facts and compilations that illustrate just how far the library has come over the last century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ridgefield Population</th>
<th>Library building (sq. feet)</th>
<th>Library staff (full time positions)</th>
<th>Average daily visits</th>
<th>Reference questions</th>
<th>Adult programs</th>
<th>Children’s programs</th>
<th>Computer stations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1,577</td>
<td>0 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>900 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>2,626 sq. ft.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>25,600 sq. ft.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>54,100 sq. ft.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>100,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>150,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>190,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>2,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>4,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>15,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operating budget: $663
Average daily visits: 8
Reference questions: 25
Adult programs: 170
Children’s programs: 440
Computer stations: 23

$1.6 million

The proceeds from these fund raisers go to anything that the library needs. This range from permanent improvements to special programs or events. The Friends’ role provides the library with “a big brother or sister for the extras that they can’t quite find or pull out of their pocketbook.” Over the years, contributions from the Friends have included additions to the library’s DVD collection, computer and Internet upgrades, last minute, popular authors and other special programs such as film and lecture series.

2002

In comparison to someone who would not be able to get on the Internet at home, without the library’s automated system, “some people would not even have high-speed Internet.”

While the library is current with many technological standards, there are still more advancements to be made. One change Mr. Cacciola said would like to see is wireless Internet and laptops. “People could take the machines and move where they want to, in the History Room, Dinner Program Room and study room,” he said. Mr. Cacciola also said that donations are accepted all year long and may be turned into the library’s circulation desk. Tax forms are also available so the donation may be cited.

“I don’t have any kind of agenda where they think they would benefit from, would like to see us do or initiate, we are as available as the service and membership and service,” Ms. Laspia said.

The proceeds from these fund raisers go to anything that the library needs. This range from permanent improvements to special programs or events. The Friends’ role provides the library with “a big brother or sister for the extras that they can’t quite find or pull out of their pocketbook.” Over the years, contributions from the Friends have included additions to the library’s DVD collection, computer and Internet upgrades, last minute, popular authors and other special programs such as film and lecture series.

2002

“You must live feverishly in a library. Colleges are not going to do any good unless you are raised and live in a library every day of your life.” — Ray Bradbury
Board of Directors: The library’s governing body

by LIBRARY STAFF

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Library. As such they are responsible for setting policies and procedures which guide the operation of the Library.

The Board provides the financial leadership and oversight to the library administrative body of the Library. As such they are responsible for the financial well-being of the Library, and for ensuring that the Library is providing high-quality services.

The Board meets regularly to consider proposals for the construction of a new building or addition to the current building. They also review the Library’s budget and financial statements, and approve the annual operating budget.

The Board approves new policies and procedures, and revises existing ones. They are responsible for overseeing the Library’s administration, including the selection and evaluation of the Library Director.

The Board approvals all contracts for major services, such as library software and online databases.

The Board provides a report to the community on the Library’s progress, and maintains a good working relationship with the community.

The Board oversees the Library’s strategic planning process, including the development of a strategic plan for the Library. They are also responsible for ensuring that the Library’s mission and goals are met.

The Board approves the Library’s annual budget and financial statements.

The Board approves the appointment of the Library Director and other key staff.

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The Board approves the appointment of the Library Director and other key staff.
Ridgefield Reads to celebrate The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

by JONATHAN SCHUMANN
Press Staff

“Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer’s wife.” So begins L. Frank Baum’s novel, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. Like many of my generation, and other generations past and present, I recall those opening words, and the rest of Dorothy’s wild adventures across Oz with Toto in her arms and the Tin Man, Scarecrow and Cowardly Lion at her side. For years my mother and father read this engaging, magical novel to me. These memories of laying in bed at night, with a parent as my companion for these amazing journeys down the yellow brick road stand as some of my childhood’s most distinctive and enjoyable. Now, with the Ridgefield Library’s “Ridgefield Reads” program, part of their Centennial Celebration, the novel’s joy will reach a new, wider audience.

“Ridgefield Reads” is a reading program for the town that will include multiple book discussion groups and other activities.

“It’s an effort on the part of the library to be engaged in the community beyond their own doors and draw their community into a thoughtful project based on reading,” Assistant Director of the Ridgefield Library Mary Rindfleisch said.

The program focuses on one book, and encourages the entire community to read this book, and then come together for discussion. An early success, highly publicized instance of this type of reading program occurred in Chicago. The city focused on Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird and had the opening speech by the city’s own racial issues. More locally, New York City chose Chang Rae Lee’s Native Speaker and Westport read Lois Lowry’s The Giver. This is the first time Ridgefield has participated in such a program.

For this occasion, the library chose The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. The novel, first published in 1900, follows the heroine Dorothy’s search for home in the magical, mysterious land of Oz. Though popular years before the landmark 1939 film version, the mimicry elevated the story to its iconic status in popular culture.

While planning the Centennial Celebration, a group of library board and staff members began to decide what book to choose. After four to six weeks of reading and brainstorming, they introduced “personal favorites and books that had been done by other libraries,” Ms. Rindfleisch said. After considering such titles as Louis Sachar’s Holes and Jean Craighead George’s My Side of the Mountain, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was quickly to the top of the list. “It’s a classic, it’s a very popular book, and it’s a book that many generations have read,” Ms. Rindfleisch explained.

“It did have a recognition factor, it did have inter-generational appeal,” Ms. Rindfleisch said of the library’s choice. “It was the Harry Potter of its day.”

The similarity to this modern-day classic was key in the selection process, as this project is geared toward families. “Given the compositions of the town and the large amount of emphasis on family, we thought that something that could appeal to the whole family was a good choice,” Ms. Rindfleisch said. “We like this book because it wasn’t just written at a kid’s level, and it has enough complexity as a piece of literature that it could appeal to older readers.”

In addition to its appeal to multiple age groups, the library also likes the book’s message. “We thought it had some themes worth looking at in this new century,” Ms. Rindfleisch said, noting that the values each character is searching for are especially relevant today. “There is nothing wrong nowadays with seeking courage, heart, brains and home,” Ms. Rindfleisch said. “We thought these would lend themselves to discussion on many levels.”

Ms. Rindfleisch also said that a comparison of Ridgefield and Oz draws some striking similarities, noting that both towns have a common composition. “It is the one occasion at which anyone who has participated can come together.”

In addition to this appeal, there are several other activities geared around The Wonderful Wizard of Oz that will take place.

Perhaps the most exciting event for Ridgefielders will occur on July 10, when musical theater sensation Stephen Schwartz, who penned Pippin and Godspell, will come to speak and appear live on stage at the Ridgefield Playhouse. Mr. Schwartz’s latest, Wicked, which will have its world premiere at the New York City Center in the fall, is based on Gregory Maguire’s re-telling of Baum’s classic from the Wicked Witch of the West’s perspective.

“Dorothy now took Toto up solemnly in her arms, and having kissed it four times, saying, ‘Take me home to Aunt Em!’”

“...at the end of the road of yellow brick, was a big gate, all studded with emeralds that glittered so in the sun that even the painted eyes of the Scarecrow were dazzled by their brilliance.”

Erma Bombeck

Raising money

From left, Mrs. Mario Marcheggiani, Joseph Whitman, Gerald Fannozzo, Mrs. Theodore Jessup, Mrs. Joseph Whitman, Dr. Theodore Safiedd and Primo Zanardi at the thermometer during a 1996 library fund raiser.