

The Heritage Village Library & Ethan Allen Cottage

Summary

This is a "Focus" community feature program that presents a narrated tour of the Heritage Village Library, housed in the historic Ethan Allen Cottage, an original building dating to the early 1700s that was reputedly the home of Ethan Allen and was transported to Southbury, Connecticut from Litchfield. The video opens with song lyrics (Enya's "Only Time") over exterior views of the building, then moves through the library's rooms, its original 1700s fireplace and historic door with bullet glass, and behind-the-scenes operations including cataloging, book covering, shelving, the book sale, and the surrounding landscaping. The program also serves as an appeal during the library's patron donation drive.

The host is Ginny Dreyfus of "Focus," whose featured guest is Ruth Warner, the president of the Village Library, who describes the library's history, collection, and operations. Other identified speakers include volunteer Elayne Doherty and Janet Hansen, who heads the library's landscaping committee. Several additional volunteers narrate segments on the fireplace, rooms, cataloging, book covering, shelving, and the book sale but are not named on camera; these are rendered as Narrator/Guide and numbered speakers. Persons referenced but not heard include Bea Norman (who makes the volunteer schedule), the Ballentine family (who moved the building), Mr. Borge, Otto Paparazzo, and Henry Paparazzo.

Transcript

Narrator: Who can say where the road goes, where the day flows? Only time. And who can say your love grows as your heart choose? Only time. This is the original building, which dates back to the early 1700s, and it's quite an historic building that was transported from Litchfield at one time. As we go across, you'll see that there's a new section at the very end with a door and two windows on either side, with a wheelchair-accessible ramp. And that was added a couple of years ago, but it was done in such a way that it completely matches the original building. And it's hard to tell at this point what was original and what was not. We're now panning back across to the front of the building and the porch, and the old iron pot with a mum in it.

Speaker 1: Welcome to the Heritage Village Library and the old Ethan Allen Cottage. This is where we have our main selection of books and our reception desk. And now we are open for the afternoon, and we welcome anybody who would like to come.

Ginny Dreyfus: Welcome to Focus. I'm Ginny Dreyfus, and we're coming to you today from the very beautiful and historic Ethan Allen Cottage, home of the Heritage Village Library. And our guest today is Ruth Warner, who is the president of the Village Library. Welcome, Ruth, and so nice of you to join us. I understand this is your first year as president of the library, but you've held many positions prior to this. So tell us about them, if you would.

Ruth Warner: Well, I was secretary for the library for a number of years, and then vice president in charge of training and scheduling. I worked at the Newtown Library for many years, as many of our volunteers do have library experience.

Ginny Dreyfus: Are you a librarian by trade or official?

Ruth Warner: Yes, you are. Yes. The library was started as a convenience for villagers. The first books were all donated, and we have graduated from that to a great extent. But it's wonderful for villagers walking around the pond. They can drop in, pick up a book, sit down on the bench, look at the pond, read the book, and it's just very relaxing. It's a recreational library for the most part. We do not have room for extensive extra copies or non-fiction. We have lots of DVDs;

video tapes are all donated. We are buying the DVDs at this point. And we've started buying some of the CD audios in the classics, because so many cars now do not have room for a cassette. They just have CDs. We keep expanding as much as we can, and most of the people who come here just love this place. It's cozy, warm, and they love having us.

Elayne Doherty: I'm Elayne Doherty. I'm one of the 48 volunteers that volunteer here at least once or twice a month. We work the desk from either 10 to 12 or 2 to 4. We usually have a signed schedule made by Bea Norman, and we all have our chance to work here. Many of us do other things, such as shelving, perhaps reading the books, or doing the book sale. We do a lot of other things as well, but this is the time that we sit at the desk and serve the people, and it's a very enjoyable job, and we all look forward to it.

Narrator: This is an original fireplace dating back to the 1700s. It's no longer in working order, but as you can see from the black, it was at one time the focal point of a family's kitchen. This is a swing arm that will swing out with a pot on it over a roaring wood fire. And in here we have a warming oven which was used to heat things up and keep them warm until they could be served. And this is a butter churner. And they had, of course, a very high mantle, because the flames would leap out. And this is an implement that they used to stoke back the coals when they got too hot. They would come out onto the slate hearth so that they wouldn't burn the original wood flooring. And this implement was used to get them back under the grate.

Guide: This is where we keep our newest fiction. It can be taken out for two weeks at a time. The non-fiction is against the window. All the rest are mysteries in this room. They're alphabetized by authors, starting at this point in the room and going all around. Underneath the two-week books, we have our classics, which are also alphabetized. And we do have a loose-leaf book that has all of our current books listed. This room houses our fiction, audio books, and CDs.

Ruth Warner: We in the library here, we try to make it as user-friendly to the village as we possibly can. And to that end, I think we've been focusing more on buying fiction and non-fiction that was sort of universal. And mysteries, of course, are very popular. So we have — it's amazing, in this room here, which is the new room, when it first opened just a few years ago, there was plenty of extra shelf space. And it got so filled up so fast that we've had to remove a lot of the books from here. And we did get rid of some really old ones that nobody was using. So we try to keep very up to date, and we buy about 25 new books a month. So we have a book selection committee which meets about once a month, and we buy new books, and we get our suggestions — of course, we read the New York Times and the bestseller list. We try to buy most of those, and we use suggestions from residents as to what they might like to see in the library. So we really try to keep up to date with that, and the new movies that come along on DVD, we're trying to keep that pretty much up to date. So this has been pretty much our focus here in the library, and the residents seem to like it quite well. It's a wonderful group that works here in the library. Everybody is so cooperative. They trade with one another and fill in when they have to. And it's a very congenial, pleasant place to work for everyone.

Speaker 2: All right. My job is to catalog these books, get them ready for circulation in the library. And the way I start, we have our new book, and then I have to type up — I do this on the computer — three catalog cards for each book. And after those are done, we have to type up a card pocket and a card that goes in the back of the book. And then I prepare a little package which includes the library sticker that goes in the book. And these are all put together, and then they're given over to the people who cover the books. And so they do that, and then the books can go out for circulation. And we do this for the books — we have the trade paperbacks, we have the CDs, we have the DVDs, we have audio books. So all of those things go through basically the same process. We periodically go through our shelves to discard books to give us

more space. We usually will take out books that haven't been taken from the library or circulated in five years or more. And that's pretty much the criterion. If they're pretty good, we put them in the book sale. If they're really awful, we can throw them away, which has always been hard to do, but we've had to throw away some really old books that nobody wants. But most of them go into the book sale.

Speaker 3: This new book has to be covered. And I will show you first what has been done ahead of me. The sticker is put on the front page. In the rear is the pocket and the card, which is kept at the library when it's taken out by someone. And the sticker here is for two weeks. This is a new book. Then after that's done, this comes off, and the paper has to be covered so that it will be protected. And it's done in this plastic container, and it's slipped in like this. Try to even up the edges. That's pretty good right there. Then this gets turned under and taped up. First make sure you've got it right. Yes, that's fine. Then this is a special tape. It isn't regular scotch tape there. That's done. That's covered now. And this is the last step. Two more. There. Now the book is ready for circulation. All done.

Speaker 4: I am chairperson of shelving and reading. When books are returned, they're brought into this room, unless they are two-week books and they're put in the mystery room in the front for two-week circulation. These books are full-week circulation, and we check the books, open them, make sure the card is correct, that it coincides with the title of the book, alphabetize them, and then put them in their proper place. Fiction goes in the front room. Dewey decimal system and all the other books here, the biographies in the middle room and the front room over there. Actually, the new room was the fiction room. The front room houses the mysteries and the current books. We also have readers who come in about once a week to check to make sure all the books are in place. And one of the jobs of the shelvees — they come in three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There are two people on duty, and they alternate the weeks, and that is about the job that's done. We also house CDs, VCRs, audio books, and those have to be shelved as well, along with the large print. That's pretty much the job description, and we're always in need of new people to come.

Narrator: This room houses the rest of our entire library collection, from cookbooks to travel books, art, philosophy, games, etc. You can find almost anything in here. We also house puzzles. But our greatest treasure is this door, which was part of the original house and was left. And the glass on the top is bullet glass, which, if you can see it, has little hole-like depressions in it. Behind this lovely door is a treasure trove of tapes from the HV trustee meeting, the ambulance association, and music VCRs. It's a hidden treasure that very few people know about, but now you probably will.

Speaker 5: Our next book sale will be on May 18th, 19th, and 20th of 2007. That's a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. This last year, our sale hours were from 9:30 to 3. This next book sale, we hope to extend it to 5:00 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday, and to start earlier on Sunday, to start at 10:00 rather than 12. We count on volunteers from the library to help us with the book sale. And this year we're going to ask for other volunteers who are not associated with the library but who live here in the village to help us with those extended hours. We're in need of books, especially books in large print, mysteries, paperbacks, and trade paperbacks. We don't accept encyclopedias, Reader's Digest books, textbooks, or magazines. Records are accepted on the day of the sale. We do accept DVDs, CDs, and videotapes at this time.

Janet Hansen: Hello, I'm Janet Hansen. I and my committee are in charge of the landscaping of the library. And here is my little friend, Louis Phipe, who keeps me company while I work down here, sitting here on the bench and on the side of the library that faces the meeting house. The library itself was transported here some many years ago by the Ballentine family, and it's an historic building dating back to the early 1700s. It was reputed to be the home of Ethan Allen,

moved from Litchfield, Connecticut at one time. The stone walls that you see here are part of the original barn that rested upon this location. And along the sides, we've planted 200 and some begonias. Along both sides, we have a perennial garden. And we also have evergreens and a number of annuals that we plant each year. I'm walking now down along the side of the wall that I just described earlier. And as you can see, fall is coming. And normally we have plants in these urns during the summer, but they've been uprooted. And now we just put decorative pumpkins in them for the fall. And then we'll put them away for the winter. These are the original stone steps leading up to the foundation of the barn that Mr. Borge used, and also Otto Paparazzo had used this building as his place of abode while this village was being built by his brother Henry. The begonias continue to go all along the entire length of this wall and end at the little roadway coming down from the activity center.

Ginny Dreyfus: Well, Ruth, we want to thank you so much for taking us through and taking the time today. It certainly has been a wonderful tour. But in closing, I would like to mention that I believe this is patron drive at this moment. Is that correct?

Ruth Warner: Yes, it certainly is. And this is where the money comes from. Yes.

Ginny Dreyfus: And so we certainly hope that everybody who has received their letter will come make their donation, so that this wonderful library can continue, and all the wonderful books that we have. And the library is open every day, Monday through Saturday, from 10 to 12, 2 to 4, and on Sunday from 2 to 4. So everybody come on down, and don't forget to send your check. And thank you again, Ruth.

Ruth Warner: You're welcome. Glad to have you.

Narrator: Where the day flows, only time. And who can say your love grows as your heart shows? Only time. Who knows? Only time. Who knows? Only time.