

Marble Columns



Newsletter of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library

Hogwarts is Back!

The popular fundraiser, based on the Harry Potter books, will open again on October 11 & 12 at the library. This is a very large event, requiring many volunteers, and the committee is hoping for help from the Friends. And remember, if there is a teen in your family, signing up as a proctor is the most fun way we can think of to get those volunteer hours.

Be sure to visit blackstonehalloween.org for information on volunteering and ticket reservations.

Letter from the President

It is an honor for me to serve as the new president of the Friends of James Blackstone Memorial Library. In the past two months, I witnessed many dedicated, hardworking volunteers at the Volunteer Service Center and Branford Hills School, who are preparing for our biggest fundraising activity—the annual book sale on the Green. I would like to express my sincere thanks to our past president,

Betsy Klarman, for her leadership and service. Betsy is a very good organizer, which makes my job easier. I am very grateful that Betsy has agreed to help us with this year's book sale and that she will continue to provide her support and guidance. We will miss her at our regular board meetings, though. Thank you, Betsy—we wish you the best.

Helen Wong



Are You Ready for the Book Sale?

Preview Night is Thursday, September 18 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. If your dues are paid up by September 10, you are welcome in the "Members Only" line in front of the tent. If you haven't paid your dues, you can pay the Non-Member admission price (\$15). Save yourself the hassle by renewing your membership today!

Sale dates are as follows:

Friday, 9/19: 9am—8pm
Saturday, 9/20: 9am—8pm
Sunday, 9/21: 12noon—5pm

On Sunday, a full bag of books is only \$10. From 3—5pm, you can fill two bags for \$10!

Volunteers Needed

The Book Sale is our biggest fundraiser, and as everyone who has ever participated knows, working at the sale is

probably the most fun you can (legally) have on the Green. You'll see old friends, make new friends, and of course take home as many books as you can carry.

How You Can Help

A. *Set-Up on Wednesday, September 17.* Matt Hally and his crew will oversee putting up the tent, then books will need to be unpacked and arranged on the tables. With more than 70,000 volumes, the more volunteers we have, the better!

B. *Working the Sale Days.* We need people to staff the checkout tables in 3-hour shifts. If you're math-phobic, we also need 'floaters' in the tent to help folks find what they're looking for and tidy up the tables after over-

enthusiastic rummaging. We also need friendly people to staff the food tables of the Blackstone Café.

C. *Breakdown & Clean Up.* The sale ends at 5pm Sunday, but the work doesn't. After closing, Matt Hally needs helpers to consolidate the leftover books and cover them for the night. On Monday, the books have to be crated up for transfer.

Please sign up online by 9/8 at www.signupgenius.com. Click on "Find a Sign Up" and type jbmlfriends@gmail.com.

For those who miss the cutoff date for online sign-up, or just don't want to use the online option, contact Betsy Klarman by phone or email: jbmlfriends@gmail.com.

Where Does the Money Go?

Congratulations!

To Fred Biamonte, winner of the Friends of CT Libraries' Focused Project Award for municipalities with a population over 25,000. Fred was honored with this award for his work on our lecture series.

One does not need to look far to see the Friends contributions at work. Next to the Town of Branford, the Friends of the library are the library's largest individual supporter each year. The funds provided by the Friends support special projects, recommended by the library director and approved by the Friends Executive Board. In the past year, the Friends have made an impact on special programs throughout various departments of the library:

In the Reference Department, Friends have supported the digitization of a very large collection of scrapbooks. When the project is complete, the scrapbooks will be searchable through a link from our website. They will be very valuable tools for those interested in Branford history and family genealogy.

Each year the Friends sponsor the library director's attendance at the annual conference of the American Library Association in order to keep up to date with current trends and practices. Funds are also provided to send all staff to continuing education workshops provided by the state library throughout the year. Friends always sponsor our annual staff appreciation Holiday party and we are grateful!

In the **Youth Services Department**, Friends have funded

our collection of 22 museum passes, which provide discounted or free admission to local museums, historical sites and other attractions. Friends helped us purchase new toys for the playroom, apps for our ipads and book and CD packets. We also incorporated new backpacks, which include a collection of books, games and toys to teach preschool children about concepts like counting, the alphabet and shapes.

Friends also funded the many special summer reading programs, from Weather Wise, to Cryptid Creations, Animal Adaptations, Science of Magic with Jon Cap, and more.

Friends, under the leadership of Fred Biamonte, sponsor a special lecture series for adults, featuring regular programs like the ones featured on the opposite page.

This year the Friends also sponsored our celebration of Shakespeare's 450th birthday, with a special performance of Macbeth by Shakespeare, lecture by Mark Shenker and refreshments for our 24 hour marathon reading of Shakespeare's works.

The Friends made a generous gift to the library at their annual meeting in June. President Betsy Klarman presented \$5,000 to augment the library's collection, to be used for books, dvds or digital materials. An additional gift of \$15,000 was presented to

be used for the library's first Mobile MakerLab.

The Mobile MakerLab embraces the growing DIY and Maker movements, which promote "learning through doing" in a social environment. There is a strong focus on using and learning practical skills and applying them creatively.

The MakerLab features a Mac computer, 3D printer, sewing machine, circuitry and electronics equipment, plus much more. It offers free access to tools, technology and materials that allow people to learn new skills, connect with other makers and ideas, and create something of their very own. The MakerLab will be open to adults, teens and children (with supervision). Some training will be required prior to using the equipment. The MakerLab will be open for use at various times, either by appointment or at a drop-in Open Lab Session.

Entrepreneurs can prototype their inventions using the computer and 3D printer. Teens can learn to solder and explore electronics and circuitry. Kids can learn and practice computer coding. Budding directors can use the green screen and video camera to produce their very own movie.

Thank you Friends, for your amazing contributions!

Karen Jensen

Program Highlights 2014-2015

Karkowska Sisters Duo "60 Minutes Around the World"

Sunday, September 14

@ 2—3:30 PM

From Warsaw to New York and from Carnegie Hall to Lincoln Center, Kasha Karkowska, pianist and Anna Karkowska on violin have delighted audiences with amazing classical music and wonderful stories.

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Monday, September 22

@ 6:30—8 PM

The story of a young woman facing catastrophic illness and how humor helped her heal. Carla Ulbrich has appeared on SiriusXM radio, the BBC, and ABC's "The Revolution."

Brian Gillies: The Roots of Rock 'n' Roll

Saturday, September 27

@ 2—4 PM

A one-hour retro-groove of singing, dancing, history & impersonations. Don't miss!

The Androgyny of John Singer Sargent

Tuesday, October 14

@ 7—8 PM

Fred Biamonte, educator at the New Britain Museum of American Art, presents an analysis of Sargent's art and life with an emphasis on his ambiguous relationships with men and women.

Connecticut Lore: Strange, Off-Kilter & Full of Surprises

Saturday, October 18

@ 12—1 PM

Norwich State Hospital, Daniel's Village, stories of demonic possession, myster-

ies of Plum Island and more. Book talk with author Zachary Lamothe.

Sherlock Holmes Radio Show

Sunday, October 19

@ 2—3 PM

The Adventure of the Speckled Band, a radio murder mystery with four actors portraying 7 characters.

Guide to Researching Your Family History

Tuesday, October 28 @ 6 PM

An overview of the process, resources and tools for discovering your family history.

Rave On!

Sunday, November 9

@ 2—3:30 PM

Back by popular demand, Rave On! plays the legendary music of early rock and roll. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

ShoreGrass Concert

Saturday, November 22

@ 2—3:30 PM

Bluegrass instrumentation, traditional 3-part harmony and creative arrangements. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Annual Holiday Concert

Sunday, December 14

@ 2—3:30 PM

The Music Makers from Branford High School and conducted by Cathyann Roding will perform a selection of holiday classics, including traditional carols, and modern selections.

Downton Abbey

Sunday, January 18, 2015

@ 1:00 PM

Spend an afternoon in Down-

ton Abbey with afternoon tea, performances, and exhibits of Victorian England.

They Called Me Lizzy...From Slavery to the White House

Sunday, February 1, 2015

@ 2:00 PM

The true life story of Elizabeth Keckly; Her rise from slavery to entrepreneurial freedom then scandal and decline.

The Fantasy World of Norman Rockwell

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

@ 7:00 PM

A chronic depressive, Rockwell painted rather than lived his happiness. Psychobiographer Fred Biamonte will analyze how Rockwell rationalized his inner world of depression with the external world of his pictures.

The Music of the Beach Boys

Sunday, April 19, 2015

@ 2:00 PM

The Beach Meanies, are one of the most popular and versatile tribute bands on the East Coast. The New York/New Jersey-based band have been performing together since 1984.

Music in the Movies

Saturday, May 2, 2015

@ 2:00 pm

Nicole Biamonte, Associate Professor of Music Theory at McGill University in Montreal will provide an introductory look at the different ways that music is used in movie soundtracks: it can set the scene, portray emotions, enhance the action, or sometimes contradict the images onscreen.

Downton Abbey Tea Party

*Sunday, January 18
1:00-4:00 pm*

On the first Sunday of the new season, we'll have the entire library for this new event. Kandi Carle's program exploring the complicated attire of the "Victorian Lady" will educate and entertain; your own costumes are encouraged but not required. Watch for more details in December.



**Friends of the James Blackstone
Memorial Library**

758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

Non-Profit
Organization

U.S. Postage
PAID

Permit No. 117

Board of Directors 2014-2015:

Helen Wong, President
Pam Roy, Vice President &
Trustees' Governance
Committee Representative
Callista Stoddard, Treasurer
Paula Harrington,
Assistant Treasurer
& Membership Chair
Don Mitchell, Secretary
Alice Lambert,
President Emerita
Joan Ahern, Mailings & Finance
Fred Biamonte, Lecture Series
Louise Carocari,
Publicity &
Volunteer Reception
Matt & Mary Hally,
Book Sale Co-Chairs
Jonathan Clark,
Book Donations Chair
Donna Roy,
Branford Schools Liaison
Terry Twigg, Newsletter Editor
Karen Jensen, Library Director
Member Ex-Officio

Introducing our New President

Helen H. Wong was born in Nanking, China and moved to Taipei, Taiwan with her parents as a baby.

Helen graduated from National Taiwan University with a B.S. in Chemistry and continued her graduate study in Engineering at the University of Cincinnati. She also holds an M.S. in Chemistry from Fisk University and an MBA from University of New Haven, along with a Master Certificate in Project Management from George Washington University.

Helen began her career as a Radiochemist, later promoted to Manager of Radiochemistry and Environmental Laboratories at Radiation Management Corp. in Philadelphia during 1971-1976.

Helen joined Northeast Utilities (NU) in 1976 as a Nuclear

Engineer at Connecticut Yankee Nuclear Power Plant, and held various managerial positions for the next 18 years. She is the first woman in the United States to earn a Senior Nuclear Operator License on her first attempt.

Helen became a Principal of Charter Oak Energy (NU's unregulated subsidiary) and developed power plants in China and Mexico for the next 5 years.

In 2000, Helen became a Project Manager at NU's Transmission Business Unit. For 8 years, she was responsible for the Long Island Cable Replacement project; the Plumtree to Triangle 115 kV Transmission Line upgrade and various substation modification projects.

Helen is a past recipient of the Connecticut Women in

Leadership Award for her contributions to her profession, community and for encouraging young women to pursue engineering careers.

Since retiring in 2008, Helen has spent time practicing aerobics, zumba, tap dancing, line dancing, yoga, Tai Chi and watercolor painting. She has volunteered her time as a Board member for Short Beach Zoning Board Appeal; Branford Community TV and Friends of James Blackstone Memorial Library and maintaining membership and contribution data for the Branford Land Trust.

Helen and her husband Frazier Bronson have 3 children (all from previous marriages) and 9 grandchildren. They enjoy traveling around the world and have lived in Branford for almost 14 years.