

Marble Columns



Newsletter of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library

Letter from the President

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.

Greetings and Happy New Year to all. Last year was a busy and profitable one for the Friends. We had the most successful book sale ever and the basket sale was a sellout.

In June we ventured into the Branford Festival for the first time, taking over the Italian Ice Booth from the High School, who no longer wanted to do it. All who worked had a lot of fun and we will be doing it again.

We celebrated our 25th anniversary in June with a well-attended reception for all our

members and gave special recognition to all the volunteers who gave so generously of their time, talent and donations to make our fundraising events so successful.

We plan on honoring all of our volunteers who worked the fundraisers again at our annual meeting on June 3, 2014. This meeting is for all our membership and we will be electing a new board. We hope that all will be able to attend.

I want to give special thanks to Dave Hall who does so much extra work for us, in

addition to putting up the tent for the book sale.

We regret that our Vice-President, Mary Grande, has resigned due to increasing responsibilities in her place of employment. Pam Roy has stepped up and will fill out Mary's term, which is up in June.

Thanks to all of you for supporting our beautiful Blackstone Library and let us continue our good work in the year ahead.

Betsy Klarman

Volunteer Spotlight: Fred Biamonte

All these interesting concerts and lectures don't just happen. They are the work of Fred Biamonte, who scours the state for speakers and performers. He has been coordinating the arts program from its inception five years ago, when then-President Polly Fitz asked him to help start a Friends-sponsored lecture series at the library.

Fred lives in Branford with his wife Nancy, and they have three children and one grandson. He is a retired teacher of

Organizational Behavior, but well qualified to plan the programs. His interest in the arts is reflected in some of his other volunteer activities: as docent and educator at the New Britain Museum of American Art, and as a board member of the Branford Arts Council. His other passion is conservation: he is founder and former president of the Friends of Hammonasset, a Steward of the Branford Land Trust, and a member of Branford Shoreline Greenway

Trails. As well as planner and coordinator of the arts series, Fred occasionally puts on a third hat, as lecturer. His psychobiographies of selected artist offer fascinating insights into the origins of great art and great artists. If you haven't tried one yet, it's time!

How Much Did We Earn in 2013?

Special Thanks

To Dave Hall, who who does so much extra work for us, in addition to putting up the tent for the book sale.

Well, quite a lot. The **Book Sale** grossed \$58,096 and netted \$42,006. (Expenses may look a bit on the high side, but the number reflects a large purchase of book crates, which makes this year's expenses higher than they will be in future. No member of the board or of the Friends receives payment for any work related to the sale.) The **Holiday Gift Basket Sale** grossed \$2,164 with expenses of only \$98, for a net profit of \$2,066. And we already reported on the **Branford Festival Italian Ice Booth**, which netted \$1,484 out of a gross income of \$3,410. That's a grand total of **\$45, 556!** And ALMOST all of it will go back as gifts to the Library.

Why we don't donate every penny: we keep some for operating expenses, such as the printing and postage of this newsletter, and some is put aside for a rainy day. Which could be, quite literally, a rainy day: imagine we'd already put up the big tent, hired the trucks to move all the books to the green, and unloaded everything onto the tables...and *then* Hurricane Sandy blew through town!

...AND HOW WAS IT SPENT?

We paid the dues for the Friends of Connecticut Libraries; sent staff to conferences; funded the Arts Lecture series; and covered the expenses for the Annual Meeting. The Friends' funds maintained Lee's Garden, treated

the library staff to lunch during National Library Week, and made possible many of the programs in the Children's Department. We also made a \$5,000 gift at our Annual Meeting.

...AND WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE?

The answer, of course, is all the Friends who donated items and volunteered to work at one, two, or even all three events. Thank you all!

Gusta and Bob Abels, Joan Ahern, Anita Allen, Sharon Anelundi, Anne Ballard, Peter Banks, Rebecca Barron, Chris Bjork, Dot and Klas Bjork, Harriet and Bill Brody, Carly Breslin, Linda Breslin, Rosemary Booth, Jane Bouley, Judith Burke, Fred and Nancy Biamonte, Berclée Cameron, Barbara Cangiano, Lou Ann Carocari, Angela Carrano, Jon Clark, Martha Clark, Marilyn Collette, Robin Comey and family, Charlotte D'Aniello, Jan Day, Beth Dock, Lucie Douglas, Frank and Mary Lou Drago, Betty Eckert, Fred Eckert, Joe and Micky Fazzino, Cynthia Feldman, Linda Ferraro, Emily Fielding, Polly Fitz, Carol Fitzgerald, Phyllis Fitzpatrick, Peter Fusco, Betty Gallacher, Rowena Gatta, Theresa Gattey, Nancy Gaylord, Jennifer Giri, JoAnn Giri, Arlene Goldstein, Ellen Good, Christopher Gracy, Mary Grande, Paula Grimm, Fran Gwinnell, Maryanne Hall, Mark Hally, Mary Hally, Matt Hally, Paula Harrington, Bimi Hegert, Ariana Hirst, Pam

Hirst, Mary Hitchcock, Glenn Jamieson, Karen Jensen, Barbara Johnson, Andy Klarman, Betsy Klarman, Kim Klarman, Kris Klarman, Leslie Klarman, Molly Klarman, Stuart Klarman, Peg Kraus, Alice Lambert, Eunice Lasala, Samantha Lee, Lois and Blake Lehr, Alice Locarno, Mary Lowery, Jessica Lynch, Nancy Lynch, Dorothy Maynard, Mary McCarthy, Lucille McEachern, Pat McGrath, Cathy and Jon McGuirk, Andy McKirdy, Sally Meyers, Lorraine Morro, Evelyn Moulton, Lorie Nicholas, Perdita Norwood, Erin O'Brien, Pat O'Brien, Richard O'Brien, Donna Jean Odie, Karen Osborne, Jim Parsons, Norcott Pemberton, Robin Perrone, Tom Perrone, Diane Provost, Addie Raucci, Gerry Reider, Paul Rowan, Sue Rowan, Donna Roy, Gerry Roy, Pam Roy, Jodi Rucquoi, Maryetta Russell, Pat Russell, Catherine Russo, Nell Schmidt, Sue Schultz, Arlene Steinlauf, Callista Stoddard, Scott Stoddard, Scotty Stoddard, Barbara Tamulevich, Marge Thompson, Faith Tingley, BettyAnn Trapasso, Terry Twigg, Ed Valis, Lauren Valis, Pat Vogel, Alexine Wallace, Nancy Wallace, Curt Wendler, Karen Williams, Mike Wilson, Donna Wohler, Jacey Wyatt, Helen Wong, Cathy Young, Diane Zack.

Program Highlights 2014

Diners of Connecticut

Saturday, March 22, 2-3 PM

Join us for a book talk and signing with Garrison Leykam, author of *Diners of Connecticut*. Over 20,000 miles of highways and main streets crisscross the state of Connecticut, inviting hungry travelers and locals into the more than one hundred diners that dot the roadways. Among these eateries are some of the most prized American classic diners manufactured by such legendary builders as DeRaffele, O'Mahony, Tierney and Kullman. Author Garrison Leykam hosts a road trip to Connecticut's diners, celebrating local recipes and diner lingo—order up a #81, frog sticks or a Noah's boy with Murphy carrying a wreath—as well as stories that make each diner unique.

Off the Beaten Path Connecticut: A Guide to Unique Places

Tuesday, March 25, 6-8 PM

Featuring the things travelers and locals want to see and experience—if only they knew about them. From the best in local dining to quirky cultural tidbits to hidden attractions, unique finds, and unusual locales, this series takes the reader down the road less traveled and reveals a side of Connecticut that other guidebooks just don't offer. Cindi Pietrzyk will share tidbits from her book and help you find some hidden gems of Connecticut.

Beatles Legend Band

Sunday, March 30, 2:00 PM

The Hofners are a band that recreates the Ed Sullivan era with the music of the earliest Beatles classics. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Opera Appreciation: 4th Mondays @ 7 PM

Charlotte D'Aniello hosts Opera Appreciation, a lively look at the world of opera featuring a lecture and video. Program is \$5, open to the public. Each month features a different topic:

March 31: Lost Art of Letter Writing

April 28: Live Performance by Opera Oggi

Branford Historical Society Presents: Becoming Tom Thumb

Wednesday, April 2, 7-8 PM

Despite being one of the most popular celebrities of the 19th century, there has been little written about Tom Thumb until now. Eric Lehman recounts the amazing story of Tom Thumb, told in full for the first time thanks to new sources.

Eric Lehman teaches literature and creative writing at the University of Bridgeport and his essays, reviews, poems, and stories have been published in dozens of journals and magazines. His seventh book, *Becoming Tom Thumb: Charles Stratton, P.T. Barnum, and the Dawn of American Celebrity* was recently released by Wesleyan University Press. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Shakesperience Presents: Macbeth

Saturday, April 12, 2—4 PM

Enjoy a live performance of one of Shakespeare's most beloved plays. Space is limited; registration is a must. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

A View of Macbeth's Tragedy: What Bloody Man is That?

Tuesday, April 29, 6—8 PM

Is Macbeth a tragic hero, or something more like a murderous warrior-tyrant? Mark Schenker, Dean, Academic Affairs, Yale College. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Winslow Homer and the Sea

Tuesday, May 13, 7—8 PM

Fred Biamonte, Educator, New Britain Museum of American Art, will discuss the life events that caused Homer to withdraw from the social world into a life of solitude—alone with the sea. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Tassy Walden Awards

Tuesday, May 27, 7-9 PM

New Voices in Children's Literature: Tassy Walden Awards competition encourages and nurtures the creation of exceptional quality books for children by unpublished Connecticut writers and illustrators. Judges may present a \$250 prize to a winner in each of five categories: Picture Book (text only), Illustrated Picture Book (art and text), Children's Book Illustrator Portfolio, Middle Grade Novel, & Young Adult/Teen Novel.

Nutmeg Chamber Players

Tuesday, June 10, 7—8 PM

A Piano Quartet (piano, violin, viola, and cello) performing classical music.

A 24-Hour Marathon Reading Of Selected Works from Shakespeare

Friday & Saturday
April 25 & 26
12noon—12noon

Celebrate the work of one of our greatest and most celebrated writers. Help bring his works to life... Reading will take place on the library steps weather permitting. In the auditorium if not.



**Friends of the James Blackstone
Memorial Library**
758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

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Gentle Readers:

A few months ago we announced the Friends would no longer publish a paper newsletter. Instead, we would join the 21st century and publish electronically. Yet, here you are, paper in hand.

What happened?

Well, very simply, many of you didn't like the email version. Some emails went straight to spam folders, never to be heard from. Some bounced back because someone made a mistake with the email address, or because you changed your email and forgot to tell us. And some Friends just didn't bother to open it at all. It got even worse with electronic sign-ups for volunteer work. Some volunteers never heard about the event, for all of the reasons listed above. Some were reluctant to sign up online, or to trust yet another website with their email ad-

dress. Result: missing-in-action volunteers for the Book Sale, and fewer-than-hoped-for baskets for the Holiday Basket Sale.

So where do we go from here?

For the Newsletter, we're reverting to paper for now. However, we will also send it out via email. If you're willing to accept the email version as your only copy, just open the email. The software tells us who opened it, so we can delete you from the paper list and keep you on the email list. Paperless delivery saves trees and saves money we'd rather give back to the library, so if you're comfortable with the email version, please do choose that option.

For the volunteer events (the Book Sale, the Holiday Basket Sale, the Branford Festival Italian Ice booth, and some fun new possibilities we're consid-

ering) we'd like very much to continue using the automated sign-up. Until you've tried it, you simply have no idea how long it takes to make a hundred telephone calls! You DO NOT have to create an account in order to sign up for an event. And the only reason the site asks for your email address is to send out reminder emails a few days before the event. Before using the Signup Genius, we spoke to several other volunteer groups, all of whom reported they had had NO problems with improper use of their email addresses. For all these reasons, we hope you'll give online sign-ups another try. But if you're still wary, yet want to help out, we still want you! Please send us an email with "Call Me" in the subject line, plus your name and phone number in the text. We'll keep a separate list.