



In Celebration of Gay Pride Month with Amy Bloom, Author of *White Houses*



Win Naming Rights In the Renovated Library

Raffle tickets are currently on sale in support of the library renovation. The tickets cost \$20 each—the grand prize is naming rights to the Upper Rotunda art gallery.

Tickets are available at blackstonelibrary.org and at the library Reference Desk.

Amy Bloom, a local author residing in the Stony Creek part of Branford, has crafted a runaway New York Times bestselling novel based on the romantic relationship between First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and trail-blazing journalist Lorena Hickok, entitled *White Houses*. I had the opportunity to hear her engaging presentation describing her writing process at the North Haven Library.

Bloom's tome is based on biographies of Eleanor, Franklin, and "Hick." But most impressive is her documentation through a collection of 3,000 letters exchanged between the two women. Their most intense letters were penned in the early 1930's which chronicled their affiliation with tenderness, admiration, and support, especially on the part of Lorena who was the rock for her Eleanor.

In 1932 came Lorena's pivotal meeting with Eleanor Roosevelt, as the Associated Press assigned her to cover Mrs. Roosevelt during her husband's run for president. From this juncture the story flows to the "white houses" of the presidential home in Washington, D.C. and ancil-

lary residences shared by the women during their love affair. Bloom portrays their then forbidden ardor with respect and dignity.

It is "a remarkably intimate and yet informative novel of the secret, scandalous love of Eleanor Roosevelt and her longtime friend and companion Lorena Hickok, who relates the tale in her own, quite wonderful voice."—*Joyce Carol Oates*

Amy Bloom was born on January 18, 1953 in New York City, spending her childhood in Great Neck. Having undergone training as a clinical social worker at the Smith College School for Social Work, Bloom used her understanding of psychotherapy in creating the Lifetime Television network TV show, *State of Mind*.

Amy Bloom is the Distinguished University Writer in Residence and Director of the Shapiro Center for Creative Writing at Wesleyan. Previously, she was senior lecturer of Creative Writing in the department of English at Yale University. Bloom has been nominated for the National Book Award and the National



Amy Bloom with Alpha Coiro.

Book Critics Circle Award.

She has written for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *O Magazine*, and *Vogue* and has won a National Magazine Award for Fiction. Her work has been translated into fifteen languages.

Future projects for Amy Bloom include a script for a TV mini-series of *White Houses*, another historical novel, and a possible script based on the Joseph McCarthy era for another mini-series.

Alpha Coiro

Test Your Knowledge of the Blackstone

The correct answers may surprise you. See bottom of next page.

1. Who donated the funds to build the library?

- a. Railroad magnate Henry Bradley Plant
- b. James Blackstone
- c. Timothy Blackstone
- d. The Library of Congress

2. What woman's medallion portrait can be found on the second floor of the rotunda?

- a. Jane Austin
- b. Pearl S. Buck
- c. Harriet Beecher Stowe
- d. Emily Dickinson

3. Which one of the following items can be borrowed from the library?

- a. desktop scanner
- b. digital camera
- c. sewing machine
- d. binoculars

4. What was the total annual circulation from 2016 to 2017?

- a. 126 849
- b. 240,893
- c. 732,956
- d. 843,729



Photo: Ellen Wagner

5. What type of trees bookend the front steps to the library?

- a. Crab apple
- b. Bradford pear
- c. Sugar maples
- d. Evergreen magnolia

6. The iron staircase connecting the nonfiction area and the reference room has how many steps?

- a. 22
- b. 16
- c. 18
- d. 20

7. Where were the mosaic floors designed?

- a. Paris
- b. Athens
- c. Philadelphia
- d. Morocco

8. Where was the marble on the library's exterior quarried?

- a. New Hampshire
- b. Tennessee
- c. Stony Creek
- d. Italy

9. A study carrel in the mezzanine is dedicated to whose memory?

- a. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.
- b. Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales
- c. Branford Veterans of WW I
- d. Blackstone librarians, past and present

10. How was the basement originally used?

- a. Storm shelter
- b. Quaker meetinghouse
- c. Civil War museum
- d. Gymnasium

11. A Museum pass is available for which kid-pleasing attraction?

- a. Children's Museum of Southeastern CT
- b. Mystic Aquarium
- c. Shore Line Trolley Museum
- d. All of the above ...and more!

Ellen Wagner



2018 Book Sale

As the sale has continued to grow we are in need of more volunteers, especially those "behind the scenes" volunteers who help to get everything ready prior to set up on the green. Currently we are looking for book collectors to empty the collection bins of donated books each week. It's a perfect position for teams of two—if you have 3-4 hours each week to spare, email

fbmlvolunteers@gmail.com

Renovation Update

Our capital campaign has reached \$700,000 toward its \$800,000 goal, and the project went out to bid in June. Groundbreaking and construction is expected in August, with the new entry enclosed by winter.

Friends member Phyllis Fitzpatrick recently requested that her friends make dona-

tions to the library in lieu of gifts for her birthday. We are so grateful for her thoughtfulness. Library staff were able to send acknowledgements to Phyllis' friends, and keep her up to date on donations received. We truly appreciate these heartfelt gifts in honor of a Friend of the Library.

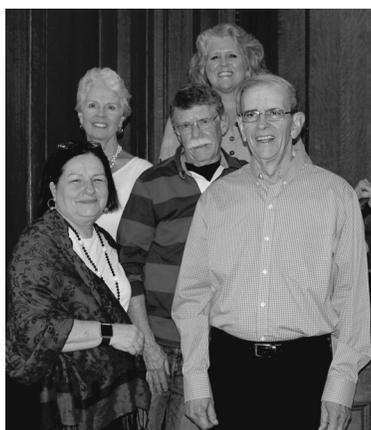
The library is selling raffle tickets to raise funds for the reno-

vation. The cost is \$20 each and they are available through the library website and at the Reference Desk.

The library will remain open through the six phases of the renovation, which is expected to last for one year.

*Karen Jensen
Library Director*

Annual Meeting Highlights 2018



Above: Diane Puchalski and Al Daniels

Left: Past Presidents Hatsie Mahoney and Betsy Klarman

Above: The 2018-2019 Executive Board was elected at the June 5th annual meeting. Mary Hally, *President*; Al Bertoline, *Vice President*; Don Mitchell; *Secretary*, Paula Harrington, *Membership*; and Callista Stoddard, *Treasurer*.

Who's Reading What?!?

Here we are, longer days and lots of light at last. I love a good summer read and am always asking my friends, "What are you reading?" And for a good conversational gambit, "What's your favorite book?" never fails. I've put together responses from some of your fellow Friends:

John Smith's favorite is Clancy's *Hunt for Red October*. Certainly can't dispute that! I know what he means, a great read, but I loved Clancy's *Clear and Present Danger* even more. They are both page turning favorites.

Alpha Coiro recommends *The Woman in Cabin 10*, by Ruth Ware. Alpha described the speckled light of an English seaside village, 3 women, mysterious alliances, shared childhood secrets, and found human bones. Some of my favorite ingredients! She says it's a real whodunit! Can't wait to read it.

Helen Wong chooses *Love, Animals, and Miracles*, by Dr. Bernie Siegel. She remarked on the touching and inspiring

true stories and recommends having some tissues near by, you'll need them while reading!

Barb Barrett introduced me to *Lilac Girls*, by Martha Hall Kelly. She describes it as a deeply moving story about the intersection of the lives of three women in World War II. The war eras always make for compelling reading.

Ellen Wagner suggests *Faith: A Novel* by Jennifer Haigh. The backdrop of this novel is the Catholic church sexual abuse crisis. (Be assured that the story does not depict any events of abuse.) Instead, it focuses on the effect the scandal has on the lives of people in an Irish-Catholic section of Boston.

Gerri Reider chooses *The Underground Railroad*, by Colson Whitehead, while Terry Twigg states, "Always and forever: *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austin." Nuff said!

Paula Harrington has found *Every Note Played*, by Lisa Genova. In it we find a renowned pianist, sacrifice,

love, and an in depth view of the deadly disease ALS. As characters find redemption and forgiveness, we, the readers, find empathy and compassion. Paula found it moving and insightful.

I'm an omnivorous reader and would be hard pressed to select favorites, and I stress the plural. At the moment, on my nightstand there is a stack of British murder mysteries from the golden age of the genre, and, of course, dear Commissario Brunetti, a Donna Leon creation. I've also preordered the new Daniel Silva novel and impatiently await its release. I frequently revisit the classics, old staples of my teaching days.

Isn't it interesting to learn what people choose to read? Why not share yours? Please drop us an email at friends@blackstonelibrary.org to let us in on your picks! Who doesn't love finding a new title or author to explore? I look forward to hearing from you!

Read On!
Hatsie Mahoney

30th Anniversary of The Friends of JBML

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library and a special celebration will be planned for later this year. A newly formed Historical Committee chaired by former Presidents Polly Fitz and Betsy Klarman will be working on gathering information on the earlier days of the Friends for a presentation at the event. If anyone has information to share about the history of the Friends or would like to help with the celebration please contact Polly Fitz at

goodtable@aol.com or Betsy Klarman at betsyqk37@aol.com



**Friends of the James Blackstone
Memorial Library**
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From the Desk of Mary Hally

Board of Directors 2018-2019:

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& Membership Chair
Don Mitchell, Secretary
Barbara Barrett & Joe Genua
Louise Carocari
Alpha Coiro
Jonathan Clark
Matt Hally
Hatsie Mahoney
Donna Roy
Pam Roy
John Smith
Terry Twigg
Helen Wong

Karen Jensen, Library Director
Member Ex-Officio

As the new President I'd like to introduce myself to the members and share with you my involvement with the group. I have co-chaired the annual book sale with my husband Matthew since 2001. I ran my first book sale when I was in high school, worked in an antique book store in Maine and can't pass a book sale without stopping. Book sales are my passion!

There have been many changes to the sale since 2001, Preview Night was added, the hours have been expanded to midnight on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Café Blackstone offers coffee and refreshments, the size of the tent has increased to al-

most 10,000 sq. feet, and sales have increased from \$21,000 to just over \$60,000. With the growth came the need for more processing space, and unfortunately we lost our sorting site at Branford Hills School and have had to rent commercial space which has increased our operating costs substantially.

In an effort to offset these expenses the Friends applied for and were approved for the Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program. The **Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program** is designed to provide funding for municipal and tax exempt organizations by providing a **corporation**

business tax credit for businesses that make cash contributions to these entities. Over the next few weeks I will be contacting corporations in town seeking contributions to take advantage of the credit. The contributions will be used to offset our increased operating costs. If you know of any corporation that may be interested in a tax credit please contact me at marycolwellhally@aol.com

M.H.