

Marble Columns



Newsletter of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library

We have officially moved!

We've moved from our book storage warehouse on School Ground Road to a new location on Thompson Road. The layout is more accommodating for volunteers to work, and significantly simplifies and reduces the amount of manual labor needed.

This past fall, our old warehouse lease was up for renewal with substantial increases to our rental costs, placing our overall operations in jeopardy. Faced with this dilemma, a small team explored all options, reassessed our needs and our finances. We sharpened our

pencils to manage our costs to maximize the amount of support we give to the Blackstone library. With some luck, we were able to secure a new space and restructure our storage expenses. Overall, our costs have still increased, but not as much as they would have increased had we stayed put.

Securing the new space was only half the battle! We had to move out of our warehouse in an extremely short amount of time during December. Jane Kenealy and a small team spent tremendous time designing, negotiating, and revisiting plans to come up

with the optimal layout for our new space. It was a tight timeline, and it took truly a team effort to make this happen. With the help of volunteers and donated time and equipment from Van Wilgens, Branford Lumber, and Smedley Construction, we were able to move all of our inventory and were up and running by the start of the new year.

The move was concurrent with the construction work at the new warehouse needed to accommodate our needs and requirements. It was a tightly coordinated schedule!

The construction work was a significant one-time cost that Friends incurred. We were fortunate to have recently received an



ARPA grant to offset revenue losses incurred during COVID. Without this funding, it would have been difficult to continue to support our library at the same levels this year. As you may be aware, in addition to supporting enrichment programs, materials and activities, another of our organization's objective is to promote literacy and make books available and affordable to all in our community.

Upcoming Friends Book Sales

Spring Book Sale
May 4th Saturday
20 Thompson Road
9 AM—2 PM

Adult fiction (hardcovers & trade), Sci-Fi, paperbacks,
Children's books & Cookbooks



**Fall Tent Sale on the
Branford Green**
Sept. 19-22

Until then shop at the Mini-
book cart in the Library and on
the Virtual Book Cart

Go to:
www.blackstonelibrary.org

Swords and More at JBML!

On a Sunday afternoon in January over 60 people attended a Friends' sponsored event at the Blackstone Library. 'Swords and More' was presented by Christopher Valli and other members of Laurel City Historical Fencing, a medieval martial arts training group in Winsted, CT.

After a brief introduction to the history of medieval martial arts, Chris introduced us to some of the weapons they use such as the longsword and a buckler (a small shield). He also explained the various training weapons like the Rondel training dagger and a rubber poleaxe. This was

accompanied by demonstrations using the weapons in combat as well as explanations of how they could be used against an opponent. The rules of combat are very specific and controlled to ensure the combatants are safe and include the wearing of special padded clothing.

The final part of the program involved participation by the younger members of the audience who were asked to identify the various items of armor that would have been worn during medieval times. As each item was identified, Chris added it to his costume with an explanation as to its purpose until finally he was fully clothed in armor.

It was a very interesting and informative program and there were many questions asked by the audience both during the presentation and afterwards when quite a crowd stayed to talk to Chris and his team. It was fun to attend the event and a pleasure to see a Friends sponsored program being so well received.



Upcoming Friends Sponsored Programs at Blackstone

Check out our upcoming Friends sponsored programs and activities open to everyone in our community. This is just a sampling of how the Friends support the enrichment of our library and our community. These are all funded by your annual membership, donations, and support of our book sales and holiday gift basket sales.

Thank you for helping us support our library and community. Please check out comments and feedback from program attendees:

Keep up the great work
Friends of the Blackstone
Library

We love all that you do!

Wonderful community
event

Adults:

- Words From the Front: A Play by Nancy A. Herman & Lynda Sorensen– Saturday March 2 at 2pm
- Sprout Your Success: A Beginners Guide to Seed Starting (Mark Gostkiewicz) Monday March 18 at 6pm
- Celtic Celebration (Judy Handler& Mark Levesque) - Saturday, March 23 at 2pm
- Express Yourself Writing Workshop (Amy J. Barry) - Wednesdays April 3 thru April 24 at 6pm
- Rave On!: The Music of Buddy Holly & Roy Orbison– Sunday April 21 at 2pm
- The Art of the Odyssey: Classical Mythology in Stories & Art– Thursday May 2 at 6:30pm
- 50 States of Mind: A Journey to Rediscover American Democracy (Ryan Bernsten) -Monday May 6 at 6pm
- Best Seller Book Club - Saturday March 30, April 27, and May 25 at 3:30pm

Saturday Cinema

- Barbie (2023, PG-13) - Saturday, March 30 at 2pm
- Oppenheimer (2023, R) - Saturday, April 27 at 2pm
- The Color Purple (2023, PG-13) - May 25 at 2pm

Thank you for
these very educational
programs!

Kids:

- Science Saturdays with Cool-ology for Grades K-4: 1st Saturday of the month 10 - 11am | -March 2, April 6, May 4
- Kids Step-by-step Painting for ages 6 and up - Wednesday May 15 4- 4:45pm
- Homeschool Meetup - Once a month on Mondays: March 11, April 8, May 13 2-3 pm
- Spring Family Take-N-Makes - Once a month on Last Wednesdays: March 27, April 24, May 29 between 9am to 8pm
- Snacks and a Film: The Super Mario Bros. Movie for all ages - Thursday, April 11 at 2pm

Teens:

- Teen Spa-tacular: DIY Sugar Scrub and Lip Balm: Thursday, March 14 4:00 - 4:45pm
- Taylor Swift Friendship Bracelets and Trivia - Wednesday, March 20 4:00 - 4:45pm
- Teen Take N Makes: Bubble Tea for grades 5-12 - Monday, April 22 between 9am to 8pm
- Billions of Board Games! - Thursday, May 9 3:30 - 4:30pm

Check the Library website for a detailed description and the most up-to-date information at blackstonelibrary.org.

Some programs require pre-registration while others are drop-in events.



Premier violin-cello duo Millie and Randy Calistri-Yeh performing at the Blackstone Library on February 17th.

Friends—Volunteer Spotlight

Each issue a special volunteer is recognized for their contribution to Friends.

Jane Kenealy

Archivist Jane Kenealy likes things to be organized! Her organizational skills were apparent as one of the leaders in the recent successful move to the new warehouse location at Thompson Road. She juggled the numerous details and schedules smoothly and with obvious enjoyment. All this while continuing to sort donations in her travel book specialty – a typical JBML Friends volunteer role preparing for the book sale dates coming up in 2024. No stranger to travel, Jane hails originally from Somerset county in the UK, southwest of London. There she taught elementary school in London and managed several British pubs. In 1999 she and husband

Tony made a major move to San Diego, CA. She became involved organizing the extensive collections of the San Diego History Center. In 2017 she changed jobs to work for the Japanese American Historical Society. In



2020 as COVID was upon the world, they had to change locations and so single handedly Jane had to move everything to another location. She alone packed documents, artwork and artifacts, including fragile sculptures and ceramics as well as designing a space to house the Japanese American collection. Leav-

ing California in 2021 to be closer to their family in the UK, Jane and Tony drove cross country to settle in Branford, Connecticut – an environment they love partly because it resembles areas in their native England. Here Jane enjoys gardening, antique shopping and sharing Tony's Sci-Fi interests. (He is also a Friend's volunteer, specializing in Pop-Culture books and online book sales).

Although the “big move” to the new warehouse location is now accomplished, Jane will always be organizing – “smoothing the system”, as she puts it. With so many generous community members donating books and limited space to sort and store them, flexibility is always key.

Thank you, Jane for always looking for a better way to help the Blackstone Library!

Looking for Books!!

Friends can not do what we do without donated books.

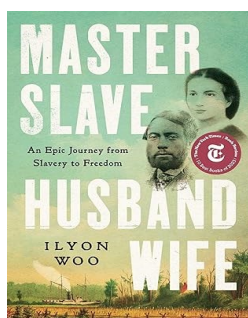
Donation bins located behind the Blackstone Library and at 30 Harrison Ave in Branford.

Have too much to drop off? We pick up.

Email us at: friends@blackstonelibrary.org or call the library.

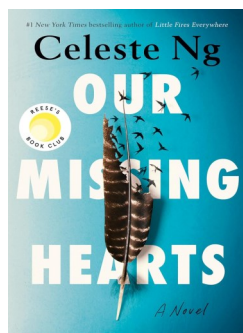


Book Recommendations from Your “Friends”



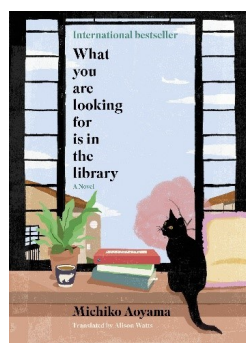
The daring & incredible journey of an enslaved couple Ellen & William Craft who fled Macon, Georgia on Christmas in 1848. Ellen, who could pass for white, was disguised as a white man and William as her enslaved servant. Their harrowing journey brought them to Philadelphia & beyond.

Recommended by
Jane Bouley



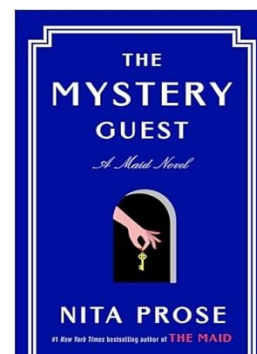
A mildly dystopian novel in which any anti-American speech results in your children being taken away forever. One woman fights the system in her own unique way and this is her story.

Recommended by
Ann Davis



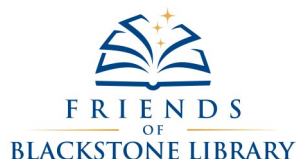
Even after finishing this book two weeks ago, I cannot stop thinking about the impact it had on my mind & soul. This book is an incredible representation of how everyone is connected, in some way, and even the littlest bit of new perspective & encouragement to go after our dreams can mean the world to someone and truly change their life.

Recommended by
January Welks



This is a follow up to Prose's previous book, The Maid. This book features Molly, a kind soul and a strong, resilient hotel maid who sees the world differently than most people. This is a light read which intertwines a good mystery with delightful characters.

Recommended by
Phyllis Kaletsky



758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

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Articles contributed by:

Joe Genua
Jane Kenealy
Nancy Reynolds

From the President

By now you know all about the move to our new warehouse. It was quite an effort to not only move during the month of December while at the same time continue to receive and process donations without hardly skipping a beat! I was holding my breath and scratching my head trying to envision how it was all going to move and most importantly fit into the space. But no worries—thanks to the detailed planning and obviously people who have more spatial-planning skills than I have—it all worked beautifully. To celebrate the completion of the move and to welcome the volunteers to the new location, an open house was

held on January 6th. Now it is full steam ahead with the operation up and running. No major issues—just some last minute refinements. Everyone is acclimated to the space and back at work preparing for our upcoming Spring Sale at our warehouse and of course our Annual Fall Book Sale on the Branford Green.

And if you can't wait for either sale, then please check out our book sale cart in the library as well as our Virtual Book Cart. Visit www.blackstonelibrary.org/friends for more information.

Don't forget to mark your



calendars for the annual Mini-Golf at the Library on May 18th—19th. Check out the Friends hole on the Main Floor! It can't be missed.

And while you have your calendar handy, please mark June 18th for the Friends Annual meeting in the Library auditorium for all current members. More information will be sent out in the next Marble Columns.

Barbara

Barbara Barrett, President
friends@blackstonelibrary.org

