Letter from the President

“I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expense than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the county under such regulations as would secure their safe return in due time.”


Greetings, everyone, and welcome to our first newsletter of 2013. Thomas Jefferson’s words are as apt today as the day he wrote them, though he never envisioned that a “small circulating library” would someday be able to offer a wealth of resources we now take for granted. We anticipate that this, our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary year, will be a busy one, and look forward to working closely with our new Director, Karen Jensen, and with you! We have a particular need for new book sorters, who are a vital part of the Book Sale, which this year will be held on the Green from September 19 through September 22.

As you will read below, we are moving to electronic publication. Although we know that many members prefer hard copy, the newsletter has become increasingly expensive to print and mail, so please give this new format a try! We also have a new way for you to contact me or the board: jabmlfriends@gmail.com. Please use this email address to send questions, ideas, or criticism, and especially to volunteer to help out in our fundraising efforts. You can also find all kinds of interesting information at: www.blackstonelibrary.org.

A very sincere thank-you to all the library staff, especially Kathy Oxsalida, who were so helpful to us in the months in which there was no director. Many thanks to everyone who helped make the most recent book sale our most successful yet, and especially to Co-Chairs Matt and Mary Hally.

I look forward to working with all of you as we continue our mission of supporting our beautiful Blackstone Library.

Sincerely,

Betsy

Friends’ Newsletter Moving to Email Publication

You are reading what we hope will become a collector’s item of a sort: the last paper issue of the Friends’ newsletter. The cost to print and mail the newsletter to 550+ members increases each year. We have to collect, sort and sell a lot of books to earn that money, and we believe our membership would rather save some trees and use our earnings to support more Library activities.

Therefore, starting with the next issue, the newsletter will be emailed to members. It will also be available at www.blackstonelibrary.org, and a limited number of copies will be available at the Library.

If you have not already provided your email address, please send it to jabmlfriends@gmail.com so we can add it to our records. We never sell, rent, or share our address list with any other organization.
Twenty-Five Years of Friends

Working to Make our Library Even More Special!

This year marks the silver anniversary of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library. From a small group of dedicated booklovers who got together in 1988 to talk about ways to help out, we have become a group of 550 families and individuals able to make a real difference.

Are you one of them? Did you sort books? Staff the checkout tables? Haul boxes? Donate items? Hang posters? Everyone who performed any of these tasks (or the many other chores necessary to our success) is helping to carry on the Friends’ mission established all those years ago. Instead of a separate Volunteer Appreciation Reception to say thank you for your many contributions, we invite you to attend the Silver Anniversary Reception at the Annual Meeting to be held on June 4 at 5 o’clock at the library.

Please join us as we honor the charter members who started it all and the hardworking Friends whose ongoing dedication makes it possible for us to move so many projects from “wish list” to reality.

Meet the New Library Director

Have you met Karen Jensen yet? Stop in and say hello—provided you can get this energetic and enthusiastic woman to stand still!

Karen received an undergraduate degree in Communications from the University of Pennsylvania and her Library Science degree from Southern Connecticut State University. Although she grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, her family now lives in Connecticut and she has spent most of her professional life here, most recently as Director of Hagaman Memorial Library in East Haven. When asked what attracted her to Branford, Karen didn’t hesitate. First: she saw Branford as a town that cares about quality of life. The residents are active and engaged; they love living here and love the library.

Second: the caliber of the staff was a deciding factor. Even in her former positions, she had heard a lot of praise for the Blackstone staff. Third: us! “One of the largest and most active Friends groups in the state, organized and talented.”

Karen’s mission is shaped by the goals of the recently completed strategic plan. These include:

• Offering a broad array of resources, programs, and services, to educate and enrich the community.

• Cultivating and maintaining a set of relationships, from town leadership to patrons to donors to volunteers to the general public, to support the mission and vision of the Library.

• Improving the internal operations of the Library, with a focus on improving the current physical space, offering professional development to staff, and increasing the use of data and information to monitor progress and inform decision making.

Karen attends Friends board meetings as an ex-officio member. We invite you, too, to attend, meet her and your board, and share your ideas.
Surviving an Active Shooter Event
Monday, April 22, 5-8 p.m.
If a tragedy like Sandy Hook ever strikes again, you may need to provide for your own safety and that of others around you until the arrival of the police. Vincent Riccio will talk about how you can protect yourself in such an event. Please register for this event: 203/488-1441 ext. 318.

Rave On! Band
Friday, May 10, 7:30 p.m.
Rave On! is a band that plays the music of Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison and other legends of early rock and roll. They will play hits like “That Will Be the Day”, “Peggy Sue”, “Not Fade Away”, Pretty Woman”, “Crying”, and “Only the Lonely”, along with other classic, early rock and roll songs. Sponsored by the Friends.

Classical Music in Classic Cartoons
Tuesday, May 14, 7:00 p.m.
Dr. Nicole Biamonte, Assistant Professor of Music Theory at McGill University in Montreal, will explore music visual elements, and meaning in vintage cartoons with famous classical soundtracks. Sponsored by the Friends.

The North American Porcupine
Wednesday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.
Menunkatuck Audubon welcomes one of our favorite speakers, CT DEEP Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitation Gerri Griswold, who will bring a live porcupine for her program. For information: 203-457-1699 or program@menunkatuck.org.

A Brief History of Jazz
Part I: Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.
Part II: Friday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.
The Laid Back Jazz Quartet presents “A Brief History of Jazz” using discussion and musical performances to illustrate the evolution of jazz. Take a musical journey with them charting the major moments in American jazz development, through the music of Ragtime, Blues, Dixieland, Swing, Bebop, Bossa Nova, and Funk. Sponsored by the Friends.

‘38 Hurricane Revisited
Thursday, September 12, 7:00 p.m.
Jane Bouley explores the history of one of the century’s worst weather events. Sponsored by the Branford Historical Society.

Friends’ Annual Book Sale
Thursday, September 19, 5-8 p.m.
Friday, September 20, 9am-8pm
Saturday, September 21, 9am-8pm
Sunday, September 22, 12-3pm
A preview for members on Thursday evening. Sale is open to all on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Poe, Times Two
Saturday, October 19, 2:00 p.m.

The Women in Wyeth’s World
Tuesday, November 12, 7:00 p.m.
Fred Biamonte, Psychobiographer & Educator at the New Britain Museum of Art, will explore Andrew Wyeth’s art through the relationships with significant women in his life. Sponsored by the Friends.

Friends of the Blackstone Annual Holiday Concert
Sunday, December 8, 2:00 p.m.
Come enjoy refreshments and music of the season.
2012 Book Sale: Another Record—Breaker

The 2012 book sale took in over $55,000. Expenses were somewhat higher than usual this year, because we invested in a large number of reusable book cartons, but the cartons will allow us to move books much more efficiently for years to come. Even after expenses, the continually increasing success of the sale makes it possible for us to support more Library programs and activities every year.

Naturally, an undertaking of this size could not have succeeded without the generous contributions of our sponsors and the hard work of so many volunteers:


Thanks also to:

- Andy McKirdy and the Board of Trustees
- Members of the United States Coast Guard
- Branford High School students: Mansi Chapatwala, Juliana Denison, Jeff Gallimore, Daniela Goday, Marisa Kaplita, Aisha Khan, Ben Lifton, Jillian Marsico, Kayla Norton, Giulianana Piscitelli, Michelle Pomeroy, Andrew Stone, Victoria Suppa, Meng Dan Wu.

If you don’t see your name here, please don’t feel slighted! We do our best to keep track of all our volunteers, but in the chaos under the tent some names always get waylaid.

Heartfelt Thanks to all of you!
In its third year, the Holiday Basket Sale netted $2,460 from the sale of 108 baskets, all donated by patrons. The fact that the sale exceeded last year’s total is doubly impressive when one remembers that many donors were still dealing with the effects of a certain storm named Sandy. Local sponsors also donated items to be raffled. In addition, callers, sellers and wrappers were vital to the sale’s success, and the Acting Library Director and staff were extremely supportive.

Donors and Sale Volunteers:
Philomene Acunzo, Joan Ahern, Mary Angelotti, Richard Armistead, Irene Ayres, Becky Barron, Nancy Biamonte, Christine Bjork, Eileen Brennan, Linda and Carly Breslin, Anne Carucci, Martha Clark, Yolanda Cosenza, Catherine Cox, Rosemary DeGrand, Claire Delombaert, Bernadette DeMusis, Barbara Destefano, Joann Donadio, Rosemary Donahue, Eleanor Doyle, Barbara Eckert, Joseph Faricielli, Cynthia Feldman, Polly Fitz, Phyllis Fitzpatrick, Mary Fontana, Adela French, Mary Grande, Fran Grinnell, Patricia Grab, Maryann Hall, Paula Harrington, Margaret Iacobellis, Barbara Johnson, Pat Johnson, Sandy Johnson, Sue Kelsey, Betsy Klarman, Kristine Klarman, Alice and John Lambert, Eunice Lasala, Lois Lehr, Betty Ann Levitin, Alice LoCarno, Elinor Lutch, Barbara Lyons, Barbara Mattson, Evelyn Moulton, Audrey Nelson, Perdita Norwood, Ken Olson, Nancy Perilli, Addie Raucci, Kay Razmaier, Claire and James Richardson, Sue Rowan, Jodi Rucquoi, Marge Sassion, Claire Smith, Arlene Steinlauf, Calista Stoddard, Jean Sunny, Mary Swift, Barbara Tamulevich, Betty Ann Trapasso, Terry Twigg, Barbara Vietzke, Nancy Wallace, Patricia Whitestone, Diane Zack.

The Friends appreciate the generosity of all who participated. We also want to give special thanks to co-chairs Alice Locarno and Cynthia Feldman, who packaged, decorated and priced every basket; obtained wrapping supplies and ribbons, bought extra items when needed to augment donations, solicited sponsors, and supervised the sale. After three years of giving her all, Cynthia is resigning (but will be available to advise), but Alice has gamely volunteered to stay on for one more year. We are grateful for their leadership.

It won’t be easy to fill Cynthia’s shoes, but we are looking for someone willing to try! Contact any Board member or send us an email if you’d like to help out with the baskets next year.

Holiday Basket Sale Also Sets a New Record

Holiday Basket Sale Sponsors:
Ashley’s Ice Cream
Eli’s On The Hill
Mango’s
Shelly Johnson
Home Bakery
Cookies
B. Jean Connal, Massage Therapist
Starbucks
Townhouse Diner
Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream
Ballou Restaurant and Wine Bar
New Sorting Volunteers Needed

Inevitably, the larger the Book Sale, the greater the number of books that must be sorted.

Regrettably, there is no Book Fairy on hand to cull the mildewed volumes, the outdated textbooks and the old National Geographics, or to decide which of several dozen categories best describes a particular book. All of this must be done by human beings, starting in March and continuing almost to the first day of the sale in September.

The quality and well-organized presentation of our books is the key to our sales success. Can you help out with this essential work? We have experienced book sorters ready to train new volunteers. Sorting can be done any day of the week, month in and month out, you don’t have to be a superhero to make a valuable contribution. Even a few hours per month would make a welcome dent in the mountain of unsorted materials.

If you’d like to help, please email us at jbmlfriends@gmail.com. (If you don’t have email, leave your name at the Library, or contact any Board member.)

Did You Know?

With 650 viewings, Fried Biamonte’s lecture on Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is the most-wanted show in BCTV’s archives. The next most popular recording, the 2011 debates, has been viewed 170 times.