

Marble Columns



Newsletter of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library

From the Caucasus to the Creek



April 22, 1999



Arnold Newman / Getty Images



16 Halls Point Road

If you are a movie buff and lover of literary classics, you will surely remember the romantic scenes between Gary Cooper and Patricia Neal in **The Fountainhead**. Its iconic author, Ayn Rand, was born Alissa Rosenbaum in St. Petersburg, Russia, the daughter of Fronz Rosenbaum, a chemist, and her mother Anna in 1905.

The Russian Revolution, which occurred when she was twelve years old, changed her life as her family's financial and social position declined and the remainder of her education was conducted according to Bolshevik guidelines.

She moved to the United States in 1926 when she changed her name to Ayn (rhymes with "mine") Rand (for the Remington-Rand typewriter which she transported to America).

Rand penned 24 works. She was especially known for her two best-selling novels, **The Fountainhead** and **Atlas Shrugged**, and for developing a radical philosophical system she named Objectivism which supported anti-authoritarianism, ethical egoism, and rejected altruism.

Rand additionally had plays produced on Broadway entitled **Penthouse Legen**, **Ideal**, and **Think Twice**. Many of her books such as **We the Living**, **Love Letters**, and **The Night of January 16** have been produced as films for which she wrote the screenplays.

Rand spent the summer in Stony Creek in the late 1930s while her husband, Frank O'Connor, did summer stock. She developed key elements of the plot of her novel **The Fountainhead** at 16 Halls Point Road, the address where Rand had spent her two summers creating **Anthem**. The setting of **The Fountainhead** was partially in the nearby quarry.

According to Steve Mariotti, contributor to the [Huffington Post](#), "When we were friends in 1980 and 1981," he asked the famous novelist what was the favorite time of her life.

"Hands down," she said smiling and closing her eyes to help the memories flood in, "the summers in Stony Creek when I was writing in the stone house and Frank was performing in the **Night of January 16th**."

"She said those were the happiest times of her life. Later, she showed me a picture of

them together on the dock.... She went on in great length about how the idea for Howard Roark working in a quarry came from her time in Stony Creek."

Rand has always been a magnet for advocates of limited government. The New York Times dubbed her the "novelist laureate" of the Reagan Administration; and a 1991 Library of Congress survey ranked **Atlas Shrugged** history's second most influential book, behind the Bible.

She died March 6, 1982, an American citizen since 1931, found in her apartment on Manhattan's East Side. Death was attributed to natural causes.

Ayn Rand is remembered for her many poignant quotes, one of which continues to be timely:

"We are fast approaching the stage of the ultimate inversion: the stage where the government is free to do anything it pleases, while the citizens may act only by permission; which is the stage of the darkest periods of human history, the stage of rule by brute force".

—By Alpha Coiro

New Talent Wanted for Friends Board

Everyone loves the James Blackstone Memorial Library. It's the pride of Branford and is always seeking support from the community. As the Friends have grown, so has the demand for additional talented, energetic people to join the Board. They are nominated and voted on at a regular monthly meeting. Could you be one of them? Don't let one of these be your reasons not to:

"I don't have time." Yes, you do. The Board meets only once a month. If you can't manage even that commitment, there are many projects that you can work on in your own time, on your own schedule, and report in only as needed. Sign up for a smaller project. Better yet,

sign up with a friend and share the work.

"I don't have any special skills." Yes, you do. At work and at home you've set priorities, worked within budgets, followed through on projects, planned for the future, and coped with surprises. Your experience is valuable. Don't underestimate it; we don't.

"I don't know anyone on the Board." Neither did most of us until we got involved. In years past, it's true; most board positions were filled by word of mouth, among a circle of acquaintances. But as the Library's needs grew and the role of the Friends evolved, the importance of reaching out to the Branford

community has been realized. Branford is blessed with so many capable people like you. Your ideas are needed! Currently available are vacancies for Public Relations and Social Media chairs. The Friends need to continue to keep the public updated about its many contributions to the library and to town life. If those are not your areas of expertise, you're still very welcome. If you're a Friend and can contribute in finance, fundraising, people skills, or just plain brainstorming on other committees, come share your strengths. Contact Terry at ttwigg@comcast.net or Helen at helenhsiaochinwong@gmail.com. The Friends look forward to hearing from you!



The Town of Branford is 375 years old! Check out www.branford375.com and #branford375 to keep up with all that will be happening this year.



The 2019 Book Sale Committee, L to R: Don Mitchell, Barbara Barrett, Alpha Coiro, Joe Genua (chairperson), Evelyn Moulton, Sue Rowen, Pat Mooney. (Not pictured: Hattie Mahoney, Pam Roy, Anna Bagley, Sue Schultz, Jon Clark). Photo by Diane Puchalski



Members of the Klarman and Hally families with Friends donation. Photo by Diane Puchalski

Friends Donate \$50,000 to Library

The Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library announced two donations totaling \$50,000 to the library on December 18. The combined donation is the largest in the Friends' history.

The first gift of \$25,000 is made in honor of Matt and Mary Hally, who have chaired the Friends' annual book sale for 20 years.

Together with their son Mark, the Hallys have coordinated everything from tent rental to transportation of 70,000 books, to sharing the space with other town organizations. The Hallys are retiring

from the chairmanship this year, leaving a daunting challenge for the new book sale leadership. This gift to the library is in addition to a previous \$25,000 gift from the Friends.

The second gift, also \$25,000, is given in memory of Betsy Klarman. Betsy was a hard-working member of the Friends for many years and served as President from 2012 to 2014. This gift will be used to upgrade the sound system in the auditorium, which is in constant demand for concerts, lectures, movies, and other events.

These donations were presented to the Board of Trustees at the Friends' Board of Directors holiday meeting on December 18th.

This meeting will also honor the team of book sorters as special guests, whose indefatigable work, all year long, is the foundation of the book sale's success.

The Hally and Klarman families were also invited to the celebration.

Friends Support Fellowship for Summer Intern

At their January meeting, the Friends Board of Directors voted to approve a \$1500 stipend for a summer intern to help organize and preserve archives relating to the Friends and Library history. Rachel Wells, a local student who has volunteered at the library during the past two summers, has been awarded the fellowship and will begin work when she returns from school this summer.



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

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Karen Jensen, Library Director
Member Ex-Officio

Renovation Update

The project we have been planning for years has started! The Youth Services Department has moved into the Auditorium for the duration of the project, and work has begun to transform the 2nd floor into a new computer lab, additional meeting rooms and office space.

Construction of the new entry is in progress. Until it is ready, you can enter through the back entrance next to the book drop. The door is accessible with assistance. Please ring the bell if you need help from a staff member to enter.

Parking will be more of a challenge than usual in the upcoming year. Please remember that the book drop

located in back of the building is open 24-7. Also, the Friends of the Library operates a book donation bin at the Volunteer Services Center at 30 Harrison Avenue, just around the corner from the library.

We are also very pleased that the Campaign for the Blackstone has exceeded its fundraising goal of \$800,000! Our naming opportunity raffle for the upper rotunda gallery space concluded on February 1 — Shepard and Marlene Stone of Branford are the lucky winners!

We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of community support and all of the hard work by the Friends that has brought us thus far.



Miss Carly and Miss Mary can be found in the Auditorium for the upcoming year. Photo by Diane Puchalski

During the upcoming year, the latest construction updates and news can be found on the library website: blackstonelibrary.org.

Many thanks for your support!

*Karen Jensen
Library Director*