

## Harriet Beecher Stowe Visits Blackstone



**FRIENDS BOOK  
SALE ON GREEN  
THIS FALL!  
Thu, Sept. 22 –  
Sun, Sept. 25**

**Preview  
Friends Members  
Thu, Sept. 22  
5 PM—7 PM**

**General Sale  
Thu, Sept. 22  
7PM—9 PM**

**Fri, Sept. 23  
9 AM—7 PM**

**Sat, Sept. 24  
9 AM— 7 PM**

**Sun, Sept. 25  
12:00 NOON to  
3:00 PM  
(\$10 BAG SALE)**

Blackstone Memorial Library may have opened in the nineteenth century, one certainly would not expect to find someone dressed in Victorian-era clothing browsing the shelves; but Saturday, May 21, that is precisely what patrons found. The Friends of Blackstone Library welcomed Harriet Beecher Stowe, portrayed by historical reenactor Kim Hanley, to the library for a presentation on the impact of Stowe's life and work in celebration of the library's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. More than thirty people attended the event, which included an hour-long presentation on Harriet Beecher Stowe's personal life and her work as an author and educator.



Carrie Lakin – Friends Board Member



Pictured: Kim Hanley as Harriet Beecher Stowe at the Blackstone Library on May 21.

A Connecticut native, Stowe is most famous for her 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as well as her involvement in the fight for abolition. While patrons certainly heard much from Mrs. Stowe about the writing and impact of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (including some brief readings from the novel), they also learned a great deal about Stowe's personal life and family. Stowe drew on her background as a minister's daughter to form religious and moral arguments against injustice and emphasized the importance of

following one's conscience, even when doing so may make you unpopular. This important lesson was made all the more impactful by the engaging presence and good humor of reenactor Kim Hanley of the American Historical Theatre. A fun and educational afternoon for all, this historical reenactment demonstrated the importance of historical awareness and proved that history offers lessons for our present moment, even if we feel far removed from the past.

(Article written by Kathryn Lakin)

# 2022 Spring Book Sale Success!!



## Wonder Where the Money Raised by Friends Goes?

In 2021 Friends donated over \$82,000 to the library

Since 2017, Friends have donated \$129,000 in special gifts beyond regular yearly funding

Friends are a key partner in funding numerous 125th Anniversary Programs

In 2019, a special gift of \$5K provided the scanning station in the computer lab

\$30,000 was donated in April 2021 to new furniture in the rotunda.

A \$20K gift in June of 2021 is being used to supplement the library collection.

Friends fund many children, young adult and adult programs at the library.

Your support makes all of this possible!!!

Thank you for supporting our spring sale held on the weekend of May 14<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> on the library grounds and in the auditorium. We've raised over \$5,000 offering adult fiction and children's books for your summer reading. Even though it may have been challenging to host the sale at the library, our volunteers were up for the task. We held our spring sale on the library grounds, to help celebrate and showcase our James Blackstone Library's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This offered our patrons who have not had the opportunity to visit our library to see its renovations – or perhaps see our library for the first time.

The Friends use proceeds from our book sale revenue and other fundraisers to support many additional offer-



ings at the library, including a large support for children's programs and hosting informative and thoughtful adult presentations, not to mention the many 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programs held at the library this spring. These were many historical presentations offering insights into the time when the library was founded.

Now that the spring sale is over, our volunteers are not exactly relaxing. Many of us are busy planning, organizing, and collecting books for our annual fall book sale under the big tent on the Branford town green in September.



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There is plenty of work to do. We can always use an extra hand to help organize, provide new perspectives, or bring new and fresh ideas to the group. If you are interested in joining our team of volunteers or just have a comment or idea to share, please send an email to: [friends@blackstonelibrary.org](mailto:friends@blackstonelibrary.org)

(Article written by Joe Genua)



## Goodbye and best wishes

riching lives. Recognizing a critical need, she advocated for and added a new teen area for the library and staffed it by a librarian dedicated to teen services. Further, she strengthened the library's development plan, all of which helped the library to transform and improve its valued services to the

Branford community. Her mild manner yet strong leadership made it a pleasure for me as well as the Friends to continue to do more in support of her, the library, and our Branford community.

We will miss you.  
Alfred Bertoline

# Friends—Volunteer Spotlight

*Friends of JBML is successful because of the hard-working and dedicated volunteers we are lucky enough to have. Each issue we will recognize one special volunteer for their contribution to our organization. In this issue we kickoff our Volunteer Spotlight.*

## Frank Drago

If you are a Friends volunteer, there is a very good chance you know Frank Drago. Frank can be found at some point most days either at our River Run warehouse or our book room on Harrison Ave moving blue bins around, hauling donations across town, dropping off books at the Discover bins or vacuuming to keep our workspace neat. Frank, a Friends volunteer

for 10 years, is one of the hardest working volunteers always ready with a quick smile and to help do whatever is needed.

Frank grew up in the Branford area. He served four



years in the US Air Force, graduated from UCONN, subsequently attending George State where he acquired a masters in cartography. Frank moved from

Atlanta where he worked as a cartographer relocating back in Branford in 2002. Frank works as a custodian in the Branford Public schools. He has been married for 53 years and has 3 children and 6 grandkids. You can find Frank frequently Facetimeing with one of his grandchildren—Alex.

Frank volunteers for one main reason – he loves to help everyone and enjoys meeting new people. He is always in motion and working for Friends there is always work to be done. Franks is grateful for his wife supporting his volunteer activities and time away from home – and Friends is certainly grateful as well.

## Friends Membership Renewal Time

Just a reminder that Friends Membership expires on June 30th.

If you haven't already renewed for the year 2022—2023, please consider doing it now.

Please see Renewal insert in this newsletter for more information and the various ways to renew your membership.

Your Friends membership will help ensure Friends continues to support the Blackstone Library and our community.

THANK YOU!!



## It is time to celebrate Our Library

125 Years of Making a Difference to Branford Life

### 10:30 – 11:30am Family Story-time with Master Storyteller Bill Harley \*

Bill is best known for his work with children and families. A two-time Grammy winner, he is vibrant, outrageous, unpredictable and genuine with songs & stories about growing up, schooling and what it is to be human – our connections with one another .

### 12:00 – 12:30 pm Ceremony: Time Capsule Sealing, Guest Speakers, Announcements

### 12:30 – 3:00 pm Picnic, Lawn Games\* Live Music from Covergirl

Enjoy giveaways of a complementary picnic lunch (Hornets Nest sandwich, chips, drink) and a commemorative Blackstone 125<sup>th</sup> picnic blanket (limited quantities available, given on a first come, first served basis).

\* - Sponsored by Friends



Check us out on Facebook



**Friends of the  
James Blackstone Library  
758 Main Street**

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2021—2022**

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Karen Jensen, Library Director  
Member Ex-Officio

## From the President

### President's Message

As we approach the end of our current year, there are so many good things to talk about.

First of all, we must celebrate the success of our Spring Book sale held at the library the weekend of May 14 and 15<sup>th</sup>. The books were organized and plentiful both in the auditorium and outside on the grounds; the weather cooperated (rain at night, pleasant during both days); the volunteers were smiling, available and helpful; and the Branford community turned out in droves to support the library and build their supply of summer reads. Thanks to our volun-

teers, our members, the library staff, and our Branford community for our successful event.

Please SAVE THE DATE on June 21, 2022, 5:30 – 7:30 pm for our annual meeting beginning with our business meeting in library and moving to the deck for the thank you reception). The business portion will primarily introduce and elect/ratify our new Board members and officers and the thank you reception will give us the special opportunity to thank our members, volunteers and all those who work together to make our library such a valuable institution for

our Branford community.

As we end our fiscal year, we thank our officers and board members who are leaving their positions with the Friends for their incredible contributions over the years. Further, we look forward to our new leadership and offer all the optimism and support they will need to continue to enable the Friends and the library to thrive.

*Alfred Bertoline, President*  
[friends@blackstonelibrary.org](mailto:friends@blackstonelibrary.org)