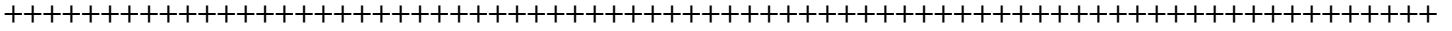




Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library Member Newsletter

July 2008

Editor, Terry Twigg



LEOCADIA LOCARNO SULLIVAN... A TRIBUTE

“LEE” SULLIVAN: FRIEND, COLLEAGUE, LEADER, AND BELOVED MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BLACKSTONE LIBRARY

The month of May is a time of renewal, when spring takes firm control of good weather and mothers are



honored. Lee Sullivan (*left front, in photo*) was the essence of May: proud of being a mother and grandmother, and also a good daughter to her own mother, who lived with Lee and her husband Dick. Lee always approached any task or activity as enthusiastically as if it were the first time, and the work was always fun when she participated. This past May, she was busy organizing her life around a new grandchild, but still found time to be part of the team planning the annual meeting of the Friends. Sadly, and ironically, May was also the month that family and friends lost Lee. John Loeb remembers Lee from her teenage years when she worked on high school publications. “You can always see the quality and talent shining through some people and Lee was one of those people,” John commented. “I knew that she would be excellent at whatever she did, and in my

experience she was.”

Lee taught English at the Baldwin and Adams Schools for more than thirty years. Martha Link Walsh summed up the perspective of a former student who loved and respected Lee: “She was my favorite teacher.” The many tributes coming into the Blackstone Library demonstrate that many others shared Martha’s affection for Lee. Lee had been active in the Friends of the Blackstone Library for a number of years. She held many offices and was slated to be president, but resigned in order to tend to family priorities. Joan Ahern, another high school classmate and a member of the Friends’ board of directors, said she and Lee had lost touch for a while, but later renewed their friendship, and it was Lee who encouraged Joan to get involved with the Friends seven years ago. To Joan, Lee personified the word “friend.” Lee also recruited President Polly Fitz soon after Polly retired from UCONN. Lee was Polly’s guide and mentor as she progressed from helping with mailings to assuming leadership of the Friends.

Lee’s important work with the Friends not only helped the organization achieve its goals, but made the work pleasant and “lightened the load for all.” Richmond Browne, immediate past president, offers these comments: “We are all so sorry to lose Lee and we will miss her. We offer our sympathy and thoughts to the family.”

Lee was one of a kind... leading...helping out in a crisis... or just being there as a friend. We are so grateful for the time she spent with us.

The family has requested that donations be sent to the Friends of Blackstone Library, 758 Main St., Branford, CT 06405.

Greetings to all Friends of the Blackstone Library,

Our new officers are as follows: Joan Ahern, Treasurer; Harriet White, Secretary; Richard Sullivan, Vice President; and Polly Fitz, President. We will serve for the next two years.

Since this is the first issue of the Newsletter of my presidency, I'd like to introduce myself. It is with great pride that I assume the role of president of our Friends organization. I have had a lifelong interest in reading, books, and learning. In my professional service, I have been involved in national organizations that focus on health and have been chair of a national foundation. Most of my career was spent at UCONN as an academic dean, department head, and administrator. Since my retirement, I have focused my energies on civic and fund raising organizations in Branford. I am completing a four-year term on the Garden Club board. I have been a volunteer with the Friends for five years, and assumed the vice presidency a year ago. I am in awe of the goals already achieved by the Friends and our past leadership. You have my commitment to continue the traditions and success of the Friends.

We will finalize our plans for the year at the September board meeting. Watch for our exciting and ambitious program of work in the next newsletter. Our entire board will be listed in the upcoming issue of the Friends Newsletter. You are welcome to attend any and all board meetings held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:15 p.m. in the Lucy Hammer room of the James Blackstone Memorial Library.

We are hard at work on the Annual Book Sale to be held on the Town Green under the BIG TENT, September 19, 20, and 21, 2008. Don't forget, donate those books that you have been saving for this sale and PLAN TO ATTEND! Remember, all proceeds directly benefit our library.

I can be reached by phone at 488-7701 or by email at goodtable@aol.com. Please let me know your questions and concerns.

Best regards,

Polly Fitz

ANNUAL BOOK SALE

This year's book sale is scheduled to take place on September 19, 20 and 21. If you volunteered in the past, you can expect a telephone call from Bev Madeska in the first week of September. If you haven't volunteered before, but would like to, there will be a sign-up sheet posted on the Friends' board (downstairs) in the library, starting July 15. Even if you can't help out on the sale days, please remember to donate your extra books, and plan to attend the sale.



PAINTING LOANED TO NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM

Forgotten treasures are the stuff of legend, and the Antiques Roadshow © has sent us all scurrying to the attic in search of that priceless heirloom hiding next to the broken dishes. The improbable became real for the library in 2002, when attention was focused on an old oil painting in the library's collection. The portrait of Ella Wheeler Wilcox turned out to be the work of Lilly Martin Spencer (1822-1902), one of the prominent American painters of her time. Although the painting has been extensively researched by Fred Biamonte, no one is sure how the library came to own it.

In 2003 the painting was cleaned and restored at the Friends' expense, but it has not been displayed at the library. We are pleased that it has just been loaned to the New Britain Museum of American Art. The painting will spend two years in New Britain, where it will be in good company with the museum's collection of American masterpieces—including another Lilly Martin Spencer painting. The museum plans to host a reception for the painting, at a date to be announced.

Note to bibliophiles: The subject of the painting, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, was an American poet. Although she was popular in her time, her work is not widely remembered today, with the exception of Solitude, which begins "Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone." Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poetry can be found in the library's collection.

MEMBERS HONORED AT SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Blackstone Library began with a reception and social gathering at 5:30 PM on June 3, 2008 in the auditorium of the James Blackstone Memorial Library.

Following a lively and enjoyable reception, Richmond Browne, President, opened the meeting. Before proceeding to business, he asked everyone to participate in a moment of silence and remembrance for our friend, colleague, and longtime Friends leader, Lee Sullivan.

President Browne called on Alice Lambert, Chair of the Nominating Committee to present the Nominating Committee report. Alice presented the slate of officers for 2008-2010:

Polly Fitz, President

Dick Sullivan, Vice President

Harriet White, Secretary

Joan Ahern, Treasurer

The slate of officers was ratified by the members in attendance. Also as part of the formal business meeting, minutes and financial summaries were made available.

Next, President Browne presented two special awards honoring Alexine Wallace and Marie Crowley for their exemplary service and pioneering work for the Friends of the Blackstone Library. Each honoree saw a \$2000.00 check presented to the Library in her name. The checks were accepted on the Library's behalf by Vincent Giordano, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, and Sandra Reiners, Treasurer of the Library Board of Trustees.

President Browne then turned the meeting over to Polly Fitz, incoming President of the Friends. Polly, in turn, presented an award honoring Richmond for his 11 years of leadership and service to the Friends of the Blackstone Library. Vincent Giordano and Sandra Reiners accepted a check for \$5000.00 in his name on the library's behalf, after which Richmond shared some remembrances of his tenure with the Friends.

At the conclusion of business, the meeting moved to lighter pursuits. This year's annual meeting featured a special program entitled "On Being Glenn Miller." Polly Fitz introduced Dr. Thomas C. Duffy, composer, conductor, and professor at Yale University. Dr. Duffy's talk reflected his research about Glenn Miller's time at Yale and in Europe during World War II. The research led Dr. Duffy to search out artifacts of Glenn Miller's military career and reenact some of his performances with the Yale Band, especially during the Band's trips to Normandy and other World War II sites on the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. Dr. Duffy's presentation included photographs and musical excerpts that evoked the wartime era, especially for those members of the audience who had been at Yale or in service during Miller's tenure. They shared their memories of classes interrupted by the sounds of Miller's band practicing on campus, and their eyewitness accounts brought history to life.

Thanks to Joan Ahern, Irene Ayres, Jeri Reider, Bercee Cameron, Kathy Rieger, Harriet White, and Polly Fitz for their efforts to ensure a successful meeting.

THANKS TO....

Kathy Rieger, Library Director provided an enjoyable selection of music on the piano.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS INCREASE

This year, the names of those who renewed their membership before May 31 were included in a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate. Our hope was that this bit of extra incentive would encourage more members to renew—and it worked! The prize was won by Katie Gehner, a long-time member. Congratulations, Katie!

The gift certificate was donated by several area merchants. We want to thank them for their generous support.



Friends of Blackstone Library Annual Book Sale on the Branford Green



under the big tent!

Friday, Sept. 19th

9 a.m. — 8 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 20th

9 a.m. — 6 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 21st

11 a.m. — 2 p.m.