



Vol. 30, No. 2

Underwritten by the Friends of the Blackstone Library

Spring 2007

Great Times at the Blackstone

In celebration of National Library Week, the Blackstone Library hosted a *Meet the Authors Night* on Wednesday, April 18th. Fun was had by all. The catered reception gave patrons a chance to meet some of Branford's finest authors. There was electricity in the air as people mingled, chatted and enjoyed sharing the latest literary news. Various genres were represented at the festivities, from sci-fi, to children's picture books, thrillers to westerns, biographies to memoirs. Among those in attendance were Nancy Wallace, Richard Randue, Feenie Ziner, Frank Dormer, Jim Griffin, Susan Tamulevich, David Silberkleit, John Kennedy, Peter Tveskov, Tom Shaw, Rolandas Kiaulevicius,

Michelle Hughes and Blackstone's very own Alana Abbott.

Be sure to check out our bulletin boards, website or ask a staff member to find out what's coming up on our summer programming calendar. A few highlights are: *Behind the Canvas*, a three part slide illustrated lecture series present by Fred Biamonte, a sure sensation. Fred is a psychobiographer who will delve into the lives, loves, and psyches of Edward Hopper, John Singer Sargent and Winslow Homer; Mary Tokarski, concert accordionist, performs both nationally and internationally as a soloist with symphony orchestras—Mary will perform pieces from her new CD; The Mudflats, a Stony Creek original, join voices to experiment with a variety of musical styles and eras, from classical to gospel, country to

pop, and show tunes to ballads, with a little light jazz and doo-wop thrown in for good measure.

There is always something new going on at the Blackstone. Our bulletin boards are filled with information and our website is updated daily, so check often. New ideas and suggestions are always welcomed. Also, consider the Blackstone Library auditorium and rotunda if you are planning a party, banquet, or fundraiser. Call Kate Hosfelt, your Programming Coordinator at 203-488-1441 extension 313 or if you prefer, email me at events@blackstone.lioninc.org.

—Kate Hosfelt

Programming Coordinator

We're Wi-Fi!

Bring your laptop to the library for free internet access.

Local history books, canvas book bags, note cards & more for sale @ Blackstone Library. Items displayed in our Reading Room —purchase @ the Main Check-out Desk

Library Hours

Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday Hours:

*On vacation for the summer—
returning after Labor Day*

Friends of JBML

Mini Book Sale

June 21, 22 & 23

@

Blackstone Library

Debby Trofatter, one of our reference librarians, enjoyed her trip to Hartford to attend Librarian's Day at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference. Lecture topics included building a core genealogy collection, resources available at the State Library and CT Historical Society Library, and a panel discussion. For patrons interested in genealogy, stop by the library to check out books on a variety of topics and remember that you have free access to Heritage Quest through iCONN, from the library computers and your home computer.

Jason Neely has recently joined the reference staff at the Blackstone Memorial Library. He most recently worked at the Jacksonville (FL) Public Library. He has a Bachelors degree in history, a Masters of Education and a Masters of Library and Information Science and has managed a day habilitation center for adults with developmental disabilities. He is originally from Pittsburgh and is a die hard Steelers fan. Jason moved to Connecticut in December with his fiancée Lucy and their dog Sidney and cats Charlie and Pancho.

The British magazine *Bookseller* presents an annual award to books with the oddest title. Here are some recent winners:

The Stray Shopping Carts of Eastern North America

Reusing Old Graves: A Report on Popular British Attitudes

How to Avoid Huge Ships

Staff Picks

☞**Linda:** *Wait Till Next Year* by Doris Kearns Goodwin: A memoir of a little girl and her love for the Brooklyn Dodgers, with flashbacks of what life was like growing up in the 1950s. A fun read and a must for all baseball fans. *In Dublin's Fair City* by Rhys Bowen: Another exciting adventure in the Molly Murphy mystery series as she takes on a dangerous case, setting sail across the Atlantic to her Irish homeland.

☞**Sandre:** *Infidel* by Ayann Hirsi Ali: Ali takes you into a hard and honest look into her life-what is was like growing up as a Muslim in Africa, her forced marriage, her fight for freedom in Holland and for other Muslim women. *Burning Bright* by Tracy Chevalier: For those who love historical novels and 1600s England, this is a must read.

☞**Debby:** *Heart-Shaped Box* by Joe Hill: Joseph Hillstrom King's (Stephen King's son) first novel is not for the faint of heart who read to relax at bedtime. Fans of ghosts, terror and horror, however, will enjoy Hill's novel very much.

☞**Patricia B:** *The Knitting Circle* by Ann Hood: The author has the ability to draw you into the lives of her characters. You find yourself cheering for them and crying for their sorrows. *Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring out the Best in People at Their Worst* by Rick Brinkman and Rick Kirschner: You are given insight that you are not alone in many situations

☞**Barbara:** *Within this Wilderness* by Feenie Ziner: Branford author's poignant and revealing account of a mother's journey to rediscover her son.

☞**Kate H:** *Sink Reflections: Overwhelmed? Disorganized? Living in Chaos?* by Marla Cilley: Simple guidelines to organize your life without having to be perfect. *True Evil* by Greg Iles: If Scott Peterson was a client of Greg Iles's divorce attorney, he would have got away with murder. A new twist on spousal genocide.



☞**Deirdre:** *The Glass Devil* by Helene Tursten and *The Blood Spilt* by Åsa Larsson: A few of the latest Scandinavian mysteries to be translated and published in the United States. *The Inn at Lake Devine* by Elinor Lipman: A witty and breezy comedic novel with a social conscience.

☞**Gennett:** *90 Minutes in Heaven: A True Story of Death and Life* by Don Piper: Piper's story is not the typical "near-death" experience, after his horrific car accident in 1989. Piper, a Baptist minister, eventually finds meaning in his suffering, and has seen good come from its telling. It's a hard book to read at first, but stay with it—there is beauty, too. *Time was Soft There: A Paris Sojourn at Shakespeare & Co.* by Jeremy Mercer: When crime writer Mercer divulges the name of one of his sources in print, threats are made on his life. He escapes to Paris, where he finally lands on the doorstep of Shakespeare & Co. Bookstore. This is a quirky book full of colorful characters, improbable subplots—and it's all true!

☞**Patricia G.:** *But Excuse Me That is My Book* and *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* both by Lauren Child: Charming, quirky, imaginative and delightful! Fans of Charlie and Lola will understand; budding bibliophiles and fussy eaters NEED to read these books. Enjoy with a big bowl of cloud fluff and green drops.

☞**Alana:** *Inda*. The first of the new fantasy series by Sherwood Smith is a coming of age story for not only the hero, Inda, but for a number of the young men and women who surround him. Smith uses an omniscient narration that shifts from one perspective smoothly into the next, providing multiple viewpoints on every occurrence. This makes the novel a challenging, but extremely worthwhile, read. *Damsel under Stress*. It's here! The newest of Shanna Swendson's series about Katie Chandler, who is immune to magic and working for the largest magic development company in the world, housed right in New York City, has arrived!

☞**Kathleen:** *Different Like Coco* by Elizabeth Matthews: Terrific juvenile biography of Coco Chanel from her poor childhood through her successful career as a designer.

Continued on page 4

Library Welcomes New Development Coordinator

In an important policy decision designed to implement one of the recommendations of its recently adopted strategic plan, the Board of Trustees at the James Blackstone Memorial Library has recruited a new Development Coordinator. One of the announced goals of the Strategic Plan adopted in January 2006 was to secure increased funding from public and private sources to meet the community's demands for library service.

Robert O. McAlister, Ph.D. recently moved to the Connecticut shoreline with his family. He did his undergraduate and graduate studies at Rice University in Houston, Texas, and his doctorate was in the field of biology. After a 3-year tour of duty as a Captain in the US Army at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, he continued his studies on the immunology of malaria for the next 10 years, simultaneously earning tenure and a teaching award at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He was then recruited to start the AIDS education and surveillance program in the Oregon Health Division, Portland, Oregon and simultaneously was appointed Clinical Associate Professor of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the Oregon Health Sciences University. He remained in the public health field for 12 years and then moved to the non-profit arena. He served as Executive Director of the National Eczema Association from 1998-2002, and Executive Director of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation 2002-05. Since 2005 he has been serving as a development consultant to small nonprofit organizations in the health field.



McAlister characterizes himself as a lifelong user of libraries who now feels the time is right to formally acknowledge this important part of his life by helping the Blackstone move into a new era. "My career has been devoted to population health, and there is no better indicator of a community's health than the condition of its public library," said McAlister. "The staff, Trustees and volunteers of the Blackstone combine with this historic building and its many collections to form a remarkable community resource. I feel honored to represent this vibrant institution as we work together to identify and secure new sources of funding for what the Strategic Plan stated is '... the crown jewel of Branford's green.' Welcoming all with its remarkable collection of books, periodicals, audiovisual resources and internet services, the Blackstone is already one of the finest public libraries in the state." McAlister went on to state his goal: to "...help the Blackstone become a catalyst for exciting new economic and cultural developments in Branford; as the library becomes even stronger and more diverse in its available services, so will the town of Branford."

Many thanks to the Friends of JBML and the Library Board of Trustees for their volunteer work and fundraising for the Blackstone Library.

Our reference librarians Barbara and Debby used a summer 1896 issue of the *Branford Opinion* to familiarize themselves with our new digital microfilm reader, purchased with Friends of JBML money. The following are some excerpts from that issue:

Wednesday, June 17th, dawned with a leaden and lowering sky, but a large number of townspeople and strangers were present to witness the dedication of our new library.

The exercises in the afternoon were very interesting, especially the addresses of Hon. Lynde Harrison and Prof. Hadley. Many were disappointed in not seeing Timothy Blackstone, the donor of the library, he having sailed for Europe last week.

M.P. Rice has recently purchased a heavy two-horse truck for general carting purposes- the first owned in town.

Hopson Avenue is taking the lead in housebuilding. Another cellar is being dug there this week.

A large number of Branforders expected to witness the Wisconsin-Yale boat-race at Lake Saltonstall yesterday, weather permitting.

The Kickapoo Indian Medicine Co. have since Tuesday night given a free show in the rear of the Delavan House. The size of the audience each evening shows that the people appreciate a free show in these days of dullness.

Mrs. I.H. Palmer has greatly improved the appearance of her residence by the addition of blinds, which were hung Wednesday, C.W. Harrington having charge of the work.

The B.L.W. [Branford Lock Works] works are shut down this week owing to needed repairs upon the big chimney. The work at this shop is very dull at present, and the employees are looking up work where they can find it.

The incandescent lights placed about town for the purpose of lighting the streets are now in operation. They have also been placed in the bandstand on the green. What with our new public library, "new" green and electric lights, old Branford has taken a big step forward.

Youth Services Department

As always, the Youth Services Department is buzzing with activity. In addition to the ever popular Miss Mary classes, this spring we added a baby class on Monday mornings. The babies, have stories rhymes fun ties. They loved rolling and kicking rubber balls and knocking over blocks. Their favorite though, has been blowing bubbles. It is a wonderful opportunity for babies and caregivers to socialize.



The Triple T 5th to 8th graders have had a great spring. They have made some extraordinary items including fleece pillows in the shapes of footballs and butterflies, book safes, and summer items like flip flops and sun visors. The group has so much fun and the laughter is contagious.

A special thanks to the Branford Rotary Club who have been reading on Thursday evenings. The volunteers have shared some of our new books and some good old favorites! Come drop-in to hear a favorite story and do a craft.

Summer reading is fast approaching and the staff is preparing for *Get a Clue, Read at Your Library*. We've added some really neat mysteries to the collection and have some fun programs planned. Come get a clue!

Don't forget to check out your school summer reading books from the Blackstone. Ask the staff which book is the funniest, longest, shortest and most popular. We'll be glad to help you find a book you'll love.

Do you hate long car rides? The Youth Service Department has several new books on CD for you to take along on your next trip. We have some old favorites as well as some newly released books. If you hate hearing "are we there yet?", check out an audio book.

Don't forget your friends at the Blackstone Library while you are on vacation. Send us a postcard from wherever you are. We will be collecting postcards from patrons and displaying them on the bulletin board. Whether you go to Hammonasset, Florida or Europe we want to hear from you.

Have you met any of our terrific volunteers? The YS Department has a crew of dedicated teen volunteers who we wouldn't be able to function without. You may see Jenna and Colin changing the book displays, Donald and Nonni shelving books, Jamie sorting and organizing packets, Ajay and Jason running Chess Club, Christina assembling our Author board, and Jacob and Alice helping prepare crafts. Miss Mary and Miss Kathleen are so grateful for all their help!

Continued from page 2

Pirates Don't Change Diapers by Melinda Long: Great illustrations and a wonderful, fun-filled story of a brother and his pirate friends taking care of his baby sister.

Maia: *Like Life: Stories* by Lorrie Moore: All Moore's collections deal with observations on life issues, but *Like Life* deals with the mundane, making for a more thought-provoking read. Her writing combines the tragic

and humorous events surrounding the search for love and is honest and self-reflective. *Roxaboxen* by Alice McLerran: This is a story I read as a little girl that has stayed with me ever since. It captures the boundless imagination of children and the timeless beauty of their creations.

Jason: *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* by Bill McKibben: McKibben challenges the notion that an economy's health is adequately measured by economic growth. He envisions localized economies that are both more ecologically sustainable and psychologically fulfilling.

Megan: *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey: Regardless of whether the story is true, this is a very powerful book of a young man's struggle to put his life back together after years of addiction. *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult: Picoult tackles the difficult subject of a school shooting, creating a highly emotional and intense work.

Kathy R.: *Underfoot in Show Business* by Helene Hanff: If you know this author at all, it's probably for her book *84 Charing Cross Road*. All of her books are enjoyable, especially *Underfoot in Show Business*, which is a delightful and funny memoir of Hanff's romp through Broadway—run-ins with producers, writers, and other actors, and making ends meet in New York City while trying to find her way in the "bright lights".