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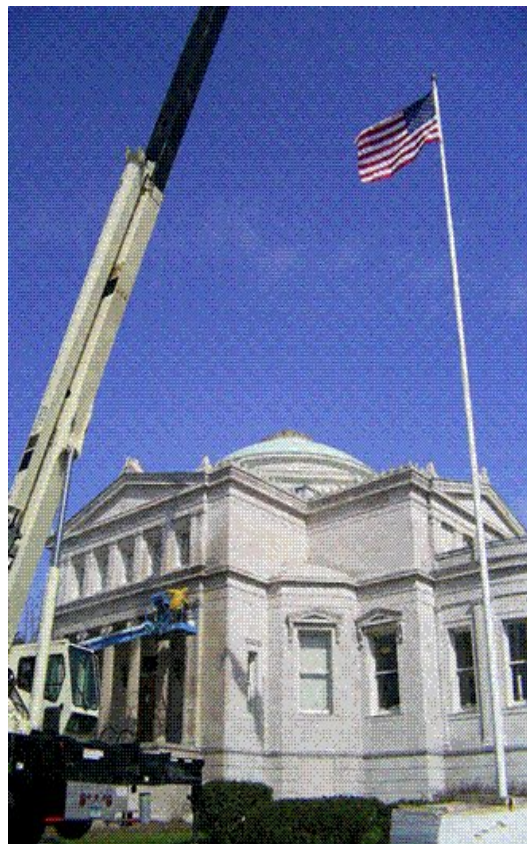
Underwritten by the Friends of the Blackstone Library

Spring/Summer 2008

## A Spiffin' Up

What's going on at the library? That's a common question these days as patrons see several cherry pickers around the building, parking places fenced off for equipment, and door exits closed on occasion due to construction. For lack of a better term, we could call it "spring cleaning" but more accurately it is long overdue restoration work.

For starters, the outside of the building was thoroughly cleaned, and what a difference it made! The library literally shines now that all the pollutants and years of grime have been washed off. While the washing was going on, all of the windows on the ground level were removed and the single pane glass was replaced with new Bi-glass. This has given us state-of-the-art energy efficiency while retaining the character of the windows. Several of the windows are curved and therefore have curved glass that was somewhat of a challenge for our contractor, Kronenberger & Sons Restoration, Inc. The windows on floors one and two will be receiving



replacement storm windows for the old storm windows that were added to the library in the 1960s.

The roof of the library is also being replaced to take care of the leaks that we have experienced over the years. Once the new roof is in place, the plaster inside the building around the areas which leaked will be redone.

Last, but by no means least, is the repointing of the entire building. This involves removal of the current mortar, realigning, and in some instances replacing the marble and setting in new mortar. Luckily the Tennessee marble that is original to the building is still available from a quarry in Tennessee.

The James Blackstone Memorial Library building is the most beautiful building in Branford and is near and dear to the entire community. We are pleased that through town and state funding we are able to keep it shining as the crown jewel of downtown Branford.

—Kathy Rieger, Library Director

### Library Hours

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

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

Sunday Hours resume:  
Sept. 7, 2008 - May 17, 2009  
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Catch the reading bug this summer!  
Buzz to Page 3 . . .



Friends of JBML  
Annual Book Sale  
on the  
Branford Green  
Sept. 19, 20 & 21

**@ the Blackstone**

The **Friends of Blackstone Library** have an ongoing book sale table set up in our Reading Room. Prices are pay what you will.

On July 1st, **Case Memorial Library**, in Orange, was the newest library to join the LION (Libraries Online) consortium. Now numbering twenty-four public and academic libraries located in New Haven, Middlesex and New London counties, LION provides an extensive selection of books, DVDs, books on CD and cassette, magazines and music CDs to its registered users through reciprocal borrowing.

The LION online catalog now offers registered borrowers the ability to keep a record of their **reading history**. Blackstone patrons can opt-in to this feature after they have logged in to their LION account. Read more about this online or ask at our service desks.



**Branford Land Trust** celebrates its 40th anniversary with a history exhibit in our rotunda display case. Also on display will be some of the many books that the Land Trust has so generously donated to the library and which are available for check out.

**We're Wi-Fi!**

**Bring your laptop to the library for free internet access.**

**Staff Picks**

☞**Linda:** [Bulls Island](#) by Dorothea Benton Frank: A novel about two Southern families and what fate has in store for them—good light summer read. [A Flaw in the Blood](#) by Stephanie Barron: A mystery novel involving a secret about Queen Victoria and the royal family—suspenseful, exciting, historical and hard to put down.

☞**Sandre:** Blaize Clement is a new mystery writer and her Dixie Hemingway series is delightful. Her character is an ex-deputy turned pet sitter takes place in the Florida Keys. The first book is [Curiosity Killed the Cat](#), followed by [Duplicity Dogged the Dachshund](#); her newest is [Even Catsitters Get the Blues](#), which I am looking forward to reading

☞**Deirdre:** Glaswegian Caro Ramsay's [Absolution](#) is her assured and accomplished debut mystery, with an intricate plot and well-developed, and troubled, characters. Tartan noir at its best! John Banville turns to the mystery genre, and a nom de plume, Benjamin Black, with [Christine Falls](#), set in Ireland and the United States in the 1950s.

☞**Patricia G.:** [Grace \(Eventually\)](#) by Anne Lamott: Lamott, once again, shares her quirky wit, refreshing candor, and irreverently relevant religious adventures as she navigates the spiritual path.

☞**Alana:** A traditional hero quest is turned upside down in [Standard Hero Behavior](#) by John David Anderson, when two teens with no desire to go on an adventure find themselves seeking out retired heroes to save the town that once chased them away. [Amulet: The Stonekeeper](#) by Kazu Kibuishi (who is incidentally, the husband of Amy Kim Ganter, whose [Sorcerers and Secretaries](#) I've recommended) launches his first volume of an adventure between two worlds. The story is engaging, but what really makes the book worth recommending are Kibuishi's marvelous illustrations.

☞**Nancy:** [The Life of the Skies: Birding at the End of Nature](#) by Jonathan Rosen: This is a must read for anyone who enjoys watching birds. It gives great insight into what is going on out there at the birdfeeder and it also gives a very interesting glimpse into the unusual life of John James Audubon. [Carpe Diem: Put a Little Latin in your Life](#) by Harry Mount: This book is good for anyone who loves words. It explains, often humorously, the Latin roots for many of our common everyday expressions. It also helps explain all the strange phrases that are seen on old buildings and is a great help to anyone who enjoys solving crossword puzzles.

☞**Mary:** [The Glass Castle](#) by Jeannette Walls: A story of survival against all odds, parents who were vagabonds, dysfunctional children who grew up to take care of each other—very sad and yet some funny parts—how they loved their parents even though there was hardship. They each took charge of their lives and turned things around and became successful. Walls has a lot of courage, strength and love for others. [Read All About It](#) by Laura Bush and Jenna Bush: A really cute story about how a teacher helped a student who had no interest in reading to use his imagination and as she read he visualized the characters; the book has a lot of humor.

☞**Jason:** Throughout [The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta](#), Mario Vargas Llosa skillfully shifts between two intertwined narratives. The first is that of a novelist pursuing the life story of a former classmate, Alejandro Mayta, an idealistic Trotskyite revolutionary. The second story is the recounting of Mayta's failed uprising that took place decades before. Vargas Llosa pulls these two threads together when the novelist finally reunites with his old schoolmate.

☞**Kathy R.:** [Unravelling](#) by Elizabeth Graver is a coming of age story of a young girl in 19<sup>th</sup> century New Hampshire. Graver does an excellent job of placing the reader back in the 1860s where you can see that even though much has changed in our society, habits and morals have not.

☞**Patricia B:** It had been years since I read and watched [Marjorie Morningstar](#) by Herman Wouk; enjoyed both—a fast read to be followed by the old classic movie.

☞**Kathy B.:** [The Family that Couldn't Sleep](#) by D.T. Max: This American author researched various diseases that have as their origin prions, proteins that go wrong. He suffers from a neuromuscular disease as well. Very interesting!

☞**Megan:** [Duma Key](#) by Stephen King: With its creepy page-turning plot, this book is a chilling showcase of King's matured writing.

☞**Joanna:** [Getting Started Knitting Socks](#) by Ann Budd: For all you knitters who have stumbled over the directions for knitting socks, I've found the book for you. Ann Budd shows

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## From the Youth Services Department

A special thank you to Herbert Pearce (*left, in photo below*) for his generous donation, in honor of Daniel Cosgrove's (*right,*

fun ways to enjoy summer reading. Miss Mary and Miss Kathleen have been busy planning summer reading



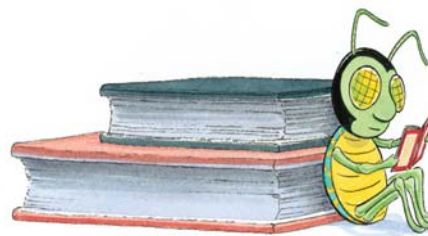
*in photo*) 90th birthday, which allowed us to purchase a subscription to BookFlix, an online database of interactive books for children.

The Youth Services Department is excited to offer our patrons BookFlix. Scholastic BookFlix is a new online literacy resource that pairs classic video storybooks from Weston Woods with related nonfiction e-books from Scholastic to build a love of reading and learning. The engaging way to link fact and fiction, BookFlix reinforces early reading skills and introduces children to a world of knowledge and exploration. There are 356 pairings of books. Branford residents can access BookFlix through the Blackstone Library Youth Services website from home or the library. All you need is a library card and you are ready to enjoy BookFlix.



Get ready to Catch the Reading Bug. This summer is going to be filled with

activities around that theme. For the older children the theme is Metamorphosis! Patricia has a great summer planned for the Triple T kids. Special performances will be held weekly and there will be prizes throughout the summer for reading. Thanks to the Friends of JBML and Guilford Savings Bank — this will be a fantastic summer reading program.



In addition to Catch the Reading Bug, Blackstone Library has worked closely with the Branford schools for the required summer reading. The lists for the various grades are filled with great books by some new authors as well as some who will be familiar to the children. Additional copies of the books have been obtained and are ready for the students. Remember you can put books on hold from home. We will call you when your books are ready for pick up. Each school is having special incentives for students to complete their required summer

reading so be sure to come check out your books.

The Blackstone Library is proud to congratulate two of our volunteers who graduated from Branford High School this June. Ajay Phadke has been our Chess Club leader for five years. He has taught countless Branford children to play and love chess. Ajay could always be counted on to help in whatever ways we needed. We are grateful for all his work over the years and wish him well! Jamey Morrow-Polio has been volunteering with us for the past 3 years. He has been a “jack of all trades”. He has been the photographer for many youth services programs; he has helped Miss Mary with story hours, shelved books and much more. Jamey and Ajay have been favorites of many of our Saturday patrons and they will be missed greatly!

Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> was National Free Comic Book Day. Thanks to the generosity of Curt's Comics & Collectibles of Branford, Blackstone Library was able to give a free comic to all the children and young adults who came to the library that day. Curt is also providing comic books as summer reading prizes. Thanks Curt.

Calling all Young Adult library users, we want to know what you think and what you want. There are two ways to let us know. You can contact the Youth Services Department, [kfeeney@blackstone.lioninc.org](mailto:kfeeney@blackstone.lioninc.org), to join our Teen Advisory Board which will meet once a month to discuss what books, magazines, etc., that you think we should be buying. We also will be placing book reviews in the Young Adult room; take a look and let us know what books you'd like to see on your shelves!

—Kathleen Feeney,  
Youth Services Librarian

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us the fundamentals of sock knitting in clear and easy to follow directions. Her book includes photos, drawings and a variety of sizes and styles to choose from. It's a great reference book for your knitting library!



☞ **Kathleen:** Pigeon Wants a Puppy by Mo Willems: This is the fourth Pigeon book. Throughout the series Pigeon has “Stayed Up Late”, “Driven the Bus”, and “Found a Hot Dog”. Now Pigeon really wants a puppy, but does he really know what it means to own a puppy? This funny picture book takes a surprising turn. Does Pigeon’s dream come true? A Beginning, a Muddle and an End by AVI: This is a delightful tale of a snail named Avon who decides to be writer. When he struggles to get more than the word “something” on a page his ant friend Edward helps him. This book will be an inspiration to struggling writers of all ages. It is both funny and punny!

☞ **Debbly:** Skeletons at the Feast by Chris Bohjalian: A compelling tale set at the end of World War II as a German family flees their home and walks across Germany. It reminds us of the brutality of war but also illuminates the strength of the human spirit. Odd Hours by Dean Koontz: another suspenseful, otherworldly tale

from Koontz featuring “Odd Thomas.” If you liked his previous books in the series, you will enjoy this one.

☞ **Barbara:** Strong at the Broken Places: Voices of Illness, a Chorus of Hope by Richard M. Cohen. An honest and revealing look at five individuals living with chronic illness. Without being preachy, the book reminds us that it is always possible to find strength and peace even in the most difficult of circumstances. Shear Spirit: Ten Fiber Farms, Twenty Patterns, and Miles of Yarn written by Joan Tapper and photographed by Gale Zucker. Beautiful photographs by Branford’s own Gale Zucker and wonderfully personal stories by Joan Tapper. I might just chuck it all, buy an alpaca and raise alpaca!

☞ **Gennett:** The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia, by Orlando Figes, describes a way of life I would never want to live. Stalin’s rule produced fear and terror as a way of life for millions of people. Figes uses interviews with citizens who lived under Stalin as well as testimonies from their children to tell what it was like to live in the Soviet Union during those years. His writing is vivid because he lets his subjects tell their stories, and the reader is drawn into them. It is not an easy read, but it is well worth the time.

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Editor: Deirdre Santora. Contributors: Kathy Rieger, Kathleen Feeney, Deirdre Santora. Many thanks to Debby Trofatter for all her help.

## Novel Ideas

Forthcoming new novels include The Other Queen by Phillipa Gregory; Goldengrove by Francine Prose; Indignation by Philip Roth; The Catch by Archer Mayor; The People on Privilege Hill and Other Stories by Jane Gardam; The Laughter of Dead Kings by Elizabeth Peters; Rough Weather: A Spenser Novel by Robert B. Parker; People Who Walk in Darkness by Stuart M. Kaminsky; Home by Marilynne Robinson; The Lucky One by Nicholas Sparks; A Spoonful of Poison by M.C. Beaton; A Most Wanted Man by John le Carre; Anathem by Neal Stephenson; Scarpetta by Patricia Cornwell; Angel’s Tip by Alafair Burke and Swan Peak by her father, James Lee Burke.

Reader raves for The Uncommon Reader by Alan Bennett, The Spies of Warsaw by Alan Furst and An Irish Country Doctor by Patrick Taylor.

The Morgan Library & Museum in New York City will be exhibiting Jean de Brunhoff’s manuscript drafts, sketches and watercolors for The Story of Babar the Little Elephant and Babar’s Cousin: That Rascal Arthur. Drawing Babar: Early Drafts and Watercolors will be on view from September 19, 2008 through January 4, 2009.

Q & A with Bette Midler in *Vanity Fair* magazine: *What is your idea of perfect happiness?* An empty house and a good book. *Who are your favorite writers?* Nabokov and P.G. Wodehouse. *Which words or phrases do you most overuse?* “I gotta get crackin’.”