

# MARBLE COLUMNS

The Newsletter of the James Blackstone Memorial Library [www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)

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*Underwritten by the Friends of the Blackstone Library*

Spring/Summer 2009

## “Under the Dome” at the Blackstone Library – Literally and Figuratively

The dome of the library is one of our building’s more prominent features—as community members often tell newcomers, “Oh yes, the library is the building in the center of town with the large dome!”

During last summer’s library roof and repointing project, we discovered several things about the dome. It is made of marble, just like the rest of the building, with lead poured joints. Also, like the rest of the building, the skylight that is in the top of the dome is a technological masterpiece from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are, in fact, two skylights in the dome, one on top of the other. They open for ventilation and even have a complex construct for keeping water out of the library while letting fresh air in. The skylight contains an illuminating light as well, although it is not currently operational. With the

advent of air-conditioning in the building in the 1990’s, there is no longer a need to open the sky lights.

At some point in the life of the building,



possibly in the 1930’s, the lead joints between the marble of the dome failed. When they failed, a copper dome was placed on top of the marble. It was often thought that this covering was

just tin, because tin roofs were very common in the early part of the last century, but it is definitely copper. The copper roof must have failed as well and so began the many, many layers of paint and asphalt strips backed with asbestos felt applied to the dome. Even though the covering is still copper, the patina color that we see today is from paint and not from exposed copper.

The dome could now use some work and there are several thoughts on which way to go—covering it yet again, or taking it back down to the original marble. This project is on hold because of the cost and the many layers of “protection” that were put in place during the times of “failure.” As we know, it is problematic and expensive for workers to deal with asbestos and lead paint, of which

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### **Library Hours**

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

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

**Sunday Hours Resume:**  
Sept. 13, 2009  
1 – 4 p.m

### **We’re Wi-Fi!**

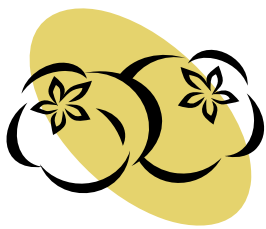
Bring your laptop to the library for  
free internet access

**Friends of JBML**  
**Annual Book Sale**  
**on the Green**  
**Sept. 25, 26, 27**

See Friends newsletter  
for details

## Novel Ideas

Blackstone Library customers have been reading *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene; *Sarah's Key*, Tatiana De Rosnay's historical novel of the deportations of thousands of Jewish families in Paris in 1942; novels by Paolo Coelho; *This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; reissues of Maj Sjowall and Per Wahloo's police procedurals featuring Superintendent Martin Beck of the Stockholm Homicide Squad; Rennie Airth's historical thrillers set in post WWI England; snapping up reissues of the doyenne of romance and historical novels, Georgette Heyer (1902-1974); Alan Furst's historical espionage thrillers set before and after WWII; Katherine Towler's coming of age novels *Snow Island* and *Evening Ferry*; raves about Larry Bond's suspenseful *Cold Choices*; K.C. Constantine's mystery series featuring Police



Chief Mario Balzac including *The Man Who Liked Slow Tomatoes*. Try Katherine Stone's novels—if you like Susan Elizabeth Phillips or Ann B. Ross's series, starting with *Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind* (“razor-sharp wit and perfect ‘Steel Magnolia’ poise”) if you like Jan Karon or Philip Gulley.

## Staff Picks

☞ **Linda:** *In the Shadow of the Glacier* is the first book in an exciting new mystery series, followed by *Valley of the Lost*, by Vicki Delaney. Join Constable Molly Smith as she solves crimes in the small town of Trafalgar, British Columbia. Likable characters, well-written plots and lots of action.

☞ **Sandre:** *Borderline* by Nevada Barr: Once again, Barr's newest Anna Pigeon mystery makes you feel you are there, rafting on the Rio Grande in the Big Bend National Park, experiencing the adventure, action and drama of the unknown, and the dangers. Anna Pigeon is thrown into finding out why two people were gunned down in a raft, a pregnant woman is left to die in the river weeds and why someone wants the baby that Anna delivered, dead too.

☞ **Patricia G.:** *All in a Day* by Cynthia Rylant: Gentle rhyming text and expertly crafted cut-paper illustrations combine brilliantly here to express the surprises, sweetness, and possibilities a day holds. Tender and true. For ages 2-102.

☞ **Jason:** *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon* by Davin Grann: Grann tells an interesting tale of one man's obsession as he retraces the footsteps of the English explorer Percy Fawcett. In the early 20th century Fawcett trekked into the unexplored regions of the Amazon rain forest to try to find a lost civilization that may have been the source of the mysterious El Dorado legends that have spurred conquest and exploration since Columbus first landed in the New World. Grann pairs the narrative of Fawcett's life with his own adventure of trying to track down the mysterious explorer.

☞ **Kathy R.:** *Things I Want My Daughters to Know* by Elizabeth Noble: Noble gives anyone who has lost a loved one a perspective on grief in this novel. The characters are four daughters along with their stepfather/father and their journey through the painful months following the death of their mother/wife at age 60. Noble is British and I especially enjoyed that and the story takes place in England, with all the quirky phrases and jargon that one associates with the Brits. Even though the subject of the novel is grief, the story is optimistic and it is interesting to see how the characters work through their feelings of sadness and loss. *March* by Geraldine Brooks: Brooks takes the letters of Louis May Alcott's father and weaves together a fictional story of how the “Little Women” and their mother cope with the absence of Mr. March, their father and husband, who is serving the North during the Civil War. The real Mr. Alcott held very liberal convictions and Brooks puts these to work in creating a story of the atrocities and lessons learned about this most hideous time in American history.

☞ **Carol:** *A Treasure at Sea for Dragon and Me* by Jean E. Pendziwol: Little girl and her dragon friend learn valuable water safety tips while having a very adventurous day at the beach. In an interesting turn of events, seems the most valuable treasure they stumble upon is the knowledge learned on how to be safe, sensible and responsible in the water. Cool colors and soft pictures resemble a typical summer day.

☞ **Deirdre:** *Italian Shoes*, the latest English translation of Swedish author Henning Mankell, is a novel of one man's self-imposed exile and redemption. Canada's Michelle Wan continues her Death in the Dordogne mystery series with *A Twist of Orchids*.

☞ **Gennett:** *The American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* by Jon Meacham: Having read *Franklin and Winston*, I knew Meacham had the talent of making history readable and interesting. *American Lion* is another example of good biography. The author is able to create a balance between Jackson the man and Jackson the politician, and gives an excellent description of the politics of the day. *People are Idiots and I Can Prove It! The Ten Ways You are Sabotaging Yourself and How You Can Overcome Them* by Larry Winget: Winget is described as “the pitbull of personal development”—for good reason! His theme is good common sense; his approach is no-nonsense with a capital N! Yet *People are Idiots* is also written with humor, and Winget talks freely about “being an idiot” and what he did to change his life for the better. You may not agree with everything he says, but he will make you *think*. (You may also want to read Winget's *You're Broke Because You Want to Be* — can't hurt!).

☞ **Megan:** *Handle with Care* by Jodi Picoult: An amazing and well-written story of the hardships of a seemingly normal family that includes a young girl with a rare bone disease. Once again, Picoult explores the dark side of morality and makes the reader question how they would handle such difficult circumstances.

☞ **Joanna:** *Out of Range* by C. J. Box is the fifth book in the long-running Joe Pickett series. Pickett is a Wyoming game warden/sleuth and a magnet for trouble. Even so, his charming flaws



## From the Youth Services Department

Summertime means summer reading in the Youth Services Department. We have been having a great summer of Getting Creative @ the Library! Miss Kathleen worked with the schools, creating a terrific list of books for you to choose from during the summer. There is something for everyone on the lists. There are funny, gross, silly, scary, adventurous and mysterious books to entertain readers of all ages. Not sure what to read? Ask us!

There are an abundance of activities and incentives galore to encourage kids to read this summer. Stop by the Youth Service Department or check out the web site to see how to "Get Creative @ the Blackstone!" The 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders are getting a chance to "Express Yourself @ the Blackstone" this summer. Special activities and prizes will be available for this age group.

A wolf at the library? Whoever heard of such a thing? Well the Blackstone played host to the New York Wolf Conservation Center on April 15<sup>th</sup>. This highly educational program was attended by over 100 people. The conservation center conveyed the messages that wolves in the wild are not dangerous to people, wolves perform a vital role in the environment, wolves are not pets and it is

everyone's responsibility to do something each day to make the world a better place. The audience also had the opportunity to meet Atka, an ambassador wolf, up close. Atka is an Arctic wolf who visits libraries and schools to help educate the public on the importance of wolf conservation. For more information about Atka or the Wolf Conservation Center, visit [www.nywolf.org](http://www.nywolf.org).

Nutmeg Book Nominations for the 2010 awards are here and on the Branford School Summer Reading list for Walsh Intermediate School. The Nutmeg Book Award encourages children in grades 4-8 to read quality literature and to choose their favorite from a list of ten nominated titles. Jointly sponsored by the [Connecticut Library Association \(CLA\)](#) and the [Connecticut Association of School Librarians \(CASL\)](#), the Nutmeg Committee is comprised of children's librarians and school library media specialists who are members of our sponsoring organizations. There are ten titles for 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders and ten titles for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Read the Nutmegs and help choose the winner. Kids can vote for their favorite at the end of this year. Book marks with all the titles are available in the Youth Service Department.

Emily Graves, age six, made an unusual request of the children she invited to her birthday party. Instead of presents for herself Emily asked that the children bring a new DVD for Blackstone Library children's collection! Nineteen DVDs were brought in honor



of Emily's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. We were delighted to get titles such as *Bolt*, *Harry Potter*, *Milo and Otis* and *Spider-man*! What a generous idea. Thank you to Emily and all her friends!

—Kathleen Feeney,  
Youth Services Librarian

What's going on @ the Blackstone? Click on PROGRAMS on our homepage:

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there is plenty. For now, nothing is leaking and we can live with it for awhile.

What is just as important is what goes on "under the dome" of the library. Our library serves everyone. Students of all ages, job seekers, investors, mothers and fathers of small children, retirees seeking new ways to live productive lives, people lacking computers and internet access at home - all these and more come to us for assistance. Under the dome we offer direct, personal, face-to-face service to the citizens of Branford and the surrounding area. Our hope is that when you see the dome of the Blackstone Library you not only think of its beauty and importance as a landmark in our community, but what we offer on the inside. Your public library is a cornerstone of a free democracy and an essential service for Branford.

— Kathy Rieger, Library Director

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

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can be his greatest asset because there are those who underestimate his strength and passion for the job.

☞**Kathleen:** Double Identity by Margaret Peterson Haddix: This is a terrific suspense novel. Bethany has never spent a night away from her parents. Suddenly, she is dropped off at the house of an aunt she never knew existed while her parents take off because of Elizabeth; but who is Elizabeth? I couldn't put the book down.

☞**Debby:** The Mascot: Unraveling the Mystery of My Jewish Father's Nazi Boyhood by Mark Kurzem: A riveting true story of a young boy who witnesses his mother, brother, and sister being killed by Nazi troops, hides out in the woods until he is found by soldiers at which point he becomes their mascot, complete with a miniature uniform. He travels with the soldiers off and on throughout the war and then emigrates to Australia, where he keeps his past a secret from his family. A remarkable story. The Cradle by Patrick Somerville: A touching, moving story of love and family; a short novel, but truly engaging.

☞**Kate:** The Heretic Queen by Michelle Moran: Be prepared to be transported to ancient Egypt. Moran creates images that will not be forgotten. Dewey: The Small Town Library Cat by Vicki Myron: Although the title is Dewey we get the flavor of growing up and overcoming struggles in a small town in Iowa. You can't help but feel Myron's appreciation for her community, friends and family.

☞**Alana:** Before You Leap: A Frogs-

Eye View of Life's Greatest Lessons by Kermit the Frog: There's nothing that cheers me up quite as much as the Muppets, and none of them quite as good at it as Kermit himself. Not only is this memoir / collection of advice full of good Muppet comedy, it's got plenty of bits of wisdom that could come from a sage who wasn't green.

The Good Neighbors: Kin by Holly Black and Ted Naifeh: The fairies in Holly Black's novels are terrifying – even the good ones. The ones in her graphic novel are no different. Rue Silver thought she knew the difference between what was real and what was not, but when her mother disappears, she begins to see things that make her realize the world is larger – and more dangerous – than she ever knew. Naifeh's paneled art is a perfect fit for Black's dark tale.

☞**Barbara:** Shopgirl and Born Standing Up: a Comic's Life by Steve Martin: The world's foremost "wild and crazy guy" writes with intelligence, dark humor and tenderness in a novella about life in Los Angeles and offers illuminating personal insights in his newest book calling it a biography rather than an autobiography, "because I am writing about someone I used to know."

#### Marshes: The Disappearing Edens

A review by Emily Burdett, Senior Intern of the Branford Land Trust:

Author William Burt, a resident of Old Lyme, CT, is zealously passionate for the world we live in. His thirty year journey through the U.S. and its outskirts has led him to the beautiful discovery of a utopia we too often overlook: salt marshes. They skirt our lovely town of Branford and lace themselves throughout our hiking trails, but too often are regarded without notice or interest. Burt immerses himself directly into this void.

Though flooded with facts, Marshes: The Disappearing Edens reads more as a story rather than a textbook, its pages teeming with admirable reflection and comfortable relatability. He encloses a remarkable photo gallery as well, capturing scenes from ducklings, to a mothering otter, to the sunset-painted waters of Canada.

Marshes: The Disappearing Edens directs its focus towards marsh degradation. The book is beautifully constructed, a definite must-read for those concerned with our environment and willing to help. Learn more about our Branford marshes- our own undiscovered Edens, and give your perspective on our little town a whole new view.

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