

Vol. 32, No. 1

Underwritten by the Friends of the Blackstone Library

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## Readers are Leaders

It seems that reading is popular again! As librarians, we often hear asked: With the advent of the Internet, are libraries really relevant? Apparently they are! The number of people using the libraries and checking out books continues to rise. Eighteen to twenty-four year olds are owning up to actually having “read at least one novel, short story, poem or play in the previous 12 months” (*New York Times* January 11, 2009: “Fiction Reading Increases For Adults”).

It’s a fact that our new President is a reader. Especially since the November election, there have been numerous comments not only about the books he’s reading, but about the books he’s written. The *New York Times* Best Sellers list has had for many weeks a book written by Obama, a book currently being read by Obama, or one written

about him. What does this say about our new leader? He not only reads, he is a writer as well. One of the books that Obama was seen reading is Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *Team of Rivals*. It is suspected that this



book made an impact on his choices for Cabinet members. During his campaign he was also seen reading Jonathan Alter’s *The Defining Moment*, Larry Bartels’s *Unequal Democracy*, Steve Coll’s *Ghost Wars*, and Fareer Zakaria’s *The Post-American World*. Obama himself is the author of *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, *The Audacity of*

*Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, and *Change We Can Believe In*. With our new President shown carrying a book nearly everywhere he goes, many are scurrying around trying to find out what he knows that they need to know, too. It’s no secret that people who are readers are usually smarter, better educated, and more successful in their careers.

Wouldn’t it be nice to hear that our President has compiled, not a list of the most villainous terrorists or the countries we should fear the most but instead, a list of books we should read! I found this jingle on a handout for kids, but it might make everyone smile: *The more you read the more you’ll know, your world will expand and your interests will grow! Readers are leaders! Their dreams can come true, so read every day; It’s the smart thing to do!* — Kathy Rieger, Library Director

### Library Hours

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

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

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



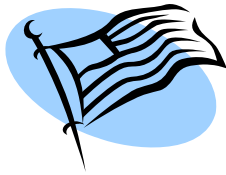
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### We’re Wi-Fi!

Bring your laptop to the library for free internet access.

**@ the Blackstone**

The **flag** on our flag pole was given to the library from Nick Esposito in memory of Salvatore Esposito.



New magazine titles available in our reading room include Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel; Cook's Illustrated; Crafts 'n Things; Every Day with Rachael Ray; Guideposts; Hog River Journal (which recently featured an article on Nellie Green's rum running business on the Farm River as well as an article by Alana Abbott, our Reference Assistant); Metropolitan Home; More; Saveur; and Smart Money.

**A Chilly Mistake** — Did you attend the reception for the Lights of Branford on Friday, December 12? The coat rack that night held two similar black wool coats with velvet hoods, and someone went home wearing the wrong one (with someone else's house keys in the pocket!). Please check your closet. If you have the coat, please bring it to the library and trade it for yours.

**The Walks of Branford**, a new publication by the Branford Land Trust and dedicated to William Van Wie, is just one of the bestselling items available for purchase at the library.

A selection of Federal and Connecticut **income tax forms** can be picked up at the "tax table" in our Reading Room.

You can now pay for your overdue fines and lost items with **Mastercard** or **Visa** at the ground floor checkout desk. There is a \$5.00 minimum for these transactions.

**Staff Picks**

**Linda:** Lorna Landvik's Tall Pine Polka, Your Oasis on Flame Lake and Patty Jane's House of Curl are all heart-warming novels with likeable characters. If you like Mary Alice Monroe, Adriana Trigiani and Jennifer Chiaverini, you might enjoy Lorna Landvik.

**Sandre:** Eggs in Purgatory by Laura Childs: A brand new series featuring three delightful women who open a restaurant with a book nook and a knitting corner. This mystery promises to be a series worth following.

**Patricia G.:** Ballistics by Billy Collins: Celebrate National Poetry Month (April) with the latest offering from twice-appointed U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins. Clear, funny, passionate and poignant, Collins' poems are witty, surprising, uniquely imaginative, and always satisfying. Also by Collins: Questions about Angels and Sailing Alone Around the Room.

**Alana:** Dinosaur vs. Bedtime by Bob Shea: If you haven't ever seen a dozen twenty-somethings perform a picture book at a party, you're missing out. Dinosaur vs. Bedtime was a delight as a read-aloud for grown-ups, and if that's true for us, I imagine it's even more fun for little ones! Mouse Guard: Fall 1152 by David Petersen: Fans of Redwall and The Tale of Despereaux will be delighted to see a new group of hero mice appearing on the scene—and these mice are appearing in comic-style format! There are serious adventures here, and serious danger (for mice!), inside an excellent tale of duty, loyalty, and friendship. The art is beautiful.

**Nancy:** A Gathering of Sparrows by Rumer Godden: This is another old book that that tells about the adventures of children (sparrows) living in the slums of London. Sometimes it is fun to read the books that you read long ago and rediscover them all over again. A Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett: This a very nice old classic suitable for children as well as adults. I read it numerous times as a child and found it even more rewarding as an adult.

**Carol:** The Rain Stomper by Addie Boswell: It's the first day of spring. Jazmin is dressed for a parade—then a loud boom, rattle, crash—no, she's not afraid. A rain storm, a loud, thick, heavy, dark-cloud one. This doesn't stop her, as she sets off on her day. She out-stomps, splashes, shouts and chases that fierce storm away. There is a lot of action in this book, with pictures displaying many forms of movement and expressions. It's nice to know that even rainy days can be fun.

**Jason:** Fiction by Sherman Alexie: Like Alexie's The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, Ten Little Indians is a short story collection that deals with a variety of issues that affect Native American communities. In The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian, Alexie explores the issue of identity in this young adult novel in which a Native American leaves the reservation in order to get a better education.

**Kathy R.:** Prep by Curtis Sittenfeld: While this book centers on the life of students who attend and board in elite private schools at impressionable ages, it isn't necessary to have attended one to identify with this coming of age story. The author deals with all the angst and loneliness of the heroine, Lee, to the point where the reader feels these emotions just as deeply as the protagonist. One can't help but root for Lee to finally graduate and hopefully feel good about herself and the choices she made. The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri: Interpreter of Maladies was a book of short stories that won Lahiri a Pulitzer Prize. She continues her marvelous and rich writing with this first novel, The Namesake. She weaves a wonderful story of an immigrant Indian family in Boston and their life-long struggle between their Indian culture and their life as Americans.

**Patricia B.:** Bend in the Road by Nicholas Sparks: Unsolved traffic accident brings two people together and helps them move on in their lives. Surprising ending on how the accident happened. Grace by Richard Paul Evans: An elderly man reminisces about his first love, a young runaway and former classmate, who taught him more about life than anyone had before or since.

**Deirdre:** Continental Drift by Russell Banks: Banks novel follows the journey of Bob DuBois, from New Hampshire to Florida, and that of Vanise Dorsinville, a Haitian immigrant. The Believers by Zoë Heller: Not quite as good as What was She Thinking? Notes on a Scandal, Heller nevertheless knows how to create some memorable, and troubled, characters!

**Kathy B.:** The Woman's Heart by John A. Eleftheriades, MD and Teresa Caulin-Glaser, MD: This new book written by a Yale surgeon helps to analyze the female heart and its unique concerns. It's a well-written guide to staying "heart" healthy throughout all phases of a woman's life.

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### From the Youth Services Department

The Youth Service Department has been working hard to cure your winter blues. We've bought great books, new release DVDs and CDS. We've had programs galore for kids and families! Mike Michaels, a local musician performed on January 17<sup>th</sup>. He was very engaging and had everyone dancing and playing musical instruments. Tons of kids came to the library during both their holiday break and their February vacation to take a break from the harsh New England winter to play games, make crafts, watch movies and enjoy scavenger hunts. The Blackstone is the place to be for kids of all ages!

Miss Mary's story time had a special Elmo birthday themed birthday party. Everyone enjoyed a game of "pin the nose on Elmo" special songs and crafts were on hand to wish our favorite furry monster a very happy birthday!

The Triple T kids had a talent show that featured more than 20 singers, dancers, musicians and aspiring comedians. Branford has tremendously talented kids!!

The librarians are always here to help with homework. Some schools have made the Blackstone a field trip destination and we have been glad to help students learn to use the library and gather research for their projects. Give us a call we're always glad to be of assistance.

In honor of Lincolns 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, the children of Branford have been making birthday cards for President Abe. The cards are displayed on a bulletin board in the children's department. One lucky child will win the book *Lincoln Shot- A President's Life Remembered* by Barry Denenberg. Come see the creative and thoughtful

cards for our 16<sup>th</sup> president.

Did you know that there is a New York Times Best Seller List for Children's Books? This list is posted in the kids department each Monday morning. See what everyone is reading.

"Boys don't read" Oh how many times we hear this lament from frustrated parents! But we're here to tell you boys DO READ! Let us help your son find a book or magazine to read! We have sports and adventures books, graphic novels, fiction, and non-fiction. We have books that will inspire him, make him laugh or gross him out! You can join the Book Voyager -Reading Adventure series with your son or grandson. It's just for boys! There are 4 great books picked out especially for guys. Or check out the website [www.guysread.com](http://www.guysread.com). This website by children's author Jon Scieszka offers lists of books recommended for boys, guys and men. There is truly something for every guy. So believe it BOYS DO READ!


— Kathleen Feeney  
Youth Services Librarian

*Marble Columns* is a quarterly publication of the James Blackstone Memorial Library and underwritten by the Friends of JBML. Mail subscriptions to members of the Friends; additional copies available at the library or on our website.

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What's going on @ the Blackstone?  
Click on PROGRAMS on our homepage: [www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)

The James Blackstone Memorial Library Board of Trustees and the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library were guests of the New Britain Museum of American Art on Thursday, January 22 (see photo below). The library owns a prized portrait painting of poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919) by American artist Lilly Martin Spencer (1822-1902). This painting is on loan to the museum from the library and is hanging next to another painting by Spencer, which is in the museum's permanent collection.

 Thanks to the Friends of James Blackstone Memorial Library, we have museum passes available for checkout to three more Connecticut destinations: the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme ("Home of American Impressionism"), The New Britain Museum of American Art and the American Clock & Watch Museum in Bristol.



Douglas Hyland, director of the New Britain Museum of American Art speaking to members of the Board and Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library.

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🐾**Megan:** Manic: A Memoir by Terri Cheney: An honest account of the roller coaster existence of the devastating mania and extreme despair experienced by a person with bipolar disorder. I couldn't put it down!  
Private by Kate Brian: The first in the series, *Private* has all the guilty pleasure elements of any other novel about privileged teens but this series has something different—mystery!

🐾**Joanna:** Dewey: The Small Town Library Cat Who Touched the World by Vicki Myron: Dewey is the heartwarming story of a cat abandoned in a library night-time book drop and adopted by the library staff. Not only is it a good read for cat lovers but it also reminds us of the lessons and struggles in life and how we are helped through them by those around us be it human or cat!

🐾**Kathleen:** The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary by Candace Fleming: This is one of just many books published this year in honor of Abraham Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. The book includes newspaper articles and photographs as well as interesting historical information. If you think you know everything there is to know about our 16<sup>th</sup> president you are in for a surprise!  
Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins: I couldn't put this fantasy/adventure/horror novel down, written for teens. Twelve teenagers of a futuristic North American land are chosen to play and they must play to the death. Only one is allowed to survive and the whole country is watching!

🐾**Debby:** Skeleton Lake by Mike Doogan: Well-written police procedural, set in Alaska, that weaves

three different time periods in Detective Nik Kane's life into one gripping tale. Read Doogan's Lost Angel and Capitol Offense first.

🐾**Mary:** Murphy's Law by Rhys Bowen: Interesting, good mystery series—couldn't put it down. Paddington Here and Now by Michael Bond: If you are a fan of Paddington, we own this all-new adventure—what a wonderful book for children.

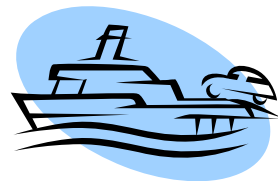
🐾**Barbara:** Bill Buford, fiction editor of *The New Yorker* writes about his experience as an apprentice to chef Mario Batali and his quest to learn authentic Italian cooking in Heat: An Amateur's Adventures as Kitchen Slave . . . . Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly is Anthony Bourdain's sensational account of the culinary trenches of American restaurant kitchens.

## **Hog River Journal features the Thimble Islands**

Over the summer, Reference Assistant Alana Abbott met one of the writers for the *Hog River Journal* as he was researching an article in the Blackstone's vertical files. Alana was so impressed with the magazine he showed her, she decided she would investigate submitting something to the magazine as well. This quarter, Alana's first history article, "Cruising the Thimble Islands: A History of the Thimble Island Ferries," is one of five features in the "Maritime Connecticut" issue of the *Hog River Journal*.

"Cruising the Thimble Islands" is a short history of the ferries that have transported summer residents and tourists through the archipelago off of Stony Creek. The article covers the early years of sailing yachts and steam ships to the glory days just before the hurricane of '38 through the modern histories of the *Volsunga* and the *Sea Mist*. It also discusses how in recent years, the captains of the ferries have acted as the historians for the islands, introducing visitors to a little slice of Connecticut history.

*Hog River Journal* is a quarterly magazine that compiles photo essays, feature articles, short historical snippets, and museum exhibit information, all about Connecticut history. Published by the Hartford Public Library, the journal is available to be read here at the Blackstone.



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**www.blackstonelibrary.org**

—Alana Abbott