

# Marble Columns

Newsletter of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library

## Where does the money go raised from the Friends Book Sale?

To Blackstone Library enrichment programs such as:

Youth Services Programs

Musical programs

Discounted museum passes

Best Seller Book Club

The Library of Things

Films

Educational Lectures

Streaming Services (Hoopla/Kanopy)

Children's summer reading program

## Leftover books after the sale?

### Where do they go?

To non-profit organizations promoting literacy and reading such as:

Baystate Books

Branford Rotary Club

Read To Grow

New Haven Sunrise

Café

We are thrilled to have established a new relationship with *Friends of Kenya*, a non-profit organization creating lasting change in Kenya by building libraries and transforming schools. Many remaining books were gathered to be shipped to Kenya.

## Another Sale for the Record Books

Our Friends Fall Book Sale on the Branford Green this past September was a phenomenal success, setting yet another record. Last year, we were thrilled to surpass \$72,000 in sales, a milestone we thought was a once in a blue moon event and would be hard to beat. However, this year, we outdid ourselves with gross sales just shy of \$74,000. We are humbled by your support. We are also amazed we did this all without increasing our book prices – making it very affordable for all. This incredible achievement is a testament to the unwavering support of our community. Your support has enabled the Friends to continue to offer enriching programs and materials that benefit everyone.

The excitement on opening night was palpable with a turnout that exceeded our wildest expectations. The energy and enthusiasm of our patrons and shoppers were truly inspiring and perhaps a bit overwhelming. As an all-volunteer organization, we are deeply committed to making each event a memorable experience. Our dedicated volunteers, driven by their passion for the library and community, have been diligently reviewing feedback and lessons learned to further enhance the shopping experience in the future.

Looking ahead, it may seem early, but the 2025 book sale will be here before you know it! Please mark your calendars for Thursday, September 18th through Sunday, September 21st, 2025. We are already planning new improvements to make next year's sale even better. In the meantime, enjoy your winter reading material and know that your support makes a significant difference.

## Ring in The Season With Our Holiday Gift Basket Sale

It's that time of the year again, and we're getting ready for our annual Holiday Gift Basket Sale. Mark your calendars.

- December 12<sup>th</sup> 12 PM – 8 PM
- December 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> 9 PM – 5 PM
- December 15<sup>th</sup> 1 PM – 3 PM



The sale will be held on the bottom floor of the library across from the circulation desk. During Branford's Sip and Stroll with Branford's Main Street Merchants on opening day enjoy festive music, complimentary prosecco and holiday cookies. Our beautiful baskets are very reasonably priced, and you'll find something for everyone on your shopping list. Enter our raffle to win great prizes! Winners will be selected Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM.

Thank you for the donations we have received so far. We can continue to accept your generous donations through December 5<sup>th</sup> at the bottom floor circulation desk. **And thank you for your support in helping to make this fundraiser for our Library a big success!**

# Upcoming Friends Sponsored Programs at Blackstone

## **ADULTS:**

- Creativebug Workshop: Winter Greeting Cards - Thursday, December 5 @ 6-7:30 pm
- Holiday Lights Winter Concert: Sunday, December 29 @ 2-3 pm
- Silk'n Sounds Concert: Sunday, January 5 @ 2:30-3:30 pm
- New England Pirates: Monday, January 13 @ 6-7 pm
- Jigsaw Puzzle Tournament: Saturday, January 18 @ 2:30 – 4:30 pm
- Tales from Brother Grimm: Wednesday January 22 @ 6-7 pm
- The Golden Age of Hollywood: Monday, February 3 @ 6-7:30 pm
- New England UFOs: Tuesday February 11@6-7 pm

## **Academy Award Sundays: Sundays 1:30 – 3:30 pm**

January 26: Past Lives (2023, PG-13)  
February 2: The Holdovers (2023, R)  
February 9: American Fiction (2023,R)  
February 23: Oscar Winning Shorts

## **Third Thursday Movie Matinee: Thursdays 10 am – 12 pm**

December 19: My Man Godfrey (1936)  
January 16: The Court Jester (1955)  
February 20: Now, Voyager (1942)

## **Saturday Cinema - Saturdays, 2 -4 pm;**

December 21: The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992, G) with cookies and hot cocoa  
January 25: Twisters (2024, PG-13)

## **Best Sellers Book Club**

December: No meeting  
January 25: The Author's Guide to Murder by Beatriz Williams, Lauren Willig & Karen White  
February 22: The Stolen Queen by Fiona Davis

## **KIDS:**

- Homeschool Meetup, Once a month on Mondays | December 9, January 13, February 10 @ 2pm to 3pm
- Graham Cracker Decorating for Grades 1 and up, Wednesday, December 11 @ 2:30 to 3:30
- Winter Family Take-N-Makes, Once a month on Last Wednesdays | December 18, January 29, February 26 @ 9am to 8pm *Drop-in event.*
- Snacks and a Film: Inside Out 2 (2024) for all ages, Friday, December 20 @ 2pm
- Noon Year's Eve Storytime for ages 0 to 5, Tuesday, December 31 @ 11:30am - 12:00pm  
*Drop-in event.*
- Science Saturdays with Cool-ology for Grades K-4, 1st Saturday of the month @ 10am to 11 am | January 4, February 1
- Valentine's Slime for Grades 2-5, Wednesday, February 5 @ 4pm to 4:45pm
- Get Movin' with Northeast Athletics and Training, Saturday, February 15 @ 10:00am to 11:00am. Ages 3-8.

## **TEENS**

- Teen Spa-tacular: Hot Cocoa Sugar Scrub and Peppermint Lip Balm, Monday, December 16 @ 3:30pm to 4:30pm .
- Trash to Treasure: Upcycled Crafts, Thursday, January 23 @ 3:30-4:30pm
- Teen Mini-Masterpieces, Thursday, January 30 @ 3:30-4:30pm
- Kitchen Creations: Valentine's Day Cookie Pops, Thursday, February 6 @ 3:30-4:30pm

*Check the Library website for a detailed description and the most up-to-date information at [www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org). Some programs require pre-registration. Some programs require pre-registration while others are drop-in events.*

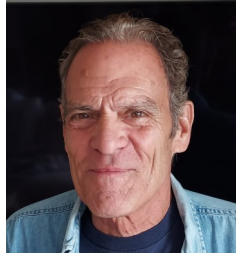


## Friends—Volunteer Spotlight

Jon Bloom likes to fix things – which might explain his “can do” attitude concerning all things related to the successful projects he has contributed so much to for the FBML organization. He has been a major player in the move to the Thompson Avenue warehouse last winter, was a principal part of the Fall Book Sale committee and currently is a member of the Finance Committee and on the Board of Directors for the Friends.

Originally from Eaton’s Neck on the North Shore of Long Island, Jon enjoys early memories of swimming and outdoor sports there. The family moved to Orange CT to be closer to his Dad’s job. Robert Bloom was an accomplished musician and taught in the Yale Music School and Juilliard, training many aspiring oboe students. His mother was also a talented cellist. While attending Amity High School Jon met his future wife, the creative and talented artist Lucia, who would head the art department at Laurelton Hall in Milford. Together they are the proud parents of daughter Alessandra, currently living near Venice, Italy.

Jon’s interest in “fixing things” especially centered on his love of cars and led to positions of mechanic and then Service Manager at Honda in New Haven,



and ultimately a 35 year career at Sikorsky starting in the 70’s. The Blackhawk helicopter was just being developed and Jon took training courses and became a lead mechanic. At Sikorsky he particularly enjoyed the overhaul and repair of older aircraft from the 50’s and 60’s. During that time, he helped form a water ski club on the Housatonic river and water skied in amateur competitions around New England.

As for other leisure interests, the Blooms spent vacations at a large farmhouse on Squam Lake in New Hampshire, originally bought in 1922 by Jon’s grandfather. From June to Labor Day they could be found there hiking, water skiing and crewing a Lightning class sailboat (and when time allowed, also playing golf and tennis). It seems that he is perfectly suited to sort the Sports category of donated books – a Friend’s project he handles on a weekly basis.

Saving the best for last, Jon is an avid sports car collector, currently including a ‘64 Corvette and ‘85 Porsche. If you see a guy in a classic Corvette convertible go by – just wave, that probably will be Jon!

## Scarecrows on the Green



Friends of the Blackstone Library was pleased to participate in the Branford Garden Club’s recent “Scarecrows on the Green” event. Our talented members Jon & Lucia Bloom once again created a truly remarkable display. Next to it was a bin which our volunteer, Susan Moher, continuously stocked with children’s books. Folks were welcome to come and pick out a favorite book or two to take for free. One of the Friends’ missions is to promote and facilitate a love of reading amongst the children of Branford and surrounding communities. We are always pleased to participate in this annual event and give back to our community.

### Be part of a Great Team!!!

We have an opening for a person to pick-up book donations at two locations within Branford behind the Library and at the Volunteer Services Center on Harrison Ave. and bring them to the Friends warehouse also located in Branford one day a week. Requirements: Must drive and have access to a car or truck capable of accommodating bins and boxes of books; must be able to lift 40+ pounds; must be reliable. If interested, email [friends@blackstonelibrary.org](mailto:friends@blackstonelibrary.org)

### Beautiful Sounds

Our Book Sale was graced by the melodious tunes of Al Daniels once again on Saturday. The music was a delightful hit with everyone. Thank you All!!



### In Memory

In August, we lost a wonderful Friends Volunteer, Andrea Schieckel Clark. For many years, Andrea coordinated the children’s section of the annual book sale. She will be deeply missed for her dedication and humor.



758 Main Street  
Branford, CT 06405

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Articles contributed  
by:  
Sandra Brockett  
Joe Genua  
Linda Milici  
Nancy Reynolds

Editor-Susan Stackpole

## From the President

I can't believe another amazing Annual Fall Book Sale is already behind us. And what a sale it was!! We nearly hit \$74,000 in proceeds before expenses—a record amount! This means even more funds can be allocated to the Blackstone Library for enrichment materials, programs and activities for our community.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our generous community sponsors (businesses, members and individuals) whose support—both monetary and in-kind—helped offset our book sale expenses. Your contributions are invaluable.

We owe everything to our volunteers. Each and every one of you is critical to the success of the organization, no matter the role or time spent. To show our appreciation, we held a lovely Volunteer Celebration on October 1st at the Library, with sincere thanks expressed by the Library Director Katy McNicol and Janice Kochanowski, President of the Library Trustees.

But there is no rest for our dynamic Friends organization. We are busy preparing for the Holiday Basket Sale, happening at the Library December 12th through the 15th.



With holiday music on Thursday night, it promises to be a delightful seasonal event with perfect baskets for everyone on your shopping list. We would love to see you there!

Enjoy the season, stay well and keep reading,

Barbara Barrett, President  
[friends@blackstonelibrary.org](mailto:friends@blackstonelibrary.org)