

# Marble Columns



Newsletter of the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library

## Spring Sale at the Friends Warehouse! 20 Thompson Road Saturday May 3, 2025 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Book sale of Children's, Young Adult, Teens, Fiction, Literature, and a special collection of Boating Books, Plus DVD's, and even Puzzles for all ages!

*Thank you to all who responded to our survey. Your input is greatly appreciated and will help Friends move forward and plan for our future. If you have any further questions, please email us at [friends@blackstonelibrary.org](mailto:friends@blackstonelibrary.org)*

## Save the Date!

**Friends Fall Book Sale  
2025  
September 18 - 21**

The location for the sale may move from the Branford Green due to the construction on Main Street.  
Stay tuned. More to come.

## The Value of the Friends

What would the Blackstone Library be without its Friends? That is a question I don't like to think about! The Friends are so very valuable to our library – and to our town. Not only do the Friends raise funds year-round to support enrichment and enhance library offerings, but they provide ample opportunities for community connections (anyone who has attended the bustling Book Sale on the Green knows how often friends and neighbors run into each other while shopping). The volunteer members who work together also develop strong relationships which serve to make the entire group powerful and resilient.

This past year, I have seen the Friends address the critical challenge of finding new warehouse space, and in doing so, create even stronger connections with their networks and membership. The core transition team even won an award for how they rose to that particular challenge!

And despite challenges, the Friends of the Blackstone continue to find ways to raise funds that they, in turn, grant to the Blackstone. These funds are not part of the library's annual operating budget – we don't count them when we plan for maintenance, salaries, the core collection, and services. That is not what the Friends support.

What the Friends DO support are so many things on top of that core budget. The Friends and their incredible members work hard year-round to raise money which the library then uses to help fund:

- The incredible array of programs offered to babies, children, teens, adults and seniors. Not every program we offer costs us money, but most library programs that do cost money are funded by the Friends!

- Special collections such as the Best Seller Book Club books, Library of Things items, museum discount passes, Hoopla and Kanopy digital materials.
- Transparent Languages, our digital language learning service offered to library card holders for free.
- Furniture and equipment that help create a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere and display shelving, as well as providing for special services like free scanning and 3D printing.
- Staff appreciation and training to help keep staff moral up and offering group in-service training sessions that make our staff better prepared to offer fantastic customer service to the community.

If the Friends did not exist, the library would have to figure out how to fund all of those things or else do without!

We are so fortunate in this town to have such a vibrant, well-organized, and dedicated Friends group. On behalf of the library staff and trustees, I thank each of you for your membership, for your volunteer work, and to the Friends Board and President, for your visionary and passionate leadership. I look forward to working with you in the coming year, to overcome the challenges and celebrate the successes!

Katy McNicol,  
Blackstone Library Director

## Upcoming Friends Sponsored Programs

### **ADULTS:**

- **Creativebug Workshop: Greeting Cards**  
Thursdays 6–7:30 pm, 3/20, 4/17, 5/15
- **Laugh Like the Dickens:** Humorous Stories with Mr. Dickens  
Monday, March 3 @ 6–7:30 pm
- **Sprout Your Success:** A Beginner's Guide to Seed Starting  
Monday, March 17 @ 6–7 pm
- **Doox of Yale A Cappella Concert**  
Sunday, April 13 @ 2–3 pm
- **Smartphone Photography Workshop**  
Saturday, May 24 1–4 pm
- **Third Thursday Movie Matinee** Thursdays 10am–12 pm  
**March 20:** *Forbidden Planet* (1956)  
**April:** No Meeting  
**May 15:** *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945)
- **Saturday Cinema** Saturdays 2–4 pm  
**March 29:** *Wicked* (2024, PG)  
**April 19:** *Beetlejuice 2* (2024, PG-13) \*note: 10am-12pm\*  
**May 31:** *Conclave* (2024, PG)
- **Best Sellers Book Club**  
**March 29:** *Three Days in June* by Anne Tyler  
**April 26:** *Dream Count* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
**May 31:** *Rabbit Moon* by Jennifer Haigh

### **KIDS:**

- **Science Saturdays with Cool-ology for Grades K-4**  
1st Saturday of the month @ 10am to 11 am | March 1, April 5, May 3
- **Beads, Bracelets and Keychains for grades 3-6**  
Monday, May 5 @ 4:00 to 4:45
- **Homeschool Meetup**  
Once a month on Mondays | March 10, April 14, May 12 @ 2pm to 3pm
- **Spring Family Take-N-Makes**  
Once a month on Last Wednesdays | March 26, April 30, May 28 @ 9am to 8pm
- **Snacks and a Film: The Wild Robot (2024) for all ages**  
Friday, March 14 @ 2pm

### **TEENS:**

- **Kitchen Creations: Edible Terrariums**  
Thursday, March 27 @ 3:30-4:30pm
- **Personalized Book Box for grades 5-12**  
Register by 4/7 to pick up a box the week of 4/14/25
- **Food Explorers: Italian Fruit Tarts**  
Wednesday, April 16 @ 3:30-4:30pm
- **Teen Marbled Bags**  
Thursday, May 1 @ 3:30-4:30pm

**Important:** 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 while others are drop-in events.



**Looking for a book?  
No need to wait for a sale!  
Friends offers two Book  
Carts!**

On the main floor of the Blackstone Library affordably priced books can be found on the **Friends Book Sale Cart** in the rotunda during Library operating hours—adult fiction, children's books and a shelf that changes genres periodically.

Plus, the **Virtual Book Cart** is now open until May 1st! - offering mostly books within the last several years in both hardcover (\$3) and trade paperback (\$2) format. Browsing and purchasing is as easy as 1-2-3! Pick up books at the library. Visit [blackstonelibrary.org/friends/](http://blackstonelibrary.org/friends/) for more information.

## The Friends 2024 Holiday Gift Basket Sale

The Holiday Gift Basket Sale was a big success this year, and we so greatly appreciate everyone's support. A heartfelt thank you to all of our generous donors, our volunteers and shoppers! To our donors, your generosity enables us to continue in our mission to support the James Blackstone Memorial Library and our community. To our volunteers who planned the event, donated items and assembled baskets, baked cookies, and participated in the sale, we are so grateful for your time and effort on behalf of this worthy cause. To our shoppers, your annual support of this event is a key to its continued success. Our sincere thanks to the BHS Carolers and flautist Mimi Griffin Dudley who performed festive music for our holiday event. And a big shout out to our library staff for their help and patience with the disruption this festive event caused!



Proceeds from the sale totaled \$6,107.00. That's a 30% increase over 2023! We sold 118 baskets for a total of \$3,933.00, an 18% increase over 2023. Raffle proceeds were \$1,444.00, a 51% increase over 2023. Cash donations totaled \$730.00, a 75% increase from 2023.

Save the dates: Our 2025 Holiday Gift Basket Sale is planned for December 11<sup>th</sup> –December 14<sup>th</sup>.

## Friends—Volunteer Spotlight

Upon entering the FBML warehouse if you are greeted by "Mabel" – a small four-legged whirlwind, you will know that Nancy D'Amico is there. Nancy volunteers by sorting donated books into categories, listing CD's and DVD's on Ebay, creating Facebook and Instagram posts to publicize Friends events and coordinating with the library on selecting Friends sponsored programs.

Nancy, born in Lakewood, Ohio, and, after living in southern California for a brief period, eventually settled in Connecticut – first in Westport and then in Branford.

Nancy attended UConn as a Psych major but her real interest was in Special Education. Her first job was in the building supply industry in Milford, where she met husband Ed. Their two boys, Nathan and James, soon arrived and she became a stay-at-home mom to them, as well as Ed's four sons. In 2005 she started her career in the Branford school system as a Special Education paraprofessional at Tisko Elementary school, circling back to her true interest. She retired from that

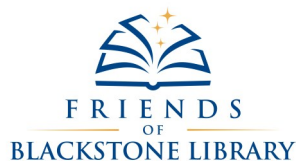


position after fourteen years to concentrate on a growing family (now with three grandchildren 6,4 and 2 living in Guilford and Mabel's companion, a 13 1/2 year old Newfoundland!). No stranger to volunteerism, she currently makes deliveries for the local food pantry and in the past was coordinator for the Community Dining Room, was active in the Congregational Church of Branford as a summer camp director, volunteered with Camp Totokett and chaperoned on many youth mission trips. This year she looks forward to visiting Paris in April and Mexico in the fall.

When asked why she volunteers with Friends, Nancy expressed that she believes in its purpose and likes to meet new people plus "the Fall Book Sale has such good energy and is good fun! It's a huge undertaking and I'm proud to be part of it. Friends is a well run organization where my efforts are appreciated. It's not busywork."

Thank you, Nancy for all your hard work and enthusiasm for the Friends and the library!

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Looking for someone to pick up book donations one day a week at two locations within Branford (behind the Blackstone Library and at the Volunteer Services Center on Harrison Ave.) and bring them to the Friends warehouse located in Branford. More info at <http://blackstonelibrary.org/support-the-library/friends-of-the-library/>



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Katy McNicol, Library  
Director Member Ex-Officio

#### **Articles contributed by:**

Sandra Brockett  
Katy McNicol  
Nancy Reynolds  
**Editors:** Jeanne Hayes  
Susan Stackpole

## **From the President**

As we start a brand-new year, I extend my sincere wishes for a prosperous and joyous 2025 to each of you. Your unwavering support and dedication over the past year have been nothing short of inspiring.

Throughout the past year, your contributions have made a tremendous impact on our community. Every hour you've volunteered, every donation you've made, and all the enthusiasm you've shared have been the backbone of our organization. It is because of your commitment and generosity that we have been able to achieve our goals and support the library to the fullest extent possible.

Our festive Holiday basket sale, held at the JBML was a resounding success. With over 130 baskets for



sale and 6 raffle items, we raised just over \$6,000! A huge thank you to everyone who donated to the sale and came out to shop. Special thanks go to the amazing coordinators of the sale— Sandra Brockett, Susan Moher, Helen Murphy and Billie Cohen.

I also want to express my gratitude to all who responded to our Friends survey in January. Your feedback will enable us to continue building and maintaining a strong and vibrant organization.

Until next time,

***Barbara***

President—Friends of JBML