

Friends News of Brooks Memorial Library

224 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

From the Board



Starting at top: Frankie Gibson, Vice President; Mary Ide, President; Howard Burrows, Trustee Representative; Jerry Carbone, Library Director; Lisa Fricke; Sue Dyer, Secretary; Joyce Marcel; Kate Wylie; Connie Kimball, Treasurer. Bob Oeser is missing.

THE PAST YEAR been an exciting — even surprising — one for the Library staff, the Trustees and Friends of the Library. We started the fiscal year with an understanding of the difficult budget constraints faced by the Town of Brattleboro, constraints that would affect the Library as a Town department.

In light of Brattleboro's financial challenges, the Trustees and Friends embarked on a first-ever annual appeal campaign, with a goal to raise \$17,500. The Friends, a 501(c)3 organization that can accept tax-deductible donations, spearheaded this campaign in collaboration with the Trustees. Annual appeal letters were drafted in the late summer for distribution later in the year.

In the summer of 2014 the Trustees were informed that a generous bequest was slated to come to the library. However the timeframe for receiving this

bequest was uncertain — as was the size of the bequest.

The annual appeal was launched, and by January 2015 we had raised \$20,000. Also in January we learned that an extraordinarily generous \$1.2 million bequest has been left to the BML Trustees' library endowment by the late Ronald Read, a lifetime Brattleboro resident who had passed away in June 2014.

The Endowment Fund of the Brooks Memorial Library has been in place for over 100 years and grows through bequests and other donations. An independent investment manager, selected by the Board of Trustees, manages the fund. As is custom, the endowment's principal is intended for long-term growth. The annual withdrawal on the endowment is between 4% and 5% of its value, a

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fiscally prudent rate recommended by investment management practices.

With additional funds now available through the endowment, annual appeal and the Friends fundraising efforts, the Library plans to:

- restore open hours cut when the Town budget was reduced;
- proceed with physical plant renovations to make the library space more welcoming and relevant for today's uses;
- update technology needs and assure the timely

purchase of books, subscriptions and digital resources.

Although the Library continues to receive a majority of its funding from the Town of Brattleboro, clearly the increased endowment, a continued annual appeal and Friends fundraising will help keep our Library a vibrant and vital community resource.

If you have questions about the Friends of the Brooks Memorial Library and our mission, please feel free to contact the Friends Board members, the BML Trustees or Jerry Carbone, Director of the Library.

New Board Members

KATE WYLIE



LAST SEPTEMBER, the Friends Board welcomed a new member, Kate Wylie. Kate brings to the Friends a range of skills and insights cultivated from her careers as a meditation teacher, psychotherapist and potter.

Kate believes that “the Brooks Memorial Library is a free public space which makes our community possible. At the library we all have access to learning which opens our minds and our lives to new worlds.”

Since 1975, Kate Wylie has practiced meditation in many settings including at the Insight Meditation Society and the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center in Massachusetts. Kate now teaches at Vermont Insight Meditation Center. She also currently teaches meditation at The Cheshire County jail in Keene, New Hampshire.

Between 1975 and 2008, Kate worked as a psychotherapist in England, Somerville, Massachusetts and Brattleboro. Her practice included a special focus upon to the effects of social oppression due to race, sexual orientation and class.

In 2002 Kate joined the Mudflat Studio in Somerville, MA and began to study pottery. Currently she is an active member of Brattleboro Clayworks.

JOYCE MARCEL



AT THE FRIENDS JANUARY MEETING, Joyce Marcel was welcomed as a new Board member. Joyce brings to the board a wide-ranging knowledge of local art, culture, politics, business and music gained through her work as an award-

winning journalist and columnist.

Joyce says that “ever since I got my first library card at age seven and started working through the books in the children’s room shelf by shelf, libraries have been sacred places to me. I am in the Brooks Library at least once a week. It helps me with my reporting and my research projects as well as my addiction to detective novels. It’s a treasure and I want to do whatever I can to protect it and keep it rolling.”

Marcel has been writing for Vermont Business Magazine since 1990 and in 2000 Joyce won the Gold Award for Reporting from the Association of Area Business Publications. Currently her opinion pieces, news and art stories appear in *The Commons*; formerly she was a long-time columnist for *The Brattleboro Reformer*.

Before becoming a journalist, Joyce was a costume designer in San Francisco and New York. She then traveled extensively in South and Central America.

Thank you to all who generously donated to the 2014 Annual Appeal

Peter and Marion Abell	Douglas Cox and Lisa Anderson Cox	Jennifer Lann	Mark and Denise Rivers
Jackie Abrams	Creative Carpentry (Janet Hulnick)	Diane Leary and Timothy Cavanaugh	Robert and Ellen Rounds
Andrew Adam	Nancy Crompton	F. David Levenbach	Sandra Rouse
June Anderson	Patsy Cushing	Doreen and Gary Lincoln	Erik Schickedanz and Ruth Allard
Elliot Anders	John and Judith Davidson	Debra Loevy-Reyes	Hervey and Robin Scudder
Kathy Andrew	Andy and Robin Davis	Bernard Luskin	Brian Shafford
Jean Arrington	Rebecca Day	Deborah Lee Luskin	Vincent Panella and Susan Sichel
Stephen Baker	Raymond De Vries	Meg Lyons and Jim Johnson	Prentiss Smith
Nancy Barber	Anne Duzinski	Larry MacIntosh	David Snyder
Katherine Barratt	Susan and Paul Dyer	Patricia MacNamara	Marcia Spencer
Wendy Bayliss and Eric Pofcher	Michael Earley and Kimmerly Nace	Patricia and Neil Manders	Elizabeth Spicer
Pamela Becker	Helen Egan	Joyce Marcel	Robert Stack
James Bedard	Cameron Elliott	Jim and Gay Maxwell	Brian and Johanna Staveley
Joan Benneyan	Richard Evers	Tim Mayo	Russell and Doris Stephens
Ike and Maureen Bergeron	Philip Feidelseit	Ann McCloskey and Joe Meyer	Jane Swanson
Jack and Judith Berkley	Brooke Finnell	Elizabeth McCollum and Lisa Fricke	Douglas and Ann Switzer
Diana Bingham	Carol Forsythe	Richard Michaelman	Elizabeth Tannenbaum and Peter Falion
Tony Blofson and Denise Paasche	Nova Fraser	Jane Michaud	Dodie G. Thomas
Susan Bonthron (Otter Pond Bindery)	Adam Franklin-Lyons and Marjorie Wickenden	Paul Miksis	W. Nicholas Thorndike
Ernest Boudreau	Jerold Goldberg and Donald Shaw	Georgia Morgan	Robert Tortolani
Francesca Bourgault and Vivian Woodland	Tom and Connie Green	Eric and Dale Morse	Elizabeth Trousdell
Hollie Bowen and Paul Love Jr.	Howard and Francine Groverman	Justyn Moulds and James Swan	Susan W. Troy
Jane Buckingham	Vern Grubinger and Travey Devlin	Patrice Murray and Fred Breunig	John and Elizabeth Ungerleider
Steven Budd	Freddie Hart and Christopher Hunt	Alfred New and Christina Wozniak New	David Usher
Marilyn Buhlmann	Seth Harter	Margaret Newton	Allen and Dorothy Vander Meulen
The Bunbury Company (Liz Bankowski)	George and Rose Haynes	Kim Noble	Vermont Community Foundation (Josh and Kate Traeger)
Irene Burtis	Melissa Hays	Jane Noyes and Andy Ingalls	Ken Vitale and Jane Rosser
Hollie Burke and Peter Gould	Charles and Mary Henderson	Ellen O'Beirne and Thomas H. Lowell	Janet Wallstein
Mary Byrnes	Karen and Randy Hesse	Rose M. O'Connor	John Warren
Jerry Carbone and Kathleen Maisto	Wendy Houlihan	John Ogorzalek	John Wesley
Wayne Carhart	J. Parker Huber	Susan Olson	Veronica and Marchall Wheelock
Hollis Purdy Carlisle	Mary Ide	Park Place Financial Advisors	Anne Wiley
John and Mary Carnahan	Harriet Ives	Susan Parris	Norma Willingham
Stan and Barbara Charkey	Claudia Jacobs and Ralph Palmer	Periwinkle Foundation (Jeane and Ray Walker)	Katie Wilson, Junio Anthes Moody, and Jubilee Anthes
Alice Charkes	Russell Janis and Constance Snow	Joan Mary Pinilla	Windham County Bar Association
The Childrens' Writers Group (c/o Jessie Haas and Michael Daley)	Bill and Martha Kelly	Dawn Pollard	Elizabeth Wohl and Rebecca Balint
Kelly Coleman and Amir Flesher	Michael Kennedy	Dean and Lucille Porter	Muriel Wolf
Combined Jewish Philanthropies (Barbara and Harvey Pofcher)	Janis Kiehle	Marie Procter	Malcolm and Marjorie Wright
Peter Cooper	Judith and Donald Kinley	Robert and Sen Pu	Kate Wylie
Bruce and Carol Corwin	Linda and John Kohler	Patricia Putnam	Judy Zemel
	Sarah Kotkov	Shoshana Rihn	
	John Kristensen	Dale and Barbara Riker	
		Stephen and Barbara Ritchie	

The Local History Room

by Joyce Marcel

THERE'S A MYSTERIOUS LOCKED ROOM

on the mezzanine of the library where — as reference librarian Jeanne Walsh says “You can hold living history in your hand.”

A few weeks ago, Jeanne and I set out to explore just a few of the wondrous treasures in the collection.

The first thing we looked at was a file holding fragile issues of “Asylum Journal,” a yellowing weekly newspaper published every Tuesday by inmates of the Vermont Asylum, now called, of course, the Brattleboro Retreat.

The library has issues dating from 1842 to 1846. Who knew?

Jeanne then handed me a piece of 1993 research done by Thomas St. John relating to Dr. Robert Wesselhoeft's famous Brattleboro water cure. Back in 1844, when Wesselhoeft opened his spa on Main Street, taking the curative Brattleboro spring waters was quite the thing to do. Even Harriet Beecher Stowe came here, Jeanne told me.

What I didn't know was that Wesselhoeft came to Brattleboro after being driven out of Boston by no less a personage than Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. What did Holmes have against him? Homeopathy. According to Holmes, it was “a pretend science,” a “mingled mass of perverse ingenuity, of tinsel

erudition, of imbecile credulity, and of artful misrepresentation, too often mingled in practice... with heartless and shameless imposition.” Tell us how you really feel, Oliver.



Since homeopathy and other forms of alternative medicine are still big in Brattleboro, you could say the more things change, the more they remain the same.

But before we could even say that, we were on to a cabinet full of ancient books published by Brattleboro's Fessenden Press in and after 1814. There were

Bibles and religious treatises with names like “Solitude Sweetened: or Miscellaneous Meditations of Various Religious Subjects.”

Then Jeanne pointed out that the cabinet also contained artifacts of one John Doherty, who died in Brattleboro on March 22, 1847 at the age of 58.

And that led us to the wild tale of Captain Lightfoot and Captain Thunderbolt, two notorious English highwayman who fled England just ahead of the hangman's noose.

Doherty — or “Thunderbolt,” as he did not prefer to be called after he went straight — settled in Dummerston, practiced medicine for 29 years (without a license) as Dr. John Wilson, and built



Friends Giant Paperback / CD / DVD Sale

Friday, April 10th from 10AM–6PM
Saturday, April 11th from 10AM–2PM

Low prices for paperbacks / CDs / DVDs
Fiction, non-fiction, coffee table,
photography and more!



The Local History Room; bust is of Maria Leavitt Hunt

the round brick schoolhouse in Brookline. Lightfoot kept on robbing people and was finally hanged in Springfield, Mass. around 1821.

Later on, a Brattleboro man named Harry R. Lawrence became obsessed with collecting Thunderbolt memorabilia; his collection in the cabinet includes Doherty's medical bag, his eyeglasses and several sword canes.

Talk of Thunderbolt led to a discussion of other scoundrels Brattleboro has known and loved. For instance, the infamous and flamboyant Madame Sherri, actress, costumer, world traveler and rumored madame. She is the subject of a large

file full of fascinating and glamorous photographs and breathless news stories.

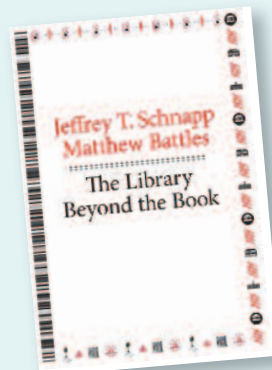
We ended by examining a file containing two tiny dance cards from the Estey Guard Concert and Ball. One of them was for a ball on the evening of February 5, 1891. It showed that its popular owner danced a quadrille with Mr. Harris and another with Mr. J. F. Hooker. Attached to the card by string was a slender pencil with a papillote string tip. It was so tender and alive a document that it brought me close to tears — holding living history in my hand, indeed.

Note: The room is an intellectual treasure for researchers into Brattleboro history: because books, clippings, and other ephemera are organized and cataloged, it's possible to find information on specific subjects very easily. In fact, it's much more a print library collection than a museum of artifacts, although the artifacts are certainly enticing in themselves.

The Local History room is located on the mezzanine and is available to all researchers during regular business hours. It contains approximately 5000 book volumes and clipping files on the history of Brattleboro and neighboring towns, plus town directories, cemetery records, military rosters, and more. This collection is separate from the collection of the Brattleboro Historical Society, whose offices are next door to the library in the Brattleboro Municipal Center. Many researchers consult both collections for a comprehensive search.



MANGO LANGUAGES provides online interactive instruction for 45 languages. Ruth Garbus, a Brattleboro guitarist, says she has tried it and is "very excited to use it."



LIBRARIES are places for "access, congregation, contemplation, delight, discovery, dispute, escape, hiding, repose, research, secrecy, self-abnegation." From *The Library Beyond the Book* by Jeffrey Schnapp and Matthew Battles.

First Wednesday Series Schedule

APRIL 1st • 7PM Main Floor

The National Security Agency: The Law, the Media, and the Legacy of Edward Snowden

Retired NSA executive Bill Sullivan discusses the NSA's foreign intelligence mission as well as its process, governance, and oversight, and examines media reports based on material provided by Edward Snowden.

Underwriters: Vermont Bar Association, Windham World Affairs Council

MAY 6th • 7PM Main Floor

The Duel: Aaron Burr vs. Alexander Hamilton

Was it murder or suicide when the vice president of the United States killed the first Secretary of the Treasury in a duel? Willard Sterne Randall, award-winning biographer of Hamilton and five other Founding Fathers, tells this fascinating story.

Underwriter: Merchants Bank

Thursday Films at Brooks Memorial Library



Movies you must see...but might have missed!

The second Thursday of the month February 12th through October 8th
Movies begin at 3PM • Library Meeting Room 2nd floor

Contact library for a flyer with titles by phone at 802-254-5290 ext 0,
or by email at info@brookslibraryvt.org brookslibraryvt.org

Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301
The event is free and open to the public.

Join cinefile & journalist, Tom Bedell, for a Thursday afternoon at the movies.

February 12th • The Parallax View

Starring Warren Beatty, William Daniels, Paula Prentiss (DVD)

March 12th • Local Hero

Starring Burt Lancaster, Peter Riegert, Fulton Mackay (DVD)

April 9th • The Professionals

(Special Edition) Starring Burt Lancaster, Lee Marvin, Robert Ryan (DVD)

May 14th • The Wrong Box

Starring Michael Caine, John Mills, Peter Sellers (DVD)

Revenge Reading and Discussion Series

A READING AND DISCUSSION SERIES —

What are the causes of revenge? What are the consequences? Is taking revenge ever justified? Explore this most passionate and provocative of human desires through short stories, and novels.

Join Vermont Humanities Scholar and long-time Brooks facilitator Richard Wizansky for an evening of engaging discussion on this universal topic. The books are available for checkout at the Front Desk. The discussions are held in the Meeting Room on the 2nd Floor.

Wednesday, April 15th • 7PM

Andrew Dubus — Selected Stories

Wednesday, May 27th • 7PM

Russell Banks — The Sweet Hereafter



VOLUNTEERS ARE A MAINSTAY of the Brooks Memorial Library. In 2014 there were 52 volunteers who provided 3,121 hours of help in shelving books, moving collections, preparing historical materials for digitizing and much more.

What your Membership Buys



INTERESTED in finding out more about your ancestors? The Friends annual \$1,500 subscription to the Ancestry Library Edition database gives Brooks Library patrons instant access to a wide range of resources for genealogical and historical research.

Searchable records include the U. S. Census; military records; court, land and probate records; vital and church records; directories; petitions for naturalization; passenger lists and more. Between 2013 and 2014, Brooks patrons conducted close to 5,000 searches.

Ancestry Library Edition is accessible on all the public computer stations in the library and on any laptop or mobile device that's connected to the library's wireless network. Reference staff are happy to help patrons find and use the database. For more information, please contact the Reference Desk at 802-254-5290 x109 or asklibrarian@brookslibraryvt.org.

Parking for evening Library events

IF YOU PLAN to attend an evening event at the Library, the Municipal Parking Lot behind the Library is available for free parking after 6PM. It is a short walk to the rear entrance of the Library and there is an elevator to the First Floor.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Supporting the
Library with funding,
programming, and
technology

friendsofbrookslibraryvt@gmail.com

802-254-5290

www.facebook.com/FOBML

Friends Annual Meeting

Friends

OF BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Thursday, May 14th • 7PM
Join us for our Annual Meeting

Special program to be announced
Light refreshments