

Friends News

of Brooks Memorial Library

224 Main Street, Brattleboro, Vermont

President's 2018 Annual Meeting Report

By Joyce Marcel

FIRST OF ALL, we lost our beloved Frankie Gibson on New Year's Day. She had been a board member almost since the beginning of this organization, and we loved her generosity and wit. We miss her.

Libraries are public spaces. We need to be aware that this holds danger as well as joy. Starr spoke to us about safety issues facing our beloved library. There was recently a training from local police and firefighters around the issue of safety from intruders and weapons, and as a result, a committee from the trustees is working on a safety plan, which includes a drill (to happen soon), relocation of panic buttons to easier-to-access locations, and a wireless key fob-type alarm for lone evening workers. Starr said that although we would like Brooks designated as a "weapon-free" zone, local and state laws about guns supersede this and so this would not be enforceable.

The safety committee is also looking at the possibility of getting an AED device. Also, there will be a workshop about administering Narcan.

The Journalism Film Festival was a happy success. We showed five films in the series, attracted about 250 people, and most people — to my surprise (although I had ready a tip jar) — made donations of \$10 or more even though we showed the films for free.

We started by having Humphrey Bogart declaim the importance of news and newspapers in "Deadline USA." "Ace in the Hole," starring Kirk Douglas in an unforgettable and intense performance, showed how journalism can go wrong. Just before we

showed it, it was named as one of the Library of Congress' "25 Films to be Preserved" this year, was referenced in an article in *The New Yorker* and was cited as a "Good Idea" by the ALA in a recent newsletter.

We also showed "Broadcast News" in January and "Spotlight" in February. "Spotlight" packed the house and several people asked us to do another festival next year.

The Latchis turned out to be a remarkable partner — they bought the films, made fantastic posters, they gave us a table in the lobby, showed the films, and Jon Potter, the executive director of the Latchis, even stayed afterwards to join the discussions as a former journalist. We also had top-notch people speaking: the *Rutland Herald's* Susan Smallheer, former *Reformer* editor Kate Casa, *The Commons* editor Jeff Potter. And *The Commons* news editor, Randy Holhut, hosted all the films. Best of all, our media partners, *The Commons* and the *Brattleboro Reformer*, gave us a lot of coverage.

The experience showed how well collaborative partnerships can work.

Our next collaboration was with the Brattleboro Rotary. Marty Cohn and Joe Little presented to the Friends their plan for a literacy project: Little Free Libraries. They constructed seven library boxes and contacted seven artists to decorate them. The boxes were lovely. We sold three the first day! Six went quickly and we raffled one at the book sale. All told, we netted about \$2,000.

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New Officers and Board Members

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, held on May 19th, a new set of Officers was elected to the Friends Board: Joyce Marcel, President; Betsy Wagenknecht, Vice-President; Connie Kimball, Treasurer; and Karen Duggan, Secretary.

The Annual Meeting was also the occasion for welcoming new members Jamie Harvey, John Komar and Jennifer Robinson.

Jamie Harvey is currently pursuing a Master of Information degree with a concentration in library science from Rutgers University. He works in the Development Office of Marlboro College as an Advancement Services Assistant and as a contractor for the Brattleboro Music Center where he is performing an inventory of the Blanche Moyses collection. He is passionate about reading, ideas, information literacy, and information management. Jamie is grateful for the opportunity to be a member of the Friends board.

John Komar grew up in Manhattan, Calcutta, Ankara, Washington, D.C., and Boston, plus two summers in Vermont making it his home of homes, returning at every opportunity until moving here in 2002.

Professionally, John developed and produced "The Star Market High School Quiz Show" in Boston, ultimately reformatting it into a board game for *Newsweek Magazine*. Continuing in marketing, he developed and wrote sales proposals, working for *U.S. News & World Report*, and finally moved to Brattleboro while commuting to Peterborough, N.H., as associate publisher at a business magazine.

John has a B.S. from Boston University School of Journalism and an Ed.M. in Education from Harvard, and libraries have been his center and source of fascination. He looks forward to



Pictured L to R: Jennifer Robinson; Joyce Marcel, *President*; John Komar; Kate Wylie; Starr Latronica, *Library Director*; Karen Duggan, *Secretary*; Sue Dyer; Betsy Wagenknecht, *Vice-President*. Not present for the picture: Connie Bresnahan, *Trustees Representative*; Jamie Harvey; Connie Kimball, *Treasurer*.

supporting Brooks Memorial Library, especially with fundraising initiatives.

Jennifer Robinson grew up in the Midwest and moved to Brattleboro two years ago from Louisville, Kentucky. She is currently the IT Director for Commonwealth Dairy, home of Green Mountain Creamery.

When her family moved to Brattleboro, they fell in love with the library. Jennifer has served as a library volunteer and considers it an honor to serve now as a board member. She looks forward to working with the board to promote the continuation and growth of Friends-sponsored events; her personal favorite is the First Wednesdays lecture series.

Jennifer is married to Scott and they have two daughters: Lindsey, a junior at the University of Vermont, and Caitlyn, a sophomore at BUHS, who has also served as a library volunteer. Jennifer enjoys walking their Golden Retriever, Otis, and spending time volunteering in the community. ■

Dessert Evening

ON THE EVENING of Friday, April 13th, about 70 people gathered in the Main Room of the library to enjoy a luxurious spread of desserts, participate in a smorgasbord raffle and chat with friends. The event was so well received that the Friends are planning to make it an annual event, to be held in April.

The Friends would like to thank the following businesses and individuals who donated their goods and services to this fundraiser: Amy's French Macarons, Against the Grain, Colonial Spa, Grafton Cheese, Penelope Wurr, Renaissance Jewelers, Robb Family Farm, Superfresh!, Top Tier, Quiet Designs, Connie Bresnahan, Jerry Carbone, Klara Charlton, John Dimick, Karen Duggan, Sue Dyer, Mary Heninger, Jaime Harvey, Moss Kahler, Jenny Karstad, Connie Kimball, Joyce Marcel, Therese Marcy, Lynette Pritchard, Patty Propster, Jennifer and Scott Robinson, Susan Rohde, Starr LaTronica, Betsy Wagenknecht, Kate Wylie and Shari Zabriskie. ■

First Wednesdays 2017–2018 Series



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SEASON of the Vermont Humanities Council First Wednesdays Lecture Series has come to an end. All told, 707 people had the pleasure of attending these lectures.

This series is one of the most expensive items that the Friends help sponsor, and we greatly appreciate the local businesses and organizations which contributed to this season's cost: Brattleboro Savings & Loan, Dead River Company, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC, The Richards Group and the Windham World Affairs Council.

We are currently soliciting contributions for next season's series. If you have, or know of, a business or organization that might be interested, please contact Joyce Marcel at friendsofbrookslibraryvt@gmail.com or Brooks Memorial Library Director, Starr LaTronica at 254-5290. Contributions are acknowledged in all the Vermont Humanities Council's First Wednesdays publications, as well as in local publications and at the start of each lecture. ■

Book Bag Fundraiser

SALES of the Friends book bags did not go as well as hoped, but an unexpected request made it possible to put our overstock to good use.

Friends president Joyce Marcel learned from Patricia Whalen, former judge on the War Crimes Chamber in Bosnia/Herzegovina, that refugee camps in Sarajevo were in need of tote bags for the people flooding into the camps. Joyce relayed that information to the Friends board, who were delighted to authorize a donation of 50 bags.

It might be a stretch to say that the Friends outreach is now worldwide, but at least a small corner of the world will benefit from our donation.



Children's Room Summer Programs

THIS SUMMER the Children's Room will be presenting the Libraries Rock! Summer Challenge. Children earn points by attending library events, completing the weekly discovery station, and of course reading! Once 25 points have been earned, children win a prize. Each child can earn multiple prizes over the course of the challenge. Prizes include: free books, prize packs, gift certificates to local eateries and stores, and passes to fun activities. Children can join the program by stopping by the Children's Room anytime between Monday, June 18, and Wednesday, August 1. The completed forms must be turned in by Saturday, August 11, to receive a prize.

Every day throughout the summer the Children's Room offers a free craft table and a STEM-based Discovery Station for children to explore music and sound. Children can also find the hidden picture of a musical instrument to enter a weekly drawing for a prize.

Monday Movie Matinees



Our Monday Movie Matinee series, sponsored by Bellville Realty, begins on Monday, June 25, and runs through Monday, August 13. This year's movies in order are: *The Incredibles*, *Sing*, *The Emoji Movie*, *Coco*, *Wonder*, *Leap*, *Despicable Me*

3 and *Moana*. The movies will start at the new time of 1:30PM and run approximately an hour and a half. All movies are rated G or PG. FREE and open to the public.



Libraries Rock! Workshops

On Thursdays we will be offering our Libraries Rock! Workshop series. These programs will begin at 1:30PM.



June 28: We kick off with a "Song Writing with the Annies" workshop for children ages 7 to 12. There is a strict limit of 10 participants, and registration is required. Thank you to the

Friends for sponsoring this exciting program.

July 5: Children are invited to make jar lid banjos and spin drums during our instrument making workshop.

July 12: Libraries Rock! takes on a new meaning when the Brattleboro Mineralogical Society presents hands-on explorations of unique and interesting rocks and minerals.

July 19: We will hold our monthly LEGO-palooza event.

July 26: Children can discover dancing and food during our "Salsa and Salsa" event. Sign-ups are required!

August 2: Children are invited to experience the various aspects of sound during our "Sound Exploration Lab."

August 9: Children can decorate life-sized cardboard guitars.

August 16: We wrap up the series with LEGO-palooza.

Libraries[™] Rock!

For Little Ones and Families

For our littlest patrons, ages 3 and under, we will once again be offering our early literacy program. Together parents and children complete twenty-five suggested activities, such as "Read wordless books with your child" and "Put a puzzle together with your child" to help build early literacy skills. Complete the twenty-five activities to earn a prize: your choice of a board book or a day pass to KidsPLAYce.

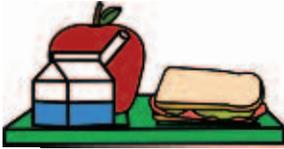
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On Tuesday mornings at 10:30AM, beginning on June 26 and ending on August 14, we will be offering a free series of "Sing and Dance with Robin." This program is offered in collaboration with KidsPLAYce, which hosts the program during the school year, and is sponsored by the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library.

We will continue our Wednesday morning Rhyme Time at 10:30AM.

Teen Reading Program

Any teen that checks out library books or attends a library event can pick up a scratch ticket to win a prize. These prizes will include gift certificates to local businesses including Sam's Outdoor Outfitters, Latchis Theatre and Taco Bell. No sign up or logging book titles required!



Summer Food Service Program

Brooks Memorial Library is a proud participant in the Summer Food Service Program. This year, lunch will be offered Monday through Friday from 12:00 to 1:00PM starting on Monday, June 25, and running through Friday, August 10, with the exception of July 4, when the library is closed. All children 18 and under are invited to enjoy free lunch at the library — no registration is needed. Parents can join their children for lunch by purchasing a meal for \$3.50. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Check the Website

Visit our website at www.brookslibraryvt.org/kids for more information about upcoming programs. Have questions? Please contact the Children's Room at 254-5290, ext 1210 or stop in the Children's Room. Brooks Memorial Library is located at 224 Main St in Brattleboro. The summer challenge is supported by the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) and is sponsored by the Vermont Department of Libraries, Bellville Realty, the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library and other local sponsors. ■

We did two large books sales this year. The December book sale brought in close to \$5,000. Betsy Wagenknecht suggested we raffle off gift baskets during the sale. She made one, Starr made two, and I made one. The baskets earned another \$200. The summer book sale brought in another \$2,500.

We held a dessert evening/raffle on Friday, April 13, at the end of National Library Week. Tickets were \$10 and included dessert, coffee and three chances to win a raffle prize. It was an enchanting event — a big party with about 70 people eating way too much cake and chatting with neighbors and friends. It was so lovely to spend time with the library community that we decided to make it our signature event and hold one every April.

The annual appeal brought in \$11,049.

The First Wednesday's series had another successful year. We're currently looking for corporate sponsorship for next year's series.

Starr brought a suggestion from librarian Therese Marcy that the Friends fund the purchase of a subscription to "Bookpage" magazine. This is a complimentary book review which comes out monthly and would be put in places displaying other free publications. We voted to fund the purchase of 100 copies per month.

Howard Burrows, on behalf of the trustees, asked for \$500 to have the library's artwork professionally rehung (after the renovation). We voted to fund this request.

We updated the handbook.

The book bags we ordered for the 50th Anniversary Party led us to our proudest moment. We had a hard time selling the book bags, so when Patricia Whalen put out a request for tote bags to take to refugees in Sarajevo, we were delighted to donate 50 bags for this worthwhile cause.

Coming up: Samirah Evans and Evelyn Harris on October 19, and a fashion show at a date to be determined. ■

June Book Sale

OUR JUNE BOOK SALE, held on the weekend of the Strolling of the Heifers, was very successful. As of publication of this newsletter, it has generated \$3,600.

As always, these sales are successful due to both the generous contributions of books by our patrons and the dedication of volunteers who help set up, man, and break down the sale.

We wish to thank Autumn McAuliffe, Carmen Berelson, Evan Bolivar, Mary Carnahan, Carol Davis, Karen Duggan, Jamie Durham, Mark Eggert, Peter Falion, Melissa Hays, Mary Heninger, Wendy Houlihan, Mary Ide, Pat Ireton, Harriet Ives, Susan Jacobowicz, Connie Kimball, Joyce Marcel, Elaine Murray, Bob Oeser, Susan



Michael Celona and Lucia enjoying the sale!



Rohde, Dianne Shapiro, Vickie Shepard, Erin Shulman, Jane Southworth, Robert Stack, Kathryn Turnas, Betsy Wagenknecht, John Eagenknecht, Walter Wagenknecht, Amy Wickstrom, Kate Wylie and Carol Young.

Therese Marcy, Circulation Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, does planning and recruiting of all the volunteers for the sales.

All the monies raised from these sales are used to support library programs and services. Thank you to everyone for all the help in running the sale. And a special thank you to our patrons for supporting the sale through contributions and for shopping at the sale. We couldn't do it without you. ■

Rare Book Find

WHEN BOOK DONATIONS ARRIVE at the library, several people look through them to see what might be useable for the book sales. Several years ago, Elaine Murray came across a very slender volume which turned out to be a rare and bitter-sweet find. Written in German (and translated by our Bob Oeser), it was entitled *Sparrow Makes Her Way* and inscribed with "Love, Evi, your Aunt Becker. Cologne, Rosh Hashanah, 5699.

On researching it Elaine discovered that it was the last Jewish children's book published under the Nazi regime in 1938. It was also one of the last things published by Philo, the publishing house for Jewish groups in Germany. Printed in the fall of 1938, the book never went to market, as the Gestapo closed Philo in November of that year. The author, Meta Samson, and her daughter

Marlene, who had inspired the book, both perished in Auschwitz in 1942.

Bob found out that Columbia University already had a copy in their collections but at their suggestion contacted the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. The Institute was interested in acquiring it and, with support from the Judaica Conservancy Foundation, was able to purchase it.

An effort was made to track down the book's donor, but that effort was unsuccessful. It is hoped that the donor may read this article and learn that the book is now carefully preserved in the library of the Leo Baeck Institute, a research library devoted to German-Jewish history. ■



Brattleboro's Literary History and the "Words Project"

By Mary Ide

IN SEPTEMBER OF 2016 the Friends of the Library and the Brattleboro Historical Society co-sponsored a public forum to gather thoughts and ideas about ways to promote the vibrant history of printing and publishing in Brattleboro. Interest in this history grew; other organizations got involved, and in 2017 a project emerged titled, *People, Places and the History of Words Brattleboro, Vermont* ("The Words Project").

"The Words Project" is a collaborative effort to bring our literary history to light through podcasts, tours, exhibitions and a published book. With matching funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this four-year project is driven by five institutions including: the Brooks Memorial Library, Marlboro College, the Brattleboro Literary Festival, the Brattleboro Historical Society and Write Action.

Write Action is managing the publication of an eminently readable, interesting and graphically handsome book about Brattleboro's printing and publishing history and culture. This work is being researched and written by 15 local authors with editorial oversight by Jeff Potter, Editor-in-Chief of *The Commons*. The narratives will include photos

and graphics. Our projected publication date is the fall of 2019.

Community and student research teams will explore and document, through audio podcasts and a website, the history of words as embedded in places and sites around Brattleboro. These audio segments will be linked to maps for walking, biking and driving tours.

The Words Project has already installed two exhibits in the Brooks Library. The first, installed in the fall of 2017, documented "Brattleboro's Letterpress Years." The current exhibit, "Brattleboro's Printing and Publishing Heyday, 1900 to 1970" can be seen until the fall of 2018.

On the second Thursday of every month, The Words Project hosts a free public Roundtable session that highlights one aspect of the project themes. The July 12th Roundtable event will focus on one-time Brattleboro resident and famous author Rudyard Kipling.

For more information about the project, Roundtable discussion, exhibits and research work, see brattleborowords.org. ■

Little Free Library Update

THE LAST OF THE SEVEN "Little Free Libraries" donated to the Friends by the Brattleboro Rotary Club's Literacy Project has found a home: Kevin O'Keefe was the happy winner of the raffle that ended June 2nd. The other six LFL's had previously been sold outright, and the combined income from this fundraiser, including the raffle tickets, came to about \$2,000.



The lucky raffle winner, Kevin O'Keefe

All the proceeds will be used to support the library with programs or materials to enhance the library's mission. In addition, the LFL's themselves will enhance the library's mission by contributing to literacy in our area—precisely the goal of the Brattleboro Rotary Club's Literacy Project.

Thanks to all who helped to support this worthwhile project! ■



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