



WOODS HOLE LIBRARY NEWS

Spring 2016

Volume 11, Issue 7

Smithsonian Magazine, in 2014, recognized Woods Hole as one of the “Best Small Places to Visit” for reasons that included its abundance of cultural opportunities. The performing arts are well represented in this abundance, and in this issue, we provide a mini-history of a few of our acting groups—the Woods Hole Theater Company, Brian Switzer’s Acting Camp, and Brazen Belles’ emcee Curtis Suede. We also profile our Library’s “elder statesman,” Seymour Cohen, and our newest librarian, Liz Saito. As the last newsletter co-edited by Terry McKee and Pamela Nelson, we say goodbye as well.

Seymour Cohen: Our Elder Statesman

by Laurie Raymond

Spending a few hours in discussion with Woods Hole resident Dr. Seymour Cohen is rather like taking a brisk stroll through an entire set of encyclopedias. The breadth of subjects that not only hold his interest, but about which he is deeply knowledgeable, is astounding. His current areas of interest and research include (but are certainly not limited to) the history of science, the settlement of Liberia by free American blacks in the 1800s, Jefferson’s correspondences with Dr. Thomas Cooper, the eradication of disease in the US, Haitian history, vaccine development and viral replication, England’s contributions to the Industrial Revolution, and the current competition for the US Presidency.

At 99, Seymour is arguably the most senior “circulating” Woods Hole Library patron, and in an effort to appease his insatiable intellectual appetite, he works constantly: reading, researching, corresponding, writing, and contributing to various organizations and committees on which he serves. In addition, he makes several trips weekly to the Woods Hole Library, counting on the experience and expertise of the Library staff to help him track down and obtain materials needed for his research. Somehow, Seymour finds time also to indulge in lighter fare, including mysteries and international thrillers, and finds the Library’s collection most impressive.

Born in Brooklyn, Dr. Cohen attended City College in New York and then earned his PhD in Biochemistry at Columbia University. His accomplished career began with a Polio Foundation Fellowship at the prestigious Rockefeller Institute at Princeton. The next four years were consumed with the development of the typhus vaccine, followed by a lengthy and successful teaching career, including twenty-nine years at the University of Pennsylvania, and shorter stints in Denver and at Stony Brook, all the while continuing his research on viral replication and other areas of interest. In the summer of 1948, Dr. Cohen and his family first came to the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, to join what he refers to as “the greatest collection of biologists in the world,” returning every summer thereafter.

Upon his retirement in 1985, Seymour and his wife Elaine (the late artist and sculptor, in whose memory the Woods Hole Library has a large collection of art books) settled in Woods Hole permanently, where he continued to dig deeply and tirelessly into various subjects. It was then that the retiree finally found the time to further research and write about the lives of Drs. Thomas Cooper and Joseph Priestley (fellow chemists and Philadelphia intellectuals) and their influence on US political thought, as well as their subsequent correspondence with Thomas Jefferson. Thirty years into the effort, he is still uncovering and integrating new material.

Seymour continues to keep up daily with the *New York Times* and with several weekly scientific publications. He maintains an active membership

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Library Hours

Mondays Noon - 5:30, 7 - 9

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 3 - 5:30

Wednesdays 10 - 5:30, 7 - 9

Saturdays Noon - 5:30

Woods Hole Public Library

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Seymour Cohen, continued

in numerous professional organizations and has most recently been a contributor to a forthcoming publication about the eradication of a major disease in the US. Though he gave up playing serious, competitive tennis ten years ago, Seymour continues exercising regularly. He is visited often by his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. In short, other than an occasional afternoon nap, Dr. Seymour Cohen shows very little inclination toward slowing his pace.



Elaine Pear Cohen Exhibit

On Monday, July 18 at 7:30pm, the Library will remember Elaine Pear Cohen with an exhibit of some of her smaller works and a display of some of the Library's art book collection purchased through the book fund set up in her memory. Co-author Ruth Gainer will discuss their book, *Art: Another Language for Learning*, which presents true stories about the role of art in childhood development. Elaine's best known local work, *The Conversation*, permanently on view on Water Street in Woods Hole, shows three seated scientists absorbed in conversation. She was a spokesperson on the impact of the arts on the quality of community life and upon business and economic development.

Newsletter Staff

Terry McKee and Pamela Nelson, with Emma Dvorak
Contributors: Prosser Gifford, Laurie Raymond, Anne Richards, and Curtis Suede

Brian Switzer's Acting Camp

by Pamela Nelson

It is mid-morning in July on Water Street in Woods Hole. The drawbridge is up, cars and pedestrians are waiting impatiently. Brian Switzer, relaxed and smiling, sits on the front steps of Community Hall. Behind him a giddy bunch of kids bursts out from the front door to cluster or scoot down to the sidewalk. Passersby might wonder what all those kids are up to, and why Brian is smiling. For the kids, the answer is simple: they are there to participate in Mr. Switzer's Summer Acting Camp. For Brian, the answer is more complex, harking back to his own childhood love of acting.

Theater is written into Brian's genetic code, it seems. Turn back the clock almost 50 years and you would see Brian's mother, Phyllis Switzer, standing at the door of the MBL Club, just down the street from Community Hall. A strict taskmaster, she was summoning her young actors, "The Woods Hole Players," for a rehearsal of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. From 1968 through 1971, Phyllis and her associate, Liz Davis, of the Woods Hole Cantata Consort, directed full productions of four Gilbert and Sullivan operettas: *Patience*, *Princess Ida*, *The Mikado*, and *Pirates of Penzance*. Brian, age seven the first year, was the youngest participant, and among the most eager. He already knew all the words to these operettas, which he and his mother sang from start to finish as they drove together to Woods Hole each June. The actors were all kids, the official lower cut-off age being 10, and the leads were extraordinarily talented teenagers. They all worked toward a single performance, staged at Lawrence High School, in front of a packed hall. Those who were involved



Brian Switzer on the steps of Community Hall

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Brian Switzer, continued

back then recall the experience as a highlight of their Woods Hole summers. Some, including Brian, later went on to join the Penzance Players, a somewhat older, independent group in their teens and twenties, who produced one play each summer.

Brian began his own summer Acting Camp years ago at Morse Pond School, where he taught traditional sixth grade until the principal asked him to create what became the school's TEAM (talented, eager, and motivated) program during the regular school year. Acting Camp was a summer morning program he devised for kids who wanted to continue the fun they enjoyed during TEAM activities at school, and it included theater games, working from scripts, making masks, all "without having to do math in the afternoon." For Brian, with a mortgage to pay and a baby on the way, it was a pleasurable way to supplement his teacher's salary.

After several years he moved his Camp to Woods Hole, where the president of the Community Association was glad to have the hall put to optimal use during the day by a known and trusted villager. The Camp is popular with both year-round and summer kids and provides solid jobs for twelve counselors—older teens and twenty-somethings—who are well paid for their work supervising the up to 70 kids who participate. ("I'm good for the local economy," Brian says with pride.) His son, Elijah, also a teacher in the Falmouth schools, assists him in the mornings and then runs the afternoon version of Camp, "Second Act." Elijah, like his father, has the family theater gene.

Acting Camp runs in July for four weeks, Monday through Thursday. On a basic level, it provides good, safe childcare, where kids get to do "neat stuff." There is a structure that has been successful over the years. The first week is devoted to theater basics. Kids are taught to consider several questions that they must answer for themselves and their audience. *Who am I? What is my goal here on stage? Where am I? How do I convey the sense of a character?*

The second week the counselors "raid" the Woods Hole Public Library for children's books, from which the kids select several to dramatize in small groups. They prepare for 2 ½ days and then present the resulting dramatizations at the Library. Even inanimate objects may become characters. Brian reminds the kids that theater is about entertaining an audience. "Never disrespect your audience by presenting something that isn't fun to watch," he tells them.

During week 3 they use high-definition cameras to make films. Their challenge is to make something that is watchable. Brian assists with editing.

The final week is devoted to making a live music video. He says it is the hardest task they face, but also the most rewarding. Results are shown at the Library. All film work is archived on video and can be accessed on YouTube by searching under "Brian Switzer." There is always a group video. For instance, interested readers are urged to look up "New Shoes," and also "Happy Woods Hole."

Looking back, Brian cannot recall ever having a camper who didn't have a good time. The main objective, he says, is not about learning theater, but about getting along and being friends with everyone.

Signing Off

by Terry McKee

As co-editors of the past eighteen issues of the Library's biannual newsletter, Pamela Nelson and I have spent many hours together, poring over our pieces, discussing vocabulary, punctuation, and layout, and reading articles aloud to check for clarity. Our strengths were complementary. I could never aspire to Pamela's fine sense of grammar, and she insists that I spared her many challenges with computer technologies. True or not, our partnership worked, mainly because our mutual goal was to produce a lively, engaging, and readable publication, and to have fun in the process.

Early on, we decided to expand the scope of the newsletter to include profiles of some local luminaries. Thus I had the pleasure of conducting interviews in venues that ranged from the basement library of Llewellyn Hillis and the late Paul Colinvault, to the Library roof with Tom Chase. In addition to her interviews, Pamela traveled to various CLAMS libraries for her virtual tours series.

We credit Liz Braun (2007–2011) and Emma Dvorak with doing layout for us, but they also corrected our mistakes, reined us in if we strayed into hyperbole, and, best of all, they were a pleasure to work with. We enjoyed escaping from our own points of view when others (Kellie Porter, Laurie Raymond, Anne Richards, Prosser Gifford, Bob Pelletreau, and Amy Sanger, to name a few) took on an interview or article.

We have been gratified to hear occasionally that a library patron had read the newsletter from cover to cover, or had enjoyed a particular work. While we may be signing off as editors of the newsletter, it is not for lack of many more great subjects we might have covered. It's just time.

Also leaving the board are Daniel Gomez-Ibanez, Cam Larrey, and Josh Leveque, though we all plan to continue as loyal volunteers.

Locally Grown: Woods Hole Theater Company

by Anne Richards

Lisa Jo Rudy stands in front of the stage, clipboard in hand, watching as a dozen teens and tweens rehearse the culminating scene in the play she has written, *The True Adventures of Snow White and Prince Charming*. With only three days to go before the first show, her parting words to her cast, delivered with remarkable calm, are “Learn your lines.”

Lisa is not the first playwright to unveil an original work through the Woods Hole Theater Company (WHTC), a theater group known for its spirit of adventure in offering “off-beat” works as well as time-honored classics. According to Joan Edstrom, long-time WHTC member, producer, director, and president of the board, WHTC is able to experiment with new works and eclectic offerings because of its connections with the Woods Hole community. The group rents the Woods Hole Community Hall for rehearsals and performances, and meetings are held at the Woods Hole Public Library. Having access to these venues frees the group from needing to own property, a financial burden that has led to the demise of many community theater groups. Edstrom stresses that the group exists “for community benefit, not to make money,” which allows them a lot of freedom in choosing scripts. The recent schedule of performances has included plays by renowned playwrights like Neil Simon alongside local playwrights such as Lisa Rudy and Lydia Sargent.

Theater has deep roots in Woods Hole. In 1930, Sarah and Mary Meigs, twin sisters and aunts of current WHPL Board member Nawrie Meigs-Brown, founded the Penzance Players, along with their governess, Miss Balfour. Woods Hole Library benefactor Thomas Ratcliffe advised the fledgling group, which produced plays for more than 55 years before its dissolution in 1984.

In 1973, a new group called the Woods Hole Theater Festival was formed with the objective of bringing contemporary theater to Woods Hole. Although initially met with enthusiasm, the group’s emphasis on “heavy and humorless” productions failed to attract audiences and the group folded, leaving behind a substantial debt. In the following year, the WHTC was launched by three members of the bankrupt Theater Festival, with the support of several Woods Hole residents. The newly-formed WHTC assumed the Theater Festival’s debt, which it managed to repay within a few years. The WHTC is now in its 42nd year, presenting a varied lineup of plays and readings throughout each year.

A hallmark of WHTC productions is inventiveness, partially born of slim budgets and the limitations of the performing space, which was built in 1878.

The stage has no space for passing behind the back curtain, so if an actor needs to exit stage right and enter stage left, s/he must exit the building entirely and walk around it to be let in at the other side. Limited budgets do not limit productions, however. An early example is the 1975 production of *Wizard of Oz*, in which each member of the audience was provided a handmade pair of cardboard glasses with green cellophane lenses and asked to put them on when Dorothy and her gang reached the Emerald City. A more recent example is the magic mirror in Rudy’s *Snow White*, in which young actress Isabella Youmans appeared and disappeared from the mirror’s surface at the wave of a wand. Created through simple tricks with wood, fabric, and lighting, the effect was stunning, and the acting no less wonderful.

The True Adventures of Snow White and Prince Charming opened to an enthusiastic audience of mixed ages and was an unqualified success, despite things not always going according to plan. But as Lisa Rudy commented after one performance, “It’s theater! If something goes wrong, you just go with it.” And go with it they have, to great success and to the benefit of our community.



Photo by Peter D. Cook

Book Sale Reminder

Don’t miss our Spring Book Sale!
Opening Day: Saturday June 4, 10am to 5pm
Lots of new donations, including a large collection of books on Civil War history.

Book Sale Donors:

- Please drop off donations indoors during library hours.
- We welcome clean hardback and paperback fiction and nonfiction.
- Please, no encyclopedias, textbooks, or mold.

Curtis Suede: For Whom the Belles Toll

by Terry McKee

No history of theater in Woods Hole would be complete without including the latest addition to the performing arts—The Brazen Belles. A burlesque troupe of ladies clad in corsets and fishnet tights, the Belles sing and dance their way through hilarious and original performances that have packed the houses wherever they play. The group's founder Aanjes Hershfield sought to "create a thinking person's burlesque," reported Troy Clarkson in a recent *Falmouth Enterprise*, celebrating what he calls "the boundless boundaries of beauty" and "body positivity."

A prominent figure in the shows is Curtis Suede, the troupe's emcee, played by Woods Hole's Amy Wilson Sanger. Debuting with the Belles at the Woods Hole Community Hall in 2012, Curtis "nestled," he says, "right into the bosom of art and culture." A suit from her husband's closet and a pair of spats comprise her simple costume, along with a Fu Man Chu mustache and goatee. Through sheer swagger and attitude, Amy's appearance is transformed. "People who don't know me honestly believe I am a man. At least for a while..."

Amy describes Curtis as an amalgamation of her observations, "a pinball machine for stereotypes, about both men and women, that ricochet all over the place. He is a placeholder for utter absurdity." The emcee work, Amy says, is "a platform for transforming my writing into live performance, which I find utterly thrilling. I aim to create cohesion, and to stay fresh with a new theme for each show, which I weave throughout the introductions to each number." Celebrated for his electro-swing dance style, Curtis's music tracks are often selected and edited by Amy's teenage son.

"Burlesque has a rich cultural history, to which the Belles pay serious homage," Amy explains. "This kind of bawdy performance goes back to the Greeks, 400 BCE. It's in the foundations of western civilization... it speaks to something fundamental in human nature—not just sex, but thinking, creating, talking, and joking about sex. Burlesque is not sex. It's about sex. Historically, burlesque was very popular in England during the Victorian era. I highly recommend it for Downton Abbey fans," she adds parenthetically.

"Once burlesque hit New York in the early 1900s, there was an explosion of American style—Vaudeville, Music Halls, hoochie coochie, cabaret, Go-Go, striptease." In recent years, burlesque has enjoyed a resurgence in cities and towns throughout the US and beyond, known as the 'neo-burlesque' movement."

"What I love about neo-burlesque is that it gives wide berth for humor, parody, satire, political and social commentary, within the context of theater, music, and dance, and all body types are represented. The beauty of playing Curtis is that he is full of polarity. He's sexist but a true admirer and lover of women. He's the first to use them and the first to defend them. As the token 'male', he's a very convenient foil for the ladies. Shallow and deep, narcissistic and neurotic, he's an idiot and a Renaissance man. He's human! And..." she laughs, "he's very attractive. He might be sleazy, but the audiences really connect with this character."

Curtis and the Belles work on many levels. They get a lot of laughs for sheer irreverence, but their main objective is not simply to shock or to push the boundaries of good taste flippantly. "The sex-positivity message makes some people hesitant to come to a show. That's ok. It's definitely adult material, and not everyone's cup of tea. Most often, our audience leaves with faces and bellies aching from laughter. The show is a healing release for everyone."

"This is a new generation of feminists. They come from a political vantage point different from their mothers' generation. These women choose to express themselves through this art form. It turns out, performing a striptease can be a subversively feminist act."

The women in this troupe have families and/or demanding professions and pursuits. "You want stripper scientists," quips Curtis, "I'll give you stripper scientists," referring to young WHOI scientists and PhD candidates who have performed as Belles between research cruises. The troupe changes as performers take time to have babies or pursue higher education. New performers join, but a core group has remained consistent. "These are incredibly active, busy, smart, talented women. Some are musician/vocalists who perform solo or with bands. One is classically trained and sings opera. Performing with the Belles is a real labor of love. Aanjes has created a wonderful outlet for guest performers in the community as well."

The group performs yearly in Woods Hole, as well as at the Cotuit Center for the Arts, and most recently at Highfield Theater. This June, a trio of Brazen Belles, Aanjes, Katie Meyer, and Jodi Edwards, will perform in Las Vegas at the esteemed Burlesque Hall of Fame. Curtis plans to accompany them, explaining, "I'm very proprietary about my girls." This same trio won the "Best of Festival" award at the Las Vegas Burlesque Festival this past fall.

See the Belles' Summer Spectacular, titled "In the Wild" at the Cotuit Center for the Arts in August. For more information, visit <http://brazenbelles.com>.

Map Specialist to Speak at Annual Meeting

On Tuesday, July 12th the Library will hold its Annual Meeting. Ronald E. Grim, Curator of Maps since 2005 for the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library, will be the featured speaker. Before coming to Boston, Ron spent 33 years working with the cartographic collections at the National Archives and the Library of Congress. In a Boston Globe interview in 2013, Grim said, "Our mission is not just to collect and preserve maps, but also make people curious about how maps can teach us about history, world cultures, citizenship, and, of course, geography."

His presentation, which will include early maps of Cape Cod, will begin at 8:00 pm following a short business meeting. A brief reception will follow.

Welcome Liz Saito

Liz Saito has joined the library staff, filling the position vacated when Carol Wagner retired in late 2015. Liz is familiar to many already, having lived in Woods Hole since 2005, with two previous local careers—first as a reporter for WCAI, Woods Hole's NPR station, and later as a reporter for the *Falmouth Enterprise*. As the mother of two young children, Kunio, 8, and Rory, 1, and with a background in English Literature, Liz was pleased to take on a "simple job in service of literature and a great organization." She has authored two photo books for children, one with her husband, chemical oceanographer Mak Saito, about an expedition to the Antarctic. The other is a child's guide to Falmouth's Spohr Gardens. Next time you drop by, please join us in welcoming Liz to the Library!



Local Authors: The Doc and the Duchess

by Terry McKee

The Doc and the Duchess: The Life and Legacy of George H. A. Clowes, written by his grandson, Alexander W. Clowes, celebrates the lives of G.H.A. Clowes, who played an important role in the development of insulin, and of his wife, Edith.

Born in Victorian England, "Alec" Clowes started his life in research in Buffalo, New York, where, in the early 1900s, he met and married Edith Whitehill Hinkel. He held leadership roles at the Eli Lilly Company in Indianapolis, at the University of Toronto, and in Woods Hole. It was in Woods Hole that Alec and Edith picked up their sobriquets, the Doc and the Duchess.

The book follows the couple through the first half of the twentieth century, through the growth of their family and the beginnings of their enduring interest in philanthropy. Through letters, photos, and remembrances, the author has created for us a portrait of a man who was a "a man of science for all seasons."

SUMMER CALENDAR 2016

JUNE

- 4 Annual Spring Book Sale, 10am–5pm
- 11 Hungry Town Concert, 7:30pm
- 24-25 *As You Like It*, shown at Falmouth Academy, 7pm & 2pm

JULY

- 6 *The Horse*, book talk by Wendy Williams, 7:30pm
- 12 Annual Meeting. Speaker Ron Grimm, 8pm
- 13 Equal Justice Book Discussion Group:
Just Mercy by Bryon Stevenson, 7:30pm
- 18 Remembering Elaine Pear Cohen, 7:30pm
- 19 Lassalle Dance Lecture, 7:30pm
- 26 Lassalle Dance Lecture, 7:30pm
- 27 Book Talk *Fellow Traveler*, 7:30pm

AUGUST

- 2 Lassalle Dance Lecture, 7:30pm
- 3 Equal Justice Discussion, TBA
- 6 2nd Annual Accessories and Adornment Sale
- 9 Lassalle Dance Lecture, 7:30pm
- 20 Summer Book Sale 10-5

EVENTS FOR CHILDREN

- July 9 Children's Tag Sale and Carnival, 10-12
- July 13, 27 Brian Switzer: Drama Performances
- July 6-Aug 10 Wednesday Morning Story Time, 10:30
- Aug 17 Bat Workshop—bring a T shirt!

New Volunteer Program

The Library has long depended on the help of enthusiastic volunteers for everything from maintaining the bulletin board to manning our events and programs. As the Library's role in the community has expanded and plans for future programs grow, the Library is looking to increase its reliance on the talents and generosity of the community to maintain its standard of service.

Library staff, board members, and community members gathered recently around the Ratcliffe Room table to discuss possible new directions for the Library. It is clear that our programs are well received and that there are more ways in which the Library can serve the community. Up till now, director Margaret McCormick and the other librarians have tried to keep everything going on their own, doing their jobs, and then some, to meet the increasing expectations. They have solicited volunteers on an as-needed basis, with a dependable few to call upon.

With this in mind, the Library is embarking upon establishing a WHPL Volunteer program, and will soon seek a volunteer coordinator for the group. This person will match the needs of the organization with the skills of the volunteers who come forward to join the program. Working with the Librarians, the coordinator will create job descriptions and use the Library network to find volunteers who can assist with simple tasks like covering books or more complex ones like assisting patrons who are interested in participating in social media. A job description for the position is in preparation, as is a list of potential volunteer positions.

To set up the program, we are meeting with a few local volunteer coordinators to gain insight into how to do it well. We feel this program will strengthen the Library's ability to keep a strong presence in our active community. If you are interested in volunteering, please check the box at the bottom of the enclosed appeal letter. Look for more information about it soon.

SUPPORT THE LIBRARY WITH AN ONLINE GIFT!

We've added the convenience of secure online giving to the library website. Visit <http://woodsholepubliclibrary.org>, click the Donations tab on the top menu bar to choose an amount, then enter your credit card or PayPal account details. We acknowledge all donations immediately via email and shortly afterwards by hand-written snail mail. For guidance, please see Kellie at the front desk.

A New Season of National Theatre

In collaboration with Falmouth Academy, the Library brought a series of video rebroadcasts of live performances of London's National Theatre to appreciative audiences at Falmouth Academy's Morse Hall starting in September 2015. Acclaimed actors Benedict Cumberbatch, Helen Mirren, Carrey Mulligan, and Bill Nighy have been among the actors performing in plays both classic and modern. The eighth and final performance of this season, Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, will take place on June 24th at 7:00 pm and June 25th at 2:00 pm.

A new season is being negotiated now with NTLive, producers of the videos. Check the Library website for the 2016-2017 schedule and ticket prices. To find out more about National Theatre Live, visit <http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us>.

Successful Fundraisers Return

The success of the Library's second annual fabric and yarn sale on Super Bowl Sunday 2016 (it brought in over \$1,700!) suggests it has the potential to become a popular annual fundraiser. Some of us clearly appreciate having an alternate focus on that football-obsessed day. Please mark your calendars for next year, and, with us in mind, stockpile fabrics and yarns to contribute. Look for more information closer to the sale date.

This year's contributions included several beautiful antique bed coverings, a big jar of buttons, a couple of rugs, quilting cottons, and lengths of corduroy, flannel, wool, silk, cotton, upholstery and novelty fabrics. Other items of interest were sewing notions, knitting needles, and crochet hooks.

Everything contributed goes either to customers on sale day; to the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, MA, for a similar sale that benefits that institution; or to a Vineyard patron of our Library who helps to supply Haitian women with quilting fabrics.

Another "second annual" sale of gently used items is planned for Saturday, August 6, offering adornments and accessories. Items will again include jewelry, gloves, scarves and shawls, beach cover-ups, bags, men's ties, belts, hats, sunglasses and cases. Donations will be gratefully accepted at the Library the week before the sale (or earlier, if needed). Things left at the end of the sale will be distributed to local charitable organizations. For more information or to arrange for a pickup, contact Suzanne Currier at suzcurrier@comcast.net.

Growing CLAMS for the Cape

by Prosser Gifford

With an undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Illinois and an MBA from the University of Chicago, Gayle Simundza moved with her husband to the Cape 35 years ago, settled in, and had two children. At the university, she had studied information analysis, which led her to several part-time jobs in small businesses. When Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing (CLAMS) offered her a position in information technology, she seized the opportunity.

Gayle enjoyed managing CLAMS data, and moved on to become their Systems Manager, and then, in 2007, Executive Director. The CLAMS consortium includes 35 libraries at 38 locations on the Cape, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. Gayle has visited almost every one of them, delighting in the fact that each reflects the community it serves. For example, Osterville has a large collection of financial newspapers and periodicals, Oak Bluffs has a strong collection of African American and Portuguese materials, and South Yarmouth features an extensive art collection. In many instances individual patrons and collectors have augmented their local libraries significantly, as exemplified by WHPL's Ratcliffe Room, where Gayle and I met.

Gayle said quietly and confidently that working with a Board of seven directors and a staff of six is enduringly satisfying, and that she feels rewarded to know that by using CLAMS, library patrons benefit from resource sharing.

Those resources are indeed considerable. At the end of 2015 Cape libraries held about 1.7 million books, videos, and audio materials, and during the year they shared over half a million titles, including 17,389 e-books and e-audiobooks. Gayle's responsibilities focus on making system-wide decisions, such as dealing with system vendors and acquiring new software. She worked with eight other Massachusetts library consortia to create the Commonwealth Catalog, an online resource that offers every library patron access to 53 million items.

Gayle's concerns include CLAMS funding. Operating costs are borne primarily by member libraries, and include employee payroll, contractual costs for software and hardware maintenance, telecommunications, a training lab, and centralized cataloguing and bibliographic services. In 2015 member libraries paid \$780,370, and Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners contributed an additional \$118,215 for telecommunications and resource-sharing.

Despite the increase in electronic resources and the growing convenience of accessing materials outside a library, Gayle knows that for many patrons

the physical library continues to be crucial as a community meeting space and as a protected space for quiet study, reading, and reflection. Librarians who can skillfully navigate electronic resources will continue to be more necessary than ever as electronic media become more diverse and more complicated. My sense is that nurturing CLAMS is a rewarding profession, currently in careful and caring hands.



New Museum Publication

The History of the Falmouth Coal Company and Dyer's Dock, Woods Hole, by Susan Fletcher Witzell, a 48-page photo-filled paperback, is available for sale at the Library and at the Museum store.

EVENTS CALENDAR

WOODS HOLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

JUNE

- 18 Opens for the season
- 27 Cod Lecture by John Cumbler, 7:30 pm

JULY

- 16 Auction
- 17 Tag Sale
- 23 Cod Event TBA
- 25-29 Family Boat Building

For a complete list of upcoming museum events, visit <http://woodsholemuseum.org>