



# WOODS HOLE LIBRARY NEWS

Spring 2013

Volume 11, Issue 1

In this issue of the newsletter, we continue our series on local writers of children's literature, with a focus on science books for children. We also offer our readers a tour of the Provincetown Public Library, a visit to our Library roof with Tom Chase, two students' insights into the pleasures of playing the ukulele, and more.

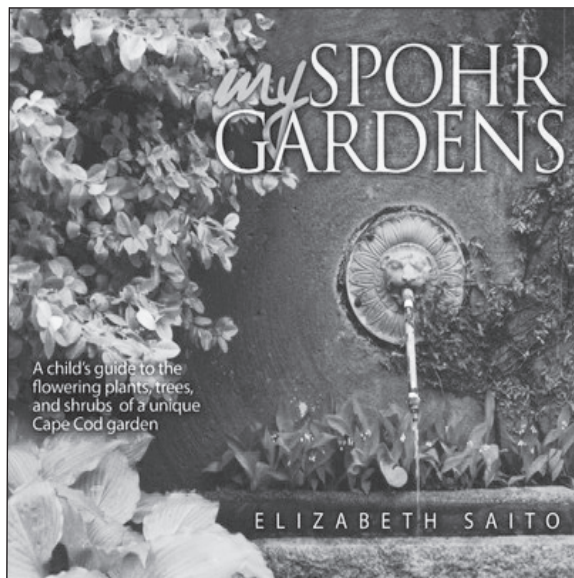
## Local Authors of Science Books for Children

by Terry McKee

The most recent addition to the Library's collection of science books for children is **Elizabeth White Saito's** self-published book, *My Spohr Gardens*. Illustrated with Liz's own photographs, the book takes the reader on a walk through Spohr Gardens, identifying individual plants along the way. The plants are photographed at the height of their beauty, so the book progresses month by month through a full year in the garden. It is informative for adults and children alike, and encourages the visitor to notice a particular detail about many plants—the scent, the vibrant color, the delicacy. Two pages at the end of the book provide a history of Spohr Gardens and its creators, Charles and Margaret Spohr.

*My Spohr Gardens* is Liz's second foray into the world of children's books. In 2011, with her oceanographer husband Mak, she self-published *Antarctic Adventure: One Scientist's Research Expedition to the Southern Continent*, which

tells the story of Mak's research expedition to Antarctica. Photographs of Mak's team suited up for the cold and working alongside penguins and whales are sure to draw in young adventurers. There are big trucks, helicopters, and science gear for those whose fascination runs toward the mechanical. A description of the science is added at the end of the book, so the narrative can be directed toward the interests of children.



Worth checking out is a series of textbooks published by the Woods Hole **Childrens' School of Science**, which celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Written by **Ellen Dorris**, each textbook covers the material for a course taught during the summer sessions at the school. Since a big part of the Science School curriculum is fieldwork, the books are rich with photographs of young investigators in pursuit of seaweed or butterflies, pond mud or wildflowers. One book, *The Big Book of Nature Projects*, contains projects and activities that encourage getting involved with nature, whether making prints of leaves or cultivating insects. Textbook titles are: *Meet the Arthropods*; *Woods, Ponds, and Fields*; *Ornithology*; *Entomology*; *Invertebrate Zoology*; and *Marine Biology*.

### 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

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# Sunshine on our Shoulders: Ukelele Comes to WHPL

by Amy Wilson Sanger

Have you ever tried to tune a ukulele in the company of a roomful of other novices simultaneously doing the same thing? Though difficult, it's not impossible.

This past fall, as the days grew shorter, and our community prepared to tuck in for the off-season, a contagious ukulele fever struck our library. It all began as a conspiracy to lure summer resident Sala Steinbach into extending her stay a bit longer, and 6th grader Ruby Sanger into giving music lessons of any kind another try. Library Director Margaret McCormick, a co-conspirator, enlisted Falmouth school music teacher Tom Goux to instruct, and he proved to be just the rock star for the job. Soon, on Tuesday evenings, the sounds of a fantasy island paradise could be heard wafting through the library (that was Tom playing), followed by the strumming efforts of his students, sounding not all that bad. Each week, it seemed a new face would appear, imploring to be granted a place in the group and promising to catch up.

We sang "Polly Wolly Doodle" and "Singin' In the Rain." We played Christmas and Hanukkah songs. Winter winds howled, but we felt sunshine on our shoulders. By Valentine's Day, thirty or so plucky students had learned to play "I'll See You in My Dreams" pretty respectably, and had a ball doing so.

Learning ukulele with Tom is just plain fun. His approach is a kinetic one; students are asked to assume different standing, sitting, or leaning positions to build muscle memory in association with the auditory experience. Playing "This Land is Your Land" became a downright athletic proposition for some of the older participants!

In his school classroom, Tom taught ukulele to all his fifth graders, demonstrating the instrument's worthiness, accessibility, and relative ease. When asked by reporters from both *The Falmouth Enterprise* and *The Inside Scoop*, "Why? Why the ukulele?" new enthusiasts tended to answer: "Because it makes me happy," or "Because it feels so good."

Aching, untrained fingers aside, one doesn't worry while playing the ukulele. There is a soothing quality about these four strings and their breezy, simple sounds, whose character can adapt to a variety of expressions. The possibilities are limitless, and so was the fun of learning together this winter in our favorite Library.

*Ruby, Amy, and Laurie strumming and humming*

# A Ukelele Trip to Hawaii

by Laurie Raymond

After participating in Tom Goux's six-session beginner ukulele class last fall at WHPL, I felt that mastery (a term used VERY loosely here) of four or five chords and a desire to learn more were incentive enough to take that diminutive four-stringed instrument with me on a trip to the Big Island of Hawaii. The "uke" is to Hawaiian music what the violin is to classical, the accordion to polka, the organ to the heavenly choir. Among its many attributes are its size, which makes it an agreeable traveling companion, and the fact that armed with four or five chords, even a beginner can play literally hundreds of songs.

The live music scene in Hawaii includes almost nightly performances by world-class musicians, plus the unspoken invitation to players of all abilities to join in the fun and play when the opportunity arises. The "Kanikapila" is an informal weekly community jam session featuring anywhere from five to fifty ukuleles, with a few guitars, basses, and steel guitars mixed in. People arrive either toting huge collections of song books and sheet music or with their laptops or iPads loaded with roughly a gazillion tunes. The Aloha spirit was immediately evident, and even an out-of-tune out-of-towner, a beginner like myself, was made to feel most welcome.

While some may cringe at the thought of fifty ukes strumming away more or less in unison, and fifty voices crooning the lyrics to the songs of our youth, it was an inspiration and a revelation, and evidence that there is a lot of rewarding enjoyment to be had with this instrument. I know there are many folks out there waiting for the Woods Hole Library to offer the next series of ukulele classes, or perhaps its very own Kanikapila!





# An Enduring Gift

by Pamela Nelson

Not long ago there was a generally accepted convention that certain topics were not raised in polite conversation. In addition to one's religion, a woman's age was definitely "none of your business."

Times have certainly changed. Last autumn Library patron Eleanor Hodge made no secret of the fact that her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday was approaching, and in mid-November she celebrated the event with family and close friends. She even treated herself to a special gift. That gift, it turns out, was actually made to all of us in the library community.

Ellie set up the Eleanor Bronson Hodge Book Fund, inviting those who wished to acknowledge her birthday with a gift, as "frosting on the cake," to donate to her new Woods Hole Public Library book fund. At least two dozen friends and family members contributed to the fund in honor of this remarkable woman, who has long been a supporter of our Library and of the wider community. With the assistance of librarian Kellie Porter, Ellie designed a bookplate for the new books from a drawing she made some time ago of Nobska Lighthouse.

The fund is an endowed, unrestricted fund, with its principal to be invested in perpetuity and the interest spent on books in Ellie's name. However, a sum of money was set aside to start the book purchases, to "prime the pump." Unrestricted funds have great flexibility, so Director Margaret McCormick chose to use as guidance her knowledge of Eleanor's taste in reading.

As of spring 2013, the following titles have been purchased:

*Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*, by Jon Meacham

*Prosperous Friends*, by Christine Schutt

*Dear Life*, by Alice Munro

*News from Heaven*, by Jennifer Haigh

*The Burgess Boys*, by Elizabeth Strout

*The Pinecone: the Story of Sarah Losh*, by Jenny Uglow

*Last Friends*, by Jane Gardam

This list includes three novels, two short story collections, and two biographies. The books, the first of many destined for the Eleanor Bronson Hodge Book Fund, are available at the Library for our reading pleasure, thanks to Ellie's far-sighted birthday gift to herself—and to the community served by the Woods Hole Public Library.



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## Thank you, Shirley and Bill

It would be difficult to list all that outgoing vice-president **Shirley Wozena** has done for the Library since she joined the Board in 2005. Shirley's touch can be seen in so many of the improvements that have taken place in the Library recently—renovation of the book sale room and the kitchen, new lighting in the Ratcliffe Room, rugs and reupholstering here and there.

With former board president Sarah Elizabeth, Shirley drafted new personnel policies, and has worked diligently on the Library's long-range plans and on improvements to the Bradley House. Says Library Director Margaret McCormick, "We will miss her can-do attitude and big-picture-vision of how the library can improve its services to patrons."

**Bill Rogers** has taken responsibility for the Library's Buildings and Grounds for the past six years. Of him, Margaret says, "Bill has quietly kept the Library running smoothly. Lights hang more safely, toilets flush more efficiently, and many things happen as if by magic. He took on projects that would have stymied most of us and completed them with care and consideration." We have been especially appreciative of the sandwich board sign he built that allows us to advertise Library events and for his part in overseeing the replacement of the slate roof.

The Board echoes Margaret's sentiments and thanks Shirley and Bill for their lasting contributions.

# Music, Laughter, and Special Memories

"Wonderful," according to his wife, Bonnie, was Stephen Simon's favorite word, and from our point of view, it describes perfectly his relationship with the Woods Hole Public Library. Here in Woods Hole, we were shocked and saddened to learn of his death at home in New York City on January 20, 2013.

Stephen was a great friend of our Library, and his interactions with it bore his unique, generous, and joyful stamp.

For instance, to honor our Centennial in 2010, Stephen and Bonnie chose to offer us a special concert, a Summer Simon Sinfonietta, performed under a tent outdoors at Highfield Hall. It featured music of the 1910 era, with additional musical literary references. This unusual fundraiser was an opportunity for the Library to reach out to the community and to experience the thrill of a Simon concert. Of course, like his summer concerts of the 1970s and 1980s on the Hudson River, this event was a huge success.

To honor Stephen's memory, we asked a few Woods Hole neighbors and Sinfonietta musicians to share some personal anecdotes, reflections, and memories.

"For a decade, Gansett Woods had a 'float,' a trailer pulled by a small tractor, in Woods Hole's annual Fourth of July parade. For many of those years, Stephen ambled over in the morning to find out the theme of the year, then returned in top hat and tails to play the little piano that had been loaded onto the trailer. One year, the theme was 'Yellow Submarine,' with three mermaids on the trailer (and many submarine signs.) Stephen played 'Yellow Submarine,' of course, but also bits of *Water Music* [he was, after all, a Handel expert] and other watery tunes. The music always ranged from rock and folk to classical, and he began to play on Buzzards Bay Avenue, continuing to the MBL waterfront park.

~ **Mary Ulbrich, Stephen and Bonnie's summer neighbor**



*Photo by Beth Armstrong.*

"Stephen loved a good joke and a good pun. He loved to hear them and, even more, to tell them. They were so broad you could drive a car through them, and all the more enjoyable for it. One day I marveled to him, 'You get my jokes. Not everyone gets them, but you do.' He replied, 'Well, that's because you and I live on the same planet.'

I do and will miss him terribly. My friend, my maestro, my fellow punster."

~ **Judy Yaldatel, principal, double bass, Simon Sinfonietta**

"I began attending Stephen's Kennedy Center orchestral concerts in the 1990's, always admiring the beautiful performances adorned with quirky tricks. I will never forget the janitor who wandered onto the stage through a side door as Stephen raised his baton to begin the final piece of the program. After clever banter with Stephen, the janitor borrowed the concertmaster's violin and the final movement of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto ensued. The crowd exploded as the orchestra drew its last sound and Stephen smiled with delight, something he did so very well.

~ **Robert Wyatt, pianist, neighbor, and Gershwin expert, who played *Rhapsody in Blue* in the Summer Sinfonietta concert celebrating the Library's Centennial in July, 2010**

I have my own treasured memory. In the summer of 1991, my son, Philip, aged 10, was employed by the Simons to read in the early mornings to their younger son, Sebastian, and then to walk Sebastian to Science School. The following spring Philip and I received an invitation to come to Washington for Stephen's surprise 55<sup>th</sup> birthday party. The invitation mentioned "waltzing." I immediately enrolled in ballroom dance lessons (which I continued for years) to learn to waltz. At the party itself, glittering and truly "wonderful," I enjoyed

watching one particular couple, accomplished ballroom dancers, as they circled the floor. I myself had only one opportunity to try a waltz, when Stephen asked me to dance. A photographer snapped our picture, one that I still treasure. In it, dancing with Stephen, is the one time in my life that I have ever looked truly glamorous. Thank you, Stephen!

~ **Pamela Nelson**





# Family Continues Tradition

Among the townspeople of Woods Hole who signed the Statement of Incorporation of the new Woods Hole Public Library on August 1, 1910, was one man who took to heart the words he had signed, which stated the founders' goal of "providing free for the public good...material of cultural, historic, and artistic value." This visionary man did not donate a set of books or special documents but a collection of his own paintings, described in 1966 by *Yankee Magazine* in a feature article, "The 'Grandpa Moses' of Woods Hole," as "an astonishingly rich treasure trove of historical paintings." The collection, it continued, "provides the most complete representation of the early days of a New England seaport you are ever likely to see in one place. The paintings are all the work of one man, Franklin Lewis Gifford, whose wish was to bequeath to posterity a record of Woods Hole as recalled by a lifelong resident." Most of Franklin's paintings were created after his retirement from house, sign, and carriage painting, and also interior decorating. A true Yankee, he used leftover house paint in some of his renderings. He worked from photographs as well as from memory, and took pains to do meticulous historical research on scenes depicting the earliest days of the settlement, prior to his birth in 1854.

Even today, Franklin Gifford's descendants still honor his memory by giving paintings of his to the Library from their personal collections. Last October the WHPL Board received a letter from Franklin L. Gifford's great-granddaughter, Ellen Gifford Christian Keogh, stating her desire to follow family tradition by donating four additional Gifford paintings to the Library's collection. These "new" paintings do not depict life in a seaside village but instead provide a view of the family itself. The gift includes portraits of Franklin's parents, Barzillai and Elizabeth, as well as of himself (a self-portrait) and of his wife, Ellen Davis Hatch.

The presentation of the paintings took place at the Quissett Avenue home of Ellen Keogh's aunt and uncle, Violet and Jim Gifford. Ellen, who grew up in Woods Hole and attended the Woods Hole School, now lives in Marion but makes regular visits to her aunt and uncle. It should be no surprise that Jim, in keeping with the family's strong connection with the Library, served as President of the Library Board, from 1962-65 and 1969-70.

The Franklin Gifford family, which includes the Griffin and Christian families, has maintained close ties with the Woods Hole Public Library for over a century. Scratch the surface and you will find yet another link, such as the fact that Ellen's brother, John Christian, recently presented a Museum-sponsored Conversation on "Fishing in Woods Hole"

in the Library's Community Room and also painted interior walls downstairs in the Library.

A tour of Franklin Gifford's paintings within the Library is a must for anyone who is interested in the history of the village. We are indeed indebted to the house painter and Library founder who left a very personal visual record of village history to educate and delight future members of the community.



*Ellen Keogh and her uncle, Jim Gifford, with paintings of Franklin Gifford and his wife Ellen Davis Hatch Gifford.*

## Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 1: Spring Book Sale

Friday, June 21: Woods Hole Historical Museum Opening

Tuesday, July 9: WHPL Annual Meeting

Sunday, July 14: Walsh Rose Talk by Gretchen Ward Warren on Penzance Point

Saturday, August 10: Summer Book Sale

Saturday, August 18: Jeff Hughes concert in the Meigs Room

For details, visit [www.woodsholepubliclibrary.org](http://www.woodsholepubliclibrary.org) and [www.woodsholemuseum.org](http://www.woodsholemuseum.org)

## Annual Meeting Speaker

Cultural Historian Dr. William D. Moore of Boston University's Department of History of Art & Architecture will speak at the Library's Annual Meeting on Tuesday, July 9, about the history of the Children's School of Science.

In honor of its centennial, the Science School is publishing a commemorative volume entitled *Wet Sneakers and Nets*. The book includes current and historic photographs, features artwork by teachers and students, and documents the School's history and its influence on generations of children.

See [www.childrensschoolofscience.org/news/centennial](http://www.childrensschoolofscience.org/news/centennial) for a full description.



*Helen Porter, daughter of Librarian Kellie Porter, enjoys a picture book from the Children's Corner in the Book Sale Room.*

### Newsletter Staff

Terry McKee and Pamela Nelson, with Emma Dvorak  
Contributors: Laurie Raymond & Amy Wilson Sanger

## Helen Reuter Returns to the Book Sale Committee

by Laurie Raymond

We are delighted to announce the return of Helen Reuter to the Book Sale Committee. She will join Cam Larrey in co-chairing this hard working group of volunteers. Helen brings a wealth of experience, energy, and good cheer. She has been a WHPL board member, overseen the children's section of the book sale, and has been a mainstay at the spring plant sale. When not sorting through stacks of books, she is a teacher, a tutor, a mom, a gardener, and a fiddler!

And speaking of book sales... did you know these book sale facts?

- WHPL hosts 3 major advertised sales each year, but the sale is ONGOING and open to the public in the downstairs book sale room during library hours. Upcoming sales are June 1, August 10 (Falmouth Road Race weekend), and December 7.
- The first WHPL book sale was in 1967 and earned \$65! Cam Larrey, Sarah Elizabeth & Sam Lewis, and Megan & Dick Jones have been some of the recent chairpersons, who, with their team of volunteers, have devoted countless hours to keeping the sale humming along smoothly.
- Today, the book sale generates an amazing 6% of the WHPL total income, estimated at \$12,000 this fiscal year! Boy, those \$1 and \$2 purchases sure add up!
- Finally, the library counts on you, your friends, and neighbors to keep this wonderful institution going, by donating your gently used books, CDs, and DVDs, and by coming by to browse and buy any time we are open.
- New volunteers are always welcome. We'll see you downstairs, soon!

*Just for fun, we asked each WHPL and WHHC&M board and staff member to give us the title of a long-time or current favorite cookbook, and to explain the choice. We received sixteen responses, which appear in shortened form on the back of the outreach letter. We can't promise that they are available at the Library, but you might discover your own new favorite at the Library or in the Book Sale Room!*



# Up On the Roof with Tom Chase

by Terry McKee

Gazing out from the roof of the Woods Hole Public Library, roofer Tom Chase has a bird's eye view of the many Woods Hole roofs he has worked on during his long career. He isn't up there to admire his handiwork, however, but to complete the months-long project of replacing the Library's slate roof. Though it's not a big roof, it's pretty demanding work for someone who works on his own. Tom estimates that he has hand-carried 5,000 new slates up the ladder, and the same number down. Salvaging the old slates was a special request by the Library Board and staff, who saw the opportunity to raise funds by re-purposing the historic slates as contemporary kitchen serving items like cheeseboards and coasters. Having just climbed the ladder with a mere point-and-shoot camera dangling from my wrist, I was awed by the idea of making the trip burdened with heavy slates!

Agile and at ease even as I distract him with questions, Tom continues to work. He selects a slate, measures off an even distance from the edge, and marks it with a placement line using permanent marker. He reaches for his hammer and some copper nails and pounds the nails through two pre-punched holes, securing the slate to the roof. He talks easily about his work as he reaches for the next slate.

Laying slate, he says, is not much different from

any other material, and he has worked with them all—asphalt, cedar shake, and metal. To prepare for the project, which required the practice of a disappearing art, he read three books on Vermont slate roofs. An interesting fact he gleaned from one book, *The Slate Bible* is that, unlike other roofing materials, slates will crack if stepped on. Therefore, paths must be created so the roof can bear the weight of a person walking on it to repair a chimney or place an antenna. Thicker slates must be chosen for these walkways. Thinner slates form the rise of the roof, graduating to thicker slates at the edges where the most erosion from wind and water occurs. Since the slates vary in size, there is an artistry to spacing them to prevent water from making its way through the slate layers to the spaces in between them, thus creating leaks.

Tom started the project just after Hurricane Sandy in early November, 2012, on the back side of the Library in the southwest corner. He worked his way along in quarter-sections to finish at the northeast quadrant, methodically selecting, marking, and nailing each slate into place, to finish in early 2013, the year the building turns 100 years old. Upon completion, Tom packed up his tools, dismantled the scaffolding, and was off to another project, knowing he had created something that will protect the Library effectively and attractively for another century.



# Do you recommend the CLAMS?

by Pamela Nelson

A visit to the Provincetown Public Library in late March reminded me that good libraries usually reflect the character and aspirations of the communities that they serve. Similarly, the challenges they face often mirror problems peculiar to those communities.

Housed in an imposing edifice, its 100-foot spire looming above the numerous small shops and galleries on narrow Commercial Street, the current Provincetown Library opened its doors in 2005. It moved here after outgrowing its former home, an elegant three-story building, where it had first opened in 1873. Originally the Center Methodist Episcopal Church, the library's current home was built in 1860 and at the time was thought to be the largest Methodist church in the nation. Its 128 pews accommodated its congregation of 900 worshippers. A century later, a reduced congregation sold its home to the son of the founder of the Chrysler Corporation, who ran the Chrysler Art Museum, with limited success, for a decade. The Provincetown Heritage Museum was opened on the premises on July 4, 1976, to showcase local history, with emphasis on the Portuguese community and the town's fishing tradition. The museum's centerpiece was a half-replica of the fishing schooner *Rose Dorothea*, built on site in the former church sanctuary by a local, elderly master shipbuilder and rigged by a master rigger. The original *Rose Dorothea* was important to the town, as winner of the Lipton Cup in a 42-mile Fisherman's Cup Race in 1907. However, even the Heritage Museum, with its amazing ship model, struggled for visitors and support, and in 2001 the property was conveyed to the Library's Board of Trustees for rehabilitation, restoration, and reopening.

With its complex history and unusual architecture, the Provincetown Public Library is a fascinating building and institution. While it functions primarily as a library, it also serves as art and historic museums. The town, for years a celebrated artists' colony, owns a vast art collection, and a town commission is responsible for placing artwork throughout the library. Marvelous paintings and sculpture adorn the entire building, with framed paintings even gracing bathroom walls.

There are numerous reading nooks, and large numbers of computers available for public use. Non-fiction is located on the ground floor (a finished basement) and also on the mezzanine. Fiction is on the first floor, along with audio books and videos. The circulation desk supports an impressive green sign and large box: "Food for Fines. One non-perishable food item forgives \$5 worth of late fees."

And then there's the schooner. I had heard about the schooner. Walking in the front door, I was impressed by the twin curving staircases, roped off, with a sign reading "Historic stairs... we appreciate your help in preserving our history," on either side of the grand entrance. Straight ahead, in a glass case, is an enormous and elaborate trophy, the Lipton Cup. Farther down this aisle is a video kiosk, with an excellent 12-minute documentary about the Cup, the fishing schooner *Rose Dorothea*, and the difficulties facing the fishing industry then and now. (A bit embarrassing, though—where is the boat?)

Upstairs! The schooner is in the middle of what was once the main sanctuary of the church. Its mainmast is 48 feet tall, and the height of both masts necessitated the creation of domes in the vaulted ceiling. The bowsprit extends into the Cape Cod collection up yet another set of stairs. The Children's Library (absolutely brilliant!) surrounds the schooner, with books for older children on one side, a play and imagination space on the other—including a large picture book collection, a puppet theater, aquarium, toy kitchen appliances, a central play area, and computers with color-coded keyboards as learning tools. Oh, to be a child in this library!

I alluded earlier to difficulties that face libraries, some peculiar to location. The library's impressive website includes a long statement of Library Policies, including an Unattended Child Policy that basically prohibits the dumping of children under the age of eight at the library. Other enumerated—and proscribed—behaviors are sleeping in bathrooms, drug trafficking, engaging in obscene acts, gambling, screaming, banging on computer keyboards, bringing in items with a foul odor, and doing laundry in the bathrooms.

The energy of the Provincetown Public Library is palpable. The library is open every day of the week! The monthly newssheet is packed with programs and events. Tai Chi by the Ship starts in May. The Thursday morning Community Run starts from the library, and the weekly Coffee/Conversation Hour convenes after the run in the main reading room. Of course the library sponsors lectures and workshops. Its latest project is the establishment of the Provincetown Public Press. Briefly, the intention is to give voice to the arts community through a digital publishing imprint, utilizing design and publishing software. The Press hopes to publish 10-20 original finished and edited works in its first year of operation. Poetry collections, works of prose, and artwork are all to be included, with selection to be performed by a library panel and local experts.

If you go to Provincetown, don't miss a visit to the Provincetown Public Library. In the meantime, perusing the web site is also fun and informative.