

WOODS HOLE LIBRARY NEWS

Spring 2018

More Than Your Average Library *Woods Hole Public Library members are fortunate that our library goes beyond the normal call of duty to offer its patrons creative and innovative programming. In this newsletter, we highlight just a sampling of some of the special features that make the Woods Hole Public Library unique.*

“Chair as Art” Silent Auction and Party Recap

By Sharon Benjamin



In the last few years, the Woods Hole Public Library appears to have developed a particular kind of community art event built around a large quantity of cast-off items repurposed for massive creativity and expression. The first community art project used discarded books in 2014, and the staff built a community art and fundraising event around sculptures made out of the worn volumes. The second event used retired nautical maps in the summer of 2015; the library skipped the summer of 2016.

When the Fishmonger closed a few years ago, the building became Water Street Kitchen, but 34 of the restaurant's chairs were given to the library. They were stored at the home of Prosser Gifford, the Emeritus Chair of the WHPL Board of Directors for a long winter season, and in the spring of 2017, the library recruited supporters and local artists to decorate or modify the chair any way they liked.

The results were donated for a silent auction to benefit the library. The kaleidoscope of styles and methods were shown off at the July 22 “Chair as Art Silent Auction and Party” where library supporters strolled among now-works of art, sipped wine and sampled savory snacks. The starting bid was \$25. Designs included a wide variety of styles and patterns, including calming nautical vistas and a compass rose; geometric patterns, and some whimsical designs such as for the “Hot Seat” – covered in intricate flames.

Other artists re-imagined the wooden chairs completely. One artist converted their chair into a stand for a potted plant, while another re-assembled the chair legs into a frame around a painting of the iconic Water St. building, on the underside of the seat.

One chair remains on permanent loan to the WHPL: the chair, converted into to a hanging mobile (a la Alexander Calder) by Alan Steinbach, is still suspended in the upstairs main room, and was purchased at the event by Joshua Wrigley and Sharon Benjamin. Alan, a patron who lives in Woods Hole, builds a mobile every summer in his yard; in 2017 he taught a library workshop on making mobiles.

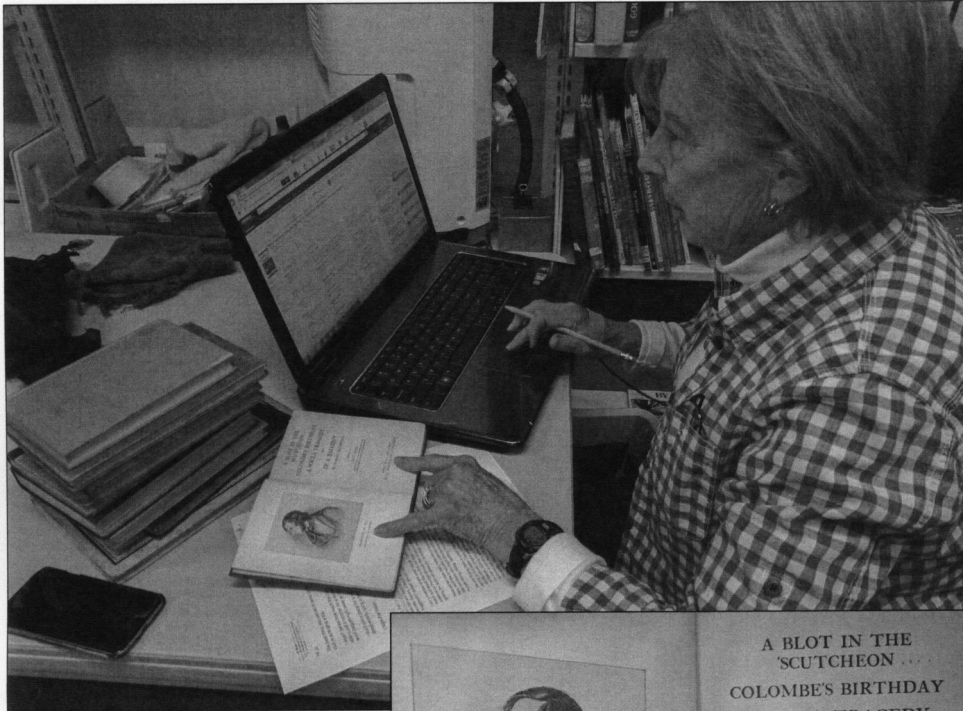
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Library Hours

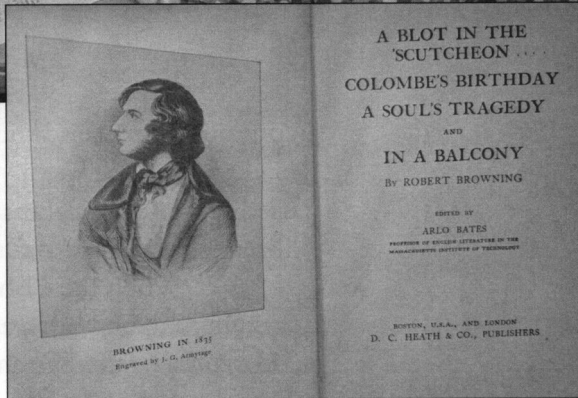
Mondays Noon - 5:30, 7 - 9
Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 3 - 5:30
Wednesdays 10 - 5:30, 7-9
Saturdays Noon - 5:30

Woods Hole Public Library
PO Box 185 • Woods Hole, MA 02543 • 508 548 8961
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Library Sleuths Discover Money Hiding in Books



Volunteer Jo Kraemer has led an effort to sort through book donations in search of those valuable enough to sell online, such as these awaiting sale. Last year, the effort raised more than \$2,500.



Have you ever scanned the tables at the library's book sale in hopes of scooping up an underpriced gem, an early edition of "Winnie-the-Pooh," maybe, or an oversized book on Bauhaus architecture? If you went away disappointed, that's good.

Library staff and volunteers pick through the hundreds of books donated every month seeking those valuable enough to sell online. In the last year the library, led by volunteer Jo Kraemer and assisted by Cam Larrey and Susan Fishman, has sold about 150 books and assembled a backlog awaiting sale that fills four bookcases.

Although library staffers had done this for years, there was never enough time to do it adequately. Last year Kraemer -- a lively, outgoing geochemist who retired to East Falmouth five years ago from the U.S. Geological Survey in the Washington D.C. area -- agreed to help, spending an average of 10 hours a week sorting, researching and posting the books on Amazon.

And it shows: over the last decade the library had never raised more than \$1,000 a year from reselling donated books online. In 2016, for instance, it raised \$774.

But in 2017, with Kraemer and others devoting hours to the work, the library sold \$2,511.

But Kraemer said there is still room to improve. The effort is limited by a shortage of volunteer time and book storage space. If a few more volunteers could help sort through donations when they come in more books could be sold through online sales, perhaps, Kraemer estimated, bringing in another \$1000 or more. Most online work can be done at home. Library staff do the packing and shipping. The library is also considering ways to store more of the books awaiting sale.

Kraemer didn't know anything about book sales when she started, other than that she likes to read. The learning curve has been steep, but enjoyable. She's discovered something about which genres, subjects and authors are valuable and how much (or little) a signature and the condition of the book and dust jacket add to the value. "It's been a real education," she said. "I've learned a lot, a lot."

To see if a book is worth looking at further, she takes a picture of the book cover with her smartphone and the Amazon app will take her right to the listing of identical books for sale. She'll go back to Amazon later for pricing guidance using the listings from other book sellers. "I try to match or go a little below the lowest price," she said. "Most Amazon sellers are dealers who buy their books and need to make a profit...Ours are donated, so it doesn't cost us anything. We should try and move them quickly if we can."

Recently, she sold a color illustrated copy of "Andersen's Fairy Tales" for \$30; the "Jazz Theory Book" from 1995 for \$25; and a special commemorative edition of "The Feynman Lectures on Physics" for \$110.

Although she gains some satisfaction from helping a good cause -- the library budget -- there can be an unexpected payoff as well: she's woken up in the morning to find five of the books she had just listed all sold.

"I'll go 'Oooh!'" she said, showing off a grin and a small cry of triumph.

Introducing Nancy Rea

By Laurie Raymond

One would be hard-pressed to find a person more enthusiastic and knowledgeable about libraries than new Woods Hole Public Library trustee Nancy Rea. She joined the board in July 2017 and comes with a lifetime of library experience at multiple levels.

She began her formal association with libraries while working at the Frick Art Reference Library after graduating from Wheaton College with a degree in art history. By the late 1980s, Nancy realized that working with libraries was her true calling and earned a master's degree in library science at the University of Maryland. Since then she has been a librarian, library director, deputy director at the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and a library consultant for more than 25 libraries statewide.

At the age of 12, Nancy moved to Falmouth with her family, where she attended Falmouth schools and frequented the Falmouth Public Library. She and her husband Cary have lived in Hawaii, New York City, Oregon, Virginia, Maryland and elsewhere in Massachusetts before returning to Cape Cod eight years ago, initially to a family home in Wellfleet, and then to Woods Hole, in part to be closer to their son on Martha's Vineyard.

Nancy is passionate about libraries: what they provide, their role in the community, the sharing and "cross-pollination of ideas," and the integration of new technologies into existing services. Libraries today play a crucial role in their communities by evaluating the needs of that community, then determining which of these the library can fulfill. This process keeps libraries relevant to the people they serve, and pushes them to continuously adapt to meet the needs of evolving communities. While meeting traditional expectations, libraries today must also maintain an awareness of external social, economic and technological trends and adapt accordingly. A timely example of changing social trends is the libraries' new role in helping patrons become well-informed citizens in the age of "fake news" and internet overload.

Nancy is concerned about the 'big picture' future of libraries in general. With the latest budgetary wrangle in Washington, funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) was nearly eliminated entirely. The IMLS is an independent federal agency whose mission is to "inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement". It is a key source of federal funding for libraries and museums, and though it barely survived the recent federal budget negotiations, it remains under threat; all the more reason to love your library!

As central as libraries have been to her life, Nancy radiates a similar zeal toward her other interests. She is an avid swimmer and yoga practitioner, and, not surprisingly, an ardent reader. A lifelong sailor, she loves sailing 'Catspaw', the Rea's Herreshoff 12 1/2 out of Quissett Harbor, and several canoes and rowing boats round out the family fleet. Fine art and art history have always been important in her life, and Nancy has put much of her energy and resources into supporting artists, museums and art education. She has been showered with academic, civic and professional honors wherever she has lived and in whatever capacity she has served.

Nancy feels that the WHPL is a "wonderful gem of the community", and cites the caliber of the staff, the strong collaboration between the staff and the Board, and the synergy between the Library and the Museum as concrete organizational strengths. We are so very fortunate to have her on board!



Nancy Rea joined the board in July



Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the success of our Super Bowl Fabric and Fiber Sale in February, we are continuing to host a small selection of yardage, notions, and yarns. Please take a peek in the book sale room and see what is being offered this season!

Building the Library's Collection One Book at a Time

If you scan the new book shelf and get a small thrill upon finding something interesting -- thank Library Director Margaret McCormick. She picks the books.

"Oh, that's so boring," she protests -- in a typical Margaret demurral -- in explaining how she decides what to buy. But when she starts to talk about her thinking process it opens a window on the sometimes difficult balance she walks between buying books that reviewers find worthy, pleasing patrons and following her own intuition.

The library must spend at least \$19,000 a year on new books and other materials to remain certified by the state as a library. New books go out front on a separate shelf and are typically the most checked-out books in the library. McCormick said she tries to leave worthy, but underappreciated, new books on the shelf out front a little longer to attract attention.

All new books eventually work their way back into the existing collection. That means the existing collection undergoes a constant weeding process to make room. It can be hard to pick what to cut, weighing what has long-run appeal and what might have been popular once, but is just too old these days. Time is pretty hard on political thrillers, she said.

"I would say that Tom Clancy is passe," McCormick said. "He's dead, and his stuff isn't selling in the book sale." There is at least one delicate subject: when to purge books by local authors, many of them scientists, who wrote books decades ago and who have since passed on.

On the other hand, aging books can be an asset in the children's collection. Parents who spent summers growing up in Woods Hole return to the library with their own small children and are thrilled to find the very book they fell in love with decades ago.

In picking books to buy, one of McCormick's main sources is Library Journal, a trade publication that lists and reviews books about to be published. She also reads the Sunday New York Times Book Review because she knows her library patrons read it and will ask about particular books.

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See Some of Today's Best Documentaries



The library's new POV documentary series included "The Islands and the Whales" about whale hunting in the Faroe Islands.

Last fall, librarian Kellie Porter got a call about showing a documentary on whale hunting in the Faroe Islands. Woods Hole has a history with whaling - would the library community be interested in viewing a documentary on the subject? From that bloody beginning a beautiful relationship is blooming.

The library now runs documentaries from POV (a cinema term for "point of view"), a PBS series which features independent nonfiction films, every other month or so. The library showed "The Islands and the Whales," the somber story of how the islanders' traditional whale hunt has come under siege from environmental and political changes, in November. But the range of the films shown promises to be diverse. In January, the library ran "Motherland," a portrait of the world's busiest maternity ward, in the Philippines.

The POV documentaries do appear on television first and are part of POV's efforts to extend the reach of these powerful films through a network of community partners. The library doesn't pay to show them and they are free to the public.

The library alternates the POV documentaries with off-beat feature films, such as "The Glass Castle" and "Loving Vincent," for which it does pay a modest licensing fee. These films are also shown free to the public.

Library staff will post the schedule of films on the library's inside door, in its monthly email of events, in the events listings on library's web page -- woodsholepubliclibrary.org -- and on its Facebook page.

Basket maker Barbara Douglas weaves a world of wonder

By Lynn Shepherd

Barbara Douglas has had a life-long love of basketry. An accomplished basketmaker and avid collector of baskets, particularly those made by Native Americans, she shares that love in a popular reed basket class at the library every March. The class makes a different style basket each year, from Native American inspired baskets to a replica of an early American basket from the collection at Harvard.

Her interest in Native American basketry was influenced by her aunt, who was a social worker with the tribes in northern Michigan. Her love of basketmaking was sparked in the third grade when her teacher in Michigan had the class weave a basket using crepe paper. Barbara was so intrigued by the process, and the end result, that she bought a basket as a present for her mother.

When Barbara and her family moved to Sherborn, MA in the early 80s, she met a basketmaker at a craft sale at the local library. She gathered a group of friends and had the basketmaker teach reed basket making. Later, in Falmouth, Barbara took classes to learn Nantucket basket making with noted reed basketmaker Diane Stanton. Every summer in Michigan she takes classes to study Native American basket techniques including birch bark and quill baskets. The majority of the people in the classes are from the Odawa tribe, who have a long history of quill baskets. The classes help to preserve and spread the culture of quill basketry of the Odawa tribe. Barbara's basketmaking skills cover flat reed, round reed, Nantucket, birch bark, porcupine quills and sweet grass.

Barbara has traveled widely in the US and the world, collecting baskets and basket-making techniques as she goes. Her Native American basket collection includes a trapping basket from Yosemite made by Julia Parker of the Kashaya Pomo tribe, which was used to trap and release woodpeckers to gather feathers for headdresses. She also acquired a New Mexican basket made from barbed wire, quill baskets from the Ottawa tribes, curled flat reed baskets from the Passamaquoddy tribe, a basket referred to as an artichoke basket consisting of 11 tightly nested baskets, baskets from the Pueblo and Hopis, southern baskets made from sweet grass, and Tennessee baskets made from honeysuckle vine. Her global collection includes a ditty basket from Australia; an open star weave pattern from the Amazon; baskets from Pitcairn Island and Zimbabwe, which both start with a square pattern in the base; Zulu; and the Marguerite islands.



We're excited to announce that Shoutbomb, the new opt-in text messaging service, is up and running! Shoutbomb will send you library notices and other reminders as text messages. You can also renew items and check your account details. Shoutbomb notices are in addition to email, mail or voice call notification methods, not in replacement. Shoutbomb text messaging is a free service, but your mobile provider's standard text message rates apply. If you are not sure of the limits and per message charges for your phone plan, please check with your provider before subscribing. For answers to frequently asked questions, please visit <http://library.clamsnet.org/screens/NoticesFAQs.html>. Interested patrons can sign up at <http://info.clamsnet.org/text-messaging-sign-up/>.

"Chair as Art" Silent Auction and Party Recap

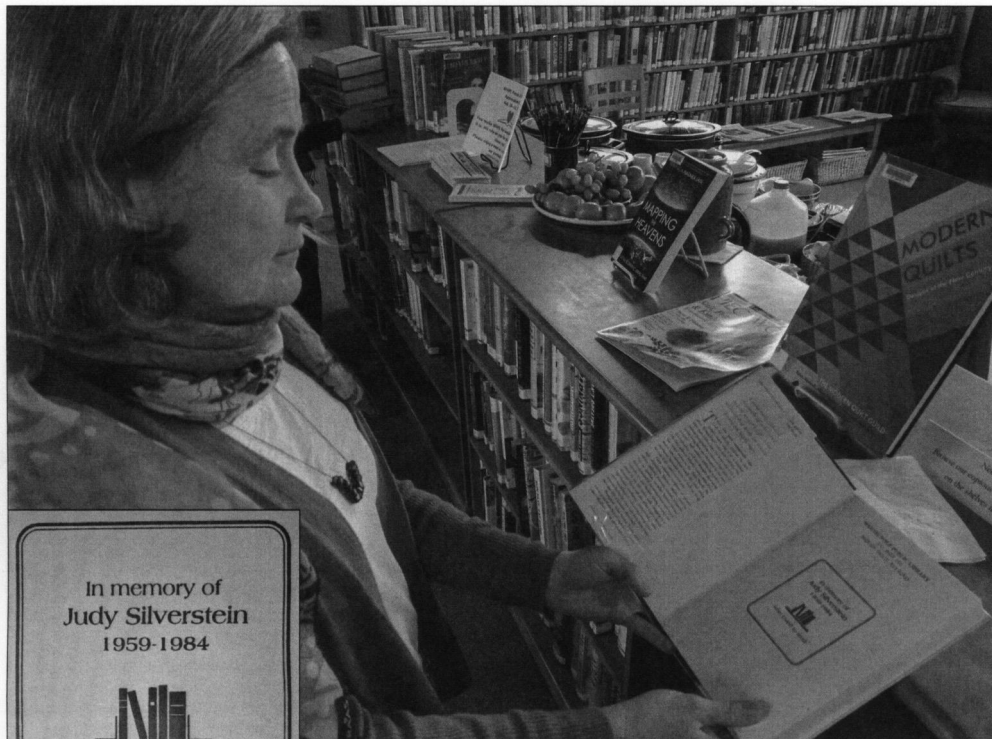
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The event was a huge success, raising more than \$5,000 and sharing the creativity of our patrons with the community. As ever, the library staff remain vigilant for the next fortunate coincidence that will provide inspiration for our next artistic collaboration. One idea for the summer of 2018 may be coordinated with an exhibit on sailor's valentines – stay tuned to learn more in the coming weeks.



An adorable group of owls created during one of our winter Saturday Crafternoons

Bookplates Provide Way to Honor a Loved One



Some of the library's books have big stickers inside the front cover that say "in honor of" or "in memory of" followed by a name. Those are called bookplates and, as you may have guessed, it means donors have given money to the library to buy books in honor of those people. Have you ever wondered who those people are?

There have been more than 20 bookplate funds at the library, but some have run out and exist only as bookplates here and there. Others are ongoing and continue to help the library fulfill its mission to buy new books and other materials.

"It's a nice way to remember someone," said Library Director Margaret McCormick.

The biggest donors are Arthur and the late Frances Silverstein, in memory of their daughter, Judy Silverstein, who died of cancer in 1984 at age 25. Arthur Silverstein said they created the endowed fund for non-fiction because their daughter, a graduate stu-

People donate money to buy books for the library in honor of loved ones. Those books receive bookplates, such as this one in honor of Judy Silverstein.

dent at the time, was an avid reader who spent many summers in Woods Hole and visited the library often. He continues to contribute to the fund each year. "I have great respect for the Woods Hole Public Library and the people who work there," he said.

Other important funds honor:

- Betsy and Fred Bang, scientific researchers who spent summers at MBL and later retired to Woods Hole. Fred Bang discovered the horseshoe crab's defense mechanism against bacteria, which led to tests still used to determine if hospital equipment is sterile. Betsy Bang did ground-breaking research that proved that birds can smell. She also volunteered at the library for many years and created the fund after her husband died in 1981.
- Elaine Pear Cohen, a sculptor and teacher, for art books.
- John Adelman and Jane Dorsey, who appear as "Woods Hole Jane + John" with a drawing of a fish, for fiction.
- Long-time librarian Nancy Babin. Library staff and trustees donated to fund books about fiber art, one of her passions

Building the Library's Collection One Book at a Time

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She tries to read the New York Review of Books and also pays attention to the Sunday Boston Globe and Cape Cod Times for more regional and local authors.

She loves to hear recommendations from the people who walk in to the library. "If they want it -- and it's not to be found elsewhere and it has some appeal to our patrons -- I'll buy it," she said.

She also pays attention to the CLAMS network, the Cape-wide network of local library catalogues. She can see what's hot and what's not by the length of waiting lists at area libraries. Even if a book is clearly popular, if there are 10 copies floating around the Cape, she may opt not to buy it and rely on other libraries to supply it through CLAMS. On the other side of the scale, she may spend the \$25 on a wonderfully-reviewed book that might be just be too high-end to be popular.

Choosing books to buy can be fun, like looking over bins of candy, but it can be stressful, too. Unlike a poor pick in borrowing, buying the wrong book means living with the mistake for years. In finding the right balance, she's concluded you just have to try your best.