

WOODS HOLE LIBRARY NEWS

Spring 2019

Library and Historical Museum Courtyard to be Refreshed



The small courtyard behind the Library and Historical Museum is due for a refresh in the hope that it will become one of the village's favorite nooks. Plans call for turning it into an pleasant outside reading room during the summer months.

"It's been a while since the courtyard was created," said Grey Zeien, who heads the Library Board's grounds committee. "It's been a long enough time that when we brought the contractors in, they scuffed up the top layer of gravel and found three inches of dirt underneath before they got to some sort of hard pack," he said.

Originally built by compacting the soil and laying down gravel in order to provide a fairly solid surface that retards the growth of plants in the area, trees and other plants dropped leaves and other vegetation in the area over time. While much of it was raked up,

some disintegrated and turned into dirt burying the old surface.

"Unless you keep on top of it, and blow it out of there, it will rot and build up," Zeien said. "You can't leave it for even a few months because the leaves will start to break down quickly."

The vision for the courtyard is that it will look pretty much like it does now, but cleaner, sharper and more welcoming. Currently used for the Library's plant sale, the Museum's annual party, and a few other occasions, Library Director Margaret McCormick sees it becoming a regular space for people out and about in the village as well as readers.

McCormick is looking for a large sail to hang over the space as a shade to reduce the summer heat. There will be outdoor furniture and new landscaping to encourage people to use the space. It will be open to whoever wants to use it and available even when the Library and Museum are closed.

"I see it as a place to enjoy the good weather and extend the library outside," she said. "It's been a sanctuary in the past and can be again," she said. "But it's changed and needs the canopy to cut the heat, new gravel and the landscaping needs to be improved. It's a lovely quiet spot, that with a little work can become really inviting."

Museum Executive Director Debbie Scanlon agrees. "I just think it will be a nice little oasis away from the heat and the crowds, including probably for me," she said. "I'll lunch out there."

Zeien said he expects the project to be largely completed by June. He said the contractor estimated it would remove 36 tons of material and replace the hard-packed surface and gravel.

The project is estimated at close to \$5,000. McCormick said the Library hopes to get \$1,500 from one local foundation and the remaining funds from other local funding sources.

Library Hours

Mondays Noon - 5:30, 7 - 9

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 3 - 5:30

Wednesdays 10 - 5:30, 7-9

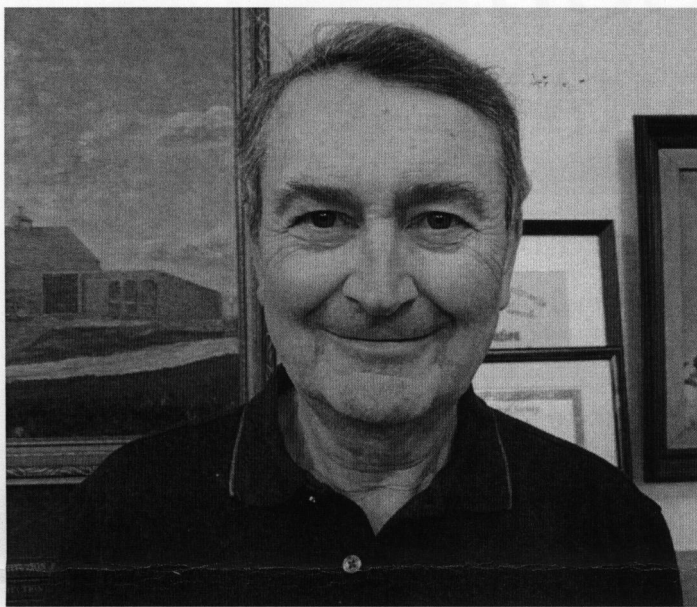
Saturdays Noon - 5:30

Woods Hole Public Library

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woodsholepubliclibrary.org

Blomberg to Share His Love of Woods Hole and its History



Rob Blomberg

Rob Blomberg loves Woods Hole with the enthusiasm of a new arrival -- which he sort of is and sort of isn't. Blomberg, who became a trustee at Woods Hole Public Library last year, has roots in Woods Hole going back four generations and over a hundred years, but largely grew up and spent his career elsewhere.

Although a history major and education minor in college, Blomberg worked for 38 years for Liberty Mutual Insurance, moving up the corporate ranks. His last position was as vice president in the claims department based in Boston. During his time with the company, he and his wife, Wendy, moved a lot -- understandable, if stressful, he said. Each time, he said, they bought houses, joined new clubs and made new friends. In the most extreme example, he said, he was working for the company in Pittsburgh when they were asked to move to Syracuse for a new position. They sold and emptied the house, moved, and before the year was out, were asked to move back to Pittsburgh for another position. They learned to live light and make friends easily. Blomberg's naturally gregarious and engaging personality eased the transitions.

He retired in 2015 and Woods Hole was the natural place to move because of his deep roots here. One of his grandfathers was Bob Neal, the long-time local general agent for the New Haven railroad, which ran the train and steamship operations. His great grandfather, Albert Neal, died in the 1938 hurricane when he and one of his sons walked out to Pizance Point to move some carpets out of the way of flood waters. On Bar Neck, they were caught by the storm surge and grabbed onto telephone polls. Blomberg's great uncle managed to cling on, but his great-grandfather was swept away. His body was later found on Martha's Vineyard.

His father and mother, Thure and Avis Blomberg, both grew up here, but left after World War II to find work. They settled in the Hartford, Conn. area where his dad worked for Pratt & Whitney. Blomberg largely grew up there, but spent time year round visiting his grandparents in Woods Hole on weekends, over holidays and in the summer. "I first started going to the library when I was a toddler and there are still a few books there with my name in them," he said. As a teen in the early 1970s, Blomberg worked three summers at the Sands of Time and then three summers at the Landfall as a busboy, where his mother also worked as a waitress and hostess. He visited the library often in his off hours and estimated he read 30 to 40 books a summer.

When he retired in 2015, they moved back to and renovated the house on Woods Hole Road above Little Harbor that his grandparents built in 1941. He's been more than pleased with the move. "Of all the places I've lived in, this is my favorite, by far," he said. "Falmouth isn't the sleepy little town I remember. It's got more than 30,000-32,000 people. There are more activities available than is possible to do."

He chairs committees for the town's Rotary Club, the Commodores baseball team and plays in the Cape Cod Codgers softball league. But his most time-intensive retirement activity is outside Falmouth: leading tours of Fenway Park three times a week. And the tour has certainly proved popular -- 242,000 people took the one-hour tour last year, he said. Relatively few were natives or Red Sox fans.

"In my last tour I had two people from Australia, eight Canadians, one from Japan," he said. "My tour is much more about Fenway history and not so much about the Red Sox. They're there because Trip Advisor told them that this is the top thing in Boston to see."

He likes giving the tours so much that when Woods Hole Historical Museum Executive Director Debbie Scanlon asked him last year to do tours of Woods Hole, he accepted. This coming July and August, he will lead tours at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays starting at the Museum. He gets to talk about the science, the shipbuilding, the whaling, the fishing, the farming, the tourists, the steamships and railroads, even the guano, that makes Woods Hole and its history so interesting.

"For a town of about 800 people, it really is an amazing place," he said.

An Ambassador for Book Buying and Selling Offers Tips and Tales



Ken Gloss of Brattle Street Books spoke about what makes books valuable to an overflow crowd at Woods Hole library in late March.

In his recent visit, Ken Gloss wove laugh-out-loud stories from a lifetime hunting rare and valuable books with a gentle warning for his listeners that the works they clutched were probably not among them.

Gloss -- for decades the owner of Brattle Books on West Street in downtown Boston -- spoke in late March to a packed room in the Library's basement. After the talk, dozens in the audience brought books for a quick appraisal.

He is an ambassador for the book buying-and-selling world. He has become one of the better-known experts in his field, giving talks frequently, doing the podcast Brattlecast and appearing on PBS' Antiques Roadshow and local cable stations. He makes owning a second-hand bookstore seem fun and, occasionally, glamorous, with phone calls from mysterious old ladies and attics bursting with antique volumes. The more you know, he said, the more rewarding the hunt.

"A lot of the fun of collecting is studying, learning, appreciating something," he said. "It's really your knowledge that makes something interesting. One person might look at something and say that's a scrap of paper, while another might say it's a broadside

that led to the Boston Tea Party that led to the American Revolution that led to the founding of our country."

Brattle Books goes back to 1825 in downtown Boston, but it was almost out of business when his father bought half interest in 1949 for \$500. Gloss himself didn't originally think he wanted to be in the business, but while wrestling with his future after college decided to take a year to work in his father's store. That was 46 years ago.

His mission, in addition to promoting the business, is educating the public on what constitutes a valuable book. He said people are always coming up to him to ask what their first-edition book is worth. Usually, the answer is not much.

"Most first editions never came out in a second edition and probably never should have come out in a first edition," he said. "Nobody cares about them or wants them. A book has to be historically, scientifically, literarily or for some other reason important for there to be a group of collectors out there to want it."

And that was his basic message: the book market is like any other. Prices are set by supply and demand. Books are less valued for their contents -- which can now be gotten free or low cost -- than their collectible appearance and condition. They are bought to sit on somebody's shelf as an object. Valuable books tend to be first editions of high profile authors, but from a work with relatively few copies printed. And they must be in excellent shape, with the dust jacket.

"A lot of collecting is prestige, it's 'Look what I am. I have the best, the most wonderful, essentially, I have what you don't have,' and people who can afford it will pay absolute top price for the very, very best, but might not spend anything at all for any (book) even slightly less."

Many in the audience brought old books, several from the 1700s. Old, certainly, he said, but probably not worth more than a few hundred or, at most, a few thousand dollars. The Gutenberg Bible (printed in 1456) is worth millions of dollars. In fact, he said, anything printed in the 1400s is valuable, but... "After that," Gloss said, "it depends on what the book is. You can have a book printed in the 1500s that was a relatively dull and uninteresting book then, and it's still a dull and interesting book now and nobody cares much about it."

Does an author's signature enhance the value of the book? Yes -- and no.

Gloss had a man come in with packet of letters by author J.D. Salinger. All were interesting and the rare Salinger signature was very valuable, Gloss said. But there was one letter he particularly liked in which Salinger recalled when he first moved to New Hampshire and a group of local high school kids helped build the foundation of his house. "He said that one of the kids was a really good athlete -- a kid named Carlton Fisk. So Carlton Fisk helped build J.D. Salinger's house." On the other hand, he said, some authors are just too prolific with their signatures, such as noted New England maritime

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An Ambassador for Book Buying and Selling Offers Tips and Tales

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Ellen Burns was one of a few dozen people eager to show their old, interesting books to bookstore owner Ken Gloss for a quick appraisal.

history and adventure author Edward Rowe Snow. The author, a friend of Gloss' father, had just returned from a visit to a Cape Cod where he stopped in at a bookstore he'd never visited before. "And he went right up to a section where his books were and pulled one off the shelf and exclaimed: 'My, a rare unsigned copy!' and took out his pen and signed it...So signatures by Edward Rowe Snow don't add as much."

He said sometimes you find more than you expect -- the time he met with a woman who told terrific stories about marrying into the Russian royal family in exile and owned a wall full of J.M.W. Turner watercolors -- and other times less than you hoped.

He once had an elderly client who, as a young man, got the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend a dinner with Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. He was so looking forward to learning from two of the era's great Americans. "Edison, by this time, was quite elderly and had a horn to help with hearing," Gloss said. "Ford says, loudly, 'My Tom, you look very good.' And Edison says 'It's those Carter's Little Liver Pills.' And this man said that all night long all they did was yell about Carter's

Little Liver Pills. He said next time he wanted to learn something he went to the library."

A few pointers from Ken Gloss about valuable books: The general rule is: there has to be collectors who would want them. That includes books by famous authors, and books on interesting subject areas, places or histories. | Bibles, even ornate, antique ones, are generally not valuable because they are so common. | The more specific the subject the better. A history of Woods Hole might be valuable, a history of Massachusetts less so. | If the book was written contemporary to its subject, it is typically more valuable. | Dust jackets, the better-preserved the better, are important for 20th Century books. | Foreign language is OK. | For fiction, works written earlier in a noted author's career when there were fewer copies in the print run tend to be more valuable. | When in doubt, take a picture of the book and send it to Ken at info@brattlebookshop.com or another book dealer. "We don't mind, you are not bothering us." | Or go online to Abebooks.com or Amazon.com, but Gloss said the pricing is not always accurate or helpful for pricing your book. **And for every rule about book value, there are a thousand exceptions.**

Community Art Project 2019

By *Nawrie Meigs-Brown*

Get your creative juices flowing! The Library staff invites the community to participate in an art project during June and July using the molts, or discarded shells, of the horseshoe crab. Originating 450 million years ago, the horseshoe crab, or *Limulus polyphemus*, is a living fossil and its strange blue blood has been found to have valuable medical properties. Past Library art projects have used books, navigational charts, and even left over chairs from the Fishmonger to fuel artists' imaginations. The books were used to make all sorts of things, including a mobile, a pop-up book that featured Mother Goose and a Night-blooming cereus. The charts were fashioned into a pinwheel, blocks, origami cranes, and a three-dimensional fish. The transformation of the chairs was magical and beautiful: one even became a planter, complete with plant. Go to the Library's Facebook page and look through the photographs of these wonderful projects.

Where do the ideas for the projects come from?

"We wait for inspiration," said Library Director Margaret McCormick.

This year's inspiration came from Library patron De Grice who grew up here in Woods Hole. She has long ties to the community and has participated in other art projects. Delighted with the *Limulus* idea, the Library staff took to the beaches at the end of last summer and collected about forty molts which were then stored over the winter.

If you are interested in participating in this project, you may call the Library to reserve a molt. The molts will be available for pick up beginning in late June. The completed works of art will be on display at the Library during the week of July 25. On Saturday, July 27 the library will celebrate with a party and silent auction. These Community Art Projects have been successful fundraisers for the library in the past.

Invite your friends to the party and encourage them to bid high!

Rea is Committed to WHPL's Strength and Stability

The Woods Hole Public Library is made of stone and concrete, but how solid is it really? That's a question that Nancy Rea thinks about a lot.

A retired librarian and current trustee at Woods Hole Public Library, Rea knows from personal experience that libraries as institutions can actually be quite fragile, only as strong as their public and government support. That's why she is a big believer in advocacy. "It's incredibly important to make our voices heard," she said. Library support comes at three levels, she said: local, state and federal levels.

The local level is the one everyone thinks of. It includes local taxpayer support -- Falmouth Library is largely supported this way, while the Woods Hole Public Library, as a private entity, receives just 11 percent of its nearly \$200,000 annual budget from local taxpayers. Funding from the public also means gifts, memberships and events such as movie nights and the plant sale.

State support is also critical, if less visible, to library users, Rea said. "At the state level things are going on that most people are not even aware of," she said. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners connects and oversees all 350 local libraries, vastly expanding the range of reading material and sophistication of services available to the average patron. It ensures a minimum level of quality through certification and the sharing of materials through regional networks such as CLAMS (Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing), electronic databases, staff training, library technology and construction grants.

Perhaps the most obvious direct state-funded items for WHPL is the van that brings books from other libraries in the CLAMS network or elsewhere in the state. Without those vans, our Library patrons would have just the books on the shelf at 581 Woods Hole Road.

The agency's budget also funds the Library's databases, connects the CLAMS eBook catalog with the larger state-wide network of eBooks, and provides access to digitized historical collections and archival material through the Digital Commonwealth. All of these resources can be accessed through the WHPL website. "What the Commonwealth provides is all about access," Rea said. The agency also provides services to academic, school and special libraries across the state.

On March 5, Rea and hundreds of librarians, library trustees, volunteers and users from across the state attended the annual Massachusetts Library Association's Legislative Day at the State House in Boston to talk with local legislators or their aides about the importance of library funding and support for the agency's annual budget.

They hope to get more money for libraries. State library funding peaked in 2001 and has remained down ever since. At \$27.2 million, the state's library funding makes up about 0.07 percent of the \$41.2 billion state budget. This year, library advocates are asking roughly \$2 million more, plus a \$250 million bond for library construction projects. The Legislature won't vote on the final state budget until July.

Federal support for libraries is even deeper in the background. It comes through the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which administers grants and programs for library technology, programming, training and advocacy services. The Trump Administration is presently seeking to cut the entire \$210 million federal budget for federal library funding. "They zeroed it out last year, too, but it was put back because people stood up and insisted," she said.

Rea has an unusually deep understanding of the federal/state/local interconnection because she spent a career in libraries.

Upon moving to Massachusetts in 2003, she was Library Director at the Haverhill Public Library. She arrived to find a library suffering from chronic underfunding, but the library's trustees, friends and users persuaded the local government to increase funding to keep the library certified. Without certification, a library would no longer be able to receive books through interlibrary loan or apply for federal grants. Even if government funding rebounds, regaining certification can take years. Wareham has just been recertified after a long struggle.

Rea was Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners from 2006 to 2009, where she oversaw development of libraries across the state, including the administration of federal grants to libraries and the agency's nationally recognized library construction program.

Our 5th Annual Accessories and Adornments Sale is Saturday, August 3, and we need your help to make this event a success! If you have jewelry, handbags, scarves, men's ties, or any other adornments that are no longer sparking joy for you, please donate them to the Library. We will gladly be accepting donations during Library hours in the weeks leading up to the sale!

A Timely Treasure: WHPL's Grandfather Clock



Rolland Fischer works with the grandfather clock

On Wednesday mornings the Woods Hole Public Library welcomes children from the nearby Daycare Co-op for Story Time. They arrive, herded by their teachers, in classic crocodile fashion, clinging to a length of clothesline. Three and four-year-olds gather in the Children's Room, where they sprawl on the new carpet while Jennifer Gaines reads to them from old and recent picture books. One week it may be *Make Way for Ducklings* and another week perhaps one of Molly Bang's amazing collection, *Ten, Nine, Eight* or *In my Heart*.

The children's high-pitched voices reverberate until they wave goodbye, and in the sudden quiet, Jennifer sometimes pauses beside the Library's grandfather clock to listen as it chimes the noon hour. She and the clock are old friends. She sheltered it for a year in her home, at the foot of the stairs, away from dust and debris, when the Library closed for its 1989 expansion project. Jennifer admits she misses its strike, a distinctive chime, and she remains its official keeper, winding it once a week.

This grandfather clock has recently been the beneficiary of considerable attention, occurring when the Library closed for a week during its big carpet replacement project. In fact, Library Director Margaret McCormick is particularly grateful for the various additional tasks completed during that busy effort. Among other things, the staff had time to go through file drawers, where they came upon a collection of documents related to the clock and its history.

A perusal of the file reveals that the clock itself was built circa 1820, in London, by a Mr. George Prior, maker of clocks and watches between 1800 and 1830. Shipped to this country, the clock met with calamity even before reaching our shores. It is said to have fallen or been thrown overboard in Boston Harbor, but was salvaged and successfully put back into working order.

The clock's first owner was Thatcher Hatch of Falmouth, who lived off Mill Road at Emmons Farm. After his death in 1856, the clock was sold at auction to Watson Shiverick for two dollars. It was sold again in 1909 to H. K. Dyer, who lived at the tip of Penzance Point. He loaned it for a time to the Falmouth Historical Society, subsequently gifting it to the Woods Hole Public Library.

The clock case, according to Brian Cullity, curator of the Sandwich Heritage Museum, was built in this country and its style is "of this area." The backing, white pine, is doubtless local, while the front of the case is open-grained mahogany, which may have been imported from the Caribbean. In 1980, Mr. Cullity pronounced the style of the housing "interesting," especially adjacent to the metal clock face. He described the wooden columns on either side of the face as "chunky" and distinctively American. His assessment includes his speculation that the face was once topped by three finials and two round, gilded carvings, now missing. Ronald Rutkowsky, servicing the clock in 1991, removed its front feet because he felt they interfered with the balance of the clock, preventing it from running smoothly.

The clock has been maintained over the years by experts, most recently by Library friend Rolland Fischer, who has expertise in pocket watches and grandfather clocks. During the carpet project, Rolland initially moved the "the hat," the top part of the wooden case, to a high shelf.

With assistance from Library trustee Grey Zeien, he then transferred the rest of the clock to the Children's Room, first the two weights and the pendulum, then the rest of the case with the movement (the mechanical part) attached, placing it carefully on its back on a window seat. Then they wrapped plastic sheeting around all the pieces to protect the parts from damage.

Because Rolland felt it would run and sound better if standing on marble rather than on a squishy rug, his wife, Betty Wall, was on the lookout for—and through serendipity found locally—a marble slab, a plinth, to go underneath the clock. Another Library friend, meticulous ship's carpenter Rusty Strange cut out a piece of the new carpet to install the marble plinth. After painstakingly leveling the clock, Rusty attached the housing to the wall, preventing the clock from ever tipping over.

Margaret points out how lucky the Library is to be situated in a supportive community, with people who step forward, offering their knowledge and expertise. The carpet should last at least another 30 years. "Good things happened because of the rug," she says appreciatively, adding, "I feel the clock is ready for the next hundred years."