



WOODS HOLE LIBRARY NEWS

Spring 2015

Volume 11, Issue 5

In this issue we continue our series on local residents who enrich our lives in an interview with Judy Laster, originator of the Woods Hole Film Festival. We recognize Becky Lash once again, this time for her work with sea turtles, and bring you up to date on the latest offerings from local authors Peter Abrahams and Salley Mavor. We report on winter happenings and events to come, and we remember Tom Chase.

Radio Workshop

by Laurie Raymond

How was YOUR school vacation? The eight Upper Cape high school students who participated in the Library-sponsored Transom Teen Radio Workshop might tell you it was pretty darned interesting... and challenging, scary, rewarding... and FUN!

The five day intensive workshop took place downstairs in the Ratcliffe Room over February school vacation, and was made possible by a generous grant from the Brabson Library and Educational Foundation. Under the tutelage of independent radio producer Rob Rosenthal of Atlantic Public Media and Transom.org, with help from Viki Merrick, the students produced two short radio-ready audio pieces.

The first, known in radio parlance as a "vox pop," involved posing a question to numerous people, mostly strangers "on the street," about a subject of interest to each student. Questions elicited responses on a range of topics, including gay marriage, immigration policy, local snow removal, impacts of global warming on climate, and social media use by the younger generation. As if trolling large parking lots and busy shopping areas for interview subjects, with headsets on and microphone in hand, weren't challenging enough, interview day was 18 degrees, snowing and blowing, slippery and frigid. The students persevered, and people who weren't too frozen were happy to talk, resulting in enough material to produce some great-sounding pieces.

The second production was a 30 second pitch or "promo" for a real or imagined radio show, written by each student and incorporating music, sound effects, and voicing, much of which was done in the studios next door at public radio station WCAI. These pieces were fun and creative and reflected the humor and enthusiasm of these hard working young people.

The workshop concluded with a lively presentation of the work before a packed Ratcliffe Room audience. In the crowd were parents (who had braved wild weather, schedule changes, and roadblocks to get their kids safely to and fro, from as far away as Dartmouth and Yarmouth!), friends, teachers, Library Trustees, and public radio personalities, all of whom seemed genuinely delighted and impressed with the end results. As the group dispersed, there was already talk of potential summer internships, and the desire to continue working together, using the technologies and skills acquired during this very memorable workshop.



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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Judy Laster and Her Amazing Film Festival

by Laurie Raymond

The internationally renowned Woods Hole Film Festival (WHFF) will celebrate its 24th year this summer from Saturday, July 25, through Saturday, August 1. During the 8-day fest, over 100 films from across the globe will be screened in multiple sites in Woods Hole village and Falmouth. As in previous years, there will also be panel discussions, workshops, filmmaker Q & A, and concerts and parties, all taking place at local businesses and institutions.

Film Festival founder and producer Judy Laster of Woods Hole will tell you it wasn't always this way. Judy first came to Woods Hole as a "summer kid." Her father was an NIH scientist with a summer lab at the MBL, and Judy was immersed in village life. As a teen and an MBL Club Steward, she began organizing and producing concerts and dances, and showing movies at the Club. She realized early on that she enjoyed creating events that brought people together. Judy first began taking film courses while at Bowdoin College, then attended law school, and continued taking film courses, which evolved naturally into making her own films.

In her late twenties, Judy made several films with like-minded local friend Kate Davis (who went on to become a film director and producer), and under the patronage of the Woods Hole Community Association, began showing these and several other original films upstairs at the Firehouse. Thus was born the Woods Hole Film Festival, in its infancy a one-day/five-film event, and at the time one of only several film festivals in Massachusetts! For several years Judy collaborated with the independent filmhouse Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline. The Festival continued to evolve along with the independent film movement. Judy was putting more hours and energy on a year-round basis into ensuring the Festival's success. Over time it grew into a weekend-long affair. She recruited more volunteers to solicit and screen films in the off-season, and to sell tickets and host venues during the Festival, all the while courting local businesses and institutions to advertise, support, and host WHFF-related events.

Today, the eight-day Woods Hole Film Festival is one of over 3000 across the country. It has the commitment of over 100 local volunteers, and is considered a paragon of film fests by filmmakers and other festival producers. Judy feels her Festival has several unique features that set it apart. One is focusing more on the filmmakers themselves,

giving them greater direct access to distributors and audience members. She has also worked hard to maintain a local flavor by including films reflecting the culture, values and environment of Cape Cod, films made by local producers, and films focused on scientific topics and areas of research relevant to Woods Hole, and often originating in local labs.

In addition to the obvious benefits the Festival brings to Woods Hole, the less tangible benefits are manifold. The creative buzz generated by the WHFF is contagious. Nearly every restaurant in the village is hosting a party with live music. Every space large enough to screen a film or host a panel discussion is doing so. The Firehouse is a hive of ticket and program sales, posters and promotional items, and volunteers who can barely contain their enthusiasm. It truly is a festival on many levels, a celebration of creativity through film, integrated with the culture of Woods Hole.

Judy's development of the off-season "Dinner and a Movie" series has also been hugely successful, hosted by entities as diverse as the Captain Kidd restaurant, WHOI, Atria Falmouth, Quicks Hole Tavern, and the Cotuit Center for the Arts. These screenings serve to maintain a year-round Cape-wide presence for the fest. They allow filmmakers to be compensated through ticket sales, increase patronage at local restaurants during the slower months, and give the public a chance to see films they may have missed during the summer blitz.

Judy sees a bright and evolving future for the WHFF. A new year-round venue will be the recently completed Morse Hall at Falmouth Academy, with ample parking and seating capacity. She hopes to begin working with and mentoring a new generation of film and festival producers who can assume some of the responsibilities of producing the WHFF, freeing her to pursue larger festival issues like development, growth, and additional community building. As far along as film festivals in general have come, Judy hopes to see the field of festival production evolve further by creating job opportunities that pay a living wage, and attracting industry professionals and people who want to work in film.

As individuals and as a community, we look forward to the 2015 WHFF, and to what Judy Laster and her team, in their tireless efforts, will serve up for us. It's better than Sundance; thanks to Judy Laster, it's *Woods Hole*, and it's **right here!!**

Newsletter Staff

Terry McKee and Pamela Nelson, with Emma Dvorak
Contributor: Laurie Raymond

Sea Turtles and their Friends

by Pamela Nelson

It was a harsh autumn for Kemp's Ridley sea turtles in Cape Cod Bay. The smallest of all the sea turtles, they were named for a Florida fisherman, Richard Kemp, who submitted one of them for identification to a scientist at Harvard over 100 years ago. Many juvenile Kemp's Ridleys, who swim north from the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico and up along the Atlantic coast, spend the summer eating crabs in Cape Cod Bay. At summer's end, changes in daylight and temperature trigger the turtles to swim south. Those who fail to swim around the crook of the arm of Cape Cod find themselves trapped in Cape Cod Bay. When temperatures drop suddenly in the late fall, the trapped turtles are "cold-stunned." Because they are cold-blooded, they lose their ability to function and to swim, leaving them at the mercy of waves and currents. Unprecedented numbers of them—over 1200—washed ashore between early November and the end of December. Many of those turtles were dead, but over 700 of them survived. Far fewer washed ashore in 2013, with 90 turtles surviving. Most years, anywhere from 25-150 are rescued.

All of the cold-stunned turtles would have died if not for the trained Massachusetts Audubon Society volunteers, who rescued them and took them to the Wellfleet Sanctuary. These experienced volunteers patrol the beaches after every high tide, even at night. At the sanctuary, the rescued turtles are assessed, and survivors are placed on a towel inside a banana box. More volunteers then drive them to the Rescue and Rehabilitation facility at the New England Aquarium Animal Health Center in Quincy, outside Boston. The rehab facility is in a giant brick building that was once used for building ships. Usually just a few arrive at a time at the Quincy facility, but this year, on a couple of occasions, over 100 turtles were delivered in just one day. Because there were so many turtles this year and not enough room for them all in Quincy, hundreds of turtles were flown to aquariums and turtle hospitals in other states.

I learned about the turtle rescue operation from long-time Woods Hole Public Library member and Science School teacher Becky Lash. (It is Becky who shares her monarch butterfly hatcheries with us in the Children's Room in our Library every fall.) Several years ago Becky contacted the Wellfleet Sanctuary, offering to do beach patrols and to drive rescued turtles to Quincy. There are so many qualified and trained volunteers that no one called her until one Thanksgiving Day, when a driver was needed. She delivered her turtle from Wellfleet to the Quincy Rehab facility, looked around, and

decided to submit an application to work there. Not everyone who applies is accepted, but Becky had some unusual qualifications. She had been employed as an aquarist at NOAA's Woods Hole aquarium for three years, working at times with Kemp's Ridleys. With her knowledge of marine life and her hands-on teaching experience at Science School, she is comfortable handling animals, and is not squeamish. After a series of interviews, Becky was finally accepted to work at the Turtle Rescue and Rehab Center. At the outset she had to commit to showing up on a specific day of the week for a period of six months. She has worked there since December of 2013, and this past winter she sometimes worked as many as four days a week, during the height of the strandings. Becky also worked on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Along with the other volunteers, she does many different jobs. She assists the New England Aquarium veterinarians and scientists with treatments and exams in the clinic, prepares food (chopped herring and squid) and feeds the turtles, cleans out the pools, and helps keep records on each turtle patient. There are large pools of 75° sea water where the turtles live. It can take months before each turtle is healthy enough to be released to the warm ocean waters of Georgia and Florida. "I like being part of the network that rescues sea turtles," says Becky. "It's so interesting and fun and purposeful."

Becky cautions that folks who aren't trained should call the Massachusetts Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary Sea Turtle Hotline at 508-349-2615 if they find a stranded sea turtle on the beach. (For stranded dolphins and seals, call IFAW at 508-743-9548.)



Local Authors: Peter Abrahams (aka Spencer Quinn)

by Terry McKee

Wanting to meet an author because you like his work is like wanting to meet a duck because you like pâté...

—Margaret Atwood

I decided this quote was dead wrong after meeting with local author Peter Abrahams (aka, Spencer Quinn.) Peter, author of more than thirty books, including many New York Times bestsellers, has written adult mystery and crime thrillers, a series of Young Adult books set in the fictional New England Town of Echo Falls, and an addictive detective series about the capers of Bernie Little and his partner, Chet the dog.

It was through the Chet and Bernie books, written under the pen name Spencer Quinn, that I was introduced to Peter's work. I started with the first book of the series, *Dog On It*, in which narrator Chet, a 100-pound dog with mismatched ears, recounts his adventures with private eye partner Bernie Little. I was smitten.

I think it was the hope that Chet actually existed and might accompany Peter that made me seek an interview with the popular author. In preparation, I read two more of his books, the crime thriller, *A Perfect Crime*, and the first of the Echo Falls series, *Down the Rabbit Hole*. I also watched the movie, *The Fan*, which was based on his book of the same name. I hoped Peter would be interested in discussing the literary technique of using dogs as narrators (as in Paul Auster's *Timbuktu* and Garth Stein's *The Art of Racing in the Rain*), but Peter said he does not read works similar to his own. So we talked about Chet, which worked for me.

Peter fabricated Chet based on the many dogs that shared a home with him, his wife Diana, and their four children. It was Diana who suggested that he write a book through the mind of a dog. Peter describes Chet as an "unreliable narrator," because as a dog, he observes and understands both more and less than a human. "I felt that Chet's narration, paired with the rigorously clue-driven nature of detective stories, would make for an interesting mashup of the genre," he said.

Chet and Bernie live in "the Valley" in an urban area near the desert, a setting that resonates for Peter, and is, he felt, the perfect place for the duo's adventures to play out. They encounter urban crooks and spoilers of the environment, as well as the beauty and wildness of the wide-open spaces. The unique indigenous characters (desert vagrants, Western sheriffs, and motorcycle gangs) add interest to the stories and a particular kind of danger to their

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Tom Chase: 1947 - 2014



Tom Chase, who loved to work on a roof he found interesting, spent the fall and winter of 2013 singlehandedly replacing the Library's slate roof. Sometime when you drop by for a book, take a moment to look at Tom's legacy atop the Library, from the vantage point of the bridge across the street. From that perspective you will see the design he created from the slates he so carefully selected at a quarry in Vermont.

Local Authors: Salley Mavor

by Terry McKee

Felt Wee Folk: New Adventures, published in March, is the follow-up to Salley's 2003 book, *Felt Wee Folk: Enchanting Projects*. A work of art in itself, the soft-cover book offers step-by-step directions for making a variety of fanciful dolls using pipe cleaners, wooden beads, acorns, colorful yarns, and bits of fabric. The book offers many new doll projects, but also includes dolls from the first book. Salley says, "The directions have been improved, and there is more detail to the body parts of the new dolls," which is apparent in the lovely little bride dolls, which appear in delicate strapless wedding dresses. More advanced techniques for finishing the small creations, especially more intricate hair, have been added. Other new projects include Robin Hood and his Merry Men, nursery rhyme characters, a dollhouse family, and many more.

For Salley, "It's not about making one single thing.

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Peter Abrahams, *continued*

exploits. In at least one book, Chet and Bernie travel to the Bayou Country of Louisiana, which offers up its own fair share of colorful characters.

The plots, Peter says, are driven by Chet and Bernie's affection for one another. They might be dog and master, but they experience life together as would any two "guys" who enjoyed each other's companionship. Chet is a kind of Watson to Bernie's Holmes, says Peter.

Cleveland Plain Dealer book reviewer Michelle Ross pretty much summed it up for me: "I swear, if one more literary person says in that oh-so-condescending tone, 'Oh, I don't read ... mysteries,' I'm going to take a novel by Peter Abrahams and smack him on his smug little head." Now, that's a quote I won't quibble with!

Peter's books are available through CLAMS. For more information on his work and to learn about his new series, Bowser and Birdie, see his website <http://www.spencequinn.com>.

Carol Chittenden to Speak at Annual Meeting

On Tuesday, July 14th, the Library will hold its Annual Meeting. Carol Chittenden, retired owner of Falmouth's Eight Cousins bookstore, will be the featured speaker. Commenting on her 28 years at the store in an email blast, she said, "If everyone had a job as absorbing and rewarding as mine has been at Eight Cousins, the world would be a far happier place..." The presentation will begin at 8:00 pm following a short business meeting. A brief reception will follow.



Salley Mavor, *continued*

I like to think about reproducing and sharing my creations with the world. I don't need my art to be exclusive. This may have compromised my status in the serious art world, but knowing my works have touched many lives is of more value to me personally."

The pleasure of sharing, Salley continues, was a legacy she received from her mother. Mary Mavor ran a shop in Woods Hole for many years, selling her hand-made batik wall hangings and, later, clothing and artifacts imported "From Far Corners," the name of the shop. As a child in the 1950s, Salley remembers making clothing for plastic dollhouse dolls that had molded hair. She was always frustrated by the contrast between their soft realistic clothing, and their inflexible, unreal hair. She thinks this frustration may have been the force that compelled her to pursue making dolls as a large part of her artistic career.

In the new book, each step in the process of making a doll is described both in words, and in photo illustrations. Rob Goldsborough, Salley's husband, is the photographer, and shares credit for the beauty of the book. Close-up photographs show Salley's hands at work, exhibiting a particular stitching technique. Photographs of the doll habitats (a driftwood shack, a Nativity scene, a winter play area) make the book so much more than an instructional guide. They provide little worlds, within which the inhabitants move, work, and play.

In addition to these how-to books, Salley has illustrated numerous children's books with her imaginative stitching, including her very popular illustrated treasury of nursery rhymes, *Pocketful of Posies*, published in 2010. She creates stand-alone works as well. *Self portrait: A Personal History of Fashion* is composed of tiny doll-size images of herself, one for every year of her life. It hangs in the Library, as does her fabric rendition of the Library building, which forms the center square of the Woods Hole Village Quilt.

Salley's books are available at the Library. To share in more of her work (and to watch a short video about making a doll,) visit her blog at www.weefolkstudio.com.

Good News! The Woods Hole Foundation has installed 36 solar panels on the roof of the Post Office. The electricity generated will be donated to the Library, serving about half its energy needs, according to William Roslansky of the Woods Hole Foundation. The Library Board is thrilled with this extraordinary gift.

Superbowl Sunday Fabric/Yarn Sale a Success

by Terry McKee

The Patriots' triumph against the Seahawks wasn't the only exciting game in town this winter. On February 1st, the Library held its first Superbowl Sunday Fabric and Yarn Sale, a tradition observed by many fabric and yarn shops across the country to provide alternative entertainment for those whose interests are less centered on football. In previous years, Falmouth's Fabric Corner and the yarn store Sage would have opened their doors for the event, but Fabric Corner has been closed since it burned to the ground in December, and Sage has moved from its Main Street location to North Falmouth. Inspired by their absence and by the Library's own recycling tradition, we set about the task of soliciting donations of fabrics and yarns to resell as a fundraiser for the Library.

The time between the inception of the idea and its execution was short and intense. Donations poured in from library patrons who were eager to weed their collections ("stash," in stitching vernacular,) and to see their materials appreciated and used by other enthusiasts. To prepare for the sale, librarians, Board members, and volunteers Nan Logan, Salley Mavor, Rachel Switzer, and Valerie Walbek organized the donations, and transformed the lower level of the Library into an attractive retail display space.

Business was brisk from opening to closing. In the downstairs Community (Book Sale) Room, shoppers explored tables piled with neatly folded and color-sorted quilting fabrics, upholstery material, and vintage fabrics. In the Ratcliffe Room, baskets and boxes heaped with colorful knitting and needlepoint yarns adorned every surface. By the end, the stock was well depleted.

Even the leftover fabrics were put to good use. Nan Logan transported a few boxes to the St. Vincent DePaul Society Thrift Shop in Cotuit. Carolyn Stoeber, U.S. Program Coordinator of the Haiti Peace Quilt Project, arrived by ferry from Martha's Vineyard to collect unsold quilting fabric. The Project enables Haitian women "to earn a living through meaningful, creative work."

The sale brought in close to \$1300 for the Library. Many customers expressed the hope that we would continue the tradition next year. If we think we can re-create the success of this year's event, we just might.

Exploring the Museum Archives

by Terry McKee

On a cold February morning, I accompanied archivist Susan Witzell to the offsite archive of the Woods Hole Historical Museum (WHHM). Our mission was to retrieve the collection of *Woods Hole Weekly* issues, a publication that reported village news in the early 1980s. I was eager to peruse the complete set and, in particular, the "Dogs of Woods Hole" issue (February 17, 1983). Also, I wanted to visit the site, which the Museum secured in 2013 to free up some much-needed space in Bradley House.

When we arrived at the storage locker on Teaticket Highway, Susan hopped from her car and punched in the code that opened the security gate separating us from the parking area. We entered the cavernous building, heading down the cement hallways and up the elevator to the Museum's locker. Susan had described the site as "spooky," so I was pleased when she made short work of locating the boxes containing the *Woods Hole Weeklys*. We departed quickly, our mission accomplished, the environment not compelling us to linger.

The archive is a rich resource for anyone seeking historical information on Woods Hole. It includes documents, photographs, paintings, clothing and artifacts, maritime records, and ship and whaling logs, all of significance to village history. A description of some of these collections can be found on the Museum's website, <http://woodsholemuseum.org/>, where sample photos from the historical photo collection can be found. The added storage, says Susan, allows her to utilize Bradley House space

better for items that are more frequently requested and collections they are currently cataloging. Our visit to the storage locker showed me that the archivists are dedicated to keeping as much Village history accessible to the public as they can.

Requests for material usually come to the archivists in the form of emails or phone calls—often blind requests for any information on the requestor's topic of interest. More sophisticated researchers, says Susan, use the website to guide them to specific items, which they can then view during the archive's operating hours.





The Library is grateful to Anne Nelson, Bea & Jonathan Wittenberg, Osteria la Civetta, The Bank of Woods Hole, and six donors who choose to remain anonymous for their underwriting support of the *Listening at the Library* concert series. The Library Board Events Committee has put together a package of information describing the levels and the benefits each level offers to sponsors. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please don't wait for us to find you. Look for details on our website at <http://www.woodsholepubliclibrary.org>, or come find us at the Library.

Book Delivery Service

Library patron Klem Klimek has offered to deliver books from our Library to folks who are ill or who are shut-ins—in other words, to people who cannot come themselves. After patrons call the Library at 508-548-8961 to make their requests, WHPL will contact Klem to pick up and deliver books in the Woods Hole area. In this pilot program, which serves as a way for Klem to give back to the community, he will make deliveries and retrievals on Mondays and Tuesdays. Margaret is enthusiastic about his taking on this service, last regularly provided by former Library Director Elaine Tripp.

See the back of the letter to find a recipe for a **Berry-Filled Cake Roll** that was made to celebrate potter Anne Halpin's birthday this year. Anne has generously donated pieces to our Holiday Pottery Raffle.

Museum Passes Available

The Woods Hole Public Library is enrolled in an institutional pass program with several nearby museums. The passes offer discounted general admission to participating museums, which include the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Heritage Museum and Gardens, the Cahoon Museum, and the Cape Cod Museum of Art. For further information, visit the Library website at <http://woodsholepubliclibrary.org/boston-museum-passes/> or ask a librarian.

UPCOMING LIBRARY EVENTS

Sunday, July 5, 10 - noon. **Tag Sale and Kids Carnival.** The Library needs donations of gently used toys and bikes for this important annual fund-raiser.

Tuesday, July 14, 8:00 pm. **Annual Meeting** with speaker Carol Chittenden.

Saturday, August 15, 9 am. **Summer Book Sale.**

July, dates and times TBA. The **Lassalle Dance Series** will continue with lectures and a movie.

July, dates and times TBA. **Art from Nautical Charts.** In the spirit of last summer's successful Renewal Art exhibit, the Library will provide old nautical charts to anyone interested in creating a work of art using them as the medium. Works will be displayed at the Library and then auctioned off at a closing party with proceeds benefiting the Library.

Sunday, July 19, TBA. **Hydrangea Talk** by Marcia Chapman from Soares Flower Garden Nursery.

Find details about these and more events on our website at <http://www.woodsholepubliclibrary.org>.

Adornments and Accessories Sale

The Library will hold a sale of gently used adornments and accessories for men and women on **August 1, 2015**. We invite donations of men's ties, belts, sunglasses, and hats, and women's jewelry, scarves, hats, belts, and sunglasses. No baseball caps!

Donations will be accepted from July 27–31. The sale will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on August 1st. All proceeds will benefit the Library.

When is Out of Date Preferable to Forever?

Do you have a desk drawer filled with old, outdated stamps? The Library Membership committee can put your old un-canceled stamps, in any denomination, to good use as postage for our gift acknowledgment notes. Please bring your unused stamps to the Library, or place them in an envelope and mail them to Woods Hole Public Library, P.O. Box 185, Woods Hole MA 02543.

Thank you! Forever!



Do you recommend the CLAMS?

In which we visit the Marstons Mills Public Library.

by Pamela Nelson

Out on the tip of Cape Cod, the enormous Provincetown Library doubles as an exhibition hall and historical museum, while on the Vineyard, the Aquinnah Library near Gay Head nourishes imaginations in a tiny structure that not long ago was a one-room schoolhouse. CLAMS member libraries are as individual and different from each other as a group of diverse friends who share a common interest. The Marstons Mills Public Library (MMPL) is yet another unique member of the system.

Although the address of the library is on Main Street, the building is located on “the road less traveled,” the narrower, uphill fork of the road into the village of Marstons Mills. It sits next to Liberty Hall, a building reminiscent of our own Community Hall. The adjacent shingled library was last enlarged in the 1980’s, when an office building was moved and attached to the small space that had opened a century earlier and that served as library and post office in the nineteenth century. Hattie Crocker Mecarta served as postmistress and librarian, and donated seven bookshelves, which held the original collection of Marstons Mills Library books.

The atmosphere inside is comfortable and welcoming. Nooks and agreeable spaces invite you to make yourself at home. The fireplace (gas logs) was lit during my visit, with two large rocking chairs in front of it and a tea and coffee station to one side. In another area four public computers are arranged on a circular, two-tiered table (for the keyboard and monitor,) affording privacy to each user while taking up a minimum of real estate in this compact library. There are meaningful as well as fanciful signs posted, from “Mermaid Crossing” to “Browsing Room” and “Don’t judge a book by its movie”! In addition to its fiction and non-fiction areas, you will find a Cape Cod collection, a theater arts section donated by actress Nancy Reardon, a shelf of staff picks, and a mystery collection dedicated to their “resident sleuth,” who happens to be a volunteer and trustee.

The children’s room is in the basement, a homey jumble of toys and picture books, with craft supplies tucked to one side. In the center of the room is one big rocking chair, perfect for a parent with a sleepy child or for the reader at their frequent Story Times. Middle schoolers and their curious parent-drivers are attracted to the after-school Odd History Club, which—explained the children’s librarian—covers interesting facts around a theme.

For example, October’s spooky theme led the participants to learn about Moll Dyer, a seventeenth century Maryland herbalist accused of witchcraft. Legend says that she died with her hands frozen to a stone and that her handprints are still visible on that stone.

Like our own WHPL, the MMPL is an independent library, with less than half its budget provided by local taxes. It does not have a formal membership program nor is there a Friends of the Library group raising money for it. In summer, teens are encouraged to produce crafts for sale. They are excited that half the proceeds go to the library itself and the rest to the National Marine Life Center. In autumn the well-attended annual Taste of the Mills, a major library fundraiser, takes place next door in Liberty Hall. Soups, stews, and chowders are featured, with side dishes and desserts as well, all for a reasonable entrance fee. Friendraisers outnumber fundraisers at MMPL, with book discussion groups, Kneedlers knitting group, and movies all part of regular programming.

The Library’s useful and easily navigated web site describes a variety of programs and activities, suggesting an active and engaged group of patrons as well as staff. The home page is delightful, with a slide show of posters for current programs, directed at folks of different ages and interests. During the month I visited MMPL, this slide show included a poetry workshop for teens, an introductory session on the paranormal, a talk on prostate enlargement, a kids’ storyteller conducting family programs, and a week of Downton Abbey events, including a free 1920s fashion show, paired with a tea.

MMPL is open to the public for even more hours than the Falmouth Library main branch—pretty much all day on weekdays, extending into the evening on Tuesday, with shorter hours on Saturday. With its three large and comfortable rocking chairs, this small library sends the message that its patrons are invited to stay as long as they like in a space that is peaceful, friendly, and eager to offer a welcoming home to its patrons.

