

THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' UPDATE

July 2018

Copy by Kim Brawn (unless otherwise noted) / Layout by Tom Lyford

GOODBYE, HELEN



Bittersweetness. That's what retirement parties are made of. The hors d'oeuvres and canapes were scrumptious, but that sweetness was necessarily tempered by a bit of sadness as well. Because despite the satisfactions of the job well done—in this case a job *twenty years* well done—still, and most importantly, the word *done* has that ring of finality about it that pervades the festivities with its sense of leaving, of loss.

But this very well-attended soiree was a heart-felt celebration, a time of the gathering of friends and community. Greeting cards and gifts were bestowed amid smiles and laughter. It was a time of conversations loud and soft, handshakes and pats on the back and, yes, happy tears and hugs. There were speeches extolling Helen's stellar career, her resume highlighted by the

construction of the new wing, her service as past president of the Maine State Library Commission, and her work at securing TFL's membership among the first ten libraries that formed the Balsam Consortium. But finally, pretty much like every high school graduation ceremony you ever sat through with its diplomas awarded at the end, there was the presentation of the plaque, at which point all of us... our patron-friends, Thompson Free Library's own little 'family' of library co-workers, and especially our departing Library Director... were feeling oddly happy-sad. We were overcome by both the joy and the sorrow of something good, something *very* good, coming to its end. But joy because once again, as in the words of every valedictorian who ever lived, we remind ourselves that every ending is, in essence, simply another commencement. And for Helen, she is commencing upon her new journey which offers her ample time to enjoy her children and grandchildren, time to spend with friends, and time to take up new hobbies and pursuits such as, who knows, volunteering at Thompson Free Library perhaps. Wherever this commencement takes you, Helen, we wish you Godspeed. by Tom Lyford

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Our staff send-off for Helen happened on her actual last day—May 31. Michelle came up with the idea to forgo the usual cake-centric celebration and take the savory route instead. The proximity of Helen's office to the workroom meant she saw us walking back and forth, up and down stairs, like we were on a mission—which we were. So, it wasn't a surprise party.

Helen donned her "Officially Retired" crown and opened her cards, awash in best wishes. Gifts included: red wine, Gifford's gift cards, and a handmade beaded bracelet. Our quasi-potluck featured yummy appetizers, delicious main courses, refreshing beverages and, as the afternoon wore on, eventually dessert. In typical TFL fashion, the affair was punctuated with patrons. It seemed a fitting goodbye--laughing, reminiscing, storytelling—some small details remembered, and some larger ones forgotten. In the background, as you'd expect, the weight of melancholy and uncertainty. Now, a month later, Helen is settling into her new life, visiting family and friends and still involved with the library: she has gamely made sauerkraut at a program (see the photo), worked the book sale, ordered interlibrary loans, and been available to answer questions.



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HELLO, GRETA

On June 1, Greta Schroeder, stepped into the role of Library Director and has been eager to learn what we do, how we do it, and how to make things better for both staff and patrons. Combining an outsider's perspective with insider (library) knowledge and her own experiences, she is quickly connecting with her new community. She is at home at the circulation desk as well as weeding books (which she calls "a great way to learn the collection") to discussing landscaping and promoting the library, whether at a recent senior Coffee Talk at The Mill or taking photos for our Facebook page. She seeks our input. And is quick to offer assistance. Greta helped one not-so-tech-savvy woman resolve a computer issue and the woman was so grateful she said, "I want to go home and bake you cookies!"



Oral History and Folklife Research, Inc.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"I'm so excited to share this," said an animated Michelle Fagan. "We received a grant for \$8,500 from the Maine Community Foundation for an Oral History Project. It will go towards buying equipment, software, workshops, and a digital archive." The mission, she explained, is "to capture the oral histories of the people in Piscataquis County." The library is partnering with the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society and Central Hall Senior Commons on this important venture.

At a recent workshop at the Commons, Keith Ludden and Molly Graham from Oral History & Folk Life Research, Inc. focused on how to interview and be interviewed to help preserve our local stories and voices, how to encourage subjects to talk, the laws and ethics involved, and how to use recording equipment.

Michelle noted that Molly, a part-time area resident, has offered to spend time teaching and showing interview techniques to those interested in becoming interviewers for the project.

Michelle is passionate about this ongoing project's ultimate goal: a digital archive, with plans for a link on the TFL website and, hopefully, hardcopies stored at the library. While all stories are valuable, the top priority is to hear from our older population. "If an interviewee is homebound," Michelle points out, "We will go to them."

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“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.”

–Thomas Merton, No Man is an Island



In June, Jane Blay's beautiful artwork and photography graced the walls and other spaces at TFL. She is an art teacher at Foxcroft Academy with a long and storied history of exhibiting her work in galleries and at art shows. The triptych, "Piscataquis Morning," blends sky, water, and trees, capturing the look



Local resident Geneva Chambers' quirky drawings provided a fun change of pace in April. The work of this mother, wife, and self-proclaimed "crazy cat lady" has a playful tone, bringing a bit of an urban vibe to our rural proceedings.



Student artwork brought an incredible energy to the library in May. Young artists from SeDoMoCha and Foxcroft Academy let their creativity shine through in many varied and inventive pieces—an exuberant display of mixed media creations.



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DANDELION DETOX

In May, Dexter Herbalist Linda Tisdale returned for her third TFL program. An informative talk, spirited Q&A and lively discussion highlighted Linda's demonstration on how to make an herbal tincture. She opted for a dandelion leaf tincture, known for its detoxification properties, especially concerning the liver, as well as for supporting digestive health (giving body and mind a little spring cleansing). Attendees helped wash the roots, pick the best leaves, and chop them up. This tincture is ready in ten days to three weeks and can last up to seven years.



FERMENTED FUN

Mary Margaret Ripley from Ripley Farm hosted a mini-workshop in June on how to make homemade fermented sauerkraut. She also discussed making other fermented veggies like kimchi (she even brought some for us to sample). She walked us through the fermentation process using her detailed handout and answered lots of questions. She distributed cabbage to those who brought the necessary tools. Others watched and took notes. Mary Margaret walked around the room, sharing her tips and techniques, helping budding fermenters conquer each step. The large, spirited group made a bit of a mess, but many came away with a jar of sauerkraut--and everyone left with enough information to make it at home.



LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD

In April, Joy Bueschen of Turning Page Farm stopped by to show us how to make an effective and inexpensive three-ingredient laundry soap. She gave us an informative overview, answered questions, and took us step-by-step through the process, giving hands-on tasks to eager helpers. Joy and her husband Tim left high powered corporate jobs to raise goats and make popular goat's milk soap and goat cheese in Monson, Maine.



PAPER MUSE

Librarian Michelle Fagan conceived and coordinated April's eye-catching display, motivated by her "burning desire to make a paper hedgehog" and inspired by paper craft/folded art books. Then, she called on her paper posse to help. This popular display came to life thanks to designs from Michelle and her fellow library peeps: Valerie Talmadge, Helen Fogler, Phyllis Lyford, and Iris Snowfire. This array of paper pieces proved especially alluring, generating comments, compliments, and curiosity. We kept replenishing the display's books because so many patrons decided to create paper crafts for themselves.

