

# THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

## ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' UPDATE

October 2018



### *Artist of the Month*

*by Kim Brawn*

Dover-Foxcroft artist Lisa Laser credits “living off the grid in the woods of Central Maine” with giving her “the gift of place and endless changing seasons to work with” and her wonderful watercolors show the fruits of her artistic labors. Many pieces have what she refers to as an “ethereal essence...from the layering of light and color.” In August, her scenes of the natural world brightened our surroundings and caught the eye of patrons and visitors who marveled at their quiet, distinctive beauty.

Greenville Junction resident Eric Leif Johnsen had these canvas photographs created specifically for his display at TFL. We are so grateful that he did. Eric became September’s Artist of the Month because he walked into the library last year, was struck by our monuments display and asked if he could take photos of it. His beautiful and haunting work has struck a chord. They invite a longer, more intense gaze and feature familiar terrain somehow transformed in an indelible, fresh way. His exhibit called “Green over Blue” consists of images “made in camera” at Borestone and Onawa. In the comments book, local artist Kathy Farris wrote to Eric: “I think you captured what keeps most of us here.”

Lisa Laser



Eric Leif Johnsen



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### *Field Trip*

by Kim Brawn

Sixty educators and administrators from SeDoMoCha became students during a professional development program at TFL in September. This successful collaboration, coordinated by SeDoMoCha's literacy specialist Carolyn Clark, gave attendees a tour of the library as well as a better understanding of the scope and specifics of the incredible resources available on-site as well as digitally. Greta Schroeder and



Michelle Fagan worked diligently to make this a rewarding and worthwhile experience. Greta, Michelle, and Carolyn, along with Nancy Grant and Amy Fagan-Cannon, took on the role of teachers/guides as each group made their way around the library. RSU 68 Superintendent Stacy Shorey called it "an informative and thoughtful hour."

Those attending had the chance to sign up for library cards or get new ones. (37 of them signed up for one.) We now offer free library cards to all Sedo and Foxcroft Academy students and educators, even non-residents.

### *LIBRARY! The Musical*

by Tom Lyford

Drums? A French horn, a saxophone and a cello? Even a banjo? No, this is not your fathers' and mothers' library. In the twenty-first century, libraries rock!

This summer, in June, July, and August respectively, TFL's summer program line-up was thrice musically blessed with The Juniper Quartet of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, the folk singer/performer Bill Berlinghoff, and finally the Harold J. Crosby Community Band.

After a heavenly warm-up practice in the Community Room downstairs, The Juniper Quartet, daintily arranged in a semi-circle, transformed the new wing into a veritable chamber from Masterpiece Theater. (You can catch a sample on our Facebook page.) But in July, our new addition became a one-man 1960s hootenanny hall as folk singer/performer, Bill Berlinghoff, entertained us with the guitar and banjo folk classics of Pete Seeger; Tom Paxton; Peter, Paul, and Mary; and even Maine's own Jud Strunk. The highlight of the evening was his original sequel (sanctioned by Noel Paul Stookey himself!) to "Puff, the Magic Dragon." And finally at the beginning of August, in perfect weather, the Harold J. Crosby Community Band of Dexter convened on TFL's front lawn to please our ears with the traditional band favorites of days gone by.





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### *Memoir 101*

by Kim Brawn

In September, TFL's own author and poet Tom Lyford examined the creative non-fiction genre known as memoir. At turns funny and moving, Tom brought the concept of memoir to life by reading vivid examples from his own work and the books of others. He captured writer comedian John Hodgman's neurotic over-thinking style and runaway imagination with a pitch perfect snippet called "Dump Jail" from the book, *Vacationland*. Tom took us in a totally different direction as he read from his former

student Monica Wood's bestseller *When We Were the Kennedys*. He chose a touching passage of how the still-grieving Mother, whose empathy and anguish are palpable, bonds with a grief-stricken Jackie Kennedy after the president is killed.

Tom recalled, with gusto, his experiences as a high school teacher and gas station attendant, how memoir differs from autobiography, and even answered questions from the curious, appreciative crowd. By intertwining his personal stories with book excerpts to highlight the diverse range of possible topics, he may have even lit a fire under some aspiring memoirists. This was Tom's second chance to flex his literary muscles this summer, he also gave a well-received poetry reading in July entitled, *From Womb to Tomb*.

### *Ground Hog Day*

by Kim Brawn

Apparently, many kids wouldn't mind reliving Chewonki's fun Mammals of Maine program over and over again! This year, the folks from Chewonki (a school, camp, and environmental education organization in Wiscasset) brought skeletons, pelts from animals, and a live woodchuck (who was rescued and is non-releasable and wouldn't survive out in nature). "Everyone always loves Chewonki," says Michelle of the popular summer attraction. "They teach—but in an entertaining way."



### *Movin' & Groovin'*

by Kim Brawn

Summer may be gone but the beat goes on thanks to Miss Jenn's Move & Groove program.

Jenn

Tyler weaves together stories, games, and songs to teach young children the importance and fun of physical activity. The highlight, according to TFL children's librarian Michelle Fagan, was when Miss Jenn used a parachute to play a healthy food



game. Pleased with the turnout and enthusiastic response, Michelle definitely wants Miss Jenn to come back. "She's very well-prepared and does a great job."

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### *TFL'S DOG DAYS OF SUMMER*

*by Tom Lyford*



Although the title may sound like a shaggy dog story, Erma is actually a six-year-old German shorthaired pointer who just happens to moonlight as a reading therapy dog. Yes, you read that correctly. Well, it isn't actually that Erma can *read* exactly. She just likes to be read *to*, and consequently travels all around from library to library allowing children to read to her. She



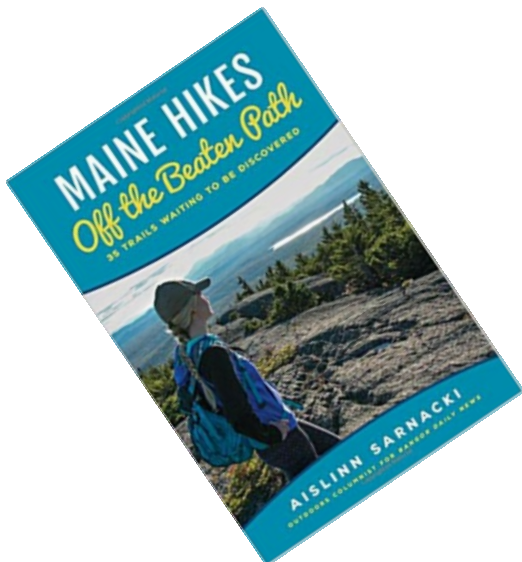
specializes in children who are reluctant readers, kids who could use a self-confidence boost along with an increase in their interest in books and their reading abilities. Every Wednesday throughout the summer, Erma would appear at TFL with her trained handler, April Taylor, where the children who had signed up in advance would each get a 20-minute session to lie on the floor with Erma and April and read aloud. Erma was always all ears. After all, she is a Reading Education Assistance Dog (READ). According to Taylor, "She is always non-judgemental and doesn't correct." This was a very popular program.



### *Catching up with Aislinn*

*by Kim Brawn*

Is not an easy thing to do since the popular *Bangor Daily News* outdoors reporter Aislinn Sarnacki is always on the move. Aislinn, known for her *Act Out with Aislinn* column and *One-Minute Hike* videos stopped by the library in August and gave a multi-media presentation to a packed house (in the TFL community meeting room). She talked about how she got into journalism, her methods, favorite hikes and answered lots of questions. A long line formed as she signed copies of her new book, *Maine Hikes Off the Beaten Path* (with her own signature and then, much to the delight of her fans, her dog Oreo's paw print.) Another reason for dog-loving hikers to rejoice: library director Greta Schroeder says that Aislinn will return to TFL after her next book, *Dog Friendly Hikes in Maine*, is published.





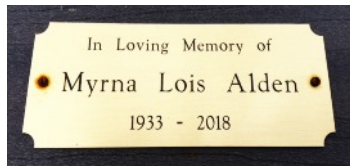
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### *Commemorating Her Life and Service*

by Tom Lyford



As most people will remember, for many years Myrna Alden was the friendly face behind the counter at TFL. And near the end of her library stint, I got to enjoy the privilege of working with her as a part-time employee here. She was a good conversationalist and well liked, as attested by the large number of donations to our library made in her name. It was our honor and pleasure to commemorate her life and service by commissioning a picnic table, with its engraved plaque, to be built and placed out on the library's front lawn where patrons can nibble on snacks as they sit, read, or converse in the fresh air. Our staff thanks carpenter Bob Bailey of Cambridge for his skilled work in building our table perfectly to specifications and for returning, at the drop of a hat, to drill a center center hole with which to anchor a shade umbrella (when it eventually occurred to us that we will be needing one). Thompson Free Library has been called one of the jewels in the crown of Dover-Foxcroft, and Myrna's picnic table adds to the user-friendliness of our burgeoning, well-manicured little campus.



### *Dancing with Spirit*

By Kim Brawn

Abbot Village-based photographer Steve Maines has been an area fixture for decades, many people had their yearbook and senior photos and family portraits take by him. But what many don't realize is that Steve has spent most of his life traveling the world, especially to remote locations. He photographed and documented these experiences in the recent book *Dancing with Spirit, Reflection's from the Mirror of Life*. Steve's 101 program in July focused on his book, his knowledge of photography and some of his stunning black and white matted photographs. Pat Juska, who attended, described his photos: "They seemed to capture the true emotions of his human subjects as well as their surroundings." Steve's narrative flowed between poignant and funny. Pat called it "entertaining and inspirational." His unique perspective and joyful enthusiasm is contagious. (fyi: Steve's photography will be on display at TFL during October.)



### *Mystery Rocks TFL*

by Kim Brawn



The rocks (scattered throughout these pages) began appearing in May. Painted rocks with a common theme—love of books and reading—and animals. The suspect is a Harry Potter fan with a fondness for Dr. Seuss. Adept and artistic, possessing a flair for the sneakily dramatic. I have considered a stakeout (with pizza delivery!) to see if this was some kind of inside job. Or, setting up a camera in the stacks or tailing anyone suspiciously creative.

These rocks have been a delightful surprise, the only real clue (unless we spring for forensic testing, is that in the budget, Phyllis?) is that on the other side of each one, it reads "Sebec Rocks! 2018."

So, there may have been a 2017 version but with rocks placed elsewhere. The identity of our rock painter may remain a mystery, but it has brought a smile and a mischievous twinkle to all ages. (Ok, I know what you're thinking: Michelle taught a rock painting class for her summer kids' series a.k.a Libraries *Rock*. Coincidence? Too obvious? I haven't ruled her in or out. For now, I'll call her a person of interest. The whole Sebec thing may be a ruse, perhaps the rocks are from Sebec, but the artiste could be from anywhere...