

# THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

## ASSOCIATION MEETING MEMBERS' UPDATE

April 2019



*I THINK, THEREFORE I AM* by Tom Lyford



Socrates, one of our wisest philosophers, left the world to chew on this observation: “*The unexamined life is one not worth living.*” On a Friday afternoon in January, TFL’s Philosophy Circle (19 down-to-earth, would-be “philosophers”) began by examining that statement. Some assured us and Socrates that hey, *they* never examine *their* lives and yet their existence feels “*quite* worth living, thank you very much.” On the other hand, others admitted that they do examine and search for meaning in their lives to varying extents. But long-story-short the high schooler, the septuagenarian, the clergyman, the atheist, the engineer, the homemaker, the counselor, and the physician who showed up enjoyed a lively, engaging discussion. And it was fascinating, what was offered up. When it was over, virtually everyone agreed it had turned out to be both an eye-opening and fun experience (no punches thrown!) and all looked forward to the next one. Now, after four monthly meetings, attendance has averaged a satisfying seventeen. So if you were imagining a sophisticated, high-brow affair, one set among marble statues of Zeus and Aphrodite, one that would never apply to *you*, you can forget it. This is not a Philosophy 101 class where you have to take boring notes and pop quizzes to prove that you learned something. No pie-in-the-sky discussions here.

The focus is on *my* life and *yours*, right here and now in 2019 Central Maine. We tackle topics like *How Can You Know What’s True in a World of Photoshopping and Lying Politicians?* or *Human Beings: Inherently Benevolent, Malevolent, or What?* In facilitated discussions, we share some of the reasons and personal experiences that have shaped our individual outlooks. Originally the brainchild of patron Diane Boretos, the group models itself after *The Socrates Café* movement, a philosophy discussion template gaining popularity throughout America and around the globe. The Socratic Method of asking, answering, and discussing simple questions guides our discussions. The Philosophy Circle meets on the first Friday of each month from 3:30 to 5:00. Please join us. Come and dive right in, or simply watch and listen for a while. All are welcome.

*ARTISTS OF THE MONTH* by Kim Brawn



The way a scent or a song can evoke a vivid memory or an intense emotion, so can the paintings and photographs of the artists whose creativity graces the library’s walls and shelves.

When I saw the intricate pen and ink cat created by Guilford artist Teresa Kennedy Sprague (known for her pet portraits), I was taken aback by how life-like it was. I imagined a familiar feline looking up at me from his perch, waiting for a headbutt and my undivided attention. And, her weary but beautiful barn—that quintessential Maine building that’s falling apart—captures a slice of life that resonates with rural dwellers.



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In her artist talk, Teresa passed around examples of her artwork and discussed her process and the various techniques she used including pen, ink, watercolor and colored pencil. She also took those gathered on a walking tour of her pieces, answering questions and giving more back story along the way. "I love doing detail work," Teresa explained. And luckily for us, her skill is equal to her passion.



Wayne Finkle's Paintings

In February, Milo's Wayne Finkle's acrylic paintings really turned heads. He gave us lush landscapes and wonderful wildlife to shake off the winter blues. Raised in a Navy family from Florida, he moved from place to place, but now finds a special inspiration in the beauty of the Pine Tree State.

Mystie Belanger's stunning, award-winning images captivated us in March. Mystie, who lived in Milo and died tragically in a car accident at the age of 33, had hoped to travel the world taking pictures. We are very grateful that her parents, Melody and Steve Carey, continue to share Mystie's loving and vibrant portraits of Maine, as seen through her eyes and lens. Knowing her life was cut short adds a special poignancy to her work and is a fitting tribute to her talents.



Mystie Belanger's Artistic Photos





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### *MIMICKING NATURE* by Kim Brawn



The Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted *Permaculture 101* at TFL in March. Steve DeGoosh and Brooke Isham from LOMAH (Land of Milk and Honey), a farmstead in Sangerville, shared the knowledge they gained using the principles of permaculture in their “yarden”—a small urban lot in the university town in Michigan where they lived—and their current home, 16 acres of land in rural Maine, where they “use permaculture practices to mimic nature.”

Local farmers were among those attending, as well as TFL Director Greta Schroeder who was very interested in learning about this concept of maximizing and interacting with the land in the

most harmonious, sustainable, and efficient ways possible. Greta described a presentation filled with Steve and Brooke’s direct experiences including many before and after photos from both their Michigan and Maine properties, showing examples of small and large-scale permaculture projects.

Steve and Brooke, both certified permaculture designers, also gave handouts including a Beginner’s Guide and Checklist for Design and basic instruction on how to get started as well as lots of tips like Catch and Store Energy. They talked about developing a Zone Map with each zone serving its own purpose. (Zoning is a technique that positions the elements in the design in areas according to their need or use. The greater the need or use, then the closer it’s placed.)

Those attending came away with a greater understanding of permaculture and hopefully the inspiration to try it—or practical ideas to make their designs even better.

*To learn more, visit:*

–[piscataquiswcd.org](http://piscataquiswcd.org)

–[lomahfarmstead.com](http://lomahfarmstead.com)

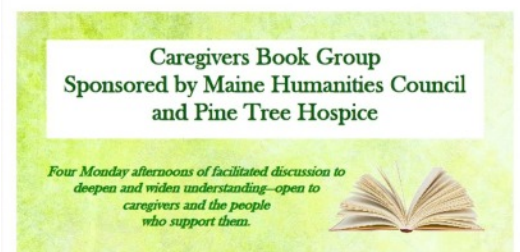
### *CARING FOR YOURSELF* by Kim Brawn

The Caregivers Book Group (open to caregivers and those who support them) is a collaborative effort by the Maine Humanities Council, Pine Tree Hospice, and the Thompson Free Library. The reading list of three novels and a collection of poetry focuses on care, loss, and home. Gregory Winston, an English professor at Husson University, is the facilitator.

Pam Pultz, of Pine Tree Hospice, hopes the program will “make people more aware of what it is to be a caregiver and the toll it takes. . . to know that you are not alone.”

At first glance, a book discussion group like this may seem an unusual approach as a resource or outlet for caregivers and those who support them. But TFL director Greta Schroeder, who has participated, calls Greg “excellent” and credits him with creating a “very open and accessible, low pressure” atmosphere. “We’re all diving in together and he helps strengthen the dialogue and discussion.” With his guidance, it’s “a chance to reflect on experiences together and touch on various issues.”

*There will be three more group meetings; attending all sessions is not a requirement. For more information, please contact Pine Tree Hospice at 564-4346.*



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### *ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN* by Tom Lyford

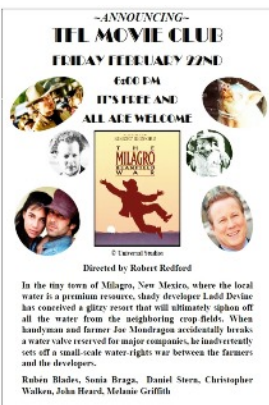
G. Gordon Liddy, Chuck Colson, and H. R. Haldeman. To FA students, these names might understandably be perceived as the faceless subjects of assigned readings. But to us who were alive during the first half of the Seventies they, along with Carl Bernstein, Bob Woodward, Archibald Cox, and “Tricky Dick” Nixon will always be the faces that occupied the nightly news slots between graphic footage of the jungle warfare going on in Vietnam and the violent protests erupting in American cities. So in early February, TFL hosted an event that hoped to elevate the students’ understanding of the events from the Watergate break-in of June, ’72 to Nixon’s resignation in August of ’74 as well as the rigorous principles regulating the investigative journalism that brought down a sitting president.



“ALL THE PRESIDENT’S MEN,” a joint project with TFL, Center Theatre, and Foxcroft Academy, was supported by a grant from the Maine Humanities Council. The book *All the President’s Men* played a part in two history and journalism classes at FA, as well as being the subject of an adult reading group at TFL. Seventy-five copies of the book were made available at no cost to participants. Both the classes and the adult reading group got to interact with Callie Ferguson, a journalist with the *Bangor Daily News* who facilitated a Q&A about the book and her own experience as a Maine-based journalist. The project culminated days later with a free screening (open to the public) of the Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman film at Center Theatre and a follow-up dialogue.

### *OUR OWN LITTLE CINEMA PARADISO* by Tom Lyford

There can only be one plausible reason for Dover-Foxcroft getting saddled with the title, “Maine’s Most Boring Town”: whoever was responsible for conducting that idiot study simply neglected to step into our library for a look-see. On top of the other many, many TFL programs now successfully serving our D-F residents, a couple of months ago we established our first monthly Free Movie Night with popcorn!



Fellow movie buff (and TFL’s own IT guy) Dan Juska and I were engaged in one of our typically scintillating repartees about all things cinema (best all-around movies and cult classics, notable scenes, memorable quotes, most talented actors and directors, behind-the-scenes-anecdotes, etc.) when Greta piped up, “You two should have your own movie blog.” That caught our attention and, after discussing the prospect for a while, somebody came up with the idea of taking it one step further and actually showing movies right here at the library. A couple of weeks, some research, and the procuring-of-a-movie-license later... Movie Night was born! A good projector, a sound system borrowed from Dan, and a new microwave for decent popcorn production all combined to make it a reality. Our first screening in February was a resounding success as we counted 25 in our audience, all of whom applauded at the movie’s end. The selected film was the Robert Redford directed, book-based comedy-drama, *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988).

Movie selection criteria remains a work in progress, one in which the library staff is actively engaged. One thing is certain: we want to show quality cinema. Other possible ideas being considered are movie length, the intended audiences for each film, and hopefully finding titles that many people may have overlooked over the years. March’s selection is *Paper Moon* (1973), also a comedy-drama, starring father and daughter Ryan and Tatum O’Neal.



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### *LOW VISION AWARENESS* by Kim Brawn

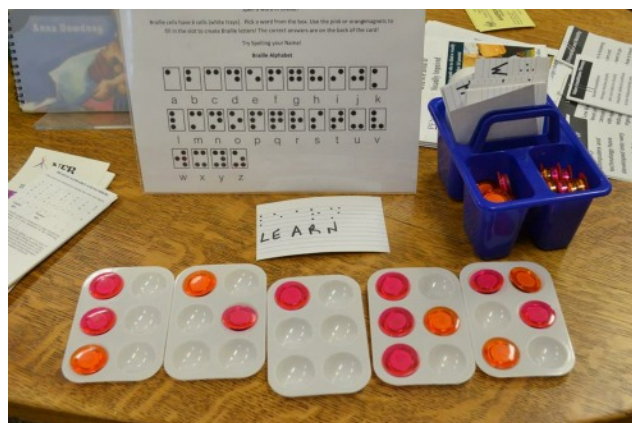
TFL patron Nancy Matulis was pleasantly surprised to discover our large print book display in January as she came in to discuss her idea of coordinating a Low Vision Display for Low Vision Awareness Month in February. Nancy, from the Dover Low Vision Group, along with Esther Ireland (Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired), Aisha Hixon (The Iris Network) and Susan Harper (who created many of the braille books and the braille blocks) teamed up to share resources and information to help create more understanding about low vision and provide practical assistance to those who need it.

The exhibit became a focal point for all ages and a wonderful teaching tool for children. Patrons and visitors took a few moments to explore braille alphabet handouts, examine the Perkins Brailier ("braille typewriter"), and learn about available services. Kids got hands-on with the spelling in braille exercise and feeling the picture books. Many also used the simulator cards to get a rough idea of what vision loss is like.

The display generated interest, curiosity, and positive responses and is a reminder, says TFL's director Greta Schroeder, that "the library is a great place to connect with community services."

And when it comes to large print books, Greta explains that we are "continuing to develop and expand our collection for all ages, including bestsellers in large print."

*The Dover Low Vision Group meets at Thayer Parkway Community Room (33 Thayer Parkway in Dover-Foxcroft) from 10-11:30 a.m. on the first Friday of the month. Those looking for resources & support are welcome to attend.*



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### *Assisted Living for Retired Parrots* by Kim Brawn

They're very intelligent, social, and in the wild, thrive as part of a flock. Well, on a brisk and sunny Saturday in February, five parrots from Siesta Sanctuary in Harmony got a chance to socialize and thrive as one of the biggest flocks ever descended upon the library.

Drawing record attendance (around 100), our feathered friends interacted with people off all ages, children seemed particularly mesmerized by them. Margaret and Fritz Buschmann founded this incredible non-profit in 2006 as a home for displaced parrots who needed permanency. The standing-room only crowd learned about the Sanctuary and picked up key points from the Parrots 101 mini-class.



We knew the program was getting some buzz but had no idea what to expect. The regular Saturday routine transformed as soon as Henrietta, Gracie, Jose, Paprika, and RiRi arrived on the scene. While they sound like dancers at a club in South Beach, these amazing and colorful creatures (who live 30-80 years) brought an exciting energy and crackling cacophony to TFL. Eager for something different on a

mid winter's day, kids gamely interacted with and became fascinated by the cockatoos, macaw, African grey, and Amazon. Henrietta especially liked making new friends.

Prior to the show, the parrots hung out in the workroom, with their cages covered. As I stood at the printer, something struck me as funny and I started laughing, not realizing that their mimicry extends well beyond words. My laughter triggered an almost immediate chorus of roaring guffaws and chortles from our guests, causing me to laugh even harder until it became clear that I was the cause and they were the effect. (BTW: Were they laughing with me or at me?)



(To learn more, visit [siestasanctuary.org](http://siestasanctuary.org))

### *BRANCHING OUT* by Kim Brawn



After dotting the library landscape with beautiful hearts in February, creative crafter Phyllis Lyford set out to put a little Spring in our steps. Phyllis is now getting in on the TFL bulletin board act and adding her own decorative flair to fun accents like these adorable, smiling four-leaf clovers.



*Writers note: A heart shot was also supposed to appear here but I lost those photos in iCloud (or in a mysterious, hidden corner of my laptop) when switching cell networks & getting a new phone. Moral of the story: don't be afraid to ask for help & sometimes googling isn't enough. Shameless plug: remember our drop-in Technology Help Time on Wednesday afternoons at TFL & Tech Time at The Commons at Central Hall (April 25 & May 23 @ 3:30 p.m.)*