

THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

October, 2020



From DC to Dover-Foxcroft: The Long Road to Women's Suffrage by Kim Brawn



This three-part online discussion series took place in August and September. Cindy Cyr, creator and facilitator, teamed up with Lizz Sinclair of the Maine Humanities Council (MHC) and TFL's Greta Schroeder to create this well-received, informative, and revealing multi-media discussion series.

Since MHC in-person programs were cancelled because of COVID-19, they came up with a way to help communities facilitate online conversations by having community members choose their own discussion topics. Cindy landed on suffrage because of the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote and the upcoming election. Then, she, Lizz, and Greta developed the syllabus and the approach, which was to begin with a national view, move to understand Maine's role, and then bring it home, literally, to learn about the activism going on in Dover and Foxcroft at the time.

"This DC to D-F theme worked really well. We were able to draw on a variety of sources," said Cindy. These included film clips/videos, podcasts, books, poems, and articles.

Greta said that the book *Voting Down the Rose* (which they read for 2nd session) focused mostly on Southern Maine activists, so it was great to learn about the "incredibly active local perspective" thanks to D-F Historical Society's Mary Annis' fascinating research that showed the vital role rural areas played in the movement.

About 15 people participated in the series. Responses were positive. "A comment by (attendee) Marilyn Rohdin really stayed with me," said Cindy. During a discussion of the back room promises that were made to women during their negotiations with the legislature and with members of Congress, the group learned (not surprisingly) that promises were broken over and over again. Marilyn's reaction: "People know what is right and what is wrong. It's a matter of conscience not of politics."

According to Mary Annis' handout, in 1916, Mrs. Louise Gilman Rounds from the Dover and Foxcroft Equal Suffrage League went to the Suffrage Convention in Washington, DC and reported back that a petition four miles in length bearing the names of 500,000 voters was presented at the opening session of Congress. The club also had a prominent booth at the Piscataquis County Fair.

Another highlight: once women had the right to vote (after the passage of the 19th amendment in August of 1920) it changed the ways a lot of things worked. At the 1921 town meeting in Dover, for example, the women no longer had to sit in the balcony of Central Hall. They could now vote along with the men.

Greta enjoyed learning about the "rich dialogue" from the various voices and factions in the movement. "It involved women at every level of society."

And yet, the third meeting also focused on the fact that many people including native Americans, blacks, and POC were still silenced even after women won the right to vote. For example, indigenous people in Maine didn't get the right to vote until 1967. In her article (one of the selected readings) Penobscot Nation tribal ambassador Maulian Dana reminds us that milestones, like the anniversary of women's right to vote, are "fertile ground to take a glance backward, examining our present, and preparing ourselves for what our future holds and how we want to shape the next chapter... and to save space for all the stories to be told."

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Time Travel Aboard the Postcard Express by Tom Lyford

“Dover-Foxcroft: The Postcard View; Selections from the Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company”

Captivating. That's the most appropriate word I can come up with for the online August program that served as part of TFL's Maine Bicentennial Speaker Series. But yeah. I know. *Postcards*? Hardly sounds like a rock concert. Ironically though, many years ago I walked into a shopping mall snickering at a huge sandwich board heralding *POSTCARD COLLECTORS' CONVENTION — This Way —>*. “What in the world,” I asked my wife, “could be more boring than *postcard collecting*? I mean, come on. Get a life.” Long story short, I ended up blowing a wad of money in an hour there and am now the proud owner of my own hometown postcard collection.



Kevin Johnson, passionate photo archivist for the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport, Maine, began his slide show presentation with the history of the Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company. Founded in 1909 in Belfast, Maine, Rudolph Herman Cassens had set himself the ambitious goal of photographing towns and rural areas from Maine to California, producing “real photo” postcards that would be valued for promoting tourism. However, his company only succeeded in producing over 50,000 glass plate negatives of New England and Upstate New York between 1909 and 1947. Full of historic businesses, family homes and local landmarks, the collection is now part of the archives of the Penobscot Marine Museum and

continues to grow as more negatives that “escaped” from the original collection are located and acquired. The collection is being digitized and more than 100,000 fascinating images can now be viewed on the museum's website, www.PenobscotMarineMuseum.org

Johnson's stewardship of the collection at times turned out to be a much more adventurous story than one might imagine, considering for instance his night of rescuing thousands of negatives from a flooding storage basement due to overhead frozen pipes bursting. But the real frosting on the cake for us Dover-Foxcroftians was, of course, the viewing of the slides depicting the turn-of-the century images of our very own community. Many of these photos elicited eager discussion, questions, and stabs at the identification of long-gone structures from in and around the town. Local historian Chris Maas was exceptionally adept at identifying, and supplying historical background information about many of the buildings therein, while a handful of us life-long residents who were living here in the fifties provided more nostalgic information.

What made it really nice is that Mr. Johnson was just as enthusiastic to hear, and learn more about, our information as we were to listen to his presentation. You can watch the recorded program at this link: <https://youtu.be/ATvX8FBUsIs>

Reading with Beanstack by Kim Brawn

Like almost everything else, TFL's summer reading program had to be reimagined because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the help of the Maine State Library, youth services librarian Michelle Fagan found an awesome alternative: taking the perennial program virtual with Beanstack, the user-friendly reading challenge software and mobile app that lets people earn badges or points for reading.

Depending on the number of minutes or books you read, the badges you receive help you earn prizes. If you completed an activity, you got a small ice cream cone from Pat's Dairyland, if you wrote a book review, you got a \$5 Dover Cove Farmers Market credit. If you read all the minutes/books you won a free book and were entered into a drawing for Maine books. A child, teen, and adult won a drawing prize bag of books. Michelle plans to use this fun, innovative approach again next summer (paper copies will also be available). “But we liked using Beanstack so much we will also be doing a winter reading challenge with prizes. Watch social media, our website, and newspaper articles for details,” she said.



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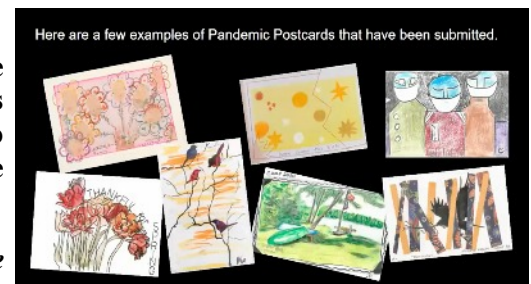
All in this Together by Kim Brawn

On August 13, the Maine Community Archives Collaborative hosted a live public event via Zoom, “All in this Together: Preserving Maine’s COVID-19 Memories.” Collaborative coordinator and TFL director Greta Schroeder said that the program was “a way to highlight the collaboration and showcase some of what has been collected and hopefully inspire people to contribute.” The event brought together many of the archivists and librarians from around the state who are collecting stories on the impact of COVID-19 in Maine. Greta explained that the group “meets weekly to share ideas, skills, and outreach strategies.”

Participants learned what archives are (they can be photographs, audio/visual recordings, scrapbooks, art, born digital, and more) and why they are important. They serve as primary source material, directly from the people who experienced it.

Representatives from various libraries and colleges talked about their archive projects and shared submission examples, including Bangor Public Library’s Pandemic Postcards, artwork from Ogunquit Memorial Library, and an audio clip from Heart of Maine Community Stories (a group of central Maine libraries including TFL).

Libby Bischof, from the University of Southern Maine described *Sign of the Times: Covid-19 Signs in Southern Maine* as a crowd-sourced digital archive



that she began in April to have people take photos of pandemic-related signs. Libby, a professor of history and executive director of the Osher Map library at USM, recognizes the fleeting and ephemeral nature of signs and messages created to respond to a particular event.

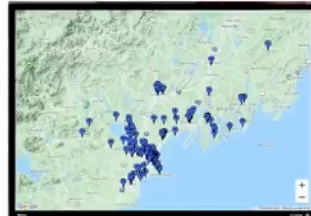
The “All in this together” event, and the COVID-19 archives project itself, underscore the importance of capturing the lived and felt experiences of this moment. And sharing these personal narratives can serve as documentation for the future.

(Looking ahead: Members of the collaborative plan

to talk with the Maine Department of Education about involving students and educators in their project.) For more information/to contribute, visit <https://heartofmaine.omeka.net> or <https://mainestatelibrary.omeka.net/>

What We Document:

- Photograph of Sign
- City/Town
- Date photograph taken
- Photographer/Contributor
- Location of sign (geo-referenced and mapped)
- Type of sign
- Location type (e.g. school, business, private residence, park, restaurant)
- Transcription of sign text
- Keywords



Diverse Directions by Kim Brawn

TFL’s Michelle Fagan was already ordering books to add diversity to the entire youth services collection so getting a grant from Diverse Book Finder was the perfect fit and much appreciated. According to their website (<https://diversebookfinder.org>), this organization based out of Bates College “aspires to be a go-to resource for librarians, educators, parents, book creators, and publishers who seek to create collections in which all children can see themselves—and each other—reflected in the picture books they read.” The Diverse BookFinder is a comprehensive collection of children’s picture books featuring Black and Indigenous People and People of Color.

“They offer a tool to analyze how diverse your picture book collection is and if it needs help they offer up to \$300. We got the full amount. We had many diverse

books, but several subjects and races were lacking. We added 24 new diverse books to our picture book collection,” said Michelle.



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Bittersweet Glimpses by Kim Brawn

“I told you, I warned you—it’s the good, the bad, and the ugly,” Tom Lyford said, shaking his head about halfway through his Bittersweet Glimpses 101 online program. The mid-September afternoon brought together about 15 people interested in hearing “A Tom’s of Maine Scrapbook.” To make sure he had a good internet connection, Greta graciously let Tom use her office at the library.



Tom, born and raised in Dover-Foxcroft, is a former English teacher, who has worked at the library, primarily at the circulation desk, for almost 20 years. With faces peering at him from their little Zoom boxes, Tom launched into a verbal, quick-edit nostalgic montage of memories, setting the stage for vivid glimpses from Maine life, mostly local, during the 50s, 60s, & 70s.

He took us through a range of emotions with plenty of smiles and laughter, but the tone remained true to the title: bittersweet.

With his family on a drive to Bangor when Tom was around 7 years old, an ambulance raced past their car and they were soon stopped in traffic. He and his cousin walked ahead to see what was happening, making their way through the small crowd to find themselves staring at an arm sticking out from under a blanket on the ground. There had been a fatal accident that killed an enlisted Air Force “flyboy.”

“I was afraid that the airman’s soul was rising over our heads and listening,” Tom said, the scene seared into his young brain.

The next day, he biked to McDonald Ford’s back lot (now TFL’s parking lot) where wrecks were regularly transported and saw the demolished car up close. “There was blood. There was the smell of whiskey.”

Next he took us on a roller coaster ride with his story of a hypnotist performing at Central Hall (now the Commons). Tom was 9 at the time and wished he could have changed places with the older kids in the audience who were chosen to participate. From an imaginary airplane dropping imaginary money to x-ray glasses causing shock and awe, this atypical event left him mesmerized.

Tom admitted that as a kid he really wanted to smoke like all his idols did; Hollywood made it look so damn sexy. “I was on the lookout for ways to smoke...I wanted badly to smoke anything.” Well, after a lot of pretend smoking, Tom and a friend did get caught actually smoking behind the boy scout hall. In the middle of their post-incident anti-smoking lecture, the scoutmaster pulls out a cigarette from his pocket and lights up—because, well, as Tom said, “We lived on a different planet back then.”

He shared truly scary stories about pollution. With 2020 hindsight they seem appalling and inconceivable, but they were just business as usual back in the day.

He and his soon to be wife Phyllis made their way to Acadia National Park for a pre-graduation beach sleepover on Sand Beach with two other couples. At 3 am giant lights came on; bright as daytime, a big row of lights that were really trucks—dump trucks—that drove to the edge of water, turned around, backed up and emptied trash into the Atlantic Ocean. “The smell killed us, we had to move way down the beach,” Tom recalled. Hours later all was back to normal, no smell, pristine water—as if nothing had happened.

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(Bittersweet Glimpses continued)

In his early childhood, television sets were just arriving to the area and into people's living rooms. Tom explained that when people found out you had a television, they would all gravitate to your house before the big show aired. Making their way towards your house like the pod people from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, walking down the street, chairs in hand, invited or not.

One day when Tom and his brother Dennis were super bored, there was a knock at the door. It was a kid from Milo carrying a huge bulging sack of comic books. He told them that he'd go around neighborhoods and try to find people who'd want to trade. That got their attention. So he laid out all of his comic books on the floor, they dug out all of theirs, and then bartered back and forth and came away with a brand "new" collections.

Tom is a story telling time machine who transports you through the decades with his short narrative bursts—you can almost see him relive the moments in his mind's eye. His face lights up as the details come back to him.

If you missed Tom's 101 or want to relive it, here's the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YH8uAgVZ9wg&t=244s>

You may also enjoy Tom's podcasts that feature still more stories: <http://anchor.fm/tom-lyford7>

Music to Our Ears: "A Concert of Summer Celebration" by Tom Lyford



Dramatist William Congreve is credited with the axiom that "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast" Well, with the pandemic only just beginning to ramp up and tempers consequently teetering just a tad on edge, "A Concert of Summer Celebration" performed outdoors on the lawn at TFL in mid-July by the Highlands Classical Chamber Ensemble was just what the doctor ordered.

At 6:30, a gratifyingly sizable audience materialized, many of the music lovers arriving with their own lawn chairs in tow to sit in the gentle warm breezes of an idyllic summer evening and experience the much-needed balm that music offers the heart. Susan Ramsey on violin and guitar, Ruth Fogg on cello, Katherine Hunter on flute, and Margery Aumann on piano were joined by guests Evelyn Marston on flute and Evan Viera on piano to perform a joyous potpourri of tangos, waltzes, ragtime and music by Mozart, Debussy, Saint-Saens, John Williams

and others. Everyone agreed the amazingly talented musicians were flawless and enjoyable.

The concert proved to be one of the most successful programs TFL has presented in recent times.



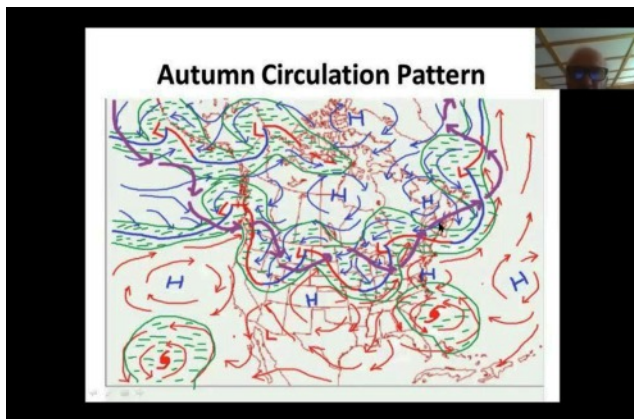
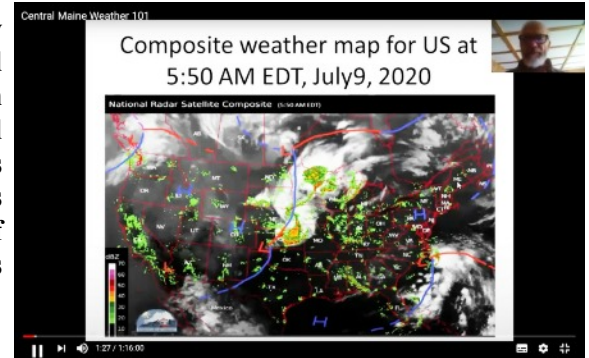
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The Complete Forecast by Kim Brawn

On a hot and humid July afternoon, local meteorologist and former Navy weather forecaster and retired high school science and math teacher Ed Hummel gave us an informative and interesting presentation via Zoom called Central Maine Weather 101. Ed shared his vast knowledge (and some really cool maps!) in a down to earth detailed approach, taking us back to science class and into the atmosphere (and other spheres) with his explanation of various weather patterns and their causes and those of other weather-related phenomena. He also highlighted climate changes that we are seeing and feeling on a daily basis.



Ed provided us an in-depth weather forecast for the day of the program and the following day. He explained the difference between weather and climate, identified the layers of the earth's atmosphere, gave us a glossary of local circulation patterns, discussed what drives the global climate, and talked about the main causes of climate change and the effects of global warming on central Maine.

I am grateful that Ed was game to shift what was supposed to be an in-person event to an online one—it turned out fine—satisfying both weather geeks and weather curious alike.

If you didn't get the chance to see Ed's program or want to watch it again, here is the link to the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PR8iI1NQvU&feature=youtu.be>

Tai Chi 101 by Kim Brawn



About a dozen people, wearing masks came together (yet stayed apart!) on the lawn at TFL in mid-August as certified Tai Chi instructor Lilian Mahan introduced us to the simple wonders and benefits of Qi Gong and Tai Chi. At times it was hard to hear Lilian's words through her mask and the street noise, but she made it easy to follow her lead and copy her movements.

Tai chi is a great way to improve balance, in part by becoming aware of how your weight shifts and moves; as Lilian said, "it's mindful not mindless." She helped us wake up our Qi (life force; energy flow) and told us that "Tai Chi is Qi Gong with motion."

Some who participated were students from her class at the Piscataquis Regional YMCA in D-F. While others like myself were absolute beginners.

Lilian took us through breathing meditation, warmups, cool downs and various moves, involving the whole body. She says tai chi "combines concentration with slow, gentle, continuous movement to improve balance, strength, coordination, and general sense of well-being."

I found it both energizing and relaxing. Valerie Cote, who also attended the class, said that Lilian "was a great instructor—she made the moves easy to associate with her descriptions as we were doing them."

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Signs of the Times by Kim Brawn

When the library opened with special precautions on July 14, one of the most obvious differences from pre-pandemic life was the abundance of signage to guide patrons and visitors through the new COVID-19 safety policies. The library's layout reflects Maine State Library and CDC guidelines with the goal of staying safe while still providing access to services. We limit the number of people in the library at one time and the duration of their stay, along with quarantining books, asking patrons to use hand sanitizer before they browse, and making sure they wear a face covering before entering. We have children and adult masks available if they do not have one. We ask that everyone practice physical distancing.



Sometimes people don't see or don't pay attention to signs, and occasionally they ignore them, but overall, signs are helpful reminders--an effective way to communicate--as we all try to remember what to do and what not to do. It's also good to remind ourselves and each other that this is a work in progress and a learning experience for everyone.

Please note: This is just a sampling of the signs, changes, and policies in effect as of this writing. It is not a comprehensive overview. We continue to offer curbside service to anyone who wants it during our current business hours (Tuesday-Friday 9-5).



Michelle has converted the YA tables into a mini "to go" craft /freebie area.

The picture book section is limited to one family or two adults at a time. Michelle spreads books onto tables to cut down on book bin browsing.

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What's the Buzz? by Tom Lyford

Growing up, perhaps you (like me) associated bees with the fear of bee stings. Heaven knows my reckless curiosity earned me a sore number of them. But other than the pain, I knew next to nothing about bees back then, other than the fact that I definitely did *not* want a bee in my bonnet.

Today we know that not only are honey bees our ecological friends, it's been impressed upon us that they are essential to our very survival on this planet. But there are so many interesting facets to learn about these bumbling little creatures, and as a library we consider ourselves fortunate to have been able to host a live, outdoor, (non-Zoom) educational program covering some of the *A Bee C* basics of bees and beekeeping.

Lynn Lubas of the Penquis Beekeepers' Association set up a temporary learning station under the tall Maple on our east lawn. This consisted not only of pamphlets to share and some basic beekeeping implements but, more interestingly, a portion of her backyard live bee colony housed in a glass-fronted hive carrier. There was a little excitement when two of her bees escaped their enclosure, and it was an interesting moment when eight neighborhood bees showed up, apparently attracted by the escape artists.



Ms. Lubas made a presentation and fielded such questions as *How do you get the honey out without getting seriously stung?* and *What does it mean 'To Smoke the Hive,' and how does that work?*

I asked Ms. Michelle what *she* had learned during the presentation. "I never knew," she told me, "that all of the bee colonies which beekeepers raise in this state and all around the country are non-native bees. Bees have to be ordered from overseas. Because there *are* no native bees in our country. The first bees were brought here by settlers from Europe back in 1622."

Teaching Social Distancing to Library Critters by Tom Lyford



Mickey, casually stepping off the Prisoners' Transport Vehicle on the Foxcroft side of the river, where he will begin his life anew with an expunged library record.

Pets are allowed into the library *only* if they are licensed service animals or have their own library membership cards. Well, try telling that to Mickey the frisky little field mouse who, under the cloak of night, has been gorging himself on staff snacks when everyone else had gone home for the night. Apparently he'd found and read our *When You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff, and it had given him ideas.

Or just try explaining the library membership card rule to (I call him Dewey) the beautiful black cat who (very likely a librarian in her/his last life) insists on coming in nearly every other day to oversee the circulation desk.



Dewey deftly slinking beneath the Penobscot Beekers' display table and heading toward the library's entrance to once again test our establishment's "open-door" policy.