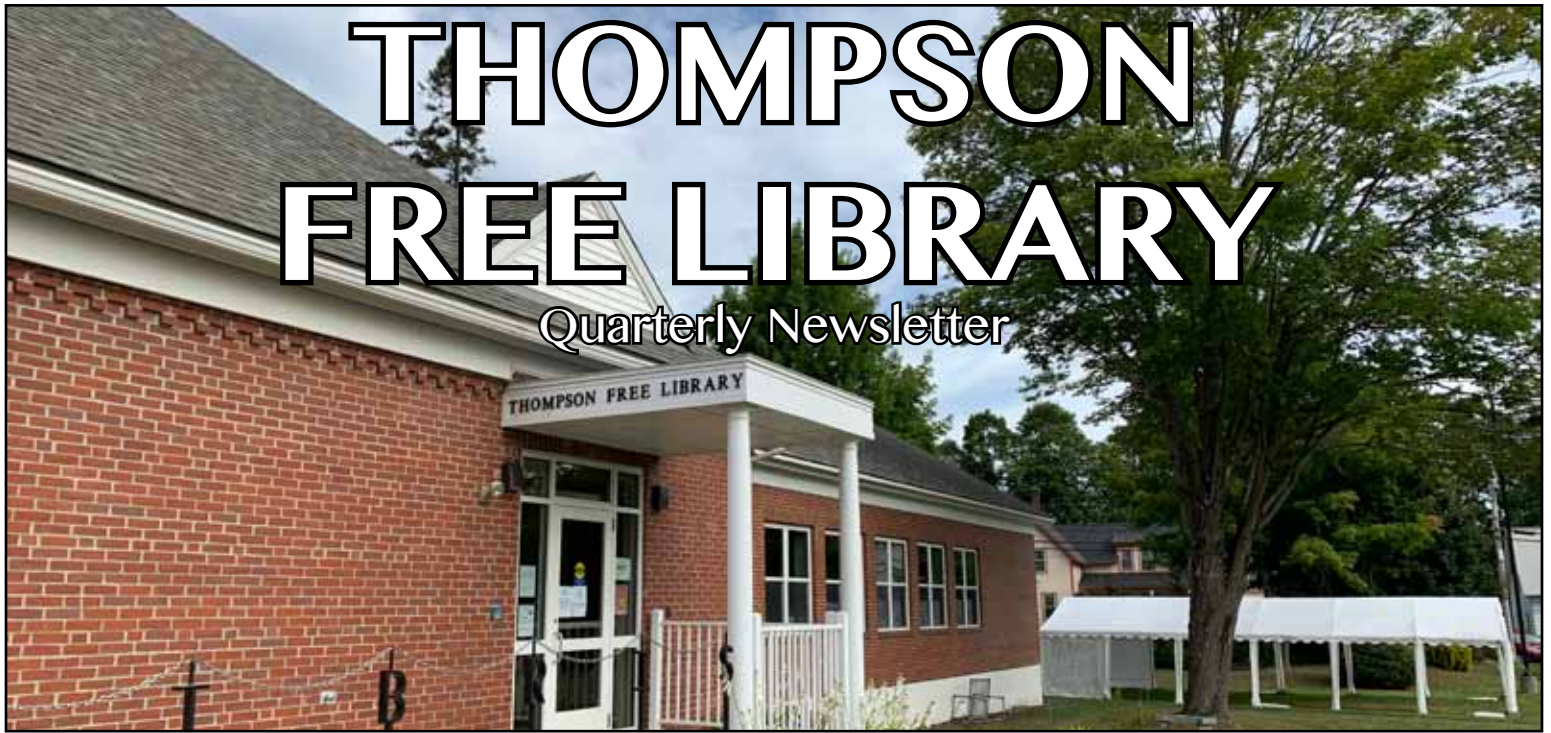


THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

Quarterly Newsletter



OCTOBER 2021

Highlands Classical Kicks Off Summer Right



The Highlands Classical Chamber Ensemble concert on July 15th was stupendous! Over 170 people attended, which was by far the largest outdoor event we've ever had. Once the band started playing, it was easy to see why. HCCE features many talented professional musicians playing classical, Celtic, and other enthralling instrumental numbers. We look forward to having them back next year for, hopefully, an even bigger and better concert! –Jon Knepp



How to Wow a Crowd: Invite Mr. Drew and His Animals Too

A scorpion wasn't the only thing Mr. Drew had up his sleeve—well, in his hand—he brought ten reptiles and insects with him, including a turtle, lizard, snake, tarantula, and even hissing cockroaches! All ages reveled in the exotic animals that Mr. Drew rescues and rehabilitates.

“He's excellent...he's funny and keeps the audiences' attention,” said librarian Michelle Fagan. “He's very informative and great at teaching.” (Did you know that tarantulas are actually very delicate?) Many who saw the show stopped at the circulation desk to tell us—very enthusiastically—how much they enjoyed it! –Kim Brawn



Pages for PAWS

By Kim Brawn

Heat and humidity didn't deter adults, kids, and teens from raising money for a good cause while enjoying their favorite things: reading and ice cream! Youth services librarian Michelle Fagan says that approximately 30 people participated in the TFL Read-a-Thon outside under the tent on August 18 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. benefiting PAWS of Milo.

The Darlings Ice Cream Truck arrived to supply cool treats to the prolific readers. The ice cream was free but a donation to PAWS was suggested. Between the Darlings proceeds, the program pledges, and other donations, \$175 was raised.

Reading Dog Erma was there with her human April Taylor, who made yummy cotton candy that melted before it reached your mouth! For lunch, hungry



readers ate pizza donated by The Friends of the Library. Along the way, Michelle led arts and craft projects, including making a bookmark.

You never know what the day will bring when you plan an event like this, but the Read-a-Thon worked out well. "Kids had fun and families read together. Everyone had a good time," said Michelle, happy with the results.



On the Right Track

By Kim Brawn

Charlie Shaffer, Piscataquis Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Safety Coordinator, drew an attentive and engaged group for his "Animal Tracking" program. He talked about the different animal tracks we see here in Maine and what those tracks can tell us about animal activity. Participants (mostly families) were able to touch 20 pelts from various animals found locally, including skunk, beaver, and fisher.

The skunk pelt received the most animated reactions, winning most popular by far.

"My favorite part was finding out about the tough spot on the underneath," said Liam Robert Gauthier. Holly, another attendee, was also team skunk, declaring "I really liked looking at that pelt."

In addition to identifying animals in any given area, tracking is also a way to play detective and gain lots of information about animal behavior. "I learned a lot more than I knew before," Kacie Bishop said. Allan Bray agreed, "I learned a lot and will use it on walks with my family."

Water World



*Say hello to my little soaker!
Above: And so, an epic and waterlogged battle ensued during "Pirate Capture the Flag." Arrr!*

Left: How could something called "Kids Wet and Wild Water Play" not be fun?!



"The Glow Party" outside TFL on August 21 celebrated the end of summer, as the new school year quickly approached. This after dark event drew 29 people (mostly families) who bowled in the dark with Michelle and did neon painting under a black light, while April Taylor got creative, making cotton candy on glowsticks that gave the evening an extra dose of sweetness. Sedomocha's school librarian Carolyn Clark drew prizes for the school's summer reading program. This delightful diversion received many glowing reviews. "It was lots of fun," Michelle said of the summer send-off.
-Kim Brawn

Science Jam



Pairing enjoyable with educational is a win-win and that was definitely the case with "The Sound of Science," a two-part interactive program held in late June and early July. Allison and Hunt Smith brought their impressive musical talents, along with an array of instruments, to share this unique interactive science experience with the families who attended. Part one focused on learning about instruments; during part two kids made their own and participated in a group "jam session." Ms. Michelle says that Allison, who did most of the teaching, was "really good with the kids."
-Kim Brawn

Musical Journey Through Times and Places



Hunt and Allison Smith's September 4th concert was a journey through Yankee music. Playing traditional British songs, New England tunes influenced by those from "across the pond," as well as sounds from southern Appalachia, they wove through musical times and spaces near and dear to them and important to this region. It was also a lot of fun, as anyone who saw my son dancing can attest to! They are masters of weaving history, storytelling, humor, and top-notch musicianship into an experience that is unlike any other. –Jon Knepp



What's in that Big Blue Box?

Thanks to TFL's own Alicia Millette we have a sturdy new, big and blue book return box on the righthand side in the entryway (or as Jon calls it, the foyer, which adds a dash of sophistication!).

Alicia transformed rough square pieces of wood, locally sourced from Aspen Works in Dexter, into a box and ultimately created the rugged mobile (tested on various terrain!) container you place your library returns into! Of course, everyone's still learning—it takes time to teach our patrons (and ourselves) new tricks! –Kim Brawn

Crosby Band Captivates



Cooper and Andy Knepp get a sneak peek of the brass section before the Harold J. Crosby Community Band's show August 19th! With marching tunes, patriotic ballads, and Queen covers, there was something for everyone to enjoy!

Unwelcome Guests

By Kim Brawn

Sometimes a topic resonates resoundingly. That was true at July’s “Weed Management 101” hosted by Trisha Smith from UMaine Cooperative Extension Piscataquis County. As much as everyone gained useful information, it was also a chance to commiserate. We all deal with weeds and, like rabbits and tribbles they can multiply and take over like a bossy sibling

(or so I hear. . .).

Trisha, armed with rather imposing garden tools, led a lively discussion on weeds, which she defined as “some-



thing unwanted in an outdoor space, especially non-native invasive species.” Participants brought samples for Trisha to identify. From Yellow Creeping Jenny

to Creeping Charlie to Cypress Spurge to Ragweed, Bedstraw, and more, Trisha aced the test. No one stumped her!

Her casual, down to earth approach, combined with a wealth of knowledge and experience made the atmosphere conducive to an interactive Q&A throughout. She also shared interesting tidbits such as: Japanese barberry can be a cover for mice who carry Lyme disease, shrubby honeysuckles are a huge problem in the area, and non-native lupine has crowded out native lupine. While managing weeds requires “constant vigilance,” having a chance to pick up tips and engage in a good-natured gripe session proved reassuring.



Mindfulness in Motion

By Kim Brawn

A gray, misty, muggy Thursday in August was probably not the most inviting backdrop for Lilian Mahan’s “Tai Chi for Health 101.” So, while the weather likely kept a crowd away, the handful attending found Lilian’s energy and instruction calming and accessible.

Lilian, who studied under Dr. Paul Lam, came to tai chi after an osteoporosis diagnosis in hopes of an alternative to medication. Others in attendance were drawn to tai chi because it improves balance and strength, is meditative, group-oriented, and spiritual.

Lilian described tai chi as a mind-body integration (using breath) that feels good. Its movements are slow, continuous, and smooth. The history of tai chi and qi gong, a related discipline, date back centuries to ancient warriors. Lilian draws a key difference between the two, “Qi gong builds strength to prepare for battle, tai chi expends the energy.”

The highlight of the event was the wonderful demonstration Lilian and students from her Piscataquis Regional YMCA class performed, showing the grace and fluidity of tai chi—an art that truly embraces mind, body, and spirit.

Reconnecting with Nature, Ourselves, and Each Other



Dr. Lesley Fernow brought her program “The Work that Reconnects” to our tent in July and August. Focusing on climate and societal change, Lesley said the workshop involved “interactive practices such as sharing in pairs and small groups and exploring our relationship to the Earth through ritual.” Following the program’s success, participants expressed an interest in evolving towards a more life-sustaining society and meeting to further discuss the topic. –Jon Knepp

Preserving the Past, One Frame at A Time

By Jon Knepp

David Weiss, Executive Director at Northeast Historic Film, came to the library via Zoom to present films from Piscataquis County and the surrounding area. The NHF is dedicated to preserving the film and video record of northern New England. Most of these videos are home movies capturing events commonplace to those who shot the footage, but fascinating to us many years later. All of the films shown, whether about a depression-era logging camp or a trip up to camp in the 40s, gave those in attendance a window into another world. The setting is the same, but the people and their paths in our region were very different.

Watching these short films, we gained an appreciation for the NHF's mission and its importance. Amongst the attendees were several members of the



Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society. Phyllis Lyford, one such member, remarked "I realize the importance of preserving our films that are just sitting in our basements or attics. These stories of yesterday will not be captured if we let these films deteriorate. David Weiss demonstrated the need for making our old films become a visual memory of our past."

The Historical Society plans to go into its collection, assess any film they have that may be of interest to the NHF, and work with them to preserve and make available the video legacy of our region. The recording of the event is available on the library's Youtube channel, along with some of our other programs at: <https://bit.ly/3mdBwnr>

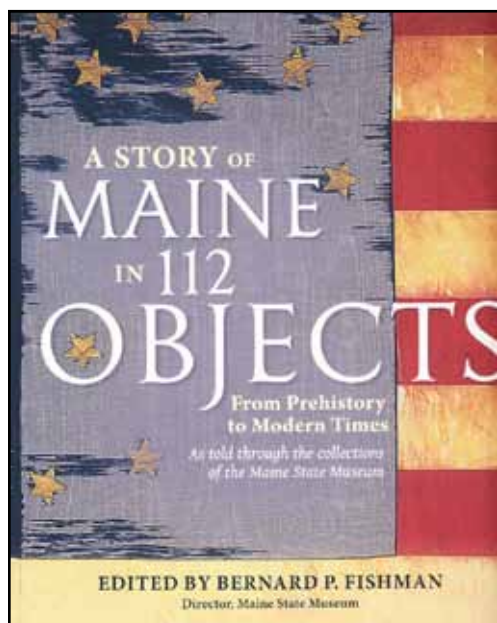
Bringing the Museum to the People

By Jon Knepp

The Maine State Museum's mission statement is "... to share what is meaningful about Maine and its place in the world, in order to inspire people to discover Maine's past, understand its present, and imagine its future." Since its closure in 2020, the Museum has continued its mission, bringing history to the people, since the history is packed up in boxes. As part of this outreach effort, we were lucky enough to have Bernard Fishman, the museum's director, visit the TFL to talk about the museum and his book *A Story of Maine in 112 Objects*.

Both the book and the presentation were amazing. Covering items as different as a Viking coin found in Brooklin

which hints at pre-Columbian Viking visits, Penobscot icon Molly Molas-ses' hat, and a labor mural removed by Governor LePage in 2011, Fishman made all in attendance eager for the museum to reopen. Patrick Myers, Director of the Center Theatre, said of the program "I appreciate even more the rich heritage of our state that resides within the walls of the Maine State Museum and I certainly look forward to the day they are able to re-open after the current renovations are finished." While the reopening has now been delayed until 2024, that just gives Mainers even more time to head to the library, pick up Bernard's book, and start making a wish list!



Close Encounters of the Tom Kind

By Kim Brawn

Under a crisp September sky around dusk, TFL's Tom Lyford hosted "UFOlogy Mythology" a well-attended fascinating look at unexplained aerial sightings through the decades. Theories (and of course conspiracies) abound, but no one knows for sure their origin.

Tom shared his impressive research at this event, part slideshow, part commentary, adding his trademark humor to the proceedings. His vivid descriptions kept the audience captivated and pondering, as questions still swirl around each case. He explored the 1942 Battle of Los Angeles, UFOs buzzing the Capitol in 1952, and the disabling of ICBMs at a Montana AFB in 1967. He even delved into the mysterious Loring Air Force base encounters in Limestone, Maine.

A self-described "seeker," movies fed Tom's active imagination and interest in outer space and UFOs. Watching films like *The Man from Planet X*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *War of the*



Worlds, 2001: A Space Odyssey, and *Close Encounters* only fueled his quest for answers.

The highlight of the talk was arguably when Tom discussed his time as a MUFON (Mutual UFO Network) Investigator (and, yes, he does have a badge!). He played a riveting clip of an eyewitness sighting over Augusta. (He slightly altered the voices for privacy reasons).

He mixed mythology with details of

intriguing incidents and crazy theories with plausible explanations. It was a very entertaining and informative hour. Tom has a way of taking you on a surprising, unpredictable ride that you don't want to end.

Missed Tom's presentation? The recording of the event is available on the library's Youtube channel, along with some of our other programs at <https://bit.ly/3mdBwnr>

Cold-Blooded Crowdpleasers



Reptiles ruled when Chewonki came to town with their Scales and Tales program! Kids (and kids at heart) saw creatures not frequently encountered while learning about their important place in nature.



When we say All Ages are welcome, we mean it! Even this little one got in on the act during "Family Game Night" outside TFL! (Families played cool games & made yummy s'mores!)