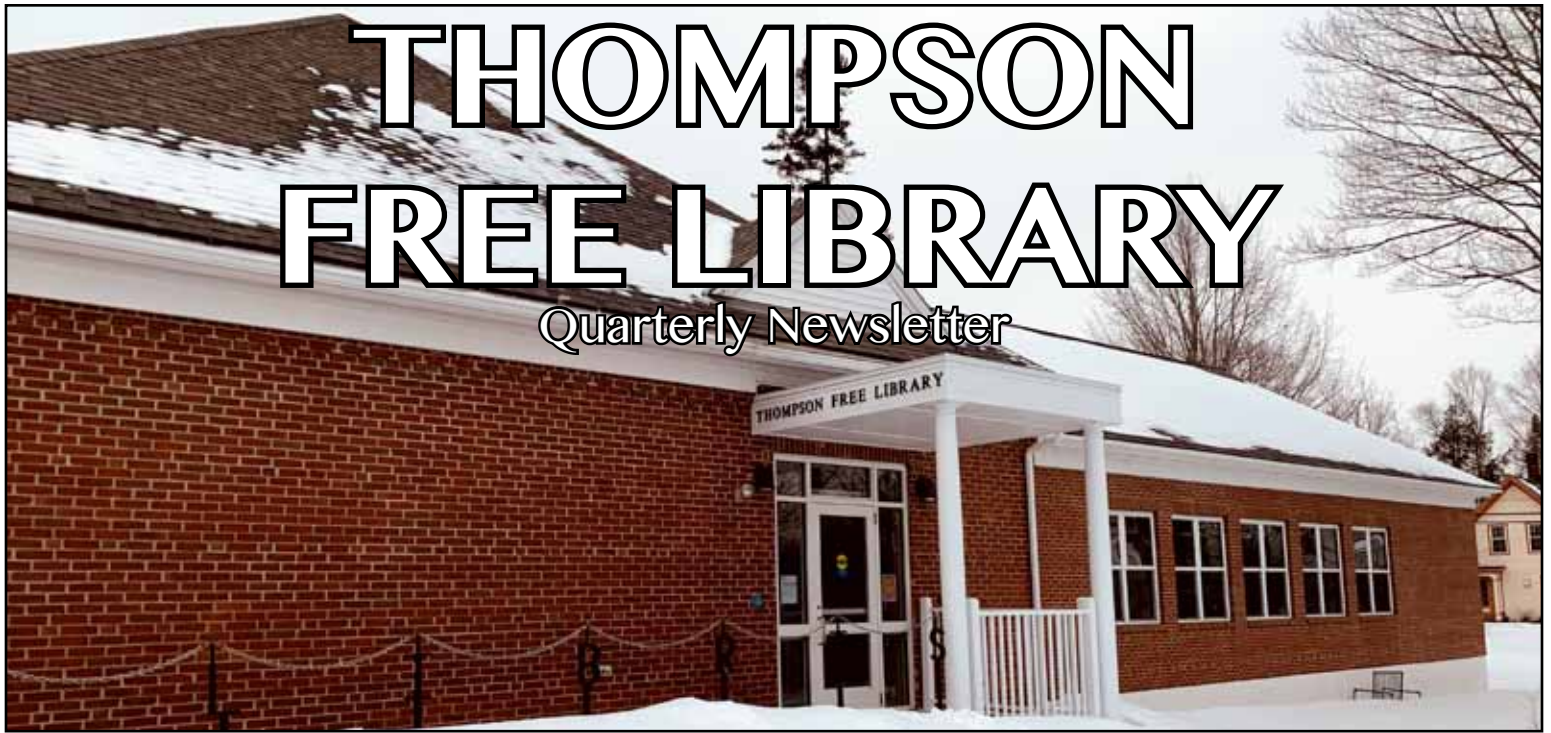


THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

Quarterly Newsletter



APRIL 2022

Adding Perspective (And Some Depth) to the Past

By Jon Knepp

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, is a 3D picture worth 3,000? Whatever the math, Bernard Fishman, director of the Maine State Museum, brought his worthwhile program Historic Maine in 3D to the library on March 31st. Pulling from the Museum's collection of stereograms, 19th-century photographs that allow images to be seen in three dimensions, Bernard brought a broad swath of slides. They covered much of Maine life at the time, from everyday work and home scenes to extraordinary events like the 1901 train wreck in Foxcroft that involved three engines.

Carlson Williams, TFL Executive Committee and D-F Historical Society member (and himself a collector of stereo cards), enjoyed the program, especially the view of the 1901 train collision saying that "the addition of depth makes me feel like I am almost viewing the real scene." I felt similarly; looking at a view of a picnic in Dover from Carlson's collection, I could not place the location until I viewed it stereoscopically. In 3D, I saw the slope down to the river, the mill,



church steeples, and I instantly placed the photographer behind the courthouse overlooking town even though the scene has changed drastically in the 100+ years since.

Bernard is always very willing to travel to our library and share his knowledge with us. He is also working with Carlson

to help expand the historical society's stereo card collection. Though the state museum is closed until 2024 as renovations continue, I look forward to visiting when it does reopen. Until then, it's good to know that fascinating programs like this will continue the museum's work in the interim!

NOW IN 3D!



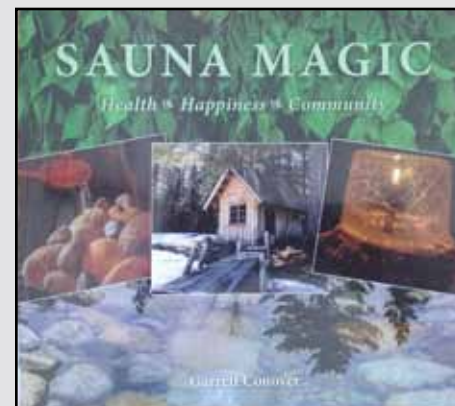
These lovely stereoscopes and their viewer, on loan from the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society and Carlson Williams, provided another way to look at our town and get people excited for our Historic Maine in 3D event and the 100th anniversary of the Dover-Foxcroft union!

A Quilt with a Cause



We sold a good chunk of raffle tickets when the Pine Tree Hospice Quilt was displayed at TFL. Patrons and visitors admired this beautiful heirloom, queen size quilt that was handmade by two fabulous Pine Tree Hospice volunteers who create a work of art each year for PTH to sell. Community members always look forward to supporting this incredible area resource—and hopefully winning a wonderful quilt!

–Kim Brawn



PerSAUNAfication

By Kim Brawn

In the throes of a dark, often bitterly cold, Maine winter the idea of sitting in a steamy Scandinavian sauna might seem like a dream come true. Well, a small but enthusiastic group braved the elements to listen to writer/photographer Garrett Conover talk about his book *Sauna Magic* and fire up their imaginations.

Images from TV and movies may be our first exposure to saunas, defined as Finnish steam baths in which steam is provided by water thrown on hot stones. Saunas are diverse in traditions, rituals, and types, giving great fodder for questions and discussions on that late January evening at the library.

“I was surprised to learn how much of a resurgence saunas are having right now. There’s a groundswell of interest,” said Jon Knepp, TFL’s director. “I always thought of saunas as a solitary experience—peace and quiet. But in learning more from Garrett, they are a communal experience, meant to bring people together.”

Mulch Madness!

By Kim Brawn

Mulching might not come to mind as a “get your motor running” topic but turns out it led to an interesting and useful discussion during “Tips and Tricks for Garden Chores” on March 24 at TFL. It was the first in a series of free workshops from Piscataquis Regional Food Center and University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Piscataquis County.

Laurie Bowen, from UMaine Cooperative Extension, shared her gardening tips with an audience of fifteen gathered at the library, while others watched online via Facebook Live. She offered various ways to alter garden tools using easy-to-find materials and sang the praises of her favorite garden tool, the 5-gallon bucket. Laurie also came armed with plenty of great handouts, including one involving tractor yoga! Attendees asked questions, shared gardening frustrations, and gave their own special tips.

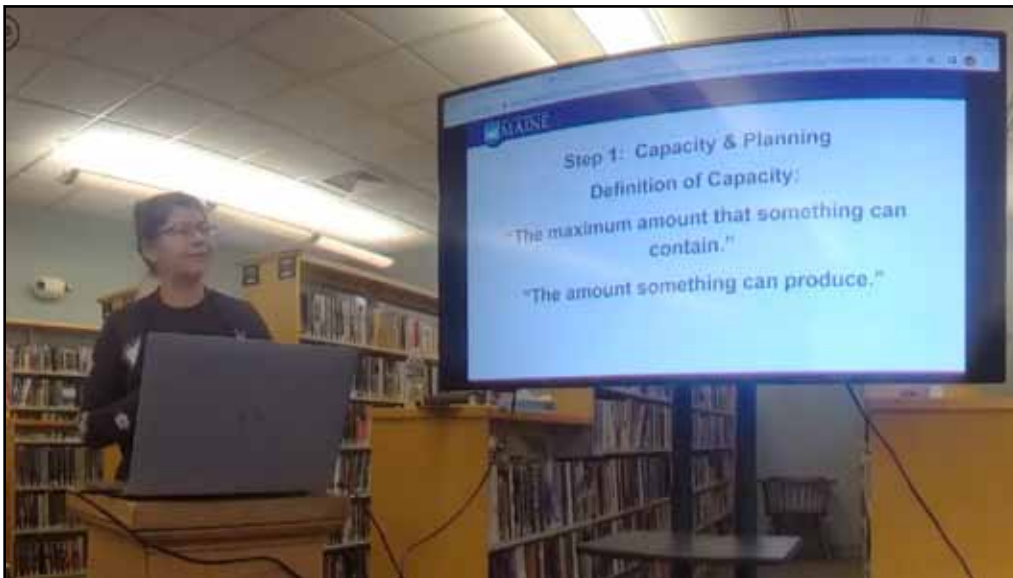
These free workshops expand the reach of the popular “Garden in a Box” program, which is limited to 18 participants. Kazia Knepp, PRFC’s Community Food Services Coordinator, says that “the workshops are meant to encourage the general public to start a garden, even if it’s a small container garden. We want to spread all our resources and know-how to a larger audience.”

TFL director Jon Knepp (Kazia’s husband) is eager to put the tips and tricks he picked up to good use as last year’s family garden was a disappointment due to differences in growing seasons in Maine and their native Pennsylvania.

Jon was happy to reach even more people with the live stream, “It went really well. We’ve had people watching it days later. I’m excited about the potential for hybrid programs and how they’ll allow us to bring in a wider audience.”

Missed the event? Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/TFLyoutube>

(Next up: “Small Space Gardening” on Thursday, April 28 at 6 p.m. at TFL.)



Laurie Bowen, UMaine Cooperative Extension, had lots of garden tips & tricks up her sleeve!



Educated

By Kim Brawn

Parents are always looking for tools to add to their children’s educational toolbox. With that in mind, youth services librarian Michelle Fagan created TFL’s new literacy boxes. They can help kids gain knowledge about letters, reading, and numbers. They can be used independently or with the help of an adult or older sibling.

“We have six boxes so far and they help teach addition, counting, letter tracing, early reading and rhyming, letter recognition, and animal matching. Each box has a set of instructions, but families can kindly use them as they see fit in our children’s area,” says Michelle. “The goal of the boxes is to help children learn the early basics of reading and math in fun ways. They use fine motor skills, writing skills, practice counting, identifying letters and numbers, and much more.”

Michelle studied early childhood education and development in college. “These are things that I used in the classroom before I worked in libraries. I also read books and follow a lot of home school and Montessori classroom blogs and social media. I continue my education because I can use those skills here at TFL.”

Once Upon a Time in Mexico, Maine

By Jon Knepp

Before I read Kerri Arsenault's *Mill Town* for last September's Book Group, I was skeptical because non-fiction typically bogs me down. Once I started reading, I found it to be quite the opposite. *Mill Town* reads like a work of fiction, even though it is not. Woven into an overarching narrative of environmental and economic ruin in Mexico, Maine are very human storylines of identity, belonging, family, our ties to one's hometown, and many others. This creates a very readable book that draws you in—very different from typical environmental writing. The book club's discussion was equally lively, enjoyable, and covered a lot of ground.

After discussing the book as a group, we felt we had only scratched the surface. I invited Kerri to visit the library virtually, which she graciously accepted on February 17th. Despite being days removed from hip surgery, Kerri read excerpts from the book and spoke on the themes and her personal journey with writing *Mill Town*.

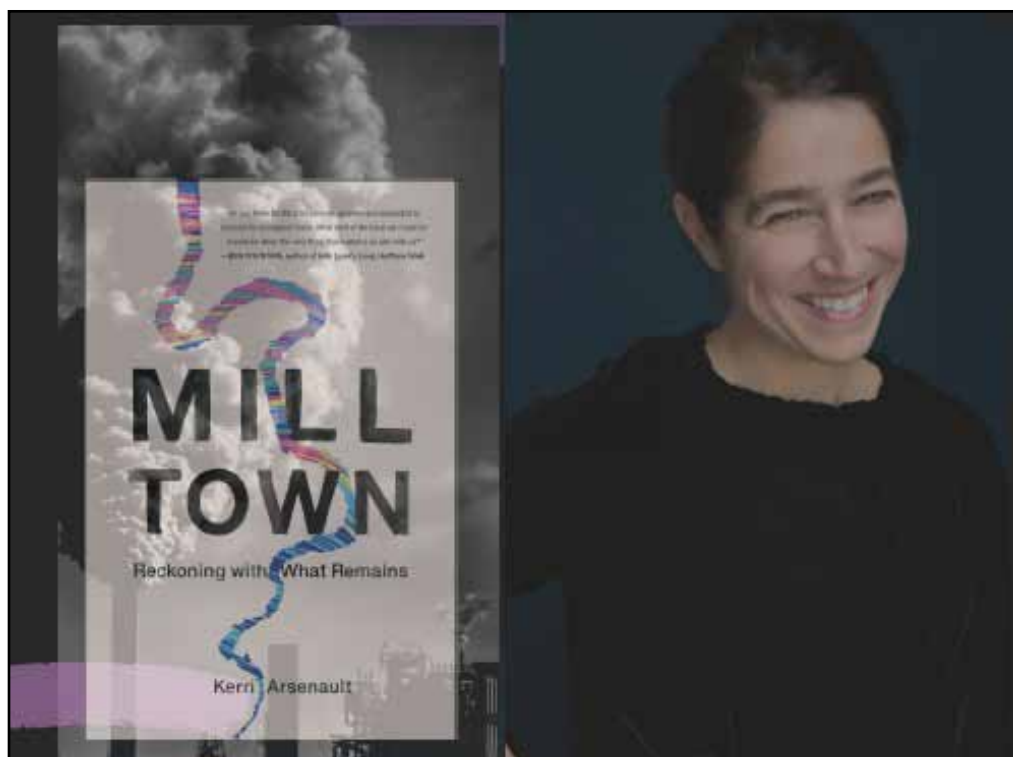
Bobby Keniston, who attended the talk, stated what he enjoyed most about the discussion was “that Kerri Arsenault was very generous with her time and truly wanted people to engage in the discussion.” He also agreed with me on Kerri's

ability to weave a non-fiction story, saying “what I like most about the book is the way it manages to combine elements of memoir to heighten Arsenault's sense of stakes in her pursuit of the truth. Like all great nonfiction, its prose and the way in which it tells its story is as engaging as any piece of fiction.”

I enjoyed talking with Kerri, as did all those I heard from who attended. Though the book is set in the Mexico/

Rumford area and Kerri currently lives in Connecticut, there are motifs that could just as easily have been from Dover-Foxcroft or any of our lives. Copies of *Mill Town* are available at the library. To watch our *Mill Town* event, head to <http://bit.ly/TFLyoutube> and to find out what Kerri is up to, head to her website

<https://www.kerri-arsenault.com/> or find her on Instagram: @kerriarsenault.

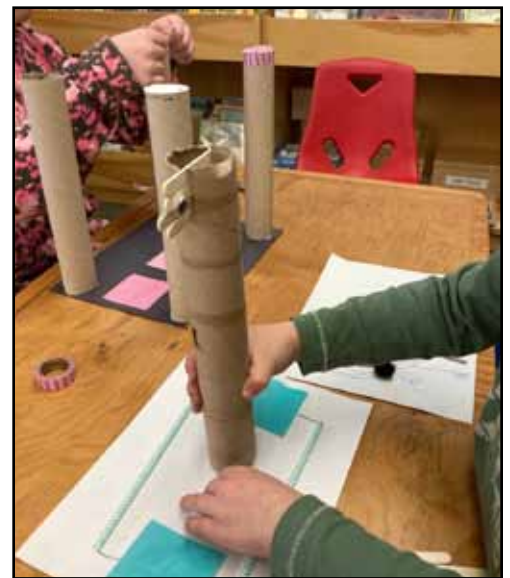


Walk on the Wild Side

Spring is the perfect time to get back to nature! And, thanks to the Maine Audubon Society, it's never been easier to get the whole family involved. Now you can check out these cool nature backpacks at TFL. The three themes are Plants, Birds, & Wildlife and each bag is filled with books, tools, information, and activity ideas. What a fun way to learn and explore!

—Kim Brawn





New Kids in Town

By Kim Brawn

While Pokémon Club and STEAM Time are the brainchildren of youth services librarian Michelle Fagan, it was TFL staffer Shannen Rhoda who stepped in to host and coordinate the first couple of sessions. So far, they've drawn (a handful to a dozen) eager elementary and middle schoolers, plus parents.

Shannen gave me the scoop on the Pokémon proceedings, "They patiently corrected my pronunciation of the characters until I got it right. Although no card trading takes place, they shared their Pokémon card collections, drew their favorite characters, played Pokémon BINGO, and explored the library's Pokémon book collection." (As a Trekkie, I do understand this level of fandom and fun obsession.)

While the club has its laser focus, STEAM Time was imagined as free time to explore, when kids of all ages could drop in and craft, experiment, build with LEGOS, play games, and glean inspiration from the supplies on the STEAM



cart. So far, kids have used puzzles, built pirate ships (which they were thrilled to see actually could float in the sink!), designed suits of armor, and investigated the robots and circuit science kits.

These two recurring programs are off to a promising start, and I think we can all agree with Shannen's assessment: "It's wonderful to have the sound of kids having fun together in the library!"

Pokémon Club is held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 3:30-4:30 p.m. STEAM Time is 3:30-4:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

TFL Gets a Glow Up!

The library looks good for 125 years old, but that requires a lot of work. Thanks to Mark Price (who also took this photo) and At Home for their work on the windows and floors respectively!





On Display!

TFL team member Shannen Rhoda has shown her flair for inspired and distinctive displays that get people talking and reminiscing. May her creativity live long & prosper!

