

THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022

A Spirited Evening with Mira and Angie

by Jon Knepp

On May 19th, author Mira Ptacin and medium Angie Welch visited the library for an immensely entertaining evening. Equal parts book talk, history lesson, and religious experience, the program made clear why the curious have been coming to Camp Etna since 1876. While it once had a “Burning Man-sized popularity,” these days, a smaller but no less enthusiastic group descends on the grounds yearly to experience the links between our world and the afterlife.

I first learned about Camp Etna from patron Sue Harvey, who suggested Mira’s book *The In-Betweens* and also told me stories of growing up around Camp Etna years ago. I could not put the book down. Mira’s work weaves together a history of the broader Spiritualist religion with a deeply personal social history of the camp’s current and former residents as well as Mira’s personal life journey and what brought her to the camp.

The program itself followed a similar trajectory. Before it even started, a woman in the front row approached Angie to inform her that Angie’s cottage at camp used to belong to her grandfather. They reminisced a bit about camp lore and Angie said that some part of her grandfather’s spirit is still very much alive in the cabin, even wearing the same overalls. Mira read a passage from the book, we had a short back and forth, and our guests answered some questions from the audience.



The highlight of the night came when Angie demonstrated her mediumship by speaking with spirits connected to members of the crowd. She stressed beforehand that talking to spirits should be a healing experience for those who have passed on and those they’re speaking to. Communing with the deceased is a key part of Spiritualism and mediums hone their skills throughout the summer at Etna. I’ve tried to describe the experience to those who were not there and cannot, it’s something you have to see to believe! Unfortunately, my attempt to record the event failed. Perhaps the spirits didn’t want to be uploaded to Youtube!

Having experienced the program, it is easy for me to see why people are drawn to Camp Etna and *The In-Betweens*—they’re fascinating. Angie, and all the others detailed in the book, are lovely, interesting people who have built a very unique close-knit community with a rich history. Their work, whether you believe in it whole-heartedly or are skeptical, heals and comforts those who seek it.

Mira’s book gives a fascinating glimpse into this world, but it’s clear that to get the full experience, one has to visit the camp. Sue Harvey, who originally piqued my interest in the subject, put it best: “[w]hat a joy to visit my childhood when stories of the Camp Etna spirits abounded and we all were believers. It is good to be reminded that all things in this universe are possible and skepticism is just a blindfold.”

I think a visit to the camp may be in my future. Maybe I’ll see you there? Angie can be found at www.leapoffaithartistry.com, Mira is at www.miramptacin.com, and Camp Etna can be found just down the road, at www.campetna.com, or by calling 269-2094.

Thompson Free Library

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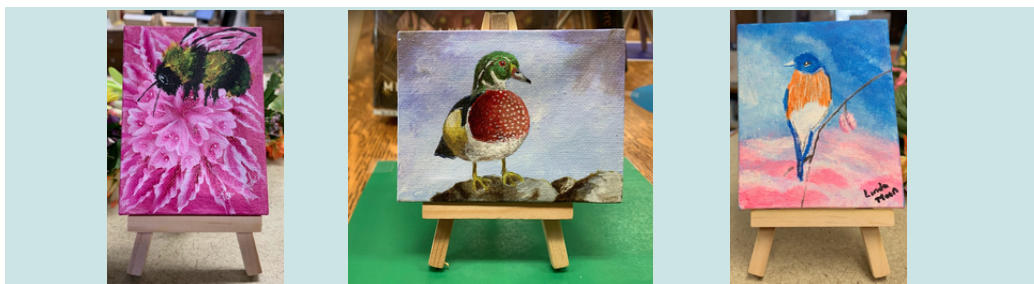


Garden Variety

By Kim Brawn

We've had a gardening trifecta of sorts with the TFL Seed Library, Garden in a Box Learning Series, and an actual Garden in a Box demo garden that sits outside the library. TFL director Jon Knepp, is pleased with year two of the seed library, "It's done really well . . . people have been dropping off their extra seeds, picking up a few they didn't have, it's been a lot of engagement." Kazia Knepp, formerly of Piscataquis Regional Food Center, brought us the demo garden that features squash, marigolds, cherry tomatoes, and chard. (The tomatoes will be up for grabs!)

UMaine Cooperative Extension's Laurie Bowen shared useful information, tips, and resources during two free learning workshops, "Small Space Gardening" and "What's Wrong with my Vegetable Plant?" Gardening newcomers and pros came away more confident and informed. (Find programs you may have missed at www.bit.ly/TFLyoutube.)



Little Canvas, Big Art

We're thrilled that youth services librarian Michelle Fagan came up with the Tiny Canvas Art project. "The response was bigger than I expected," said Michelle, who gave each participant a tiny canvas and the theme of "Spring." About 40 artists of various ages and skill levels returned finished designs—their own unique visions of spring. We displayed the petite pieces throughout April, "People were so excited about the show. . . so many commented on how lovely the art was," Michelle remembered. Patrons and visitors walked around the "gallery" reacting with oohs and aahs to the artwork—a perfect burst of color and creativity to wake us up after a long winter! —Kim Brawn



Demystifying Telehealth

by Jon Knepp

Thanks to telehealth, access to healthcare is more ubiquitous than ever! Unfortunately, it requires access to reliable internet and a degree of technological proficiency. Piscataquis County is very rural, so doctor appointments are often far away and reliable internet service is often lacking. We're also behind when it comes to digital literacy. Luckily, the TFL is now able to provide telehealth services thanks to the state library's Telehealth Connect program!

As part of the state library's program, we received a kiosk including a laptop, monitor, high-definition webcam, and even a white noise machine! This equipment allows us to schedule reliable telehealth appointments while keeping private conversations private. We also have staff available for setup and to answer technological questions. An electronic doorbell ensures patients can get help while maintaining complete privacy. Thanks to Mayo Hospital, we learned how to mitigate the potential for spreading illnesses between visits through a cleaning and appointment timeline system. As an added feature, the



library is working with Northern Lights and ConvenientMD in Bangor. Both facilities offer virtual walk-in care, perfect for non-emergency visits that cannot wait until your next appointment. Some examples include rashes, tick or other insect bites, minor burns, seasonal allergies, or depression/anxiety. Both options take most insurance and appointments can be made within an hour!

The Telehealth Connect Program is a great way to provide world-class healthcare close to home! I'm excited to be able to provide this to our community and hope it increases access to healthcare while also saving the community time and gas money spent driving to appointments. If you would like to schedule a visit, have any questions, or would just like to learn about how the service works, come in and ask, or contact the library at 564-3350 or thompsonfreelibrary@gmail.com.

Making Sense Out of Chaos

by Jon Knepp

Russia's invasion of Ukraine left all of us looking for answers. Luckily, Steve Grammont, a town selectman, is also a professional designer of war simulation video games and a historian specializing in Soviet and post-Soviet history. When he approached me with a program idea to shed some light on the chaotic situation, I thought it was a great idea!

The invasion is just the latest chapter in a conflict between Russia and Ukraine that goes back centuries. Steve was able to lay out all of the history, diplomacy, cultural differences and similarities between the two countries and more, starting in the ninth century and leading up to the invasion itself. He also was able to lay out paths the conflict could take, some of which have already played out.

I personally enjoyed how Steve was able to remain even-keeled throughout the presentation. While some want to blame American politicians, Steve stressed that it has more to do with Kyivan Rus', an empire that hasn't existed for 800 years, and Putin's



desire to resurrect the Russian empire of the czars and Soviets, than anyone in Washington past or present. With situations this complex, confusing, and, above all else, heart-breaking, I appreciated this deep dive into the subject!

Likewise, everyone in attendance that I've spoken with learned a lot about what led to the conflict. Emily Adams, who attended,

said "I left the library that night comforted to know this community has expertise it can draw on at times like these, a venue and organizers willing and eager to make that happen, and a more educated citizenry as the end result." If you're interested in watching the program, it is available on our Youtube channel: www.bit.ly/TFLyoutube.

County Culture

by Kim Brawn

In late May, Paul Buck, UMaine Fort Kent Associate Professor of History and Education, gave a dynamic presentation on the "Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842) and Maine's Northern Border" to a receptive audience. The treaty definitively established the boundary between British North America and the United States. With a slide show that included many maps from the Osher Map Library (at the University of Southern Maine), Paul explored the treaty itself and its impact on the singular Acadian and Francophone community of the St. John Valley, which found itself split into two countries, while bringing much-needed historical context as well. "Paul is a great speaker . . . those attending loved the talk," TFL director Jon Knepp said. "He thoughtfully asked them what they were interested in and tailored it to that." One point that stood out to Jon was how Paul cast northern Maine not as the "end of



civilization" but as the exact middle of French culture in North America, between Quebec and Acadia. (Watch the talk, part of

the Maine Speaks Series from the Maine Humanities Council, here www.bit.ly/TFLyoutube.)

All the Blocks that are Fit to Print

by Kim Brawn



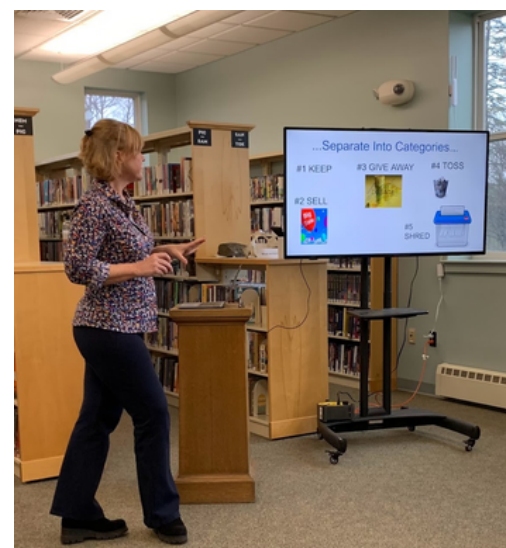
TFL alumna and talented printmaker Greta Schroeder adapted her virtual program from last year, taking it to the next level, with the in-person “More Block Printing 101.” Greta played teacher, coach, and cheerleader on a rainy afternoon in June. The small but attentive group had Greta’s impressive array of tools and materials at their disposal. Greta gave a brief rundown of the procedure and showed several examples, then it was time to dive in. While mostly aimed at adults, two kids, along with their mother, took part and turned out to be careful and skillful students, as was the rest of the group. The challenging and precise process involves transferring images onto blocks, carving blocks, inking, and printing (and, of course, tweaking). Greta created a detailed but user-friendly handout so the printers could continue to explore the craft on their own. She walked from table to table, mentoring and motivating, with advice and tips she’s learned along the way. The results were quite impressive! (To get a feel for block printing, check out www.bit.ly/TFLyoutube.)



Cutting the Clutter Cord

by Kim Brawn

In April, Kim Corey from Bangor area’s Finely Sorted Organizing joined us for “Declutter 101.” Drawing from her 20+ years as a professional organizer, she gave a really detailed and helpful slide presentation filled with great information and useful tips. To get control of the chaos and clutter, most items can be separated into five categories (keep, sell, give away, toss, or shred.) Kim offered up many specific resources and gave lots of examples from her work with a variety of clients (in-person and virtual.) A candid Q&A session followed. We came away less overwhelmed and intimidated by the prospect of tackling our own projects and knowing it’s ok to start with small steps.



To learn more, watch Kim’s presentation here www.bit.ly/TFLyoutube and visit www.finelysorted.com.

The Story Continues!



After more than two years on hiatus, TFL's weekly Story Time returned at the end of April. And Ms. Michelle couldn't be happier, "It's been great! Many families have attended with kids enjoying 2 or 3 books and some movement, songs, or sometimes flannel boards where they help tell the story. It's wonderful to have kids play, read, and interact again." Michelle has also added "Story Time Yoga" (one Saturday a month) to the TFL lineup: kids can do simple poses and listen to awesome books! —Kim Brawn

Storytime Yoga

Join Ms. Michelle for a story or two and some simple yoga poses

May 28th 10am
June 25th 10am
July 23rd 10am
August 20th 10am
September 17th 10am
October 15th 10am
November 12th 10am
December 10th 10am



Better Listen to Tonie!

by Kim Brawn



Ms. Michelle wants to get the word out about Tonies. If you're scratching your head and a bit confused, well, a Toniebox is a kid-friendly, screen-free digital audio player containing pre-downloaded content. "They're a fun way for young kids to listen to audiobooks on a player that can't break easily," says Michelle. "Sometimes parents need a few minutes and don't want screen time, and these can be a great solution." The little ones play the books with the help of cool figurines (called Tonies) including LeVar Burton who reads his book, *The Rhino who Swallowed a Storm*. With many different themes to choose from, they're a simple yet innovative approach to get children to love books—and you check them out just like library books! (Stop by TFL to learn more.)

Beyond the Biggest Loser

by Kim Brawn



Local fitness expert Adrienne Clarke headlined "Personal Trainer Tips 101" in May. Sometimes you need help reaching your workout goals or just want to kick it up a notch and that's when a personal trainer can come in handy. But how do you find a good fit and what can you expect during the process? Adrienne gave those attending a thoughtful overview of these and other key questions. She also described the stages of the client-trainer relationship (rapport, investigate, planning, and action.) Adrienne works at the Piscataquis Regional YMCA in

Dover-Foxcroft, Community Fitness in Guilford, and plans to branch out with her own training venture, FarmFaithFitness. Besides the ins and outs of working with a personal trainer, Adrienne shared her own philosophy. She believes that everyone is unique, focuses on the whole person, sees it as a collaborative effort, and she is encouraging throughout the whole process. Her final pro tip was inspiring yet simple—start today, you are stronger and more capable than you know! (Adrienne can be reached at 315-777-6093.)

From the Ground Up!

Michelle Fagan, TFL's youth services librarian, joined our friends at Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District for their "Soil Health Day" at the Law Farm back in May. Michelle described the scene: "I helped kids learn more about soil using Legos and offered books on soil, plants, and trees for adults and kids to look at. There was music, activities, and the story walk to engage and teach families about soil and the Law Farm."



Lights, Camera, Lobster!

"Read the Movie" and "In Maine" were displays that got people talking and reading! We had to keep replenishing the books because they disappeared so quickly.



A Mighty Wind

Folk singer Bill Berlinghoff performed under the tent on June 16, despite the evening's chilly, windy backdrop. Bill, with his rich, flexible baritone, playing his trademark guitar and banjo, put on a great concert featuring a diverse songbook--from Tennessee mountain music to 60s folk songs to whimsical originals to singalongs. Jon Knepp, TFL's director, said that a highlight for him was when TFL neighbor and #1 "liberry" fan Jefferson Prestridge requested This Land is Your Land, "Bill went into the history of it and sang some extra verses Woody Guthrie wrote that I had never heard before." (For more info on Bill, visit <http://www.billberlinghoff.com/>)

—Kim Brawn

It's a Pokémon Terrarium and We're Just Living in it

It was a challenging and messy project, but Ms. Michelle (with the help of Mrs. Fagan) guided the kids at Pokémon Club through making these super cool terrariums! The incredible finished designs, while labor- and supply-intensive, were definitely social-media worthy. Michelle says it was a one-time thing, but you never know what new adventures await in Pokémon World.



A Cat by Any Other Name...

We called him Dewey. His owner named him Sparky. Whatever you personally call him, he has been a mainstay at the library for years! With programs happening outside again, the friendly neighborhood cat is again patrolling the grounds and entertaining patrons and our Facebook fans!



Layout Design by Kazia Knepp
(seen above with the cat!)

There Goes the Neighborhood

We were so busy at the New Neighbor Block Party that we didn't take pictures until afterwards. We sold books and decorated bookmarks with kids. We also got to meet new friends and see old ones we don't often see outside of the library!

