

# THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023

### Long Journey Back

by Jon Knepp



The Atlantic Salmon Federation's Maranda Nemeth, Peter Ruksznis of Marine Resources, and Justin Stevens from Maine Sea Grant visited on June 15th to discuss our most endangered Piscataquis County resident, the Atlantic Salmon. Unlike its Pacific brethren which you can find in almost any grocery store, the Atlantic Salmon has faced an uphill battle against extinction in the United States. Once found as far west as the Long Island sound, they are now found in only a few rivers in central and eastern Maine. They are making a comeback, thanks to stocking and habitat improvement projects in the state. In fact, the most fascinating part of the talk to me was that the Piscataquis River, of all the salmon spawning grounds in Maine, has the highest survival rate. It helped to show that our area is vital to the salmon's continued recovery!

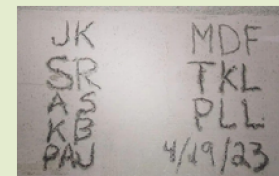
Our Youth Services Librarian Michelle Fagan enjoyed watching over, and being watched by, the smolts! She particularly became close with the biggest smolt, which she named Solomon. Michelle said she "hopes Solomon has a happy journey" as he travels down the Piscataquis to his feeding grounds in Greenland and "she hopes to see him soon" if he is one of the lucky ones to make it back to our neck of the woods several years from now!

 **Watch this on Youtube**



### Leaving Our Mark

TFL held a "Consecration of the Concrete" on JULY 19th to commemorate the pouring of the pavilion (more to come in the next issue!) slab. Michelle, Shannen, and Jon listened as TFL (and former town) poet laureate Tom Lyford shared his apt poem KILROY WAS HERE which ends with: "... and let the results/proclaim my essence/in this dust:/I too was here!" It was a fitting benediction for the start of the long-awaited project. -Jon Knepp



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# Winnie the Peep & Friends

by Kim Brawn

“I saw the peep dioramas online and thought they looked like a great idea,” said youth services librarian Michelle Fagan. And so, another fun spring project was born. Although Michelle had hoped more people would participate, she said those who did were “so creative and put it in a lot of hard work.” The finished dioramas went on display and drew smiles and accolades. Several people, including our own TFL peeps, Tom Lyford and Shannen Rhoda, got in on the act.

With a theme of favorite book or movie, Tom didn't even think twice. What else could he choose but his all-time favorite: Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. How did he transform his epic concept into a shoebox-sized design? Tom explains, “I was off to a lucky start thanks to a cute little crocheted mini-Moby I'd received years ago from (TFL alum & friend) Valerie Talmadge. All that was left for me then was to make a rare visit to Joanne's in Bangor, where I discovered the perfect yarn for my Atlantic Ocean.” Meanwhile, Shannen brainstormed via email with daughters Molly and Annabelle,



who are away at college. Molly sent a photo of a Winnie the Pooh peep display and it just clicked. “Since we are a Winnie the Pooh family, it made perfect sense,” says Shannen. Construction was not without its challenges, including figuring out the best way to paint the peeps. (The key is letting them dry out first.) “It was a fun project, I wasn't sure how it was going to come together but it did,” she says.



## Razzle Dazzle

Multi-talented arts & crafter (and baker!) Gale Robinson stopped by TFL on April 13 to show us how to make quick and easy jewelry. She also got a good workout, bouncing from table to table helping the dozen participants create their own unique piece of jewelry. Choosing which design to make may have been the hardest part, as she brought tons to choose from. The supplies were from her own stash, so everyone had what they needed at their fingertips. She guided them through the process, identified the various components and where to buy them, gave one-on-one support, and answered questions.

Jan Barton and her granddaughter Katie Kite were among those attending. “We had a very enjoyable time together making jewelry with Gale. Katie had Easter week off from pharmacy school in Tennessee to visit us here. The 101 was a perfect way to spend an afternoon,” said Jan. “Gale presented the steps for the project very simply and clearly, assuring success for us first-timers. The opportunity to chat with other library patrons while we worked was an added bonus.” —Kim Brawn

(Find Gale Robinson's delicious baked goods and more at the Dover Cove Farmers Market.)





# The Birds and Bees (and the Bats!)

by Kim Brawn

Lynn Lubas, avid gardener and former honey beekeeper, who retired from Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2020 after 12 years (before that, she worked at Riverside Florist) came loaded with handouts for her May program, “Pollinators in Your Yard 101.”

Lynn started with the basics: a pollinator is anything that helps carry pollen from the male part of the flower (stamen) to the female part of the same or another flower (stigma). The movement of pollen must occur for the plant to become fertilized and produce fruits, seeds, and young plants. “Most of our food is grown from pollination,” says Lynn.

She shared many tips like: it’s best for pollinators if you plant things close together in clusters that way they’ll have less distance to travel and get less tired, so they can do their jobs; you don’t have to cut everything back in the fall because birds like the various seeds from the flowers, plants, etc.; even if



you have a small space, you can still have window boxes and hanging plants to attract pollinators; and remember that pollinators need cover and protection like shrubs and bushes, good for darting under to escape predators.

Unexpectedly, to me at least, the subject turned to bats. Bats are nighttime pollinators and are able to carry much larger amounts of pollen in their fur compared to other pollinators. They use echolocation and scent to find nectar-producing plants. To attract these flying mammals, flowering

plants have evolved a musty or rotten perfume.

Attention margarita fans! Without bats, there wouldn’t be tequila. Tequila is made from the agave plant. Bats are the only species that pollinates the agave plant. Bats also service many other plants that are medicinally, culturally, and economically important.

Lynn’s wide-ranging talk kept the audience’s attention and included an in-depth rundown on bees, especially bumble bees, native bees, and honeybees and how to attract them. The details of how sociable honey bees enlist a caste system of a queen, workers, and drones to accomplish the tasks that ensure the survival of the colony was especially fascinating.

[▶ Watch this on Youtube](#)

## Garden Guest List

by Kim Brawn

Donna Coffin and Laurie Bowen from UMaine Cooperative Extension held an informal presentation and discussion called “Animals in the Garden: Yay or Nay?” on April 20. This topic resonated with those in the audience who asked questions and offered up comments throughout.

Animals can cause damage to gardens, trees, yards, houses, etc. while also bringing enjoyment and helpful elements. The focus was on what to attract and what to deter and Donna pointed out that habitat modification is the top strategy for either of these. If you want to attract animals, provide water, shelter, and food. Examples of deterrents would be repellents and barriers.

To attract animals, first decide what types of animals you’d like to see in your garden and yard area. But realize that nature’s cause and effect will still come into play. For example, feeding songbirds may attract their natural predator (i.e., hawks). Laurie



talked about bee houses that can be used to attract and shelter bees and showed one.

“Yay or Nay” was the final chapter in the Cooperative Extension’s Garden Series at TFL. “The series as a whole was great! Obviously, we had more people at the earlier programs, as people are eager to start thinking about gardening at the height of winter. It’s always been great to work with Donna and Laurie and we hope to continue our partnership next year,” said library director Jon Knepp.

[▶ Watch this on Youtube](#)



## Reaching for the Stars

The TFL went all out this year, renting space at the Commons so that we could host two groups of fifty stargazers for Northern Stars’ SuperDome inflatable planetarium on April 20th. Despite having one hundred spots, space filled up in only a few days. Jaime Snyder, whose family went to the show, said “it was an informative, fun, family activity!” Those in attendance learned from John Meader about the constellations, planets, and the spring night sky. There was even a demonstration of a high-intensity, green meteor John once saw! We definitely look forward to having Northern Stars back.

–Jon Knepp



# Seeing the Trees for the Forest

by Kim Brawn

Maine Forest Service's Jim Ferrante walked into the library carrying a large basket pack filled with foliage samples all sourced from his Sebec property. His goal was to share his knowledge as well as tips and tricks to help us identify trees. After all, as Jim pointed out, Maine is the most forested state per land area.

He gave us each a copy of *Forest Trees of Maine*. The book's identification key works in identifying trees with either leaves on or leaves off and is a very useful resource.

Jim, always energetic, began by talking about and showing examples of branch types (alternate and opposite). Opposite tends to be MAD (maple, ash, dogwood) but there are always exceptions. Another ID trick: friendly fir, spiky spruce. He brought multiple foliage samples, passing them around one at a time for people to smell, touch, and examine. Foliage samples provide defining characteristics. Samples included softwood species such as fir, spruce, and pine. ("Balsam fir smells like Christmas," he noted.) Softwood trees live



the longest.

Later came the hardwoods, like sugar maple and red maple. Sugar maple, such as the ones used to make Bob's Maple Syrup, have leaves that are smoother. Meanwhile, the red maple, which Jim calls "the true unsung hero of the forest of Maine . . . and one of the most common trees," has edges that are more serrated.

The program ran overtime with Jim patiently answering questions from

inquisitive members of the audience. Who knew we had so many dendrophiles in our midst?

"What an educational and interesting program," said avid 101 supporter Pat Juska. "Jim's knowledge and love of trees were obvious, and his enthusiasm was contagious! To see, touch, and smell examples of hardwood and softwood branches was a special treat! Hints to remember when identifying softwood and hardwood trees will be especially helpful."

A big thank you to our friends from Piscataquis County Soil & Water Conservation District for partnering with us on this event and for bringing white spruce seedlings and all sorts of informative materials for those attending. Visit [piscataquisswcd.org](http://piscataquisswcd.org) and follow them on social media for incredible resources and events. Jim Ferrante is a District Forester and a PCSWCD board member who can be reached with your forestry-related questions at [Jim.Ferrante@maine.gov](mailto:Jim.Ferrante@maine.gov).

## ▶ Watch this on Youtube

Did you know that many of our programs are streamed via Facebook Live at: <https://www.facebook.com/thompsonfreelibrary> and then uploaded to our Youtube channel: [bit.ly/TFLyoutube](https://bit.ly/TFLyoutube)? Look for this symbol with our stories to find recorded programs on our Youtube page.

The recordings can also be found on our Facebook page and links to the Youtube presentations are on our website: [thompsonfreelibrary.org](http://thompsonfreelibrary.org)

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## Once Upon a Trail

Looking for a fun family activity in the great outdoors? Youth services librarian Michelle Fagan, calls TFL's Story Walks "a good way to do family time, encourage outside time and literacy. I like to remind people to explore family friendly places in our community." Michelle is the project coordinator and constructs the story walks herself and then puts them up on the easy-to-walk trails.

The books Michelle selected are *A Seed is Sleepy* (by Dianna Hutts Aston & Sylvia Long) located at the Piscataquis County Soil & Water Conservation District's Law Farm and *Lost in the Woods* (by Carl R. Rams II & Jean Stoick), located at the Sedomocha/Dot Warren Nature Trail.

—Kim Brawn



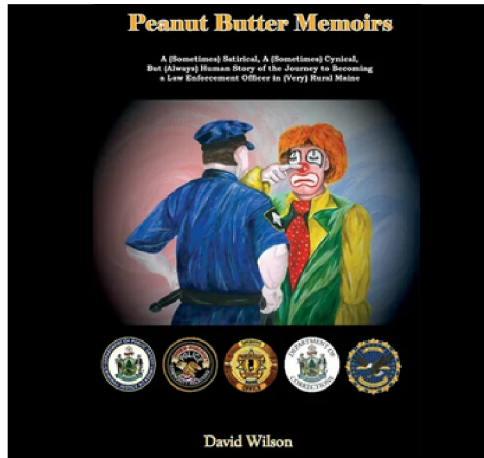


## Send in the Clowns

by Kim Brawn

In late April, law enforcement veteran and local author David Wilson, who spent part of his decades long career at the Dover-Foxcroft Police Department as well as the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office visited the library to talk books, the writing process, inspiration, being a Maine-ah and a cop, and the importance of stories and humor.

David has written three books: *Two Seasons*, *Peanut Butter Memoirs*, and *Ma's Diner* (a sequel to *Two Seasons*). His dad was a big inspiration for him to start writing because of all the interesting stories his father told over and over again. David wanted to document them. In *Two Seasons*, he took those stories and embellished them and created a fictional town (East Puddleduck, Maine) with fictional characters and then



gave each character one of his father's stories.

He describes the Ma character from *Two Seasons* and *Ma's Diner* as “rough and tough, in your face, very straightforward, but she

loves you and you know that . . .” sort of a composite of various Maine women in his life. His friends and family say that David also shares plenty of Ma's traits and attitude.

The non-fiction *Peanut Butter Memoirs* is like a diary of his law enforcement days. (The not-so subtle cover art represents, as David puts it, “every clown I dealt with in law enforcement.”) David doesn't take himself too seriously and is quick with a joke. Humor infuses much of his writing and tends to be a necessary coping mechanism for those in law enforcement.

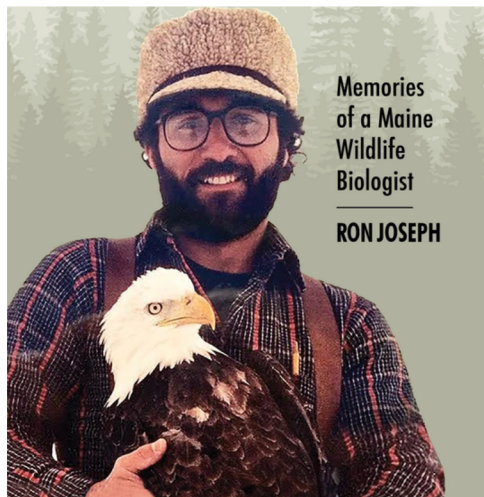
At the end of the day, David hopes his books will make people laugh. “We have to find the humor in things . . . I want my books to be like sitting around a campfire telling stories.”

## Wit and Wildlife

by Jon Knepp

Ron Joseph's first book *Bald Eagles, Bear Cubs and Hermit Bill* regales its readers with stories from Ron's more than thirty years as a wildlife biologist throughout the state. From unlikely animal encounters to run-ins with nude sunbathers and everything in-between, Ron can really tell a story! One story even puts Dover-Foxcroft in the middle of the action, as Ron brings a baby bear cub to a local farmer known to rehabilitate wildlife after its mother is killed in a logging accident. It's a great read and even has a foreword by Paul Doiron, one of Ron's good friends and one of the state's best-known writers (Paul's wife is also Ron's editor.)

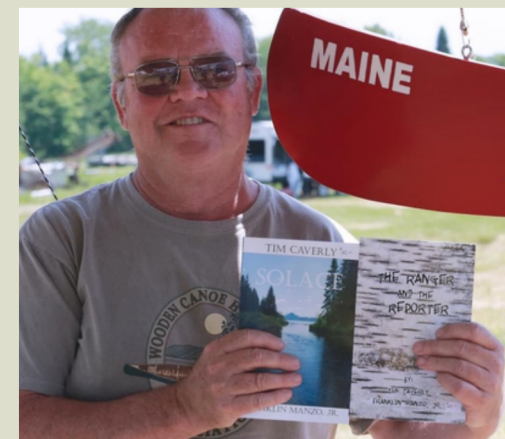
Ron's talk was as fascinating as his book! He showed up very early to set-up and the two of us chatted for a while before the event even began. Once others started showing up, the conversation kept flowing and changing so that, in the best of ways, it was hard to say when the “program” actually started and “just talking” ended. Ron is the kind of natural conversationalist that seems like he could chat with anyone. It's led to a lot of fascinating stories, and he is able to describe them with such detail and humor! I



can't recommend Ron or his book enough. If you see him out in public, say hi, if you see his book, read it.

## Tim Knows Maine

Over a lifetime spent in the Maine woods, Tim Caverly has collected thousands of stories and nearly as many bits of trivia about his home state. He and his wife Susan shared tons of these tales and facts with a captive audience on May 25th when he brought his “So you think you know Maine” program to the TFL. We learned about Bambi's origins, the ghost trains of the north woods, a combined bear and skunk attack, pet raccoons, and much more! –Jon Knepp





# Screen Shots



"I SPY" a super fun bulletin board (created by Shannen) based on the children's guessing game!



The library honored Dr. Eldridge A. Thompson, its founder and a Civil War veteran, on Memorial Day or, as it was known in his day, Decoration Day.

Vail's Custom Cakes & Icelandic Bakery's versatility was on display as they brought creepy but yummy tick-themed cupcakes along with more traditional tasty fare for those attending the Maine CDC's Tick Talk in June which featured lots of important information.



"I remember seeing Harry Belafonte LIVE down in Times Square all those years ago." — Folk singer Bill Berlinghoff before he launched into his own version of the classic "Jamaica Farewell."

Across the pond and in our own backyard: Shannen's displays hit the mark!



Special Thanks to Kazia Knepp for helping with layout!