

THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023

Celebrating the Library's Past, Present, and Future!

by Jon Knepp

September 9th has always been an important day in the history of the library. After all, it was on that date in 1898 that the library was dedicated with a grand celebration at Central Hall. It was only fitting to celebrate the library's 125th birthday and dedicate our new pavilion on September 9th of this year with (perhaps) an even bigger celebration!

The celebration started with the dedication of our new pavilion, which has been a work in progress since April. Through all types of weather: mostly rain, a few sunny days, even a weird snowy May day, the pavilion has steadily progressed, thanks to the dedication, hard work and donations from everyone at the TFL and many local organizations and companies. Just before the dedication, the last coat of stain was applied by the Charleston crew and the space was ready for its big unveiling!

When setting up the dedication, having 125 years of library history behind us was both daunting and helpful. On the one hand, there's a lot of pressure not to screw it up! On the other hand, I was able to pull a lot of Dr. Thompson's words from the original dedication. In giving the library to the town, he said "I am here today to perform one of the most pleasant acts of my life, namely to transfer to you the building that I have erected for a free library. My only wish is that it be as gratifying to you to receive as it is to my pleasure to transfer." The town and the library have grown and thrived together, fulfilling Thompson's dream.



Following welcoming remarks, Sebastian Zepada of Bangor Savings Bank presented the library with a check for \$5,000, a grant awarded from the BSB Foundation. Tom Lyford, Dover-Foxcroft poet laureate emeritus, delivered a stirring reading of the poem "The Thompson Free Library," written and delivered by Anna Boynton Averill at the library's original dedication. Then, surrounded by past and present staff,

volunteers, and Association members, I cut the ribbon to officially declare the pavilion open.

Inside, a birthday cake, snacks, and drinks were provided as Hunt and Allison Smith played. Historical displays detailing the library's legacy were set up in the front of the library. Over one hundred guests mingled, reminisced, and caught up.

Barbara Lockwood, who used the library for many years before working here and later volunteering at the TFL shared her thoughts on the event and the library's place in her life: "The anniversary brought out the importance of remembering, recognizing and appreciating the generosity of Dr.

(continued on page 2)



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Bringing Songwriters 'Round

by Jon Knepp



One of the most challenging but ultimately fun and rewarding programs I've been a part of at the library was the Songwriters in the Round concert featuring Will and Luke Mallett and their friends Eric Bettencourt and Pat Byrne on July 21. With the construction of our new pavilion underway, we really wanted to showcase it with more concerts and groups that we haven't hosted before. When Jayne Lello told me that she thought she could get Will and Luke, her sons, to play at the library, I was definitely intrigued, if a bit skeptical. The Mallett

Brothers Band is a big deal! How would we convince them to play here? How could we afford it? Jayne, always the optimist, said "we'll figure it out!" And she was right, we did.

Either they really wanted to play in Dover or Jayne was apparently very convincing, because Luke and Will were instantly on-board. Then, I only had to reach out to a few local businesses and the costs of the concert were covered! And the event couldn't have gone more smoothly. Andy Lizotte summed up the concert: "Luke and Will Mallett played

a stripped-down acoustic set cover their own musical output over the years, while working in songs and witty banter from their fellow singer-songwriters Eric Bettencourt and Pat Byrne. The library pavilion was the perfect setting—open but intimate—to showcase their talents." Will and Luke were glad to be in their hometown, playing for people they've known their whole life. Eric and Pat enjoyed finally being able to put names and faces to stories Will and Luke have told in the past. The banter was especially fun, as it got into weird corners, like Eric's love of ChatGPT.

Concert-goers packed the house and had a great time doing so! In the planning phases, we spent a lot of time calculating how many people we could fit in the pavilion. We found out that it's around 80! People brought folding chairs, blankets, or just sat on the grass, and we had 135 in total at the concert. It was a great experience for all involved and hopefully we will be able to bring them back next year.

[▶ Watch this on Youtube](#)

Juke Box Heroine

Musician and singer-songwriter Alexandria Thomas was one of the first performers to grace the TFL pavilion during a special Sunday concert on July 9. Tom Lyford and his wife Phyllis took their seats and quickly became big fans. This is Tom's review: *Wow. Phyllis and I were blown away by the superior level of talent exhibited by Ms. Thomas. It was honestly like Nashville Live suddenly and magically materialized right in our back yard. Unbelievable. When she started out, it was obvious Ms. Thomas was categorically Country. But her repertoire spanned many genres, including rock 'n roll from the 50's and classical standards. She is a veritable juke box. At the end, she asked for requests. I asked for "Me and Bobby McGee." She said, "Oh I'm sorry. That's one I've just started working on, and I'm not quite ready." I whispered to Phyllis, "I should have asked for my all-time favorite, "Brown-Eyed*



Girl." After fulfilling someone else's request, nobody seemed to know what to ask for. Surprise! "Alright," she said, "I'll finish up with a request I get almost everywhere I go." And then she launched right into "Brown-Eyed Girl"! And everybody couldn't help but to sing along. Her rendition was perfect. What a show!

(Find Alexandria on Facebook & Instagram) —Kim Brawn

Celebrating (cont.)

Thompson . . . that act has benefited our town and the surrounding area all those 125 years. I have a picture I took of TFL in 1970, the summer I moved to town. It drew me in with its charm; the woodwork, the inside pillars, the quietness say nothing of all the books and the staff behind the counter. It has always been a special place that I am privileged to have been a part of for quite a while." Thanks to everyone who helped us to celebrate. We look forward to another wonderful 125 years!



“10/4, Good Buddy!”

August’s “Touch a Truck” was held in the Sedomocha parking lot. “The kids had a lot of fun. Thankfully the Dover-Foxcroft Fire Department called in some more trucks. An ambulance and county sheriff’s vehicle joined us after they got the call. The fire truck and dump truck were a big hit,” said TFL’s Michelle Fagan.



Pulling Your Strings

Lindsay Aucella brought her larger-than-life puppet pals to the library on August 10. “This show was so much fun. She did a great job engaging the kids. I loved the polar bear puppet skit. We had a great turnout and the kids and adults left happy!” said Youth services librarian Michelle Fagan.

Wild Thing...You Make My Heart Sing

Chewonki’s “Fur, Feathers & Feet” program (highlighting differences and similarities between birds and mammals) proved popular with all who attended. Kids were really captivated by the owl and opossum.



In late July, Wildlife Encounters (an ecology center & farm school) came to TFL. “All of the animals were great; the fennec fox stole the show. It was interactive so a few of the animals could be touched like the toad, centipede, and snake. We had a good turnout, and the kids had a great time,” said Michelle Fagan who coordinates TFL’s Summer Children’s Series.

—Kim Brawn



Pop Goes the Artist

Prolific pop artist Michael Albert, internationally known for his cubist mosaic cereal box collages, brought his special interactive workshop to TFL on August 3. Everyone who attended got to go home with a piece of Michael’s art, as well as their own creation made during the program. —Kim Brawn

Three Times a Charm

by Kim Brawn



Can you even fathom the idea of hiking five million steps—the entire Appalachian Trail—much less doing it three times? Most people get excited when they see 10,000 on their Fitbit! Dave, who goes by the trail name “Slow Foot,” has done just that. He has almost 30 years of backcountry experience with paid and volunteer trail crews on the AT. He shared his thru-hiking insights and experiences from the late 1990s-early 2000s during a presentation (created by his wife Sumiko Miller, with whom he co-owns Mountain Blaze Arts and lives in Parkman) under the pavilion on August 10.

The Appalachian Trail starts at Springer Mountain in Georgia and runs through 14 states ending atop Maine’s Mount Katahdin. Dave hiked the AT long before there was cell phone reception or ultra-light gear, so back in the day he would carry backpacks that weighed 30-50 lbs. and rely on maps, guide books, and his extremely durable leather hiking boots. He carried food, a water filter,

and a stove. Then, hikers relied on general deliver mail drops to pick up food supplies that they packed beforehand and sent to various stops along the way. “You were living every day with the gear on your back,” Dave explained. He said time and again that the key to success wasn’t the specific gear but “your day in and day out mentality.” Since most thru-hikes last from 4-8 months hikers had to “remain open-minded . . . and learn to accept nature for what it is—lots of ups and downs.”

What helped Dave during those long arduous days and months? “I became grounded in nature,” he said. There was a social aspect too, bonding with others on the trail who came from all different backgrounds. They were your “trail brothers and sisters” and oftentimes it was those friendships that “helped push you north or south.” Many of those connections continued beyond the trail.

While the entire route is very scenic and



has its special features (like the sunrises and sunsets in the south), Dave says that Maine is both the “most beautiful” and “roughest” state. He likes Maine shelters because they are handmade, built onsite (often with knotty pine) and designed to let in an abundance of natural light.

People have their own reasons for taking to the trail. Some are trying to find themselves or their direction in life. And there is plenty of time for soul searching. “By Vermont, most hikers are grounded to the trail,” says Dave. As they get closer to Katahdin, many realize they don’t want the journey to end.

The long trek from Georgia to Maine tests you physically, emotionally, psychologically—even philosophically and spiritually. That’s why, ultimately, the key to finishing, Dave says, “is what’s in your mind.”

Find Dave and Sumiko at Mountain Blaze Arts on Instagram and Facebook.

 **Watch this on Youtube**

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? 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

Thank You!

The TFL would like to thank those who made our new pavilion possible via monetary donations:

Ware Butler, Bangor Savings Bank Foundation, GFWC/MIOSAC Club, and Anonymous Donors

Donations of time and talent:

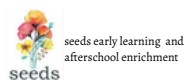
Charleston Correctional Facilities Trades Program, Dover True Value

And the time and efforts of:

Shane Mailloux, Johnson Foundations, and Bishop Concrete

We would also like to thank those who donated or contributed to our Songwriters in the Round concert:

Maine Highlands Council for the Arts, Central Maine Smiles, Dave’s World Heating and Cooling, Sweet Lou’s Barber Shop, Vail’s Bakery, Nanoq Guide Service, and Seeds Early Learning!



And to all of our donors and patrons who have made the TFL the great place it is for 125 years!

Droning On and On!

by Kim Brawn



Thank you to Blaine Chadwick's mother for giving him a drone in 2015! He quickly realized the device's potential. He saw it as a way to highlight the area's diversity and beauty and be used in land management and real estate. He bought his first drone in 2016 and started 3Rivers Unmanned Aerial Service in Milo.

Blaine set up a terrific display of his three drones and framed photography (many of which had just snagged awards at the Piscataquis Valley Fair!) in the TFL pavilion on September 14. Photos included the Onawa trestle, the ice circle in the Piscataquis River in Milo, and a mossy forest at Katahdin Ironworks. Nestled among the stunning landscapes was an awesome indoor shot from the Central Hall Commons' ceiling down through the staircase. Blaine used his smallest drone for that one and it required some careful maneuvering.

Blaine told us that in most instances commercial drones are allowed to fly no higher than 400 feet and have many restrictions around airports, much of Blaine's pilot license test involved airport questions. During the Whoopie Pie festival, Blaine had to keep his drones at least 100 feet over the crowd.

 **Watch this on Youtube**



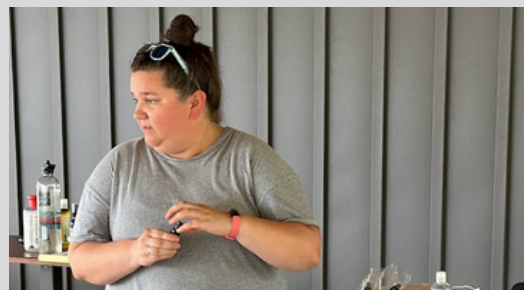
While delivery drones a la Amazon are still a work in progress (drone highways need to be created for them to become ubiquitous) they have proven invaluable in places like Africa and other remote areas to deliver medical and other supplies during natural disasters and emergencies. In the US, law enforcement and search and rescue units use them, especially the ones that have infrared technology. Drones can also do roof inspections and play important roles in agriculture and forestry.

Drones know where they are (with a GPS in the controller—which looks like the video game kind) and when to come back (based on battery level).

After his talk, Blaine gave us a cool demonstration. He flew his drone over the library and to the Essex Street bridge, bringing it back to land in his truck parked outside the pavilion. Later he graciously shared those incredible photos with us. Drones give such a unique perspective—they can go where no human has gone before!

Get a Whiff of This!

Youth services librarian Michelle Fagan is big into essential oils. So who better to do a 101 on the subject. We met under the TFL pavilion on July 13 to do a "make it and take it". Michelle shared her special formulas and brought a plethora of oils to choose from so we could make wonderful, personalized blends for fragrance, aromatherapy, and cleaning. She gave tips and techniques to help us achieve scent-sational results. I love my juniper-lemon-bergamot-vanilla combo—it makes a refreshing perfume and room spray! —Kim Brawn



(photo credit: Blaine Chadwick) Visit Blaine's website: 3riversuas.com, find him on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube

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A Tale You Can't Resist

by Kim Brawn

Author and Library of Congress curator Gerard Gawalt headlined this year's James Brown Lecture series program, "Fire and Ice: Henry and Lucy Knox and the Settling of Maine," which focused on his book by the same name.

"Gerry is a fount of knowledge on all things historical," said TFL director Jon Knepp. "He regaled us with tales of the Knoxes for nearly an hour and it was obvious that he could have kept going for two or three more." He understandably interjected "long story short" many times as he had the challenging job of distilling down the detailed and complicated lives of the Knox family.

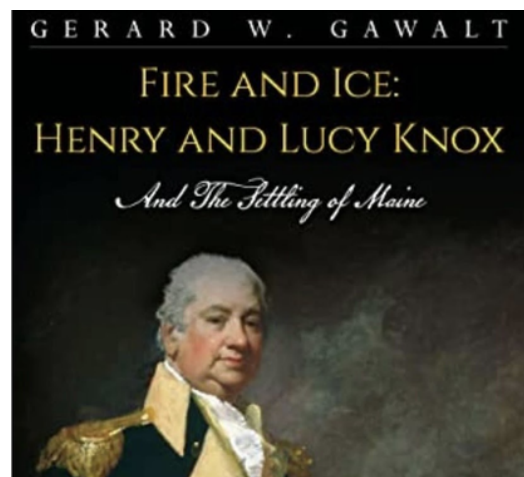
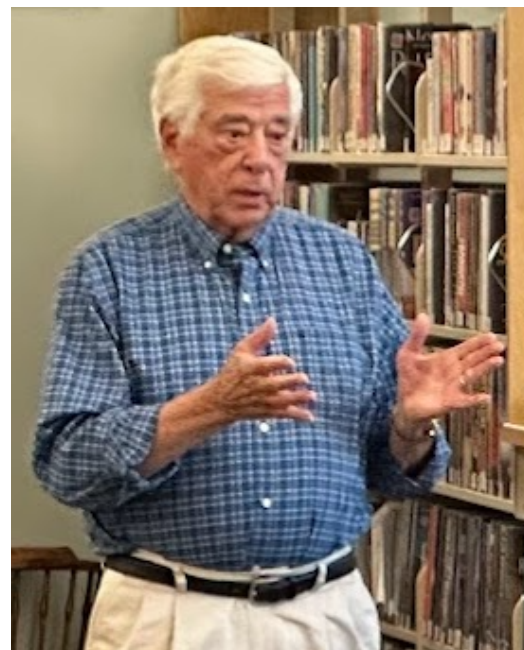
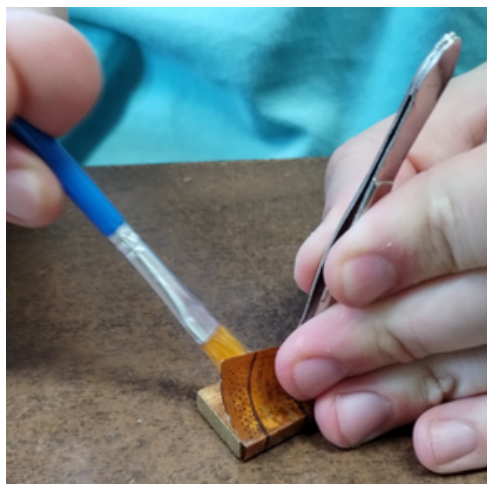
Both Henry and Lucy were born in Boston. Henry was an American patriot while Lucy's parents, the Fluckers, were British loyalists. He started off as a bookseller and later became the Commander of Artillery in the Revolutionary War, with Lucy traveling with him along the way.

After the war, they eventually moved to Maine to claim and develop land that had belonged to Lucy's parents when Maine was under British rule. They built a 19-room mega mansion in Thomaston overlooking the Saint George River. Long story short: their real estate schemes and wheeling and dealing never made money and left them in debt and the "resisters"—those who had bought and/or developed the land in Maine before the Knoxes—won.

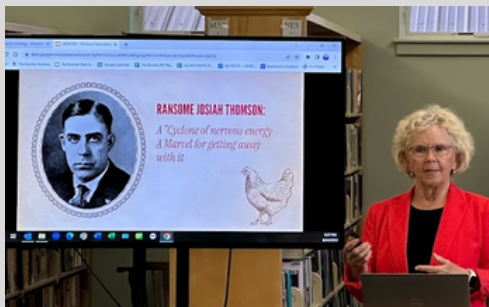
Fire and Ice is available at TFL.

A Book for Ants?

Alex put his bookmending skills to the test when some of the dollhouse's books were damaged!

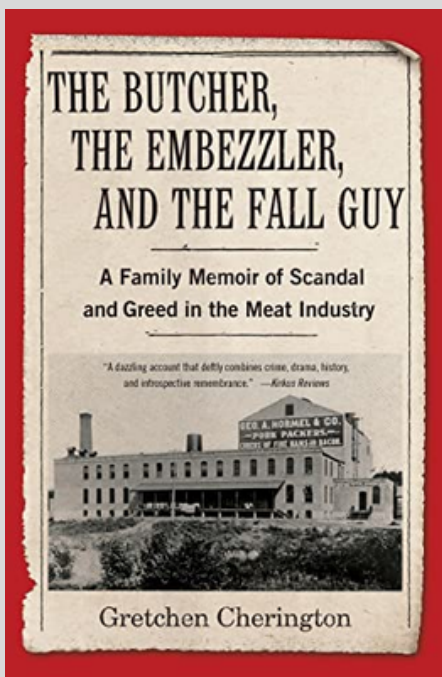


[▶ Watch this on Youtube](#)



Spoiled Meat

Gretchen Cherington came to the TFL on August 24th to discuss her newest book *The Butcher, The Embezzler, and the Fall Guy*. The daughter of U.S. Poet Laureate Richard Eberhart and previously a corporate consultant, Gretchen now lives on the midcoast. Her writing profiles the complicated legacies of powerful men, in the case of her latest book, the management at the Hormel company, including her grandfather. Her talk was excellent and illustrated her incredible historical research into an incredibly complicated incident of corporate greed. It was also extremely loaded on all sides; as the Hormel company and her family each had their own narrative of events and unraveling the truth wasn't welcomed by either side. Her writing and her presentation are incredibly powerful and well worth checking out! –Jon Knepp



Discovery Process

by Kim Brawn



“discovery process”—about finding her way out of a situation. She told those attending that she was especially interested in writing about characters who “lose their psychological footing.”

Meghan read an excerpt from her book which was followed by a thoughtful and fascinating discussion. She answered questions and received many compliments on *Lungfish*, the reading group’s selection of the month, including her beautifully descriptive language.

Jon noted that after hearing her speak and finding out where she pulled some of her inspiration, “it added even more depth and layers to the characters in the book and their choices.”

(Visit Meghan’s website meghangilliss.com & find her on Instagram @meghan_gilliss)

Meghan Gilliss shined as the special guest star at TFL’s Reading Group in August which doubled as a Maine Humanities Council program.

Jon Knepp, TFL’s director, called *Lungfish*, Meghan’s first novel, “visceral and very compelling.” Some have described her book as a psychological thriller while others have likened it to a poem.

Meghan, who has written short stories and worked the circulation desk at Portland Public Library, said that she wrote the book in vignette form when “she was broke with a baby” and a husband facing his own addiction issues, the book’s core theme. “I wrote it over six years in small bits . . . sort of as a journal to preserve the strangeness of the time.”

For Meghan, who lives in Portland but is from Kentucky, writing the book was a



COMFORT IS AN OLD BARN

Stories from the Heart of Maine



Counting Crows (and Cows)


by Kim Brawn

Long time, award-winning *Morning Sentinel* reporter and columnist Amy Calder stopped by TFL on July 6 as part of her *Comfort is an Old Barn* book tour. The work is a curated collection of 70 of her columns (whittled down from 800+). The book is broken into three parts: Growing Up (Skowhegan in the 1960s), On the Beat, and The People I Meet.

“I really enjoyed Amy’s stories and process. Like so many of our speakers, she has a knack for finding interesting stories in the most unlikely of places,” said TFL’s director Jon Knepp.

One example: how seeing a dead crow in the snow led her to writing about Smokey the Crow, a Waterville celebrity of the corvid kind who stole hearts and parking tickets in the early 1950s. Amy’s talk is watchable for many reasons and anecdotes (there’s a nice one involving cows and an old classmate, but especially for the crow interlude where she tells Smokey’s story and that of his human companions.

Comfort is an Old Barn is available at TFL, Amy is on Facebook.

 **Watch this on Youtube**

Thank you to Erma and her friend April Taylor for another successful year of the Reading with Erma Program!

It is a joy having them at the library every summer and we look forward to their return in 2024!





Katniss, Kiki, Harry, Sister, Greg, Waldo, and Fern won "Best Non-Profit Float" for the library's homecoming parade float!



PanStorm's concert (presented by Maine Highlands Council for the Arts) had all ages movin' and groovin'!



Just authors named Ken proved more than KENough!



The Norcott family gave TFL this amazing dollhouse. We love it and Michelle plans to decorate it for all the holidays, starting with this haunted Halloween theme!

Screen Shots

The "Adventure Awaits" book display morphed into a stuffed animal on plexiglass art installation.



We love donuts, books, & puns!



Pam Pultz & her Westminster award-winning Parson Russell terrier, Sihtric, showed off some tricks of the trade.

Thanks to Kazia Knepp for her help with layout!