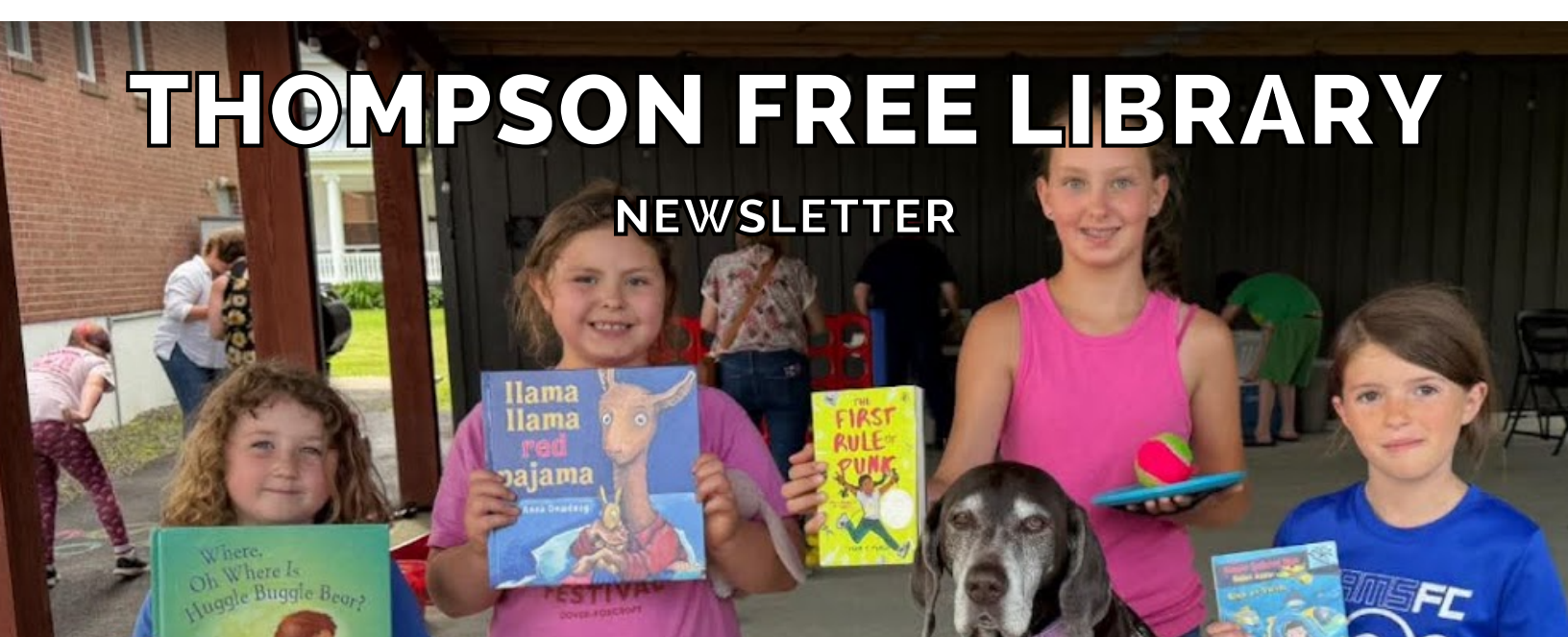


THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2026

Tess-tify



by Jon Knepp

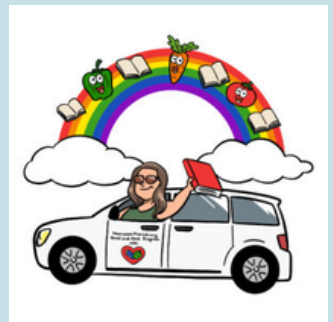
It all started when my wife, Kazia, was looking for a new series to read. "I am grateful that the library facilitates reading for entertainment because I breezed through the entire Rizzoli and Isles series in 2024 in a concentrated attempt to minimize my interactions with screens (and/or current events)." Seeing that Tess Gerritsen, the author of the series, lives in Maine, Kazia said "you have to get Tess to the library," which is exactly what I set out to do!

Having no luck through contacting her publisher, I queried my Maine library friends for a way to reach out to Tess directly. "Just write to her personal email," came the reply, along with a very generic-looking Gmail. I gave it a shot, why not? Almost immediately, Tess responded, which shocked me. We set a

date for June 4th of this year, she said she needed no special accommodations and doesn't charge a fee to speak at Maine libraries. It was the most pleasant time setting up a speaker I've ever had.

Kazia was thrilled, though she didn't want to wait a full year to hear Tess speak. But, she found that patience pays off in the end, saying "I am even more grateful that TFL is able to host such incredible authors from time to time and, so far, each of them has been even more approachable, kind, and interesting than I imagined. Thank you for hosting Tess!"

Tess even donated a box full of her books to the library, had people pay what they could for them, gave the money to the library, and happily signed them and chatted with folks.



Read & Feed Rides Again

TFL's Michelle Fagan is back on the horse—well, in the van—as she drives around local areas offering free books and fresh produce to residents. Michelle took a quick break from her hectic schedule to give an update on how this year's program is shaping up: "This has been a great year so far! Many repeat customers which is awesome. The new stop in Brownville is a real hit! We are at the apartments for older folks, and they are so glad to have us and always so kind and appreciative. The first stop was so lovely. Lots of happy, kind people. Made my day! The Fuel for Fun snack packs for kids that PRFC (Piscataquis Regional Food Center) got a grant for (from the Evelyn S. & K.E. Barrett Foundation) are a big hit this summer." — Kim Brawn (Learn more about PRFC at prfoodcenter.org)

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Rad Summer

Snow still covers the ground when youth services librarian Michelle Fagan starts planning for summer. All the coordination, preparation, calls and emails paid off as kids have been experiencing an incredible mix of events and activities.

Michelle says, "This summer has been busy! The kick-off party was awesome! We had 130 people come and everyone had a great time. We made \$244 in donations (for PRFC) with the Darling's Ice Cream Truck. Kind Kids was such a cozy rad morning at TFL. They were

engaging and the music and puppets were great. We will have them back again. Camp Readalot was a great success. We had a lovely morning of reading and snacks and friendship bracelet making. Everyone had a good time! We are already thinking about what next year's Camp Readalot will look like."

While Michelle noted that the crowds were a bit smaller, there was no shortage of summer fun and great vibes! —Kim Brawn



Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers wowed with "The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow" July 2nd at Central Hall Commons.



Kind Kids' puppet and music show was a hit for all ages.



Wes Booth shared the magic of reading with kids and adults alike.



The Darling's Ice Cream Truck is a perennial hit at our Summer Reading Kickoff parties.



Michelle, April Taylor, and Erma bask in the glow of Camp Readalot's successful first outing!



(Meanwhile, Annie was enjoying the cupcakes!)

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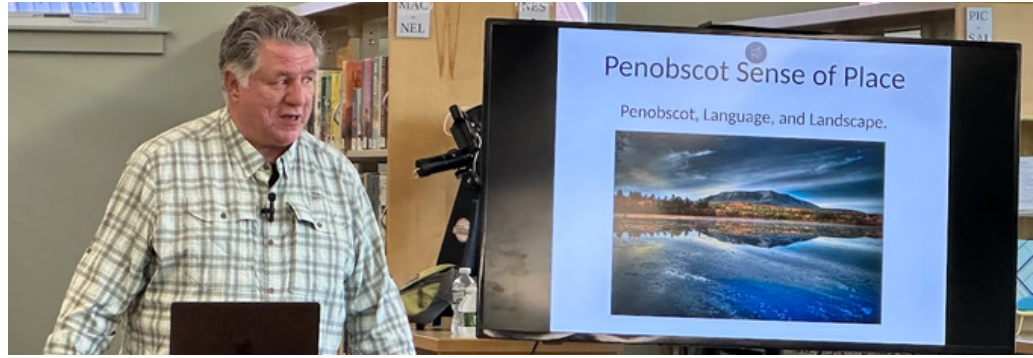
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Putting Our Region In Its Place

by Jon Knepp

When you live in a place long enough, you stop thinking about place names. Chesuncook and Kenduskeag take up the same place in your mind as Lincoln or Dover—they're just words. Soon, you lose that curiosity you had when you first heard the word. James Francis is the Penobscot Nation's Director of Cultural and Historic Preservation and Tribal Historian and his "Penobscot Sense of Place" presentation brought that sense of wonder back to the names and places that surround us. The talk he brought to the library "Penobscot Sense of Place" brought that curiosity back to my mind and I'm sure to all in attendance.

Far from meaning "the place most of the way to Bangor," Kenduskeag meant "place of the eel weirs" in the Penobscot language. Most rivers and streams were named after their relationship to the seasonal migrations of the Wabanaki nations. Winters were spent north of Bangor, hunting and gathering. Springs and falls were spent migrating down



or upriver respectively, following the seasonal patterns of fish, game, and plants. Summers were spent in the Penobscot Bay, taking advantage of the abundance of the coast.

Through all seasons, the Penobscot River was the highway connecting all of these seasonal grounds, the Penobscot themselves, and the foodways that sustained them. This led to a place-naming system revolving around navigation and/or utility. For example, rivers you could paddle ended in "cook," like Sebasticook. In navigable waters ended in "hunk," like

Nesowadnehunk Falls. The Penobscot knew all of the navigable rivers, streams, bogs, ponds, and lakes of the Penobscot watershed. And, by portaging from one small tributary to another, they could drop into another watershed and easily navigate the entire state.

I found the talk absolutely fascinating! It made me feel a deeper understanding of our region and its relationship to the indigenous cultures of Maine. James' talk is available on our YouTube channel and is a must watch if you're interested in Maine history.



Watch this on Youtube

go to: bit.ly/TFLyoutube

Maine on the March

by Jon Knepp

When Rik Scarce approached me with the idea of his talk "Other Mainers at Gettysburg," I was skeptical. "Other" often implies "less significant" or "less interesting," and I didn't want us to have a second-rate presentation. Luckily, Rik's talk highlighted some of the less-talked about but still very significant Maine units that played a pivotal role in the battle but weren't led by the one-man PR machine of Joshua Chamberlain.

Rik is a licensed Gettysburg battlefield guide, meaning he has gone through rigorous training and testing in order to be able to be a paid guide for the battlefield. Originating in 1895, LBGs were set up to ensure that only the best could give tours at Gettysburg. After listening to him speak, Rik is definitely amongst the best.

Eric Boothroyd, a local Civil War buff in attendance, shared "... [Rik] offered a unique presentation of the three-day battle in combining



live narration to a self-produced video which combined period images, maps and present-day videos of the battlefield. This gave the viewer a perspective of the landscape and specific sites at key moments during the battle as they existed then and now."



Watch this on Youtube

go to: bit.ly/TFLyoutube



Down On The Farm

Lynn Olsen Brown's *Alice, Frankenstein and Saturday Night Beans* is a lovely tale of growing up in an idyllic environment in The County. Bradford Farm sounded like a wonderful place to be a child and it was great to have her come share her childhood memories and memorabilia with us on April 9th. -Jon Knepp

The Marden's and Renys of Programs

(A Little Something for Everyone!)

by Kim Brawn

What do kefir, decoupage, land management, and meditation have in common? Absolutely nothing, right? Well, except for the fact that they were all part of this year's 101 Series at TFL. What's fun about coordinating these programs is that I can basically plop a "101" on the end of just about anything, so the sky's the limit.

I try to find a variety of interesting topics, activities, and presenters that will give great overviews and introductions (or beyond) and offer resources and guidance if people want to continue exploring the topic on their own. They each bring their own vibe and expertise to the proceedings. I hope it's an enjoyable way to spend part of your afternoon, connect with other creative and curious people, and maybe learn something new.

So far this year, Mary Margaret Ripley shared her passion—and even her own culture/grains—for that tangy probiotic called kefir; Gale Robinson helped guide us through a Mason Jar Tissue Holder decoupage project that came out so pretty; district forester Jim Ferrante fielded lots of questions from property owners on land



management while helping us ID some highly invasive species; and Ann Marquis gave us her best tips for establishing a mindful meditation practice, complete with take-home instructions. (We even meditated for what may have been the longest 15 minutes of my life, remember, you can start with less!) I am grateful to all of them for sharing their time, knowledge, and own experiences!

(Find Mary Margaret at ripleyorganicfarm.com; Gale (Leaves & Blooms Greenhouse on Facebook); contact Jim at jim.ferrante@maine.gov; and Ann holds a Meditation Class Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. at the Recovery Wellness Community Center in Sangerville.)



Avery's Joy of Painting

Looking at the beautiful landscape paintings by Avery Browne that we displayed back in May, I think most of us were a bit awestruck when we realized that the artwork was done by a 6-year-old. Like so many patrons and visitors, TFL's Michelle Fagan was duly impressed, "Avery's art was amazing for a boy that age. He has a great eye for color and awesome technique. Everyone who saw it was truly amazed by the talent of such a young boy. People said they were even going to reach out to buy some of his prints."

In April, Avery told WABI news that after watching artist Bob Ross' show "The Joy of Painting" with his grandmother he fell in love with the landscapes that Ross is known for and now Avery creates his own colorful scenes. We are so grateful that he shared his talent with us! —Kim Brawn



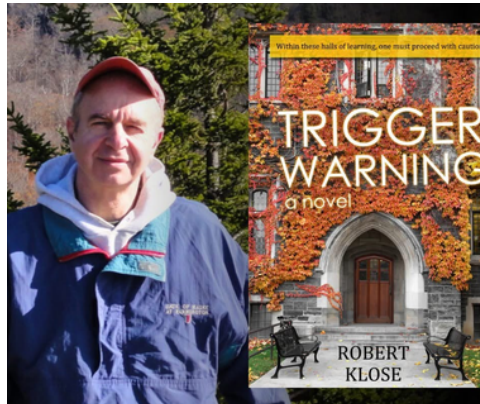
Knowing When to Pull the Trigger

by Kim Brawn

You never know how many people will show up for a program—it's impossible to predict. It has little to do with the person themselves but a variety of factors that remain somewhat of a mystery (weather notwithstanding). On an early April evening author Robert Klose returned to TFL to talk about his novel, *Trigger Warning*, after a well-received visit the previous year that highlighted his books on his adopted sons. Well, his author talk became more of a conversation with the only two people in attendance: Carlson and Carolyn Williams.

Remembering that the couple were the two who showed, I reached out to them for their thoughts, this is from their email:

Robert's book, Trigger Warning included this quote on the cover, "Within these halls of learning, one must proceed with caution." He introduced the book by reading a passage that laid out the direction the book was to take. Set in a fictional college in Skowhegan, the professor "T" is placed under pressure from his superiors to adjust his teaching methods to include trigger warnings in the course's syllabi. The book has received high praise from a number of authors and was selected as an award



finalist in the American Fiction Awards 2024.

Robert explained that he had tried repeatedly to get his dean (at the university where he teaches) to read the book but to date has been unsuccessful, which to us is amazing."

Needless to say, the two enjoyed their own private author talk, and it seems the feeling was mutual with Robert signing their copy of his book, "Delightful talking with you." (Visit robertklose.com & find his books at TFL.)

**Special Thanks to Kazia Knepp
for Helping with Layout!**



Caregiver Confidential

Dale Ruth Sherburne, author of *Neither Wife Nor Widow*, visited TFL on May 21. The book's title reveals the chaotic and uncomfortable state of limbo in which many caregivers live. The book has been described as "a riveting, straight-from-the-trenches memoir about the emotions experienced while caregiving for a family member with dementia." Library director Jon Knepp said that Dale's talk "was captivating. She really conveyed the toll caregiving places on people who have experienced what she has. And her book being written as it was happening gave a valuable insight into her struggle. She's obviously very motivated to help others in the same situation, even if it's only by letting them know they're not alone. Her story was powerful and so pertinent today, when so many families are struggling with caring for loved ones." —Kim Brawn (learn more at neitherwifenorwidow.com.)

**▶ Watch this on Youtube
go to: bit.ly/TFLyoutube**

We Got The Beat!

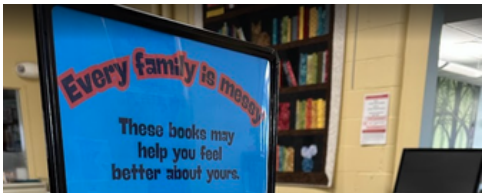
Seasonal rituals, like our summer concert series, are comforting and welcome traditions. This year's lineup featured fan favorites returning to wow the crowds once



again. Audiences enjoyed a wide variety of musical stylings from these popular area bands: Harold. J. Crosby, Seabasticook Valley Community, Alumni Jazz, and Some Reel People. TFL's director Jon Knepp says, "The summer concerts are always a hit! And, they allow us to highlight some of our local talent at our great outdoor pavilion space. They're a great way to bring the community together." —Kim Brawn



Screen Shots



Shannen's knocked it out of the park again on the display front with *Eyes of March*, *We've Got Your Back* In April, *Dysfunctional Families* in May, and went highbrow in June to celebrate National Bathroom Reading Month, and then explored 250 years of U.S. History in July.



Jack helped Ms. Michelle put up the Law Farm story walk—always a fun family activity!



Ms. Michelle played tour guide and docent as exuberant SeDoMoCha third graders descended upon the library!



You never know what gems you'll find at TFL's popular Basement Booksale! Our June sale really surpassed expectations! Donations are currently welcome. (Contact the library for details.)



Eggcellent Adventure: revisiting the art of Pysanky Eggs—decorative Ukrainian Easter eggs!



Nobody collects spooky Maine stories quite like Nomar Slevik, as he proved when he visited TFL again this year to promote his new book *In the Pines: True Stories of Mystery, Mayhem, and Monsters in Maine* on May 28th.



Michelle hanging out with some cool friends at the ALA Conference in Chicago in late June!