

# THOMPSON FREE LIBRARY

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024

### Librarian of the Year (#LOTY)

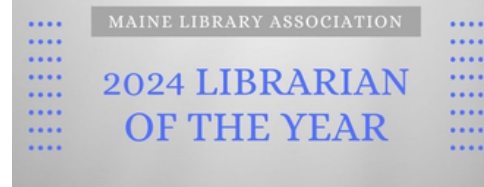
by Kim Brawn



Unless you've been living under a rock, you probably know that TFL's Michelle Fagan was named Librarian of the Year in May. Director Jon Knepp texted the news we were hoping for just after it was announced at the Maine Library Association conference he and Michelle were attending. Since then, we've had the town crier working overtime! From Facebook to Instagram to TFL's sandwich board and the classic Center Theatre marquee, the exciting news spread and the congratulations, likes and loves, poured in.

Many of Michelle's current and former coworkers, patrons, friends, and fellow librarians from around the state and here at home wrote glowing accounts of Michelle's dedication to the library and her community. "It was such a lovely surprise; I had no idea! I

am humbled and a little overwhelmed by all the love and support. So thankful. This



award is great for our community. Our library is awesome, and it makes others take notice," said Michelle who is our youth services librarian and also serves as chair of the Maine Library Advisory Council.

What has the post-win era been like for Michelle? Jon breaks it down for us, "Since Michelle has become the #LOTY, it has been great, if a little embarrassing for her. Every day, at least once, someone congratulates her on being the Librarian of the Year. Kids made adorable cards for her. I sometimes make announcements along the lines of: 'we have the Librarian of the Year for the entire state of Maine in the audience' and everyone starts clapping. I know it embarrasses Michelle a bit to be recognized, and I'm also someone who is not the best with compliments. But, if anyone is deserving of praise, it's Michelle. All of our patrons know this and are jumping at the chance to show their appreciation of her. Michelle: sorry for putting you under the spotlight, but it's what you deserve. It will all be over next May. Unless you win again." ☺

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Thanks to Kacey Weber for taking and letting us use the wonderful image at the top of the page!



# Getting The Read and Feed Program Moving

by Jon Knepp



The Read and Feed program is the culmination of Michelle's lifetime dream to have a bookmobile at the library! When Good Shepherd Food Bank's Community Driven Strategies program announced grants for Piscataquis County, we realized that this could be the way to get a bookmobile started while also providing much needed fresh produce for Dover and the surrounding communities. Michelle and I didn't know what we were getting into or

how to make it work, but we were confident we could.

A bookmobile needs two things: books and a "mobile." Rather than catalog books and issue library cards on the road, we bought gently used books from Books By The Foot and stamped on the inside "If you love it, keep it. If not, bring it back." For a mobile, while we contemplated buying a bus and wrapping it in TFL branding, practical ideas like insurance, maintenance, where to park it, etc. won out. Instead, we talked to our neighbors and good friends at Rowell's Garage, who are renting us a van at a good price "because it's a good thing for the community." The food is all donated by Good Shepherd and distributed to us through Piscataquis Regional Food Center. Other logistics involved buying random items, trying to find lost signs in bushes, and some light welding. But, we have it mostly figured out!

So how is it going? For that I will defer to Michelle, who is the one-woman-book-and-veggie-slinging army out there on the front lines every Wednesday. "The Read and Feed has been great so far! Lots of happy people. Books and food both make people happy. It seems hard to get the word out, when we feel like we have worked hard at spreading



the word yet people haven't heard of it. The weather overall hasn't been the best but we are managing to get through it. We haven't forgotten about you Thayer!"

The Thompson Free Library Read and Feed Program sets off every Wednesday, visiting Monson and Dover one week, and Charleston, Sebec, and Milo the following week with books and food for everyone! For details, a schedule, and to see a great cartoon version of Michelle in the bookmobile head to [thompsonfreelibrary.org/readandfeed](http://thompsonfreelibrary.org/readandfeed).

**Sign Up For Our Mailing List!**

Visit [bit.ly/tflnewsletter](http://bit.ly/tflnewsletter) to sign up now and stay up to date!

**▶ Watch this on Youtube**

Did you know that many of our programs are streamed via Facebook Live at: [www.facebook.com/thompsonfreelibrary](http://www.facebook.com/thompsonfreelibrary) and then uploaded to our Youtube channel: [bit.ly/TFLyoutube](http://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)





# A Long-Overdue Visit from Paul

by Jon Knepp



Paul Doiron's visit to the TFL on April 30th was a long time in the works! Since I started at the library almost four years ago, I've learned a lot about Paul. We have to buy two copies of every one of his books, which is something we rarely do. As soon as the books come out, they are gone, and there is a waiting list a mile long to read it. Paul came to the library in 2018, and every month I would hear from patrons: "you should get Paul Doiron back here!" Believe me, I've tried. Religiously, I have emailed Paul. When Ron Joseph was here in 2023, I asked him to put in a good word for me with his old friend. That must have worked, or I just caught Paul at a good time, because I finally convinced him to come to TFL this year!

I had read the first two Mike Bowditch novels, but to prepare for Paul's visit, I binge-read the remaining 20 books (some are novellas) in a little under four weeks. I was on a tear. I couldn't put them down. I was googling how to get my hands on the novellas, some of which are very hard to find. I even read an Advanced Reader Copy of *Pitch Dark*, his latest, on my phone because that was the only way to do so. I finally got what all the fuss was about!

Our own Shannen Rhoda was also thrilled to learn that Paul was coming to the library. She and I were racing to catch up on the Bowditch series. We shared tips on where to find some of the novellas. We set our expectations high for Paul's visit, but luckily he exceeded them. Shannen noted that the size of the crowd was "the largest adult indoor program we'd ever had! And Paul was so friendly to each person who brought a stack of books to sign and wanted to share their own Maine stories with him."

I agree with Shannen. It was an awesome talk! One of the things I love about his books are all the settings. You read about places you've been in the past and it brings back good memories. You hear about new places you want to try that aren't that far from home in Maine terms. Paul's love for our state shines through in his books, and the readers get to share in that. It was great to have that same experience in person, surrounded by others who enjoy his work!

Paul's new book *Pitch Dark* is available now. We have two copies at the library, so if you'd like to be put on the waitlist, let us know! Don't wait for it to hit our shelves, it may be a while. Thanks again to Paul for taking the time to visit us and thanks to Gibran from The Briar Patch in Bangor for selling books at the event. If you want to buy the book, pay them a visit.

[▶ Watch this on Youtube](#)



## Bringing a River Back

Juvenile Atlantic salmon once again graced the TFL this year, hanging out in a tank for a few days before starting their long migration to Greenland! Then, on May 16, some of the authors of the book *From the Mountains to the Sea* visited the library to discuss the book and the project it is based on—the restoration of the Penobscot River watershed. The panel included Dan McCaw and Charles Loring from the Penobscot Indian Nation, Laura Rose Day from the Penobscot River Restoration Project, Josh Royte from the Nature Conservancy, and Andy Goode from the Atlantic Salmon Federation.

The book itself details the unlikely alliance which worked together to complete the project. Hearing their stories was fascinating! One thing that really struck me were the details from the members of the Penobscot Nation. Due to human intervention in Maine's rivers, sea-run fish were extremely limited on the river. As their habitat started to be improved, native fish returned to spots that were named for them eons ago. One such spot on the Kennebec, whose name roughly translates to "meeting place of the sturgeon," finally saw a return of sturgeon to that exact spot several years ago. It's a fascinating story in compromise and collaboration that meant a cleaner, healthier, and more economically viable river for all creatures involved—human, animal, or plant.

*From the Mountains to the Sea* is available at TFL and more details about the organizations involved in the group are available in the book and on their respective websites. Thanks again to all the contributors that came together to bring the salmon and the book event to the TFL.—Jon Knepp

[▶ Watch this on Youtube](#)



## A Lasting Legacy

by Kim Brawn



It was all very mysterious when our director, Jon Knepp, received a call from an estate attorney telling him that a woman named Paula Willoughby, who passed away in Sedona, Arizona in November of 2021, had left money to the library. Like pieces of a puzzle, information slowly came together. Who was she and what was her connection to the Thompson Free Library? Little did we know what a transformative gift it would be and how close to home the connections actually were.

Paula's generous donation to TFL now allows residents of Piscataquis and Penobscot

Counties to get free library cards. As the good news broke, many people were curious about Paula's background.

She grew up in Mexico, Maine and graduated from UMaine, where she became the first woman graduate to be commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

After moving to San Luis Obispo, California, she met her future husband Louis Harper, a professor at Cal Poly, who would go anywhere Paula wanted as long as he had a book to read. Paula was an avid reader and collector of cookbooks and an excellent cook in her own right.

In her professional life, she lived in various parts of the country, working in food research and development, as a caterer, and an interior decorator before retiring to make and sell jewelry, ultimately settling in Arizona.

Paula kept her connection to Maine with visits to her family members and by eating blueberry pie and lobster rolls wherever she could find them. Her sister Sally Nuite, who lives in Sangerville, was an elementary school teacher in Dexter for many years. Sally's husband, Bradley, who passed away in 2004, was an avid reader of history.

Paula made frequent trips to the area, often staying with Bradley's sister, Barbara Lockwood, and her husband Dave. Barbara

started working at the Thompson Free Library in 1979 and has been a part of the TFL family ever since, as a librarian, volunteer, patron, and friend to all! She is currently a member of the library's association, and her daughter Amanda Maddocks is on the library's Executive Committee.

Love for the Thompson Free Library shines through in every member of Paula's extended family, so it is fitting that she left this generous gift to the library in memory of her brother-in-law Bradley.

There have been many new faces at the library since the policy was enacted. Jon gave this update: "We've had a lot of people who are very excited about the free cards and very thankful to Paula for leaving this legacy for the library. It's also been a great way to get the word out that non-residents can get cards. We've had a lot of people who thought that only Dover-Foxcroft residents could use the library. After learning that they could use the library, many of them have decided to continue paying the former \$20 non-resident fee (now a contribution to the Paula Willoughby Fund). It has been a great experience for all involved, and we are all (library staff, board, residents, non-residents) very grateful for Paula's generosity."

## Preserving Our County's History

by Jon Knepp



The digital archive maintained by the Thompson Free Library and the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society (found at: [doverfoxcroft.historyarchives.online](http://doverfoxcroft.historyarchives.online)) is a tremendous resource for our community! It contains all of the county's newspapers from 1838-2019 (with 2019 to 2024 being added very soon), as well as the *Foxcroft Academy Review* yearbooks from 1940 to 2020.

One problem with the collection is the quality of the scans. Lines on the original microfilm (from being used) transferred onto the

digital images, making them hard to read, and nearly impossible for the scanners to convert to words that could be searched. This past winter, the historical society found new, unused copies of *The Observer's* microfilm from 1921-1986 without these scratches. By replacing the damaged images with clearer ones, we would make the newspapers much more useful and easier. Simply searching for a name, town, business, etc. would find nearly all mentions of them in the 186-year history of the county.

The big problem with rescanning is that it is expensive. It will cost around \$6,500 to rescan the years 1921-1986, which is not something the library and the historical society had planned for. I proposed having folks sponsor a year of *The Observer* for \$100 (around what each year would cost) and the response has been tremendous! So far, we have raised around \$4,000, which is almost 2/3rds of our goal. The project is moving along quickly, and hopefully before the end of the year we will be able to start the rescanning process. To learn more about the campaign, or to make a donation, head to our website at [thompsonfreelibrary.org](http://thompsonfreelibrary.org) or to the PayPal we have set up for the project: [bit.ly/observerpaypal](https://bit.ly/observerpaypal). Thanks to all of our generous donors!



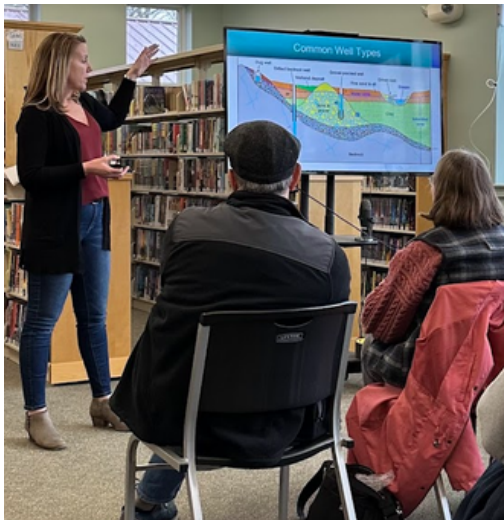
## Fanning Paint Dry



In May, the multi-talented Gale Robinson of Leaves & Bloom Greenhouse and Dover Cove Farmers' Market fame returned for another fun and easy project: "Rock Painting 101." She guided the 15 eager artists through painting a lady bug on a cement rock, noting that the finished design can sit on a shelf, be used as a paper weight, or placed in a plant pot or garden. Gale brought all the supplies and walked around to give tips and support as the process unfolded. Unfortunately, the paint didn't dry as quickly as hoped due to humidity and other factors. With no blow dryers handy, paper plates turned into makeshift fans, and everyone fanned away like extras on Downton Abbey. Thankfully, all went with the flow, had fun chatting, and were pleased with their creations! —Kim Brawn



## Charted Waters



Partnering with Piscataquis County Soil & Water Conservation District always means there will be a lot of great information shared. This was definitely true for those who

attended "Drinking Water/PFAS 101" in April. Sarah Robinson, PCSWCD executive director, lined up expert presenters for the program. First, Rob Durgin, Superintendent of Dover-Foxcroft Water District talked in detail about our local water supply. Then A&L Drinking Water's Rebecca Labranch gave a presentation on types of wells, common contaminants, proper sampling procedures, and understanding your water test results. Finally, Katie Richards from Maine Laboratories discussed how their lab is different from others, what PFAs are, how they are dealing with them, and what resources they have available for landowners. (Learn about all the programs & resources PCSWCD has to offer at [piscataquisswcd.org](http://piscataquisswcd.org))

—Kim Brawn



## Self Preservation


by Kim Brawn

Laurie Bowen from UMaine Cooperative Extension knows her stuff. She's also down to earth with a sense of humor. Those of you who have attended her gardening programs in the past know this. Her focus is now on all aspects of food preservation. She has completed an intensive master food preservation course and was more than ready to impart key information and share her own experiences during "Canning 101" in June.

Laurie urged people to reach out to her with questions about recipes, proper procedures, etc. She brought some essential canning tools with her and underscored the need to follow tested recipes from reputable sources like the *Ball Blue Book*, USDA, and Cooperative Extension.

Safety was a major theme: she discussed the importance of sanitation (clean surfaces and hands), temperature & pH (especially to prevent botulism). She highlighted the difference between boiling water bath canning and pressure canning, pointed out that a correct seal is necessary, as is your canner owner's manual and gave an in-depth overview on jars and reminded us to label the jars when the process is complete. Laurie said that Cooperative Extension offers free dial gauge testing and that it should be done yearly.

Pat Juska attended the session and called it, "A terrific introduction to canning for beginners and a reinforcement of techniques and safety for current or previous 'canners.'" The presentation was concise and inspiring." (Contact Laurie at 207-942-7396 or at [laurie.bowen@maine.edu](mailto:laurie.bowen@maine.edu); website: [extension.umaine.edu](http://extension.umaine.edu))

 **Watch this on Youtube**



# Meant to Be

by Kim Brawn



Its stay was supposed to be temporary, to promote the Pine Tree Hospice Quilt Raffle. Soon it was evident that it was the perfect fit. It belonged there. It was a spoken and unspoken truth: this wonderful, reading-themed quilt was meant to hang on the wall just off the Thompson Free Library's

circulation desk. We were determined, as Picard would say, to “make it so.”

As director Jon Knepp explained, “Despite buying more tickets than we probably should have and getting everyone we knew to do the same, the library did not win the Pine Tree Hospice quilt from their quilt raffle. Luckily, we have the best community around, with people like Barb Austin, who did win the quilt! Barb generously donated the quilt to the library, and it is once again hanging on the wall by the circulation desk. Thanks again to Barb for making this possible. And also thank you to the many people who helped support Pine Tree Hospice and their important mission in our community.”

Helen Higgins, who made the exquisite quilt, left this Facebook comment: “Having the privilege of being a part of Pine Tree Hospice, and a resident of Dover-Foxcroft for over fifty years I am so pleased that this quilt is hanging in our library.”

# Day Trippin’

by Kim Brawn



Let the Farnsworth surprise you.

Check out a museum pass with your librarian today!

Founded as a bequest of Lucy Copeland Farnsworth, the Farnsworth Museum of Art opened its doors in 1948. Today, the Farnsworth is recognized as one of the best American art collections in the nation and is home to more than 15,000 works by 1,300 artists. Now we have free passes available to this celebrated museum located in Rockland. Passes will admit anyone 17 or older (16 &

younger get in free) and we can give out four per day to TFL patrons.

Be sure to explore their website ([farnsworthmuseum.org](http://farnsworthmuseum.org)) for information on current and upcoming exhibits and their incredible collection. I went there for the first time in October of 2019 and loved it—if you’re not already a Wyeth fan, you’ll probably become one—but there’s so much more and it’s always changing. (The museum store is really cool too!)

But wait, there’s more: we also have day passes available for the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay (admits 2 adults and all accompanying children for free) and the Maine Discovery Museum in Bangor (admits four people for free). We also have the Maine State Park vehicle pass (admits everyone in the vehicle for free) which can be checked out for two days at a time.

**(Photo: *The Witching Hour* by Andrew Wyeth, photo by Kim Brawn)**

# Short and Sweet

To celebrate National Poetry Month in April, our displayer-in-chief Shannen Rhoda decided to hold a Haiku Contest. Winners were chosen in three categories and all poems were posted at the library. Many people read through them and commented on them. Shannen said that “out of the 25 people that entered the haiku contest, 20 of them were adults. The most surprising entry came by email from India, by a woman who had a Google alert set up for haiku contests. She obviously did some research about Dover-Foxcroft, since she included a reference to whoopie pies in her poem.” —Kim Brawn

## Thompson Free Library Haiku Poetry Contest Winners

spring rain showers cleanse  
rolling river rushes on -  
water over dam

By Jefferson (Adult)

Exclamation marks  
Exclamation marks are cool  
Exclamation marks!

By Amelia (Kid)

Winter is so bleak.  
The transformation begins  
Say hello to spring.

By James (Teen)

## Thompson Free Library Haiku Poetry Contest Honorable Mentions

Maple leaves float down,  
Sparkle red, orange, yellow -  
Jewels underfoot

By Iris (Adult)

fragrance of the earth...  
with tu-whoo tu-whit tu-whoo  
wake to whoopie pie

By Monika Kakkar (Adult)

My neck’s very short  
But my legs are very long  
And arms medium

By Finley (Kid)





Here's Erma stocking up for the weekend! (She & April are at TFL on Wednesdays this summer starting at 2 p.m. for "Reading with Erma"—first come, first served.)



Nobody covers the crafting classics like Ms. Michelle—a great turnout for Decoupage Eggs on March 28!



# Screen Shots



Inspired by her Vietnam-serving nurse mom and nursing grad daughter, Shannen saluted National Nurses Month in May!



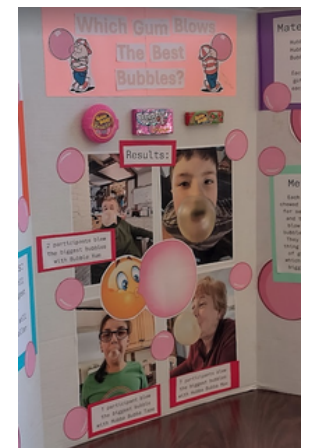
Books really are the perfect getaway!



We celebrated Pride Month with a slew of great reads!



Story walks make for fun family time! *Song of the River* is at the PCSWCD's Law Farm and *A Fairy Friend* is at Sedomocha's Dot Warren Nature Trail. (Remember, these trail stories will earn you raffle tickets during summer reading!) (Locations: Law Farm, 20 Lee Cemetery Rd D-F & Dot Warren Nature Trail, across from the Sedomocha parking lot.)



In April, young science enthusiasts showcased their experiments to an inquisitive group of visitors at TFL's first ever (that we know of!) Science Fair.

**Thanks to Kazia Knepp for her help with layout!**