Blue Hill Library Notes



"A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are calbedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a coll rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead." - Caitlin Moran



Blue Hill Public Library 5 Parker Point Rd. Blue Hill, Maine 04614

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

MY (BRIEF) STRUGGLE WITH MEIN KAMPF

Mein Kampf.

It's an absolutely infamous book, but almost certainly you knew that. Adolf Hitler wrote it in 1923 after an attempted Nazi coup d'état while he was imprisoned for what he believed to be political reasons. Enraged about his incarceration, in the book Hitler makes his case for the racial superiority of Aryans, against Jews as Bolsheviks (among other things), and laid the foundations of systematic genocide. It was published to little initial fanfare. Few early editions survive.



-RICH BOULET

Rich would like you to know that, while his job is fun, he doesn't really spend his days listening to records.

During the 1930s, however, the book picked up steam. It was translated into 11 languages, was a bestseller in Germany and with millions of copies in print, Hitler earned considerable royalties from its sale. Copies were given to each German soldier on the Front and all newlyweds were given special, festive editions.

This year the Friends of the Library book sale received one of those "wedding editions" from 1940. The book was in nearly pristine condition, still in its original slipcase, Hitler's imperious stare simmering from a portrait within the front pages. In this copy there is an inscription on the title page from the mayor of a German town to the newlywed recipients. The book is a historically-interesting document that also carries a heavy psychic burden. It could fetch \$300 or more if we sold it online, as we do with some donated books.

While \$300 is not bad when it comes to income for the Friends, when the book was placed on my desk for some thoughts on its disposition, I couldn't live with the idea that we might sell the book to someone who would appreciate it for ideological reasons. Selling historic artifacts to Nazis is not what I come to work to do.

At about the time I was considering the fate of Mein Kampf, I read a passage from Blue Hill resident Hellmut Juretschke's book, Glimpses of a Boyhood in Troubled Times. Hellmut is a sweet, gentle man we all see walking around the village, and until I thumbed through his memoir, I had no idea he had escaped the Third Reich. In his book we find a poignant reply to a former gymnasium classmate who had invited him to a class reunion in Germany:

"Of course, this [invitation] also stirred up many other memories of that time. But I have to confess that much remains blurry, and that, despite the fact that I still recognize many of the faces in the photos, I can no longer properly decide the positions the various boys took with respect to me. But I know that often it was made difficult for me, first of all to remain in the school, (e.g.

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one among them had complained that because of my Jewish mother he did not want to share the same classroom with me) and, otherwise, to find real friendships (e.g. almost nobody could or wanted to visit me at home, or invite me to his house). And despite the fact that I remember that several among them were always decent and correct – I think you belonged among them – I still have to ask myself when looking at nearly every face: well, what was really our relationship and how far did this or that one participate in the shameful dealings of that time towards me?

I have no intention, of course, to offend anybody personally, but because of this you must understand that it is hardly worthwhile to get involved in this phase of the past... And therefore I hardly think that a closer tie and exchange of life histories with my 'comrades' of those school years is appropriate, or useful. "

I was moved by Hellmut's eloquence and reminded that the Holocaust is more than text in history books or the raw material of Hollywood dramas; it is actually a disgusting period of human history that, while the Juretschke family escaped and he went on to have a rewarding and productive life here in the USA, could have had a far, far worse outcome for him and his family, as it did for millions of others.

Concurrently, a prominent White Nationalist was harassed at and gently ejected from a University of Virginia Law Library, stirring up a few more complicated feelings. On the one hand, it's 2018 and we still have Nazis in our midst, who are for whatever reason emboldened to the point of public provocations. On the other, I firmly believe that freedom of inquiry and access to information is essential, even when it is distasteful. Reading about and watching coverage of the incident, I couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed for how he was apparently treated.

T. I. Mueller

Meanwhile, *Mein Kampf* sat across from my desk on my office bookshelves for a few weeks, kind of staring at me. I could choose to sell it and put the funds to good use for the library, but then a White Nationalist could have a trophy in his or her collection. I could just continue to ignore the book, but that was not really working. Or I could try to find a suitable library that could provide researchers with just a little more context to their work.

I eventually reached out to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, connecting with their acquisition expert on Nazi books. I was thrilled when they accepted the book for their library. Presumably it will serve a historical research purpose, albeit a small one. In fact, this will be the only 1940 edition in their collection, and the inscription from the town mayor will add helpful context.

My struggle with *Mein Kampf* concluded with a most suitable outcome, as a very unsuitable book is no longer staring at me from my office bookshelves.



Catching up on the daily news will never go out of style at BHPL.

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Kids investigating a green crab.

CONSERVATION KIDS

CARING FOR THE SHORE AND MORE!

We are pleased to report that in April the library received a \$2,250 grant from the Davis Conservation Foundation for a series of summer youth programs, designed to promote stewardship of the Blue Hill Peninsula's unique shorelands. The Davis Conservation Foundation is a public charitable foundation established in 1989 by Phyllis C. Davis and H. Halsey Davis of Falmouth, Maine, "to support protection of the environment and conservation of our natural resources."

The library is partnering with six local conservation organizations for these programs, which encourage young people to recognize that through their choices and actions, they can create positive change. We are also adding materials to the youth collections, which are relevant to each of these five programs:

• We planted a butterfly garden with Healthy Peninsula & Native Gardens of Blue Hill.

•We learned about invasive Green Crabs w/ Shaw Institute (formerly M.E.R.I.).

•We cleaned up a local beach with Explore Outdoors!, a collaboration between Blue Hill Heritage Trust, Great

Pond Mountain Conservation Trust, and the Downeast Chapter of Maine Audubon).

•We built many bird houses with Downeast Audubon. • We'll be creating sculpture in the town park with The SEED Barn.



Program participants at the Shaw Institute lab facilities.

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FUN & FUNDRAISING

Summer brings with it two of the library's favorite community events and fundraisers: May's Plant Sale and Silent Auction and July's Paint the Peninsula. A huge THANK YOU to all the artists, artisans, gardeners, volunteers, intrepid board members and attendees! These events were tremendously successful, raising over \$32,000 for our library's essential operating funds. Thank you for helping to keep the doors open, the lights on and all the resources free for everyone who enters our spectacular facility! And to Friends of the Library: your delightful and delicious Book and Bake Sales make significant funding possible for many of our most popular programs.

ARTISTS SUPPORT THE LIBRARY TOO!

BHPL facilitates the sale of art through its Britton Art Gallery and at various fundraisers. In 2017 the following artists generously donated a portion of their sales to the library. Thank you, artists!

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Cynthia Winings drops off a painting.

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Courtney Haight is a long-time patron of the library, what he



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refers to as "a nifty resource." He and his late wife, Woody, have donated to the library since they arrived in town in the early 1980s. When an appeal first came to them, they thought, "We're going to support the library if they need our help." It's the ease of Four Seasons Giving that really appeals to Courtney. "I don't have to think about it." He likes the simplicity of having a monthly amount charged on his credit card. I like having my online bank take care of the monthly checks. The variety of ways to donate makes Four Seasons Giving easy for everyone.

For so many of us, we know we're going to give generously to our library. We love the books, the year round author visits and cultural programming, story time, and the piano outside in the summer. We feel proud to help support the space where the chess players and knitters meet, the friendly staff who answer every question, and the cultural exhibits that are always changing. Whatever the reason that you find the library nifty, Four Seasons Giving supports it.

The library is there for us through every season. By giving monthly or quarterly, we can be there for it.



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6 FSG = Four Seasons Giving

Photos this page, left to right: A young patron waits outside of the annual holiday party; Sara Doremus hangs with one of her students at the Student Art opening in April; Corey Paradise and Milo peruse the goods at the Annual Plant sale

BOARD AND STAFF NEWS

As a library board and staff, we are each stewards of a community treasure that is dear to so many and will live on for generations after our service is complete. With this in mind, we recognize a few transitions that have taken place since the last edition of Notes.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lisa Arhontes-Marshall, who previously served on the Friends of the Library, followed by a term on the Board

of Directors, remains on "team library" in spirit, but is focusing for the time being on professional and family commitments.

Corey Paradise has also stepped down from board service, finding he now needs more time for that growing boy pictured with him on page 6. Corey frequents BHPL with Milo and is still managing to help with Paint the Peninsula as a volunteer.

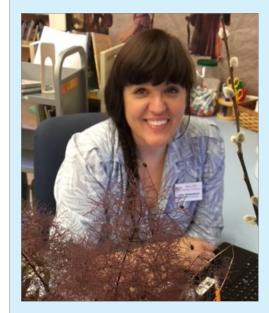
Frank Marsteller and Tony Beardsley now bring

their stewardship to the Board of Directors. Frank is a retired executive recruiter and you may know him from his years assisting his wife Deb at Blue Hill Farmers Market where, for over a decade, they purveyed the stickiest cinnamon buns Blue Hill has ever seen.

Tony Beardsley is a recently retired lawyer with the Acadia Law Group in Ellsworth. When he joined the board this spring, Tony "dove right in," helping with all sorts of tasks for the Plant Sale and Silent Auction in May. He and his wife Elizabeth live in Surry where they are currently building a new home.

Staff

Shelley Latham, who served as the library's Development and



Libby Edwardson on her tenure at BHPL: "As I reflect on nearly three years serving as Youth Services Librarian, the first word that pops into my mind is "lucky." It has been my absolute privilege to share the joy of reading with the children and families who frequent the library. It has been a delight to spend Saturdays with your bright and observant kids as they point out all the parts of a book the movie left out. It has been a challenge and a wonder to meet weekly with your teenagers, who have ALL the opinions and are never shy about sharing them. Your kids are remarkable and spending time with them has never, ever felt like work. Thank you for letting me be a part of your families, and for embracing mine in return. We are so grateful to be a part of this gorgeous community of people that "lucky" doesn't quite seem adequate."

CommentComme

Communications Coordinator since 2013 (aka tender of frogs in a wheelbarrow), the first to serve us in that capacity, has moved on to new challenges with *LinkEngineering.org*, a project of the National Academy of Engineering. We thank Shelley for her commitment to the library which extended well beyond her normal working hours. Under her guidance we could always be sure that we got the message just right.

Libby Edwardson has been

our Youth Services Librarian since late 2015, moving to Blue Hill from Kentucky with her six kids, two dogs, two

> cats and, eventually, her husband, Mike, who joined them six months later as an employee of Acadia National Park. Libby invigorated services to teens during her tenure and can be credited with pumping up library visitation stats, particularly during the after-school hours. Libby will not be moving quite as far this time: BHPL's loss is George Stevens Academy's gain as she will be their new Librarian.

> Jennifer Lapham joins our staff as the Development and Communications

Coordinator with a background in studio arts, arts administration and teaching, in both academic and community settings. She has worked extensively with non-profits doing everything from board service to floor sweeping, and is "happy to be a part of BHPL which is such a dynamic and vital part of this community." Jennifer and her family arrived on the peninsula in 2015 when her husband took the position as director of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts.

This just in: Claire Malina will soon join the staff as our

Youth Services Librarian beginning in late August. You may know Claire as one of the affable people behind Tinder Hearth bakery in Brooksville. She is a Cape Rosier resident and a 2013 graduate of the University of Vermont. She has previously taught and studied in France and has led numerous local arts workshops for school-aged kids.

Photos this page, top to bottom:

Incoming board members, Frank Marsteller with Tony Beardsley; Outgoing board member, Lisa Arhontes-Marshall with Past Preseident, Rit Dojny; Jennifer A. Lapham, Development and Communications Coordinator; Libby Edwardson, outgoing Youth Services Librarian, at her desk.

MAUD LEWIS

-JENNIFER A. LAPHAM Among the many interesting art treasures in the Blue Hill Library is a small, brightly colored painting in the Larchwood Children's Room entitled *Two Oxen in Winter*. Generously donated to the library in 2017 by an anonymous donor, this painting is by Nova Scotia artist Maud Lewis (1903-1970), who, without the use of traditional art materials or training, produced a spectacular body of work from age 34 until her death. Now revered as a Canadian folk art heroine,



Two Oxen in Winter hangs in the Larchwood Room.

and whose life is the subject of the recent feature film, *Maudie*, Lewis suffered from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, which greatly compromised mobility in her hands and spine. Despite these physical challenges and a life of poverty for most of her adult years, Lewis produced colorful images of the world around her in all seasons.

Though the film *Maudie* presents details a bit differently, Lewis began her artistic career as a young person instructed by her mother in the making of painted Christmas cards to sell, in hopes of giving her daughter some means of financial opportunity. Lewis was not born into poverty but her circumstances changed dramatically when in her early 30's, after the death of both parents, she went to live with an aunt in Digby, Nova Scotia.

At age 34, Maud married the cantankerous local fish peddler Everett Lewis only a few weeks after she showed up on Lewis' doorstep, as the story goes, in response to an ad he had posted for a "live-in or keep house" companion. Everett owned the tiny, now-famous, one room cottage on the edge of Marshalltown where the couple lived for 32 years. Though the original intention was for Maud to do the house chores, Everett eventually took over these responsibilities so that Maud could paint. Maud's urge to paint was clearly a powerful force in their lives and Everett soon recognized that the sale of her works formed an important source of income for the couple.

Always filled with vibrant color, Maud's compositions were straightforward and though sometimes without shadow or true perspective, they were highly intentional and punctuated by compelling, sophisticated, and oftentimes humorous detail. Her paintings evoke a feeling of the landscape as much as they are an image of it. Maud utilized nearly every paintable surface in her tiny home as "canvas," and scraps of board, cookie trays, and other found materials provided surfaces on which

to create paintings she could sell. Her paints were often scavenged and she used turpentine to thin the dregs in the bottom of marine paint cans discarded around the local boatyards. The movie *Maudie* shows Lewis' resourceful use of a sardine tin for paint palette, which she precariously balances on the windowsill as she begins to fill the panes of glass with flowers. In Maud's lifetime, her paintings sold for only a few dollars even at the height of her fame in the mid 1960's when she was featured in a television broadcast. Two of her paintings were purchased by President Nixon, a fact not lost on Everett who tried to sell the signed condolence card sent by the White House after Maud's death.

After Everett's death, nine years after Maud's passing, their tiny home was purchased by a group of local citizens concerned by its rapidly deteriorating condition. The lovingly painted structure was ultimately transferred to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in Halifax where it has been restored and is part of the museum's permanent display on Maud Lewis. More can be learned about her life in the book *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis*, and through the movie, *Maudie*, which offers a vivid account of her remarkable life and work, although somewhat romanticized. Both book and movie are available at the library— and be sure to visit BHPL's very own delightful Maud Lewis painting in the Larchwood Room!



A look inside Maud and Everett's colorful home, which features her artwork on nearly every surface.