

Blue Hill Library Notes

Summer 2019

YES, YOU ARE AN ARTIST

That the Blue Hill Peninsula is a community full of artists is no secret, but there are also many of us who don't think of ourselves that way. That's why, in the winter of 2018, the library launched a program series, "Art: History & Hands-On," featuring five weeks of film screenings delving into an artist or period in art history, each followed by a discussion immediately after the film and a hands-on workshop a few days later, all led by local artist Margret Baldwin. The series allowed participants to experience the creative process for themselves, making art inspired by the artists and films. The art historical periods covered spanned centuries, from the Chauvet caves up to Jean-Michel Basquiat. Art projects ranged from charcoal to sculpture to pastels, paint, and spray-paint.

Under Margret's expert guidance and empowering approach, community members came together to expand their definitions of art, artists, culture, and even what they believe themselves capable of. Too often, people think they "can't" draw, paint, or be an artist. By showing examples of art and artists through the ages, and encouraging ordinary people to create their own pieces in those styles, Margret's programs allow everyone to insert themselves into the art history narrative. We expect that those who attended this series now look at art and artistry in a new way.



Margret Baldwin's Jackson Pollock-inspired workshop participants collaborate on a group project on the library lawn.

For questions and information about programs, services, and hours of operation, please visit our website, www.bhpl.net, or call us, 374-5515



Blue Hill Public Library
5 Parker Point Rd.
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Margret, of course, has been a fixture in the arts community in Blue Hill for years, and has regularly given programs at the library in the past (usually filled to capacity). Her attention to detail and dedication to her craft have made this program series truly outstanding. Each film was selected carefully, accompanied by hand-outs, and discussed in-depth afterward. As a teacher, her patient, encouraging attitude and empathetic understanding of her students led workshop participants to dig deep, create outstanding work, and express themselves fully. The excellence of this approach was recognized by the Maine Humanities Council and the Maine Arts Commission, which funded the series with a grant for its initial run.

Many who joined in a workshop were astonished by their own abilities. Attendees raved about the program, using words like “outstanding,” “wonderful,” and “unique.” We got so much bountiful, passionate praise that we decided to run the series again in the summer months of 2018. A “second season,” featuring a new set of films and workshops on Hieronymus Bosch, Maud Lewis, Andrew Wyeth, and more, was launched in winter of 2019, funded with support from our Friends of the Library. This series appears to be a new staple of our library’s programming for the future, and we are now in the planning stages for a “season three,” to begin in winter 2020, featuring a new set of films and projects. Keep an eye out for more details to be announced this fall, or, better yet, subscribe to our weekly email newsletter to make sure you never miss a program!

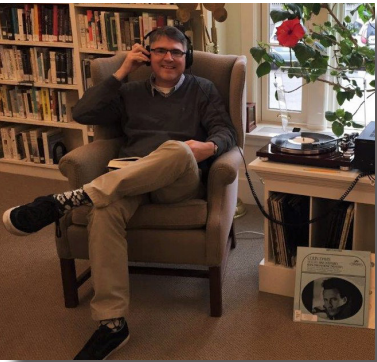
-HANNAH CYRUS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

FROM THE DIRECTOR

LIBRARIES: GOOD FOR THE BODY, MIND, AND COMMUNITY

We like to think that the library is the heart of our Blue Hill Peninsula community. We do everything we can to serve everyone of all ages and from all walks of life. But did you know that using a library can actually improve your health? In *Palaces for the People*, sociologist Eric Klinenberg writes about social infrastructure, or the places we have in common in our communities that shape our social lives. Examples include libraries, parks, sidewalks, community gardens, farmers markets, schools, athletic fields, and my personal favorite, skating rinks ~ all vibrant institutions that help shape our lives.

Klinenberg argues that communities that have invested in their social infrastructure are more resilient in disasters and show quantitatively better health outcomes for their inhabitants. People who live in places with strong social infrastructure experience less isolation and polarization, which can be a factor contributing to poor physical and mental health. Neighbors who know each other are also more likely to be aware of how others are faring, reaching out to offer help, resulting again in real improvements in health outcomes.



A public library is the most effective example of social infrastructure. In the context of our peninsula of about 10,000 year-round residents ~ plus our uncounted seasonal residents and visitors ~ BHPL is one of the most prominent examples of Klinenberg’s idea and is certainly one of the few places in our downeast area that is open year-round and consistently available to all, with many activities and programs for the public, all free.

In addition to being good for you, the library also bolsters the economic health of our community: 84% of the BHPL’s annual expenditures are spent within 50 miles of the library. With the ease of internet purchasing, this commitment to supporting local businesses, thus being direct participants in our local economy, is definitely not the easiest way to go, but we do it because we believe in it. When we hire a local vendor to build or maintain a part of the library, or a peninsula resident to clean the building or plow the lot, or when we buy our books from a local, independent book store, this money is recycled through our community, making it a much better place to live. Stacy Mitchell, co-director of Portland’s Institute for Local Self-Reliance, says it well:

“[As we buy more things online] we’re also losing an economy that is built on relationships and the notion of face to face interaction. Sociologists have found ... that places that have this vibrant, locally-based economy are actually healthier on a variety of measures of social and civic health. People actually know their neighbors more than people who are living in communities without a lot of local businesses; they belong to community organizations in greater numbers; and they also actually vote in greater numbers ... [compared to] people who live in places where the local economy has been really hollowed out.”

It is through our business practices that we can be a part of strengthening the health of our community. While the library is never going to be a gigantic employer or an incubator of transformative

industry impacting our whole peninsula, BHPL is doing ~ and will continue to do ~ what it can to improve the quality of our lives, to be a responsible member of our economy, and we hope, to continue to be the heart of the community.

Further reading: Eric Klinenberg, “Palaces for the People: how social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life.”

-RICH BOULET, LIBRARY DIRECTOR



Hunter safety instructor Ernie West shows a patron how to handle an (unloaded) hunting rifle during the annual BHPL Hunter Safety course, offered in cooperation with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

THANK YOU TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS, HOUSEHOLDS, AND FOUNDATIONS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE BHPL ANNUAL FUND IN 2018. WE SEND YOU OUR HEARTFELT APPRECIATION!

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FSG = Four Seasons Giving

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

COULD YOU HELP ME WITH A FEW THINGS?

Did you know that the history of the Blue Hill Public Library is available for all to read on our website? You can learn that in the 1860s, The Ladies Social Library of Bluehill was established, with the intention to “exchange books and eat ice cream”! Much later, in the 1930s, Adelaide Pearson was the leading force behind the library’s revival. A world traveler, bringing knowledge of different cultures to local children was one of her primary focuses. I think of Miss Pearson often and know she would be proud of the library now ~ the variety of services offered, the efforts to include everyone, our beautiful and beautifully functioning facility, and our continuing innovation.

It takes a lot to be a success. In our case, every nook of the library is used, with the youngest children on the floor in the Larchwood Room, bigger kids chasing each other outside, and teens making the upstairs their personal living room after school. We find adults reading and working in the quiet Blue Hill Room, people everywhere on laptops or listening to records in the Wilder Room, or holding meetings in the Howard and Bass Rooms. The Britton Gallery presents an ever-changing exhibition of arts and artisans, inspiring patrons every day.

We offer the Fixit Clinic, a Hackers group, chess club, knitting group, Crafternoons for kids, storytimes, discussion groups, a toddler playgroup, Lego club, a tech help desk, plus so much more. You can



borrow, buy, listen to, or download a book. You can check out a telescope or a movie about the stars, or hold a meeting.

Please help us reach ALL of our neighbors and friends, to let them know about the wonders the library offers. Perhaps you could help someone learn how to use our website, or invite them to an event that you think might interest them. There is so much happening here—we hope everyone will help us spread the word.

Your support is critical to our success, whether it is passing on information about programs or helping us financially. Thank you! And if you would like to make your own giving easier, you might consider Four Seasons Giving, with automatic monthly or quarterly donations already arranged. In this way, you help the library by offering a steady, dependable income stream that we can count on.

A few more things! Please help us thank two out-going board members for their generous service: **Stephen Lindsay**, Brooksville, joined in 2015 and has offered us gentle guidance on legal, financial, and physical plant concerns. **Nina Fleming**, Blue Hill, a board member since 2010, has served invaluable as secretary, chair of the governance committee, and important participant in Paint the Peninsula. Also, we recently and warmly welcomed to the board **Shelley Kehl** of New York and Blue Hill, and **Molly Munn** of Blue Hill.

I think Ms. Pearson would be proud of her legacy, happy to see so many people sharing in the love of the library and supporting its ongoing programs. What the library will look like 90 years from now is hard to imagine, but I do know that with all of us working together, the library will remain the heart of this amazing community.

-SARAH PEBWORTH, PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

ARTISTS AND BUSINESSES SUPPORT THE LIBRARY TOO!
BHPL facilitates the sale of art through its Britton Art Gallery and at various fundraisers. BUSINESS PARTNERS offer generous support through event sponsorship, in-kind donations, and gifts to the Annual Appeal. In 2018, the following generously donated to the library. THANK YOU!

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New BHPL Board members Molly Munn and Tony Beardsley, with fellow member Maria Matthews, at the Spring Plant Sale.

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Many thanks to Martha Cooper Designs for generously donating her services for a new FOL logo.

A FRIEND’S PERSPECTIVE

I love the Blue Hill Library. I love being a FRIEND of the library. I love donating time and effort to the library. I love the choices offered free to anyone who walks in the door. For about 45 years, I’ve been walking through these magical doors, always with a sense of expectation and eagerness.

True confession: I don’t Tweet, Face, Skype, Text, or Insta-anything, and I’m pretty sure that a hashtag gets you something somewhat medicinal and cheerful at a special dispensary. What I do do, however, is read. A lot. Give me a book or a newspaper or magazine, and I’m immediately whisked away into a mythical, non-technical cloud, empowered to circle the earth, climb the peak, rip the bodice, or learn the Swedish, with no special electronics needed! (However, should I need help with any of those new-fangled devices, all I have to do is ask for help from the friendliest staff I’ve ever met.)

And as a special library bonus, The Book Nook, run by the FRIENDS of the Library on the first Saturday of the month (and weekly during the summer) provides hundreds of finds for sale to benefit library programs: books, CDs, movies, classics-n-graphics, even book bags. For \$1 or \$2, occasionally \$5, we can find gifts for others and/or treasures for ourselves. So c’mon down to the Book Nook ~ we’ll have the welcome mat out and waiting for you, first Saturday of the month and weekly in the summer from 9-2! (That means this Saturday)

—MARJORIE YESLEY

NEWS FROM FRIENDS

In addition to the usual and wonderful things that FRIENDS do for our library, new things are happening, too. As an extraordinarily effective group for raising much needed funds for improving all sorts of things not within the scope of the library’s operating budget, each year FRIENDS raise approximately \$25,000 for such things as youth programming, newspapers and magazines, furnishings, educational workshops for staff, special children’s programs, and fabulous holiday parties!

BHPL receives 17% of its operating funds from the towns and taxpayers of Blue Hill, Penobscot, Sedgwick, and Surry, with the balance of our services funded by individual donations. The library’s endowment provides 47% of our operating expenses, with annual donations and fundraisers adding 33%. Various desk receipts, such as fines and copying fees, make up the rest.

Bottom line? Many, many people, businesses, and organizations voluntarily contribute their time talent, and treasure to make this community institution happen. In so doing, they strongly identify themselves as “friends,” whether or not they formally joined our FRIENDS group. To make things easier and less confusing,



Ann Pladson at the Friends Bake Sale.

we are now merging the two processes, so when you send BHPL a financial contribution, you have the option of signing up to be a FRIEND of the library, too, with a few extra perks included in the process.

Want to get involved as a volunteer, perhaps baking or helping with Book Nook sales or other FRIEND-ly events? Please contact Ann Pladson, folvolunteers@bhpl.net, and she’ll be glad to put your wishes into action. We thank you all very much for helping to make our library a fabulous place.

STAFF NEWS



Claire Malina in the Larchwood Room

Claire Malina joined our staff late last summer and has been relishing her job as our Youth Services Librarian ever since. “It is such a pleasure to get to know our community better through working at the library. I love coming to work every day and feel so fortunate to work with all of the kids. It is so inspiring to check out large stacks of books to them, to witness their relationship with the library evolve and grow.”

Hattie Fitzpatrick, daughter of former BHPL Youth Services Librarian and one of the nicest people on Planet Earth, will be moving on from her Library Shelver duties taking her spunky fashion sense and bright green hair to the University of Southern Maine this fall. We wish her every success.

Lisa Mazzarelli has also joined our team as the Development and Communications Coordinator. Lisa comes to us from Husson

University and, as a Brooklin resident, has been enjoying spending much less time in the car. As with any development job, she hit the ground running, supporting any sundry of fundraisers, a donor database conversion, and the library’s steady output of information via traditional and social media.



BG Thorpe

IN MEMORIAM

We were saddened to learn of the passing of a couple of dear friends recently.

BG Thorpe was one of the library’s dear friends, a sometime BHPL employee, a lover of literature, music, and the arts, and a fixture of our community. BG passed away at her Blue Hill home in March.

Most recently, BG was one of our shelveers. Well into her 80s, BG believed in remaining active, for both the body and the mind. When she originally inquired about shelving here, a job most typically filled by high school-aged people, BG was clear she was up to the tasks, although it was sometimes alarming to some considerate patrons to see an octogenarian crawling around on her hands and knees to shelve on the lowest shelves. BG simply brushed aside those concerns. BG was such a good person to have on our team and we miss her very much.

Stanley F. Myers, a longtime member of the Board of Directors, passed away near his home in Hanover, NH, in December 2018. Stan is remembered for his fine attention to detail and as an affable and serious contributor to the Library Board. He was a key member of the team that successfully fund-raised for, renovated, and expanded the library during the 1999-2001 capital project. An engineer by training, Stan was instrumental in the design of the expansion and heavily involved with the building committee: he was the “systems guy,” helping to fine tune the HVAC systems and lighting, among other things. Stan also helped establish many of our routines around budgeting and financial reporting, and so much more. He retired from BHPL Board in 2007, though his many contributions to the library continue to serve us to this day.

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KIDS: YOUR ALLOWANCE IS SAFE AGAIN!

BHPL recently went fine-free for overdue juvenile and Young Adult collections. Learning responsibility is a tough task for kids, so to encourage good behavior and keep piggy banks safe, we have eliminated fines for juvenile and YA books. We want our young cardholders to have a positive association with using the library, not live in fear of librarians sending a black Cadillac to their home to collect fines or books!

Photo at right: Twins Havon and Savonah McMullen enjoy a little R&R (reading and relaxation) in the Larchwood Room during last December's Friends of the Library Holiday Party.



THE LIBRARY WARMLY THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE BLUE HILL PUBLIC LIBRARY ENDOWMENT

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