

# Blue Hill Library Notes

Summer 2021

## THE LAND AND SEA MEET, REBEKAH RAYE STYLE ~ Molly Munn

My children have so many happy Larchwood Room memories: discovering new books, revisiting old friends between the pages of a well-worn volume, and dumping the Lego bin all over the floor. And now there is something new brewing. It is my great pleasure to tell you all about a sculptural artwork that local artist Rebekah Raye is crafting for the room's desk, made possible by a gift to the library's endowment by Dr. Maxene Doty.

The carved maple panel, custom-made by Mike Overton and Ben Mullane of Hewes and Company to match the gentle curve of the desk, will feature elements of the natural world that we may encounter in this bonny patch of the globe. Ducks, deer, red squirrels, starfish, and the most endearing seal mama and pups you've ever seen will emerge from the wood. In this sculptural technique, called a bas relief (sometimes called a low relief), the carved elements remain attached to a solid background. Rebekah explained, "I



*Rebakah at work in her studio*

wanted the possibility of little hands touching the piece for many years to come."

The sculpture begins life as a drawing. Then elements of the drawing are cut out and moved around. "The process of pattern making," Rebekah told me, "is fun like a puzzle, with many decisions such as size, balance, shape, and focus." Rebekah is currently coaxing these charming creatures from the maple panel, first with colored markers to create the composition, then with her chisel, and finally with paint, sealing wax, and other fancy stuff.

The Larchwood Room turns 20 this year and the children who first enchanted the room with their impish imaginations are now adults and are perhaps closer to the day some will bring their own children to the library than they are to the halcyon days of their own pupilage. Rebekah's delightful and engaging sculpture will be there to greet the next generation of children and captivate many more in the coming years.

*For questions and information about programs, services, and hours of operation, please visit our website, [www.bhpl.net](http://www.bhpl.net), or call us, 374-5515.*

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# FROM THE DIRECTOR

~ Rich Boulet

There is so much going on at BHPL these days. We are emerging from the pandemic with more and more activity, engagement and, best of all, patrons and that has me feeling like a Golden Retriever who has finally found his favorite ball.

One thing you might be suddenly noticing on the grounds, in the newsletters, etc., is all of this “Open Doors” activity and wondering, “What’s this all about?”

Here is the scoop: for the last few years BHPL board members and staff have been working hard behind the scenes to bolster the library’s endowment. This is in response to some financial sustainability concerns that our board identified in 2015. The good news: we have raised \$1.3 million from some of our most loyal supporters so far. That, combined with a healthy stock market (knock on wood, throw salt over shoulder) has the library in a much better position than we were when this all began.

The campaign that we have been working on for years will come to a close later this year. Before we do that, we want to make sure that everyone has a chance to invest in the library’s future. Belinda and Chuck Lawrence, local philanthropists and owners of Tradewinds Marketplace, have stepped up with another show-stopping offer: they will match any gift to the library’s endowment made at Tradewinds, up to \$500 per gift and \$25,000 total. Belinda said, “Chuck and I really hope to encourage people who do not already support the library individually to step up and do so.”

I also want to share some of the great things that we would not have been able to do if not for the prior successes of the campaign.

First, we are now incredibly lucky to have a Teen Services Librarian on our staff. Named in memory of former BHPL staffer (and grandmother of current staff member, Merrill Slaven-Brache), Ruth “Rudy” Slaven, we are fortunate to have Kendall Chapman, whose passion is connecting



Rich hams it up with one of our DOORWAYS@BHPL.

with this elusive age group.

Also thanks to the campaign, we are able to offer the Robert K. and Linda B. Slaven Lecture Series. Last year, in the wake of the reckoning around the killing of George Floyd, we dedicated this series to conversations on race, bringing diverse speakers who would not otherwise have been accessible to us, to our Blue Hill Peninsula community. This year we are focused on “the World Beyond Us,” which explores subjects beyond the naked eye, from the deepest parts of the sea to the farthest reaches of the cosmos.

And then there is just the fact that the endowment provides about 50% of the library’s annual operating budget. Without it, we might be open half as much as we are, perhaps ask taxpayers for more support, or just have fewer services that the entire peninsula community has come to rely upon.

Now we come to the public phase of this effort, a chance for everyone to do their part. I hope you will join me in contributing to the library’s future. In doing so you will be investing in your community in a way that will reap dividends for years to come.

## THANK YOU TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS, HOUSEHOLDS, AND FOUNDATIONS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO BHPL IN 2020 (THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2021)

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## STAFF & BOARD NEWS

We have had some changes to our staff and board in the months since our last newsletter. In May, we welcomed a new assistant director to BHPL, Kayleigh Thomas, after Hannah Cyrus moved on to a new position at the Bangor Public Library. Kayleigh comes to us from New Hampshire, but is a Mainer at heart, having grown up in Milford and now with family here on the Blue Hill Peninsula and elsewhere in the state. She attended University of Maine and went to graduate school at the University of Rhode Island. She has six years of experience as an assistant director from her prior post at the Gilford Public Library in Gilford, NH. Stop by and say “hi!”



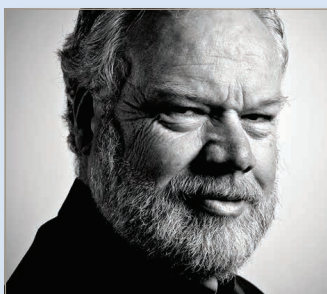
*Assistant Director Kayleigh Thomas*

Three board members finished their terms in March and were replaced by three more. We extend our sincere gratitude to Sarah Pebworth, Kathryn Dillon, and Tony Beardsley, who stepped down at the end of their terms, for their excellent and dedicated service to BHPL. Tony was a great Governance Committee chair and we are just so glad that someone wants to do that! He also served on the Finance and Plant Sale Committees. Sarah did a wonderful job as board president and was very generous with her time even while representing the local district at the state legislature. And Kathryn was an essential part of our ongoing success with the endowment campaign, particularly because of her amazing graphic design skills.

Joining the board in their places are Amanda Provencher, Pascale Soriano, and

Jessica Booth, all longtime library patrons and supporters. Many know Amanda as owner of King Hill Farm, with her husband Paul Schultz. Their kids, Mae and Gus, are frequent users of the library (Gus, in particular took it hard when BHPL closed for the pandemic). Pascale is a native of Switzerland and has lived in many places around the world. She and her husband Jose made Blue Hill her primary residence six years ago after summering here for many years. Jessica and her family are long-time library patrons, having moved to Brooksville in 2004 from Philadelphia. She works for a company that helps people rehab after arm injuries.

We feel very fortunate to have these talented people on our team! Want to learn more about those who serve on the library's board? Visit: [www.BHPL.net/Staff](http://www.BHPL.net/Staff)



**“You know actually, what I’d like to say in conclusion? How grateful I am to libraries. Especially these days. The older I get, the more I find, I really like libraries. Like in Maine, the Blue Hill Library, such a welcoming spot—such a center for the community...”**

**Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Thomas E. Ricks,  
*The Gap Year Podcast* with Debbie Weil, June 4, 2021**



...Donors \$250 to \$499 continued

## NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

~ Marjorie Yesley

The lilacs bloomed early—and profusely—this spring proving that, once again, nature prevails and we are its beneficiary.

And speaking of beneficiaries: the Friends of the Library have been hard at work throughout this very difficult year, providing our library community with a plethora of activities and accomplishments. With the support of the Friends and because of the library's endless, tireless efforts—thank you, Rich, and every staff person!!—you could explore gardens with the Blue Hill Garden Club without leaving home. Or you could've met extremely interesting local folks with Parker Ridge's Touch of Maine. Your children might have made crafts or had stories read to them, and your teens had the opportunity to join in extremely important discussions on all sorts of timely topics. Without leaving home! But if you had wandered into town, our newly launched out-side Fair Weather Kiosk was filled with treasures gleaned from our Book Nook.

The inspiring news is that we were able to maintain a solid bank balance that continued to help finance these crucial community events and projects, which is where almost all of our Friends' funds go. Despite the pandemic and beyond all expectations, we were able to disperse about \$20,000 that we raised throughout the year.

Now, as summer days lengthen, our beautifully redone Book Nook is open every day for business; just ask for the key at the circulation desk. The outside kiosk continues to thrive, the plant sale was a HUGE success, we're looking forward to Paint the Peninsula (July 19-24) and our outside book sales under the tent. Watch for more news about all of these up-coming events.

A huge thank you, Friends, because YOU make it all possible!



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*\*in memory of Margot Willis Crary*

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

~ Molly Munn

What a long, strange year it has been. Through these difficult months, our community has been so fortunate to have our beloved library as an invaluable resource, providing essential services like WiFi, remote tech assistance, and much-needed pleasure reading. Each video that Youth Services Librarian Claire Malina posted of a children's story held the promise of a return to all of the fun community activities which take place within its hallowed rooms. I am especially grateful to Rich and the staff for the weekly newsletters, keeping us all up-to-date on the COVID situation, along with the many online library offerings. I am so pleased to report that two of BHPL's most well-attended events are back—in reimagined versions. The spring **Plant Sale** was enormously successful, this time as a three-week event. Many thanks to the hard work and excellent planning of our plant sale committee, headed by Board member Greg Forrest. (Greg is also to be commended for planting the new elm trees this spring.) **Paint the Peninsula** will return in a hybrid form, with online bidding and in-person viewing, from July 19-24th, with many generous sponsors offering support.

As we have now turned the corner into this next phase, we will remember those lost during this unprecedented and painful time and hold dear in our hearts the compassion members of our community showed to one another. This past year we all depended on the kindness of neighbors. Thanks to our amazing patrons, the library has been able to weather this storm. The generosity of so many in our community is overwhelming and we are deeply grateful.



Claire sometimes records storytime outside.

# IN MEMORIAM

~ Rich Boulet

The library family suffered a couple of losses this past winter. **Retired Navy Captain and Blue Hill native Bob Slaven** was not just a long-time supporter of the library, but remembered coming to the then new Blue Hill Public Library as a school kid with his class from the Consolidated School in 1941. His class was welcomed and shown around by library benefactor Miss Adelaide Pearson, who was instrumental in getting the library built just a few years before. It was wonderful to have this direct link to the history of BHPL and Bob's interest in history helped bring it alive.

Bob's mother Ruth (Rudy) Slaven was a librarian here as well. The significance of Bob's family to the library is evident in the names of our Ruth Slaven Teen Services Librarian position and the Robert K. and Linda B. Slaven Lecture series. We're also thrilled that Capt. Bob's daughter, Merrill Slaven-Brache is continuing the tradition and serving as a BHPL staff member.



Captain Bob in the Howard Room



Michael hosting the Friends bake sale

Quiet and unassuming, **Michael Donahue** was a fixture around BHPL for many years, and he is sorely missed. A lover of movies and theater, Michael was the host of a monthly film series, selecting classic films for screening along different themes, as well as our play reading

group. Whenever we upgraded our technology, Michael was ready to learn all the tricks he needed to get the movie going.

Michael also participated in many other library events, quietly lending his support but occasionally dressing up as a giant bird or participating in the much anticipated yearly reading of *A Christmas Carol* at the Friends Annual Christmas party. He was a great supporter of the library and our events. We appreciated it and are glad now that we let him know frequently.

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*Our goal is to properly  
 acknowledge every single  
 gift to the library. See  
 something that is incor-  
 rect or missing? Please let  
 us know so we can make  
 it right!*

## HEY TEENS: WE MISS YOU!!

It wasn't that long ago that visitors to BHPL who came in during after school hours were typically greeted with what we might call "youthful exuberance" on a regular basis. It was routine to see 10-20 (or more!) teens upstairs in the after-school hours and we fully embraced having them here, so much so that we renovated an area with them specifically in mind.



*Kendall Chapman, Ruth Slaven  
 Teen Services and Outreach Librarian*

Then in 2020 we took a MAJOR step forward hiring Kendall Chapman as BHPL's "Ruth Slaven Teen Service and Outreach Librarian." Only problem was that soon after Kendall started, so did a global pandemic. You know the rest of THAT story.

Anyway, before all of that, Kendall had started with big plans, starting book clubs, board game afternoons and Dungeons and Dragons, etc. We were happy to have an engaged and capable youth advocate on the staff—a great public service! Of course, that all went on hiatus and Kendall quickly pivoted to do her job in a whole new way.

Kendall says that the pandemic "forced me outside of my comfort zone and creative boundaries. I found fresh ways to reach out into the community and interact virtually." She did weekly teen blog posts that shared book recommendations and also learned to get comfortable in front of a camera in order to post bi-weekly teen book talks on the library's YouTube channel. In addition, she hosted trivia and author events over Zoom and recorded virtual craft sessions. She added, "I'm thankful for the connections I gained through these programs, but I'm looking forward to seeing people in person again as I jump into more outdoor programming."

Teens have been trickling back in, and she makes a point to interact with each one of them if she's available. Some are excited that she is expanding the collection of manga and graphic novels. One teen actually told her that she is "a cool librarian" (could there be a higher compliment?). She feels she is succeeding in making a space at BHPL where teens can be comfortable and have fun.

So, to all the teens out there, we look forward to you coming back to the library. Kendall is here for you. Come chat with her about anything and let her know what you'd like to see happening for teens. She loves receiving and responding to feedback!

# OPEN DOORS: BLUE HILL PUBLIC LIBRARY ENDOWMENT FUND

For many years in various incarnations, BHPL has proven itself to be a thriving institution and a treasured resource.

The library serves a wide range of community members on the greater Blue Hill Peninsula including seasonal residents, visitors from around the world, descendants of town founders and community members transplanted from other places; prenatal to centenarian (and, beyond!), and interests that span a world of ideas.

Join us this summer as Open Doors extends community engagement for the library by increasing the number of supporters who make gifts that ultimately secure our financial future through our endowment fund.



**DONATING TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND IS A GIFT TO THE GREATER BLUE HILL PENINSULA**

## EVENTS THIS SUMMER

### DOORWAYS @ BHPL

Interactive Art at BHPL  
Now–September 30  
Explore the pieces of this interactive art project around the grounds of the library. Take and share photos with the community.

### TRADEWINDS DONATION MATCHING

“Chip In” at Tradewinds Marketplace  
July 1–August 15  
Tradewinds Marketplace is generously matching up to \$25,000 of customer donations toward the endowment fund.

### DEAR BHPL

Postcards from the Community  
July 1–September 30  
Write BHPL a love note! Postcards are being distributed in the community and more are available for pick-up at BHPL.



**CHIP-IN AT TRADEWINDS  
JULY 1 - AUGUST 15**

Supporting an endowment looks different for everyone. Show your support over the next few months by exploring what we are doing, participating in activities, and donating to the fund.

**VISIT** us in person or online at [bhpl.net/opendoors](https://bhpl.net/opendoors)

**DONATE** to us when you...

- Send a gift using the envelope inside this newsletter
- Give online at [bhpl.net/support](https://bhpl.net/support)
- Make a donation that will be matched at Tradewinds between July 1 - August 15, or to BHPL before September 30

**CONNECT** with us on social!

- We're @bluehillpubliclibrary on Facebook and Instagram
- We also follow #bhplendoors

**OUR FUTURE STRENGTH COMES FROM YOUR  
FULL SUPPORT TODAY. THANK YOU!**