



The Library Lookout

February 2003 Tel: 474-9072

Library Director's Corner

With the rush of the holiday's behind us, and the approach of the budget approval, I'd like to thank people that have been helping us.

Marcia Granville is busy, typing an annotated bibliography of over 350 large print books. The bibliographies will be available to schools, nursing homes, patrons and anyone with a sight problem. Next comes a bibliography of audio books and video tapes.

Ruth Blood and Carol Lam have been helping out with the Genealogy Room. Ruth will begin four sessions on genealogy beginning Thursday, January 30th. Carol Lam has recently prepared a wonderful bibliography of materials in our genealogy collection.

Jim Foster, our computer guru, will be offering six sessions beginning Tuesday, January 28th, on using the computer.

We have recently received a \$2000.00 gift from the Elizabeth Sealy Estate to purchase nonfiction books.

Dottie LaCasse, Corilla Hastings, and Maureen Calder have been coming in weekly to give us a hand.

Thanks to the great work of Françoise Labonte, Katherine Connell, Mary Turbyne, and Angela Gancarz, the fiction books are organized, labeled, weeded and standing up for all to see.

Beginning in February, the Skowhegan Regional Vocational School's electrical program, under the direction of Ed Mathieu, will be rewiring the library in order to add technology. Also, Semper Fidelis will paint and redecorate the Children's Room.

With the help and cooperation from all of the above, it makes me look good. Keep it up!

News From the Children's Librarian

Happy 2003! I Hope you all had a safe and enjoyable holiday season. With the New Year in full swing the library is buzzing with activity.

February 14th we will be having a Valentines Party in the Children's area from 3:30 to 4:30. Please join us for snacks and crafts.

February 15th we will be participating in the Getting to Know You Fair at the Skowhegan Area High School. We would enjoy the opportunity to speak with you if you get the opportunity to attend. We will be making book marks with the children, and info about our future programs will be on hand.

During February school vacation there will be daily activities held in the children's area to keep the kids busy. Each day a different activity will be scheduled for all age groups. Our schedule is as follows:

Tues Glitter Globes and Polar Plunge 1-3

Wens Hovercrafts and Hand prints 1-3

Thurs Homemade Slime 1-3

Fri Dino Day 1-3 (but may take longer)

Sat Treasure Hunt 11-1

I hope you will be able to join us on these days, be ready to get messy and have fun!

Thanks as always to Kathy Hughes, Tina Burns and Maureen Caulder for doing a wonderful job with story hour on Wednesdays.

Katherine Connell
Children's Librarian

Visit Us on the Web at

www.friendsofmainelibraries.org/organizations/fosfpl

LATEST NEWS

Executive Board Meeting

The next Friends of the Library Executive Board meeting will be held at 6:00, Wednesday, February 26th. The meeting is at the library and is always open to the public. Among topics for discussion this month will be future fund-raising ideas. Some of these are: canvas tote bags with a library logo, a cookbook – to be ready for the holidays and wall tiles to be decorated by the purchaser. We are always looking for more ideas, so if you are interested in any of these or have other ideas, please attend the meeting.

Programs

There will be more programs at the library in the near future, at least one per month. There will be Maine authors, poets and other speakers. There may be musical evenings as well as retirement planning sessions. Watch the papers for more information.

Lawn Sale

While you're cleaning out your closets on these cold winter days, please remember the Library Lawn Sale to be held on May 17. As always, we welcome useable items of all kinds: furniture, dishes, kitchenware, tools, toys, clothes, etc. You may deliver them to the Hastings' barn on the Malbons Mills Road any time. Call 474-3949 for more information.

Secretary's Report

The last meeting of the Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library was held on Wednesday, January 8th.

The Secretary's Report was accepted.

The Treasurer reported that \$7000 of the Restoration/Renovation Fund was invested in an 18 month CD at the Franklin-Somerset Federal Credit Union at 2.5% interest annually. The remainder of the fund, \$6659.66, remains in the Skowhegan Savings Bank. The checking account balance is \$1623.25.

Fundraising Chairman reported that there will be two Library Brown Bag Lunches this year; one on April 25th, the other on October 24th. The annual

lawn sale will take place on Saturday, May 17th in conjunction with the Cornville 6 Mile Lawn Sale. (The Hastings's barn is already open for donations.) On Saturday, June 28th, the Friends will host the Skowhegan Area Garden Tour and Art Show. A murder mystery, *Trouble at Serenity Pond*, will be presented, tentatively, on October 3rd.

The speaker for the evening was author James Moore. Mr. Moore is a retired investigator for the U. S. Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. He discussed his book, *Human Sacrifice*, which details the investigation of the 1988 murder of 12 year old Sarah Cherry and the subsequent arrest and trial of Dennis DeChaine. He pointed out that, according to the State's own evidence, Mr. DeChaine could not possibly have committed the crime. Mr. Moore hopes that his book, for which he is accepting no royalties, will spark enough interest to get Mr. DeChaine released. (The library has a copy of the book.)

The next meeting will be held at 6:00 pm, in the library, on March 12th (snow date: March 19th.) Program to be announced.

After the meeting we received the following note from Mr. Moore:

Thanks for having me at your meeting, and thanks to Blynn for setting everything up. Everyone seemed truly interested and (hopefully) like folks who will make their voices heard where it counts. 15 years of unjust imprisonment is enough!

As JoAnne and I were leaving, we stopped to admire the restored stain glass window – it's beautiful, viewed from outside at night with the lights on inside.

Thanks again,

Jim

lacks skills, she says, "I will be a sponge and get all I need." Library Director Blynn Currier will provide the training. In addition, she is attending various library related seminars and meetings.

Our new Children's Librarian brings a real enthusiasm to her job. She is brimming with ideas. Among her plans in the toddler area are a music area and a LEGOs table. (Donations of simple musical instruments will be welcome.) "The library is a touchy feely place now," she says. "The children can take books down and look at them. I will put them away. That's my job. The library should be a fun place to come." An example of the touchy feely place this past month were two pumpkin painting events. The Wednesday morning toddlers were provided with pumpkins, paints and plastic aprons on October 23rd. They had a glorious time painting their pumpkins -- white all over or mostly green and a few with jack-o-lantern faces. Older children painted their pumpkins one afternoon.

A bookmark contest is in the works as well as a reading program for February school vacation. Ms. Connell would like to institute a monthly family night when all the children would come dressed in their pajamas and both parents for stories, games or crafts and refreshments. Another goal is to bring more teenagers through the door. There is a wonderful collection of books for young adult readers. There may be, at some time in the future, "Java and Jam" sessions for teens.

In the meantime, Semper Fidelis has adopted the Children's Library and will be painting, making curtains and finding playtime rugs for the area. Other volunteers are busy labeling books with call numbers, making sure they all have card pockets, reading to children during story hour and anything else they can do to help. Letters have been sent to schools inviting classes to come visit the library. Some classes and Girl Scout troops have already visited for stories and/or crafts. "Whatever they request, we do."

A basic need right now is new books for the children. The Curious George campaign was very successful with every one of the titles being donated, but this is just the beginning. The Friends of the Library also have sponsored a Dr. Seuss campaign and a non-fiction campaign, and dedicated the proceeds of April's Library Lunch to children's books. There are still shelves to be filled with current fiction, picture books and reference books for toddlers and preteens.

These are but a few of Ms. Connell's ideas and plans for the future. She says, "Every day when I go home, I think how much I love my job." We are fortunate to have a Children's Librarian with this amount of enthusiasm and energy.

INTRODUCING OUR ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

For many of you, Françoise LaBonte needs no introduction. She has been working at the library in one capacity or another for 22 years. But not everyone knows what an interesting life she has had. Françoise's family originated in France, but because of her father's job as an officer in the French Gendarmerie, she grew up in French Morocco. She was teaching French to 100 students each day. A class of 50 boys learned French in the morning, Arabic in the afternoon. Those who studied Arabic in the morning learned French in the afternoon.

Teachers' salaries were also divided. One half was paid by Morocco, one half by France. When Morocco gained her independence, the French portion stopped, so the teachers had to work for half pay. Many of the French citizens returned to France at that time, but Françoise elected to stay. Morocco was home to her mother and her father had just died. Françoise didn't want to leave her mother alone.

Independence brought many changes to the country. Some citizens didn't fully understand what the term meant. One instance was of a man who went to the dentist. Because he needed more work, the dentist set up a new appointment. The man said, "Oh no, we're independent. I can come any time I want."

The number of French teachers in the school dropped from forty to three. Françoise was the only woman in the entire school, which was located in a shum. It became too dangerous to walk to and from her home, so she applied for a job with Air France. Of the 106 who applied, two were hired. Françoise was one of the lucky ones who passed the exam and was accepted.

The new job, at the reservations desk, was very different than it would be today. There were no computers to store information and print tickets. Everything had to be looked up and recorded accurately. A seemingly small mistake could result in sending a passenger to the wrong country.

It was while she was still teaching that Françoise met her marine husband, Roger. There were many American bases in Africa and servicemen returning from Vietnam were sent there. Because of her job with Air France, she was able to travel to America for frequent visits. Her first home as a new bride was right here in Skowhegan where she has lived ever since. What a difference! From a warm country to one that can get very cold and from an Arabic speaking world to New England. She knew nobody. Fortunately she had a wonderful mother-in-law who made things easier.

After her son became old enough, she started volunteering at the Margaret Chase Smith School. Later she met a friend who suggested she volunteer at the library. She helped out upstairs in the children's section and substituted when necessary. When Mrs. Someone retired, she worked full time for about six months. However, because her son was young enough to require a babysitter, she wasn't earning enough to make it worth while. When Lois Moody was hired, she was again able to do volunteer work and substitute on occasion. When Miss Buxton retired, Françoise was offered the job of assistant librarian and has remained in that capacity ever since.

Recent years have brought changes to the library. Former Librarian Helen Shaw and Children's Librarian Lois Moody have retired. Blynn Currier and Katherine Connell have taken their places. Computers have been introduced and attract many users every day. Françoise has become proficient in their use and has just completed a class in cataloging on line. When the library has acquired the proper software, all the titles will be entered into the computer system. The job will take two or three years to be completed, but will make it much easier to locate books on a particular subject, by a certain author or genre, etc.

With 22 years of experience, Françoise knows the reading habits of her customers -- what they will like and what they will dislike. Some of them don't care for paperbacks, as the print is so small. Others find the hard cover books too heavy for reading in bed. Many times in the past, people have called and asked, "What do you have for me?" Then they would come to the library to get it.

She likes working in the library. It is a quiet place to work. She meets a lot of nice people. And she enjoys reading. Like many library patrons, she enjoys mystery writers, but not the scariest ones.

OUR NEW LIBRARY DIRECTOR

On Monday, June 3rd, Blynn Currier will report to work at the Skowhegan Free Public Library as the new Library Director. His will be a familiar face to many library users as he has lived in the area all his life. He has taught and worked as librarian in the SAD #54 school system for many years.

Mr. Currier first became interested in Library Science 1962 with his first teaching job, which combined reading and library duties for kindergarten through the 8th grade. At that time he had a Bachelor's Degree in Education and Science. Since then he has earned a Master's Degree in Library Science. He came to Skowhegan in 1966 when Elizabeth Merrill wrote a grant providing the High School with Remedial Reading and better library facilities. In 1970 he became the High School librarian where he remained for 30 years.

During his retirement he volunteered two days a week at the Redington - Fairview Hospital. It was there that Rick Anzelc, Chairman of the Bloomfield Trust Library Board, saw him and asked if he would help out the Skowhegan Free Public Library as an Director for a short while until someone could be found to take the position. Since that day, he has met with the Library Board, with the former Librarian Helen Shaw, with Assistant Librarian Francoise LaBonte, Children's Librarian Lois Moody and with several sub-groups interested in the library. As a result Mr. Currier has come out of retirement, not as an Interim Director, but as Director.

The Library Board has four main objectives:

To increase technology - getting the entire collection entered into a computer system.

To weed out books that are damaged, not taken out any longer or are not timely.

To restore and renovate the building including handicap accessibility.

To get more young readers.

Mr. Currier would make that not just more young readers but more readers overall. He has a fifth objective; to get the current staff involved, to get all library supporters going in the same direction. He intends to find out what the community wants and expects of our library. He will study the results of the survey done in 1998 and will conduct his own survey.

He will attend all meetings concerning the library; Bloomfield Library Board meetings, Friends of the Library meetings, etc. And he will attend meetings held on the state level as well. When Francoise or Lois wish to attend meetings on library subjects, they will be able to do so. Their expenses will be paid and volunteers will cover their duties for the time required.

One definite plan is to have a genealogy room, which will hold the wealth of material available at the library. He explained that many libraries have small collections of special books that are kept only for certain people. It is a very expensive proposition to run a library and it isn't cost efficient to maintain such collections. Therefore, all books will be available to all library users.

Another plan is to invite the Skowhegan Board of Selectmen to meet at the library. This will give them a better understanding of library needs and, hopefully, a willingness to continue to help financially. The same invitation will be extended to the Chamber of Commerce and any other group that wants to come in. The more people who use the library the better.

One thing that bothers our new Library Director is the idea of separate libraries for children and adults. When is a child old enough to go downstairs to take out a book? Don't the interests of children and adults overlap? A youngster looking up facts for school work may find what he needs downstairs. An adult may find the latest science fiction thriller upstairs. Should there be duplicate books in some areas - one for upstairs and one for down? Where does the division come and is it even necessary?

Eventually it will be possible for a patron to go to the library, look up books on the computer - by Title, Author or Subject - and go find it him or herself. The reader may even sign out the book rather than having a librarian do it. To get to that point, a great deal of work must be done.

First, an extensive weeding is necessary. This doesn't mean that books will be tossed out willy-nilly. Intelligent ways to dispose of books can be found. For instance, there are books that do not circulate much if at all, yet contain valuable historic materials. Rather than taking up valuable shelf space these could go to the State Library, to the University of Maine at Farmington or the Skowhegan Area High School. They would still be available to anyone who needs them. Some books will be of great use to home-schoolers. Valuable old books may be professionally assessed and sold to benefit the library. Other homes may be found for them as well, such as the book sale at the Municipal Building, hospitals and nursing homes.

Then every remaining book will have to be entered into the computer database. This involves the painstaking entry of every book on the shelves and any new books into a computer data base. A complete listing will be shown on computers both upstairs and down. The entry process will take several years even with volunteer help. In the end, it will be possible to print out a complete inventory if necessary. The tedious hand entry of each title into an accession book will not be required.

In fact volunteers will be needed for many duties. They will continue the children's summer programs and year round story hour and craft sessions. They will plan and conduct library functions such as the Library Week open house and the December open house. They will cover lunch hours while the staff goes elsewhere for a staff meeting and lunch. They will help patrons with computers and do any other task needed. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Kathy Hughes at 175 James Road, Cornville Maine 04976 or come to the library and sign up.

Our Library Director needs you.

OUR NEW CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN

Katherine Connell comes from a long line of readers and is raising her children to read also. She has always felt at home at the Skowhegan Free Public Library - partly because she is related to the former Children's Librarian, Lois Moody - and has been bringing her children for story hour and books. It was important to her and her young family that there was a friendly place with activities that had no cost. As she says, "We are not all wealthy." She will work to provide more free programs to give our children the benefits of education and fun at the library.

While Ms. Connell doesn't have a degree in library science, she has had twelve years of experience working in a bank developing verbal and writing skills as well as learning how to deal with people. She also ran a day care for three and a half years and knows how to manage children. For any areas where she

Book Review

by Jim Foster

Wolfgang Hildesheimer, *Mozart*
Maynard Solomon, *Mozart*

One of the advantages of the recent weeding is that some titles I had never noticed jumped out at me like the details of a blurry photo when you apply an unsharp mask.

Neither of these books is really new; the Hildesheimer is from the seventies and the Solomon from the mid-nineties, and both had been in the library for a long time.

Hildesheimer is one of the major contemporary German writers; his book is more of an extended essay – he calls it a “meditation” – than a biography. It was the inspiration for the movie *Amadeus*.

Solomon is a well-known musicologist. I found his *Mozart* the more interesting of the two books. He criticizes the “myth” of the “childlike” unworldly and impoverished Mozart, gives a new nuance on the relationship of Wolfgang and Leopold, and has a good chapter on the secret societies (Masons, Illuminati, etc.) and their role in Viennese politics.

I would recommend either book to anyone interested in music, the late eighteenth century, or just the life of a fascinatingly complex personality.

LIBRARY HOURS					
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
10-6	10-6	10-6	10-7	10-6	10-2

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MEET A LIBRARY VOLUNTEER

If you're in the library on a Wednesday or Thursday you're apt to receive a friendly smile from **Maureen Calder**, busily at work on a variety of volunteer jobs. This capable lady is often the Wednesday morning story teller, and also may be seen stamping books or working on the genealogy collection. In the future she hopes to work with Katherine on after school programs.

A native of Millinocket and a graduate of the University of Maine at Presque Isle, Maureen lives on the Dr. Mann Road with her husband, David, and their dog, Craze. They have five children and three grandchildren. Maureen is a retired teacher and also holds a certificate for activity coordinator in nursing homes. In addition to books and reading, her interests include genealogy, gardening, herbs and writing poetry. Thank you, Maureen, for sharing your time and talents with the library.

BECOME A FRIEND OF YOUR LIBRARY

The Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library, a not for profit group dedicated to supporting and improving the library for all members of the community, invite you to join us. Dues are \$10. individuals, \$8. Seniors & Students, and \$15. for families. We normally meet at the Library the second Wednesday of every other month, unless scheduling conflicts require another date. For more information, call Corilla Hastings (474-3949).

Please complete this form and mail to Kathy Hughes, 175 James Road, Cornville, Maine 04976.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____

Tel. # _____
E-Mail Address _____

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb 4 Trustees Meeting. Open to Public. 4:00 pm at the Library
Computer Class II: Windows Operating System. 7:00 at the Library
- Feb 5 Wednesday Morning Story and Craft Hour, 10 am in the Children's Room
- Feb 6 Genealogy Workshop, 3 pm at the Library
- Feb 11 Computer Class III: Using Your Computer. 7:00 at the Library
- Feb 12 Wednesday Morning Story and Craft Hour, 10 am in the Children's Room
- Feb 13 Genealogy Workshop, 3 pm at the Library
- Feb 14 Valentine's Day Party 3:30-4:30 in the Children's Room
- Feb 15 Getting to Know You Fair, all day at Skowhegan Area High School. We will have a table.
- Feb 18 Computer Class IV: The Internet. 7:00 at the Library
- Feb 19 Wednesday Morning Story and Craft Hour, 10 am in the Children's Room
- Feb 20 Genealogy Workshop, 3 pm at the Library
- Feb 25 Computer Class V: The Internet, continued. 7:00 at the Library
- Feb 26 Wednesday Morning Story and Craft Hour, 10 am in the Children's Room
Friends Executive Board Meeting, Open to the Public, 6 pm at the Library
- Mar 4 Trustees Meeting. Open to Public. 4:00 pm at the Library
Computer Class VI: File Formats and Multimedia. 7:00 at the Library
- Coming up:
May 7 Friends Yard Sale at the Hastings'.



The Library Lookout
Friends of the Skowhegan
Free Public Library
c/o Skowhegan Free Public Library
Elm Street
Skowhegan, ME 04876

Your Librarians Are:
Library Director Blynn Currier,
Assistant Librarian Françoise Labonte,
Children's Librarian Katherine Connell,
and Thelma Butler

Your Library Trustees Are:
Bill Laney, Warren Shay,
Mary Davies, Lee Granville,
Toni Jo Blaisdell and
Carol Jarvais.

Friends Officers Are:
Corilla Hastings, Pres.;
Jim Foster, V.P.,
Marcia Granville, Sec.
and Kathy Hughes, Treas.

