



# The Library Lookout

Sept 2001

Tel: 474-9072

## Interview with Retiring Librarian Helen Shaw

Helen Shaw, our Head Librarian, has retired after 25 years of service to the Skowhegan community. Jim Foster interviewed her for the *Lookout* this month.

*Jim: How long were you at the library?*

Helen: I was first hired in February of 1976. Helen Buxton was the Librarian at that time. In 1980, Helen Buxton had to retire – she had had a stroke – and I became the Librarian. Actually, that was in February, too.

Nobody even knew where she sent to order books, not the book committee, not the Trustees. She had never filled me in. I went in stone cold. But you learn. I was kind of nervous having it dumped on me.

Françoise had been substituting, mainly up in the Children's room, and I said, "If you want the job, you'd better grab it now." She has been here ever since.

*Jim: What do you consider as your major achievements over the 25 years?*

Helen: We've brought in a lot of people who had never been in the Library before. My husband had a lot of relatives – I have a lot of friends – between Françoise and me, we brought in a lot of new people. People come in now from Madison, Anson, Solon, Bingham. . . from all over.

Before I came in nobody did Interlibrary loans. Helen Buxton didn't do Interlibrary loans. We do a lot of Interlibrary loans now. The State Library in Augusta can usually find anything, nine times of out ten.

Another thing we have achieved – when Helen Buxton was Librarian, I don't know about Mary Marsden, we had a book committee, we would order maybe ten books a month. We order now between me and the book committee forty or fifty books a month. We have to get them ready for the shelves; they have to be ordered, and

have covers and numbers put on them. Nowadays, ten books a month wouldn't satisfy anybody.

Until our hours were changed, we went to a lot of meetings. We went to the State Library, we went to Madison, North Anson, Anson, Norridgewock, Canaan – once to Bangor after it was renovated. We had people here from Hartland, Pittsfield, Jackman, Bingham, Solon... I used to go to a lot with Elsie Stanley from Norridgewock, then with Françoise. We learned a lot. There would be workshops on taking care of the books, on problems librarians have... There was a lot of repetition, but you learn something new at every meeting.

*Jim: What do you intend to do now that you are retired?*

Helen: I plan just to enjoy myself. I will travel quite a lot. I have three children who live out of state, one in California, one in Massachusetts, and one in Pennsylvania; and I have a sister in South Carolina. They are all saying, "When are you coming?" As soon as the weather gets bad and I feel hemmed in, I'm going. I play cards a lot. So that I've been very busy.

*Jim: Do you have anything else you'd like to add?*

Helen: I've really enjoyed my twenty five years. I like books and I like people. It's really a Public Relations job, not just taking care of books. It's a fun job but it keeps you on your toes. I think it will get much bigger.

**NOTE THAT THE LIBRARY IS NOW  
ON NEW WINTER HOURS.**

See box pag 3.

# New Computers Available

The long-awaited computers from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are now up and running!

The boxes arrived in mid-August. The first step was to plan out the placement and get Quality Electric in to add new circuits and outlets, which was done at the end of August. On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of September, volunteer tech coordinators Jim Foster and Lee Granville, Trustee Bill Laney, and the people from Paper Klip arranged the furniture and on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Jim and Lee connected them up and went as far in configuring them as we could without the help of the Gates staff.

The morning of Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, Michelle and Luke, the trainers from the Gates Foundation, arrived to complete the configuration and provide a training session for Jim and Lee on the technical aspects of the computers. In the afternoon and all day on the 11<sup>th</sup> they gave training in the use of the computers and the programs to Librarian Françoise LaBonte, Friends volunteers Nancy Warren and Marcia Granville, Trustee Rick Anzenc, Jim and Lee. At the end of the day, they gave Jim and Lee another lesson in maintenance and administration.

We were all very impressed by the competence and friendliness of the Gates trainers, especially under the trying circumstances on the 11<sup>th</sup> when it was difficult for anyone to concentrate on lessons.

On Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, the computers were made available to the public for the first time, and everyone who has seen or used them has been very enthusiastic, despite problems with the Internet access due to the heavy national traffic and destruction of parts of the infrastructure located in and around the World Trade Center, as well as the bottleneck of our own Internet connection with more computers sharing the available bandwidth.

There are now four new computers from the Gates

Foundation, in addition to the two machines we bought with the New Century Grant last year. The Gates computers are state-of-the-art machines with 1.4 GHz Pentium IV processors and 256 MB of RAM. The available software, besides Internet Explorer, includes Encarta Encyclopedia, Encarta Encyclopedia Africana, Encarta World Atlas, and World Dictionary (all of which will all also be available on the two older computers), Microsoft Streets and Trips, the entire Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Publisher), and a whole slew of children's programs ranging from Barney for the pre-schoolers through the Arthur and Dr. Seuss programs to Algebra programs for the Middle School students (and adults who need to brush up their math skills.) Each of the four new computers has two headphones, to make it easier for children to play games together and for researchers to study in tandem.

Also included in the Gates equipment is a new, superfast HP Laser-Jet laser printer, which is usable from all six computers over the network.

Over the next few days, Jim Foster will be adding the reference programs to the two older computers, and adding the color inkjet we bought last year to the new ones, so that all six will be about equally functional. The MS Office Suite and the children's programs will only be available on the Gates computers due to licensing restrictions.

Eventually, some of the new computers may be moved to the children's room upstairs, where it will be more convenient for children to play the games. Children may use the computers downstairs if accompanied by an adult. The staff and trustees will be developing policies for the most efficient use of the computers and printers as we go along.

## Other News

### LOG DAY PARADE

With a theme of "Growing with Books", the Library float in this year's Log Days Parade was cleverly created by Christine Smith. Surrounded by gigantic vegetable seed packets, the children blew bubbles as they traveled down Madison Avenue. Participants besides Christine included: Mariah Daigle, Shae-Lynn Smith, Hunter Smith, Zachariah Daigle, Samantha Allen, John Layman and Laura Scott. Hats off to Christine and her crew for a job well done.

### SUMMER READING CLUB

Sixteen readers completed a minimum of 150 points to qualify for the Summer Reading Club celebration at the Library on August 17. Lois Moody, Children's Librarian, entertained the children with several favorite stories after they had enjoyed ice cream sundaes of their own creation. Volunteer Friend, Christine Smith, led the group in a number of games, and each reader chose a new paperback book to take home. The readers included: Jessica Bernier, Jeremy Bernier, Allison

Lancaster, Caitlyn Lancaster, William Dutton, Matthew Steward, Rachel Steward, Aren LeBrun, John Layman, Jubul Horton, Isaac Dorko, Ian Dorko, Ryley Burkhart, Zachariah Daigle, Samantha Allen and Hunter Smith.

### OPEN FLAG

At the suggestion of a library patron, an open flag now flies outside the Library during business hours. This will not only eliminate the confusion when we change from summer to winter hours, but will provide a daily reminder of the Library's presence in downtown Skowhegan. Thanks to Lake George Regional Park for donating the flag which they no longer use.

### WHAT ARE WE READING ?

The program for the Friends of the Library meeting on September 12 was a panel discussion entitled "What Are We Reading?". The members of the panel, representing readers of all ages and interests, included UMO Professor Jeff Evans, Elementary School Teacher Mary Stuart, Skowhegan Area Middle School Librarian Toni Jo Blaisdell and Skowhegan Area High School Teacher Robin Lisherness.

### WEDNESDAY MORNING STORY HOUR

The Wednesday morning Story and Craft Hour for children of all ages will continue to meet every week at 10 AM. Readers will include Dot Cleaver, Mary Turbyne, Kathy Hughes and Corrilla Hastings. If anyone else would be interested in participating in this fun program, please contact Kathy or Corrilla.

### VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR APPOINTED

The Trustees have recently appointed Kathy Huges as Volunteer Coordinator for the Library. Kathy will help match jobs to workers, and provide a method of record keeping for hours served and in-kind donations. THANK YOU, Kathy, for taking on an important job. Those records will be especially needed when the time comes to apply for grants to help with building renovations.

### WEEDING BEGINS

Our first weeding session was held on August 17,

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### WINTER LIBRARY HOURS

	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
ADULT	1-7:30	10-6	10-6	1-7:30	1-7:30	10-2
CHILDREN	3-5:30	10-5:30	10-5:30	3-5:30	3-5:30	10-2

### 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 Corrilla Hastings (474-3949).

Please complete this form and mail to Kathy Hughes, RR 1, Box 2760, Skowhegan, Me 04976. Welcome.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

directed by co-chairs Mary Stuart and Mary Turbyne. This is an enormous undertaking which will take many months to complete, but we'll take comfort in the saying, "a job begun is a job half done"!

Mary Stuart, co-chairperson of the Weeding/Cleaning committee is looking for people to come to a work session on Saturday, September 22 at 2 PM. Please get in touch with Mary, or simply come to the Library and join the fun!

### ART EXHIBIT

Priscilla Graf Riley, Skowhegan art teacher, will have an exhibit of her work at the Library from October 11 through 25. The Friends will host a print signing for Priscilla on October 13 from 10 AM until 2 PM.

Be sure to come and admire the work of this talented artist.

### HALLOWEEN PARTY

The Friends will hold a Halloween party in the children's room on Friday, October 26 from 4 to 5 PM for all ages. Games, competitions, and refreshments will highlight the hour of fun. Costumes are optional.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers! We need your help! Please get in touch with Kathy Hughes if you'd like to give some time to any of the Library programs or projects.

We'll need workers on September 22 for cleaning at the Library, on September 29 to help prepare and serve lunch to the Genealogical Society at the High School, on October 13 for hosting or providing refreshments for the Print Signing, on October 19 for making and serving pies at the Mystery play, on that same night for taking tickets and distributing programs, and on October 26 for helping to make a fun Halloween party for the children. And of course, we'd love to have volunteers to cover one or more of the Wednesday morning Story Hours.... There's lots to do, and we invite you to participate. You'll be glad you did!

### NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS

The Friends of Skowhegan Free Public Library Web site has a new address:

[www.bairnet.org/organizations/fosfpl](http://www.bairnet.org/organizations/fosfpl)

Now that we are no longer restricted by the MCO template-based format, we will be making many improvements. Tell us what you want to see.



### The Library Lookout

Friends of the Skowhegan  
Free Public Library  
c/o Skowhegan Free Public Library  
Elm Street  
Skowhegan, ME 04976

#### Your Librarians Are:

Helen Shaw,  
Francoise Labonte,  
Lois Moody  
and Thelma Butler

#### Your Library Trustees Are:

Bill Laney, Warren Shay,  
Mary Davies, Betsey Hall,  
Kathy Dorko,  
Toni Jo Blaisdell and  
Rick Anzelc

#### Friends Officers Are:

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