



The Library Lookout

February 2001

Tel: 474-9072

Wish List

In addition to the Children's Non-fiction books, which we are campaigning for (see article under Latest News), we are looking for good educational software titles for the Children's room computers. We also need ergonomic furniture, chairs and tables, for all the computers.



Popular Selections

Chosen by Librarian Helen Shaw

Children

Couric	<i>The Brand New Kid</i>
Falconer	<i>Olivia</i>
Jacques	<i>Lord Brocktree</i>
Paulsen	<i>The Beet Fields</i>
Whelan	<i>Homeless Bird</i>

Adults

Brown	<i>Riley in the Morning</i>
Braun	<i>The Cat Who Smelled a Rat</i>
Cookson	<i>Kate Hannigan's Girl</i>
LeCarré	<i>The Constant Gardener</i>
McMillan	<i>A Day Late and a Dollar Short</i>

LATEST NEWS

Compiled by Jim Foster

Art Exhibit at the Library

An exhibit of watercolors by local artist Alice Haiss, with the title "Touring Maine", is being shown in the Main Lobby of the Library during the month of February. Be sure to come in and view these paintings of familiar area landmarks and landscapes (including one of our library.)

Valentine Craft Party

You'll have a chance to make a card for your sweetheart on Friday, February 9 from 3 to 4 PM at the Library. The Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library will be hosting a craft party for young and not-so-young, toddlers to grandpas. Just bring your creative ideas; we'll provide the paper, ribbons, and lace.

March FOL Meeting

Dr. Joe Missbach will be the speaker at the March Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library meeting. He will talk on Domestic Violence Issues. An invitation is extended to all interested citizens to attend this event on Wednesday, March 14 at 7 PM at the Library. Maine is sixth in the nation in domestic violence.

Children's Nonfiction Campaign

Kathy Hughes, chairperson of the Children's Nonfiction Campaign, announces that the list of books will be completed within the next two weeks. She has been working with Lois Moody on this project and hopes to have new books to put on the shelf sometime in March. With a start-up donation of \$500 from the Friends, the funds have been generously supplemented by the Lions Club, Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of Isabella, Dove Society, Sunset Chapter OES, and Semper Fidelis. Pledges have also been received from the Bloomfield Garden Club and the Business and Professional Women's Club.

Continued on page 7

Book Reviews

China Boy by Gus Lee

Reviewed by Marcia Granville

China Boy is not a compliment to little Kai Ting. It is an insult thrown at him by street toughs who won't dignify him by calling him by his given name. If epithets were all that Kai had to face as a seven-year-old victim, he would have considered himself fortunate. The story tells of how this skinny child learned first to run from and then to face his enemies. I found myself empathising with Kai Ting and developing a (healthy?) hate for some of his foes, not the least of which was his stepmother, Edna.

As a movie, the book would have to be at least R-rated if not X-rated because of the foul language; however, it is probably an accurate depiction of the way the kids of the Panhandle and Haight regions of San Francisco during the 50s. *China Boy* is well worth reading regardless.

O is for Outlaw by Sue Grafton

Reviewed by Marcia Granville

This fifteenth book in the alphabetical series that began with *A is for Alibi* finally gives the reader a little of Kinsey Milhone's history. The story opens with a phone call from a storage space scavenger. He has bought at auction some items that remind her of her nine month first marriage - the marriage she walked out on when her husband was accused of beating someone to death. Suddenly, the private investigator is delving into the past, trying to find out what really happened. Had she misjudged Mickey? Why has he been shot with a gun which was registered to her?

If you like mysteries, if you like female detectives, if you like Sue Grafton's style, you will certainly enjoy *O is for Outlaw*.

Beloved Island by Jonas Klein

Reviewed by Mary Davies

More about Eleanor & Franklin. This one's about Campobello in New Brunswick and its' influence on their lives. Jonas Klein will be familiar to you as a PBS documentary host. He lives in Georgetown, Me. and his familiarity with the territory makes the book come alive. There's a lot of Maine in this book and a nostalgic look at how it was. I've read a lot about Eleanor Roosevelt but I learned some new things. This book is well written, well indexed and offers a bibliography for those that want to read more on the subject. You can never know it all. Dear Reader, notice I name Eleanor first.



The Inextinguishable Symphony By Martin Goldsmith

Reviewed by Mary Davies

Another well detailed family history of Jews in Germany as Hitler came into power. These books serve as a lesson to a new generation, so that we never forget what one man is capable of doing to another. The book is well written, giving a good history of the survival of Jewish musicians as the Nazi party came into power. I found it hard going because of the minutiae of family biography. Charlie Rose has interviewed this author on C-Span and he recognized the book as an important and instructive history of Germany and the Holocaust. The men in my family served in WW2 & the memories it brought back were my fears as I entered adolescence. I was a scared teen-ager when I first read about the horrors of that time. I'm just mean enough to think our kids had better read about it too.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT THE SKOWHEGAN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY (1999-2001)

The following are excerpts from a series of articles by Marcia Granville which originally appeared in the *Somerset Gazette*.

Library Becoming Hub of Activity [October 1999]

Any time you step into Skowhegan's Free Public Library, you will find People reading, taking out books or sitting at the computers searching the Internet, sending e-mail or doing homework. Upstairs in the Children's Library, there is the Wednesday morning story and craft hour as well as computers with learning programs and games for the very young.

Aside from the traditional uses, the library is becoming a center for discussion groups. Starting October 4, a book discussion group will meet on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.. At the first meeting, everyone talked about the books they had read during the summer. It was decided not to read particular books for each meeting but to have a monthly theme. In this way, everyone reads something to his or her own taste and needn't purchase books they don't want. For November, the theme is the Civil War. Participants in the discussion group may read anything they wish from straight historical accounts to biographies of Civil War

officers to poetry, to romantic fiction based in the Civil War period, Anyone wishing to join the group is welcome.

.....
Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library meet on alternate months from September through May with the Executive Board holding its meetings during the other months. On September 8th, the Friends were treated to readings of her children's books by Lynne Plourde, *Pigs in the Mud*, *Wild Child and Moose of Course*. All of the children in the audience, youngsters as well as their parents, were invited to participate in acting out parts of the stories. Everyone enjoyed themselves immensely. Ms. Plourde has a knack for bringing out the child in all of us.

.....
Do wish you knew how to get on the Internet with your computer? The Friends of the Skowhegan Public Library and the Kennebec Valley Computer Society are just finishing the second series of free classes. The classes include: Computer Basics, the Windows 95/98 Operating System, the Internet and Resources Available Online. Classes meet on

continued on next page

Who The Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library Are

The Friends are a non-profit organization open to anyone who wishes to support our Library. We work in cooperation with the Library Staff and the Bloomfield Trustees to raise money for Library projects (such as the ongoing building renovation); to raise awareness of the Library and its services through programs held at the Library and other forms of publicity; to aid in the work of the Library through volunteering labor and services; and to provide feedback and suggestions to the Library on the needs and interests of the user-community.

Some of the specific projects the Friends have been involved with are last year's effort to replace the Dr. Seuss books in the Children's Room, and the current project to add more children's nonfiction titles; the children's story hour and summer programs; the adding of computers and Internet access, and the offering of a repeating series of computer and Internet classes; and fund raising for the Building Renovation and other purposes.

The Friends publish a monthly newsletter, the *Library Lookout*, and maintain a web site at <http://mainetoday.koz.com/maine/friends>. We are also a part of the Friends of Maine Libraries.

Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p. m. To sign up for the next series call Jim Foster at 474-25 89 or send e-mail to j foster@somtel. com.

Upstairs in the Children's Library, a campaign is under way to up-grade the Dr. Seuss collection. A tree stands in the coat room bearing tags showing a title each of the 48 books written by Dr. Seuss. A library patron or friend chooses a title and purchases the book either through the library or from Mr. Paperback (at a 20% discount). Lists are being kept to avoid duplication of effort. Jim foster has designed a bookplate for the donor's name and any dedications chosen by the donor.

Representatives from the Friends of the Library, the Bloomfield Trustees and architect Sylvanus Doughty will meet soon to discuss how the building may better meet the needs of the community. Ideas to be incorporated are handicap accessibility (an elevator?) and the use of the large (empty) basement rooms as well as general modernization of the facility while maintaining the unique atmosphere. The combined group hopes to present a drawing of planned renovations in the near future.

With so many discussion groups and educational activities going on, it can be truly said that the Skowhegan Free Public Library is an asset to the

Benefit Play a Huge Success [November 1999]

On the evening of Friday, October 22, the play "Murder at Tranquillity Falls" was presented to a large audience. The function room of the Centenary United Methodist Church was filled to see ten of Skowhegan's best known people act in the mystery comedy. Play goers were repaid with two hours of laughter and fun. There were door prizes during the intermission as well as generous servings of home made pie. The grand prize was awarded to the person who guessed "who done it".

The cast did a superb job. Sally and Buster Bickerson were hilariously acted by Veronica Wright and Butch Asselin. Mark Tanner portrayed the womanizing FBI Agent, Sherlock Jones, with a comedic flair. Lynda Quinn made a formidable Dolly Merriweather, and Herb Paradis brought many laughs in his character as the hard-of- hearing Sam Young. Janet and Mickey Powers were very convincing and funny as the talkative genealogist and the over-cautious lawyer.

Robin Lishemess did a great job as the self-important Dr. Ichabod Paine. Judith Bascom was wonderful as the herbalist, Tansy Greene. Mary Stuart added to the fun by adding body language to the part of Stella Macintosh, secretary to the mayor. Without saying a word, she appeared a "dumb blonde" smitten with the charms of Lawyer Larry Wright.

The authors of the play, Corrilla Hastings and Marcia Granville were gratified by the great acting of the cast and the laughter of the audience. Their play was a smash hit. When the proceeds were counted, it was found that they had \$1723. 00 to add to the Skowhegan Public Library Renovation Fund. This more than doubled the original goal of the fund-raiser.

"Murder at Tranquillity Falls" was taped by CATV 16 and will appear on the Madison Channel. CATV 16 will make copies of the tape available to the public at the price of \$10.00. \$5.00 of each sale will be added to the Renovation Fund.

The success of the evenings efforts was due to the generosity of a whole community pulling together. The Centenary United Methodist Church donated the use of their function room. The actors gave their time and talent to the play. Linda Powell organized the kitchen and dessert detail. Many, many ladies baked pies or cheesecakes for dessert during the intermission.

Skowhegan Town Office and the Chamber of Commerce advertised the play on their signs. The Town Office also printed scripts and programs. Paper Klip donated paper for the posters and tickets as well as printing them. There were ticket sellers, ticket takers and ushers as well as children to draw the door prizes. Maxine Russakoff generously agreed to be Hostess for the evening.

Corrilla Hastings found the idea for the fund-raiser in a publication from the Maine State Library. She and Marcia Granville spent most of the summer writing and rewriting the script with critique and input from Lee Granville and Maxine Russakoff. However, they kept the third act a deep dark secret. Not even the actors knew "who done it." They were handed their scripts when they were all on stage ready for the final act. ...

[An equally successful sequel was presented a year later in 2000.]

Ivy Removed from Library Walls [January 2000]

Nearly two years ago, concerned citizens met to learn how the Skowhegan Free Public Library's services could be expanded and up-dated. Anne Davis, Gardiner's Library Director, was the guest speaker that evening, explaining the steps Gardiner had taken in a similar situation. Her talk included the fact that the buildings in Gardiner and in Skowhegan were similar in size and design, both built in the late 1800s. Gardiner was implementing new programs and utilizing modern technology with the goal of keeping the warm ambiance of the local library.

From the meeting on the 27th of February in 1998, came the formation of the Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library. This is a chapter of Friends of Maine Libraries, a statewide organization. The first step they took was to conduct a public survey of the wants and needs of the library users. When the results came in and were tabulated, it was found that handicap accessibility was high on the list, followed by Internet accessibility and expanded Children's Library hours and programs.

Two of these stated goals have been accomplished. The generosity of a company up-grading their own resources has resulted in the gift of several computers. They were installed and connected to the Internet through volunteer labor from several townspeople. Jeff Hewett and Jim Foster are generous with their help in keeping them running. In order to help people understand the workings of the Internet, a series of free lessons, under the sponsorship of the Kennebec Valley Computer Society, has been repeated several times. ...

Children's library hours were expanded last year. Now the programs have been doubled. Instead of just one story and craft hour each week of the school year, there are two. Preschool children may come in on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. or on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. when they may be accompanied by their older brothers and sisters. There are also special events at holiday time. ...

The problem of handicap accessibility is more complex than the other two, requiring the services of a qualified architect. Not only must users be able to get up the steps into the library, but the children and their parents must be able to get to the second

story. Currently, use of the mezzanine is severely restricted because of the narrow, winding stairs. An elevator may be the only way to address all these problems.

.....
Architect Sylvanus Doughty, whose specialty is older buildings, was asked to inspect the local Library. He was delighted to find that our historic building had not been "remuddled" with modern items out of keeping with the nature of the building. Mr. Doughty is noted for the way he incorporates up-to-code features in old structures without destroying their beauty and he is currently in the process of working out a plan for the Skowhegan Library.

Although the structure of the building is basically sound, there are some problems. The windows upstairs in the Children's Library do not keep out the cold air very well. The casings and frames are showing signs of rot. Also, natural daylight was restricted, since many of them were overgrown with ivy. After consultation with the architect, members of the Library Board of Trustees and others, it was decided to remove the ivy.

While ivy covered halls may be a romantic ideal, they sometimes aren't very practical. Boston ivy, which until recently covered the facade of Skowhegan's Free Public Library, has a tendency to destroy buildings. The vine's suckers actually exude a liquid which etches a toe-hold in the mortar between bricks. While climbing up the walls, Boston ivy eats away at the very walls upon which it is suspended. This was certainly true in Skowhegan. Many of the bricks just under the roof line are so loose they can be removed by hand. This may also explain why the windows are rotting. Without the mortar, rain can work its way into the building.

When the removal of the ivy was reported to Mr. Doughty, he asked, "What are you going to do about the lilacs?" These hardy shrubs had been growing in front of the library for several decades. Unpruned, they had reached a tremendous height, obscuring the beautiful stained glass windows, the bottoms of which are six feet from the ground. Once again, a number of people were consulted, including Librarian Helen Shaw.

Then a volunteer crew was assembled; Charles Bolstridge, Bill Laney and James Hastings and, from the Library Board of Trustees, Rick Anzelc. They met at the library one Tuesday morning and pruned

the lilacs back. Charles Bolstridge manned the saw while Jim pointed out the growth which needed to be removed. Rick Anzenc and others raked debris away from the building until it was time to pile the branches into Bill's truck to be hauled away.

Through the joint effort a great deal was accomplished. Several groups were involved: the Friends of the Library, the Board of Trustees and the general public.

.....
All the old, woody stems were removed leaving only the younger shoots or canes behind. These were trimmed to a height of approximately six feet for optimum results. Being done late in the year means that the buds already formed were cut away. It may even be that there will be a lapse of two or three years before we see many lilac blossoms in front of the library. But the shrubs will blossom again, and properly maintained, will put on a beautiful show every year thereafter.

Now that the Ivy has been removed and the basic building may be seen, it is possible to make an accurate assessment of its structural needs. The architect and his crew are in the process of measuring and figuring the best way to meet today's standards in regards to accessibility and safety. As soon as the plans for the physical plant are ready, a joint effort will be needed to complete one project at a time until the job is accomplished. Not only the Friends of the Library and the Board of Trustees will be involved. The scope of the work will include the citizens of the greater Skowhegan area as well. Grants will be written and fund-raising events will be under way soon.

In the meantime, progress has already been made in other areas. As mentioned before, the children's programs have been expanded and computers installed. A generous public has responded to the Dr. Seuss campaign resulting in a new collection for the Children's Library. Other additions to the resources available include a brand spanking new Encyclopedia Britannica and a collection books on tape.

Less than two years ago, concerned citizens met to see what they could do about their aging facility. Much has been accomplished in a short time and much more is planned. The future of the Skowhegan Free Public Library is looking good.

Library Window Project Progresses [January 2001]

The first stage of the Skowhegan Free Public Library Window Project is nearing completion. All of the ground floor windows plus the three worst of those on the second story are being restored to their original condition. In close consultation with architect, Sylvanus Doughty, Steve Dionne of Dionne and Sons is working to make the windows look and work the same way they did when they were installed in 1889.

The original sash counterweight systems have been mended. The old, broken and loose putty has been scraped away and replaced. Any defects in the wood of the windows and the casements have been repaired. Each window frame is being refinished with black paint on the outside, natural wood on the inside. Even the wall above the three second-story windows has been repainted. As the windows are being replaced, state of the art weather stripping is being installed.

The magnificent stained glass windows in the reading room and over the front door are also scheduled for repair. Close inspection shows that the design of the large window in the reading room is warping out of place. One small piece is missing altogether. Fred Tenenbaum of Canaan has been hired for the intricate and painstaking job of restoration. He has started with the smaller stained glass portions of the other reading room windows.

These windows have an interesting background. They are called Belcher glass and were made using a unique process. Unlike most stained glass, there are no channels to hold the lead in place. Instead, several toxic materials were used in addition to the lead, including mercury and arsenic. (The poisonous nature of the process may be the reason why the Belcher Company didn't remain in business very long.)

It will take several months to complete the repairs on the larger window. It will be laid on a flat surface so that gravity may help to even out the distortions. In the meantime, all these windows have been evaluated and fully insured for the length of the job.

Nearly all the ground floor windows, with the

continued on page 8

LATEST NEWS

Continued from page 1

Lawn Sale

The Library Lawn Sale seems to have become an annual event. This year, as in the past, the sale will be held at the Hastings' house on the West Ridge Road. May 19 is the date, but items for the sale are being accepted any time. Please call 474 3949 for more information.

Garden Tour

Marcia Granville and her committee are hard at work on the plans for a Skowhegan Area Garden Tour to be held on July 21. Nine area gardens will be on the list for participants to visit, with a lunch at the Methodist Church and a Concert in the Park as added attractions. Kathy Evans has also volunteered to be in charge of an Art Show on that day. Marcia would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer some time for this occasion; she'll need help with a variety of jobs from tickets sales to lunch preparation and serving.

Stickers for Windows

Have you bought your window sticker? They're just one dollar and may be purchased from any one of a number of town merchants. They'll also be on sale at the Getting To Know You Fair. The money will go towards window restoration at the Library.

SPARK meeting ("Stimulating Programs & Resources for Kids")

Sponsored by the Central Maine Library District, SPARK meetings are held five times a year in different central Maine libraries to discuss topics of interest to children's librarians. On January 11, 2001 the meeting was held in the Topsham Public Library, and the subject for the event was "Summer Reading Programs". Corrilla Hastings attended and returned with many helpful ideas and suggestions which she has shared with Lois Moody and the members of the FOL Children's Program committee. Look for announcements in this newsletter when plans have been finalized for this summer's Reading Program and Activities.

This newsletter is
Sponsored and Supported by



WINTER LIBRARY HOURS

	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
ADULT	1-8:30	10-6	10-6	1-8:30	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, RR1, Box 2760, Skowhegan, Me 04976. Welcome.

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

Windows, continued from page 6

exception of the stained glass, have been repaired and replaced. The three second-story windows are back in place... Unfortunately, when this phase of the job is finished, the money will be all gone. There are still many windows in the Children's Library, as well as all those in the tower and in the basement, which need to be restored.

A New Century Grant for \$20,000 was awarded to the library and was matched by the Trustees for a total of \$40,000. A further amount was allocated for the repair of the stained glass. To finish the windows, about another \$40,000 will be needed...

For this reason, the Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library have started a new fund-raising scheme. Small pictures of a library window are being sold in downtown stores for the price of one dollar each. Each one states, "I helped fund the library window project." Each merchant carrying them will display brightly colored posters explaining the fund-raiser. The pictures are also available at the library. ...



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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February	All Month: "Touring Maine": An Exhibit of watercolors by Alice Haiss in the Lobby
February 9	Valentine-Making Party 3:00-4:00 PM at the Library.
February 24	Friends will have a table at the "Getting To Know You Fair" All day at the High School.
March 14	Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library Regular Meeting 7:00 PM at the Library. (Program Joe Missbach on Domestic Violence)
April 27	Bag Lunch fundraiser. Details will appear in the Lookout as we get nearer the date.
May 9	Friends of the Skowhegan Free Public Library Annual Meeting. 7:00 PM at the Library. (Election of Officers. Program to be announced)
May 19	Lawn Sale. All day at the Hastings'

The Library Lookout

Friends of the Skowhegan
Free Public Library
c/o Skowhegan Free Public Library
Elm Street
Skowhegan, ME 04978