



FORBES library

NORTHAMPTON'S PUBLIC LIBRARY

Summer 2014

FRIENDS OF FORBES NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 1

Elevator Fundraising Goal Surpassed *Construction to Begin This Fall*



Judy and Mike Ryan (center) were honored for their fundraising efforts by the Library Trustees (from left) Joseph Twarog, Bonnie Burnham, Peter Rowe, Marjorie Hess, Russell Carrier, and Janet Moulding.

In just a little more than a year, the Forbes for All Handicap Elevator fundraising campaign has blown past its goal. The new hydraulic elevator will cost an estimated \$300,000, and the library has raised \$327,000.

“We are very grateful for everyone’s support to make this elevator happen,” said Library Director Janet Moulding. “Our community responded generously to this

important challenge, and we can’t wait for the elevator to be installed.”

Architect Thomas Douglas completed the construction documents, and the project was put out for bids from contractors in early May, with a deadline of June 11. The elevator, which will fit the architectural style of the building, is expected to be completed this year. The hydraulic elevator will provide a comfortable and reliable ride

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Friends Annual Meeting Lecture Connects the Dots Between Local, National History

The intersection of regional and national history was front and center at the annual meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library at the Coolidge Museum on April 2. After giving an update on the Friends’ accomplishments over the past year, board President Martha McCormick introduced

Elise Bernier-Feeley, a local and family history librarian at Forbes. Her fascinating lecture was titled “Caleb Strong and the Ugly Duckling.”

Strong was a native son of Northampton, who, after practicing law in Hampshire

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Gardens of Earthly Delight

One of the great pleasures for gardeners throughout the Valley is the annual Northampton Garden Tour, which benefits the Friends of Forbes Library. Plant lovers can explore seven varied gardens on Saturday, June 14, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The tour, which marks its 21st year this season, offers a mix of flora, from an expansive country hideaway to a cluster of small urban sanctuaries.

To protect the owners’ privacy, the exact addresses of the gardens aren’t publicized. When people buy their tickets, however, they will receive a map. The tour is self-guided, so that people can enjoy the gardens at their own pace and in any order. Gardeners and volunteer guides will be on hand to answer questions.



Photo by Betsy Feick

In choosing the tour’s sites, the garden committee has several criteria for selection, including diversity in the types of gardens and their settings, educational potential, an original vision, and at least one garden that grows fruit and vegetables.

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LIBRARY BRIEFS

LIBRARY RECEIVES NEARLY \$4,000 IN FSB AWARDS

Forbes Library received \$3,859 at the Florence Savings Bank People's Choice Awards ceremony on March 5. It was largest sum the library has yet received in the Peoples Choice Awards, which allows FSB customers to vote for their favorite nonprofit organization. The bank then makes donations to the highest-ranking nonprofits. Forbes Library came in seventh place in a field of 400 organizations.

The bank also gave Forbes Library a special award of \$2,500 in memory of former Forbes treasurer and FSB president Edward Morin. At a subsequent meeting, the Forbes trustees used the money to establish the Edward Morin Fund, which will be used to finance the remodeling of the circulation desk. They also contributed \$1,000 to the fund.

Wowbrary

The newest stuff at your library

THE WOW IS NOW Forbes Library's new service Wowbrary sends you free weekly emails featuring its latest acquisitions. Check out all the wonderful new books, DVDs, and CDs as soon as they arrive. To get your weekly notice, visit wowbrary.org/signup.aspx.



TEEN SUMMER READING PROGRAM Forbes will host an adult and teen summer reading program from June 23 to Aug. 29. We know you'll be reading this summer so why not get involved and win a prize or two? Just pick up a form at the Reference Desk, read or listen to any three books, and briefly recommend one title. No registration is required. Call the Reference Desk at (413) 587-1012 or email reference@forbeslibrary.org for more information.

MONDAY NIGHT TECH CLASSES The Reference Department recently launched the Monday Night Technology class series. Every Monday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. a tech class will convene in the Community Room. Topics are wide-ranging, including the basics of Microsoft Word and Twitter and how to find good recipes online.



Iconic baby head sculpture outside MFA, Boston

REDUCED ADMISSION TO MFA, BOSTON Thanks to a generous gift from the Friends of Forbes Library, the library now offers passes to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Passes provide \$10 admission for up to two adults; children under 18 are admitted for \$10 during the week and are free on weekends. Passes may be picked up at the front desk during regular library hours and are valid during the year printed on the ticket and need not be returned to the library. Patrons may have up to two passes a month.

The MFA is one of the most comprehensive art museums in the world; its collection encompasses nearly 450,000 works of art. From Renaissance and Baroque masters to Impressionist marvels, African masks and Native American pottery to contemporary crafts, the collections are extraordinary in breadth and depth. Call (617) 267-9300 for information on current exhibits or visit the museum's website at www.mfa.org.

Forbes Library patrons may also use a dozen other museum passes that offer free or reduced admission to area museums.

POETRY WITH SPINE In celebration of April as National Poetry Month, the library sponsored its second Book Spine Poetry Contest, challenging poets to compose works using the titles on the spines of books. Poets were asked to use books from the Forbes collection, photograph them, and upload their photographs to Facebook.

The library received 57 adult entries and 11 from teenagers. "We were so pleased with the number and quality of the entries—the judges had a very difficult time deciding on the winners," said Molly Moss, head of the Reference Department.

Ellen LaFleche, a published poet and editor, won the adult category for "Why I Wake Early," and home-schooled River Pasquale won the teen category for "That Summer." Both will receive a Northampton Chamber of Commerce gift card. Visit the library's Facebook page for more book-spine poems.

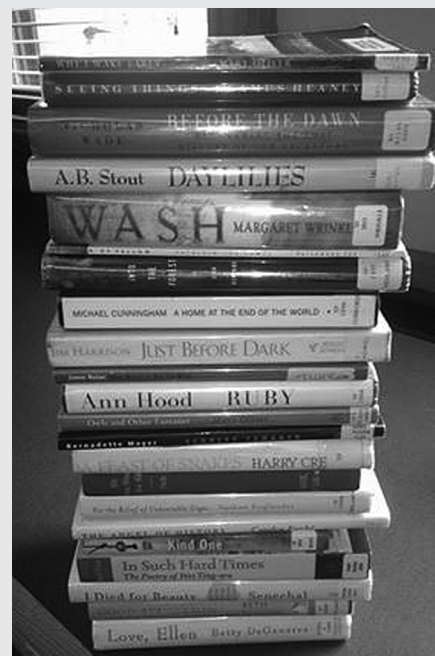
Why I Wake Early

*Seeing things before the dawn:
Day lilies wash a kind of yellow
into the forest.
A home at the end of the world.*

*Just before dark,
what moves is not the wind.
Ruby owls and other fantasies,
scarlet tanager,
a feast of snakes.*

*We who would not kill
for the relief
of unbearable urges.
The angel of history,
kind one,
in such hard times I died for beauty.*

Ellen LaFleche



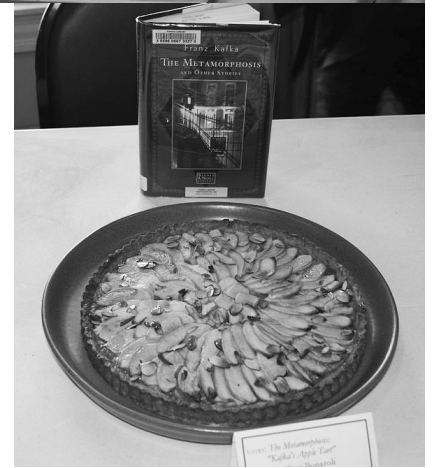
Oh, Those Incredible, Edible Books!

Books can fire the imagination and fuel the appetite, and they did both at the annual Edible Book event at the Florence Civic Center on April 6. The annual fundraiser, which features food inspired by books, was dished up by the Friends of Forbes Library.

Forbes Library Trustee Bonnie Burnham and retired professor of library science Dee Michel once again produced the moveable feast, which featured 26 delectable entries from book interpreters of all ages. With ingredients ranging from Peeps to horseradish and dishes drawn from all genres, the “books” provided food for thought.



Photos, clockwise from top right: Literary gourmets regard *The Enormous Crocodile*; “The Metamorphosis: Kafka’s Apple Tart,” by Toni Bonazoli, won the award for Most Appetizing; judges Kelsey Flynn, Steve Herrell, and Gavin Grant consider the menu.



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County, rose rapidly to prominence in both Massachusetts and national politics. He helped draft both the Massachusetts and Federal constitutions and served as governor and a U.S. senator.

Strong, who died in 1819, was an exemplary man. After vividly bringing him to life, Bernier-Feeley leaped nimbly from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, which is when her story took an unexpected turn. During World War II, a cargo transport ship, the S.S. Caleb Strong, was named after him. Such ships were called Liberty Ships, but because of their size and ungainliness, they were also nicknamed “Ugly Ducklings.”

Decades later, in 1986, a workman in Raleigh, N.C., found a regulation U.S. Navy mailbag that contained 235 letters

home from servicemen who had served on the ship. They had never been postmarked. A modern-day hero, a post office employee named Meg Harris, took it upon herself to track down the intended recipients of the letters—“wives, sweethearts, mothers, and fathers,” as Bernier-Feeley put it. Harris found all but eight of those for whom the letters were intended.

“What a story,” Bernier-Feeley said, “of courage, faith, loyalty, persistence, and determination this is—a story worthy of Northampton’s own.” After Bernier-Feeley’s inspiring lecture, the Friends along with the others in attendance enjoyed refreshments.

McCormick, Friends board president, looked back on the past year with considerable satisfaction. “We had a successful year, raising funds through our wine tasting, gar-

den tour, raffle baskets, and Edible Book event,” she said. “I’m looking forward to the always-superb garden tour and this year’s wine tasting in September.

“I’m most grateful for the dedicated service of the board, for the wonderful library administrators and staff, the volunteers and the trustees who all keep the library humming with energy,” she concluded.



Elise Bernier-Feeley

HOSMER GALLERY

MAY 2014

Northampton High School Student Show



by Olivia DeLisle

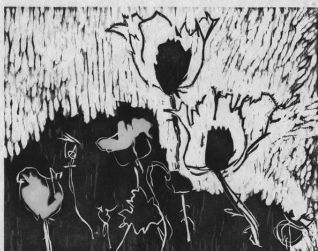
JUNE 2014

Wilbraham Art League: 3 Objects

JULY 2014

Diane Harr
gouache paintings, Italy

Martha Ebner
drawings, monotypes, watercolors



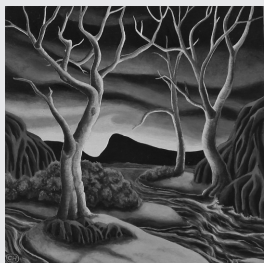
Monbegan Poppies, by Martha Ebner

Lisa Henry
charcoal & graphite drawings

AUGUST 2014

Walter Cudnohufsky
landscape watercolors

Caren Hyde
acrylic landscape paintings



Floating Islands, by Caren Hyde



Novel Affairs, Passionate Readers

Now celebrating its twelfth year, the Second Monday Book Club at Forbes is a forum for discussing great books, new and classic. Each member takes turns leading the lively discussions, but longtime participant Caroline Batson spoke with us about what makes the group so compelling.

What makes your book group unique?

I asked the group and five main answers emerged: 1) the quality and variety of the books, 2) the thoughtful quality of the discussions, 3) the variety of and respect for each other's opinions, 4) the democratic way the books are chosen, and 5) the way we share the leadership.

How do you select which books to discuss?

Everyone in the group may suggest titles. A subcommittee is formed, with the suggestions split among the members, who research the books, then bring that info back to the subcommittee to discuss. There usually are two to three dozen titles to start, with 12 to 14 books finally chosen. The main criterion is whether a book can sustain a two-hour discussion, so the subcommittee pays attention to the storyline, quality of writing, and whether a book has won any major prizes.

What books have you enjoyed most?

Impossible to say as a group. While we may agree that a book is a good choice for discussion, we're not always in agreement about whether we, as individuals, enjoyed reading it. Frequently, the group is split between liking a book and hating it, and variations in between. But one of the best parts of the discussions—and a quality we work hard to maintain—is respect for each other's opinions, even when we passionately disagree. It's especially fun when you come to that month's discussion not liking the book, wondering why on earth it was chosen, and then get turned around by hearing what others valued in it.

We've had great discussions about Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible*, by Russell Banks's *Continental Drift*, Richard Russo's *Bridge of Sighs*, Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*, and many, many others. We've read some authors more than once (Jane Austen, John Banville, Ian McEwan, Michael Cunningham, Cynthia Ozick, Colm Toibin, to name a few). And we enjoy reading "new" authors, that is, new to the group, such as the ones coming up this year: Betty Smith, Paul Harding, Eleanor Morse, Adam Johnson, and Walter Kirn.

see *NOVEL AFFAIRS*, page 6

A Support System While Looking for Work

Whether you're looking for a job or a new career, why not explore your options at the library's Job Seeker's Support Group? It's facilitated by Jane Sommer, a deeply experienced career counselor. The following letter was written by Richard Holmes, a former group participant who recently found work:

After several years as a term employee with the National Park Service, working as an archaeologist at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, my job vanished with government budget cuts in 2011. I returned to the Valley, where I have deep ties, but I couldn't find work here—or anywhere else that I looked. The discouragement that comes from an unsuccessful job search while burning through financial resources can be physically tiring and wearing on the spirit.

Fortunately, there are places to get support, and I found one at the Forbes Library in the Job Seeker's Support Group. It wasn't only practical assistance that was offered, although that was available. Meeting people with a wide range of abilities and different job histories but who were also out of work—sometimes

for a long time—demonstrated that the current high unemployment rate is not simply the result of individual situations but of widespread problems in the economy. It also created a space for exchanging useful information as well as expressing the positive and negative feelings that are part of being involuntarily unemployed. Although the group is not a therapy session, it was healing to many participants who found it a highlight of their week, offering them support in tough times.

Jane Sommer is, in my view, the center of the group and an extraordinary resource. She facilitates the meetings without dominating them, making people with different backgrounds feel comfortable enough to tell their stories, ask questions, and contribute to discussions. She never insists that anyone do one thing or another, and she lets participants share what really matters to them. As most of the participants had been in the work force for quite a while before becoming unemployed, it's beneficial that Jane respects their experiences and doesn't limit the group to résumé and interview advice (although she ably provides such advice, as requested). Her positive attitude cheers many people and helps turn strangers into friends.

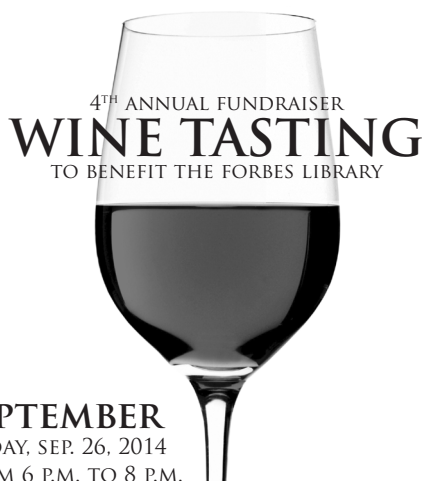


Jane Sommer

I recently accepted a new professional position, and I'm awaiting the completion of paperwork for the job. Looking back on an extended episode that I didn't anticipate in my life, being out of work seems to have been a psychological and spiritual journey as much as it was a financial one.

It involved making the right steps to get a job. The group was a weekly solace and the best thing that I did during that time.

The Job Seeker's Support Group meets Tuesdays in the Community Room from 1:30 to 3 p.m.



TICKETS

\$25 PER PERSON
PURCHASE TICKETS AT:
FORBES LIBRARY
WWW.FORBESLIBRARY.ORG



Florence Savings Bank Customers' Choice COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Customers' Choice Community Grants Program is an annual program that allows Florence Savings Bank customers to vote for their favorite local non-profit to receive a share of \$75,000.

Friends of Forbes Library, Inc.

name of local non-profit

Northampton, MA

city/state

your name

e-mail

Your Vote Counts!

You must be an FSB customer to vote.

Mail or drop off at any of our offices or vote online at www.florencesavings.com/vote.

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from the ground level up to the library's first floor.

In appreciation of their contribution, the Forbes Library Trustees gave a reception in April to honor Mike and Judy Ryan, who led the fundraising committee. The Ryans, both Northampton natives and longtime library patrons, received the 27th Trustees Award for their service. Mike Ryan is an attorney and former judge, and Judy Ryan is a retired schoolteacher.

Built in 1893, with no floor at the ground level, the Forbes Library building could only be entered by climbing up or down flights of stairs. In 1986, a handicap lift was installed in the main entrance. Often out of service and difficult to use, that lift was replaced in 2005. The replacement lift proved unreliable and expensive.

"It was out of service more than half of the year in 2012 and cost nearly \$10,000 in repairs," Moulding said. "The old lift, when it is working, is shaky and creaky, but when it is out of service, which is of-

ten, people who need it are denied their right to use their public library. That is unacceptable!"

The new elevator will be installed in the library's front entrance in place of the lift. Douglas's architectural design creates an elevator that will be much more reliable, easy to operate, and inexpensive to repair.

Inevitably, there will be some disruption of the library's front entranceway at times during construction, but the library will remain open while the front entrance is blocked.

The Children's Room entrance on the west side of the building will remain open throughout the process. For a few weeks during construction, the library will not be handicap accessible. Patrons who cannot enter the building are encouraged to make arrangements for someone to pick up materials for them or use interlibrary loan to request books and videos to be held for them at a neighboring library.

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Tickets for the tour are \$15 in advance and are available at Forbes Library, Bay State Perennials, Cooper's Corner, Hadley Garden Center, and State Street Fruit Store. On the day of the tour, tickets are \$20, sold only at Forbes Library and Garden No. 1.



Photo by Betsy Feick

The tour has a raffle as well, with prizes such as organic compost, gift certificates, garden supplies, and a landscape consultation. Raffle tickets are two for \$5 or five for \$10 and are available at Forbes Library through the day before the tour and at Garden No. 2 the day of the tour.

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What books led to the best discussions?

Seven words—the ones we have most disagreed about.

Everyone is welcome. The club meets at 6:30 pm in the Watson Room each second Monday of the month, except for October, when it will gather on the first Monday because of the Columbus Day holiday.



Join your Friends to Support Forbes Library

The Friends of Forbes is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to help and enrich the Forbes Library so it may better serve the public. Through its membership and various fundraising activities the Friends of Forbes provides financial support for programs, projects, events and materials whose costs are not met from the library's annual operating budget.

- We/I wish to join as a new member of the Friends of Forbes Library
- We/I wish to renew my membership to the Friends of Forbes Library
- Senior Citizen \$15
- Individual \$20
- Family \$35
- Supporting \$50-\$149
- Sustaining \$150-\$499
- Benefactor \$500-\$1000

name (please print)

street address

city/state/zip

e-mail

- We/I wish to make an additional donation of \$ to the Friends of Forbes Endowment Fund
- Please send more information about the Friends of Forbes Endowment Fund

WIN RED SOX TICKETS

Our Red Sox Raffle Basket will be in the lobby of the library starting on June 18th. The basket will contain 2 box seats for a September game, as well as other Red Sox goodies.



\$1 each or 6 for \$5.

GO SOX!