

# Blue Hill Library Notes

Summer 2024

## TREASURES OF THE PENINSULA INSPIRES LOVE OF THE NATURAL WORLD

~ Claire Malina, Youth Services Librarian

Rebekah Raye completed *Treasures of the Peninsula* for the library two-and-a-half years ago. Spanning the front of the Larchwood Room desk, this hand-carved maple bas-relief sculpture is designed to be touched and explored by kids' curious hands. With an average of over 300 people coming into the library each day, one can just imagine how this mural is showered in adoration by folks of all ages.

Our community is filled with talent, and we are especially fortunate to have Rebekah Raye in our midst. She is an author and illustrator of children's books, an artist of many mediums, and one of the most genuine and kind individuals I've ever met. Her deep love and passion for the natural

world is contagious and this mural is one of many ways in which she shares this passion with the community.



photo: Claire Malina

*More than one child likes to measure their growth by seeing how much of Treasures of the Peninsula they can hug! This one goes from the sun to the fox.*

I never get tired of talking about the mural with children—discussing the different plants and animals depicted in maple wood, inviting them to find the hidden mermaid. (Do you know where it is?) One of my favorite aspects of the artwork is the imagination that it sparks in our young patrons. Recently, a mom was trying to pack up while her daughter was attempting to leave the children's room without her. I've found that in these moments of struggle, it can help to encourage kids to engage with the mural. In this instance, I asked the child if she could find the bear, which she pointed

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR ~ Rich Boulet

This spring, during Women's History Month, we featured Miss Adelaide Pearson's home movies on the library's big screen (in the Adelaide Pearson Room!). All day, every day, these films provided a vibrant reflection of her life as a traveler, as well as quotidian life in and around Blue Hill. We saw a working brickyard in Penobscot with Miss Pearson and Laura Paddock gathering clay and minerals for Rowantrees pottery, a pageant of 1930s school children parading down Main Street, and movies of her world travels (including what is thought to be the earliest color footage of Mahatma Gandhi). This metered approach throughout the course of the month was a good way to take in the many hours of Miss Pearson's movies that we have in our collection.

For those who do not know, the Blue Hill Public Library—the building and entity that we enjoy today—is really the result of Miss Adelaide Pearson doggedly pursuing New Deal funding in the late 1930s. There was a Ladies' Social Library that occupied a couple of rooms at Town Hall, but Miss Pearson and her co-conspirator, Librarian Annie Hinckley, had much bigger ideas.

They had a vision for a progressive public library that would concern itself with far more than books. To that end, Miss Pearson brought back artifacts from her world travels, I think in large part to educate local children about what could be found over the horizon.

To carry out her vision of cultural enrichment, Miss Pearson also underwrote free art classes for area children. Some of the film featured kids working on the very same murals that hang in the Larchwood Children's Room today.

She felt, as was quoted in the 1937-38 Blue Hill Town Report, that "Blue Hill must have the very best of everything." It was that attitude that brought, not just those art classes, but also lectures, artifacts representing the world's cultures, at one point a costume rental service, and outreach into the schools (Blue Hill had something like 13 schools at the time) under the auspices of the library.

I admire that attitude and I think we're still being pushed forward by the momentum Adelaide Pearson gave us back in the 1930s. When I am contemplating a new service, or evaluating an old one, I often ask myself, WWAPD—What Would Adelaide Pearson Do? I wonder how she would react to the directions that BHPL is headed in—early childhood support, engagement with teens, a continued emphasis on art, a place for meetings big and small, support for telecommuters, the "living-room-ization" of the library, concerts, movies, and just the sheer volume of library offerings.

I think Blue Hill offers the most fertile conditions for a public library, serving as a center of cultural activity for the village and peninsula, and I am glad Miss Pearson and her team planted such fruitful seeds. I'd hope that she would be very pleased with today's BHPL.



## REMEMBERING MARCIA SCHATZ ~ Holly Williams, Circulation Department Head, Bangor Public Library

Marcia Schatz, the Blue Hill Public Library's Director from 1994-2001, was a woman with vision and drive. Her passion for education and children's literature impacted her work at BHPL. When she led the library's expansion and renovation project from 1999-2001, Marcia's continual advocacy for the larger children's room and the first teen area, are why they exist today. Starting in 1998, she led the way for automating the library, taking BHPL from card catalogs to computers. Marcia did all of this with patience, fortitude, and humor. She not only made a difference to the Blue Hill Public Library, Marcia revolutionized it.

I will always remember Marcia for being my first mentor and ultimately my friend. She hired me to be the Assistant Director in 1998 and although I had my degree and one year of librarianship under my belt, Marcia was really the one who taught me how to be a librarian, including that much of being a librarian was working with people—library users, staff, board members. If you don't enjoy people,



*Marcia Schatz with her husband and former Blue Hill Selectman Jim Schatz in 2021.*

you won't enjoy working in libraries. Marcia was a wonderful self-esteem boost to a young professional. She always asked my thoughts on situations and issues the library faced, gave me the autonomy to try out new programs, and provided as many professional development opportunities as she could.

Marcia taught me to always find something

you love in what you do. No matter how busy Marcia was, she carved out at least an hour a day to either conduct children's story time or work at the circulation desk—the things that brought her joy. I have carried that lesson with me as I have been on my own professional journey as library director and department head.

Like many librarians, Marcia was an avid reader and listener of audiobooks. Whenever we talked, we always compared notes on what we were reading or listening to. This last year, she was only able to listen to books, but it still didn't stop her from enjoying them, recommending titles to me, and asking for suggestions. She was a lifelong learner and educator.

Marcia died earlier this month. I'm sorry if you never had the pleasure of knowing her. She was one of those rare people who was truly good, tremendously intelligent, so kind, and had the absolute best smile. I will miss Marcia's wisdom, her laugh, and her love. I will miss my dear friend and librarian extraordinaire, Marcia Schatz.

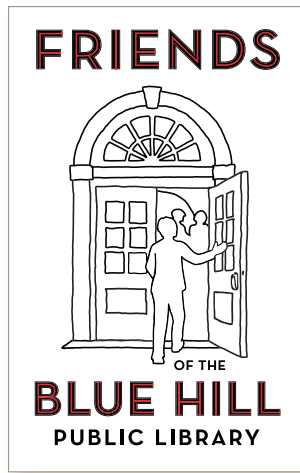
## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY AND PEOPLE LIKE YOU

~ Malcolm Purvis,  
President of the  
Friends of the Library Board

The Friends of the Blue Hill Public Library had a great year in 2023, raising about \$30,000! These funds do not go to the library's operating budget but instead fund additional, non-budgeted requests from the library director and staff. For example, much of the special programming for kids is made possible by the Friends, including the wildly popular Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers. The Friends also add to the library's collections of movies, provide additional digital content (eBooks, etc.), fund the daily New York Times subscription, and the library's Community Holiday Party. Most recently, we chipped in to help reupholster the round couch in the art gallery—after nearly 20 years it was starting to show some wear and tear—and a new water-bottle friendly drinking fountain.

Book sales account for some 90 percent of the Friends' fundraising. The Board was very creative during the pandemic with workarounds to sustain sales such as Fair Weather Books (the book sale kiosk out front) and the gradual re-opening of the Book Nook, which is now open during all library hours, with a lovely new sign pointing the way down the stairs. More recent innovations have been the opening of a free book table at the Lawrence Family Fitness Center and the election of three past board members to Emeritus status. And most importantly, we have expanded the number of Friends of the Library board members, including parents of younger patrons of the library, which bodes well for the future direction of the Friends.

Lastly, I must give a shout-out for our wonderful volunteers. Volunteers not only clean, sort, and stock the shelves of the Book Nook and Fair Weather Books kiosk but they also assist the library's own major fundraising efforts, such as the week-long Paint the Peninsula auction in July. In October, we will be holding a brief annual meeting to elect officers for the coming year. The time and place will be announced in the press and in the library's weekly email events newsletter. However, the most important objective will be to give well deserved recognition to our volunteers. We welcome all patrons of the library to join us to express appreciation to the Friends volunteers who are the backbone of our support of the Blue Hill Public Library. Looking forward to seeing you there! 🍷



## RECENT BOARD TRANSITIONS

~ Callie Curtis, Board Member  
At the Blue Hill Public Library's Annual meeting on April 24, 2024, we thanked retiring Board members for their tremendous service to the library community. **Molly Munn** (Blue Hill) completed 5 years on the Board during a time of great challenge (the pandemic) and great growth (the completion of the Adelaide Pearson Room). During her service, she enthusiastically took on many roles, always with creative energy and commitment, most recently chairing the Personnel Committee. **Greg Forrest** (Surry) served 3 terms, and in his nine years, he managed the plant sale, chaired the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and served on the Strategic Planning Committee. He took on all these roles with a positive attitude, guaranteeing their success. **Amanda Provencher** (Penobscot) helped manage the Plant Sale, and served on the Development Committee, taking an active role in making the Groundhog Day Ball a success. She brought the unique perspective of a successful businesswoman with young children to the board.

We thank Molly, Greg, and Amanda for their service to the library.

They leave an exemplary record of achievement! After bidding farewell and thanks to the three departing board members, we elected three new board members, including **Tammy Vu** (East Blue Hill), **Gale Brownlow Flax** (Sedgwick), and **Martina Herries** (Surry). They bring unique backgrounds and skills to the board.



- **Tammy Vu** has been a teacher, a school administrator, and is active in the Kollegewidgwok Yacht Club sailing school. She is an active member of the East Blue Hill community, and is also on the Town of Blue Hill's Climate Resilience Committee. She and her husband have two children.

- **Gale Brownlow Flax** grew up in Blue Hill, then moved away with her husband (a Navy pilot) and has now returned to Sedgwick. She brings a unique international perspective, having lived in Peru, Thailand, England, and Germany. She has been a medical illustrator and art teacher and exhibited her paintings in an October 2019 show at the library titled "Field and Feathers."

- **Martina Herries** was Executive Director of the Bagaduce Lending Library from 2011-2018. She has many non-profit management skills, including fundraising, marketing, communications, and facilities management. She was born in Germany and came to the US in 1957.

Each of the new board members expressed an appreciation for the role the Blue Hill Library plays in the community, and for the particular importance of libraries in their own lives. We are very glad to have them on board.



Teens got an "Anime Your Way" workshop with author and illustrator **Carlos Nieto III** thanks to funds from the Friends of the Library. They had a blast!

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## DREAMING OF SUMMER ~ Katherine Messenger, Board Member

Spring has ended with the fading of the lupines and lilacs, and summer has descended on Blue Hill. At the library, teens quickly wrap up their final assignments before break and zip around the lawn, at times crossing Parker Point Road to get a popsicle from our friends at the Blue Chill, then darting back through the library's doors for a game of chess or to talk to friends. Young children are on the lookout for caterpillars, slugs, salamanders, and snails—and are eager to show their finds to “Miss Claire,” who is always ready to recommend a book about whatever subject has just ignited their imagination, even if it's slugs. Adults of all ages are reading, working, or catching up with friends in the shade on the lawn. It's a welcome sight to see people enjoy the library's outdoor spaces at the

true start of summer, when all is bright and bursting with every shade of green. As Henry James said, the two most beautiful words in the English language have always been “summer afternoon.”

Back in February, we were dreaming of such days when we hosted a new family-friendly fundraiser, the Groundhog Day Ball. It was



*Groundhog Day revelers clown around in BHPL's photo booth.*

a runaway success, a much-needed cabin-fever reliever for those of us who spend winter here. Truly, was there a better way to chase away the doldrums—and to support the library—than by dancing to the mellifluous sounds of the Soul Benders while celebrating a rotund rodent, whom we named Stanley, after our lead sponsor, Stanley Subaru? I think not. We had a huge turnout, people dressed up—some in top hats, others in high heels, yet others as groundhogs—and it couldn't have been possible without the recent revamping of the Adelaide Pearson Room. We are grateful to have this beautiful and shape-shifting room, which in the past year has been the site of many popular and varied events, such as the Boston Typewriter Orchestra, the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, a New Year's Eve Contra Dance, and an author event with Shannon Mullen and Gov. Janet Mills. The room has become an even-more essential part of the library, as we can hold more types of events—and have more people at them.



*Soul Benders entertain at the Groundhog Day Ball in February.*

photo: Claire Malina

...Treasures of the Peninsula continued from page 1

to excitedly. When I asked if she could find the blueberries, she couldn't find them right away, so I gave her a hint that they are near the bear. Once she spotted them, she proceeded to pretend to pick the blueberries from the scene and gently give one to each of the animals, making sure that everyone got one, even the starfish. This time spent looking at the sculpture with the child allowed for the mom to get everything ready for them to leave and activated the child's imagination

in a way that is so beneficial for growing and developing children.

*Treasures of the Peninsula* sparks an awareness in kids of the natural world. Recently, a child named Rockwell was excited to look at the mural with me, and pointing at the osprey, he asked, “How come I've never seen one of these before?” I replied that he probably had seen one before, but hadn't realized it was an osprey and now he may recognize one when he's out exploring the peninsula. This question brings me great joy because it encapsulates the awareness and curiosity inspired by the artwork. I imagine Rockwell out in the world now, keeping an eye out for osprey, and perhaps other flora and fauna depicted in the artwork.

In this increasingly busy, modern world, the invitation to awaken one's awareness of the surrounding world is special and should be heeded. Thanks to Rebekah Raye and our very generous donor, Dr. Maxene Doty, who commissioned the work, visitors to the library are gifted that

opportunity to notice—the monarch butterflies visiting the milkweed, the seals basking at the edge of the tide, and the melodious songs of the birds ringing out through the forest. I hope that you will have the opportunity to visit the mural, notice something new, and head back out into the world with a heightened awareness of the world around you.



*Youth Services Librarian Claire Malina looking at the Treasures of the Peninsula with one of her young patrons.*

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