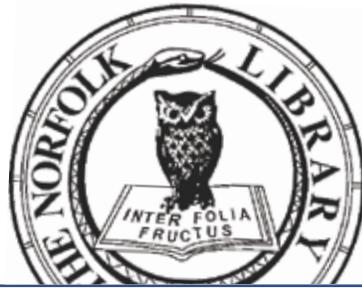


THE NORFOLK LIBRARY OWL



Vol 29 Issue 2

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORFOLK LIBRARY

July 2020

“... without distinction of race, creed or condition”

On March 6, 1909, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Norfolk Library, townsfolk recognized the Library’s founder Isabella Eldridge with the gift of a bronze bas-relief of Robert Louis Stevenson modeled by Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907), which hangs in the Library today. The gift was presented to Miss Bella with a bronze triptych executed by Tiffany & Co. of New York, containing the names of the donors on parchment. The inscription reads: “To Isabella Eldridge, founder of the Norfolk Library. After twenty years enjoyment of her gift we present this bas relief of Stevenson as a token of our gratitude.”

The list of names of those townspeople who used the Library and had contributed to the gift is remarkable, ranging from well-known summer residents to Norfolk schoolchildren. Among those listed are: Dr. Edward Quintard, personal physician to Mark Twain; Isabella Beecher Hooker, women’s rights advocate and sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe; Professor Michael I. Pupin, Serbian-born, Pulitzer Prize-winning physicist; Frank J. Goodnow, President of Johns Hopkins University; James B. Mabon, President of the New York Stock Exchange; George W. Jenkins, President of the Remington Arms Company and his wife Helen Hartley Jenkins, benefactor of Columbia University; Frederick M. Shepard, President of the Goodyear Rubber Company. Among the school children are Charles, Ellen, Flora, and John Bailey, children of African-American John Bailey.

The triptych suggests that the Library was a welcoming place to all Norfolk residents. When Isabella died in 1919, Dr. William Henry Welch wrote: “Miss Bella desired the library to be of the greatest possible



service to all ... without distinction of race, creed or condition.” But, in spite of intentions, can we be sure African Americans such as the Bailey children felt welcome in the Library? The Baileys figure largely in Norfolk’s history. Both John and his brother William were stone masons. William Bailey’s children attended Norfolk’s Center School and the Church of Christ Sunday School. They appear in many of Marie Kendall’s photographs as she documented life in Norfolk at the turn of the 20th century.

We do not have first-hand accounts of the treatment of African Americans in Norfolk at this time. In his 1900 *History of Norfolk*, Theron Crissey devoted a chapter to “Some of the Colored People,” mentioning African Americans “of worth.” Deacon James Mars (1790-1880), who had been sold at the age of 8 as a slave to a Norfolk farmer in 1798 and, after publishing his Autobiography, returned to Norfolk later in his life, was described as “the best deacon in town;” Bilhah Freedom, a cook, was so beloved by townsfolk that they placed a marble monument at her grave in Center Cemetery with the inscription “Of African and princely descent, of queenly yet deferential demeanor;” and Samuel Smith, Robbins Battell’s famer, was a “colored man of excellent character.”

Yet we must read between the lines. Although Crissey wrote that “few persons in the whole history of the town, regardless of name, race, color, or condition, have been more respected and loved than was Aunt Bilah,” he goes on to refer to her as a racial caricature: “In the south, she would have been to everyone Mammy.” James Mars’ brother, Rev. John Mars, referenced racism more directly. Crissey quotes Mary Oakley Beach, who reminisced that John had lived with her family when she was a baby: “I used to pat his face as he held me, as I have been told, and he would say, “My black skin does not make any difference to her.”

Continued on page 4

From the Director	2
Black Lives Matter	3
Exhibition	5

Summer Reading	6
Snap Shots	7

FROM | THE | DIRECTOR



Master of the horror genre Stephen King wrote, “If I have to spend time in purgatory before going to one place or the other, I guess I’ll be all right as long as there’s a lending library.” For many of us, sheltering in place has felt a bit like being stuck in purgatory, made even worse

without the resource of the Norfolk Library, shuttered for the first time in its 131-year history by the coronavirus pandemic.

The closure happened quite suddenly. On Sunday, March 8, Connecticut reported its first case of coronavirus, as we were happily greeting friends with a cautious bump on the elbow at the Library Associates art opening reception. By the following Sunday, the global fight against COVID-19 had intensified with travel bans, regional lockdowns, and cases confirmed by the thousands across the country. Information about COVID-19 and what protections to take changed almost daily, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty. At first, it was thought that hand sanitizers would offer enough protection, but when the CDC recommended social distancing along with other precautions, it was apparent that we would have to close the Library to protect the health and safety of both the staff and our patrons.

For almost three months, no physical library materials were circulated. Fortunately, we had just subscribed to two popular e-media platforms, hoopla and kanopy, offering Norfolk Library cardholders access to a broad range of e-books, audiobooks, Great Courses, and films. Zoom entered our lives. Staff met weekly online, and some of our library programs went virtual: Miss Eileen’s story time, the Norfolk knitters, discussion groups led by Kelly Kandra Hughes, and Mark Scarbrough’s popular book group. The Board of Trustees met by Zoom to discuss our policies with regard to closure.

By the end of May, Connecticut had successfully “flattened the curve,” and we cautiously began to circulate material via our curbside “Porch Pick-Up” service on June 1. But with more than 2 million confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country and over 116,000 deaths by mid-June,

it was evident that the new normal—face masks, hand hygiene, and social distancing—would be part of our lives for months to come, and that we would be unable to offer any in-house programs, receptions, and concerts for the foreseeable future.

As Connecticut libraries begin to reopen, the most important consideration is the health and safety of staff and patrons and a strict adherence to protocols listed by the State of Connecticut for reopening. While these rules provide a way for libraries to reopen in as safe a manner as possible, risks to patrons and staff cannot be fully mitigated, and patrons who choose to visit should be aware of potential risks. The State recommends that individuals over the age of 65 or with other health conditions not visit libraries, but stay home and stay safe. We will continue to offer Porch Pick-Up for those who do not wish to come in.

At the Norfolk Library, we have implemented all the rules recommended by the State in designing our road map for reopening. For those interested in reading the Guide to Reopen Libraries, it is posted on the library website.

To allow for one-way foot traffic, our front door will be entrance only, while the door at the back porch where we currently have Porch Pick-Up will be our exit, except for those patrons who need to access the ADA ramp to enter the building. Patrons will be encouraged to use the book drop to return material instead of returning it in-person at the circulation desk. Our book drop will be emptied once a day and all returned material quarantined for 72 hours and wiped with disinfectant before being re-circulated. You will also notice a hand-sanitizer upon entry and a request to wear a face mask. Staff will be wearing face masks as well. Patrons will be asked to check in with the circulation desk staff, so we can not only greet you but be sure to follow capacity limits and monitor use of our two computer stations.

Signage will direct traffic patterns through the stacks, and our new material will be set out so that patrons can browse while remaining six feet apart. For the time being, the tables in the Great Hall will not be available for work/study.

We have been encouraged not to provide shared equipment, so for now the staff will be unable to check out makerspace toys, ukuleles, kindles, ipads, and laptops. The staff will be happy to make copies for you and provide

Continued on page 4

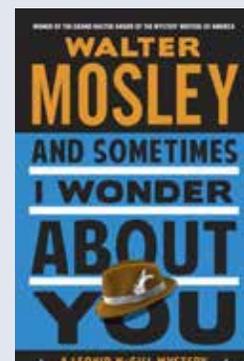
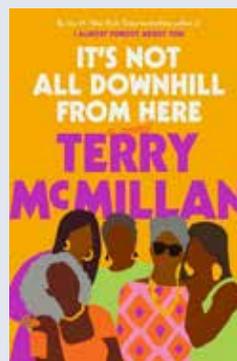
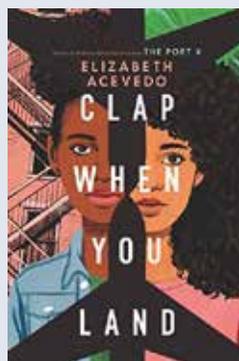
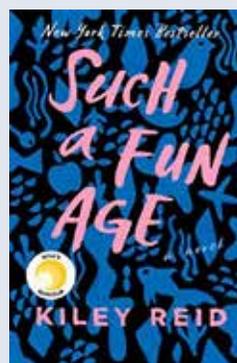
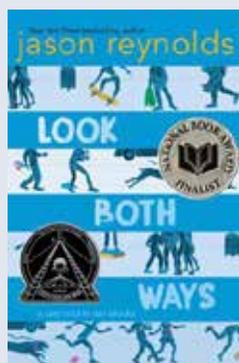
BLACK | LIVES | MATTER



Libraries are institutions that celebrate learning. We are committed to providing accessible anti-racism resources from which we can learn, opening the dialogue “How can we do better?” We learn from the voices of the Black community and people of color, who have been fighting against racism for decades, indeed centuries. These are some titles in our collection that we encourage you to read. There are more resources on our website. We will continue to order books that help foster a culture of anti-racism.

A Summer Reading Challenge to Celebrate Black Authors

Join us this summer as we celebrate Black authors with a summer reading challenge! The Norfolk Library has compiled a list of books by Black authors, and we want YOU to read them with us. These books range from contemporary fiction, mystery, romance, sci-fi, and fantasy, to young adult, middle grade, and picture books. Our goal is for patrons of all ages to read 131 different books by Black authors, one book for every year the Library has been in existence. Post about the books you're reading on Instagram and tag us @norfolklibraryct, email us at thenorfolklibrary@gmail.com, or drop us a note during porch pick-up. We will periodically post the tally in the Night Owl and on the website. Find out more and access the list on our website: www.norfolklibrary.org.



Continued from page 1

The 20th century brought increased racism as experienced by another Bailey family in Norfolk. John Edward, his wife Jeannette, and their daughter Martha moved to Norfolk in 1924 from Virginia, where John had been educated at the Hampton Institute and trained as a blacksmith. A son, Edward, and a daughter, Ann, were soon born. Although John found employment as a blacksmith, racial prejudice prevented him from financing and operating his own business, and he had to look elsewhere for work.

Martha Bailey Davis, an artist and teacher, returned to Norfolk for the last years of her life. She was affectionately known as Maba. Many of us remember Maba. Her deep alto voice rang true in the church choir, and she exhibited her artwork at the Library in March of 1983. She died in 1997. This is her story:

“My father and mother came to Norfolk in 1924. I was four years old. John Edward Bailey was a skilled blacksmith and wheelwright. He worked for a short time for the ‘Norfolk Village Smithy’ on Westside Road. Because of Bailey’s expert



Maba Bailey Davis, 1995. Painted photograph by Peter J. Ketchum with words Maba chose to describe herself.

work, he was in great demand which caused professional jealousy on the part of his employer. Soon this situation became intolerable, and my father sought financial backing to open his own shop. In 1925 this was unrealistic dreaming for a Black man in Norfolk. His efforts were blocked.

He worked on various jobs before Mr. Robbins Battell Stoeckel hired him as groom for his horses and later employed my mother, Jeannette, as cook. After working for Mr. Stoeckel for a few years, my father changed jobs and worked as butler for the noted architect Alfredo S. G. Taylor for nearly 30 years.

John retired and moved to Danville, Virginia, in 1957. Our family’s years in Norfolk were hard years but full of love, nature, beauty and learning. Learning about life, people and animals (all kinds) that inhabit the earth. I have come back to live for a while in the town that feels like home to me. For this is where I learned to know the reality of the only

thing that matters in living on planet earth—love.”

— Ann Havemeyer, Director

Continued from page 2

bottled water (our water fountain will be closed) should you need it. Our restroom will also be closed, except for emergency use.

While we are fortunate to have a lot of space in our building to allow for social distancing, there are two areas of concern. The Children’s Room can be tight quarters, so we will have to restrict use to one family at a time, and toys have been removed. The Reference Room is also small and will be open for computer station use only. There are hand sanitizers at all the computers, and staff will wipe down surfaces between use.

There will be plenty of signs throughout the building that reinforce social distancing and personal protection protocols. Although the staff will be working behind a plexiglass barrier at the circulation desk, we are all anxious

to welcome you back inside the Norfolk Library (if you are not experiencing symptoms). We hope to be open by July 1.

NORFOLK LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sally Estock, *President*

Rita Freedman, *Vice-President*

Eliza Little, *Secretary*

Steve Getz, *Treasurer*

Adam Heller
Coleen Hellerman
Ruth Melville

Michael Selleck
Barbara Spiegel

EXHIBITION

Norfolk Artists and Friends

SUMMER EXHIBIT

Norfolk Artists & Friends is a membership organization of professional artists living and working in the Norfolk area. Members embrace a wide variety of visual arts including, but not limited to, painting, sculpture, photography, jewelry, and decorative arts. Although there will not be an opening reception, we encourage you to peruse the artwork, which will be for sale to benefit the Library Associates and the free library programs they fund. The work of the following artists will be on display: Susannah Anderson, Peter Coffeen, Edward Colt, Madeline Falk, Bruce Frisch, Katherine Griswold, Pamela Harnois, Tom Hlas, Anita Holmes, Jim Jasper, Harvey Kimmelman, Laura Lasker, Karen Linden, Janet Marks, Ruthann Olsson, Jon Riedeman, Nina Ritson, Susan Rood, Turi Rostad, Rich Schatzberg, Ronald Sloan, and Hilary VanWright.



Anita Holmes, *At the Beach/Color Red Series*



Laura Lasker, *Lily Pulitzer Terrier*



Turi Rostad, *Forest Flora*



Tom Hlas, *One Fine Day*

NORFOLK LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

Jack Dillon, *President* • Jennifer Almquist, *Vice-President* • Louise Davis, *Secretary* • Paul Madore, *Treasurer*

The Associates is a group of dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents to support the Library. They organize monthly art exhibitions and raise funds for the free cultural programs offered by the Library. Sadly this summer the Associates have had to cancel their annual fundraising events: the Book Sale and Under the Tent Gala in August. However, the Library is still accepting donations of used books (by appointment only).

We'd like to extend our gratitude to Tom Hlas for his work as President of the Library Associates,

a position he has held so capably and with great enthusiasm for the past two years. Thank you, Tom!

We welcome Jack Dillon as the new President. A resident of Torrington, Jack has been involved with the Associates for many years, helping on so many fronts, including the Events Committee, products sales at the Book Sale, and bartending at the Galas and our ever-popular St. Patrick's Day Concert. Jack has also played a big role in securing for the Library's beautiful trees service from the F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company, a 110-year old family company. Welcome, Jack!

SUMMER | READING



We invite children and families to participate in our “re-imagined” summer reading program. Prizes will be given to all children who register and complete 6 of the 20 challenges. Call the Library @ 860-542-5075 or email efitzgibbons@biblio.org to register your child with your email, and we will be sure to send you a copy of the challenges and links to some very special virtual events we have planned for children and families on Magical Mondays this summer .

- We'd love to get photos of the books you are reading or the challenge you have finished. Send to efitzgibbons@biblio.org and let us know if we can put it on Instagram.
- On our back porch, there will be free books to take home and keep, as well as weekly grab-and-go activity kits. Be sure to visit the back porch each week!

Magical Mondays

All programs begin at 6:00 p.m.

We have planned a series of special events to go hand in hand with our Summer Reading Program! The links to these LIVE virtual events will be posted on the Norfolk Library website: www.norfolklibrary.org. Some of the craft programs require registration, so please call the Library @ 860-542-5075 or email efitzgibbons@biblio.org to register your child with your email. Children can pick up their fairy or hobbit house kits July 6 for the program on July 13.

June 22 - “Aesop’s Fables”

Wonderspark Puppets

June 29 - “The Fairy Tailor”

Sarah Nolen, puppeteer

July 6 - “World Tales”

Shadow Puppetry by Hobe Ford

July 13 - Fairy and Hobbit House Kits

Jessica Russell Storytime

July 20 - Make a Fairy Tale Puppet

Paper Heart Puppets

July 27 - Interactive Theater Dance

Amber Cameron, former Radio City Rockette!
Registration required.

July 31 - Friday Night Grand Finale! “Lisa the Wise”

Shadow puppetry by Sarah Nolen

SNAP | SHOTS



As part of the Weekend in Norfolk library events, puppeteer and artist Robin McCahill introduced children to her hand-felted wool marionette Gerta while performing Hans Christian Anderson's classic winter fairytale "The Snow Queen."



The Foundry Saxophone Quartet performed a mix of jazz, folk, and ragtime in February.



Mark Scarbrough offered a six-week literary series on the culture and history of Bach's Christmas Oratorio. We hope he will be back with another series in January. In the meantime, his popular book group continues remotely.



The Library Board of Trustees met virtually to discuss library policy during the closure.



When the Library closed in March, zoom meetings became part of the staff's weekly routine.

We are sad to bid farewell to Chaya Berstein, who has moved to Portland, Oregon to open a Montessori School. Chaya has been such an important part of our library staff for many years, bringing her great good cheer to patrons and keeping our house in order. She and her children will be missed. Griffin is pursuing a Ph.D. in Computer Science at Cornell; Lily is in a Masters program in Speech and Language Science at Purdue, and Zach will be heading to Curry College outside Boston in the fall. We wish them all well!

THE OWL

The Norfolk Library
9 Greenwoods Road East
Post Office Box 605
Norfolk, Connecticut 06058

www.norfolklibrary.org
ph. 860 542-5075

SUMMER HOURS

Monday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Wednesday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Friday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am	–	2:00 pm
Sunday	Closed		

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WINSTED, CT
PERMIT NO. 11



Local
Postal Customer



Our take on a popular idea that circulated through social media this spring. Read the titles from the top left!