

Art Shows at the Library

Portland Library's Mary Flood Room has been home to a series of wonderful art shows in 2023. During the first half of the year, shows included the whimsical illustrations of Pamela Hanks, watercolor paintings by award-winning artist Richard Raicik, the paintings and photography of Linda Tomaiuolo, and a variety of works by talented students from Portland Middle School.

In August, the Portland Historical Society and the library collaborated on a celebration of the art of Portland 19th century maritime painter John Wells Stancliff. The fall season brought a show highlighting the talents of Portland Library's own—art by staff members, Library Board members and FPL Executive Board members. The show was a multimedia extravaganza that included not only paintings and photography but also handicrafts, woodworking, published novels, and exquisite bridal gowns.

We look forward to many more shows in the coming year. Currently scheduled shows include:

November - *Lessons Learned: An Exhibition of Artistic Growth*. Art by the students of Bivenne Staiger. A reception was held on November 4.

December - Steven Wells, Portland Watercolor Artist. Reception: December 9 (Snow Date: December 16)

January - Jennifer Hart. *Snowpaintings*. Reception: January 6 (Snow Date: January 20)

February - Carol Ingram: *Art that is Felt*. Wall hangings/rugs. Reception: February 10 (Snow Date: February 17)

March - Youth Art Month Exhibit featuring the art of talented students from Portland Secondary Schools. Reception: Thursday, March 7 from 4-6 pm.

April - Rett Hart. Black & white photography. Reception: TBD

October - Janet Lopes (FPL Board Member). Nature photography. Reception: TBD

Area artists interested in exhibiting their artwork in the Mary Flood Room should contact Jenn Billingsley at 860-342-6770.

Please check the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for further information regarding featured artists and reception dates. All receptions are sponsored by FPL. The Friends provide home-baked goods and beverages for the receptions.



Follow us on Facebook!
@ Friends of the Portland Library,
Portland, CT

FPL Book Sales - All Year Long!

Many of you may have recently attended the Friends' **Fall Book Sale**, which took place at the library from October 20-22. It's our signature event of the year, and we are so grateful to the hundreds of members and area residents who come out to support FPL, as well as the dozens of volunteers who help make this major undertaking possible.

But you can buy quality books at bargain prices every day in the Friends' Second Hand Prose Book Sale area of the library. We have mysteries, general fiction, non-fiction, romance, young adult and children's books, and DVDs. Many items are like new and would make great gifts. Hardcover books sell for \$2.00 and trade paperbacks cost \$1.00. DVDs, mass market paperbacks, books for children and young adults, and discarded books from the library's collection all sell for only \$0.50 each. New treasures arrive each week.

FPL also holds several targeted book sales in the Book Sale area throughout the year. Next up is the **Holiday Book Store**, our month-long sale of gift quality used books including adult and children's holiday books, which begins on **Monday, December 4th**. During **June and July**, patrons can stock up on paperback books for their vacation reading at the annual **Books for the Beach** sale. At various times throughout the year, we often have a large inventory of discarded library books.

All proceeds from FPL book sales benefit programs funded by the Friends, including DVD purchases, the Museum Pass Program, Books for Babies Program, Summer Reading Programs, and the purchase of early literacy software for the library.



Supplement
to the
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Bulletin*

FPL FRIENDS OF THE PORTLAND LIBRARY

Volume 33

2024 Membership Information Enclosed

Fall 2023

FPL Funds Programs for Children, Teens and Families

In 2023, The Friends of the Portland Library budgeted \$27,000 for library programs that benefit Portland citizens of all ages. From infants to seniors, FPL seeks to enrich the lives of all Portland residents. We are especially proud, however, of the contributions that our organization makes to library programs supporting children, teens and families. Through these programs, we hope to foster in Portland's young people a love of learning, community and libraries that will last a lifetime.

FPL's "Books for Babies" program targets Portland's tiniest citizens. Through this program, every new Portland baby can receive a free kit that includes a high-quality board book, a welcome packet for the library's 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, a Baby's First Library Card, and brochures that provide families with tips on how to raise a child who loves reading and writing. See the article on page 2 for further information.

The Library's Museum Pass Program (funded entirely by the Friends) allows families to visit many local museums and attractions for free or at significantly reduced admission. For families with younger children, we offer passes to Lutz Children's Museum, Beardsley Zoo, and the New England Carousel Museum. Families who wish to explore Connecticut's rich history can choose from passes to Mystic Seaport, Connecticut River Museum and The Mark Twain House. And, since it's never too early to instill a love of art in a child, why not plan a family trip to The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Wadsworth Atheneum, New Britain Museum of American Art, or Florence Griswold Museum? See the article on page 2 for a full list of available passes.

FPL funds the entire cost of the library's Summer Reading Programs, along with a wide variety of programs for children, teens and families held throughout the year. This year's offerings have included a traveling touch tank, a bicycle stunt show, a comic mime, and programs on mindfulness, snow leopards, cooking, music and art. In addition, FPL financed the wonderful ocean scene created by talented local artist Aleksandra "Ola" Rucz on the library's windows. We also pay for the program supplies, craft materials and snacks for the library's story time programs and all programs for children and teens. And FPL funds the full cost of important software that promotes literacy in young children. All told, FPL budgets \$11,000 for these fun and educational programs.

Last year, FPL expanded its support of early literacy programs with the purchase of an AWE Learning All-in-One workstation. The station engages young children with entertaining games that focus on math, reading, science, music and art. These games assist with school readiness, improve fine motor skills, and help build computer skills in children who might not have devices at home. We hope this station will be enjoyed by countless preschoolers for many years to come.

Last, but certainly not least, FPL funds the purchase of books for holiday gift baskets given to families served by the Portland Food Bank. Each year, FPL provides hundreds of high-quality, age-appropriate books for infants, children and teens. In this small way, FPL is proud to support the efforts of Ruth Maio (Director of the Portland Food Bank) as she works tirelessly to make Portland a stronger community.

Of course, FPL continues to support many other programs for library patrons of all ages. We fund the library's impressive DVD collection and purchase many e-books and e-audiobooks at a total budgeted cost of \$9,000 for 2023. FPL finances the Library Staff Appreciation program, artist receptions, and adult programs throughout the year on such diverse topics as beekeeping and Rosie the Riveter.

All of these programs are possible only because of the unwavering and generous support of our members. Please join FPL (or renew your membership) by sending in the enclosed membership form today. With your help, Portland Library will continue to serve as a vital resource for Portland residents of all ages.

Check out FPL's website at
www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org

Museum Pass Program

Looking for family entertainment that won't cost an arm and a leg? With Portland Library's Museum Pass Program, you can visit many local museums or attractions for free or at significantly reduced admission. Here is a list of available passes:

Free Admission

Connecticut River Museum
Connecticut's Old State House
The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art +
Florence Griswold Museum
New Britain Museum of American Art
New England Carousel Museum & Museum of Fire History
Wadsworth Atheneum

Reduced Admission

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo
Lutz Children's Museum
The Mark Twain House and Museum
Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame
Mystic Seaport
New England Air Museum

+ Featured Pass! The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art is located just one hour north of Portland in Amherst, Massachusetts. The Carle is the only full-scale museum in the nation that collects, preserves, presents and celebrates picture books and picture book illustrations from around the world. The pass provides free admission for two adults and up to four children per visit.

All passes are funded by Friends of the Portland Library. Passes can be reserved at portlandlibraryct.org, by phone (860-342-6770) or by visiting Portland Library. Most passes can be printed at home from the library's website.

Join Us!

Want to help support Portland Library? Join FPL's Executive Board! We are looking for new members with fresh ideas and a bit of free time. The Board meets once a month and runs FPL's book sales, Read & Recycle Book Collections and Artist Receptions. We also decide how money raised through our Membership Drive and book sales is allocated. Contact Maureen Muir at 203-980-4087 or MLTSherman@gmail.com for more information. Help us support Portland Library!

Books for Babies

It's never too early for children to learn the joy of books! The Friends want to give every new Portland baby a free "Books for Babies" kit. Each kit contains

- o A high quality board book
- o Welcome packet for Portland Library's 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- o Baby's First Library Card – exchange it at the library for the real thing
- o *Books for Babies* brochure and bookmark with reading tips
- o *Babies Need Words Every Day* booklist
- o *Babies Love Books: A Guide for Grown-ups* brochure

To receive a free "Books for Babies" kit, please contact

- o Jennifer Renk, Supervisor of Youth Services, Portland Library;
- o Town Clerk's Office, Portland Town Hall, 33 East Main Street; or
- o Marilyn White at atwmsw@sbcglobal.net.

Under FPL Board Member Marilyn White's leadership, FPL has distributed 245 kits to Portland families over the past six years. FPL pays the full cost of Books for Babies kits, BookFlix early literacy software, and 1,000 Books program prizes. Thanks to our members for helping us help Portland's youngest readers!

Upcoming Read & Recycle Collections

In 2024, FPL will collect gently used books, DVDs, CDs, puzzles and games on the following dates:

- Saturday, January 13
- Saturday, March 23
- Saturday, June 15
- Saturday, September 14

Our "Read & Recycle" collections will be held from 10 to Noon in the Library's Mary Flood Room. All donated items must be in "sellable" condition. We cannot accept items that are dirty, moldy or in poor condition. No textbooks, business books, computer books, VHS videos, cassette tapes or magazines, please. Thank you for your support!

Donate from an IRA

FPL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization eligible for qualified charitable distributions (QCD) under IRS rules. If you are 73 years of age or older, your gift may count toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year in which the check is issued and then would be excluded from your taxable income. Go to our website, friendsofportlandlibraryct.org, for more information on how to make an IRA rollover contribution to FPL.

Summer Reading Program Goes "Swimmingly"

If you visited Portland Library this summer, you couldn't help but notice the beautiful ocean scenes on the library's windows. The scenes, painted by talented local artist Aleksandra "Ola" Rucz, introduced visitors to the theme for this year's Summer Reading Program--*Oceans of Possibilities*. Once inside, the Summer Reading Program offered a full slate of fun and adventure for all participants from toddlers to seniors.

The library held 43 different programs for kids, teens, adults, and families throughout the summer, and 1,304 people attended these programs. Of course, as always, the centerpiece of the Summer Reading Program was books, and lots of reading was going on in Portland this summer. Children and teens (362 participants) read 20 minutes or more for a total of 7,716 reading days! Prizes included books, shells to adopt, mermaid pens, assorted plush toys, games, and tickets for special end-of-summer raffles.

The adults did plenty of reading themselves. Fifty-five patrons participated in the Adult Summer Reading Program, reading a total of 130,292 pages. Twenty-seven patrons logged more than 2,000 pages while one participant read almost 15,000 pages! For the seventh straight year, our Adult Summer Reading Program participants were "reading for a cause." For every 250 pages read by an adult, FPL donated money toward funding instrument rental scholarships for two deserving Brownstone Intermediate School students for the 2023-2024 school year.

FPL is very pleased that, through the generous support of our many loyal members, we were once again able to pay the full cost of the library's Summer Reading Program. Our funding covered the cost of all events, the Brownstone instrument scholarships, the window mural, and all prizes, program supplies and refreshments. A big "Thank You" to our FPL members for making all this possible. Thank you also to Jenn Renk, Patty Ballou and Beth Kauczka of Portland Library for planning and running fun and creative programs--and to the 33 teen volunteers who assisted them!

Adult Programs at the Library

Many of the programs at the Portland Library focus on children, teens and families, but there are plenty of adult-oriented activities too, including these ongoing programs:

The First Thursday Night Book Club

First Thursday at 6:30 pm (September to June).

Reference Librarian Michele Grzejszczak leads the library's longest-running book club, which reads a variety of genres including thrillers, suspense, fantasy, science fiction and historical fiction by authors from around the world.

"Talk About Books" Book Club - First Tuesday at 1 pm.

JJ Smith, a former educator, selects a book and facilitates discussion.

Mystery Lovers Book Club - Third Tuesday at 1 pm.

Led by Reference Librarian Beth Kauczka, this club focuses on mysteries written by established and new authors.

Movies in the Afternoon – Second Wednesday at 1 pm

Knifty Knitters - Saturdays at 10 am.

Join beginner and experienced knitters for a fun and informal get together.

In addition to these regularly scheduled programs, Portland Library holds adult-oriented events throughout the year. This year's selection included paint parties, drumming circles and programs on fall bird migration, Taverns of Connecticut, the Civilian Conservation Corps, Katharine Hepburn, and the British Invasion. FPL funds each of these one-time programs and purchases the DVDs and snacks for Movies in the Afternoon, at a total budgeted cost of \$3,000 for 2023.

Thank you, Jan! Welcome, Jenn!

Portland Library Director Janet Nocek retired in early May after more than 20 years of service to the library and the community. In honor of Jan's retirement, FPL purchased a beautiful pendulum clock that hangs behind the library service desk. Thank you to FPL Board Member Lucinda Patrick for spearheading the committee that selected this useful and attractive gift, which will provide many years of service to the library—just as Jan did. FPL also supplied refreshments for a community event held on May 4th to thank Jan and wish her well as she begins this new chapter of her life.

Jennifer Billingsley, the new Library Director, comes to us from Middletown's Russell Library where they served as head of Youth & Family Learning. Jenn is honored to have been selected to step into Jan's shoes and grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Jan before her departure. Jenn's energy and enthusiasm are contagious, and we at FPL look forward to helping Jenn write Portland Library's next chapter.