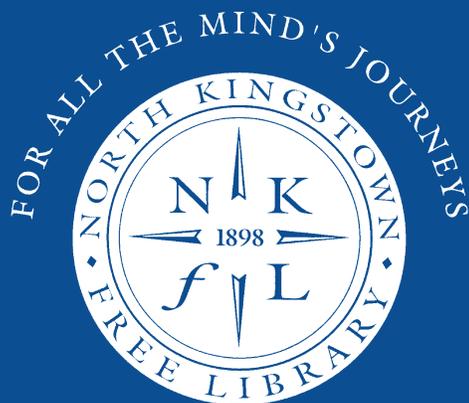
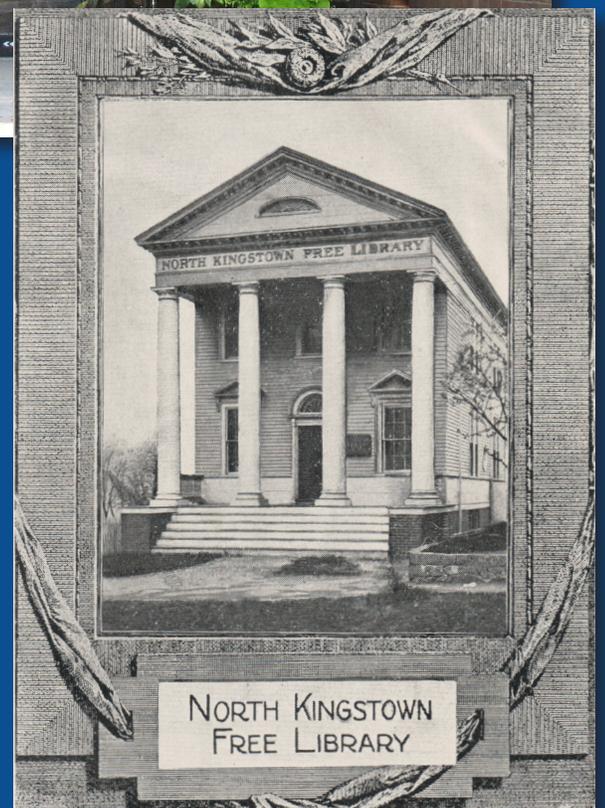


North Kingstown Free Library 1899-2015

A Book of Memories and Clippings

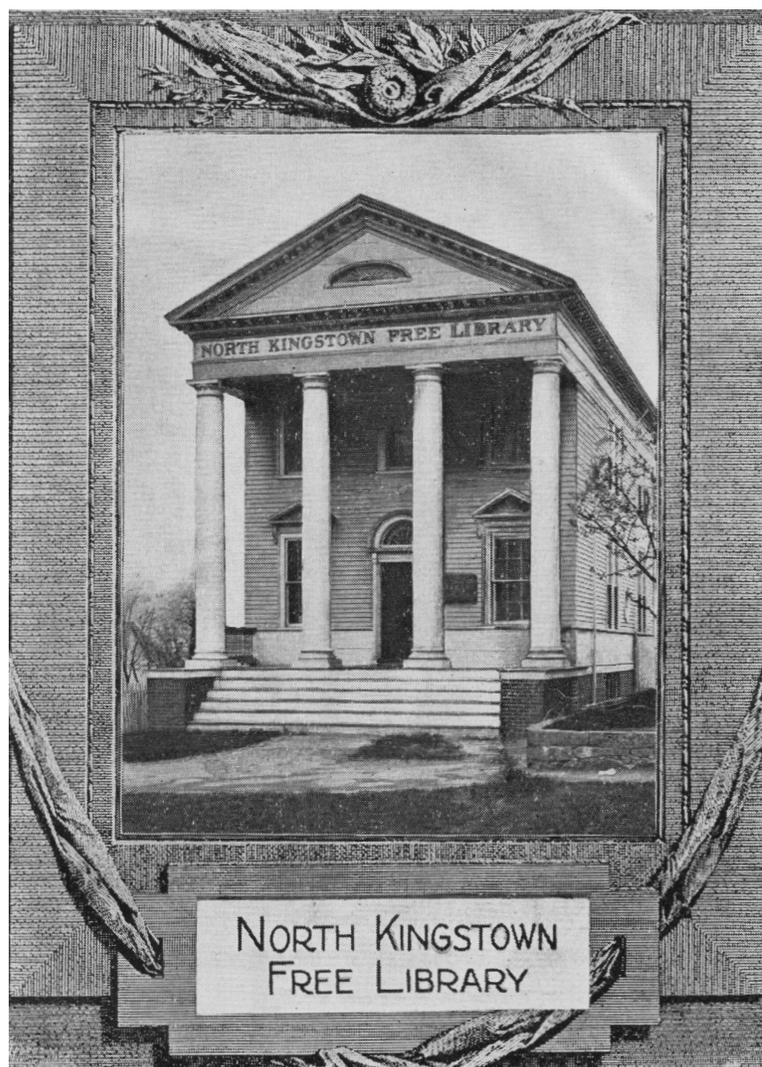


Edited by Elizabeth Donovan



North Kingstown Free Library 1899-2015

A Book of Memories and Clippings



Edited by Elizabeth Donovan

Cover photo by: Elizabeth Donovan

Back cover painting by: Carl Lager

Copyright © 2015 by the North Kingstown Free Library

All rights reserved.

**Dedicated to the staff and patrons
of the North Kingstown Free Library**

**Without a helpful and knowledgeable staff, this wonderful building
and all of its resources would be inaccessible.**

Without patrons it would all be for naught!

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Library Director Cyndi Desrochers, Deputy Director Susan Moreland and the Board of Trustees for allowing me the time to pursue this project. I also appreciate the creative freedom and the encouragement that I was given as I kept expanding on the original proposal.

Thank you to the Friends of the Library for their support of this project and for everything that they do for the library.

Writing this book was a joint effort on the part of many people. Thank you to everyone who wrote one (or more!) of the essays.

Thank you to Susan Moreland, Susan Aylward and Susan Berman for editing and proofreading. Thank you to Susan Aylward for the immediacy with which she answered my many emails and to Susan Moreland for her calm assurances that this would really come together.

Many of the photographs reproduced here are from the library archives. For additional photographs, thank you to the Peirce family and the family of Regina Leeper.

Thank you to *The Providence Journal* (formerly the *Journal-Bulletin*), *The Standard Times*, *The North East Independent* and the *North Kingstown View* (formerly the *North Kingstown Villager*) for permission to include articles and photographs that originally appeared on their pages.

And a very big, humungous, gigantic “Thank you!” to Rachel Peirce whose book design skills were invaluable in pulling this material into such a pleasing and readable volume. Rachel has been an incredible volunteer at the library on many fronts.

Elizabeth Donovan
Editor and Project Director

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 6 |
| Chapter 1: The Early Years | 7 |
| Chapter 2: Annie Merithew | 14 |
| Chapter 3: Gladys Hellewell..... | 18 |
| Chapter 4: Edna “Teddy” Lager..... | 24 |
| Chapter 5: Regina “Reggie” Leeper | 37 |
| Chapter 6: Deborah Brennan..... | 40 |
| Chapter 7: Shirley Payne..... | 47 |
| Chapter 8: Paul Lefebure | 51 |
| Chapter 9: Susan Berman..... | 54 |
| Chapter 10: Donna Dufault | 63 |
| Chapter 11: Susan Aylward | 71 |
| Chapter 12: Cyndi Desrochers | 82 |
| Chapter 13: Susan Moreland | 87 |
| Chapter 14: Elizabeth Donovan..... | 90 |
| Chapter 15: Jennifer Boettger..... | 93 |
| Chapter 16: Linda Caisse..... | 96 |
| Chapter 17: Library Appreciation..... | 97 |
| Chapter 18: The Board of Trustees | 99 |
| Chapter 19: Friends of the Library History..... | 103 |
| Chapter 20: NKFL: A Brief History | 107 |
| Index | 115 |

Introduction

In 1899, amidst much celebration, the North Kingstown Free Library opened on Brown St. in the village of Wickford. 116 years later, the library is thriving due to the tenacity and vision of 9 successive directors, the guidance over the years of dozens of committed members of the Board of Trustees, the contributions of a host of staff members, and the generous and continued support of the entire North Kingstown Community.

Two very important anniversaries in the library's 116-year history are being observed in the fall of 2015. In December 1975, the large modern library building at 100 Boone St. opened its welcoming orange doors to the public. For forty years this building has served the townspeople. Thanks to extensive renovations in 1998 and several subsequent technology upgrades, it will continue to do so into the future.

The Friends of the Library, a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the library, celebrates its sixtieth year. Since September of 1955, when it began, this organization has advocated for the library and has provided monies to fund the wide array of programs that the library offers.

It seems fitting to honor these two anniversaries by tak-

ing a look back at the history of this important town institution. As of 2015, nine people have held the post of Library Director at the North Kingstown Free Library. What better way to tell this history than through the words of these directors? In the following pages former directors, assistant directors and others have been given an opportunity to share their reminiscences and stories, either in interviews or written essays. In the case of those directors who have passed away, memories written by others have been used. Newspaper articles have also been included throughout thanks to *The Providence Journal*, *The Standard Times*, *The NorthEast Independent* and the *View*, formerly known as the *North Kingstown Villager*.

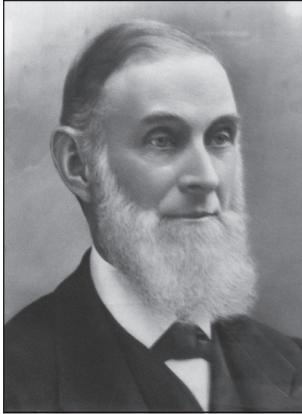
A library history written by former Library Director Shirley Payne in 1996 and updated by former Assistant Director Susan Berman is also included as is a history of the Friends of the Library written by former Library Director Susan Aylward in 1982. The FOL history has been updated by Elaine Cardente, current President of the Friends.

We hope you enjoy this look back at the history of the library and that you join us in looking forward to the next 116 years!



Chapter 1: The Early Years

As public libraries were being built throughout America, thanks to the philanthropy of steel magnate and library champion Andrew Carnegie, North Kingstown had its very own benefactor in Caleb Allen Chadsey.



Caleb Allen Chadsey

After youthful adventures that included whaling voyages and searching for gold in California, Chadsey returned home to Wickford, a village in North Kingstown, where he was active in community affairs until his death in 1894. With his bequest of both land and \$10,000, the North Kingstown Free Library was built on Brown Street in 1898.

The original 2000 books that graced the library shelves came from a lending collection that had operated at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Guild Hall. Addison Luther, an organist at the church, was the library's first director (1899-1917).

Not much is known about Addison Luther. Neither a photograph nor any writings of his have been located for this book. He was born in Mystic, Connecticut in 1861. When he was two years old, he moved with his parents to Wickford where he lived the remainder of his life. This picture from "Saint Paul's Parish in the Narragansett Country" shows the interior of St. Paul's c. 1935. It is possible that the organ (shown below) is the same one he played three decades earlier.



Interior view of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

According to the minutes of the Board of Trustees, he was engaged as librarian and janitor at the salary of \$25 a month on January 18, 1899. The library hours at the time were 10:00 A.M. to noon, 1:30-6:00 P.M. and 7-9:00 P.M. Minutes from the meetings of the Board of Trustees were brief in this time period and all we can learn is that his salary rose very slowly—to \$30 a month in 1908, \$36 in 1912 and, shortly before the end of his tenure, to \$40 a month in 1917. He was also paid for an annual vacation of two weeks.

Death of Addison W. Luther

Addison W. Luther, a well known resident of this village, died at the Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, on Monday, where a fortnight before he underwent an operation for intestinal trouble. Mr. Luther was in his 60th year.

He was born in Mystic, Conn., in August, 1861, and was the son of the late Hezekiah and Ardelia Luther. When two years old his parents moved to Wickford and he has lived here ever since.

For several years he acted as organist at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. More recently he has served at St. Gabriel's Mission at Lafayette.

Mr. Luther was librarian at the North Kingstown Free Library, retiring from that position about three years ago. Since the death of his mother two years or more ago, he has boarded with the family of the late Rev. F. J. Follansbee.

The funeral was at Barber's Undertaker's Rooms, Providence, on Wednesday, at 11 o'clock, with burial in North Burial Ground.

Rev. Herbert J. Piper of St. Paul's Episcopal Church officiated. A quartet from the St. Paul's choir, Mrs. William Spink, Mrs. Robert W. Aldrich, Fred Horsfall and George N. Oatley, sang "Nearer, My God to Thee," and "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."

The bearers were Frank Potts, George O tley, Robert Aldrich and Fred Horsfall

Standard Times May 6, 1921

NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Building Soon to be Erected at
Wickford at Cost of \$6500.

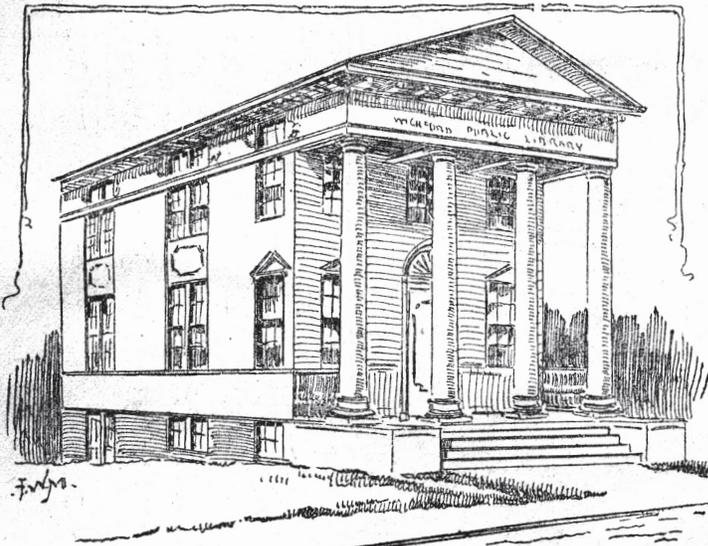
BEQUEST OF MONEY AND LAND
MADE BY C. ALLEN CHADSEY.

The Structure Will be of Wood,
Two Stories in Height, of Grecian
Architecture and After Plans by
Mr. Sawtelle of This City.

Mr. Sawtelle, architect, of Providence, has just drawn the plans and specifications for the North Kingstown Free Library that is shortly to be erected on the east side of Brown street, Wickford. The cost of the structure, including a lot of land purchased from M. J. Ryan, will be about \$6500. The erection of a suitable library building and the establishment of a town library was brought about by the late C. Allen Chadsey, whose death occurred in 1894 and who, by will, left the sum of \$10,000 to the town of North Kingstown to aid in the erection and maintenance of a public library, the gift to be available after its acceptance by the electors at an an-

the one on Brown street, formally determined to purchase from M. J. Ryan, who is now the owner of the late Mr. Chadsey's residence, some 20 feet more of frontage at a cost of \$1000, and, this point settled, bids for plans were advertised for and those offered by Mr. Sawtelle were accepted. The structure is to be constructed of wood, for the reason that in one of brick or stone the books would be more liable to mold, owing to its close proximity to the salt water.

The building's greatest length will be from east to west, the front facing the latter. It will be two stories in height, with basement, of Grecian architecture. The dimensions are 25x50 feet. The basement will be of brick and stone and of sufficient height to permit of setting up a gymnasium in the future. The structure will stand back from the street about 10 feet, and the space of ground between it and the highway will be ornamented with flowers and shrubs. The main entrance, reached by several steps and covered by a portico, opens into a hallway 13 feet by 10 feet 8 inches, where also the stairway is situated that leads to the second story of the building. On the left of the main entrance will be an office, 9 feet 3 inches by 8 feet, fitted up in hard wood, as will be the entire interior of the structure, for the use of the librarian. Off it are a lobby and toilet room, and next it and in the centre of the building will be the "stock room," 13 feet 9 inches by 18 feet, while the entire east end will contain a reading room 27x17 feet. This apartment will be fitted with an ornamental fire-place and with two large windows facing the water, and from where an extended view can be obtained of the West Passage and other portions of Narragansett Bay.



Wickford Public Library.

The building will be erected soon and will cost about \$6500.

nual town meeting; and at a regular meeting in '95 it was voted to receive the bequest and a committee was appointed to take charge of the matter. At a subsequent meeting a Board of Library Trustees were elected, with instructions to procure a site and proceed to construct a building at as early a moment as practicable. Besides leaving the bequest of \$10,000, Mr. Chadsey likewise gave for the purpose a strip of land near his residence on Brown street of some 20 feet frontage, but later in the will recommended that the plot of ground being so narrow he would suggest that a lot be secured of larger size in some other portion of the village. The trustees then in charge not being able to secure a more suitable site than

The second story will contain a directors' room, 15 feet by 20 feet 6 inches, at the west end, and a lecture room back of it, its size being 21x23 feet. It is expected the new library will be ready for occupancy by next winter, and possibly earlier. The present Board of trustees are James A. Greene, President; Joseph G. Reynolds, Secretary; W. W. Congdon, Lyman Aylesworth, C. B. Reynolds, R. F. Rodman.

Source and date unknown

Dedication of the North Kingstown Public Library

Last Wednesday evening the new Public Library was dedicated with suitable literary exercises. The time of opening was 7:30 o'clock, but long before that hour teams brought the residents of the outlying villages and other parts of the town in large numbers and long before the opening of the exercises the building was packed to its utmost capacity and still they came, until every nook and corner, whether within hearing distance of the speakers or not, was filled, while in the upper hall and stairway the people were packed as sardines as it was remarked. The audience as a general thing was quiet and intent on hearing what was said, but with the others came the rabble which made it disagreeable for all except those who were near the platform. After our experience with them we should strongly advocate the early sounding of the curfew bell, were they not too old to be effected by it, and be it said to the credit of the boys they were not the principal offenders.

The exercises commenced very nearly on time as nearly as the crowded condition of the rooms would allow and were in charge of James A. Greene, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and were as follows:

Overture, "National Airs," Barber's Orchestra; delivery of keys of building by Contractor James H. Bullock to the Chairman; the following report of the Secretary:

The total receipts were, from executor of C. Allen Chadsey's will, \$10,000; interest on same, \$964.50; total, \$10,964.50. Expenditures to date, \$6,172.78. Balance on hand, \$3,791.72.

Prayer of Dedication, Rev. C.A. Maryott.

Address "A tribute to C. Allen Chadsey," by George H. Chadsey, a relative of the founder of the library. This was brief and of a reminiscent character.

Address by Rev. F. B. Cole... (see next page for excerpts)

Music, Cornet and Clarinet Duet.

Address by Rev. E. F. Smith. After expressing appreciation for the work of C. Allen Chadsey outside of the donation that made this building a possibility, he spoke of the library as the place where knowledge could be collected together, and stored and made accessible to all who wish to avail themselves of its advantages.

Address by Rev. F. J. Bartlett, who spoke of his personal acquaintance with C. Allen Chadsey and in regard to the three institutions of the New England village:

The Christian Church, the Public School and the Public Library, and enlarged on the value of each as far as the time would permit.

Song, "Fiona," Irving Rodman, with Miss. H. S. Peirce, accompanist.

Rev. J.L. Crane spoke of the Public Library as the exponent of the broadest and truest ideas, and the representative of the best spirit of the community.

Music, Orchestra.

The address of Rev. A. E. Phelps was devoted principally to the advocacy of making the Public Library a place of resort for the young people instead of the street, and the good attendant thereto.

Elder E. R. Wood who was expected to make the closing address was unable to be present.

The exercises closed with "America," and the benediction by Rev. C. A. Maryott.

The building is of wood, two stories high with basement. The first floor is the principal business portion of the building. It is entered by a door from the centre portion of the porch which leads directly into a hall from which stairs ascend to the upper floor. This occupies the southwest corner of the building; to the north of this is the office. Immediately in the rear of the hall is the lobby and toilet room. The stack room is immediately back of the office. It is a large room and occupies the centre portion of the building. In the rear of these is the reading room which occupies the entire east end of the building. This room is furnished with two very large circular tables made of oak with chairs to match, making substantial furnishings.

The upper portion is divided into a hall of similar proportions as the room below, a directors' room of generous proportions.

In the front hall, as one enters, there is placed on the wall a dark-brown marble table with the following inscription: "This library was established and building erected from a fund of \$10,000, the gift of C. Allen Chadsey, 1898; trustees and building committee, James A. Greene, President; William W. Congdon, Charles B. Reynolds, Joseph G. Reynolds, Secretary; Thaddeus W. Hunt, Lyman Aylesworth, Robert F. Rodman."

The contractor of the building was James H. Bullock, who gave out several sub-contracts. John L. Congdon put in the heating apparatus.

Selected quotes from the address of Rev. F. B. Cole



Rev. Frederick Bradford Cole

"It is no new work to which we lend ourselves tonight, nor an intermitted work. Never an age or empire which has not witnessed its library."

"The free library system is the response to men seeking wisdom. It is the expression of that good sense and sound judgment which realizes that the better educated the man the better citizen does he become."

"Herein lies the first great value of the public library. It stands for enlightenment and progress."

Education does not end with the public school. In truth it should never end. Men should never fail to improve the mind, to keep abreast of the times, to seek how, by a close study of the past, the mistakes and failures the successes and triumphs of men long since gathered to their fathers, how they may profit, better their conditions and wrestle to get out of life all that it shall hold."

"The library is the complement and supplement of the public school. Whither the teacher sends the pupil

to re-enforce the work of her textbook, to draw illustrations, to let him see that he studies life, not death. And hither in after years shall he come himself, if he has been well instructed to think and reason."

"The public library is the protecting power against that conservatism which is like sand and grit to the cylinder of the engine, but the promoter of that just and upright conservatism which acting as the governor of the engine, makes for culture, advance, sound laws and upright government."

Public libraries also are an important part in the safety, honor and welfare of the nation. Illiteracy only is to be feared, anarchy has no use for books and libraries."

It is a sign of progress when all through the land are erected buildings like this which we dedicate tonight – landmarks on the royal road to wisdom."

"For all that is true and beautiful, then, for all that is just and lawful, for all that is dignified and courteous for sound honest government, for the happiness of home and the enlightenment of life shall this building be dedicated to God, in memory of one, and by his bequest, who loved these virtues."

"God be thanked for books... They are the voices of the distant and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts and pour their souls into ours."

Books are the looms where the inner fabric of character is woven."

"The world today is fiction mad. People seem to think that the greatest use of a book is to while away a few

unoccupied hours and the simplest, lightest, most fascinating tale which will least tax the mind is the one in demand."

"One is launched on a sea of printers ink and is as bewildered to know what to read as a mariner on a foggy night in an unknown sea which way to go."

"Take one illustration, What place does "Uncle Tom's Cabin" hold in the great question now settled, pray God forever? It was the precipitant of the struggle. Where logic failed it persuaded, where distrust of that movement hovered, it convinced men of the equity of the cause."

Each shall read for himself but no book is serviceable until it has been read and re-read and loved and loved again. What to read it is hard to answer. It shall come by experience even as we form our intimate friendships."

*(Closing paragraph of his address)
"Tonight we have one more name among the list of public benefactors. If he were here he could well say – but we shall say it for him – those immortal lines of Homer: "I have reared a monument more lasting than brass, more regal than the highest pyramid, which neither wasting storms nor the furious north wind – neither the numberless succession of years or the flight of time is able to overthrow."*

**Printed in the Standard Times
in two parts on February 3, 1899
and February 10, 1899**

LIBRARY DEDICATED.

A Notable Event in the History of North Kingstown.

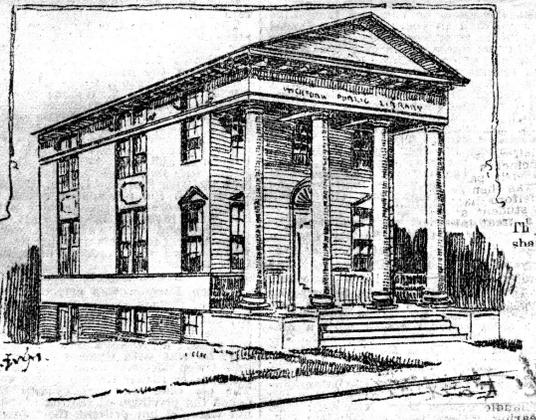
RESULT OF GENEROUS BEQUEST OF THE LATE C. A. CHADSEY.

Feb 18 - 1899
The New Public Edifice is Located at Wickford, and There Was a Large Attendance at the Interesting Dedicatory Exercises Wednesday Evening.

Wednesday evening the recently erected Public Library at Wickford was dedicated with appropriate exercises, and the event will be a marked feature in the history of North Kingstown. The erection of a library building and the establishment of a public library for the town was made possible by a bequest left by the late C. Allen Chadsey of \$10,000 for the purpose to the town of North Kingstown, provided the citizens would accept the donation. This the town did at the next taxpayers' meeting, and selected a Board of Trustees, consisting of James A. Greene, Joseph G. Reynolds, William W. Congdon, William Gregory, T. W. Hunt and Lyman Aylesworth. Later Lieut. Gov. Gregory, owing to other duties, was forced to resign, and Robert F. Rodman was chosen to fill the vacancy. The Board organized by the selection

The program opened with an overture of national airs of all countries by Barber's Orchestra of Lafayette. James H. Bullock, the constructor of the library, then presented the keys of the building to Mr. Greene as President of the Board of Trustees, and was followed by the report of the secretary, Joseph G. Reynolds, who, besides other matters, stated that by the time the \$10,000 was needed for the establishment of the library the interest account had increased the original sum \$904.50. From this fund there had been already expended \$1000 for land, \$5500 the contractors' price for the library building, \$603 for incidentals and furnishings, leaving a balance at the trustees' disposal of \$301.

Rev. C. A. Maryott, pastor of the Wickford Baptist Church, then offered the prayer of dedication. Afterward Mr. Greene introduced George H. Chadsey of Providence, who was a cousin of the donor and who spoke with much feeling of the many noble qualities of his deceased kinsman. Rev. F. B. Cole, rector of St. Paul's, followed, opening his remarks with a brief account of the antiquity of libraries and of the one unearthed by Sir Thomas Laird in Nineveh that must have been in existence at least seven centuries prior to the Christian era. Mr. Cole then made an effective address on the good derived of institutions of this character and the gratitude the citizens owed Mr. Chadsey for his generous gift. Rev. E. F. Smith of the Methodist Church was next, who highly eulogized Mr. Chadsey, and Rev. E. J. Bartlett of the Quinneset Baptist Church spoke of the friendship that had existed between the deceased and himself. Mr. Bartlett, who has travelled much in the New England States said there were three characteristics of a typical New England village. The first, a Christian church; second, the public school; third, a public library. Many of this last-named are the outgrowth of a similar bequest. Rev. J. L. Crone of the Allenton Church was eulogistic of the man who gave the town a public library, and believed the gift would result in much good.



Wickford Public Library.

It was dedicated last evening with appropriate exercises.

of James A. Greene as President and Joseph G. Reynolds as Secretary. Mr. Chadsey, besides the bequest of \$10,000, also presented a strip of land next his residence on Brown street upon which to place the library. The size of the lot proving inadequate, the first procedure of the trustees was to purchase an adjoining lot, which made the frontage 25 feet, and a greater depth was also given to the lot. This additional land was procured for \$100 and upon the deeds being duly passed the trustees called for drawings of suitable structure. A number of plans were laid before the committee and the one accepted was a Greco-Egyptian style of architecture drawn by F. J. Sawtelle of Providence.

The structure is of two stories, its material of wood and its dimensions 25x35 feet. The main entrance opens upon a vestibule, at the right end of which is the stairway, while upon the left is a door leading into the office of the librarian. Back of these is the library, fitted in hard wood, relieved by brass trimmings about the counter, which runs the entire length of this apartment. A large room, with bay windows and a fireplace with wooden mantel, is devoted to a reading room. The second story is occupied by two rooms, separated by folding doors, and which, as upon last evening, can be converted into a small hall. The library is lighted by electricity and heated by steam, and is altogether one of the most striking and complete edifices of its character in the State.

The dedicatory exercises were set for 7:30 p. m., but long before that hour people from every quarter of the town began to arrive, and the result was a crush, and it is estimated that over 500 persons were present. Of course the hall in the second story, with a seating capacity of 100, was crowded to suffocation, as well as the stairway and rooms below. This, however, did not prevent the successful carrying out of the exercises. They were in charge of

Rev. A. E. Phelps of the Advent Christian Church of Lafayette delivered the closing address. Mr. Phelps advocated having amusement of an elevating character, whereby the young might be attracted to the library in order that the boys and girls might be attracted to the study of useful and improving literature. One of the features of the exercises was a vocal selection by Mr. Irving Rodman, baritone, Miss Harriet S. Peirce acting as accompanist.

After the playing of "America" by the orchestra, Rev. Mr. Maryott pronounced the benediction. The trustees have also performed a graceful act in placing a slab of Quincy granite in the vestibule, upon which is inscribed in gold text the following memento to the late C. Allen Chadsey:

"This library was established and building erected from a fund of \$10,000, the gift of C. Allen Chadsey. Beneath is 1888 and the names of the trustees. A fine portrait of Mr. Chadsey also hangs in the reading room of the structure. The building will now be open to the public for inspection, and although the books are not yet catalogued, the reading room is ready for the reception of visitors. The library building was begun in April, and finished in the early autumn. The furnishings, however, have only been recently finished.

Evening Bulletin
February 2, 1899 and
Providence Journal
February 3, 1899

➤ DEDICATION ➤

OF THE

North * Kingstown * Free * Library,

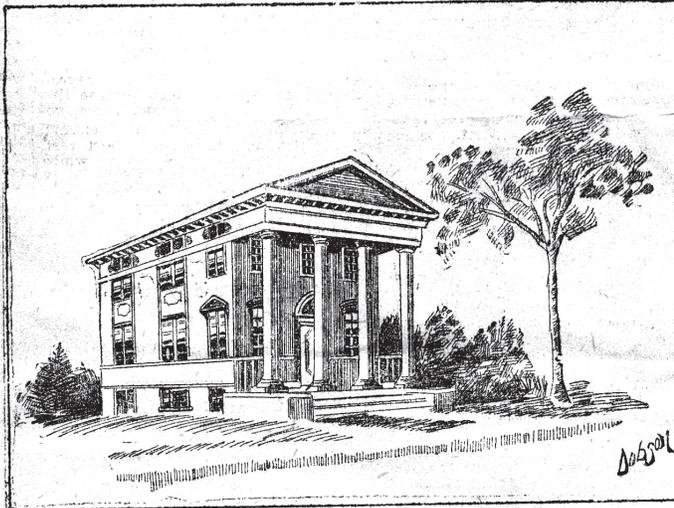
Wednesday Evening, February 1, 1899,

AT 7.30 O'CLOCK.

Programme.

OVERTURE—National Airs, BARBER'S ORCHESTRA
DELIVERY of keys of building, by Contractor JAS. H. BULLOCK
to JAMES A. GREENE, President of Board of Trustees.
REPORT OF SECRETARY, JOSEPH G. REYNOLDS
PRAYER OF DEDICATION, REV. C. A. MARYOTT
ADDRESS—A tribute to C. Allen Chadsey, GEO. H. CHADSEY
ADDRESS, REV. F. B. COLE
MUSIC—Cornet and Clarionet Duet,
ADDRESS, REV. E. F. SMITH
MUSIC—March, ORCHESTRA
ADDRESS, REV. F. J. BARTLETT
SONG, MR. IRVING RODMAN
Miss HARRIET S. PIERCE, Accompanist.
ADDRESS, REV. J. L. CRANE
MUSIC, ORCHESTRA
ADDRESS, REV. A. E. PHELPS
MUSIC, ORCHESTRA
ADDRESS, ELDER E. R. WOOD
MUSIC—America, Closing

NEW FREE LIBRARY AT WICKFORD



THE NORTH KINGSTOWN FREE LIBRARY.

(Special Dispatch to the Telegram.)
Wickford, Feb. 2.—The event to which the citizens of North Kingstown have long looked forward culminated last evening, when amid most auspicious circumstances the new North Kingstown free library was dedicated.

This new library building, now opened to the public, was begun last April by Contractor James H. Bullock, and now is a valuable acquisition to the town. The library was made possible through the generosity of the late C. Allen Chadsey, who at his death some years ago bequeathed to the town the sum of \$10,000, for the establishment and maintenance of a free public library.

After the appointment of the trustees of this fund the matter was discussed at length, and after the acquirement of additional land for the site on Brown street, it was decided to build. Plans were secured and the contract awarded, and now the citizens of the town are rewarded for the labors of the building committee. A description of the building has appeared in the columns of the Telegram previous to this time, hence a review is unnecessary. It has been fully equipped and lighted by electricity, and is a very pleasant building.

Last evening the library building was thronged with the citizens of the town, who came early to inspect the work and to listen to the exercises incident to the dedication.

The upper hall which has been planned for a lecture room and a directors' room adjoining and opening into each other, was packed to suffocation, and it was almost impossible to move about.

The program of dedication opened with an overture of national airs by Barber's orchestra, four pieces, with James B. Barber as conductor. Immediately following, the contractor, James H. Bullock, stepped forward, and in a few words presented the keys of the building to the president of the board of trustees, James L. Greene. The secretary, Joseph G. Reynolds, then read a brief report, which cited the facts of the gift of the sum of \$10,000 by Mr. Chadsey, and its acceptance, the organization of the board of trustees and the facts in relation to the building.

The Report Stated that \$1,000 was spent in securing additional land, and that a little over \$8,000

was expended in the building and furnishings. There is now a balance of about \$3,700.

Prayer of dedication was then offered by Rev. C. A. Maryott and George H. Chadsey, Esq., of Providence was next introduced, who paid a tribute to the donor, the late C. Allen Chadsey. He spoke of his high character and the deep interest which he had in the welfare of the town and gave some personal experiences concerning the deceased.

Rev. F. B. Cole was next introduced, and he gave a stirring oration carefully prepared which had to deal with the ancient history in the matter of establishing public libraries. Rev. Mr. Cole spoke at some length upon the high value which should be placed upon an institution of this character, and of its great influence in elevating the character of a community. He paid a high tribute to the late Mr. Chadsey, whom he said had thus erected a monument more lasting than marble.

Next on the program was a cornet and clarinet duet by Messrs. Sherman and Barber, and then the Rev. E. P. Smith was introduced, who spoke briefly upon the influence which a public library had upon a community, and emphasized the great importance of selecting good books.

He was followed by the Rev. F. J. Bartlett, who spoke with some feeling concerning the life of the man who had made the library possible. Rev. Mr. Bartlett referred to three things, which he said went to make up a typical New England village, and these, he said, were the church, the public school and the public library.

Mr. Irving Rodman gave a baritone solo, with Miss Hattie S. Pierce as accompanist, which was greatly appreciated.

Rev. J. L. Crane followed with remarks, eulogizing the donor and congratulating the town upon securing such a valuable institution. The orchestra played a march and the last speaker, Rev. A. E. Phelps was introduced. He spoke of the importance of making the library as homelike as possible, and endeavoring to gather the young people under its helpful influences.

Elder E. R. Wood was expected to speak and if he had, all the clergymen in the town would have been heard, but it was impossible for him to attend.

The orchestra played "America" and

The Exercises Closed with the benediction by Rev. C. A. Maryott. Mr. James A. Greene, president of the board of trustees, presided during the exercises, and all the members of the board were present. After the exercises all were given an opportunity to inspect the building and the library, under the charge of the new librarian. Ad-

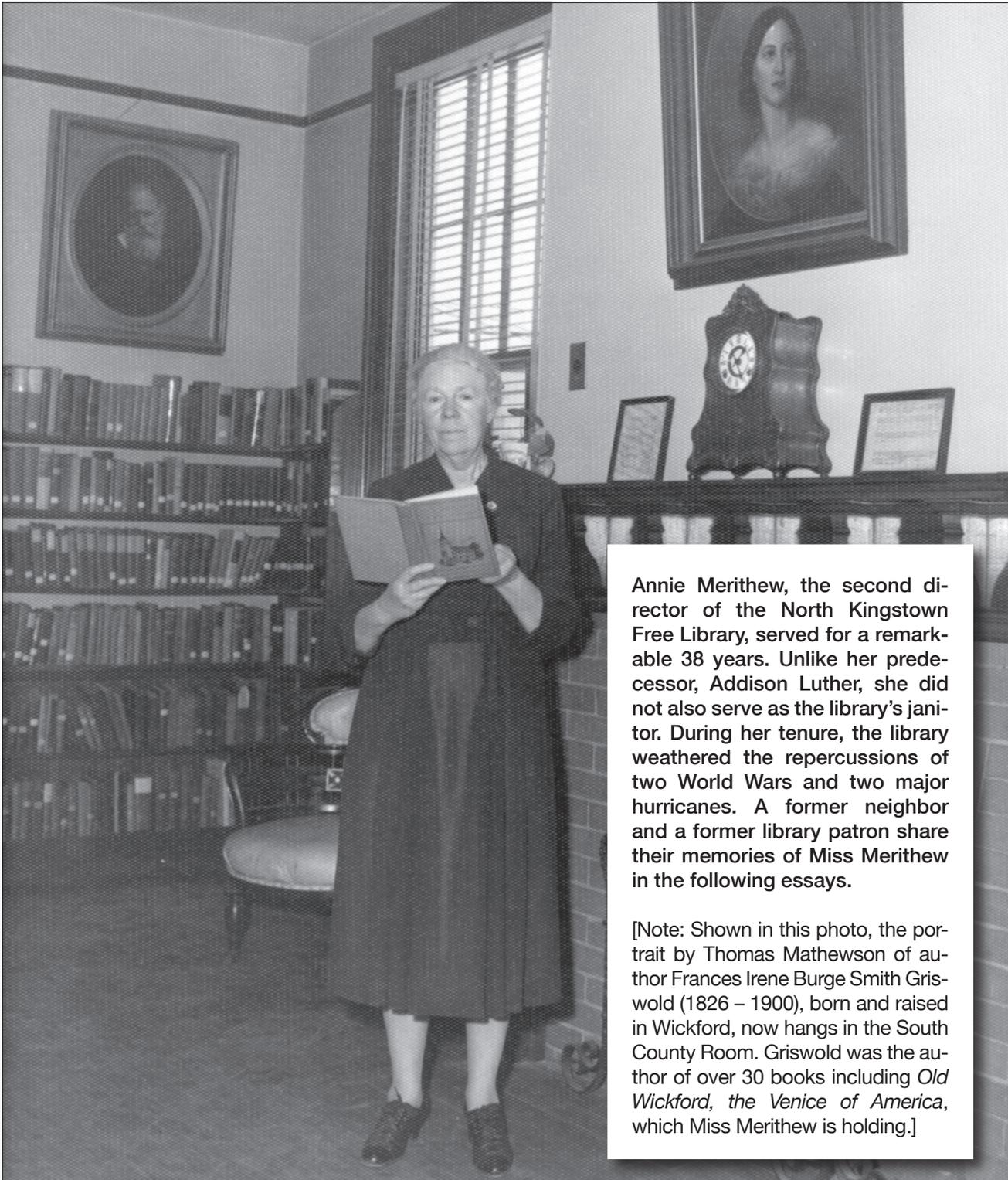
dison W. Luther, was open to the public. In the front hall, as one enters, there is placed upon the wall a dark-brown marble tablet with the following inscription:

"This library was established and building erected from a fund of \$10,000, the gift of C. Allen Chadsey, 1898; trustees and building committee, James A. Greene, president; William W. Congdon, Charles B. Reynolds, Joseph G. Reynolds, secretary; Thaddeus W. Hunt, Lyman Aylesworth, Robert F. Rodman."

In the reading room there is placed a handsome picture of the late C. Allen Chadsey.

The Evening Telegram
February 2, 1899

Chapter 2: Annie Merithew — Library Director 1917-1955



Annie Merithew, the second director of the North Kingstown Free Library, served for a remarkable 38 years. Unlike her predecessor, Addison Luther, she did not also serve as the library's janitor. During her tenure, the library weathered the repercussions of two World Wars and two major hurricanes. A former neighbor and a former library patron share their memories of Miss Merithew in the following essays.

[Note: Shown in this photo, the portrait by Thomas Mathewson of author Frances Irene Burge Smith Griswold (1826 – 1900), born and raised in Wickford, now hangs in the South County Room. Griswold was the author of over 30 books including *Old Wickford*, *the Venice of America*, which Miss Merithew is holding.]

Memories of Miss Annie Merithew

by Jean Bordo Lawrence

June 2015

While both Merithew sisters were a part of my growing up years in Wickford, I always felt that Miss Annie was the most approachable. I met her when I was six and came to the library for the first time with a neighbor. I had just learned to read and loved sitting in the little chairs in the children's corner and looking at all the many books that were mine to read for the asking. The library became a haven for me over the years. I visited on a regular basis and later used its references for my schoolwork.

When I was in high school, I was fortunate to have Henry Quinn as my English teacher. He was a model teacher and inspired me to try to keep up with him in reading the most current novels. When I saw him reading *The Caine Mutiny*, I decided I needed to stop by the library on my walk home from school to see if Miss Annie had a copy.

Now my other acquaintance moments with the Merithew sisters were through the Wickford Baptist Church where my family and I had attended since coming to town in 1944 when Dad became the letter carrier. So, Miss Annie knew my parents well, and I'm sure she realized my penchant for reading by the time I arrived at her desk and asked for a copy of the current best seller.

I clearly remember her looking at me, thinking, and then telling me that I needed to go home, talk about my request with my parents and then come back with a note of permission. Needless to say, I scurried home, got my mother's permission to read the book – we had a rule in my house that I could read any book I wished as long as I took my questions to my dad. When I arrived back at Miss Annie's desk, she gave me the book wrapped in a brown paper bag and quietly said, "When you bring it back, don't leave it on the desk. Put it in my hands!"

I guess that was all she needed to know about my parents' rules about reading "swear words," for she never again questioned my reading choices! I've often wondered if all the youngsters in town received such care and concern from her, but I think they really did. She was such a calm, quiet, statuesque lady, and I do mean lady, that she was the perfect librarian for Wickford in the 1940's.

And another memory...

Dad was a great one for driving old folks home from church, and we often had the Merithew sisters in the back



Annie Merithew, the second director of the North Kingstown Free Library, served for a remarkable 38 years.

seat on a Sunday after church. One time we had just gotten a second hand but lovely, gently used LaSalle automobile. My dad was very proud of it, for it was our first "new" car after the old '37 Plymouth and WWII. On the Sunday that we drove the Merithew sisters home for the first time in the new car, they were very complimentary about it and enjoyed their short ride. Elizabeth alighted from the back seat first and then Annie, as she was getting out, turned and said to my father, "If they had had vehicles like this when I was a young girl, I wouldn't be single now!" My sister and I smothered our chuckles as did my mom and dad until we drove on. Miss Annie really did have quite a sense of humor despite her sister's prim and proper bearing and Annie's "librarian demeanor."

Jean Bordo Lawrence is the author of "Wickford Memories, Growing Up in Wickford 1940-1960."

Memories of Annie and Elizabeth Merithew

By Joanne Lambert

June 2015

The following memories of Miss Annie Merithew recall a time period following her career at the library. They are written by Joanne Lambert who lived next door to Annie and Elizabeth Merithew on West Main St. from 1964 to 1974.

What darling ladies they were! Two spinsters who delighted in having the two kids next door come visit. Both were retired and elderly and part of the unwritten agreement when my



Annie Merithew as a young woman, c. 1910.

parents bought the house from their cousin Tommy Peirce was that they keep an eye out for and help the Merithew sisters if needed. We lugged kerosene jugs into the house, checked the barn door and often helped find Happy the cat who roamed all over Bush Hill and the marsh, but was supposed to be home at dusk. Sometimes we didn't find him on our nightly walks looking for him, but he would be sitting on the doorstep when we came back, rather put out and awaiting his dinner!

I have wonderful memories of checking in with them after school. Annie baked every day in a very small kerosene stove that was in the back pantry. They also had a huge coal/gas stove in the kitchen area. There was nothing better than coming in after shoveling the walk to the shed and having Annie at the stove with real hot cocoa, cookies or cupcakes, or fresh warm bread with homemade jam or jelly and sitting down to listen to them talk about the way things were in Wickford when they were growing up.

One of my favorite memories is of picking grapes with Annie in the fall so she could make jam. Another time she saw me with a tennis racket and the two of us (me, aged 12 and Annie aged 80-something) took turns hitting the tennis ball off the side of the barn. Very strict rules were involved...you had to let the ball bounce on the grass ("Tennis courts were originally grass you know") and you got to keep playing until you missed the ball. We laughed, we clapped for each other and when Elizabeth came looking for us, she joined in too.

Hurricanes were the only thing that I remember sending the sisters into a tizzy. They had several people in town ready to move all their furniture from the first floor to either the second floor or the barn if necessary. They had lived through the '38 and '54 hurricanes and had tales to tell. They would be prepared if a serious storm were to strike again!

I know they were grateful for our help, be it changing the light bulb over the back door, going to Barber's Hardware for a bag of lime or carrying a grocery bag home from Ryan's Market. But I wonder if they ever knew how much they enriched the lives of the family next door with their simple lessons in life-- not the least of which was how to maintain the outhouse "in case we ever needed it!"



Sisters Annie and Elizabeth Merithew look at a gift on the occasion of Elizabeth's retirement from the Industrial Trust Bank.

Vacationists 'Shoot Up' No. Kingstown Library Circulation, Says Miss Merithew

Librarian 36 Years Ready for Them, Has 11,000 Volumes

By JOHN P. HACKETT

Miss Annie E. Merithew, librarian for 36 years at the North Kingstown Free Library, visibly braced herself when a browser at the magazine rack mentioned that school was out for the summer.

"Well, I'm ready for them," she said, putting a final decimal point on the newest card in the Dewey catalogue system.

The latest book shipment brought to just short of 11,000 the number of volumes available to the readers, including vacationing students, who shoot the library's circulation index up during the summer.

Of late years, hot weather patrons have not entered the cool interior of the majestic Brown Street building in Wickford as frequently as before the second World War. Miss Merithew, tall, erect and white-haired, has a theory to explain this.

"It's the television," she says.

Capacity Taxed

Despite the distraction to readers possibly caused by the TV set, however, the book turnover still takes a jump during the summer. In addition to school-free pupils whose curriculum-confined minds turn to adventure novels or the like, the town's summer colonists tax the 55-year-old library's capacity.

While the annual circulation figure roughly is 12,000, the monthly average of books stamped out from now until Labor Day is expected to range between 1200 and 1500. "Slump" months when only 750 patrons are recorded cut down the yearly turnover.

For those who seek relief from a heat wave, the library is ideally situated. Its rear first-floor reading room overlooks Wickford Harbor, where boats sway at anchor or snuggle up to shoreside docks.

Near at hand are racks with the latest issues of many national magazines, local, Providence and out-of-town newspapers rest on round wooden tables and books from the classics to the most recent murder mysteries line shelves on all sides. More books fill an adjacent stacks room.

Lack of shelf space has forced many volumes upstairs to the second floor where the library's board of trustees has its meeting office. Miss Merithew has kept below those volumes in greatest demand and, in her discrimination here, she represents a literary critic, to some extent.

Fletcher Upstairs

"Take Fletcher," she says of some near-forgotten mystery writer. "He used to be quite popular 10 years



LIBRARIAN FOR 36 YEARS and only the second since North Kingstown Free Library opened 55 years ago, Miss Annie E. Merithew stamps books going out.

-State Staff Photo

ago. But, he's upstairs now."

Besides providing reading material to town residents and visitors, the library sponsors storytelling sessions for youngsters. These are given periodically by Mrs. Shirley Baldwin on the second floor, where two dozen under sized chairs are arranged, theater fashion. Down below, there's also a section containing books geared to the children's reading habits.

Since it was built in 1899, the library has been a center of town activity. In the spotless and capacious basement, town social groups frequently hold food, flower and rummage sales.

Twenty-seven hundred dollars in town funds awarded at each financial town meeting forms its main support, although about \$230

is granted annually by the state for purchase of books.

Miss Mary L. Metcalf is in charge of selecting these new volumes. She is a member of the board of trustees appointed by the town council for life or until they choose to resign. Harry E. Dawson is board chairman.

Miss Merithew is only the second librarian, having succeeded Addison Luther who left the post in 1917. Luther supervised the library since it was founded by the late C. Allen Chadsey, who donated land for a site and \$10,000 for its construction.

Library hours are 10 a.m.-12 noon; 2-5 p.m. and 7-8p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

There are two other libraries in North Kingstown, one in Davisville and the other in Saundertown.

**Providence Journal
June 18, 1953**

Chapter 3: Gladys Hellewell — Library Director 1955-1965

Gladys Hellewell: A Formidable Presence in the History of the NKFL

by Susan Aylward

February 2015

As Shirley Payne notes in her history of the library from 1899 to 1996, before the new library building on Boone Street was dedicated in 1975, the library had “flourished on Brown Street for seventy-seven years.” Addison Luther, the first librarian/custodian, left the post in 1917, under circumstances that remain a mystery. His replacement, Miss Annie Merithew, was the librarian for thirty-eight years, the longest-serving staff member in library history. Susan Berman and I both tried to break her record; and though we each came dangerously close, no one yet has been able to topple the “longevity of service” crown from Miss Merithew’s head. Miss Merithew was known in my house for having admonished my mother, when she was a child, for twittering in the stacks with a friend over the latest Bobbsey Twins book. If Miss Merithew was no firebrand who would pave the way for the library to move ahead in the twentieth century, the next director was all that and so much more.

Gladys Hellewell, the first professional librarian to serve as director of the North Kingstown Free Library, took over when Annie Merithew retired in 1955. In her ten-year tenure as director, Mrs. Hellewell established the foundation of the North Kingstown Free Library in the modern age. She enlisted volunteer assistants from the community to help re-organize the collection. Amazingly, 34,000 new catalog cards were created, providing access to the collection according to standard practices of librarianship. She encouraged the formation of a Friends of the Library group—still going strong today, sixty years later—which raised funds for children’s books, organized a weekly story hour for preschoolers, established a youth group called the Skipper’s Canteen; a forum for homemakers (this was the 1950’s remember); and planned lectures and movies for everyone. If this sounds familiar to you today, then you can understand the far-reaching and longstanding legacy of Gladys Hellewell.

She also presided over much-needed repairs to the building and later spearheaded a \$40,000 project to build a two-story addition at the back of the library, almost doubling its space. Also during her tenure, the library won a Dorothy Canfield Award from the Book of the Month Club, which was given to small libraries throughout the country which had been selected for giving outstanding service to their communities. Perhaps, though, one of her greatest accomplishments was establishing the R.I. Room with its collection of books and artifacts. Mrs. Hellewell saw the rich cultural and historical record of Rhode Island and of our town, in particular, as essential to the library’s mission. There is a charming picture in the library’s archives of Mrs. Hellewell and other ladies—Friends and Library Trustees—wearing hats and white gloves, sipping tea at the dedication of the R.I. Room on the second floor of the old library on Brown Street. From that day forward, every director since Mrs. Hellewell has, in turn, nurtured and shaped this essential collection.

Many of the inventory cards that we kept for every book in the collection had a small case handwritten “g” in the upper right corner of the card. The “g” stood for Gladys and it indicated that when she had done an inventory of the collection, that book was found on the shelf. When the library joined CLAN (now Ocean State Libraries) in 1986 and we began to dismantle the paper record system, I had very bittersweet feelings about that dismantling. Part of my personal sense of loss had to do with Gladys Hellewell. Whenever I saw Mrs. Hellewell’s initials on the shelf list cards, I was reminded of the past. I was reminded of my father’s respect and admiration for this taskmaster who would leave notes for him on the front desk about cleaning that she wanted him to do. I was reminded of the real and lasting contributions she had made to our library. And when we no longer had those cards on which I could trace my finger over her initial, I felt that some elemental connection had been severed, and a part of me was severed along with it.

Busy Librarian

N. Kingstown Modernization Is Big Job

The tempo of Mrs. John J. Hellewell's life has increased considerably since July 1.

That is the date that she began her duties as librarian of the North Kingstown Free Library. "Since then I have been busier than I have ever been in my life," explained the soft spoken Saunderson resident.

But the product of Mrs. Hellewell's day to day industry is very apparent. The library is currently undergoing a change.

For many years the library, located in a two-story wooden building with handsome Grecian columns on Brown Street, Wickford, limped along, shackled by insufficient financial support.

The North Kingstown League of Women Voters, however, became alarmed at the condition and adopted a program aimed at improving the town's libraries.

League members led the fight for more funds to the March financial town meeting. Taxpayers approved of the need for additional support and the annual town appropriation was increased from \$3,000 to \$8,000.

Then Mrs. Helliwell, a librarian with earlier experience in Cleveland, Philadelphia and Quonset naval air station, and volunteer workers swung into action.

When the fiscal year started July 1 and funds became available, the library doors were closed for one week. "We needed a little time to get organized," Mrs. Helliwell said.

The weeding out of hundreds of obsolete books was the first step. They were placed on sale, and surprisingly enough, Mrs. Hellewell said, "They sold like hot cakes."

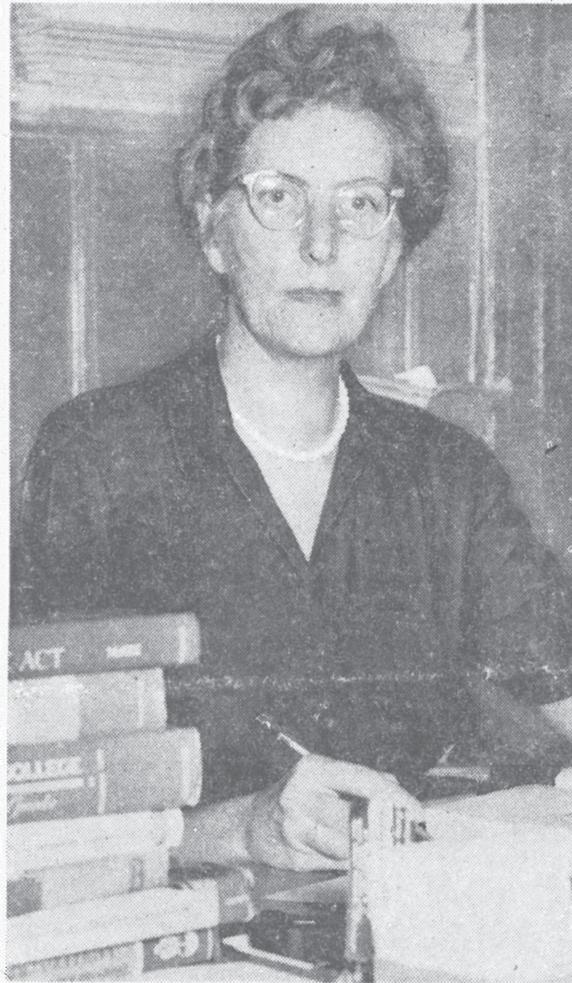
One man purchased a book of poems with the explanation that it was just the thing for passing the time sitting in his car waiting for members of his family.

The library experienced an unexpected break. The services of Mrs. Jack Garwood, a trained cataloguer, were obtained to revise and catalogue the library's books. Mrs. Garwood is the wife of a serviceman stationed at Quonset Point.

From a physical standpoint, the library's appearance had improved considerably also. A ready room, overlooking Wickford harbor, has exchanged its dull tan colored walls for those of a fresh blue.

"As long as the money holds out," Mrs. Hellewell said with a smile, "we hope to paint all the rooms until we reach the front door."

The building's front porch, however presented a problem. Extensive repairs are necessary because the Grecian columns have decayed.



High school and elementary students also had a role in the rebuilding. "Throughout the hot summer, nine boys and girls came in without any prompting and helped out at doing whatever was necessary," Mrs. Hellewell said.

Mrs. Hellewell's long range hopes call for the formation of a friends of the library association and the renovation of the building's second floor for use as a meeting place for civic groups.

Immediate plans call for a "fines forgiven day." A barrel will be placed outside the library with the hope that persons holding long overdue books will return them. The fines will be erased.

"We hope to have returned books that have been almost forgotten or ones whose fines would be staggering by this time," Mrs. Hellewell explained.

Aid from the town was sought but funds were not available. The original increased town appropriation, moreover, has been earmarked for needs that accumulated through the years. So the library sought help from the Rhode Island Foundation, a philanthropic organization. A representative, apparently impressed with the library's rejuvenation, has recommended that "a substantial sum" be turned over to the library for the repair work. Approval of the action by the foundation was confirmed this week. After the library's doors reopened, work began on repairing and mending books, typing cards and the numerous other necessary details. Mrs. Ralph Smith and Mrs. Rosella Dodge volunteered their services for the work.

North Kingstown Free Library Revitalized: Gifts of Books, Labor and Money Help Improve its Services

Village Fair News
July 20, 21, 1956

By Gladys S. Hellewell, Librarian

One hundred and thirty-five years ago, according to the brown and faded pages of a little leather-bound book in the North Kingstown Free Library, Wickford had its first library. Known as the Wickford Library Society, with a reading room in the Masonic Hall, it was established by a small group of shareholders, who on payment of a dollar a share were entitled to borrow books.

On the shelves of this early library were to be found some of the best sellers of the 1820's: The Humble Life, What Has Been, What May Be and What Will Be Again, Keep Cool, The Education of Daughters, Broad Grin, and The Religious Salesman.

The slower pace of those times is evidenced by the record of a vote taken at one meeting of the society, which convened "at early candlelight," that "borrowers who lived as far away as the distance of two miles from the library are not to be fined if they are not able to return their books within three weeks."

BEQUESTS TO THE LIBRARY

In 1829 the Wickford Library Society auctioned off its property, paid off the shareholders, and closed both its financial and its literary books.

Records show that a free library later was maintained by St. Paul's Church in the Old Guild Hall. In 1899 its books and good will were transferred to the N .K. Free Library, a handsome building of Greek Revival architecture, which was the gift of Mr. C. Allen Chadsey. Later bequests from Mr. William D. Davis and his daughter, Elizabeth D. Miller helped the library to stock its shelves with books.

Half a century of continuous library service to the community has passed since that time. North Kingstown's changing economy since World War II brought hardship to the library, operating on a tiny income in a period of inflation, and the North Kingstown League of Women Voters, concerned about the library's plight, recommended a larger appropriation. The resulting increase from \$3,000 to \$8,000, which the taxpayers voted for in 1955, marked a turning point in the library fortunes.

With increased funds, a period of reorganization commenced. Partial repairs to the building, in hazardous condition due to decay and hurricane damage, were undertaken, and the interior brightened with fresh paint. Book and periodical collections were expanded, and the reference collection modernized. A comprehensive weeding of worn and obsolete volumes provided space for more valuable books. Those which remained-with an additional 1,100 new books, were then completely catalogued to provide an accurate index of every item in the library, a huge project which required professional skill and some 34,000 cards.

VOLUNTEER ASSISTANTS

Each volume in the library was then labelled in order that it could be assigned its proper place on the shelves. The next step was first-aid treatment to mountains of worn and torn books. Volunteers from the third grade up gave hours of their time to restore them to usefulness. Children pasted and mended, sorted cards, and applied plastic jackets. Homemakers, high school students, and Navy wives typed, shelved books, lettered, sorted magazines, and helped in other ways.

Organizations and individuals also contributed to the improvement of the library. The R. I. Foundation made a substantial grant to finance a porch renovation and Mr. Charles F. Ayers provided engineering drawings for the renovation of the porch; Mr. Robert Aldrich and Mr. Edwin R. Schuler donated plumbing and sheet metal work; and Mrs. Richmond Viall contributed valuable books on Rhode Island history.

Hundreds of books and periodicals have been contributed by local residents and service families. The North Kingstown Teachers' Association, the Pettaquamscutt Chapter, D.A.R., and Ye Kingstowne Garden Club have given money and books. The Garden Club has also beautified the library with a succession of flower arrangements and has also undertaken to landscape the library entrance.

An Historical Room has recently been created through the generosity of Mrs. Joseph Warren Greene, Jr. who provided the redecoration of an upstairs room, shelving, and window hangings. Mr. Norman B. Smith's contribution of captain's chairs, a trestle table, and an antique Terry clock have also furnished the room which is now a delight for students of local history.

INCREASED INTEREST

A phenomenal increase in the use of the library has occurred since reorganization commenced. The big red door swings like a pendulum all day long as children and adults come and go in search of books and information. Total book borrowing has shot up 20%. Children have increased their use of the library by 89%. Patterns in reading have undergone a remarkable change. Adults now borrow 58% more Nonfiction books and children 92% more than in former years, indicating a sharp trend toward more serious reading.

Library resources are taxed by the increasing demands of juvenile readers: there are not enough books to meet their needs. More books are urgently needed to provide for the many different reading levels within each grade. Many youngsters, thirsting for knowledge are turned away because there are no books available within their reading comprehension.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Because of the inadequacies of the children's book collection the recently organized Friends of the North

Kingstown Free Library group, which has been working to develop cultural opportunities for the town, plans a drive for funds for children's books. Under the dynamic leadership of Mrs. Charles F. Ayers, Chairman of the Friends, a weekly story hour for pre-schoolers, a youth canteen, educational movies for sub-teens, a homemakers' forum, and little theater and senior citizen groups have already been organized. Lectures have also been provided, ranging in subject from Brazil to Rhode Island archaeology and Little America. Their new objective is an adequate children's book collection.

The North Kingstown Free Library plays an important role in the lives of local residents. Young and old use its resources. They come in for books on pirates and pyramids, math and wedding toasts, snakes, seashells and ballet. They find information on making curtains, staining shingles, prospecting for uranium, and curing a sick pup. They ask for everything from "a good corny love story" to the "Metaphysics of Aristotle" and find knowledge, guidance, recreation and inspiration for the asking on the library shelves.

Librarian Retires - Made Many Improvements

The North Kingstown Standard
July 29, 1965

Ten years ago, one of the encyclopedias on the shelves of the North Kingstown Free Library was an 1881 edition, which made no mention of automobiles, airplanes, or radio. It informed readers that uranium was a worthless metal, not to be found in the United States!

With thousands of other out-of-date volumes that had not moved off the shelves in some fifty years, the encyclopedia was discarded after being replaced with a modern counterpart. Today, the books in the library number 12,000, and use of the books has increased 277%.

Ten years ago, the library was faced with major problems. The porch columns of the handsome building were rotting away; electrical wiring presented a hazard; the interior was cramped and dreary, and the collection of books was obsolete. A starvation income of \$3,000 was assisting the degeneration.

Now, the building has been doubled in floor space; the interior is handsomely modernized, and includes a local history room, a music alcove, and an auditorium. What this means in terms of community service is perhaps best assured by the number of young people to be found in the library, furthering their education.

Some of the comments by younger library users are unpredictable. They may ask:

"Where are books for my size? I'm seven."

"Mrs. Librarian, do you have any prehistoric books?"

"My book is overdood and I waked up in the night to see what I have to pay."

"I need a new library card. Mine went through the washer."

Not all the comments are from the younger generation. A sailor, just returned from South Pole, declared, "That the only mail I got when I was down there was overdue notices from the library." And an elderly, housebound woman, upon receiving a box of books, said, "Since my cat died the only friends I have are in books."

Vast improvements to the physical plant, and in the services of the library, have been accomplished during the tenure of Librarian Mrs. John J. Hellewell, who will retire in August. To plan and follow through the upgrading of everything from the building itself, to the services it renders, has been a task of proportions not often faced by any librarian.

Help has come willingly, from many sources. Ye Kings Towne Garden Club has landscaped the grounds, and provided year-round flower arrangements that please so many visitors. The North Kingstown Women's Club has been generous with checks. Mrs. Joseph Warren Greene donated the decorations of a room for local history, which was furnished by the late Norman Smith.

Regional historical material has been garnered by the Main Street Association and the Daughters of the Amer-

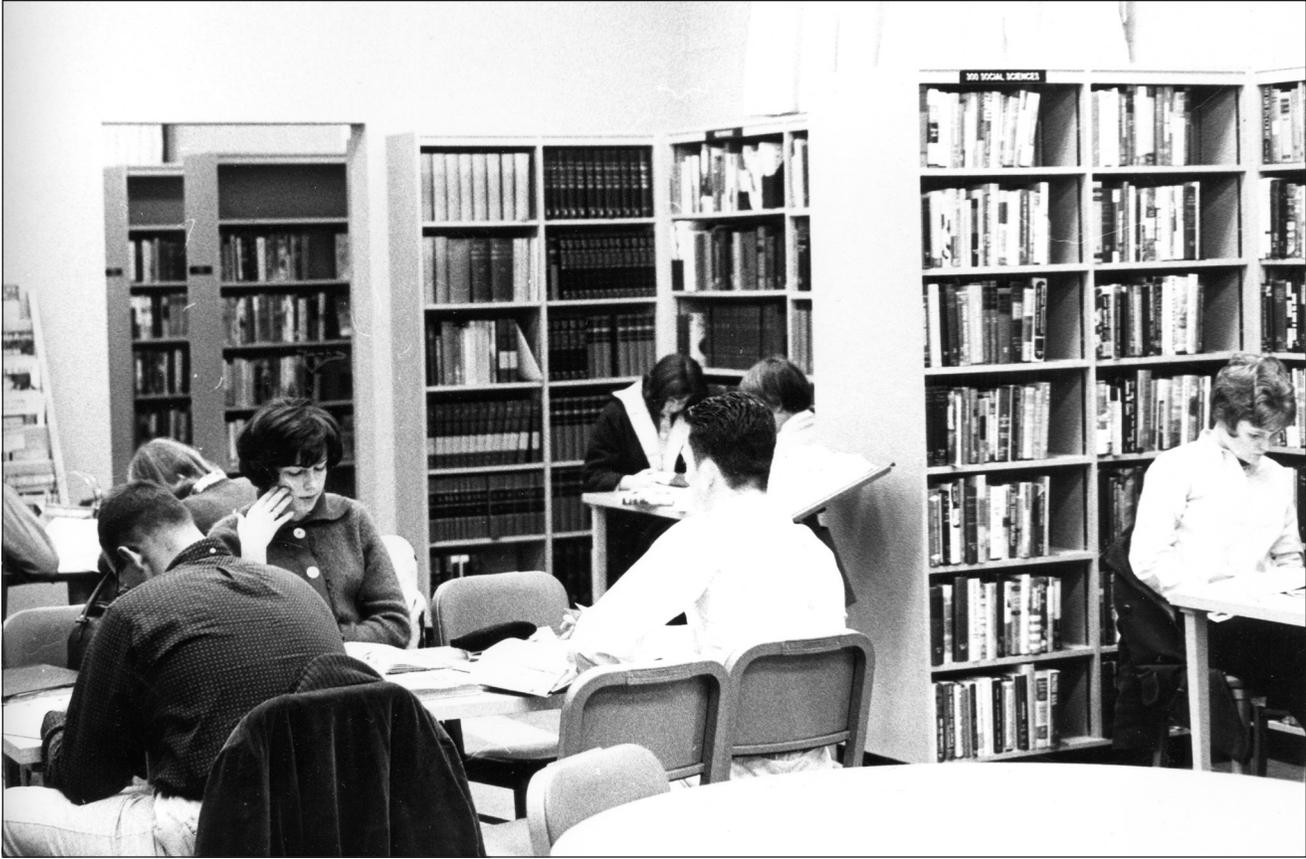


Photo courtesy of The Standard Times

ican Revolution. Mrs. Hortense Booth made a generous gift from her estate. Children have mended hundreds of books during the reorganization period; countless others have helped in many ways.

Students, who have been among the most constant users of the North Kingstown Free Library, will miss a familiar figure at the desk when Librarian Mrs. John J. Hellewell retires next month. Since taking over the library, Mrs. Hellewell has probably seen more changes than any time since the building was opened.

These include a complete revamping of the available books, systems changes; an addition to the building with: outside deck, and downstairs auditorium. Another highlight was winning the Book-of-the-Month Club Award, one of 45 such prizes given in the U.S.

A tremendous increase in library usage has taken

place during the past several years, with many readers consulting a comprehensive array of reference books. The cost of such a reference library, far beyond the means of many users, means a great deal to those who obtain benefits from use of the volumes.

Once free of her duties, Mrs. Hellewell says she expects to have time for her granddaughters, some swimming and bicycling and travel. Will she undertake any work? "Not if I can avoid it," she declares!

A trip to England is her hope to travel. With Mr. Hellewell, who is retiring from the North Kingstown School Department, she spent some time in England two years ago. She says she would like to travel by boat on the ancient, narrow English canals now being made usable after many years of neglect.

Library's 'Joan of Arc' to Retire in Victory

By GEORGE D. RIDGEWAY

Mrs. John J. Hellewell, who rejuvenated the North Kingstown Free Library 10 years ago, will retire as librarian in August.

"When I came here we had a collection of 10,000 books, most of which had never moved from their place on the shelves," the librarian from Saunderstown said.

"After we threw out half the books, we doubled the circulation and it's been going up ever since."

The circulation has gone up 277 per cent and the library has been enlarged to hold more than 40,000 books.

"One of the most recent encyclopedias when I started here was a Britannica dated 1881. It had no mention of automobiles or planes and said uranium was worthless metal," she said.

The encyclopedia may have been a joke then but the reference books are considerably better now, as shown by the large number of students who use the library for work. "On a busy school night every chair will be filled," Mrs. Hellewell said.

The youngsters can thank Mrs. Hellewell, her staff and town officials for the improvements in the Brown Street structure.

First built in 1898 with a \$10,000 bequest, the building fell into disrepair and in 1955 its only income was \$3,000 a year from the town. "The library was starving because the money wasn't enough," Mrs. Hellewell said.

A study was made through the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, which found the library was



Checking books at North Kingstown Free Library is Mrs. John J. Hellewell, librarian, soon to retire.

—Journal-Bulletin Photo

far below national standards. In 1955 taxpayers tripled the town appropriation at their financial town meeting without a dissenting vote.

The first floor was enlarged in the rear and a wide window and porch were built looking out on Wickford Harbor. In 1961 another drive for funds, augmented by the town, resulted in further modernization.

A South County room to house local historical material, a basement auditorium and music alcove were among the improvements.

The library, with a budget of \$18,000, is now supported by a town appropriation and state aid. A group called "Friends of the Library" is comprised of local contributors "who have helped put the frosting on the cake," Mrs. Hellewell said.

Last year the library won

a Book of the Month Club award for outstanding service to the community. The award carried with it a \$1,000 prize.

Mrs. Hellewell, who is a graduate of the Drexel Institute School of Library Science in Philadelphia, worked in Philadelphia and Cleveland and at the Quonset Naval Air Station library before taking over at the North Kingstown library.

She grew up in Wakefield, where her father was rector of the Church of the Ascension for many years. Her husband retired this spring as chairman of the science department at North Kingstown High School.

One novelist she wants to read with her new-found free time is the Anthony Trollope, who like her father was Brit-

Continued on Next Page

Librarian

Cont. From Preceding Page

ish and a clergyman. Another work high on her list is "The Oregon Trail," by Francis Parkman because "I've never read it and I feel I should."

Although North Kingstown is a rural town, she has found readers' interests diverse. "They come for everything. A youngster will ask for a book on nuclear physics and his grandfather will want something corny."

The persons using the library and their reading habits, have changed in recent years, according to the librarian. Developments in space have resulted in new interests in science, she said.

Mrs. Hellewell, who views her work with a light sense of humor, commented that the number of children using the library has grown greatly and led to some amusing incidents.

She remembered finding one boy doing callisthenics between the shelves while reading a propped-up book on physical fitness.

Her monthly reports to the library's trustees are crammed with anecdotes and she has learned much about Wickford's past. She has no intentions of writing a local history but she thinks "we need one badly."

After she retires from the library, she looks forward "just to having some time to savor things a bit more. I'll build sand castles with my granddaughter, dust off the old bicycle and travel a little."

PROVIDENCE SUNDAY JOURNAL

JULY 25, 1965

Chapter 4: Edna “Teddy” Lager — Library Director 1965-1979

By Elizabeth Donovan

March 2015

I wish I had had the chance to work under the direction of Edna “Teddy” Lager. By all accounts she was a wonderful manager who set high expectations for the workplace, yet was able to maintain a warm relationship with the staff. Like a good parent she fostered each employee’s desire to want to do her very best. In my 31 years (and counting) at the library I have heard only glowing words of praise in reference to her. I first met her at a library Christmas potluck and got to know her better as the years went on. In recent years she and I would often chat on Wednesday mornings when she and her husband Carl would stop at the library after her weekly hair appointment.

When we decided to put together this book with input from past directors I was more than happy to volunteer to interview Teddy. I know her place in the history of this library is an important one and I wanted to hear her story. When I called to set up a time to get together she told me she would be glad to talk with me but that she thought she wouldn’t have much to add to the story. In typically humble fashion she reiterated this-right before we began our first three hour chat.

What most impressed me about Teddy during our talks was what I had already sensed about her. She is warm and yet direct. She is confident, yet shares the credit for all her accomplishments with those who worked with her. Not surprisingly, people are her number one priority.

Teddy recounts that as a child she spent much of her time in the public library in North Andover, MA. She started high school at the tender age of 10 and soon began working at the library after school and continued during summer vacation while she was at Simmons College. The librarian in North Andover, herself a graduate of Simmons, gave Teddy a lot of responsibility—on occasion going so far as, to Teddy’s amazement, to leave her to run the library on her own; she encouraged her and became her mentor. Teddy credits that experience with having given her the confidence to later run a public library on her own.

Following marriage and a stint at Drexel College in Penn-

sylvania, Teddy came to Rhode Island when her husband Carl took a job as an aircraft engineer at Quonset. As a mother of four children, Teddy was a busy homemaker. Her professional training at Simmons was put to good use in her volunteer work at the Davisville Elementary School Library and for a short time at a job in the reference department at the Providence Public Library. But there were bigger things in the future for Teddy.

I was surprised to learn that though she and her family had lived in North Kingstown since 1947 she had never set foot in the library on Brown St. before she applied for the job as library director in 1965. Living in the north end of town her family had gravitated to East Greenwich as their center for shopping and library going. Her first impression of the library that she was soon to head was that it was cozy and quaint. She wasn’t there for long before she realized that it was also too small for the population that it served.

She began to lobby the Board of Trustees to expand the library but the initial response was to maintain the sta-



Edna “Teddy” Lager

tus quo. In 1967, with new members on the Board, and looking to the future, expansion became a serious consideration. The Board of Trustees, comprised of members Arthur Brown, Edward Ekman, Kenneth Hogberg, James Koper, Elizabeth Rodman, Mary Whitford, and Phebe Wilson, worked tirelessly to pursue the best possible library for the people of North Kingstown.

In 1972, the voters of North Kingstown showed their support for a new library by passing a bond issue for up to \$1.3 million without a site having been chosen or a building design being drawn. The Board forged ahead. Despite some negative reactions to the amount of money being spent, the closing of Quonset Naval Air Base, a proposal by the (then, but not for long) town manager to build a new town hall with the bond money approved for the library, and a lot of flap about the decidedly un-Colonial look of the design, construction on the new library on Boone Street began in June 1974.

When I asked Teddy if the time period surrounding the construction project was very stressful she said, “The building committee and the construction workers were building the library. I had a library to run.” The new library opened to much fanfare in December 1975.

Certainly the new library offered more—more space that soon began to fill with people, more bookshelves that needed books, more staff that needed to be hired. Growing into the building was a gradual process. Teddy credits Reggie Leeper, then in charge of circulation and technical services, with the library’s smooth operation, calling her the “best housekeeper”—she kept the front of the house running. She recalls a sign that Reggie kept on her desk that spoke to all the changes: “We’re not in Kansas anymore Toto.”

While Teddy did retire before computers revolutionized libraries, technological changes did nonetheless have an effect on library operations. Teddy’s favorite invention, far and above anything else, was the copy machine. Oh, to not have to use carbon paper anymore!

Teddy retired in 1979 completing a fourteen-year tenure as Library Director. She remained active with the Friends of the Library and consulted with other libraries involved in building projects in the years immediately following retirement. Teddy is happy today to drive up to the library and see people coming in and out, the parking lot full, and little ones playing in the sunken garden.

In looking back over the years Teddy credits much of the success of the library to the staff. She says she started out with a wonderful crew that she inherited from previous director Gladys Hellewell. She remembers Regina “Reg-

gie” Leeper, her second-in-command, as tough and no nonsense, but soft as a marshmallow inside. Teddy had a sense that the people she hired were meant to be at the library. She hired staff with an eye to how they would do in serving the public—but she said it was mostly just her gut instinct that someone would fit in, would provide that all important warm and efficient service to library patrons. According to Teddy, people are the factor that always makes the difference—from the encouragement of her childhood mentor to the kindness and patience of building committee chair Edward Ekman during the construction of the new library; from the enduring support of the townspeople for their library to the dedication of the staff in serving those townspeople.

It seems clear to this writer that Mrs. Lager herself was meant to be at the North Kingstown Free Library and that the library and the people of North Kingstown have been forever enriched by her leadership and her graceful presence.



BOOKS, AND THEY WERE FOR SALE DURING Art Festival. Mrs. Regina Leeper and Mrs. Edna Lager helped conduct sidewalk sale of donated volumes; raised funds for Free Library.

Standard Times
July 14, 1966

Edna “Teddy” Lager: The Giant Among Us

by Susan Aylward

February 2015

Edna “Teddy” Lager, who took over the helm when Gladys Hellewell retired in 1965, is the longest serving library director in the modern age. She retired in 1979, after an illustrious career of fourteen years as library director. As a testament to the lasting impression she made on all of those she hired and led, Mrs. Lager is still beloved by every staff member who ever worked for her—even now, more than thirty years after her retirement.

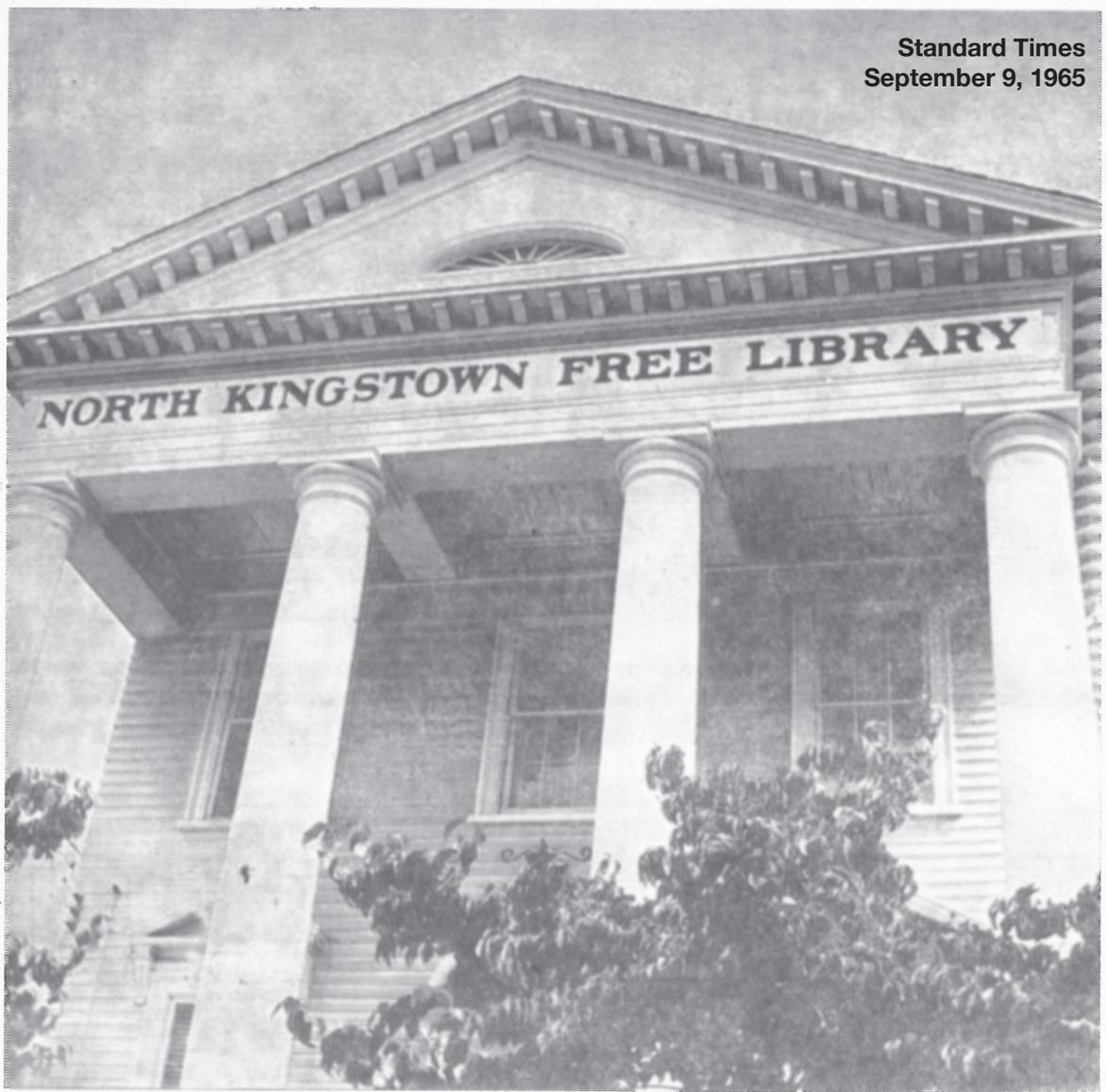
When Mrs. Lager hired new staff members, she did so with an eye as to how they were going to get along with the staff already in place. You see, she was building a family. And though we were sometimes a dysfunctional family (what family isn’t?), even the most difficult personalities among us joyfully shared a common purpose—working together to serve the library patrons and thus, to make the library indispensable to the community. When Mrs. Lager retired in March 1979, the *Standard-Times* ran a wonderful interview conducted by Carolyn Wyman. The headline was: “In her book, people come first.” Indeed, they did. She explained the following to Wyman: “A public library belongs to the public so I hire people who can relate to people and who can help provide them with the service they want.”

In the fall of 1975, when I applied to be a high school volunteer at the library, I was a painfully shy introverted seventeen-year-old who could barely make coherent sentences come out of my mouth. How on earth did Mrs. Lager see beyond that impediment to find something that would give her any confidence I could grow into a productive member of her library family? Yet, she focused beyond my shyness to encourage my plan to become a librarian; she counseled me that a strong liberal arts background as an undergraduate was what was needed as a firm basis for graduate library school (likely the best piece of professional advice I ever received). And she simply has this way about her that makes you feel cared for and important and valuable. She has a soft-spoken, lilting voice that is filled with joy and confidence, but without any trace of ego. She is always quick to smile as she talks, a smile that is sincere and warm and caring. And her eyes crinkle at the corners as she smiles and they are filled with light, a light that simply envelops the person to whom she is talking. Is there any question that her library family would have followed her to the ends of the earth?



Teddy Lager’s pitch perfect instincts about people; that shared sense of common purpose to serve the public that she instilled in all of us; a genuine warmth and caring for her library family, which included not only the staff, but every member of the community we served—these examples of leadership, service, and dedication are truly laudable. She is the giant among all of us who have served as Director of the North Kingstown Free Library.

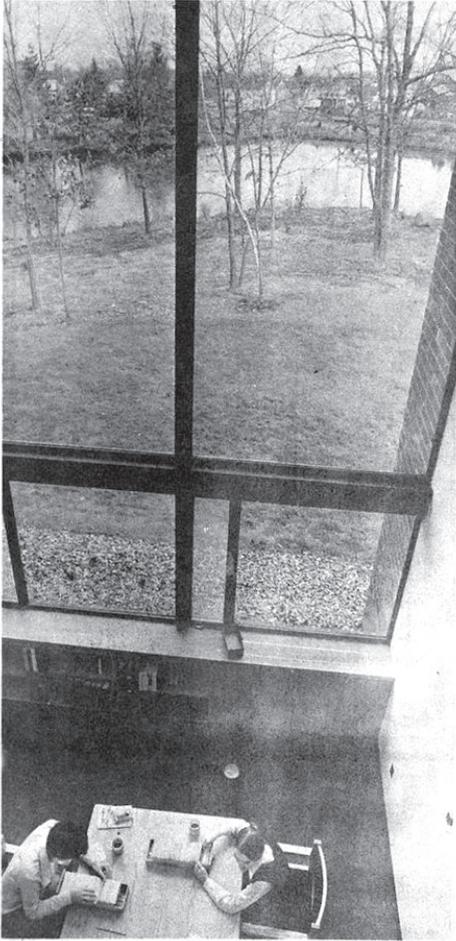
When I was promoted to the position of director in 2002, the Trustees offered to buy new furniture for the director’s office or to redecorate the office. I said, no, thank you, because, as far as I was concerned, the director’s office was Mrs. Lager’s—always and forever—I was simply holding it and the director’s position in trust; and to make any substantive changes in the office would be somehow to erase her presence. I needed to have this physical connection to her and to the history of the new library to remind me that were it not for her vision and leadership, there would be no gorgeous modern library on a hill overlooking a saltwater cove for me to direct. As long as I sat at her oak desk, Mrs. Lager was still very much with me as I attempted to live up to the confidence she placed in me from that very first day when she interviewed me in her second floor office of the old library as the staff packed the books on the floor just below us.



NEW LIBRARIAN IS MRS. Carl E. Lager, of 41 Park Side Way who is carrying on program of improvements started under her predecessor, Mrs. John Hellewell recently retired. One of most handsome in New England, the early facade is backed up by modern interior, and wide selections on shelves that show continuing increase in use by community residents.

Facilities include a record library with player, and excellent reference section that is much used by students in local schools. Open air deck at rear of building also provides entrance from public parking lot offers view of harbor for library users.

Standard Times
December 4, 1975



VIEWS like this can be enjoyed through any of the library's windows such as this one overlooking a park area being prepared by the Wickford Lions Club.



MRS. EDNA LAGER, librarian in North Kingstown for 10 years, finally has enough room for the programs she and the library trustees always wanted to accomplish.

A library photo tour



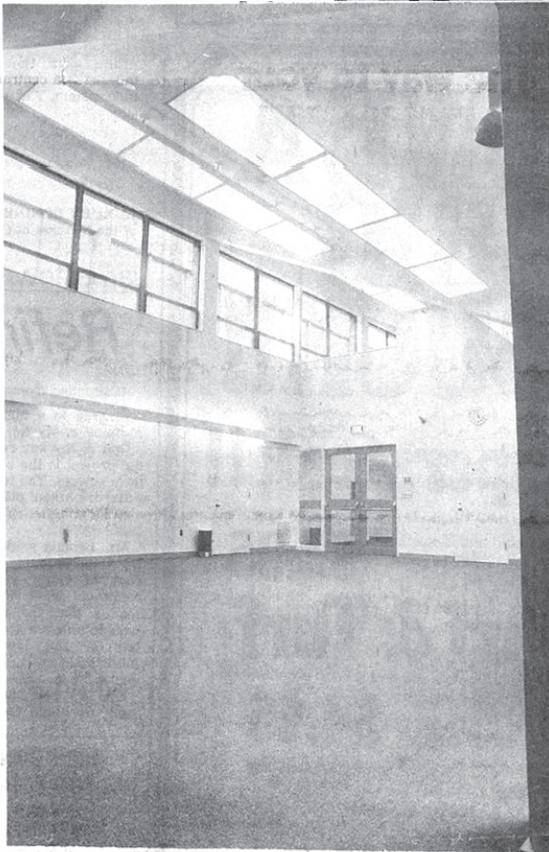
THIS ENTIRE lower floor is devoted to non-fiction and reference material with ample study areas. Furniture is light stained oak.



VIEWED at dusk from across Academy Cove, the new North Kingstown Free Library appears to fit in perfectly with its surroundings. This water-level photo is deceptive, however. The building is actually well above hurricane flood level.



CONTROL DESK offers enough space for staffers as well as patrons.



COMMUNITY ROOM can accommodate meetings of up to 100 persons. Door at right leads to storage area for chairs. Not visible is a complete serving kitchen.

Standard Times
December 4, 1975



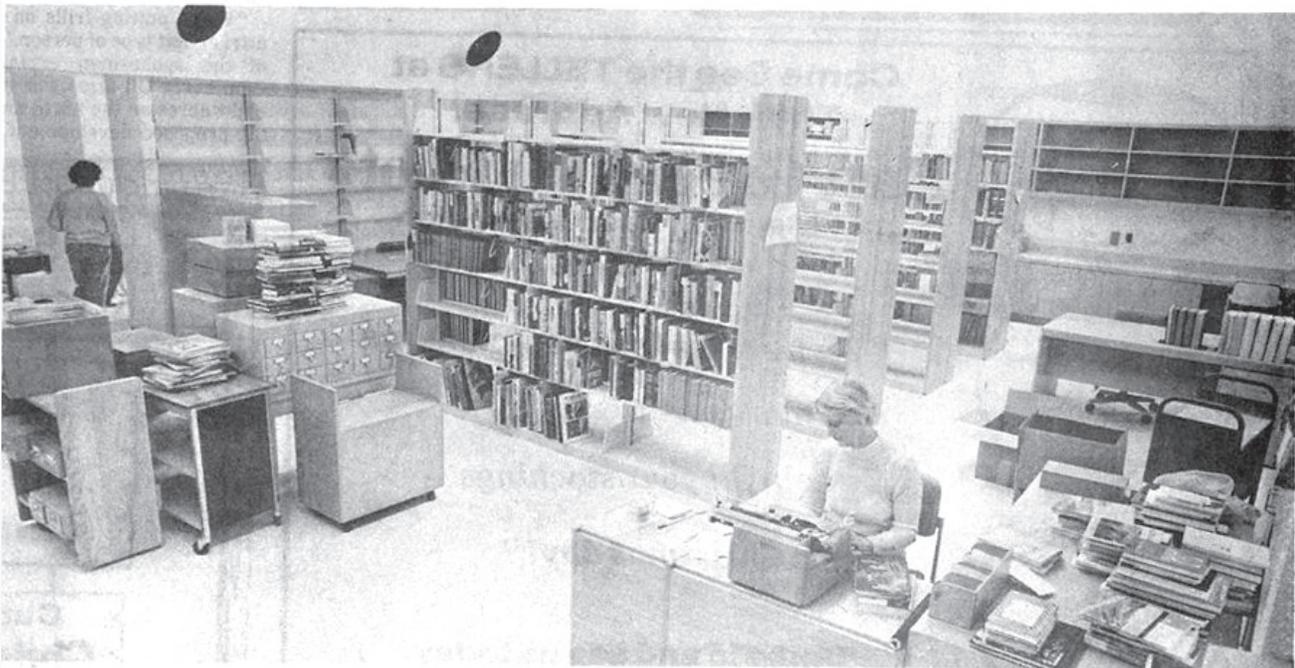
DEBORAH BRENNAN, an assistant librarian, is in charge of preparing the Wickford Room, which will house rare and unusual materials pertaining to the history of North Kingstown.



Photos by
Bob Izzo

THE LIBRARY has the first public elevator in North Kingstown making travel between the two floors easy for the elderly and handicapped. Raymond Howe, clerk of the works for the construction of the building notes the elevator will also facilitate moving loads of books.

Standard Times
December 4, 1975



SPACIOUS workroom will be used to process new books and repair old ones.

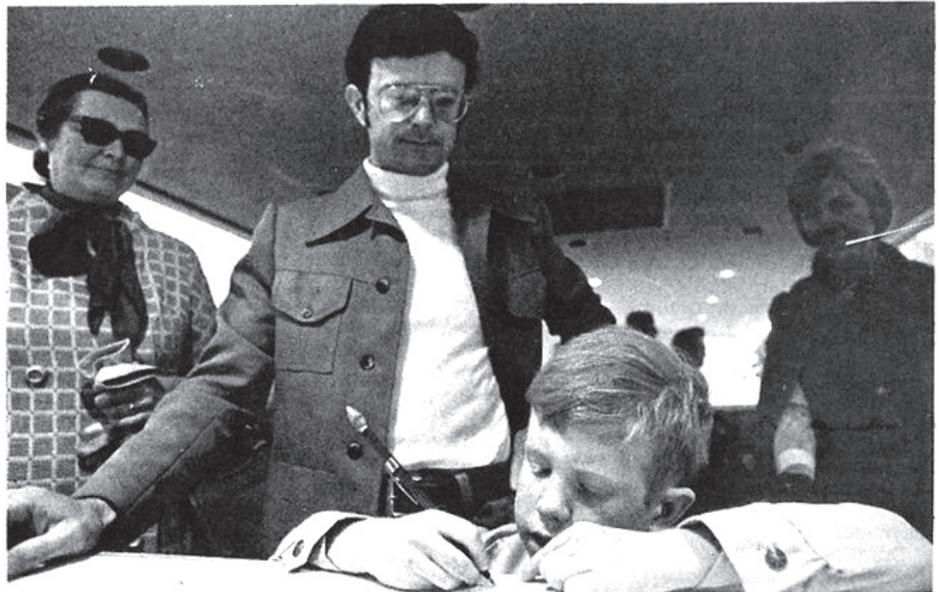


THE HONOR of cutting the traditional ribbon at the dedication of North Kingstown's new library Sunday went to Kim Marshall and Keith Fisher, two first graders who were among the first children to take out cards at the library.

Standard-Times

photos by

David Perrotta



KEITH FISHER son of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Fisher was among the first to sign in for a card to take advantage of the new \$1.3-million library.

Standard Times
December 18, 1975

300 attend dedication

NK library makes 'official' debut

More than 300 persons turned out Sunday afternoon to witness the dedication of the new North Kingstown Free Library and to tour the new \$1.3 million facility.

Threatening skies cooperated sufficiently to allow the dedication ceremonies to take place outside the building where the town had erected a reviewing stand.

The event began at 2 p.m. when the St. Bernard Braves Drum and Bugle Corps presented a marching concert in front of the library.

Master of ceremonies was James Koper, a library trustee who introduced participants in the ceremony including the Rev. Charles F. Fountain, pastor of St. Bernard, who gave the invocation; Rep. Harold D. Cutting, (R. Dist. 45) who presented a flag to the library; the Rev. Canon Peter L. Spencer, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church who gave a prayer of dedication; Kenneth Hogberg representing the library building committee in lieu of Edward Ekman Jr., the chairman, who had to be out of town and the library trustees, headed by Miss Elizabeth Rodman.

Also taking part in the ceremonies were representatives of The Architects Collaborative Inc., designers of the building, J. Arvid Johnson Inc., contractors, Miss Jewel Drickamer, head of the state Department of Library Services, Frank Cain, town council president and Rudolph A. Hempe, editor of the Standard-Times who presented a gift from the newspaper (see other story).

Keith Fisher and Kim Marshall, two first grade children who were among the first youngsters to get library cards at the new building, had the honor of cutting the traditional ribbon in front of the main entrance.

Carey Perry, commander and Robert Bragg, past commander of the American Legion Post 12 which donated the library flagpole, participated in the flag-raising ceremony.

Acknowledgements were made to the Wickford Lions Club which is constructing the Lions Memorial Park next to the library overlooking Academy Cove and to the Ye Kings Towne Garden Club which will create a sunken

garden on the library grounds. Both projects will be finished and dedicated next spring.

Mr. Hogberg, chairman of the building committee was unable to attend because he was in

Washington making a presentation to the Select Education Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in support of the Library Service and Construction Act.



MEMBERS of American Legion Post 12 raise the flag on the pole the post donated for the library's grounds.



COMPLETELY oblivious to the dedication activity elsewhere in the new library building, Timothy Marshall of 147 Chatworth Road is at an age when it's easy to eschew books in favor of wooden blocks.

Standard Times
December 18, 1975



69-YEARS worth of issues of the old Wickford Standard are contained on microfilm in this gift-wrapped box that was presented to Miss Elizabeth Rodman, chairman of the library board of trustees by Rudolph A. Hempe, editor of the Standard-Times on behalf of the donor, the Wilson Publishing Company. The microfilm virtually completes the library's collection of the Wickford Standard and its successor, the Standard-Times.

Newspaper gives library 69-yr. microfilm collection

For the first time, a virtually complete microfilm collection of past issues of the old Wickford Standard and its successor the Standard-Times is now available for public use in North Kingstown.

At Sunday's dedication ceremonies of the new North Kingstown Free Library, the Wilson Publishing Company, parent firm of the Standard-Times, presented to the library a microfilm collection of past issues of the newspaper dating from 1888, when the paper was founded through 1959. The library already had the paper's

back issues on microfilm from 1960 up to the present.

The gift, arranged for by Frederick J. Wilson Jr., Standard-Times publisher, marks the first time that a virtually complete collection of the paper's past issues has been available in North Kingstown.

In years past, many bound volumes of the Wickford Standard were lost in hurricane flood waters in 1938 and again in 1954. Up until now, the only nearly-complete collection of past Standard issues was owned by the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence. The society commissioned the Bell and Howell firm of Ohio to microfilm the old issues several years ago.

To obtain a microfilm collection for the library, the Standard-Times contacted Bell and Howell and asked them to make copies of the master negatives filed in the firm's vault. Normally the process takes two months before shipment can be made but because of the fact that the library dedication was already scheduled, the firm made a

special effort to make and ship the films within a week's notice.

The films contain all issues of the old Standard from August, 1888 up through 1959 with the exception of a two-year period from August, 1914 through July, 1916. For some unexplained reason, the Rhode Island Historical Society is missing the issues during those two years.

Personnel at the library and the Standard-Times are looking for any copies of the Standard during that two-year period. Anyone who has any copies printed during that two-year period is requested to loan them to the library or to the Standard-Times so that they may be photographed for inclusion in the library's collection.

Mrs. Deborah Brennan, an assistant librarian, is currently indexing the Standard and the Standard-Times for public use.

Rudolph A. Hempe, Standard-Times editor who presented the gift on behalf of Wilson Publishing, said the addition to the library's collection brings to North Kingstown a vital record of the town's past in a form and location convenient to the public.

The Trustees
of the
North Kingstown Free Library
cordially invite you to the
Dedication
of the new library at
100 Boone Street
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
December 14, 1975 at 2:30 p.m.

Our New Library
opened to day
December, 4 1975.
We, first year
students, say,
"Thank you to all
who helped"
Beth Russell Wickford Elementary School

Usage climbs markedly

Library big hit in first year

When the North Kingstown Free Library first opened its doors to the town in November, 1975, almost everyone knew it would be a success.

And now the library has the facts to prove it.

The library's first year report shows increases in all three categories used to measure its growth. Circulation of books is up 32 percent, new acquisitions are up 12 percent and the number of persons who hold library cards is up 25 percent.

"The new building and its setting have been almost universally accepted by the public," says Elizabeth Rodman, chairman of the library's board of trustees. "The building has been generally quite trouble-free and any adjustments needed have received prompt attention from the contractors involved."

Indeed, one of the library's finest assets is its location overlooking an inconspicuous cove in the rear of Wickford's main business district. A comfortable and modern interior provides a relaxing atmosphere for reading and studying.

But equally important has been the variety of activities, exhibits and other programs the library has offered in its first year, Miss Rodman said.

A reference service for children and adults has grown rapidly. A depository of documents, proposed by the town council, is a valuable addition to the reference department she said adding that weekly exhibits and shows make the library more than a place to read.

A Writer's Workshop, supported by the state Council in the Arts and the South County Regional Library Center was tied in with weekly exhibits, including poetry, art, black history, gardening and crafts.

Other programs included creative dramatics for adults and children, weekly pre-school story hours, a children's summer reading program and feature movie presentations.

Miss Rodman reported "excellent rapport" between staff members and school library personnel as well as with the town council.

"The success of these efforts, plus the determination of the library administration to constantly search for new and positive ways to serve the public, give support to the trustees' belief that the library will continue to grow and be an outstanding recreational, cultural and informational resource center for the town," Miss Rodman wrote in her report.



(Standard-Time

Sign of success

THE REGISTRATION CARD files are filling up rapidly at North Kingstown Free L where record growth has resulted ever since the library moved into modern qu: Mrs. Linda Vancini is one of several staff members.

Standard Times
March 31, 1977

NK librarian

In her book, people come first

By CAROLYN A. WYMAN

There is a stereotype of a librarian as being mousy, unattractive women, dwarfed by thick glasses, absorbed by the written word and totally unable to relate to human beings.

There may be a place for this kind of librarian at a research company, a college or an historical society, but there is no place for them at the North Kingstown Free Library.

"A public library belongs to the public so I hire people who can relate to people and who can help provide them with the service they want," Edna Lager says simply.

And that's exactly the kind of librarian she has been for the last 13-and-a-half years. Mrs. Lager, 58, retired as librarian of the North Kingstown Free Library yesterday.

She was graduated from the Simmons School of Library Science, married and worked briefly at the Drexel Institute of Technology Library and the Providence Public Library between pregnancies. But she waited until her youngest son was in school before she left home to work full-time. People who know her say that she never really left her family or stopped keeping house. She just moved her base of operation to the North Kingstown Free Library.

"She put together most of the staff herself and because she is so warm and wonderful, she set the tone that carries through the whole staff and right on through to the patrons in terms of service," said Deborah Brennan, former assistant librarian and now director designee.

Shirley Payne, now children's librarian, has worked with Mrs. Lager at the North Kingstown Free Library since 1965. "She has a very good relationship with the public and the staff and the trustees. That's the key to the whole thing really."

There is a standing joke among the staff about how Mrs. Lager "feeds them well." She's always bringing in food for coffee breaks. "Teddy" Lager (a childhood nickname that stuck) has also been known to mop up a floor during a rain-storm or bathe a small knee skinned in a fall on the walk just outside the building between more conventional administrative chores. By her mere presence, the short, grey-haired woman with the shy smile makes the sleek, new library building seem like an old friend.

"Now don't forget what she has done professionally in terms of the new library," Ms. Brennan warned, after discussing all of this. "When she was hired, this was

basically a two-person library, something like Saunderstown is now. Now we have this incredible new building, and 17 people on the staff. It's mind-boggling!"

"Without taking anything away from the Board of Trustees, Teddy was the one who really pushed to turn this into a professional library service," she continued. "She had worked at the Providence Public Library and she was one of the first to realize what a library really could be."

"I came into a gem of a little library," Mrs. Lager counters. "I followed the first professional librarian the library had ever had and a major reorganization."

In 1954, the North Kingstown League of Women Voters had evaluated the library according to American Library Association standards and were able to get a larger town appropriation for it in 1955. The result was a massive weeding of worn and obsolete volumes (Among the items discarded was an 1881 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* which made no reference to automobiles, airplanes and radios and informed its readers that uranium was a worthless metal.) and eventually, an addition which doubled the space in the Brown Street Greek Revival building (now the town hall annex).

And yet by early 1966, Mrs. Lager realized that the library would have to grow larger still. She spent a few years stumping for it, but once again directs the credit hither and yon.

"It was the people who came out and approved the bond issue who are really responsible for this building," she insists. "We had a good plurality."

The building committee, which was composed of the Board of Trustees and the town's engineer and planner, unanimously agreed on a modern architectural firm despite the colonial tradition of the town.

"I like the flexibility of an open building — the ability to adapt the layout of the departments according to changing needs. I was also told that this kind of building could better fit the contours of the site."

Near the geographic center of North Kingstown and overlooking a salt pond, the site was perfect, almost everyone agreed. But Teddy is still sensitive to a residue of feeling against the modern design of the building.

In addition, the library still suffers the effects of the overcrowding that plagued it for so many years.

"In the early days, our purchases were aimed at circulation. We didn't have room for a lot of unpopular titles. For



RETIRING LIBRARIAN Edna "Teddy" Lager in the new North Kingstown Free Library.

(Times photo)

instance, we might have had a half-dozen psychology books, all of the popular variety. Now we are trying to fill it out with Freud and Jung."

Circulation turnover here is still almost five times the collection. "This is a library-oriented community," Mrs. Lager explains. "A third of our circulation is in juveniles so the adult must be encouraging them. Most kids have to be driven here."

The library is strong in their reference collections, both for children and adults. It is weak on audio-visual aides such as might be found in schools, because that is where Mrs. Lager feels they belong. She believes that computers are the thing of the future — and of the present.

"I just got a letter from URI today," she said, searching under a stack of files that she is cleaning out for her successor. "They have a computer there that can locate a requested book that is not anywhere in Rhode Island." No doubt, machines like that will eventually be used by the North Kingstown staff for information retrieval and circulation records but she hates to think of the day when patrons will read a mystery from a screen.

"I may be old-fashioned," Mrs. Lager said apologetically. "But I like books."

She usually reads a novel or a mystery in the evening while her husband Carl watches TV. Mr. Lager is a former Navy engineer who took an early

retirement when Quonset closed down. Now he wants her to do the same thing.

"We want to travel and visit our grandchildren, and my job has been the only thing keeping us back," she explained.

Teddy's interest in books and library work was inspired by her relationship with a librarian in her native North Andover, Mass. Now, Mrs. Lager's position will be taken by the woman who has been her assistant librarian for the last four years.

"Needless to say I was

delighted to hear about the appointment. Debbie has served the public directly because of the time she has spent on the reference desk and she knows what the patrons are asking for. I think she will do an excellent job."

Asked about the kind of influence she thinks she will have on Ms. Brennan's tenure, she said, "Anytime I have given her any advice I've always said, 'This is only my idea. My way. You'll have to find your own.'"

Chapter 5: Regina “Reggie” Leeper — Second-in-Command 1960-1985

Regina “Reggie” Leeper: The Librarian’s Librarian

by Susan Aylward

February 2015

Throughout her 25-year career at the North Kingstown Free Library, Regina “Reggie” Leeper had a number of titles: Assistant Librarian, Head of Circulation, Head of Technical Services. Fancy titles aside, she quite simply “ran the joint.” She was the library’s chief operating officer for three directors, an unsung hero who taught me practically everything I ever knew about providing library service (graduate library school notwithstanding). She was the quintessential librarian’s librarian—a smart, exacting, detail-oriented taskmaster who tolerated no nonsense; had very high expectations of the staff; and in her zeal to keep everything running smoothly for her directors, she instilled a healthy fear in all of us (including those directors). Yet, she was secretly the biggest softie—a giving, kind-hearted woman who underneath the tough exterior had great empathy and a fondness for underdogs (especially painfully shy 17-year old high school students who worked hard and paid attention).

Though I began my library life as a page, putting books back on the shelf, it wasn’t long before Mrs. Leeper started scheduling me at the circulation desk. She was desperate for what she referred to as “warm bodies” to fill big gaps in the staff schedule because the increase in business at the new library was more than what anyone expected. Plus, there were now three desks to staff (young readers, reference, and circulation); not just one desk like the old library had. After so many childhood years of fooling with the cards without permission on Sunday afternoons while my father was cleaning the library, suddenly I was in “hog heaven” as Mrs. Leeper would say, surrounded by cards and getting paid for fooling with them!

Soon, Mrs. Leeper realized that not only did she need warm bodies for the desks, she also needed help with all of her behind-the-scenes work that kept the library humming along and so I became her apprentice; her gofer; her gal Friday—though I was not nick-named Friday. Everyone at the library called me “Susie” because that is what my father called me. But there was already a Susan on the staff (Susan Berman) and Mrs. Leeper thought

it would be too confusing for me to be “Susie.” So, she called me “Louie” instead; a name she coined from my middle name Lewis (my mother’s maiden name).

For six years, while I finished high school, earned my Bachelor’s Degree in English and my Master’s Degree in Library Science, I was Mrs. Leeper’s gal “Louie” and every day I spent with her was an education in the prac-



(Photo by Bob Wadman)

Retiring

REGINA LEEPER was honored by the North Kingstown Free Library recently in observance of her upcoming retirement in July when she will end 25 years of service. She works with the library technical services and instituted the library’s record collection. After retirement, she’ll be moving to Maine.

The Standard-Times, April 25, 1985

tical aspects of librarianship: maintaining the condition of the collection; keeping library records in good order; conducting the business of the library; and scheduling the staff. She taught me to pay attention to details; to listen carefully; to be frugal with taxpayers' money; and to keep my eyes on the prize, which was always serving the library patrons first. Because she was both tough and kind and she was dedicated to serving the library patrons, she was particularly adept in trying situations with some of our more challenging folks. We had one gentleman who came in routinely on Friday nights at closing time. He was usually well on his way to being intoxicated and he often wanted to borrow something from the classical music collection that was difficult to find. Mrs. Leeper would come to our rescue from the back room where her desk was located; she would pay little attention to the fact that he was drunk, though she was never afraid to tell him to behave himself; she always found him just the recording he wanted (she had built the classical music collection herself after all), and then he left happily to walk home and enjoy the record.

The staff schedule was one of her greatest feats of organization, a rotating two-week schedule that required full-time staff to work only two Saturdays a month. Though the schedule has now been automated, the framework of it was designed by Reggie Leeper. She drafted the schedule in pencil on graph paper, usually only once or twice a year, posting weekly changes and substitutions on the staff room bulletin board. I kept copies of her schedules—in her handwriting—from thirty years ago in the files in my office. And when I was particularly frustrated by some aspect of trying to find enough “warm bodies” to fill the slots at the service desks, I took comfort in looking at those old schedules and her handwriting, knowing that she had coped with the same problems I faced. I pray her originals are still there in the directors' files.

Reggie Leeper didn't much care for trying to fill holes in the schedule when people took time off (because she really didn't have many “warm bodies” to fill those holes), so she might just stare you down when you asked for time off, hoping if she stared long enough, you might decide you didn't really want the time off after all. I inherited the schedule when I was promoted into her position as Head of Technical Services when she retired in 1985 and so began my own twenty-year reign of terror in scheduling the staff. I never quite perfected the stare and though the staff thought I was difficult and they were grateful for voicemail and later, for email so they didn't have to approach me directly, I don't think I instilled quite the same amount of terror that Mrs. Leeper was able to instill in all of us.

Almost as soon as I finished graduate library school in the summer of 1981, the library's cataloger left the NKFL and the job was open. Though I wanted the job more than anything, my main thought was Mrs. Leeper. If I got the job, how could I possibly tell her I couldn't be her gal Louie any longer? Thanks to Deborah Brennan, who had succeeded Teddy Lager as library director in 1979, I did get the job—my first professional job at the NKFL. This was the next exciting step for me—growing up at the library. But growing up means you have to give things up and it was heartbreaking for me (and for Mrs. Leeper) to give up being “Louie.” As I look back now on that time in my life and my career, I realize what a gift Mrs. Leeper was in my life and how happy I was being her gal Louie. She had such a profound effect on my life, my education as a librarian, my confidence, which grew exponentially each time she taught me some new task and she smiled her 900-watt smile at me. I don't think I ever got the stare. I hope Reggie Leeper knew how much she meant to me and how much she meant to the growth and development of the North Kingstown Free Library.



Photo courtesy of the family of Regina Leeper



REGINA LEEPER, SHOWN in photo at left, literally has her hands full, literally speaking, and they may have been all bargains! Only the eventual purchasers who bought them during the used book sale know the answer.

The sale ran for two days during the Art Festival, with book displays supervised by members of Friends of the Library, who took turns working. Subjects as diversified as "Pollyanna" and "The Horticulture of New York State" were available to browsers.

Mrs. John Hellewell, Librarian, reported that sales exceeded last year, and that many books went to students and children.

Wickford Standard
July 11, 1964



Regina Leeper and Secretary Edith Shearer at work. 1977

Chapter 6: Deborah Brennan — Library Director 1979-1985

Deborah Brennan began her career at the library in 1974.

The Accidental Librarian

by Deborah B. Coons (aka Debbe Brennan) February 2015

June, 1978. A motorcycle in the library. Not only in the library, but directly in front of the circulation desk so that everyone had to walk by—and around—it. Its purpose? Thanks to Raze Motorcycles on Tower Hill Road—to promote an upcoming library program. Yes, I was in charge of adult programming and, yes, I wanted to attract a new audience, but a motorcycle—in the library. What was I thinking?



CC Reader:

What's a motorcycle doing parked at the North Kingstown Library? That seems to be puzzling Karen Meland, 7, one of those who saw the bike this week. The motorcycle display is promoting a program on motorcycle safety that will be held at the library tonight at 7:30. (Standard-Times Photo)

That question may well have been in the minds of members of the Library Board of Trustees about six months later as they considered my application for the position of Library Director to replace the irreplaceable Teddy Lager. Add to that, that I had never run an organization, nor been responsible for a building the size and importance of our new library. I can only say I am truly grateful that the majority of the Trustees believed that I deserved a chance.

My becoming a librarian was actually an accident—I was employed as a biological technician for a “whale man” at the Graduate School of Oceanography at URI, an interesting but not very lucrative position with far too much

typing and far too little research. I was starting to ponder the need for an advanced degree when I encountered my friend Patricia Watkins walking across the GSO campus. When I asked what she was up to, she responded, “I’m going to Graduate School.” My response: “What in?” Her answer: “Library Science.” My immediate reaction was “Perfect!” —It somehow felt absolutely right. I wrote for my college transcript, applied to URI’s Graduate Library School, and was accepted. I had changed my life forever. Over the years, I have reminded Pat that if, in fact, she had replied, “An MBA,” we would likely both be rich today—but mere money doesn’t hold a candle to the riches I found in the world of librarianship.



Getting my first job in the field was a matter of another chance encounter with a friend—though from a distance with shouting as part of the story. I was with my Brownie Troop marching through Wickford in one of its wonderful parades when I heard Cynthia Carpenter calling out, “Debbe, there’s a job opening at the library!” Well, I certainly knew which library she was talking about—at that very moment I was striding past the wonderful old building with the steep marble steps that my daughters Blair and Barrie and I would climb on our frequent visits.

A job opening in my own library: This, too, sounded perfect! So again, moving quickly, I called Teddy Lager and asked if I could speak with her about the position. Imagine my dismay in our meeting when, asking about my qualifications, her first words were “Can you type?”

And here I am struggling through graduate level library courses to get a more interesting career that would never include typing another word. I was so taken aback that I literally backed off and went home discouraged and dismayed. Fortunately, my old New England common sense restored itself—I called Teddy and told her that I would be happy to type for her or anything else she wanted me to do. Fortunately, she took me at my word, I was hired and joined Teddy's library family. And a family it was, thanks to Teddy's never-ending concern, both professionally and personally, for everyone on her staff. Working together, we all came to share this concern for each other as well.

As promised, I typed, and did anything else Teddy wanted. Other early tasks included acting as projectionist for the children's story hour—I say acting in the literal sense—I lived in fear that something would go wrong, because I would have no idea how to fix it. I also had the fun of story hour readings, enjoying especially any books that required making animal sounds. (With years of reading to my girls at bedtime, I was really good at that.) Serving the other end of the age spectrum, Susan Berman and I were given the shared task of making regularly scheduled visits to local nursing homes—A heartwarming and rewarding time that also provided an invaluable bonding experience for us—our friendship continues, long distance, to this day. Teddy's true gift to me at the time was giving me the responsibility for creating exhibits and arranging for programs for our adult patrons. An early effort: An auto repair clinic for women with a companion exhibit of "to-be-identified" auto parts. Now that I think of it, that motorcycle in the library should have come as a surprise to no one.

Well, as I say, the Board of Trustees decided to give me a chance, and as of March 1, 1979, I was promoted to Library Director. Thanks to Teddy Lager, I inherited an incredible building and equally incredible staff. With its outstanding architecture symbolizing opening arms welcoming the community, the impressive structure overlooking Academy Cove was a result of the years of work by Teddy and her visionary Trustees. I also fortunately inherited Teddy's long-time staff members—Children's and Young Adult Librarian Shirley Payne and Head of Circulation and Technical Services Reggie Leeper—who had both served in the historic building on Brown Street and had successfully made the transition to the greatly increased collection that was developing in the library's new home. Reference Librarian Susan Berman, a widely respected graduate of the URI Graduate Library program, oversaw the Reference and Non-Fiction Department on the lower level. Other old-timers included Edie Shearer, who served as the library bookkeeper/accountant, and the Circulation Desk

clerks who were the public face of the library for many of our patrons. Thanks to Teddy's influence, all of us were guided by the concept that this is the people's library and that our job was, in any way we could, to help our patrons use it. This tone, set by Teddy, prepared us all to continue to offer the North Kingstown community the professional and, as importantly, the warm and welcoming service that has long marked the culture of the North Kingstown Free Library.

Yes, I had big shoes to fill, but with the support of the Board of Trustees and the entire staff I took on my important new duties—preparing and defending the library budget so that everyone had enough funds to continue to improve and enlarge the collections, being responsible for the building and its intricate (sometimes troublesome) heating and cooling system, interviewing for staff positions and so forth. My very first task was to hire Lynn Jones as my replacement as Catalogue Librarian—and when Lynn later moved away I had the pleasure of hiring as her replacement our own Susan Aylward, who herself would be named Library Director two decades later.

With the staff basically already doing what it did so well, I was free to continue carrying out two responsibilities that I had enjoyed in my previous position at the library. First, I found it extremely valuable to continue to cover the Reference Desk one evening each week—a position that offered me the opportunity to keep in touch with the needs of the community, while continually reminding me of our mission of service. Second, I remained responsible for adult public programming—work that I enjoyed but also work that I knew truly benefited the members of the community. In my view, library programs were an extension of the books on the shelves, capable of bringing information to the general public in a different and, perhaps, more accessible format. Also, when articles in the local papers called attention to the library and its services, I had seen the public relations value of public programs in reaching non-users and getting them in the door. Once they saw how friendly and helpful we were, I knew they were sure to return.

My goal? To help make the North Kingstown Free Library the cultural center of the community. The library had a strong history of offering children's programming that was developed by Children's Librarian Shirley Payne and her assistants. Weekly story hours, visiting authors like Chris Van Allsburg, and Children's Book Week and Summer Reading programs were just a few of the many events for children. I wanted to offer the same variety of programming for our adult patrons. So, over the years of my tenure, we presented an array of public programs—book discussions, lectures, concerts, and exhibits—on

a wide range of topics. Statistics from the time indicate that the number of programs for adults and children grew from 30 to 100 annually with attendance more than doubling, from 3,000 to 6,400 during my tenure. I can only imagine what those figures are today.

And what were some of these programs? We knew from experience that our patrons have an enduring interest in local history. This led to numerous programs over the years, often to packed audiences—programs such as G. Edward Prentice’s talk about the old Seaview Railroad and John and Laura Saunders’ on their boat-building family for which Saundertown was named. We also created a history-related slide lecture—a packaged program to take the library out on the road. *North Kingstown: An Illustrated History* was a group effort produced by the Friends of the Library and the North Kingstown Bicentennial Commission with a script by historian Ellen Weiss, edited by Shirley Payne and Susan Berman, and narrated by local resident Ed Williams. Soon to be transferred to an updated format, the program will continue to inform new residents and young people of the story of our historic town.

Book discussions and authors’ readings were always popular—an early example provided by the Providence Public Library was the series “Writing in Rhode Island” with notable speakers and subjects. Another popular draw was musical events, including the Lafayette Band concerts that we offered on the lower lawn each August. Programs on health and what is now called ‘wellness’ were always popular: we worked successfully with organizations and individuals such as the Bayside Regional Health Center and local psychologist Robert Pressman to offer workshops on an array of health and mental-health issues.

The library building with its handsome meeting room and gallery called out for artwork and displays and, over the years, we had outstanding exhibits like “The Celebration of the Quilt,” with films, lectures, and demonstrations on the story of quilts and quilt making; and “The Celebration of the Book,” highlighting the use of old printing presses and the making and design of rare books. Local artists were also featured—from the works of nationally known wood engraver Fritz Eichenberg to the Dud Sinker cartoons of local artist Paule Loring, as well as the now annual exhibits of artworks by North Kingstown school students and other artists and artisans.

These efforts were made possible because of the contributions from agencies such as the South County Inter-related Library System headed by Kay Hearn and the Rhode Island Department of State Library Services, both of which offered professional assistance and program support. Also to be credited are the North Kingstown Bicentennial Commission, North Kingstown Arts

Council, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, and the Providence Public Library, among others—they all strengthened our outreach efforts to the community and we could not have done it without them.

But the most important organization to be recognized for its impact on the library is without question the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library. Over my years as director, the Friends offered support in all areas of our library—Not only financial support for programs and additions to the collections, but also personal support—from weekly book repair sessions to newsletter mailings, not to mention the countless refreshments, which they served so graciously to the audiences at our many public events. A most meaningful contribution in my eyes was the Friends’ support in launching our library newsletter, *Among Friends*. Named by Shirley Payne and with its charming masthead (from a children’s program poster created by the graphic artist in the South County Regional office), *Among Friends* continues to this day to promote all of the library’s programs and services to the community.

Perhaps the most notable display at the library has been the permanent exhibit of the original Audubon bird prints that grace the walls of the meeting room. They were originally a gift from Daniel Berkeley Updike, a descendant of the town’s founders, to the first North Kingstown High School (now the Wickford Elementary School) in 1909. It was Gay Adams, one of the founders of the Friends of the Library and former principal of Wickford Elementary, who arranged for the library to acquire the prints from the School Department. Having been handsomely reframed with funds provided by the Friends of the Library, the prints were hung as a temporary exhibit in the meeting room. They were so well-received it was decided that they remain in place—where they have been appreciated by visitors to the meeting room for the past 35 years.

Interesting exhibits and programs were not our only claim to fame in the local press. Looking back through old news clippings, I see that we also made headlines on the day that the library lent a total of 1,668 books, records and magazines. The pace of nearly 150 items borrowed per hour set a record for the library, breaking the standing record of 1,441 items established on the same day the previous year. Now that was news worth sharing with the community—and with our funders in town government as well.

Over the six years of my tenure, the library continued to enlarge and improve its services to the community. Led by Shirley Payne, later joined by Paul Lefebure and Phyllis Cullen, the Children’s and Young Adult collections and activities remained a magnet for ever greater num-

bers of young people in the community. Library patrons using the Fiction Collection found increasing assistance thanks to the work of Susan Berman who, together with Shirley Payne, instituted Reader's Advisory services, training library clerks to staff the Reader's Advisor desk installed on the upper level. On the lower level, Susan continued to develop the Reference and Non-Fiction Collection as well as the special local history collection in the South County Room. One especially effective initiative was her idea of creating "Finding Aids" to the Non-Fiction Collection to guide high school students each year as they undertook their first research papers. Behind the scenes the indefatigable Reggie Leeper and her dedicated team continued to provide the support demanded by the library's growth while at the same time they staffed the very public Circulation Desk, offering a friendly welcome to all who entered our doors.

I think all of us took great pleasure in knowing that we were making the library both bigger and better. So why did I leave?

Library automation was coming to Rhode Island. The Providence Public Library was developing the technology for potentially automating the joint holdings of every library in the state. It was time for the North Kingstown Free Library to join in this effort that would revolutionize how libraries such as ours carried out their mission. Unfortunately, I was woefully lacking in the necessary expertise to undertake such an effort—and, more importantly, I also lacked the enthusiasm for doing so. I knew that what I enjoyed most and what I found most worthwhile in my library work was offering entertainment and information to the public, not only with the written word, but also with the inherent attraction of public programming. So, in 1985, I retired from my position. Under the capable direction of my successor, Shirley Payne, a recent honors graduate from URI's Library School, and with the assistance of Susan Aylward, another recent GLS graduate who planned and directed the automation project, the North Kingstown Free Library successfully entered the exciting digital library world that we take so for granted today.

In the years since my departure, what is especially heartening is that I feel that I have never left my North Kingstown Free Library family. In fact, for more than a decade I was actually able to continue to serve the library in my new career as a consultant working with Margaret Shea at the RI Department of State Library Services. As the coordinator for various projects offering arts and humanities programs to local libraries around the state, I happily offered many of them to the North Kingstown Free Library. Working with Susan Berman, who took over my programming efforts, we were able to offer a

number of statewide programs funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and other agencies, including the "Let's Talk About It" reading and discussion series; "Is There a Rhode Island Style?" a series of programs developed by the Department of State Library Services at the time of the state's 350th anniversary celebration; and "What a Difference a Bay Makes," again by the Department of State Library Services in partnership with the Rhode Island Historical Society, offering book discussions, lectures, and concerts—all celebrating the history of Narragansett Bay and its impact on the region. I am truly grateful that I was able to continue to support the ongoing effort to ensure that our library remain the cultural center of our community.

Looking back from the day I stepped into the Director's Office in March of 1979, what I believe I accomplished was to advance the library on the course set by Teddy Lager years before. Since then, the library has continued its growth as a major cultural and educational resource in the town and one of the most respected libraries in the state. During my time at the helm I was helped by an impressive group of people: the Board of Trustees chaired by my stalwart supporters, Mary Whitford and Al Henry; the Friends of the Library, especially its leaders during my tenure, Hope Arnold, Louise Gardiner, and Marian Carvisiglia; every member of the library staff—from the custodians to the department heads; and, of course, our library patrons, whose interest and enthusiasm made it a joy to work here. It is all these individuals who helped make the North Kingstown Free Library what it is today—I, for a short time, had the fun of steering it on its way.



DEBORAH B. BRENNAN is the new head librarian at the North Kingstown Free Library. She takes over for Edna "Teddy" Lager, retired after more than 13 years. A story about Mrs. Lager appears on page 2 in the South County section. (Standard-Times photo)

Debbe Brennan resigns

Librarian opens new chapter

By SANDRA DREW



(Standard-Times photo by Bob Wadman)

DEBORAH BRENNAN — closing the book on her career at the North Kingstown Free Library.

NORTH KINGSTOWN — When other libraries have turned into foreboding places called multimedia resource centers, the North Kingstown Free Library has remained a warm, inviting place.

And Librarian Deborah B. Brennan has become the smiling face eager to usher visitors through the doors.

But the library is about to lose one of its assets. Mrs. Brennan, or Debbe as she likes to be called, resigned her position and will be leaving this month.

However, Mrs. Brennan, 43, quickly squashes any speculation that the nature of the library will change in her absence. The library will remain a comfortable place where people can read a magazine or newspaper, check out books or attend a lecture on a part of South County's heritage.

In recent years, the library has grown into a major cultural and educational resource in the town. But she was not the trailblazer, simply the follower, she says.

Former librarian Edna "Teddy" Lager "had established a program of service known for its warm and friendly service," Mrs. Brennan said. "What I feel I did at the library is continue on that course."

Mrs. Lager with her 13½ years as librarian may have been a tough act to follow. Under her tutelage the library grew from a two-person staff into a professional library service.

Mrs. Lager also led the stumping for new quarters.

Previously the ever-burgeoning library was located in cramped quarters at 55 Main St. But in November 1975, it moved into the modern brick and glass structure

on Boone Street, overlooking Academy Cove.

In its new location, the library tried to offer something for everyone. And Mrs. Brennan was much a part of that.

She came to the library in the summer of 1974 as a part-time librarian aide. She was finishing up her master's degree in library science at the University of Rhode Island at the time.

She graduated that fall and continued working part-time while raising her two small children. Later she moved up to the position of librarian assistant. In 1979 she was appointed director when Mrs. Lager retired.

At the old facility, there was little room for the books, much less special programming. But programs flourished in the more spacious quarters.

As assistant director, Mrs. Brennan was in charge of adult programming. It is a job she never relinquished. Under her management, a variety of adult programs began and still continue.

The new structure was designed so it actually houses a small gallery. Since it opened in 1975, the artwork of the Wickford Art Association members, local school children and resident artists and photographers have graced the walls. Other artwork, such as sculptures, pottery and ceramics have found a place in the ample display cases.

"It such an array," Mrs. Brennan said. "I think they bring the building alive."

Lectures and other special programs have been offered. Many of these stemmed from Mrs. Brennan's own varied interests.

She is interested in quilts and

(Please turn to page 15)

Standard Times
January 10, 1985

Librarian

(Continued from page 1)

quilt-making, so last year, she organized a program called "Celebration of the Quilt."

Films, lectures and demonstrations on the history of quilts and quilt-making were offered. The library even sponsored a quilt-blocking contest.

The program proved so successful, that the library used a similar format for this year's Celebration of the Book, which focused on the book as art. A series of lectures and demonstrations highlighted the use of old printing presses and making and design of rare books.

It is a format Mrs. Brennan hopes will continue in her absence.

Mrs. Brennan is also interested in local history as are the town's residents, she said. That mutual interest had led to lecture series that brought G. Edward Prentice to the library to talk about the old Seaview Railroad and John and Laura Saunders to discuss their boat-building family for which Saundertown was named.

But Mrs. Brennan shares the credit for the library's success. The members of the Board of Trustees have been supportive and the Friends of the Library are always ready to pitch in and help.

"They have a lot of energy and I couldn't do the programming without them," Mrs. Brennan said.

An able-bodied, 22-member staff also heads the list of those to be singled out for credit.

"The staff is really the cream of the crop. They really made the library what it is," she said. "I just consider myself the person who directs the traffic."

A lot of traffic has been directed

through the library doors.

The library boasts 12,500 patrons, which is more than the adult population of the town, she said. During her tenure, the library's collection has grown from 23,000 to 67,000 volumes.

The library's circulation hit 216,000 a year ago and that figure does not reflect the numbers of people who come to the library for some other purpose than checking out a book or periodical.

Her absence will be felt.

Albert C. Henry Jr., chairman of the library's board of trustees said "the library has lost not only a most capable and dedicated director, but also an extremely helpful and kind human being. She will be missed."

Mrs. Brennan's growing interests may have influenced programming at the library, but they also cleared the way to her departure in mid-January, possibly Jan. 18.

"It was time for a change," Mrs. Brennan reflects. "When I took the job it was with the feeling that when my children were launched in their careers, I would do something different."

Her children are well on their way to establishing themselves.

Blair, a senior at URI, will be graduating soon with a finance degree. Barrie is studying ballet at the State University at New York.

Though Mrs. Brennan will be leaving the North Kingstown Free Library, libraries will not be in her past. In fact, they will be very much in her future.

She plans to take the skills she has acquired in programming and drumming up publicity to other libraries and non-profit organizations in the state. "I'd like them to learn to help promote themselves."

Her first priority, however, will be a much-needed and long-awaited vacation. But by March she plans to begin her free-lance consultation work.

The transition should be smooth and the library left in good hands. A long-time co-worker, Shirley Payne was named librarian director last week. Having come through the ranks, Mrs. Payne said she too will work to ensure that the library retains its warm and inviting atmosphere.

Still Mrs. Brennan finds leaving will not be easy.

"Patrons, staff, trustees and friends, that's really the people who have made this library," Mrs. Brennan said. "It's really the townpeople's library. I think I will really miss this."

She's turning a page in her career

But Deborah Brennan will always be a librarian

By **ARLINE A. FLEMING**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

NORTH KINGSTOWN — When Deborah Brennan came to the North Kingstown Library in 1975, she was a young mother finishing up her master's degree, working part-time as a library aide.

By 1979, she was the library's director. In these ensuing years, she has seen the North Kingstown Free Library grow into a community meeting place for people ranging from historians and artists to the elderly and toddlers. Through numerous free film programs, lectures, concerts, and exhibits, the North Kingstown Library has often served as a source of entertainment as well as information.

Much of this change has been credited to Brennan, whose focus on programming has brought three times as many events to the library, records prove, and twice as many patrons to the new facility.

Trustee Albert Henry says: "The library is always a beehive of activity. There's always some sort of event going on, from arts and crafts to lectures to films to children's events. Mrs. Brennan took what we started and really built from that."

These reasons, he adds, make it all the harder to see her resign, which she will do come January.

"**ONE OF MY** goals in becoming director was to maintain a warm atmosphere in the library," she said, noting that in a large, modern building that feeling can be elusive.

Brennan spent her first few months as a librarian in the original library building on Brown Street, an almost 100-year-old edifice with built-in charm. She witnessed the transition to the new building overlooking Academy Cove, a modern structure with an abundance of glass, fluorescent lights and tall ceilings.

One of the ways she chose to eradicate the business-like feeling the architecture evokes was to encourage a variety of entertaining programs, such as last year's "Celebration of the Quilt" and the more recent "Celebration of the Book."

"There's a certain excitement about programming," she said. "What I like to think is that by programming, people come into the library who wouldn't ordinarily."

During her tenure, she saw standing-room-only crowds for lectures on subjects ranging from the Seaview Railroad to sailing the South Pacific. There were nautical music concerts, and holiday concerts; weaving exhibits and printing exhibits.

The plethora of programming came about initially, Brennan said, because "I'm a fairly curious person. But now that we have a reputation for programming, people come to us with ideas."

She also sought to hire staff members "who are warm and nice and fine people. And they give that feeling when patrons walk in the door. The old idea of the librarian was of a strict, stern and forbidding person. I'd like to think that's not us," says the tall, smiling woman who asks to be called Debbe.

★ ★ ★

ON A MORE pragmatic level, Debbe Brennan's tenure as director saw the library being used as a pilot building for the state's energy office as an example of how energy can be conserved in a challenging structure.

Designers drew their plans for the library "before the energy crisis," says Brennan, so while the windows and high ceilings are attractive, they are not particularly efficient.

"We've successfully brought down energy costs," says Brennan, who like to think that the money saved can go to books and programs. How did they do it?

"Essentially, we turned down thermostats and lights and the staff wears sweaters."

Brennan says, "It is going to be very difficult to walk out that door," but at 43, with two daughters in college, she felt it was time to make a career change.

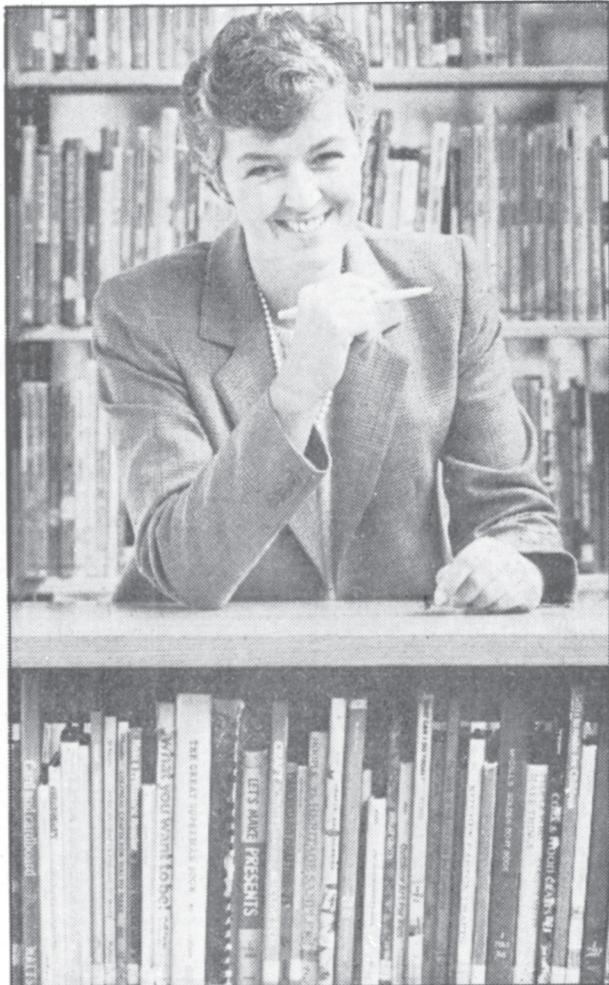
"To me it was a natural thing. When my children became launched in their individual careers, I decided to take a look at what I was doing and decide."

Brennan received her bachelor of arts degree in zoology from Wellesley College in 1963 and spent much of the next 10 years raising her daughters. She earned her master's degree in library science from URI in 1975.

She plans to remain in the library field, doing consultant work, and plans also to pursue an interest in public relations.

But Brennan adds: "You never stop being a librarian. Recently, while on an airplane, the person sitting next to me was searching for something in the newspaper. I suggested using the table of contents. It's that let-me-help-you attitude," says Brennan.

"A librarian's job is service. This is the people's library. What we do is help them use it."



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by STEVEN LaBADESSA

DEBORAH BRENNAN will resign in January as director of the North Kingstown Library.

Chapter 7: Shirley Payne — Library Director 1985-1991

Shirley Payne began her career at the library in 1965.

Memories of the North Kingstown Free Library

By Shirley Payne

March 2015

I worked at the library for more than twenty years and retired as Director. Some of the best memories of those years were from time spent in the Children's Department. Children can often surprise you. One day a mother and her young son came to my desk and asked if I could tell them where the Director was. I replied that she had just popped downstairs. The boy looked at me with amazement and said, "She popped?" We quickly established that the Director had "stepped" downstairs and was, in fact, in one piece.

Another time a class of second graders came for a tour of the library. As we walked to look at the Circulation Desk, their teacher asked the class, "Now how many of you have your own library cards?" One small boy, who came to the library quite often, raised his hand and answered proudly, "I have ten."



The town of North Kingstown has always supported its library well, first at 55 Brown Street, where I started work as a part-time library clerk at the Circulation Desk. Gladys Hellewell of Saunderstown was the library director. She had her office upstairs and worked at ordering and cataloging books and bringing the library up to modern standards. Reggie Leeper, who had worked previously at the Quonset library, was in charge of day-to-day operations. We, the small staff, were careful to follow Reggie's directions. One summer day the movie actress Joan Fontaine came in to get a library card. She was renting a small house on Gold Street in Wickford while she acted in a play at Matunuck. According to library rules, each female registrant was to be asked whether she wished to be addressed as "Miss, Mrs. or Ms." Susan Berman, who had just started work as a part-time clerk, was at the desk to register Joan Fontaine. Susan followed orders. She asked Joan Fontaine how she liked to be addressed. It was a question Joan Fontaine didn't like. "Miss!" she said emphatically as she flounced out.

In the days when I was first at the old library, Mrs. Henry Carpenter, whose husband owned the Cold Spring House, did a story hour for children. When she retired, I was given the job, which proved a challenge. Three-to-five-year-olds are quick to let you know what they like. Each child was seated in a small chair, and I stood in front holding the book open. I learned to read the stories upside down and backwards so the kids could see the pictures. We also had short movies, and I learned to run the projector.

When we moved to the new building, I was put in charge of the Children's Department. Having begun my professional education on the job, I later earned my graduate library degree. As it happened, though I had never imagined becoming Library Director, there was an opening. With my experience in every department, with my newly minted library degree and with my love of our library, I applied and became the sixth Director of the North Kingstown Free Library. My first challenge was to begin automating the library and to make it part of the statewide library network.

New library director named

WICKFORD — Shirley Payne, a staff member at the North Kingstown Free Library for about 20 years, has been named the new library director.

Mrs. Payne, who currently holds the post of coordinator of readers' services, will succeed Deborah Brennan who announced in October she was going to resign in January. Ms. Brennan is leaving to do consulting work on a free-lance basis for non-profit agencies.

The appointment of Mrs. Payne was made by the library's board of trustees, headed up by Albert C. Henry Jr. The board received numerous applications, many from out of town, for the position.

Mrs. Payne started working at the library on a part-time basis about 20 years ago. At the same time, she completed her undergraduate education which she had begun at Barnard College at Columbia University and interrupted to raise her family.

She received her bachelor of arts from the University of Rhode Island in 1975 and her masters degree in library science from URI four years ago.

"I feel very honored that the trustees have given me this opportunity to serve," she said. "This is an exciting time. Plans are underway for an automated circulation system which will provide us with practically immediate information about the holdings of 12 other Rhode Island libraries as well as giving us better control over our own material."

Another challenge that lies ahead, she said, is to try to make best use of the space in the 10-year-old library building which is accumulating a larger collection every year.

Other goals are to enlarge the local history collection and provide for quiet reading areas.

"There will be lots of changes in the next few years," she



SHIRLEY PAYNE will be taking over the North Kingstown Free Library sometime next month.

said. "One thing that will not change, however, is the warm atmosphere which came over along with the books and staff from 55 Brown St., to the modern brick structure on Academy Cove.

Mrs. Payne, who lives at 160 Salisbury Ave., North Kingstown, is the second director to attain the post "through

the ranks" in recent years. Ms. Brennan was also a member of the library staff before being named director five years ago.

"Our library," commented Mr. Henry in making the announcement, "is an outstanding community resource; and we, as trustees, are aware of the responsibility placed upon us by the townspeople. We will

all pull together to continue the fine record of public service which has been this library's tradition. I know I speak for the entire board when I say that we are pleased that Shirley will be the new director."

Mrs. Payne said as of the moment it is undecided as to when she will be replaced as coordinator of readers' services.

Standard Times
December 27, 1984

Closing the book on her many roles at the NK Free Library

North/East Independent
Thursday, January 27, 2011

By Arline A. Fleming/Special to the Independent

NORTH KINGSTOWN — If knowledge is measured by longevity, then it is safe to say that Shirley Payne is a North Kingstown Free Library expert.

Payne recently retired after 19 years as a weekly library volunteer, a record length of time, said Susan Aylward, library director.

But prior to being a volunteer, Payne was library director for six years, starting out as a clerk in 1965, and retiring from her paid position in 1991. But even before that, Payne was a patron, visiting the town library when she was a young mother in the 1950s, and the library was on Brown Street.

For close to 60 years, she has been one of its biggest fans, and remains so despite her recent decision to turn in her volunteer badge and turn over the management of the local history vertical file to others.

“I just had my 86th birthday and I thought, this was significant, it’s time. So I told Susie,” Payne said, referring to Aylward. Payne has known her since she was a child, thus the lighthearted nickname. But there isn’t anything lighthearted about what the two of them know; their North Kingstown library knowledge would make a Google page cry.

“It was a hard decision because I really liked what I was doing,” Payne said.

“But there is just so much stuff I want to attend to here,” she added while sitting in her Poplar Point home, predicting that she’ll have her own collection of clippings and paperwork “in apple pie order” before long.

Librarians, retired or not, like to know where things are.

“If you can’t find it, it’s lost,” she says.

“We were fortunate that she is not only a librarian who knows and understands cataloguing and indexing, but also someone who has lived a good part of her life in the town, so she knows the people, the places and the issues,” said Aylward.

Payne said working in a library, in both paid and un-



Shirley Payne, the former director of the North Kingstown Free Library, relaxes with a book in front of the fireplace in her North Kingstown home on Monday. After retiring from her post in 1991, Payne volunteered at the library for 19 years, but has decided to turn in her volunteer badge. (Photo by Michael Derr)

paid jobs, is a calling, but one she wasn’t actually considering until she was well out of college, married to Kenneth Payne, and mother of three sons.

“I wanted to work in Wickford because I’m really not crazy about driving,” she recalled, remembering how she lived on the corner of Pleasant and Friend streets, and so walked around the village, considering her options.

“There was an opening for a part-time library clerk at the library on Brown Street.” That made her decision a little easier.

Payne arrived with almost three years of college courses in economics and sociology from Barnard, and a huge love of learning.

Having married her husband during World War II, Payne put college aside to raise a family, and after the war, the couple moved to Rhode Island from their native New York for her husband's work.

"Somehow, when we moved to Wickford in 1954, I felt that I had come home." Her late husband, Ken, was a boat enthusiast, and they spent many years together enjoying the coastline. He was always very supportive of her return to college and the workplace, she said.

Not long after starting work at the library, she enrolled at the University of Rhode Island to finish her degree.

"Oh, I loved it. I majored in English and took ten English courses. You can't beat all that reading," she says. From there she continued on and enrolled in the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Library and Information Science, though at that point she was in her 50s and had no intention of being a library leader. But she eventually became the children's librarian and in 1985, was named director, taking over from Deborah Brennan Coons, who moved on to another career and now lives in Annapolis, Md.

Payne, Coons said, "took on the enormous task of automating the library so that it could join what was becoming the statewide library network that exists today. Young people now take this all for granted, but every aspect of operating a library changed – from replacing the library's card catalogues to being able to request books from around the state via computer, it was all revolutionary then – and Shirley was the groundbreaker who made it happen," Coons wrote in an e-mail.

Payne still sees the computer as a magnificent tool, especially when she is working on her daily crossword puzzles, and is proud that North Kingstown "was one of the early libraries to convert."

She plans to use her computer even more during her

newly acquired free time, tackling the more complicated puzzles presented to her by her former colleague, Susan Berman of Kingston.

"While she has now retired from her regular volunteer schedule, she will never retire from regarding the library as a living legacy for all of us," notes Berman, who worked with Mrs. Payne throughout her own 36-year North Kingstown library career.

Payne finds herself describing the library as being wonderful, the staff, wonderful, the townspeople, wonderful, and then admonishes herself for overuse of the word, but everything is just so, well, wonderful.

"But I do feel that I have had a very, very good life and I feel awfully lucky," Payne says.

The story of her retirement from the library as a weekly volunteer will most likely be included in those vertical files she has long been working on downstairs in the South County Room, but upstairs, it is also likely that Payne will continue to attend the many public library programs, ranging from music to lectures.

And when the weather is good, she'll make a visit to check out some books and visit with friends like Aylward and Berman, who despite the difference in age, describes Payne as being her "best friend."

Said Berman: "You can take a librarian out of the library, but you can't take the library out of the heart of a librarian."

Chapter 8: Paul Lefebure — Assistant Director of Young Readers' Services 1988-2008

Paul Lefebure began his career at the library in 1980.

Joy in the Library

by Paul Lefebure

February 2015

I'll tell you what personifies the picture of joy. You're looking over a room full of excited first grade visitors, upwards of sixty or seventy smiling faces and they are spontaneously clapping their hands. One of their classmates is called up to receive a fresh, brand new library card. The kid jumps out of his seat, rushes forward and extends his hand to take possession of the coveted card. And then that wonderful little face full of wonder and awe with the bright eyes, the two cherub-like rosy cheeks or the smiling dimples or the funny haircut, breaks into a smile, happily revealing two missing front teeth. Onward and upward and unforget-

table.... Happiness is your first and very own library card! And all this is just a part of a passing day at the public library.

Yes, all first graders in North Kingstown schools are bused each spring to visit the library and receive library cards, and the funding for those buses comes from the Friends of the Library. The terrific programming for kids is also sponsored and funded by the Friends. Puppet shows, magicians, artists and writers, storytellers, musicians, and, not least, the wild animal handlers bring surprise, wonder, and laughter to the library's meeting room. With the Friends' help throughout the years, activities in the kids' and teens' sector just seems to get better and better, perhaps the right words to describe it are expanded and enhanced. Year in and year out the Friends of the Library sponsors creative writing classes and the summer reading club sessions and they purchase items to enhance the personal library experience of all ages of youth from preschool to teen.

One of my favorite performers over the years was a classic magician, "Mr. Marco," who traveled down from Cranston with an assistant. An older gentlemen, he was what I would call "old school magic," arriving at the library well before show time and dressed in a very neat tuxedo and white gloves. His magic was superb... making objects disappear into his handkerchief, finding silver dollars on our guests, and always including the disappearing rabbit act as his grand finale. As an aside, before the show he once provided this wonderful anecdote. As a young teen back before the days of television he was a member of a summer vaudeville touring group where he met and entertained a summer sweetheart behind the stage who went on to star in Hollywood's first color film, "The Wizard of Oz." His teenage sweetheart was the unforgettable.... Judy Garland! So it was, in a sense, we sometimes felt we were touched by great performers, if not a certain kind of stardom. Again, it was all a part of a passing day in the life of a public librarian.



Who is That Little Guy?

by Paul Lefebure

February 2015

One of the library's smaller visitors set off one of the most exciting days of my 28-year tenure. It was a bat, our usual night-time New England flyer, who had breezed in on a bright sunny afternoon. Its arrival was announced by a loud shriek. Moments later, upon investigating, it was confirmed: it was a small, young bat and was fluttering about as bats do and expertly taking the measure of the high ceiling area of the staff workroom. It was stunning really, an amazing little creature with a wingspan no longer than a pencil. Well, panic ensued as though an alarm had sounded, all staff members had rushed for cover, with most huddled inside the adjoining staff lounge in a stir of amazement and delight.

This was, however, one of those opportunities to draw on skill sets not usually associated with library administration. Finding a good sized carton of gift books and quickly emptying it I bided my time in wait for an opportunity to strike quickly. That moment came when the little guy tired momentarily and deflatedly landed on the floor. It was a lucky shot. Over the top went the gift box, a cardboard floor was slid underneath it, and we were done.

But the bat wasn't the most difficult of our wildlife visitors--that was reserved for the hummingbird. It had darted in through the front doors and was an instant sensation that attracted a rapt audience of seated readers, along with all the staff, the book browsers and bor-

rowers. This one was a totally wait and see item. Again, like the bat, the little guy tired and eventually landed on one of the upper clerestory window ledges, way up high. But we were in luck. . .out from the audience stepped forward one of our regular borrowers, a member of one of the local Native American tribes, who announced that he was akin to a hummingbird "whisperer." Sure enough, up on a ladder he goes and gently, confidently, extends his hand, and quick as a hawk, has the little guy safely in hand and out the door. This was truly one of our better examples of community interaction and volunteerism.

However, they not only came in through the air but also on the ground. I remember distinctly a chunky chipmunk down on the floor in the Young Readers' Department one day and he was not going to be denied his freedom of access. Eventually he hopped out the same way he came in, through the side entrance.

And lastly, there was the disoriented mouse. Poor thing. It was seriously lost, appearing briefly on the wide open space of the library floor where we then lost track of it. When it reappeared, I caught sight of it moments before it disappeared again, this time up the inside pants leg of one of our daily public computer users. The incident was reminiscent of one of my favorite stories - E.B. White's *Stuart Little* --where the story line was always that there is no predicting what a mouse can do and where it can go.



In NK, they're off to see the Wizard

The North Kingstown Free Library is giving the red carpet treatment to fans of the Yellow Brick Road this October, marking the centennial anniversary of the publication of L. Frank Baum's children's classic, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz."

Paul Lefebure, supervisor for Young Reader Services at the library, said, "We've decorated the Young Readers area in the world of Oz." He added that the library is hosting a month-long series of Oz-inspired programs, including a night of "spooky storytelling" by Don Kirk tomorrow as part of an event called "The Oz Connection." The evening, which also will include a costume contest, begins at 7.

Baum's timeless story of a Kansas tornado that spun Dorothy and her dog, Toto, over the rainbow and into the colorful land of Oz is an American fairy tale, with some of the most memorable characters - Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and Wicked Witch of the West - in children's literature. The first book turned into a cottage industry, spawning new generations of Oz tales by Baum and Dorothy Sayers, inspiring one of old Hollywood's most beloved movies and creating hundreds of commercial tie-ins during the Victorian era, helping to sell everything from mustard to washing machines.

But it all started with the first story by Baum, illustrated by W.W. Denslow.

"We have the original title, different editions, on display," Lefebure said. Programs with names like "Oz Hunt," "The World of Oz Challenge" and "Write to the Wizard" are among those being offered this month.

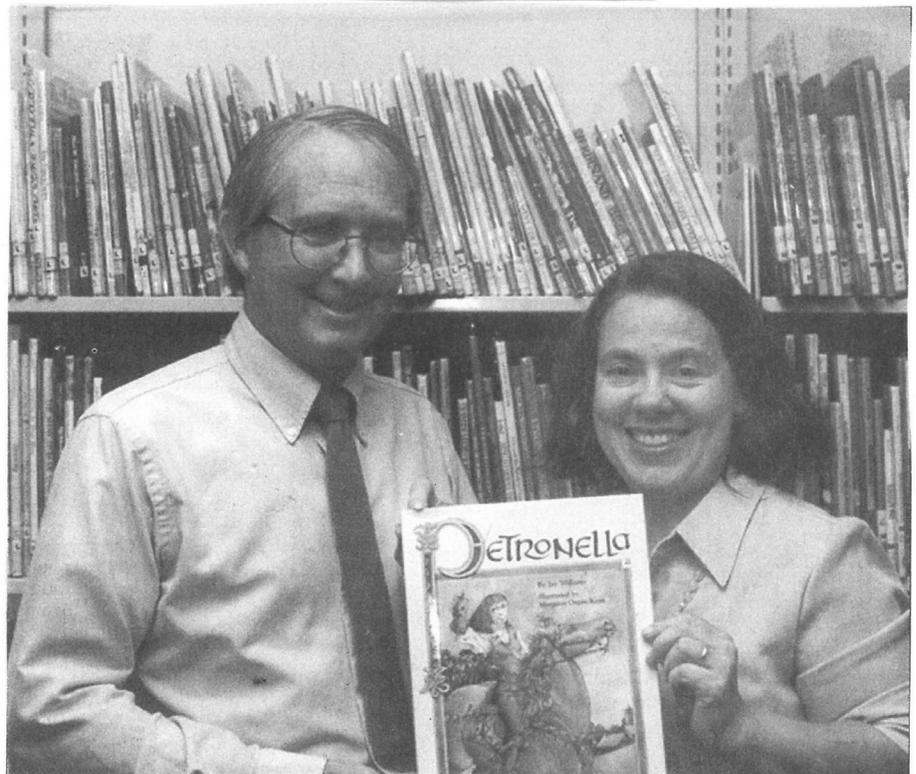
Lefebure said that for the "Write to the Wizard" program, children are asked to send their wishes by letter or e-mail to the library. The e-mail address for the program is owizard@hotmail.com. For more information, call 294-3306.

**South County Independent
North/East Independent
October 12, 2000**



PHOTO: DANIEL G. DUNN

Paul Lefebure of North Kingstown Free Library adjusts a tower on the Emerald City. The library is hosting a monthlong celebration of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," in honor of the book's 100th anniversary.



New edition Thursday, April 12- Friday, April 13, 2001

Paul Lefebure, children's librarian at the North Kingstown Free Library, accepts a signed copy of the children's book "Petronella" from Cate Monro, publisher at the North Kingstown-based Moon Mountain Press.

Chapter 9: Susan Berman – Assistant Director of Reference and Adult Services 1988-2009

Susan Berman began her career at the library in 1973.

Our Library

This is the way we were: in our growing up and...
in our living....

Thornton Wilder
Our Town, Act 1

By Susan Berman

March, 2015

By the time I retired, in 2009, I was the last staff member to have worked in the original North Kingstown Free Library building on Brown Street, the library built right in the middle of Wickford in 1898 that now houses the Town Hall Annex. One morning in April of 1973, I walked over there to ask if I could volunteer. My husband and I were both URI graduate students living in Wickford. Mark was at the Oceanography School. I was at the Library School. I had spent a year teaching English at North Kingstown High School before beginning graduate studies, thinking, initially of going into university librarianship. I wanted to volunteer in order to see what it would be like to work in a public library. Fortunately for me, they were willing to take me in. I felt as if I had come home. I immediately shifted my career focus to the public library.

The library, as far as I could see, was run by a triumvirate-- Edna B. Lager, Library Director, Regina Leeper and Shirley Payne—Teddy, Reggie and Shirley. They were three remarkable women. They had distinct personalities, but a common energy and generosity that made the library thrive. All three were mentors to the rest of us. Not long after volunteering, I was hired as a part-time clerk. Deborah Brennan and I were both graduate students when we began work at the Brown Street library. When the new library opened, we had earned our library degrees. Debbe became cataloger, and I became reference librarian. Susan Aylward, a high school student who would become library director in the 21st century, joined the staff as a page. We began our careers very much influenced by Teddy, Reggie, Shirley and the “Our Town” atmosphere of Brown Street.



This year, we are celebrating our 40th year in the “new” library on Academy Cove and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library. These anniversaries are an occasion for looking at the way we were. The children who come to Story Hour now are the grandchildren of those who sat on little wooden chairs in the basement of the old library, where Mrs. Payne read to them. The South County Room, an archive established with the support of the Friends of the Library, founded in 1955, now reflects a half -century more of our South County experience.

While the new library was being built, I would walk up to Academy Cove and imagine the view from the Reference Desk. Looking back on 40 years I see that we are always building our library. The building—19th century Greek revival or modern contemporary—gives us a common place for a collection and for the living library: the staff and the townspeople who make up the

library community. The library that opened its doors in December of 1975 is the library Teddy built. Not only did she see the stunning, Architects Collaborative of Cambridge-designed building completed, she also hired people who would work together and help each other. It was in our working together that the library grew. So this is the library we all built—the staff and the community. It is our archive and our academy, with—to borrow poet W.E.R. La Farge’s title—its changing and unchanging harvest.

This is the way we were. We worked together. We learned things together. Not long after I started working at the library, Shirley and I, encouraged by Teddy, took a course in Rhode Island history. I remember our reading about the Queen’s Fort and then exploring the remains of the ancient Narragansett fortification to look for the secret chamber described in *Lands of Rhode Island as they were known to Canonicus and Miantonomu*. We didn’t find it, but the Queen’s Fort and that secret chamber remain, to me, a kind of metaphor for our life at the library, which was always an adventure. One of the first things that Debbe and I did together was to provide library service to nursing home residents. I remember a conversation we had one morning on the way to Scalabrini-- about the library in the community. I saw the library as an archive. Debbe saw that the library had to be alive. Of course, she also saw the importance of the archive, but she knew that even the archive had to be alive—a dynamic element in the identity of the town-- not forgotten history. I had not yet realized that community-building was central to our mission. At twenty-something, I was shy and cautious about change. I was ready to take up residence in the archive or at the reference desk, believing that if you build it, they will come. But Debbe showed me a wider horizon—one that helped me grow in the profession years later. When we moved to Academy Cove, Debbe began to establish the North Kingstown Free Library as a premier public cultural and educational center. I began to see that what is built, we build together. There is no “they.” We all build our library. Debbe enlarged my idea of librarianship and, later, Shirley provided me with a way to help build our library by selecting me to follow in Debbe’s footsteps. This enriched immeasurably my life at the library—and my life.

When Teddy retired, having built, staffed and expanded service in the new library, Debbe became Library Director. She chose Susan Aylward, who had earned her master’s degree in library science, as cataloger. As Director, Debbe continued her outreach efforts. She secured a grant to produce a slide/tape history of North Kingstown. This is when we met Elizabeth Donovan, a photographer who would supply some of the images for the slide show and who would join the staff and come to play

a very important role in public programming. Shirley and I had the privilege of editing the slide show script, which was written by historian Ellen Weiss. This was the first of many projects that Shirley and I would work on together. During Debbe’s directorship, we participated in our first statewide humanities series—a reading, lecture and discussion series in which we met some of the scholars who would become what we thought of as North Kingstown Free Library faculty—English professor Nancy Potter, Shakespeare scholar Helen Whall, poet Nancy Sullivan, historian Maury Klein, filmmakers, writers, musicians and artists. Debbe initiated the publication of the Friends of the Library newsletter, “Among Friends,” still published monthly after more than thirty years, now edited by Elizabeth Donovan.

When Debbe left to pursue a career in statewide programming, Shirley, who had earned her graduate degree in library science during Debbe’s tenure, became Library Director. Shirley hired Paul Lefebure as Children’s Librarian. She gave Linda Caisse responsibility for the running of the Reference Desk. Shirley secured funding for the library to join the statewide automated library system. She chose Susan Aylward to plan, direct and oversee the automation of the library. Shirley chose me to take over responsibility for the South County Collection, which I accepted enthusiastically --and for public programming, which I accepted reluctantly. This is not a contribution I originally imagined myself making, but when I stepped with reluctance into Debbe’s programming shoes, I found them to be both stylish and comfortable. They were big for me, but I grew into them and found my way. I will always be grateful to Shirley for giving me this challenge—for her direction and encouragement and support. Over the next 25 years, I had the privilege of working with my wonderful colleagues, with the Friends of the Library and with the community at large to provide public programs in which we honored our heritage, explored arts and ideas and got to know each other and ourselves.

I think of our library as being, in part, the academy on Academy Cove. Though Academy Cove was named for the Washington Academy, built in 1800 on the site where the Wickford Elementary School building now stands, the library’s move to Academy Cove seems poetically appropriate. The North Kingstown Free Library is an academy for all of us. The greatest joy in my long career turned out to be helping to create our cultural and continuing education program—being part of a vibrant community of readers. We all learned so much from each other.

I majored in English at Lawrence University, a fine liberal arts college, but I learned to love Shakespeare at the library, in Shakespeare Studies with Helen Whall.

Over two decades, we read nearly all of Shakespeare's plays, many of them more than once--sometimes in conjunction with local performances or movies. We had "Poems for Lunch" at the library on last Fridays every month, and spent the lunch hour reading and discussing poems. Susan Aylward encountered her dissertation subject when she heard poet Forrest Gander lecture on the work of David Plante in one of Debbé's statewide humanities programs at the library. Shirley did research and lectured on Daniel Berkeley Updike, scion of our founding family, founder of Boston's Merrymount Press and benefactor of our town and our library. She established the Updike collection for the South County Room. Elizabeth, who had become the library's graphic artist, taught calligraphy classes. URI English professor Nancy Potter helped develop our annual "Literary New England" reading, lecture and discussion series and was a frequent visiting scholar. Over the years, we read our way from Connecticut to Maine. There were performances. Once we went to Newport in the North Kingstown Recreation Department's old blue bus to see an original play about Harriet Beecher Stowe performed in Newport's Quaker Meeting House. It was a dark night. The bus lights went out when we reached the top of the old Jamestown Bridge, and I vowed silently to keep our future library programs at the library if we got safely to Newport and back. We did. The play, written by a professor at the Coast Guard Academy who was one of our visiting scholars, was wonderful. I let go of my mandate to stay in the meeting room. Another time, we did a walking tour of literary Newport. In later years we did lots of tours with Town Historian Tim Cranston, some of them involving the blue bus.

This is the way we were during my time at the library. At the reference desk, we learned new things every day. The Friends of the Library generously supported and participated in library programs. We always had programs on Wednesday evenings, sometimes on other nights too, and mornings and afternoons and lunch hours-- and we had many programs on weekends-- even at times when the library itself was closed. We had concerts in the meeting room on Sunday afternoons, still do--"Sunday Musicales at the Library" in cooperation with the North Kingstown Arts Council. "Rhode Island Voices," another Arts Council cooperative endeavor, was initiated by the Arts Council's Joan Grayson, who was also a great Friend of the Library. This series still brings in Rhode Island writers to read from their work. During my time, we had three Pulitzer Prize-winners. We started a French conversation group that is still meeting at the library, now organized by Susan Gordon, one of the original members. We started a poetry-writing group, which is still meeting at the library, now directed by Ruth Siperstein, who suggested

it in the first place.

Shirley retired in 1991, having brought the library into the statewide-automated system and secured the library's reputation as what long-time Trustee's Chair Patricia Carlson called the jewel in North Kingstown's crown. The Trustees recognized the need for a new building program--to expand space and to smoothly integrate emerging technology. After a nationwide search, they chose Donna (Roberts) Dufault, who immediately focused on technology and a building program. She ran a successful capital campaign and building project. Susan Aylward's administrative responsibilities increased, and she became Deputy Director.

When Donna retired, the Trustees, after another nationwide search, chose Susan Aylward to be the next Library Director--the only public library director in Rhode Island to hold a Ph.D. in Literature. Besides, Susan had literally grown up at the library, had automated the library, had played an important role in the building program and was thoroughly familiar with her native town and with every aspect of library administration. So Susan Aylward, who, as a high school student, had come to the new library to work as a page, was the Library Director when I retired.

It was during Donna's administration that Susan Aylward earned her doctorate in Literature. For the celebration of the Library's centennial in 1998, The Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library funded the publication of *A Century of Books for all the Mind's Journeys*, compiled by the Trustees, Friends and Staff of the Library--an annotated list of some of the books by American authors published each year during our library's first century. A wide range of community members contributed annotations. Susan Aylward and I edited it. As Susan A. said in the introduction, "one of the pleasures for all of us who worked on the project was reading some things we had not read before. Another was reading old favorites again after many years. But the greatest pleasure was sharing reading experiences with other people." The building of a library is all about sharing reading experience. In this, the centennial project was emblematic of the building of our library. The compilation includes some books with obvious local connections--*In Old Narragansett* (1898), *Old Wickford: The Venice of America* (1900), *South County Studies* (1924), for example; and it includes books with less obvious local connections. Captain Joshua Slocum had completed the first single-handed circumnavigation of the globe when he anchored in Newport Harbor in 1898. His account of the voyage, *Sailing Alone Around the World*, was published in 1900. Owen Wister's classic western novel, *The Virginian*, was published in 1902.

Owen Wister summered in Saunderstown, where his Harvard classmate, Teddy Roosevelt, to whom *The Virginian* is dedicated, often visited him. The LaFarge family home was in Saunderstown. Oliver Lafarge won the Pulitzer Prize for *Laughing Boy*, a novel of Navajo life, published in 1929. *The Sudden Guest*, by Christopher LaFarge is a novel featuring the 1938 hurricane in Rhode Island. *A Century of Books* reflects some of the events and stars and social history of 20th century America: *Up from Slavery* (1901); Helen Keller's autobiography (1903); the muckraking novel, *The Jungle* (1906); *Twenty Years at Hull House*—the story of a settlement house in a poor immigrant neighborhood of Chicago (1910); *Native Son*, Richard Wright's description of being black in America 25 years before the civil rights movement (1940); *Brave Men*—Ernie Pyle's dispatches from Sicily, the Italian front and the campaign in France during World War II (1944). And of course there are landmarks in American literature—*The Great Gatsby* (1925), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *Absalom, Ab-*

salom! (1926), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956), among others. Books from the last quarter of the twentieth century include *The Family*, by David Plante, published in 1978, the novel set in a French Canadian parish in Providence, that inspired Susan Aylward to become a leading Plante scholar. *Mortal Acts, Mortal Words*, a collection of poems by Galway Kinnell, who was born in Pawtucket, and *The Changing and Unchanging Harvest*, a collection of poems by W.E.R. LaFarge were both published in 1980. The compilation ends with Susan Aylward's notes on a book by Andrew Delbanco published in 1997—*Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now*. The book looks at the work of eleven writers who Delbanco says believed, as William James believed, that “the great question about how we describe the world is: Does it, with our additions, rise or fall in value?”

In a very real sense, our library is how we describe our world. Our additions are in our library—still rising.



Library director Donna Dufault and assistant directors Susan Aylward, top, and Susan Berman have published a year-by-year selection of the best 20th-century American titles”

Photo courtesy of *The Providence Journal*
January 14, 1999

Berman closes one chapter on her library life

**North/East Independent
February 12, 2009**

*By Arline A. Fleming
Special to the Independent*

NORTH KINGSTOWN - Patrons of North Kingstown Free Library have long been secure in the knowledge that if they were searching for an obscure piece of Rhode Island history, librarian Susan Berman could lead them to it.

With determination, and relentless research skills, she has devoted three decades to finding answers for scholars, elementary school kids, serious historians and poky library savants.

She might seem like a supporting cast member - fairly hidden as she is in her ground-floor, Rhode Island Room office.

But in reality, she is reference department ringmaster, coming up with Google-quick answers well before there was a Google. She's the queen of exhaustive study.

But after almost 36 years of being the patron's patron, Berman is stepping down.

But not out.

Her final day as director for adult and reference services will be Friday, Feb. 27. But before spring puts a clamp on this feisty winter, Berman will be back at the library conducting programs as a volunteer, ending up just as she began, offering free-will expertise to the library-going public.

Her retirement, said library director Susan Aylward, "will take some getting used to."

Not only will those answering the telephone have one fewer Susan to

seek (there have been as many as four Susans at one time at the library), but also, because Berman began working at the library before some staff members were born, information in her memory will no longer be readily accessible.

Her absence will feel like a crashed computer system; Berman will be offline.

"She built the reference department, there wasn't one at the old library," Aylward said. "She took on adult programming and made our library one of the finest in the state in terms of what we offer for public programs. She has tended the local history collection for all of her years here and, even though she was not born in North Kingstown, she knows more about the town than many of the natives."

When Berman arrived in Rhode Island in 1971, she was just out of college, newly married, here with her husband, Mark, who was studying at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

She had an English degree from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisc., and a teaching certificate, so Berman taught for one year at North Kingstown High School.

"I really enjoyed it," she said of that experience, but her English major curiosity led her to the URI library science program. "I applied for an assistantship and got it and thought I might like to be a university librarian."

Instead, she became a community librarian quite by chance, dealing with scholars and college kids and also with their parents, grandparents, baby sisters and brothers.

Because she lived at the time within walking distance of North Kingstown's original library on Main Street, Berman asked then-director Edna Lager about volunteer opportunities.

Within two weeks of volunteering, Berman became a paid employee.

"One person often handled the entire library," Berman recalled. "There might be two of us working, but there was only one chair."

Nothing was automated. Library cards were checked by hand. The "web" was still what spiders built in the corners of the 1899 Greek Revival building, where the first librarian was Addison Luther, and the second Annie E. Merithew.

Merithew holds the record for working at the North Kingstown Free Library the longest, and Berman considered remaining at the job long enough to break that 37-year tenure, 1918 to 1955. But alas, the record will hold.

Berman's years of service will be one year and one month less than Merithew's. (Merithew walked the village streets to work and back home, what is today Bagelz, all those years. Her sister walked to the bank next door). But Merithew had a mere 11,000 volumes to oversee, while today, North Kingstown is the state's fourth-largest library with 129,000 volumes.

"At first I wanted to beat her record," said Berman, who considered staying on at her post a bit longer. But she changed her mind over the course of this year when she and her husband each lost a parent.

Given that she will be 60 in May, it stands to reason that the generation



that came before her is getting older, too. So Berman has decided that it is time to tend to “the elders in the family,” acknowledging that working in a public library is wonderful “but it’s tough on family life.

“You are a servant of the public, and that’s a wonderful thing, but the hours always include nights and weekends. I’ve worked every other Saturday, by choice, for years. We’re here to serve the community.”

She has found little time to visit relatives in Wisconsin where she grew up. And after spending so many years helping others to research their genealogy, she now wants to research her own, having heard that she might be a Roger Williams descendant.

Strange as it might seem for a librarian to lament, Berman also, in her retirement, hopes to spend more

time reading. She lives in South Kingstown but spends much of the week in North Kingstown handling books she would like to study.

“There isn’t too much time left outside of the library. I’ve never had a lot of time to read.

“I crave more reading time.”

The cravings have often been transferred to patrons sent forth with materials to consume, bolstering them up with answers and knowledge. The tomes she seeks out for researchers might be dusty with age, but she approaches them with an innate, technicolor enthusiasm.

Local historian Tim Cranston, who has worked with Berman on many library programs, describes her as being “passionate about local history. She, more than most, understands the power possessed within knowledge.”

Omnivorous as she is about learning, her appetite also has fueled the library’s public programming, and she has hatched poetry readings and music series, book discussions and lectures.

“People are here to learn something. I have honestly found my job to be so rewarding. I feel tremendous gratitude to all my colleagues and the patrons.”

Leaving it all will be hard. Berman pauses, her eyes filling as she reflects on three decades as a local librarian.

“You’re here to help people. That’s the nicest thing about it.”

Arline A. Fleming can be reached at aafleming@cox.net.

Local librarian passionate about history, community

You know, librarians are a much-maligned bunch. They are portrayed as demure and reserved, dressed in mid-calf length skirts and dresses with their hair pulled back in a severe little bun and little round glasses perched on a long, thin face. And in this portrayal, they are always at the ready with their accusatory

The View from Swamptown

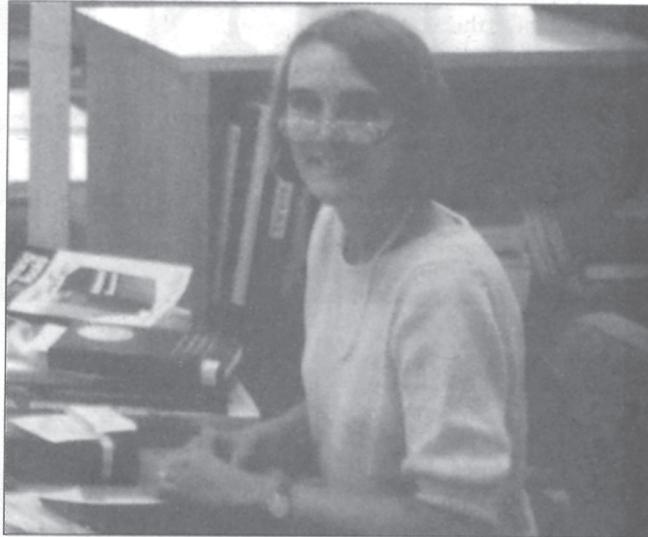


G.T. Cranston

index finger a-wagging to shush someone having just a little too much fun. We tend to think of them all in these stereotypical, one-dimensional terms. On the canvas that is life, we tend to paint them with a palette of tans and grays. But Susan Berman of the North Kingstown Free Library blows this cliché right out of the water.

You see, the Susan Berman I have come to know is a woman of passion. Passionate about her career, she exists in the rarified air inhaled by the lucky few for whom their job is both a vocation and an avocation. She, more than most, understands the power possessed within knowledge. Susan Berman gets it.

Passionate about her community, she has dedicated herself to a decades-long journey focused upon making her library, our library, a resource that goes well beyond books and magazines. Susan Berman



After spending more than 35 years serving the North Kingstown Free Library, Susan Berman, shown here in a photo from 1985, recently retired. The community will celebrate her contributions in a ceremony at 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the library.

knows what matters.

Passionate about local history, she is the perfect person to have entrusted with the stewardship of the South County Room – the stewardship of our collective past. Susan Berman understands the importance of the powerful connections to the past that exist in all of us, that exist in her as well. I remember the day that I brought her the guest register to the old Cold Spring House, that wonderful grand summer hotel that once graced Beach Street with its presence. As she ran her fingers down the pages filled with the signatures of the nation's elite during the first part of the 20th century, she choked up a bit. I knew instantly where her mind was at that moment, as mine was there as well. Holding a tangible bit of history in your hands has a powerful effect on those who fully understand what it represents. That's Susan all right, for Susan Berman understands.

She sees the big picture. That's why, for years, she has been an integral part of the

committee that oversees the state Council for the Humanities. But she also understands the importance of the finer details of life. How else could she have conceived of such innovative local programming like "Rhode Island Voices," "Summer Musicales" and "Summer Reading for the College Bound" that speak to local folks and their needs?

Now I will admit, Susan has wagged a finger in her day. I expect she's even done her fair share of shushing. But don't let her librarian-like countenance fool you; she's a woman of passion and commitment. When you paint a portrait of this librarian, you'd better break out a palette of color bigger than a rainbow.

Please join with all of North Kingstown to celebrate the contributions of Susan to our community this Sunday afternoon at 1:30 at the library.

Write to Tim Cranston in care of this paper at P.O. Box 244, North Kingstown, RI 02852 or e-mail him at swamptown@msn.com.

South County Independent
North/East Independent
May 14, 2009

Susan Berman: Demonstrating a passion for lifelong learning

Some people spend their summer lolling on the beach, sailing the Bay or trying to consume their weight in clam cakes. Not Susan Berman.

The veteran librarian is happily reading Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, a literary trek that will require two years to complete. She's part of a group that meets at the Providence Athenaeum to discuss specific chapters. "We're having the best time," she proclaims, adding that people mis-

takenly believe librarians do nothing but sit around reading all day. They have to stop working to find time for that, she says.

Susan retired last year after 36 years with the North Kingstown Free Library but keeps her hand in as a volunteer in public programming. She started the Shakespeare series with Holy Cross professor Helen Whall 20-plus years ago and still runs it, among other things such as poetry and music events.

Her claim to fame in terms of town history may be that she's the last of the librarians to have worked at the old space on Brown Street. She was on staff at the classically-columned 19th Century structure, the Town Hall annex, before the new library opened on Boone Street in 1975.

Susan was born in New Hampshire but grew up in Wisconsin where she earned a bachelor's degree in English from Lawrence University and met her future husband, Mark. They moved to Rhode Island in 1971 so he could attend the URI School of Oceanography. She taught at North Kingstown High School for a year then went to grad school at URI to obtain a master's in library science. While attending school, she started work at the North Kingstown library as a clerk.

"I had originally thought of doing college and university library work," she says, "but one week on Brown Street and I was hooked on public libraries." Libraries, she adds, "are essential to America." After completing her degree Susan became a reference librarian then coordinator of reference and adult services. "I had also taken on working with the South County collection."

This eclectic accumulation of books, genealogy, portraits, furniture and other artifacts – now displayed in a lovely room in the reference area of the Boone Street facility – got its start in the 1950s, upstairs on Brown Street. "Gladys Helliwell was a local genealogist and historian," Susan explains. "She got people to look through their personal collections and contribute items."

The South County room includes a gorgeous pair of carved Victorian chairs, a half-model of a Saunders sloop from the famous ship-building family, a portrait of author Frances Burge Griswold, whose father and husband were both rectors of St. Paul's Episcopal Church – she

NK: TELL ME YOUR STORY



Martha Smith

PHOTO: MARTHA SMITH

Susan Berman in the NK Public Library's South County room. Berman, who retired from the library last year after a 36-year career, still volunteers her time for public programs.



wrote *Old Wickford: Venice of America* in 1900 – and a restored voting machine from the 1901 election. That was the year when the only governor from North Kingstown, William Gregory, was elected. The prohibition question was also on the ballot.

And let's not forget that Gregory was the first president of the library's board of trustees.

Susan retired as assistant director of the library, a job that wasn't her natural metier. "My interest was not in administration," she admits, "but what happens when you stay in the same career – in an organization this size – is you end up having to do some administrative things. I've always loved working with the public, being a public librarian."

She's done other things, too: sitting on the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities; making presentations to the state and New England library associations; serving on the Courthouse Center for the Arts board; and holding memberships in the American Library Association and the Emily Dickinson Society, a sort of international salon for aficionados of her work.

Susan's current passion involves volunteering on the curriculum committee at URI's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She's in her second year with the grant-funded program that offers a smorgasbord of courses and ticket discounts to plays and concerts. The institute also encourages intellectual togetherness for two generations of people: the baby boomers and their elders. "Part of our mission is to create and support a community," says Susan. "There's a social component to Lifelong Learning."

Which brings us back to Proust and the readers assaying his massive writings; another version of later-life learning, if you will. "I was read to as a child," says Susan, "but the real dedication to books came later. Reading is central to my entire existence now."

Martha Smith can be reached at mgs3dachs@cox.net.

Note: A photo caption for the July 29 column misidentified Pete McDonough and John Armstrong.

**Standard Times
August 12, 2009**



Susan Berman mans the reference desk at the opening of the Boone St. library in 1975.

Photo courtesy of The Standard Times



Library staff members are represented in these paper dolls created by Elizabeth Donovan on the occasion of Susan Berman's retirement in 2009.

Chapter 10: Donna Dufault — Library Director 1991-2002

Library Renovation April 1998—March 1999

By Donna Dufault

March 2015



The Board of Trustees is charged with overseeing the library administration and operation; they take great pride in maintaining the library building. By 1990 it had begun to show some wear and tear.

Since the “new” library had been opened in 1975, the library had continued

to fulfill its mission “to meet the changing and enduring cultural, educational, informational, recreational, and research needs of its users.” The computer revolution created immense changes in how those needs were met. The collection, a continuing source of enlightenment and enjoyment, had diversified—now including videocassettes, books on CD, online resources and more—and it had quadrupled in size.

The “new” library was a success—annual circulation in 1990 was 300,000 items compared to 96,000 items in 1975. In 1990 over 33,000 reference questions were answered and there were over 185,000 visits to the library. North Kingstown Free Library had become the fifth busiest public library in Rhode Island.

In late 1990 when director Shirley Payne decided to retire, the Board of Trustees realized that a new director should be prepared to lead the library through a major renovation. Donna Dufault (then Roberts) was hired. Dufault, MLS URI, had been a librarian for 18 years and was on the governing board of the American Library Association. In her role as the Assistant Director of the East Providence Public Library she had been the main liaison with the architects and the construction team during a renovation at the Weaver Library, the main branch in East Providence.

Dufault began her job at NKFL just as the credit union crisis hit Rhode Island. She and the trustees decided to

start with a small building project to help them become familiar with the process. With a grant from the Rhode Island Department of Library Services and the help of former Trustee and architect Ed Ekman, they renovated the meeting room and made the front entrance handicapped accessible.

As the financial climate improved, bigger challenges awaited. Not only did the building and furnishings need to be updated but any renovation would need to address the technological changes of the present and the future.

Library consultant Douglas Pearce was hired to do a preliminary needs assessment and the firm Extrados Architects was hired to do preliminary work for a master plan. From these two reports it was determined that the population of North Kingstown was projected to increase 20% in 15 years; more and better technology access was needed; more and better space for collections and users, particularly children, needed to be provided; the noise level needed to be addressed and better storage and organization of historical resources needed to be created.

A long range plan was written and two major goals were identified: a library building program needed to be created to develop bidding documents in order to hire an architectural firm and a construction company and a capital campaign needed to be launched.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The renovation would cost \$1.85 million for construction, interior refinishing and new furniture. The Director and the Board of Trustees worked with the Town Council to get authorization for a \$1.3 million special Bond Referendum for taxpayer approval and they agreed to conduct a \$500,000 Capital Campaign. The Board, with the Town Manager’s approval, created the North Kingstown Free Library Corporation. The Corporation, a 501c3, became the repository of donations for this major fundraising campaign and is still in existence today.

Dufault and library trustee, Jean Tammaro, attended a weeklong intensive training course presented by the Indiana University Center of Philanthropy Fundraising School. North Kingstown resident Barbara Dawson vol-

unteered her professional public relations expertise to design graphics and create written materials and The Second Century Campaign For All the Mind's Journeys was born.

The Capital Campaign Leadership team consisted of Honorary Chairs Paul and Bess Wilson, Campaign Chairs Russell and Cathy Shippee and Library Director Donna Dufault. Special thanks should go to Russell Shippee who showed that fundraising could be a competitive sport!

\$680,000 in private funds were raised, exceeding the campaign goal by \$180,000. The Bond Referendum, held in June 1997, passed with 85% approval of the voters. In 1998 the library won the American Library Association's highly respected John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award for this very successful fundraising endeavor. Thank you to everyone involved!!!!

BUILDING ADDITION AND RENOVATION

The architectural firm RBG (Robinson, Green and Beretta) of Providence, (Christopher Placco / Principal Architect, Diane Hanley/ Interior Designer) was chosen to design and oversee the library addition and renovation. They worked with the Board of Trustees and Dufault to design an addition and renovation that met the needs outlined in a very detailed building plan which had been created with much staff and public input. Four major priorities had been identified as being extremely important to meeting the needs of the community. The four priorities were: to better serve the children in the community; to increase and upgrade access for electronic resources; to create a new special

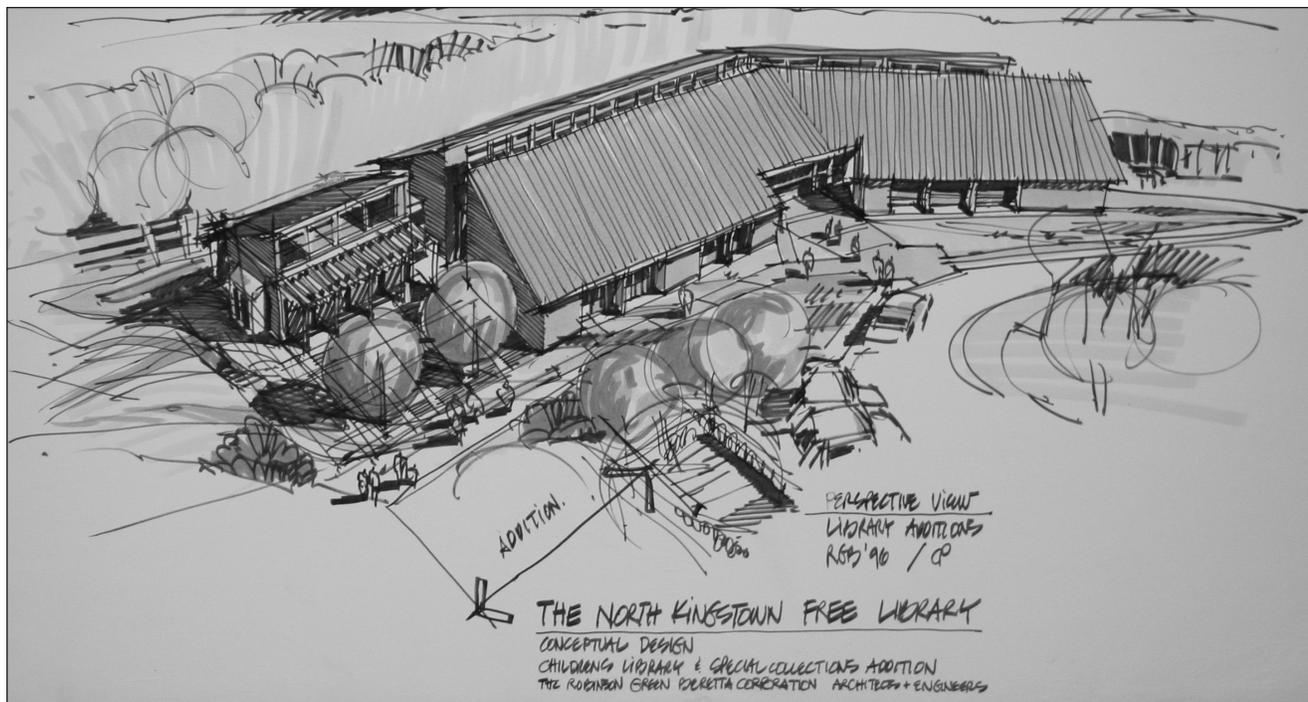
collections wing to preserve our North Kingstown heritage; and to create a more comfortable and productive environment through infrastructure improvements. All four priorities were successfully met when the design process was completed.

The young readers' area was doubled in size and included a special preschool room and a designated young adult area with comfortable seating. A new service desk, computer area, window seats, new furniture and twice as much shelf space completed the renovation in that area.

Computer technology was changing how the library was being used. Those changes and the ability to adapt to new changes had to be planned for. The building was rewired for 60 planned computers and a number of channels to house the electronic and data wire management necessary for high speed Internet had to be drilled through the three-foot concrete floors between the two service floors. A Windows Network was installed with 24 new computers for the public in a newly designed computer center.

A new Special Collections Wing was a large part of the addition on the north side of the building, lower level. In addition to a new South County Room, the wing included a large storage and workroom for staff and a small conference room for up to ten people. A special HVAC unit was installed to maintain the proper temperature and humidity for this fragile collection.

A more comfortable and productive environment was



achieved through newly designed circulation and reference desks, new carpeting and paint throughout the building, a new grand stairway, relocation of some collections to better use expanded space, new chairs, a new Quiet Study Room, and bathroom refurbishments. Improved lighting, a naming wall to honor the many donors and new signage inside and out completed the changes.

Upon completion, 5,700 square feet would be added to the existing building. The addition at the north end of the building added two floors of 2,000 square feet each. Two light wells between the upper and lower floors in the original building were converted into floor space for an additional 700 square feet. Two light wells remain; the new stairway uses part of one of them. The original stairway was filled in and created 200 square feet. An outside deck overlooking Academy Cove was roofed over and the area below it was bumped out to create an additional 400 square feet on each level.

DePasquale Building and Real Estate was chosen as the general construction contractor, Mark DePasquale/supervisor, John MacPherson/onsite supervisor. Dufault served as the library representative throughout the construction. The project began in April 1998.

The meeting room had to be closed and most programming ceased. The children's Summer Reading Program was held at the Wickford Elementary School. 30,000 books were chosen for storage and placed in 500 rented neon-orange crates and moved to the meeting room. Excavation on the new wing began with lots of heavy equipment and plenty of noise. Inside, temporary floor-to-ceiling walls were built to create an enclosed reference area on the lower floor and a children's area on the main floor.

The interior work was done in stages. Heavy plastic sheeting separated the construction workspace from the library workspace. As one section was finished, a new section was closed off, and the service space moved to another area. A large "stack mover" was borrowed from the URI Library. This hydraulic jack system was used to very slowly move library shelves full of books from one part of the library to another so that carpet could be laid down.

Despite the noise, dust, smells and disarray, the library was closed to the public for only one day during the entire construction project. The Interlibrary Loan system was invaluable in assuring that patrons got the materials they needed. A sign in the staff lunchroom said, "Let the games begin!" Work was very different for the 11 full-time and 16 part-time staff during this time. Staff and patrons were updated weekly with notes prepared by Dufault listing what to expect for the week.

Library Director Donna Dufault says, "The patrons were very patient and understanding through this whole process. The staff was wonderful: they rose to the occasion, took on new tasks, worked very hard and kept smiling. And everyone was still speaking when it was all over!"

The completion of the renovation and addition was celebrated with a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sunday, March 21, 1999.

Dufault adds, "I think this renovation and addition has served the people of North Kingstown well. The library is an exceptional public treasure, open to everyone. It is a special place "For All the Mind's Journeys" and is a beautiful spot to just sit and relax and enjoy the view!"



A NEW CHAPTER

Dedication of the new, expanded North Kingstown Free Library



PHOTOS: SCOTT WEIDER



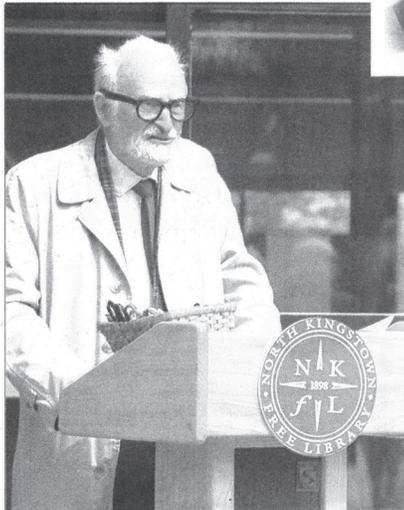
James Mollane and his son, Michael, check out a biography in the new, expanded children's section of the library.



ABOVE: Sue Moreland, a part-time worker at the library, redistributes books to the stacks. BELOW: Irving A. Spaulding, a longtime North Kingstown resident, reads the poem, *The Addition*, as part of the opening ceremonies.



ABOVE: The new stairway is one of the main focal points of the newly refurbished North Kingstown Free Library which was officially rededicated Sunday afternoon. Library Director Donna Dufault stands in front of the impressive book that lists all who contributed to the \$1.7 million project. BELOW: Taking part in the ribbon cutting are (l-r) John Eastman, president of the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library; Donna Dufault, library director; Teddy Coppa, a North Kingstown resident representing the town's youth; Pat Carlson, chairwoman of the library board of trustees and David Burnham, town council president.



Standard Times
March 25, 1999

Musings from Donna Dufault

By Donna Dufault

March 2015

The North Kingstown Free Library is a community gathering place as well as a vital resource “For All the Mind’s Journeys.”

My job as Director of the North Kingstown Free Library was the best job that I ever had. I enjoyed my eleven plus years tremendously. I believe there are four things that make a good library: a good staff, a good collection, a good building that functions efficiently, and a community that supports its library and the most important of the four goes home every night.

I want to stress my belief in how important the staff is in making the library so successful. There was a great deal of growth and change in the role the library played in providing access to information while I was at NKFL. We made many technological upgrades that were essential to providing rapidly changing electronic access to information while at the same time continuing to be an outstanding resource center for the community by providing information in traditional formats.

Our staff’s dedication and hard work makes North Kingstown Free Library more than a building full of books and electronic resources. They have maintained the library’s tradition of personal service and have carried out its mission to meet the changing and enduring cultural, educational, recreational, informational, and research needs of our users.

I feel strongly that a library is also an important part of the business community. This quote is from a speech I gave to the North Kingstown Rotary Club in 1992. “I’ve been the director of the North Kingstown Free Library for just over a year. I’m on the governing board of the American Library Association which has over 53,000 members. I speak my mind, have a Master’s Degree and I manage a business that has 30 employees, a 20,000 square foot facility valued at one and a half million dollars, a collection worth three million dollars and an annual budget of over three quarters of a million dollars.”

I was interviewed by Arline Fleming for the *Providence Journal* in 2000. The library renovation and addition had been completed and I was honored to be named Librarian of the Year by the Rhode Island Library Association. Some of my favorite quotes from that article:

“I think Donna’s most distinguishing characteristic is that she gets things done. She said she was going to renovate this building and put on an addition, and she did it,” said Susan Berman, Assistant Director of Adult Services at the library.

Fleming had this to say about my role in the renovation, “Dufault assumed the position of battle commander, saying she felt like a general going into a war zone which the building certainly resembled during construction.”

I consider my part in the library addition and renovation, completed in 1999, to be my most important contribution to the North Kingstown Free Library but there are several other things which I look back on with satisfaction. I worked to change the part time support positions to full time positions with better benefits. I worked to change the library hours so that we no longer closed for dinner. We also were open for four hours on Sunday during the school year. I initiated Food for Fines which had three important outcomes: many long overdue books were returned, patrons were able to take care of outstanding fines and we were all able to give back to our community by the donation of food to the North Kingstown Food Pantry.

THIS AND THAT

My take on an oft-repeated quote:

If you can read, thank a teacher. If you love to read, thank a librarian.

I remember when the Pan-Twilight Circus performed “The Tempest in a Big Top” at the town beach in June 1997 with 30% of the ticket sales going to the library’s capital campaign. Tom Sgouros, current member of the Board of Trustees, was the person in charge of this exciting happening. Such an amazing and wonderful event!

The most unusual “helping” pet that ever visited the library was a bearded dragon lizard that a patron brought in played across her chest as she casually asked a question at the circulation desk.

In 1999, the library published “A Century of Books For All the Mind’s Journeys” a bound, annotated year-by-year selection of the gems of 20th century American books. It was created in celebration of the centennial of the library.

Life-long love leads to new job

By MARYBETH REILLY

NORTH KINGSTOWN — Come February, the North Kingstown Free Library will begin a new chapter in its history, one that could be called the Donna J. Roberts Era.

Roberts, an East Greenwich native and current branch librarian at the East Providence Public Library, will become director of the North Kingstown Free Library in a couple of weeks, succeeding Shirley Payne who has held the post for six years and who is wrapping up a 26-year career there.

Roberts, is a cum laude graduate of the University of Rhode Island with a bachelor's degree in early childhood development and education and a master's in library science.

Roberts said that her choice of library science as a second degree came, in part, from a life-long love of the written word.

"I've always loved to read, loved books," she said smiling.

She spent the early part of her career teaching but library science has been her first love for over 16 years now.

Roberts said that she was particularly excited about taking over the helm in North Kingstown explaining that it is the fifth best library statewide in circulation.

One of state's best

And aside from cold statistics, Roberts said, "The library has the reputation for being one of the best in the state."

And well she should know. Roberts is a member of the American, New England and Rhode Island Library Associations as well as being a governing board member of the American Library Association. She is also a member of the Rhode Island Educational Media Association and the Coalition of Library Advocates. Furthermore, she currently serves on the editorial board of the Research Quarterly, a publication of the Research and Adult Services Division of the American Library Association.

Roberts said she will take at least six months time observing the inner workings of the library before trying anything new. She had only compliments for Payne and her staff adding that it's a little daunting to be stepping into the shoes of one so well-liked as the soon-to-be-retired director.

"She (Payne) is so well thought-of not just in the library but in the community as well."

Nonetheless, Roberts said she would like to see further use of the library by the town. She explained that one way to do this is to market the library as one would a product.

A library is for everybody

Many people have a genuine fear of books, she said. "They think it's just a bastion for intellectuals."

A mother of two, Roberts said one way to change that misconception is to encourage parents to take their children to the library's story hours and, most importantly, to read to them at home.

"If parents read, then their children will read," Roberts said emphatically. To force a child however, may have the opposite effect.

Instead she advises parents to teach by example.

"I can't stress that enough," Roberts said with a smile. "If it becomes a chore (for the child) then they'll lose the real pleasure of reading."

As the library's director, Roberts will oversee a staff of 20 employees with an annual budget of approximately \$752,000. In addition to the regular books, magazines and reference materials, the library houses over 96,000 items, including a video library, compact discs and books on tape.



DONNA J. ROBERTS, the next director of the North Kingstown Free Library.

Standard Times
February 1, 1991

Director of NK Free Library is shelving her career



PHOTO: JAMES RUSH

North Kingstown Free Library Director Donna Dufault is looking forward to new pursuits when she begins her retirement at the end of this month.

By Charles St. Martin

Independent Staff Writer

NORTH KINGSTOWN — One may think it odd that a director of a library is hard-pressed to find time to read the morning paper each day, but that's the busy life of Donna Dufault, who plans to celebrate the first day of her impending retirement by doing just that.

"I'll get up, get a cup of coffee and read the paper; all of it, not just the headlines," she said. "I'm just going to smile a lot."

Dufault, 58, a resident of East Greenwich, is stepping down as head of the North Kingstown Free Library at the end of this month. She has been director of the library for the last 11 years, a period that saw a \$1.75 million renovation and addition project go forward and a surge in enrollment to make the library the fourth busiest in the state.

The process of finding her replacement has begun, with both internal and external candidates being interviewed by the

library's Board of Trustees. Dufault's last day is June 28. Pat Carlson, president of the board, said a successor may be named by the end of the month but it likely will take a few weeks longer before the new director can report for work.

Dufault said she pretty much had made up her mind that this would be her last year, given that she's hit two magic numbers — the minimum age she can collect a pension and the minimum number of years, 30, before one can retire.

"So I said to myself, 'Here's a sign,'" she said. "I love this job, but the time was right."

Dufault plans to keep busy with working part time, maybe something related to library work, maybe something altogether different. She also plans to get serious about metal sculpting and hopes to attend classes at Rhode Island School of Design in the near future. In the meantime, her husband Barry has been buying her various tools she will need and she

Dufault/A6

Dufault is ready for retirement

From A1

has signed up for a Learning Connection course this summer taught by Roberto Bessin, a sculptor based in the Shady Lea Mill Complex.

"My husband won't let me get my hands on anything that heats up before I take a course," she said with a chuckle.

Speaking in a more serious tone, Dufault noted that she has been working nonstop for the last 41 years, and retiring will be a major change in her life. She said she thought about staying on at the library, that just to keep working would be the easy thing to do.

"I'm going to need time to adjust," she said. "It's scary, but it's exciting."

Dufault said one of her proudest accomplishments is the 5,000-square-foot addition put on the library in 1998. A good deal of what library directors do is behind the scenes though, and she said she would like to be remembered for her work to better working conditions at the library. When she came on in 1991, many of the people at the library worked part time and had no benefits. Now, all those who stayed on have moved into full-time jobs with benefits.

"People should be compensated for the work they do," she

said. "We have a great staff and they work very hard at what they do."

Dufault came to North Kingstown after three years as librarian and assistant director at East Providence Public Library. Before that she worked for 15 years as a librarian in Cranston Public Schools, taking advantage of both her undergraduate degree in child development and education and master's degree, both from the University of Rhode Island, in library science. Right out of school she landed a job with Hasbro Toys' Romper Room day care facilities, working her way toward her master's while gaining managerial experience.

If she does work again, Dufault said she prefers it to be something simple where she is not the boss. In regard to her time spent in North Kingstown, she said she considers herself fortunate to be in a position where the town fully supports its library and that it is considered as an integral part of the community. Such is not always the case in other towns, she noted.

"This is a very well-run town," she said. "The library's always seen a lot of respect. It's not a weak link as many other libraries in the state may be perceived."

Carlson said she had talked with Dufault on occasion in

the past year about her retirement. She even noted that she considered stepping down from the board but when she learned Dufault was leaving, she asked to remain on the board to help choose a new director.

Carlson praised Dufault's contributions to the library and in particular her work in getting the library expansion project done.

"There's no question in my mind that it is because of Donna and her management style and attention to detail that we were able to complete the addition to and rehab of the building with such success," she said. "She has been tireless in her efforts on our behalf, and by 'our' I mean every person who uses the library. She is intellectually honest, passionate about the value of knowledge and information and devoted to providing service for the library patrons."

Carlson noted that Dufault's leaving may affect the deputy director position, now held by Susan Aylward. She noted that all other positions remain, but the library director and deputy director must work together closely and the director usually has a hand in picking that person. The only other change would result if the trustees pick an existing employee for the directorship, leading to a shift as people move to the vacant position or a new person is hired.

Chapter 11: Susan Aylward — Library Director 2002-2011

Susan Aylward began her career at the library in 1976.

What the North Kingstown Free Library Means to Me

by Susan Aylward

February 2015

I have a one-word answer for what the North Kingstown Free Library means to me: EVERYTHING. As I think about the upcoming fortieth anniversary of the “new” library building on Boone Street, I can’t help but think about my own life. Because, you see, my life began (almost) when the life of the new library began. My first day of work at the NKFL, as a 17-year old high school student volunteer, was moving day—early December 1975, when the old library on Brown Street moved into the new library on Boone Street. I showed up after school to help unpack boxes of books and put them on the shelves. From that day until June 24, 2011 when I retired more than 35 years later, my entire adult life was spent in the service of the townspeople of North Kingstown in the town’s principal public library, a vital and storied institution that has grown to be one of the finest public libraries in the state.

When I was interviewed for the director’s position in 2002, one of the questions the Trustees asked was “What do you want your legacy to be?” I remember answering immediately, almost without thinking: “It’s not about me; it’s about the library.” My answer was a true one; but in hindsight, I wish I had said something a bit more eloquent; something like this: “I want my legacy to be that I helped to deepen the essential bond between the community and the NKFL.” Over the course of my career, I watched the North Kingstown Free Library evolve as an institution, an evolution that was driven by the building, which was the vessel of library service; by technology, which ultimately revolutionized the way that library service is delivered; by the collections, which are the lifeblood of any library; and by the staff—so many gifted, talented, and committed individuals who were the face of the institution. But in the end, the essence of the North Kingstown Free Library, indeed of any thriving public library, is the bond between the community and the library.

And we are so fortunate that in North Kingstown that bond is very, very strong. When I see my former library



patrons around the town, or surprise, **in the library**, they often ask how I am enjoying retirement and if I miss the library. I tell them, yes I am enjoying retirement very much. I do not miss the wearing responsibility of the building and its systems, and having to plead every year for full funding for the library budget. But what I do miss, most profoundly, is the people—my library patrons. My favorite thing as library director was to open my drapes as soon I got into the office at 7am so that I could wave at everyone coming up the front walk, sometimes running from my office to the front door to meet those I wanted to greet in person. Before the library opened, I would often crank open my window to have conversations with other early risers about books, or about their families or their pets or shared challenges in our lives. My other favorite thing was to write my monthly director’s message for the library newsletter, *Among Friends*. These were two small, quiet ways that were my attempt to open my life to other people in the community with whom I share an indelible bond—a devotion to the North Kingstown Free Library.

The Old Library Doors and the New Library Doors

by Susan Aylward

February 2015

I never worked “officially” at the old library on Brown Street. But, when I was around five years old, my father, who was the library custodian from 1955 to 1979, would sometimes take me with him when he went to clean on Sunday afternoons. We went up the steps hand-in-hand; he unlocked the heavy front door; and we stepped into the vestibule, which I thought was the grandest spot on earth because of the beautiful curving staircase heading to the second floor where Mrs. Hellewell had her office and where the really old books were kept in the Rhode Island Room. The tile floor was like glass (thanks to Dad) and there was this incredible smell which was unique and heady—a combination of the wax he used on the floors and the smell of the books. I remember it to this day.



While he did his work, I was allowed to sit at the front desk, which was curved and made of a blonde wood that didn't much match the décor of the rest of the library. But it had compartments built in for the cards (lots of them) and drawers that opened easily, which held supplies like pens and paper clips and other cards. The desk chair was on wheels and it swiveled and miraculously—if I promised not to move

things, especially the cards in the compartments—I was allowed to sit at the desk and play “library.” I could have read any book I chose from the children's corner—but instead, I was interested only in sitting at the desk and doing what I imagined the librarians did every day! I sat quietly fooling with the cards (and yes, alas, unbeknownst to my father, I did move them...) while the buffing machine whirred away in the background in what was otherwise a “church-quiet” atmosphere infused with that glorious combined smell of Holcombe wax and books.

More than a decade later, when I entered the brand new library building for my first day of work, I did so through a very different door. The door of the new library wasn't a heavy, solid door that you approached by

climbing a stone staircase onto a porch surrounded by magnificent columns. The new library entrance was a double glass door tucked into the knuckle of the building between two wings. And the frame of the door was painted a bright, vibrant orange. Not only did the orange color complement the beautiful brick façade of the building, but it shouted “look at me; open me up; come see what is inside” in a warm and welcoming way. Once you were inside, the equally vibrant orange carpet radiated that same warmth. I have long thought that this color choice of the designers was the centerpiece of the entire building's design and I mourned the loss of the orange when the building was renovated and expanded in 1996.

Thirty-some years after that first day, when I was the director, I would often go into the library on Sunday mornings to get caught up on my work and I would find myself wandering alone around the building in search perhaps of those long lost days when I was with my father and the atmosphere was redolent of old books and wax. But instead, I would look up at the sky through the clerestory windows and out at the water from the east-facing glass walls and out of my office windows towards the earth where the beautiful center island garden was in bloom in the parking lot. And I would think of the orange door and the library behind it, which made my life so special for such a long time. And today, as I write these words, I am reminded of Philip Larkin's (the British poet/librarian) poem titled “High Windows,” in which he writes: “Rather than words comes the thought of high windows: The sun-comprehending glass, And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows/Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.”



Libraries Change Lives

by Susan Aylward

February 2015

In 1958, the American Library Association instituted National Library Week and its annual advertising campaign in an effort to celebrate and promote the nation's libraries. In 2001, the campaign theme was "Libraries Change Lives." While writing my essays about the history of the North Kingstown Free Library as I saw it in my thirty-five year career, the word which comes up over and over again is "change." First, there is the library's mission: "to meet the changing and enduring cultural, educational, informational, recreational and research needs of its users." In pursuing this mission to be all things to all people, the library has been an agent of change in the lives of countless individuals—staff and patrons. In responding to its users' changing needs and the various cultural and social forces that drive those needs, the library itself has been utterly transformed by its users. In affirming the unique vision of each of its directors, the library has been enriched by their legacies.

My backward glance has me thinking about the past in a way that tends to mythologize it; nostalgia can be a powerful lens. Change brings loss; no doubt about it. But it also brings the excitement of new opportunities. I've been thinking about the glorious paper-based card catalogs, the fingerprints of so many staff members and patrons etched onto the typewritten cards. For twelve years, until the catalogs were closed in 1988 when the library joined CLAN (now OSL), I had helped to type and file those cards and I had used them to help patrons find books. There was something utterly wonderful about the circuitous route on which the card catalog might lead you, and I love the idea of the fingerprints of the past on a tangible piece of card stock. While I mourn the loss of the card catalog, I also embrace the "new" catalog, which exists only in cyberspace and lists the collections of every public library in Rhode Island. What an incredible revolution in library service for the NKFL patrons to have access to the holdings of all the public libraries in Rhode Island at the click of a mouse. But I suspect it only seems incredible to those of us who grew up opening a card catalog drawer with relish and flipping through the cards at the start of what seemed like the world's greatest treasure hunt. Today's young people expect the convenience and immediacy that technology affords them and so the methods by which we find things in libraries has been transformed.

I remember how much I loved the intellectual pursuit of cataloging "in the old days," examining each new book closely to determine first where it would land on

the shelves in the Dewey Decimal classification system and then what subjects would be assigned to it for searching in the card catalogs. I wonder: if I hadn't been the library cataloger in 1985 looking so closely at the new books, would I have read *The Hemingway Women* by Bernice Kert; which led to my writing a letter to Hemingway's third wife Martha Gellhorn and our becoming pen pals for the last thirteen years of her life? I mourn the loss of the intellectual pursuit that cataloging used to be. Yet, I embrace the new process, which means that materials move much more quickly onto the shelves. Also, there is now a level of standardized call numbers and subject headings throughout all the libraries in Rhode Island, which makes it easier for library patrons, especially those who use more than one library (which is in itself, a wonderful thing!).

I am reminded how lucky I was, after I got my library degree and began to work at the reference desk in Susan Berman's outstanding reference department, to be paired with Althea McAleer, who was the retired director of the Fairfax County Library System just outside of Washington, D.C. She volunteered at the NKFL on Mondays, working both at the reference desk and also on special projects in the South County Room. She was so smart and kind and patient; it was better than any class in graduate library school to spend my morning on the reference desk with her. Alas, she wasn't there (it was my loss) on the fateful day when I got the Moëbius strip question. A young student came up to the desk and asked for information on the Moëbius strip. I was very nervous, being alone at the reference desk. Having never heard of the Moëbius strip, I thought it must be geographical, like the Gaza strip. So my first question was: where is it? The young student answered mathematics; but I thought (with geography in my head) that she said Massachusetts. So I took her over to the atlases and began to look in the Massachusetts indexes for Moëbius strip (though I doubt I was spelling it correctly). After a little while of my consulting the index of every atlas we owned, she was finally so exasperated that she nearly screamed "mathematics." Jolted into action, I think (I hope) we finally found information on the Moëbius strip. Althea would have known about the Moëbius strip and she would never have let me head for the atlases! She would have somehow, tactfully and kindly, steered me in the correct and opposite direction. I wonder if a new, young librarian could make this same mistake today. The student looking for information on the Moëbius strip would probably look it up on *Google* rather than call or come to the library. But as the writer Neil Gaiman says: "*Google* can bring you

back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.” That is true if you ask a really good librarian, like Althea McAleer.

I am reminded of how for a number of years I wound the Eli Terry clock in the South County Room every morning, feeling comforted by the gentle tick tock of the clock and its bell that would chime on the hour; feeling connected to the library’s past since the clock was one of the pieces that decorated the original South County Room when it was established in the old library in 1955 as what was then known as the R.I. Room. The South County Room is not just a physical space on the lower level of the library; it is the embodiment of the library’s enduring mission to enrich the lives of the citizens of North Kingstown. The collections that occupy the space in the South County Room, the Archives Room, and the Patricia Carlson Conference Room are invaluable on so many levels. These collections provide papers, photographs, artifacts, and books that document not only the life and history of the town of North Kingstown, but also reveal the inner lives of its citizens; and further reflect the interests of the library directors whose vision has shaped the library throughout its one hundred and sixteen year history. I am honored to have been able to make two significant contributions to the development of this collection during my tenure as Library Director (2002-2011). The first was the voting machine used in North Kingstown in the 1901 election and the second was the David Plante collection.

The voting machine, used in the election of 1901, was discovered by Town Historian Tim Cranston in the vault at Town Hall. It had been badly damaged over the years. The paper ballots, though timeworn, were still intact on the front of the machine, allowing us to date the machine to the 1901 election in which William Gregory was the winning candidate for Governor of Rhode Island. This is of particular interest to North Kingstown and to the library because William Gregory not only lived in North Kingstown, but he was also the first Chairman of the North Kingstown Free Library Board of Trustees. I received a \$4,000 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to help fund the restoration of the machine and a series of programs related to the history of voting in Rhode Island. The restoration project was led by Conservator Bruce Mason of Barrington who was able, miraculously, to restore the machine to working order.

Shirley Payne, the Library’s Director from 1985 to 1991, has always prized education on every possible level. When she was getting ready to retire in 1991, she encouraged me to go back to school to work on a Ph.D. in English and she further suggested that I write my

dissertation on the Rhode Island-born writer David Plante, whose work we had read at a series of library programs that featured lectures and discussion on writers with Rhode Island connections called *Reading Rhode Island*, which Deborah Brennan (NKFL Library Director from 1979 to 1985) had helped to organize. Earning a Ph.D. in English, and pursuing that project through the influence of two beloved library directors for whom I served, has always seemed to me to be the culmination of the North Kingstown Free Library’s enrichment of my life. My continuing friendship with David Plante has been an amazing gift that came about solely because of the North Kingstown Free Library. It seems only fitting that upon his retirement from the Columbia University School of the Arts, where he taught writing, that David Plante, my friend, would give a collection of manuscripts and books from his personal library in his New York apartment to the NKFL. This is a significant literary archive that is invaluable not only to scholars of literature in the modern age, but also to the life of the mind that has been shaped by the North Kingstown Free Library and its directors. The NKFL Board of Trustees gratefully accepted the gift because of their recognition not only of Plante’s importance in the pantheon of modern American literature—he has been described as “one of the best living writers in the English language”—but also of his importance in the cultural landscape of Rhode Island.

The South County Room and the collections housed therein is where the past and the present become one; it is where the library’s parallel missions to meet both the changing and enduring needs of its citizens intersect. And, in the digital age, when shared collections make libraries seem interchangeable warehouses or just geographical depots to pick up and drop off borrowed material, the wide-ranging and varied special collections in the South County Room, the Archives, and the Patricia Carlson Conference Room are what make the NKFL unique among equals and it is these collections that deserve the strongest possible commitment in time and treasure. Preserving the history and culture of the past and cultivating the life of the mind are at the heart of this library’s mission and at the heart of the mission of every great public library in our nation. And it is the technology of the future—digitizing and making our special collections accessible in a virtual North Kingstown Free Library—that will make these collections meaningful and useful beyond the walls of the building, reaching out to the widest possible community.

Reaching out to the community is ultimately how libraries change lives. It is all about people. Edna “Teddy” Lager, the North Kingstown Free Library’s finest director in the modern age, recognized this through-

out her career. When she retired as library director in 1979 after having served fourteen years, the headline in *The Standard-Times* article was: “In her book, people come first.” Indeed, she has always believed that “a public library belongs to the public.” Those of us who worked for her and then went on to serve as director of the NKFL—Deborah Brennan (1979-1985), Shirley Payne (1985-1991), and I (2002-2011)—also believed in this important concept. The changes that all

of us saw across our careers were surface changes in the process or form of library service. But they did not in any way alter our collective commitment to building strong bonds between the library and the community we served. We followed in Teddy’s footsteps to ensure that the North Kingstown Free Library would continue to be a steadfast partner in improving the lives of the citizens of North Kingstown as it had during Teddy’s administration. Long may it continue.

Automation at the NKFL

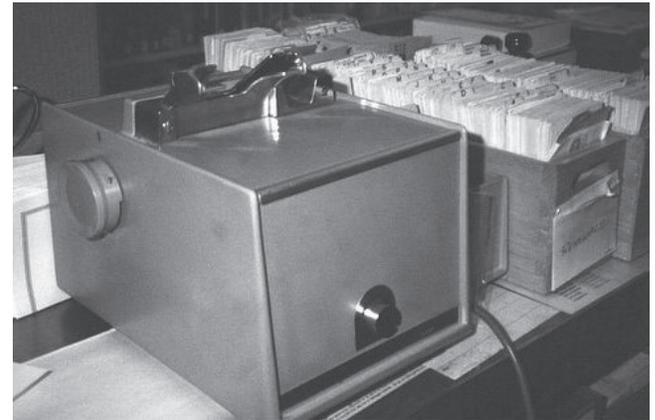
by Susan Aylward

July 2015

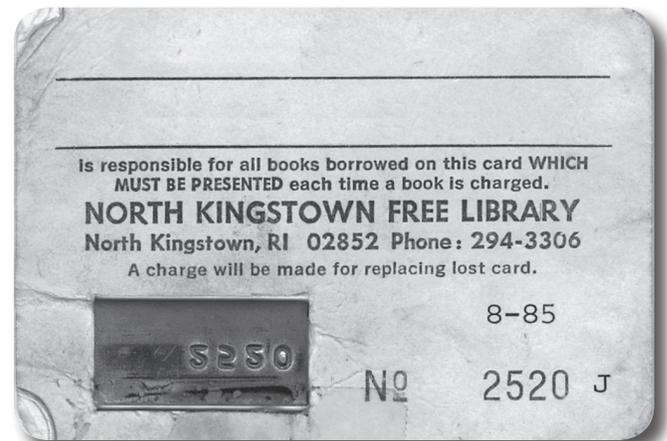
On any given day, when you visit the North Kingstown Free Library, you will see adults and children using the library’s computers to do research, send email to friends and family, find books and other materials in the library’s collection, or you might see them in a quiet corner using their own laptops or tablets, taking advantage of the library’s super-fast wireless internet connection. Many of today’s library users have no memory of the “old” days—just forty years ago—when the North Kingstown Free Library opened its state-of-the-art new building on Boone Street and there was not a single computer to be found on the premises.

In the old library on Brown Street, staff members checked out books by handwriting a patron’s library card number (or name) on a card, which was then filed in alphabetical order by the author’s last name in compartments in the desk that were divided by due date. When the books were returned, staff used the date due card, which had been put in the book at the time of checkout and which was hopefully still in the book, to find the correct book card, which then went back into the book and the book could be returned to the shelf. The patrons loved this system—their library card number or name was on the card in the book so they could see at a glance if they had read that particular book. But the system was incredibly labor-intensive and wholly dependent on the accuracy of the library staff in copying the library card number onto the book card and in correctly filing the cards so that they could be retrieved easily when the books were returned.

When the new library on Boone Street opened in December 1975, the first automation of library processes took place. We purchased “Gaylord book charger machines,” so-named because they were sold by the Gaylord Library Supply Company. These machines were metal boxes into which you inserted a library card that had a metal plate with raised numbers. My library



Gaylord Book Charger Machine



card number was P4596. That was forty years ago and I still remember that number!! Inside the machine there was a metal bar that had the due dates on it, also little metal plates with raised numbers. There was a ribbon, very similar to a typewriter ribbon inside the machine. When the staff checked out a book, the book card, specially notched to work in the machine, was imprinted with both the due date and the library card number and the machine made a loud clunk noise as those numbers were printed. At the same time, a cutting blade took a chunk out of the notched book card which advanced the printing down one line.

In theory, these machines were the best thing next to sliced bread; in practice, not so much. In theory, they eliminated the human element of getting the library card number correctly transcribed onto the checkout card. That whole process was now “automatic.” But, the Gaylord machines were the bane of our existence. They were fussy devils. Well-used library cards would get stuck in the machine, which then had to be taken apart with a screwdriver to try to pry out the ripped card. The ribbons would get stuck periodically, which required taking the machine apart to advance the ribbon manually. The notched book cards would get stuck in the machine. That required major surgery on the machine. This was equivalent to the “blue screen of death” on a computer. The checkout line would back up as we tried some feat of mechanical engineering to get the machine operating once again. Often, the staff ended up having to write in the patron’s library card number on each of the cards. And that was a problem the next time the book was checked out because the card didn’t get notched and so the next checkout would be printed on top of the handwritten entry, making the new checkout unreadable. An unreadable checkout meant you did not know who had borrowed the book.

The patrons, ever flummoxed by change, hated the Gaylord system. They were issued entirely new library card numbers, which they didn’t want (they liked their old numbers) and they had to bring their library cards with them, rather than simply reciting their library card numbers to the staff. Staff members were also flummoxed by the change. As soon as machinery became involved in their lives, a whole lot more could go wrong and it did. Those of us who were mechanically inclined (and I was one of these folks) didn’t mind hauling out the screwdriver and performing surgery on the machines. However, as a Gaylord machine surgeon, you always had an audience in the operating theater. And that could make the nervous Nellies (and I was also one of these) even more nervous. Depending on how long it took you to do the surgery, there was the potential for the long line of waiting patrons to get ever-so-slightly hostile. And the wait and their hostility did not give them any warm fuzzy feelings for “automation” at the library.

The Gaylord machines reigned supreme for about seven years—until the mid-1980’s—when the library administration decided it was time to explore a more serious form of library automation; one involving computers. It was around this time that the Providence Public Library had begun to automate its operations and was making its computer systems available to other Rhode Island public libraries in what would be the precursor to the Rhode Island public library computer network, first known as CLAN (Cooperating Libraries Automat-

ed Network) and now as OSL (Ocean State Libraries). I can remember sitting in Annalee Bundy’s office on the third floor of the Providence Public Library with Deborah Brennan, the NKFL director and Reggie Leeper, the NKFL assistant director as we discussed the logistics and costs of our joining PPL’s budding network of libraries. We joined not long after that meeting, soon after Debbe retired and Shirley Payne took over as library director. And so began the most comprehensive project that the library had undertaken since the construction of the new building.

We called it the “automation project” and it involved a complicated choreography of funding, retrofitting, purchasing equipment, wholesale changes to all of our operations, and copious amounts of training. The automation project was conducted largely behind-the-scenes for two years, when we barcoded nearly every book, video, and audiocassette in the library’s collection and entered most of those items into the computer system. In 1988, with tremendous financial support from the Champlin Foundations, we were ready to go “live” and began checking out library materials on the CLAN system. Gone were book cards, which had to be counted and filed throughout the day; and gone was the job of the Gaylord machine surgeons. Now all we had to contend with was the “blue screen of death” and the vagaries of the CLAN network computers housed at PPL.

The “automation project” was a shining example of the staff’s working together seamlessly and tirelessly on something that was larger than any one individual. Every staff member participated, most participated joyfully. We made a game of it all—calling the bar coding “zebra stripping”; naming each of the computers with names beginning with a “Z.” We had contests, and pizza parties, and bonded as a “family” over a shared goal. It was a lot of hard work; but it was one of the library staff’s shining moments. I will always be proud of that particular group of staff members and the job they did in advancing the library into a new age.

Today, we take for granted our Rhode Island network of public libraries and the immediate access we have to information and materials across the state. The Ocean State Libraries network is a nationwide model (though the nation probably does not know it) of access and convenience. Because Rhode Island is so small geographically, it means that you can select an item by clicking a mouse or tapping your smartphone and that item shows up at your home library a couple of days later. Or if you need it more quickly, you can actually drive to that library and within an hour or so, the item can be in your hand. Library staff members; the delivery system funded by the State Office of Library and Information Services;

the computer equipment subsidized over the years by the generous support of the Champlin Foundations have all made this and so much more possible.

When I look back at the incremental changes that happened in my thirty-five year tenure at the NKFL—from the Gaylord Machine to one TRS-80 computer to 50+ for the public; from manual typewriters to electric typewriters to word processors to computers; from rotary phones to phones tied to the computer; from a copy machine that used thermographic paper to copiers that now print and scan as well as copy; from a paper card catalog to a virtual catalog that can be updated instantaneously and searched 24/7 from anywhere in the world; from reference questions that required hours of searching in large books and encyclopedias to questions that can be asked and answered without ever coming into the library, I am utterly amazed. Today's library doesn't seem to resemble the building I entered as a high school student volunteer in 1975. And yet, remarkably, it does resemble it!

Those of us (now a breed of dinosaurs) who remember the Gaylord machine and the paper card catalog with great fondness perhaps have mixed emotions about the library of the future where the printed word and the place of books will be secondary to the expansive tools that make information, education, and culture so accessible. But I was heartened this week when I visited the library and saw one of our new, young librarians, the Fiction Coordinator, Maggie Browne, who earned her Master's Degree in this new age of technology. She was having a lively and lovely discussion with a reader and they were sharing book recommendations. It makes me feel as if our library is in good hands in this age of technology. The "automation project" is an ongoing one; seizing the new tools as we did thirty years ago zebra stripping every book and preparing to join CLAN. Yet, then, as now—our patrons matter. Public service requires human interaction; not just a virtual connection. Kudos to Maggie and the other new librarians who recognize that very important principle.



This photo of library page Joy Curtis at the computer was taken for a brochure created for the capital campaign prior to the renovation and expansion of the library in 1997.

Aylward named new library director

By Charles St. Martin
Independent Staff Writer

NORTH KINGSTOWN — The North Kingstown Free Library Board of Trustees searched the country for a replacement for outgoing director Donna Dufault, but in the end had to look no further than a current employee who has been intimately involved with libraries since she was a little girl.

The trustees on Monday night voted to hire Susan Aylward, the library's deputy director, a town employee for the last 26 years and a lifelong resident. She officially takes over on Aug. 6 and will have a hand in picking her replacement. She takes over for Dufault, director of the library for the last 11 years who pushed for a \$1.75 million renovation and addition project and other improvements that have made the library the fourth busiest in the state.

Walking into those shoes and the successes the library is enjoying now, Aylward said she doesn't plan to make any major changes. She laughed when asked what her legacy would be and noted that she was asked that several times during the interview process. She sees her job in the near future as helping the library stay its current course.

"I don't see many major changes on the immediate horizon, I only want to enhance that reputation," she said. "I want us to continue to be a strong center of the community."

One thing Aylward, 43, plans is to speak with staff members and see what is on their minds about the operation of the library. She also plans to speak with members of the Board of Trustees and the patrons and solicit their opinions as well. From that information-gathering process, Aylward plans to



Susan Aylward

develop some initiatives for change.

Dufault said she feels very comfortable leaving the reins in Aylward's hands. She wasn't involved in the search process though, as she was Aylward's main reference and felt it improper to be on any type of review board. She also gave references to two out-of-state applicants who were interviewed for the job.

"She's very bright, she understands the intricacies of this organization very well and we've worked as a team really for many years," Dufault said. "When I came in from the outside, it took me a while to know what I was going to do, and she was really accommodating."

Aylward said one thing she will emphasize in her tenure is increasing technology resources both for the patron who comes into the facility and those accessing the library's Web page from home. She has spent a great deal of time working on technology and sees it only helping the library do its mission.

"It has made such a difference in the kind of service we can offer," she said. "It's also been so helpful for the staff to have all this technology. I can

remember when we hand wrote the catalog cards and then gave it to someone to type. Now that's all centrally done at the CLAN office in Warwick.

Aylward's experiences are quite varied, and she's held just about every job and worked at every desk the library has. She started working at the library as a page in her senior year in high school, back when the library was on Brown Street. After two months of volunteer work, she was hired for part-time work and made plans to attend the University of Rhode Island that fall to study to become a librarian.

Becoming a librarian was somewhat a destiny for her, something that got into Aylward's blood at a very young age. Her father was a former fire chief in town but before ascending to that rank he worked part time as a custodian at the librarian. Aylward's childhood memories are punctuated with thoughts of spending time with her father in the library while he cleaned on Sunday mornings.

"Instead of reading, I sat at the desk and played with all the cards, I must have been 5 or 6 years old," she said. "I'm sure I messed up those cards."

Although a fixture in town of her own right, she has some deep lineage in town. She lives in the West Allenton Road in the house that belonged to her grandparents. Her father met her mother while he was stationed at Quonset Point. She represents the fifth generation of Aylwards to live in North Kingstown.

While in college, she wrapped up her undergraduate degree in English in 1980 and immediately began work on earning her master's degree in library science. She did it at a breakneck pace, completing the degree requirements in two summers

and one full academic year.

While in college, she worked part time at the library as a library clerk and senior library clerk. Upon graduating with her master's degree in August 1981, an employee at the library was making a career change and was leaving. She got the job as cataloger and from then on she worked full time at the library.

Aylward climbed the ranks over the years, working as a reference librarian, running the young readers and circulation desks before being promoted as coordinator of technical and automated services. Later she was named as assistant director for support services and was in charge of the front desk and all back room operations. Two years ago she was promoted to the position of deputy director.

Along the way she ground out a doctorate degree in English from URI, taking seven years to do that, from 1991 to 1998. That was quite a shock for someone who marched through graduate school to get her master's, she admitted, but said she was blessed for the support she was given at work that allowed her to pursue that goal.

"Donna [Dufault] always was very supportive and let me arrange my schedule to what I needed," she recalled.

Aylward said she always wanted to be a librarian, but hasn't been able to put her finger on what attracts her to the profession. She likes the many challenges involved in working in a library, and one the size of North Kingstown's keeps her quite busy.

"I think it started out being in my blood," she said. "I found I really enjoyed the work. It also evolved into something I really loved and I always was in the position to work for bosses that were encouraging. And of course I love to read."

North/East Independent
June 27, 2002

For new library head, life-long dream comes true

Susan Aylward succeeds Donna Dufault

By SCOTT SPITLER

NORTH KINGSTOWN – After more than a quarter of a century at the North Kingstown Free Library Susan Aylward has worked her way to the top.

The library's board of trustees announced this week that Aylward, a North Kingstown native who holds a doctorate in English from URI, will be the library's next director. She is replacing Donna Dufault who headed the library for the past 11 years.

"I was absolutely thrilled and so excited about all the possibilities," Aylward said when she heard about the promotion.

Aylward has worked in the library in some capacity for the past 26 years, serving the last two as deputy director. She began as a volunteer when still in high school, but her life long involvement with the library began much earlier.

As a little girl Aylward would accompany her father, who would eventually become the town's fire chief, to his part-time job as library custodian. While he cleaned the building the future director sat at the desk and "played with the cards." Later, she became a library page while in high school and began work

when the library moved to its current location on Boone Street.

"I sort of started when this library started," Aylward said. "It solidified my desire to do this as my career and my life."

Although she doesn't officially take over the director's duties until August 6, she will be the interim director during July while Dufault is on vacation. Aylward doesn't see any drastic changes to the library on the horizon, but in her former position as the library's coordinator of technical and automated services she knows the value of computers and technology.

"My main goals at the moment are to really solidify the library in the community," she said, adding the need to keep up to date with online resources is a necessity in a world where most research is done on the internet.

The library board of trustees agreed. It interviewed candidates from four states, but the board said, in a statement, that "her knowledge of the finance, personnel issues and technology as well as her knowledge of the community make her an excellent choice."

"We have a wonderful library," Aylward said. "And I want to enhance it."

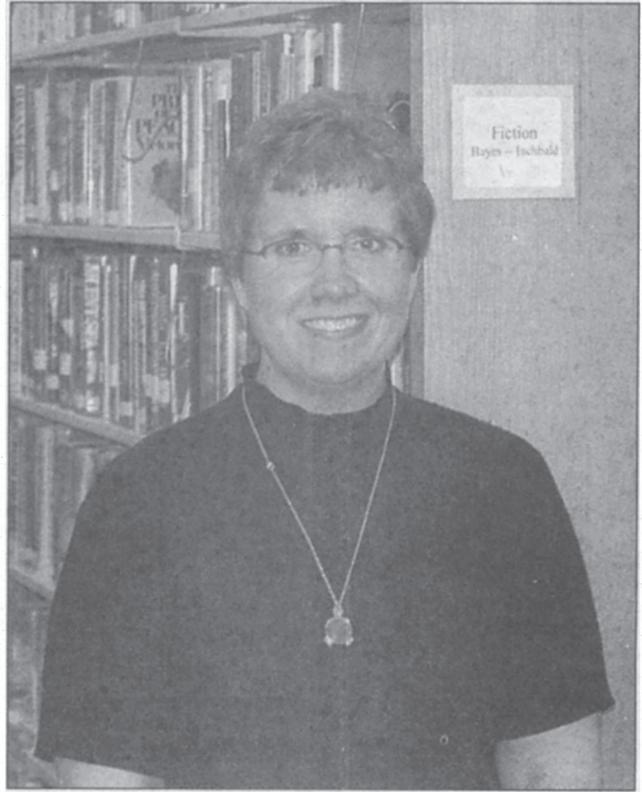


PHOTO: SCOTT SPITLER

SUSAN AYLWARD started at the North Kingstown Free Library as a high school volunteer and now starting Aug. 6 she will run it.

Standard Times,
June 27, 2002



NK library director to retire in June

North/East Independent
May 5, 2011

By Arline A. Fleming/Special to the Independent

NORTH KINGSTOWN — “I am about to write a new chapter in my own very personal story at the North Kingstown Free Library . . .,” library director Susan Aylward wrote in the library’s May newsletter, announcing her retirement plans.

If her own “very personal story” is to begin at the beginning, than it would have to start with a child-size Susan trailing her father Thomas to the former library building on Brown Street. He was the library custodian and spent his after-church Sunday hours cleaning the impressive 1898 structure.

As such, he had a key to that Wickford building with the massive columns, and with little Susie at his side, he’d unlock the heavy front door, and they’d step into the cool darkness. He would tend to his duties. She would play at the main desk, pretending to be the librarian.

By the time she was a teenager, she was no longer pretending to be a library employee. At 17, she became a devoted library aide.

Aylward never left the town library though she advanced through several titles, becoming director in 2002 after having helped steer the library into the age of automation and an expansion. Aylward said she never considered not serving the library until this past winter.

“I woke up early one Sunday morning in February with the sudden realization that it was time for me to relinquish this very great responsibility.”

“I hadn’t been thinking about it,” Aylward said in a recent interview. “I think part of it was that the winter was just so terrible and it seemed like every other minute I was thinking, ‘are we closing the library?’”

This director has also been known to shovel snow away from the library’s front door, clearing pathways and walkways to keep her staff and patrons safe. And while she says the exercise isn’t a bad thing, some of the responsibility of caring for a 30,000-square-foot building began to feel as heavy as those leaden snow drifts she was shoveling away.

Several 2 a.m. visits on sub-freezing nights brought her



to the library when the alarm sounded, and as director, she was the one who needed to respond and make the adjustment.

“It’s a very big responsibility, it’s 24/7,” she said.

Prior to the spring and fall of 2009, Aylward shared the weight of her work in conversations with longtime colleague and reference librarian Susan Berman of Kingstown, but Berman retired that year.

“I found I missed her terribly.”

Shortly thereafter, Aylward’s parents, Thomas and Marion, died within a few weeks of each other, and with that loss went a father who listened to his daughter’s work-a-day concerns and a mother who had long supported her daughter with steadfast cheerfulness.

“I could go home and tell my dad things and he understood because he had been fire chief,” Aylward said of her father, who served the town not just as the library custodian, but also as a firefighter in many capacities for many years before serving as chief.

“During a recent period when we had a staffing issue,

Susie became the custodian and could be found washing the lavs prior to opening time,” notes Patricia B. Carlson, chairwoman of the Board of Trustees, who has known Aylward since she was a young girl, and who has spent 25 years on the library board.

“It has been her willingness to do whatever needs to be done that has made her an exceptional director. She has worked tirelessly to guide the library through a period of rapidly changing technologies.”

A 1976 graduate of North Kingstown High School, Aylward earned her undergraduate and advanced degrees at the University of Rhode Island. She is an authority on author and Rhode Island native David Plante and maintained a correspondence with American novelist, journalist, and Ernest Hemingway’s wife, Martha Gellhorn, for many years.

Aylward said she has spent her entire adult life “serving the North Kingstown Free Library and up until about two months ago, I intended to spend a good portion of the rest of my life also serving our library.”

But on that winter morning when she first considered a different path, Aylward said she realized that “change is a good thing,” and she began to feel eager about exploring other interests.

After caring for her parents for many years, taking them to South County Hospital in Wakefield for various procedures, she realized that she wanted “to give back,” and so has already applied to volunteer there.

She also wrote her Ph.D dissertation on the work of David Plante and hopes to do post-doctoral work on the same subject. Plante gave the library a collection of his manuscripts and books. She hopes to inventory the manuscripts and do further work at the library but as a patron. She also hopes to attend more library programs, feeling that she wants to better support community outreach coordinator Elizabeth Donovan’s efforts, “but there are just not enough hours in the day.”

“She has been very encouraging since I took over the programming and I will truly miss her support,” notes Donovan. “But I am thrilled for her and see this as a wonderful opportunity for her to have some great adventures.”

Aylward, 52, said she “didn’t agonize over it,” when she thought about retiring. “I grew up here, it has been really wonderful, but I also feel as if a person can stay too long. I think it is time for someone else to come in with fresh eyes. It’s good for the staff, too.”

Some of the 19 library employees cried when she made her announcement. “I think they were very shocked. A lot of people were very shocked,” Aylward said.

Aylward’s job position was posted and Friday is the deadline for applicants. She hopes to stay on through a transitional period but wants to be officially retired by summer, leaving behind the 129,000-volume library and its staff, including Susan Moreland, deputy director, the last of three Susans to work there.

“I’m still trying to wrap my head around the fact that she is really retiring,” Moreland said. “Having lived here all of her life and worked here at the library for more than 30 years, Susan knows everything there is to know about North Kingstown and the North Kingstown Free Library. That kind of knowledge is priceless.”

Moreland described Aylward as having “a quick mind,” and admired her budgeting skills, an aspect of the job Aylward says she loved.

But mostly, she said she loved the staff and the patrons, and though she will leave with many memories, one of her fondest will be the mornings at her very own desk by the front window where patrons would wave to her as they passed.

“I wish I had had more time actually out on the floor talking to people,” she said.

“I think it is going to be a big change for me. I have come here every day for 35 years. I think it’s the best library in the state and that’s because of the staff,” she adds.

“But I’m looking forward to having some time to do things I haven’t had time to do,” one of which is, of course, “to read whatever I want to read.”

Her last day as director will be June 24. The next chapter in the story about the little girl who grew up at the town library will begin June 25.

Chapter 12: Cyndi Desrochers — Library Director 2011-

Chugga Chugga Choochoo to the Future....

By *Cyndi Desrochers*

August 2015

Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him.

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower



It's hard to believe, but it's been almost 4 years since I was hired as the Director of the North Kingstown Free Library. It was very exciting (and scary) to take on the director's role in a new library setting – I'd worked my whole library career (over 20 years) in one library. My first day felt kind of like jumping off a

cliff - new building, new staff, new policies and procedures. Fortunately, with the help of the library's staff, I managed to muddle through those first few weeks.

Without people, a library is just a building. NKFL is lucky to have a wonderful staff, Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library and patrons that make it worth coming to work every day.

It is very exciting to be part of a library that has been in existence for well over 100 years. Since I've always been interested in history, one of the first things I did when I took over the director's job was to read the minutes of the NKFL Board of Trustees and try to imagine what it would have been like working in the original building on Brown Street in the early years of the library's existence. The Board minutes are absolutely fascinating! The first Board meeting was on August 31, 1897 – seventeen months before the building on Brown Street was completed and dedicated. At their second meeting, on September 7, 1897, the Board voted that "the name of the Library shall be the North Kingstown Free Library." They held their first meeting in the new library on January 18, 1899.

The minutes were handwritten and often difficult to read. The first Secretary/Treasurer was Joseph G. Reynolds. It feels so much more personal reading someone's handwriting and I came to feel a connection to the library through the writings of Mr. Reynolds. Very little is known about Addison Luther, the first librarian (and janitor.) Included in the minutes were slips of paper with the library's cash receipts and I liked to imagine Mr. Luther hunched over his desk, writing those notes. It gives me chills to think I might be handling the very papers he touched!

The first women were appointed to the Board in 1916. On September 13, 1916 a special meeting of the Board was called to discuss "the matter in which the book circulation was conducted and to devise some system for the betterment of same. After considerable discussion of same, the ladies of the Board volunteered to see what could be done to straighten matters out and they were so authorized." If you need it done right....

Mr. Reynolds' last minutes were from the October 15, 1926 meeting and I was quite sad to learn of his passing. Maybel Briggs (whose handwriting was much easier to read) took over as secretary until her death in April of 1948. From that time forward, the minutes were typed. Easier to read, but less of a personal connection

On April 14, 1955, a motion was passed by the Board to start a Friends of the Library Association; the first meeting of the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library was held on September 25, 1955. Thanks to the Friends, the library has been able to offer many varied and wonderful programs over the years. They keep the library grounds looking beautiful and provide holiday greenery and decorations. They have taken on many projects that the library budget could not easily afford, such as the new sound system in the meeting room. The library would not be the same without its Friends!

The operation of the library didn't change much for many years. Of course there were more services, programs and materials, but the day-to-day operations stayed mostly the same. That changed with the advent

of computers and technology. When the new library on Boone Street opened in 1975, who could have foreseen how things would change in a few short years? On February 14, 1984, the Board voted to adopt the plan to automate the circulation system at the library. This included the opportunity to join a statewide consortium. And in the ensuing years, technology has increased exponentially! When I began my library career 25 years ago, smart phones, WiFi, ebooks, and iWatches were the stuff of science fiction. Now it seems the sky's the limit!

This is a most exciting time for public libraries. We are the caretakers of the past while charging headlong into the future. As director of the North Kingstown Free Library, it is my responsibility to steer the train of the future, keeping the library a vital and relevant place for the next generation of library users, while continuing the legacy of those who came before me. What is on the horizon for the North Kingstown Free Library? Stay tuned....the possibilities are endless....

Hop aboard and welcome to the future!

New NK library director Desrochers enjoys literary life



TELL ME YOUR STORY
Martha Smith

NORTH KINGSTOWN – Cyndi Desrochers is trying to love her new e-reader but, well, it's just not the same as holding a book.

The new director of the North Kingstown Free Library, who started her job Sept. 7 after serving as acting director of the West Warwick Public Library, finds the electronic device helpful for traveling.

"It's better than lugging 20 pounds of books in my suitcase," she laughs, "but you don't read the same way. I like to read cover to cover and when you put down an e-reader it's not as easy to pick it up again. There's something comforting about having a book in your hands. It reminds you of going to the library as a child, of being read to."

In fact, she still remembers two childhood books that were very important: one, read to her by her mother, had a Christmas theme; the other was *The Village That Slept*, discovered when Cyndi was in sixth grade.

"I took it out of the library so much my mom bought it for me."

Despite being a lifelong



PHOTO: MARTHA SMITH

Cyndi Desrochers, former interim library director in West Warwick, took over the helm in North Kingstown this month.

bookworm, the Kansas native initially chose a different career path. She graduated from Kansas State University with degrees in Spanish and social work, receiving her master's in library services from the University of Rhode Island after marrying and having children.

Attending URI, she says, "was pre-ordained." She's been a professional librarian 21 years.

Cyndi's husband is a fulltime member of the Army National Guard stationed at Quonset; he was deployed to Iraq in 2005 and is also a nurse. The Desrochers' children are now grown; their daughter lives in Boston and their son in Arizona.

At the North Kingstown library, she is taking over at a time when state and local finances are in turmoil and support for such entities as municipal libraries is dwindling.

"When I was in West Warwick, in 1993, we closed for six weeks. Then the hours [of operation] were cut, cut, cut. The situation [with the library closure] in Central Falls is really scary. Whatever happens will affect a lot of different libraries in the state.

"You want to do your best, provide your best. There will always be issues with funding but, hopefully, the town will continue [its financial support]."

Cyndi was encouraged last week when she met for the first time with the Friends of the Library board.

"It's really exciting to have a group like this," she says. "They know what they're doing."

So far she has concentrated on learning the system, how things are done and becoming acquainted with the staff.

"It will probably take another three to four weeks to get comfortable. It's a hard thing learning everyone's name, putting names with faces."

She's looking forward to getting suggestions and opinions and notes that a long-range plan for library development expires in 2013 and will need updating.

The North Kingstown library continues to be a hub of activity with a variety of diverse programs, a popular bank of public computers and heavy use of reading materials and DVDs.

In the last fiscal year, Cyndi notes, 363,989 items were checked out and a total of 187,828 visits were recorded.

As a native Kansan, she says trading one form of severe weather – tornadoes – for the hurricanes, flooding and heavy snow – wasn't terrible. For one thing, she recalls the obligatory storm cellars of Kansas as disgusting spider-filled places.

And then there was the unfortunate Dorothy and her close encounter with high winds.

"My mom was kid when The Wizard of Oz came out. It scared her to death."

The Desrochers have two yellow Labs at home. Buster was rescued and Tessie thinks she's a Yorkie.

"We watch football on Sundays with her draped across my lap."

Cyndi also scuba dives and, for 20 years, has taught exercise classes at the YMCA.

Not surprisingly, she reads voraciously. Her all-time favorite book is *Gone with the Wind*.

"It's one of the few books that I'll watch as a movie."

A youthful fondness for the Hardy Boys is probably responsible for Cyndi's devotion to mysteries.

"I love to solve them," she says.

New library director hired

**North/East Independent
Thursday, July 28, 2011**

By Arline A. Fleming/Special to the Independent

NORTH KINGSTOWN — The North Kingstown Free Library has a new director.

Cyndi Desrochers, acting director of the West Warwick Public Library, will assume the position left vacant by the June 24 retirement of Susan Aylward, Library Board of Trustees President Patricia B. Carlson announced this week.

Carlson also said that after some 30 years as a board member, she would be resigning effective Sept. 6. Carlson said her North Kingstown home has been on the market for the last five years and a sales contract was recently signed. She won't be going far, but she will be leaving North Kingstown for a condominium in East Greenwich, "and so it is with sadness that I submit my resignation from the North Kingstown Free Library Board."

Desrochers, who will begin in North Kingstown as director on Sept. 6, was selected from among more than 20 applicants who applied from both Rhode Island and out of state, six of whom were interviewed, Carlson said.

Desrochers has held the library posts of reference assistant, head of reference services, assistant director and acting director at the West Warwick Public Library, where she has worked for more than 20 years. She has also been active in statewide library organizations.

Desrochers grew up in Kansas, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Kansas State and worked as both a social worker and vocational counselor before returning to school to pursue a degree in library services. She received her MLIS degree from the University of Rhode Island in 1993.

Carlson said North Kingstown Free Library staff members, when surveyed, thought it was important for their director to have had some experience working with a union-affiliated staff, which Desrochers did at West Warwick. North Kingstown is part of the municipal employees union, Carlson said. Several of the potential candidates had never worked with a staff that included union members, she said.

Carlson also said in talking to Desrochers's references, "they all spoke about her skills as a communicator.

"That's crucial. You want someone who can articulately communicate goals to a staff and then turn around and relate to the public. And, she has a marvelous sense of humor, which in any work environment these days, I think, is critical."

Deputy Director Susan Moreland has been serving as interim director since Aylward retired, but Carlson said Moreland did not apply for the job. She has been deputy director for four years, Carlson said, and has been "keeping things going while we completed the search. We are fortunate to have filled the position as quickly as we did."

As director, Desrochers will oversee a staff of 19, a 30,000-square-foot building and some 129,000 items. According to the job posting, the salary range is \$62,000 to \$70,000. The director reports to the seven-member Board of Trustees but also is part of the town's management team, working closely with the town manager and other department heads. The job description goes on to say candidates must have "superior budgeting skills and experience in order to create and defend a budget of more than a million dollars while prudently allocating resources and setting financial priorities. Experience in grant writing is also desirable ..."

Carlson said it was important to find someone who "is technologically savvy. It's a tough job. The technological landscape changes about every six months to a year. You have to have someone suited to that kind of challenge and ready to embrace it."

At the same time, she said, it was equally important to find a candidate who is respectful of the traditional aspects of running a municipal library.

As far as technology is concerned, Desrochers said Tuesday, "I like staying on top of what's current so that we are not playing catch-up."

On the other hand, having a library staff heavily "involved with service to patrons" is among her top priorities.

She recalled needing help herself in her early days of using computers at the West Warwick Public Library. It was that interaction that actually led to her first part-time job there.

In Carlson's letter of resignation submitted to the North Kingstown Town Council on Friday, she said: "It has been both an honor and a privilege to work with the wonderful library directors and staff whom I have known during my 30 years on the Board ... I wish you all the very best as you try to adjust to the fiscal realities in which our state and town find themselves. I believe that the library will continue to give top value for each tax dollar it receives, and I foresee a nearly seamless transition on Boone Street."

The major challenges facing all libraries going forward, Carlson said, will be changing trends in technology, and the economy and how it affects existing library hours and programming.

Desrochers comes from a library that is no stranger to budget troubles. Earlier this year the West Warwick library was threatened with losing its state aid after a town

budget cut proposal would have halved its funding.

Desrochers said funding cuts in West Warwick have made it more difficult not just to provide books, but also for computer use. Many potential employers require online job applications, so for those seeking work but who might not have a personal computer, public libraries provide that option.

She said in West Warwick, she recently saw library use double during one fiscal year. The collection there numbers 105,304, she said.

A fall reception to welcome Desrochers, and to honor Aylward, a 30-plus year North Kingstown Free Library employee, her last nine as director, will be held in the fall, Carlson said. Carlson also said that both she and Aylward intend "to be active in the transition to whatever degree we are asked to be."



Photo by Ray Clayton - Courtesy of the Standard Times

Turning the Page: The NK Library Board of Trustees officially welcomed new library director Cyndi Desrochers (left) while also bidding farewell to both Patricia Carlson (center), a former trustee of the library for 25 years, and Susan Aylward, former library director for nine years at a special reception last week.

The Village People ...

North Kingstown Free Library Welcomes New Director

By Cheryl L. Butler

After a long and steadfast search for a replacement after Susan Aylward retired, the NK Free Library Board announced that it had found a committed, energized, and very qualified candidate—Cyndi Desrochers.

NKV: What made you decide to become a librarian?

CD: I was making a career change after my children were born. I had my BA in Spanish and Social Work and wasn't interested in returning to school for my MSW. A high school classmate is a librarian at the University of Alabama and suggested I consider getting a library degree. I had actually thought about it when I was an undergraduate (at Kansas State University) but they don't have an MLIS program. When I found that URI had a program, I thought the stars must be aligned!

NKV: What town do you currently live in?

CD: I've lived in West Warwick for the past 26 years.

NKV: What interested you in applying for the position of Director at the NK Free Library?

CD: I'd worked at the West Warwick Public Library for over 21 years and felt the time was right for a change. North Kingstown is similar to West Warwick in some ways, but will also provide me with different types of challenges.

NKV: What do you enjoy most about your job and the "world of the library" in general?

CD: I was one of those nerdy kids who spent every spare moment in the library. Any time I've moved to a different community, the library is one of the first places I visit. I love checking out libraries when I'm on vacation. I love books and reading. I also enjoy working with people. I'm so lucky that my job happens to be in one of my favorite places!

NKV: Having the vast experience you do as a librarian, what do you feel are a couple of standout strengths that the NK Free Library has to offer to our community?

CD: The staff at the North Kingstown Free Library is wonderful; undoubtedly its best asset. The variety of services and programs here is amazing.

NKV: What would you like residents to know most about the services the library provides?

CD: The programs and services are free and available to everyone in the community. Everyone should visit the library and see what's available.

NKV: What is your favorite book of all time?

CD: Gone with the Wind!

NKV: Do you have a particular genre that you enjoy reading personally?

CD: Mysteries and suspense.

NKV: Do you have a favorite author (or two) that you enjoy and recommend to others?

CD: I like Harlan Coben, Kathy Reichs, Sara Paretsky, Charlene Weir, Stephen White (Can you tell that I like mysteries?)



Director of NK Free Library
Cyndi Desrochers

NKV: If you had to pick one resource at the NK Free Library that you wish people would take better advantage of, what would that be?

CD: We subscribe to various online databases that patrons can access free from the library or from their home computers. We are offering a program on using these databases on November 28 at 3pm.

NKV: Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers/community about the library or anything of a personal nature?

CD: I love it when people stop by to introduce themselves and say hello!

So next time you and your family are visiting one of the best treasures in our community, the NK Free Library, be sure and give Desrochers a warm welcome. She's committed to continuing to provide our community with the best possible library services in the state. She invites all of North Kingstown to join her in making that happen.

Chapter 13: Susan Moreland — Deputy Director 2009-

Susan Moreland began her career at the library in 1998.

The Public Library: An Essential Town Service

By Susan Moreland

August 2015

Many of the essays in this collection have been written by people who are now retired, but I have both the joy and challenge of actively serving in a leadership role in an institution that, as you have read, has illustrious roots. As far as I'm concerned, it also has the brightest future.

I started working at the NKFL back in the summer of 1998. I had just been accepted to the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Rhode Island, recently moved to North Kingstown, and I was looking for hands-on library work. When I found an ad in the Standard-Times for a part-time position at the circulation desk, I couldn't believe it. An open position in my new hometown! I immediately applied. I didn't get that position, but I must have said something right, because Donna Dufault, the director at that time, offered me a Sunday page position. I remember being disappointed that I wouldn't get to work the circulation desk because I wanted to do more than just shelve books; however, I knew that any library experience would be good experience, so I happily accepted the position. Little did I know that, due to the library renovations that were happening at that time, shelving wouldn't be all that easy! I'd know exactly where the 300s in non-fiction should be shelved and then, the next day, they had mysteriously moved to a new location. It seemed like the shelves were constantly shifting...much like the moving staircases in Harry Potter. I am so glad that I accepted that page position 17 years ago. It gave me the opportunity to grow, to contribute and to thrive in one of the best public libraries in this state.

When I was in library school at the tail end of the 20th century, more than one person outside of library land questioned my career choice, proclaiming that libraries were on the way out. I was shocked and saddened by those statements, but unbowed because I was fortunate to be working in a busy public library, the North Kingstown Free Library, while I was in school. I learned first-hand and early on that libraries are vital to the

communities that we serve. As I write this, patrons are streaming in and out of the library on a typically busy summer day, picking up books for their child's summer reading, finding a great beach read, searching for employment on the web or just using the free wireless connection or a computer with access to the Internet.

It is clear to me that it is vitally important to our community for its citizens to have access to a healthy, thriving public library where the digital divide is narrowed. Those of us who are fortunate to own all kinds of technology devices can easily forget that not everybody has a smart phone or a high-speed Internet connection at home or even knows how to use a computer. These days, a high-speed Internet connection is needed to file an online application for a job or submit a resume to a potential employer. Anybody can stop at the library to use one of our computers to fill out that application or even take a computer class to gain some skills that will help them find gainful employment.



Many parents are aware that reading to their children when they are young will help their child become a better reader. They also want to provide their older children with a variety of book titles and genres from which to select reading material. More choice provides more opportunities to get hooked into a good book and improve reading skills. To make all of those books available in a personal library would come at a very high cost. When made available through the library, a book collection that would be unaffordable to many becomes attainable for all. That is the power of the public library. That is what we need to keep in our sights when budget time rolls around.

I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, when libraries were pretty much one of the only places to go when you wanted to conduct research. As an avid young reader, research was not my main concern, however. My main concern was how to find a way to carry a large enough stack of borrowed reading material home to fulfill my unquenchable thirst for reading. I carried what I could, but I always ran out of reading material and found myself rereading some of my library books before getting the chance to borrow a whole new set the following week.

As a young child, I browsed the stacks for new material. As I got older, and I needed to do research for school projects, I delved into the card catalog. It used to drive me nuts when I would find a card that would send me off to a different card drawer that another patron was busy using. I would impatiently wait until it was my turn to use the drawer of cards. And we were always bumping into each other, trying to get at a drawer that was occupied by another person. For those reasons, I welcomed the advent of computerized catalogs towards the end of my high school career. I had become expert at using the card catalog, but to be able to find books with a few clicks on the keyboard was a thing of magic for a tech-oriented person like me. And this was before you could place your own holds from the online catalog like we do today!

These days, public libraries are different things to different people. Yes, we have our die-hard readers, but we also circulate many different types of materials in different formats: print books, audio books on CD, eBooks, downloadable audio books, music on CD, and downloadable music. For some, the library is the only quiet community space where they can sit and read, think, write and just slow down for awhile. For others, we're a quick stop on the way home from work to pick up the newest Blu-ray or DVD release. For others, we are a gateway to future employment, particularly for those who don't have high-speed Internet access at home. For even others, we are an important cultural institution that offers outstanding programming for all ages to our own residents and residents across the state.

One of my favorite things to witness at the library is the happenstance encounter between two friends or neighbors who both happen to be visiting the library at the same time. Many times, as they wait at the front entrance to check out a book, they will chat with one another, catching up on what's happening in their lives and with their families. Technology evolves much more quickly than your average human being. When it comes right down to it, we are human beings first and foremost. We need to help one another. We need a place to be together in community. The library is that place for many in our community.

What is the future of our library? It's difficult to say, exactly, but I can say that we will be here to help you become educated and informed. We will be here to provide the programming that you have grown to love and appreciate. We will be a haven for some quiet time or a space where you can meet with others in the community. We will continue to archive local history materials, making them available in accessible formats. And we will continue to lend out books and other materials in formats that have yet to be imagined. We will be here. There is no doubt in my mind.



Standard Times
March 25, 1999

ABOVE: Sue Moreland, a part-time worker at the library, redistributes books to the stacks.

Library broadens electronic resources, adds librarian

By Charles St. Martin
Independent Staff Writer

NORTH KINGSTOWN — It's pretty much a given at public libraries today to find an electronic card catalog system, Internet-accessible terminals and CD-ROM databases. Using that as a foundation rather than a goal, the North Kingstown Free Library is doing much more.

The library has made a greater commitment to electronic resources by building residents-only features into its Web site and hiring a librarian to get the patrons working with the new technology. All this has happened in the past six months, and the library staff is still trying to get the word out about what is available. In this vein, the library has scheduled a special event Tuesday to teach people how to use the Internet to find good things to read.

The program begins at 7 p.m. on Jan. 9, and library officials ask that people call 294-3306 to register. The library's new electronic resources librarian, Susan Moreland, will demonstrate the basics of the statewide online card catalog called WebPac, before delving into more specific topics. These will include NoveList and Literature Resource Center, which are databases available only in the library or from home using a North Kingstown Free Library card.

There are many other new resources available electronically, and most of them have been

offered in just the past six months. All can be used by anyone in the library, but only residents can access the service by remote on the Internet. A list of the resources can be found at www.clan.lib.ri.us/nki/online.htm.

The resources are much better than the library might have had before on CD-ROM, Moreland noted, because they can be updated easily and are available to many more people at once. The online databases likely will replace the CD-ROM versions, she noted.

The library sponsored two public sessions last fall about all the new services, but this program is the first opportunity to provide more detailed information about a specific database or collection of databases. Moreland said she expects to have similarly themed programs later this year.

"It's a great way for us to show people what we have to offer," Moreland said of the programs and the databases. "It also gets people into the library."

All the databases can be used for research, but the two that Moreland will highlight next week can be thought of more as a reader's guide for pleasure reading. The NoveList program is ideal to use when one wants to find a book of a particular subject or topic, regardless of author. Keying in the search words on the computer screen, one can pick from a variety of topics and restrict the search by age. There are about 30,000 book reviews listed on this site, and once

the desired book is located, one click of a link brings up a long list of other books that the individual might enjoy based on that book. Searching for historical fiction turned citations of more than 1,800 books when Moreland demonstrated the service last week.

The other database called Literature Resource Center is more of a research-oriented tool, but can be used for people just out for a good read. This program works by allowing people to input the names of authors and will report back with citations of the books he or she has written and well as biographical data on the author.

Many of the databases the library subscribes to are compiled by the Gale Group, a well-respected research company, Moreland said. Unlike a Web search engine, the databases will not return as many results, but the results have been compiled in such a way that extraneous or unwanted information is filtered out.

"I like to sell databases on the fact that they are much quicker and more accurate," she said.

In addition to these resources, Moreland makes herself available to patrons who have questions about how to use computer-based materials. She is carving out set hours so people can make appointments with her, although the exact days are not confirmed. She suggested that anyone who has a question call her to set up some time.

North/East Independent
January 4, 2001

Chapter 14: Elizabeth Donovan – Community Outreach Coordinator 2009-

Elizabeth Donovan began her career at the library in 1983.

Reflections

By Elizabeth Donovan

August 2015

When Library Director Cyndi Desrochers and Deputy Director Susan Moreland and I were discussing how best to commemorate the two library anniversaries to be observed in the fall of 2015—the fortieth anniversary of the “new” library building on Boone Street and the sixtieth anniversary of the Friends of the Library—I was excited about the idea to ask former directors and others to write about the library from their personal perspectives. Putting together this book would be like a valentine to the North Kingstown Free Library and to libraries in general. Of course, everyone who wrote an essay or was interviewed for this book loves libraries—it does seem to come with the territory!

I have always loved libraries; seeking out the public library has been one of the first things on my agenda each of the times I have moved to a new home as an adult or even visited the homes of friends and family. I remember as a child loving to go to the public library in my hometown in Connecticut. Certain types of book bindings still cause a wave of nostalgia to come over me. I remember my mother creating check out cards so that other neighborhood children could borrow from our personal collection of books. When we moved to a new section of town, as our family grew, one of the things that I loved about our new house was that it was within walking distance of the library (the house also had some pretty neat alcoves and a wonderful front porch for reading!)

So in 1979 when I was seeking out the library in my new hometown of North Kingstown, I was immediately taken by the way the building on Boone Street fit so snugly into its site. Nestled into the side of a hill overlooking Academy Cove, the building seemed to welcome visitors with the open arms of its two wings. The light filled spaces within seemed a wonder, unlike any other libraries that I had seen at the time. It wasn't until many years later that I realized that the building was designed by The Architects Collaborative (TAC)



and that everything that I so loved about the library design was very intentional. According to *TAC 1945-1972*, a sensitivity and respect for the land and the place and a concern for spatial composition, movement, view and psychological environment were chief among TAC ideals. This building is definitely rooted in its place; it seems almost to have grown here!

I had the good fortune to be hired to work at the library in 1983 and my appreciation for the building only grew. The east-facing windows reveal the never-ending change of the seasons. In the winter months one can be snugly ensconced in a comfortable chair while looking over the cove to the backside of Brown St. The effusive blooms of the rhododendrons on the grounds bordering the cove herald spring, as do the chirps of the peepers from the nearby pond. As the leaves on the

trees unfurl in the summer months the feeling in the library is akin to being in a tree house. Each autumn a blaze of color creates a very different look to the scene. To me this building feels as close to being in nature as it is possible to be while still being comfortable and hospitable to both the books and the patrons that are its reason to exist.

I will have worked at the library for 32 years by the time of our celebration and I feel much affection for the library—not only the building, but also the work we do and the public we serve. Over the years, I have been amazed by all that the North Kingstown Free Library offers to the town. Researching the history of the library for this project, I've become more aware of how much libraries have changed over the years—technology has made such a difference in all of our lives. Computers, ereaders and smart phones would have been science fiction when Addison Luther sat at his desk on opening day in 1899. And I've been surprised to discover how many things are the same.

At the dedication of the library in 1899 Rev. A. E. Phelps in his closing address advocated “having amusement of an elevating nature, whereby the young might be attracted to the library in order that the boys and girls might be attracted to the study of useful and improving literature.” Indeed, reaching out to the community in the way that Rev. A.E. Phelps suggested continues to this day. It is both an honor and a privilege for me to be carrying on this tradition, begun in 1899. I feel very strongly about the importance of public programming and when I was promoted to the position of Community Outreach Coordinator in 2009, I was eager to add my own vision to the work begun by Gladys Hellewell in the 1950's, which was later renewed with vigor by Debbe Brennan, and further expanded by Susan Berman. Public programming is yet another way to offer information and experiences to the townspeople, making the library meaningful to their everyday lives.

The program for the Friends of the Library Annual Meeting this year featured Maria Mutch discussing her book *Know the Night: a Memoir of Survival in the Small Hours*. *Know the Night* is about a two-year period during which Mutch's son, who is autistic, required near constant attention throughout the night. One of the several interwoven themes in the book is Mutch's near obsession with explorer Richard Byrd and his solitary experiences in the long Antarctic night. Maria and I had decided to highlight this part of the book for her library presentation.

This was a special annual meeting because the Friends would be celebrating their 60th anniversary later in the

year. In preparing my introductory remarks, I read through the early minutes of the Friends meetings. At the very first official meeting on September 28, 1955, the Board members discussed their first public presentation—a film about the 1947 Expedition to Antarctica by Admiral Richard Byrd! It was thought that the public would be particularly interested in the film as preparations were underway at Quonset for “Operation Deep Freeze,” which was to be Byrd's final expedition to the Antarctic. What an incredible coincidence; shivers ran up my arms!

Since 1955, the Friends of the Library have been the library's steadfast support in providing public programming. Doing the research for this project, I have realized that the library couldn't do all that we do without our Friends. The support of the library by the all of the townspeople through the years has been remarkable. At the dedication of the library in 1899 the room was “Full to suffocation” and people were packed in “like sardines” to witness the opening of the town's public library. In 1955 the League of Women Voters lobbied successfully to increase town funding of the library from three to eight thousand dollars. Funds for an expansion of the Brown St. building were raised through public subscription in 1962 and in 1972 the townspeople overwhelmingly passed a bond issue to build a new library. People came in droves to the opening of the new library in December 1975. And in 1997 \$680,000 in private funds were raised for an expansion and renovation of the “new” library on Boone St. and a bond referendum held in June of that year passed with 85% voter approval.

What will the future bring for the North Kingstown Free Library and for libraries in general? There is no doubt that the changes will be vast. The possibilities are as endless and exciting for us now, as they have been throughout the library's long history! I trust that the library will not only offer information free to all (however that may be provided) but that the library will continue to be a place of inspiration, a place to find solace in a good book, a place to meet in community. Public programming will perhaps be more important than ever as a means to bring people together to learn new things, to join in discussions, to be entertained. I hope that children of the future will love libraries as much as I did as a child. I further hope that those children will become the devoted supporters, benefactors, and staff members of the future. I look forward to the changes of the future and I am comforted to know that the Friends of the Library will continue to offer their unwavering support as we march ahead into the second century of the North Kingstown Free Library's service to the community.



Artist-in-Residence

By Kate Phillips

There is a new friend greeting the children at the NK Free Library courtesy of artist Elizabeth Donovan. A huge, adorable and colorful dragon is the centerpiece of the window mural depicting this year's children's reading program—Once Upon a Summertime—where magic and mythical beasts abound.

Patrons of the library have been enjoying Donovan's handiwork for a long time, but most are unaware of the artist herself. Donovan has been at the library for over 18 years. She works in reference, circulation and in the children's department. She also creates all the flyers about each month's library programs, works on the Friends of the Library newsletter as well as the library's website. And she lends a hand anytime anything artistic needs to be done.

Excerpted from an article printed in the North Kingstown Villager, July 2002

Chapter 15: Jennifer Boettger — Young Readers' and Teen Services Coordinator 2014 -

Jennifer Boettger began her career at the library in 1985.

Timeless Stories and Smiles

By Jennifer Boettger

August 2015

I began my library journey as a page my senior year of high school. I enjoyed my job so much that I am still here 29 years later. I have worked circulation and reference but find the young readers' department to be the perfect fit for me. Even though I had my degree in elementary education and was searching for a full time job in education, when the director offered me a position in the young readers' department running the story time programs as well as the summer reading program I did not hesitate to accept it. The library became an important part of my life, a home away from home with great coworkers and a community full of wonderful patrons. Recently, I was given the opportunity to become the Children and Teen Services Coordinator and I am currently attending the University of Rhode Island to get my masters degree in Library and Information Studies.

The library provides many important services to the surrounding community. One of its most essential is the children's story time programs. I have been involved with these programs for more than 20 years. I have watched through the years as the library has modified its services due to the continual advancements of technology and the constant changing needs of the public. Surprisingly there has been little change to the story time programs throughout the years. During the early 1990s a toddler time program for 2-3 ½ year olds was added alongside of the 3-5 year old programs. By the late 1990s the demand for a baby program caused the library to create the Mother Goose story time for 12-24 month olds. For the past 15 years these programs have remained virtually unchanged and are loved and well-attended even though children today are surrounded with a wide range of technology. Stories read from picture books, fingerplays and flannel board stories still capture the attention of small children without the dazzle of a computer. It is quite rewarding to see the smile and hear the laughter of a child who is enjoying a story being read to him or her. I am still amazed



that the children will sit still for a flannel board story which is basically a crayon colored picture with felt on the back placed on a big black board.

My hope is that many years from now when my grandchildren attend story time at their local library that they will still be mesmerized with the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" being told to them on a simple black flannel board, that they will be excited to march around the room with egg shakers and that they will laugh at a silly story being read to them by the librarian. It is important to remember that some things at the library need to change. Hopefully, the tradition of story time here at the North Kingstown Free Library will continue many years into the future and at the end of each class the children will continue to say:

*Hands up high
Hands down low
Hide those hands
Where did they go?*

*Out comes one
Now there are two
Clap them, fold them
Now we're through*

Man About Town ...

Learning to Love the Library

By Kevin Henkin

Growing up, I can't say I ever had a fondness for libraries. To me, they were a necessary evil, a place where you grabbed your research for term papers from the microfiche files and musty old encyclopedias and got the heck out of there as soon as humanly possible.

It wasn't until I had kids of my own that I began to see these municipal institutions in a different light. When I walked into the North Kingstown Free Library for the first time a decade ago, it was the first time I'd stepped foot into any library in many a year. After searching around in vain, I finally asked the librarian where the card catalogs were located. With bemusement, she explained that libraries no longer used the antiquated drawers full of cards but instead stored all book locations on the computers.

Since then, I've become accustomed to all of the various services and resources that the library has to offer, at least to someone of my specific interests. In no particular order, here are some of my favorite things about our local library:

It's an ideal place to park your laptop and do some work – At one of my prior jobs, I was regularly allowed to “work from home”. This sounds like a great idea, at least until you become immersed in distractions of screaming kids, barking dogs, and requests from the wife to haul in some groceries, replace a light bulb, and opine on the funny smell coming from the sump pump drain hole. Let me tell you, productivity soars when you finally decide to shed the pajamas and head to the quiet building with all the book shelves.

It offers a terrific distraction to long work commutes – I've lived in Rhode Island for 10 years now and actually worked within states lines for about six months of that time. The rest has been spent commuting up to Massachusetts or beyond, which has translated into an awful lot of time spent in a car by myself. Discovering the wide selection of audiobooks at the library was a godsend because not only did it make the long hours in the car seem to pass much more quickly. It also helped me get reacquainted with a number of authors whose work I enjoyed but lacked the time to actually sit down and read anymore.

“Missus B” – I don't know her by any other name (I actually say “Hello Missus B” to her whenever I occasionally bump into her around town) but she runs the terrific reading program for toddlers at the library. All three of my kids during their toddler years have been regular attendees of Missus B's program where they have grown an appreciation of having books read to them (her enthusiasm for the material is hard to match at home),

grown their social skills with other kids their own age and had a ball reciting poems and marching around the room to music. It's been priceless to me to be able to witness this ritual on the rare occasions that I was home on those days to be able to attend.

Research! – What I dreaded as a youngster, I've come to thoroughly enjoy as an adult. Thanks to the enormous selection of book resources available at the library, I've been able to get well up to speed on a multitude of unusual how-to topics including repairing a boat, succeeding as a part-time freelance writer and properly planning a Disney vacation. It would have cost me a fortune to actually buy the dozens of books I drew upon for my research but the library provided me with an instantaneous and free borrowing source of material. It's been a consistently huge help.

Family movie time – I can't speak for anyone else but after a long week of work and a majority of a weekend day spent running errands and/or having fun with the kids, there's nothing better than crashing together in the living room to watch a late-afternoon family-friendly movie. (Sometimes I even stay awake!) Of course, we could always watch our own DVDs of *Cars 2* or *Ice Age 7* yet another time but the library thankfully provides us with a fresh set of revolving choices to bring home instead. My favorite family movie trend lately: the kids' recent enthusiasm for catching up on all things “Star Wars”. I'm not sure my wife, however, agrees with that sentiment.

As a family, our trips to the library usually include a perusal of the used books on sale by mom and dad and a stop by the reading room with the “story dory” by the kids, as well as a communal selection of family movies and a visit to the ducks at the bottom of the path that leads to Wickford Village. As a result, I think it's fair to say that our kids have already developed a positive association with the library, which is a far cry from my vision of it as a dungeon in which to gather dry scholarly information on aardvarks, the metric system, and Alexander Graham Bell.

**North Kingstown View
September 2012**

Story time at the library in the 1950s



“You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.”

~ Dr. Seuss

Members of Children’s Story Hour watch and try to imitate Mrs. Robert Van Kluyve who is illustrating action in story to youngsters. Story hour is held Saturday mornings at the library.

Providence Sunday Journal
March 25, 1956

Chapter 16: Linda Caisse – Reference and Non-Fiction Services Coordinator 2010-

Linda Caisse started her career at the library in 1983.

Reference Desk, How May I Help You?

By Linda Caisse

September 2015



In the 1980s, after a chance meeting with librarians Shirley Payne and Susan Berman at a “Lively Experiment” program at URI, I was hired by Debbe Brennan as a part time employee at the North Kingstown Free Library. I worked all three of the public service Desks—Circulation, Young Readers’ and Reference—and

continued working full-time at a succession of other libraries, while also attending graduate library school.

What I remember about the library in those days was that working at the circulation desk required a lot of stamping and alphabetizing of date due cards. And reference work included a LOT of literary criticism questions, which were answered by volumes of reference books that were kept under lock and key in a back office. Date due cards are a thing of the past; today patrons receive a printout much like a grocery receipt and filing is done within the computer database. And much of the literary criticism material is accessed in online databases to which the library subscribes.

During my early years at the library I organized and ran the Babysitting Workshop and I joined with the rest of the staff in the monumental task of entering all the book and patron records into the new computer system. Prior to that the library was computer-less! Library automation in the late ‘80s led to what is today called the

Ocean State Library system—a system that allows Rhode Island residents to borrow books from any library in the state, a system that we have all come to depend on.

I began working in the reference department full time in 1995. The best part of being a reference librarian, pre-Internet, was that every day was like a large trivia question. You never knew what you were going to be asked next! If we didn’t have the answer in the library, we knew where to find the answer or we would find out where to direct the patron for further research. I’ve always said that to be a good reference librarian one should be curious and know a little about a lot.

One of my most memorable patron interactions was with an older gentleman who was trying to figure out what to do next with his life. I suggested that he look at a Peace Corps book that the library owned and he ended up joining the Peace Corps!

Under Susan Berman’s tutelage, I became the main Reference Librarian while Susan focused more on programming and the South County Room. When Susan retired in 2009, I became the Reference/Non-Fiction Coordinator, which also includes overseeing the local history collections in the South County Room and the Archives Room.

Much has changed at the library since I began here more than thirty years ago, yet in some ways it seems not so different after all. We are still here to help answer your questions. We are here to help you navigate ever-changing technologies (a constant challenge for us to keep up with!) And we are here to connect you to the past through the amazing resources of our local history collection in the South County Room.

Chapter 17: Library Appreciation

We Love Our Library

Recently we asked library patrons to post their answers to the following questions on a bulletin board in the reading area. “What do you love about your library?” and “How has the library changed your life?” Their answers included these comments:

“NK Library is a community treasure!”

“I think my library is cool! It has lots of books.”

“I like to see the boat and play with the unicorn.”

“The people that work here are helpful and kind.”

“The library entertains and informs me...and brings me calmness.”

“I love that the library is a quiet place to go to read or think or just relax.”

“I love that my daughter has learned to love reading and the library as much as I do!”

“This was my library when I was growing up; some of my best childhood memories are here.”

Great programs. I love our librarians--each contributes a unique quality to my library visit. I love the water views.”

“I am not too good at using the computer. It is great to have the ladies (and gent) here to help me when I get confused. Often! Often!”

“The library provides a lovely and quiet space for me to study and accomplish something without a phone ringing or someone interrupting. The view is beautiful and the scenery is peaceful.”

“The library is the heart and soul of the community! It is a happening place. I’ve always loved libraries—they are vital to our democracy and way of life. This is an especially wonderful library.”

“I love the library because when you want to get books you can. This changed my life because when I read a book it inspires me.”

“The library has little performances. My favorite was Goldilocks and the Three Bears and at the end Goldilocks became friends with the bears.”

Staff Appreciation

The importance of the contributions of each and every staff member at the North Kingstown Free Library throughout the years cannot be overstated. Library patron Maureen Collins writes a note of appreciation to the staff every year. She wrote this for our library celebration.

By Maureen Collins

March 2015

For 14 years I have considered the North Kingstown Free Library my second home. I discovered the library when my husband and I moved from MA to RI.

As a lifelong library lover, I knew that for me to be happy in RI, I needed a special library. When we decided to look at real estate in North Kingstown, the first thing I did was visit the North Kingstown Free Library. It felt warm and welcoming, and I knew I could be happy in

this town. Employees at the Circulation Desk acknowledged me and smiled when I walked in the front doors. Reference desk employees also greeted me. The staff were clearly happy in their jobs and enjoyed helping and interacting with patrons.

Fourteen years later, I am so grateful that my experience remains the same. I have gotten to know many of the employees, and I always enjoy speaking with them. We talk about movies, books, our families, what is going on in our lives, etc. We laugh a lot too, which just enhances my library visits.

I have lovely memories of the previous Director, Susan Aylward. No matter the time of year, even in the dead of winter, if Susan was in her office and saw me coming up the walk to return items to the book drop, she would open her window and we would chat.

My dealings with Susan Moreland are always pleasant and the library is so fortunate to have her. I appreciate her helping me decide which magazines I can gift to the library. She takes the time to research how frequently a magazine circulates before letting me know if it would be worth renewing.

I miss Mary McKay, who was an excellent employee, as well as a fun and lovely woman.

I miss Sylvia and Shannon who made me feel they were happy to see me.

Among those working at the library now, I am grateful for all of them. I appreciate Rose, who knows which magazines I love to read. She often takes time to tell me she just put a *New York Times Book Review* out that can circulate. She is always working hard, but never fails to make time for me.

Linda in the Reference Department loves to be challenged with trying to find information I am looking for. She is such a dedicated employee and a special person.

Elizabeth Donovan demonstrates great expertise in

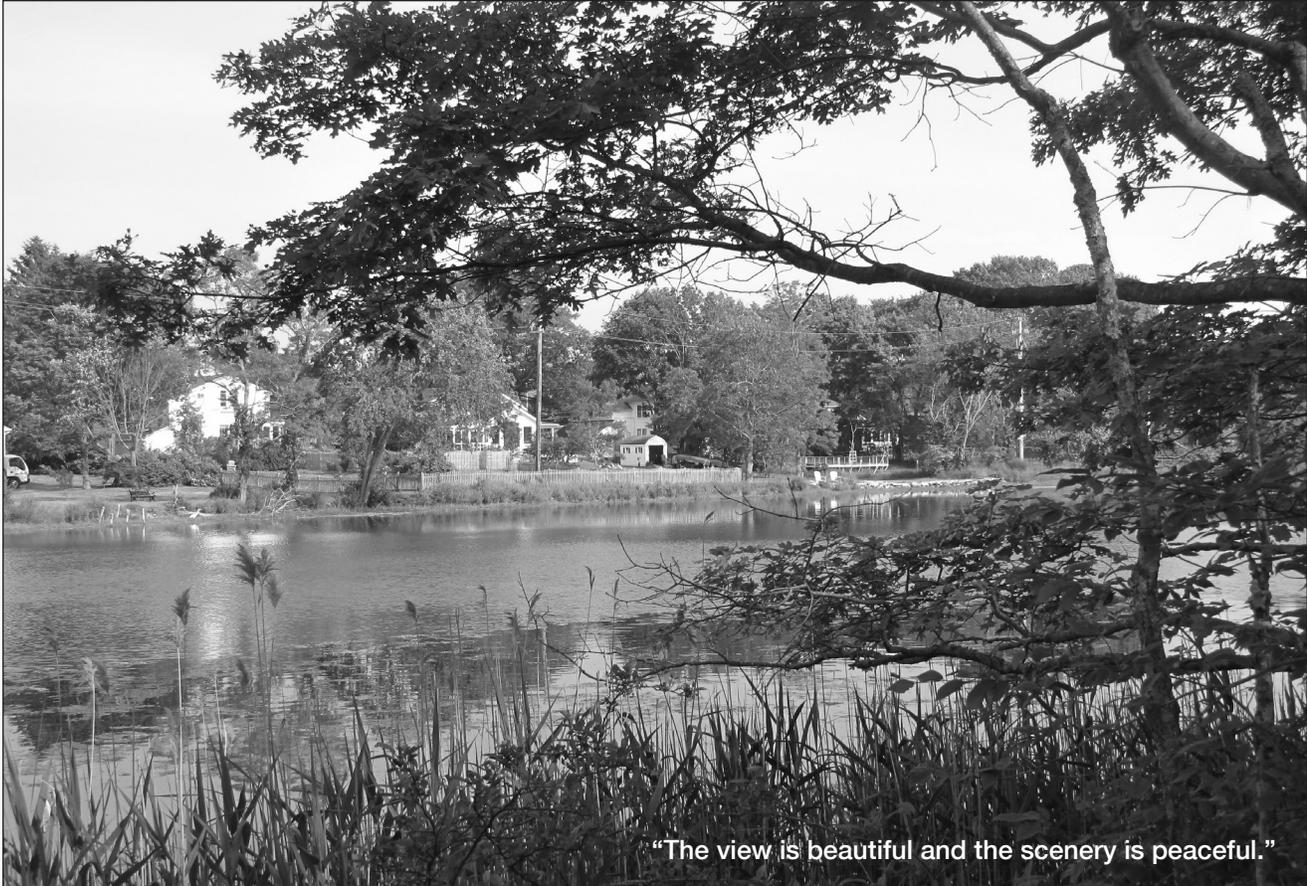
selecting such a wonderful diversity of programming each month. I can only imagine the amount of work and time this requires.

Maggie knows how much I love seeing the new issue of *Book Page* available each month. She does an amazing job choosing such a great variety of adult fiction.

It always brings a smile to my face to see Patti working at the Circulation Desk. I have gotten to know her more over the years and she does a great job. She is smart and very funny, and after checking out my items with her, I leave with a smile on my face.

Whenever I have a question, staff is always willing to assist me with the utmost professionalism. They go the extra mile to make sure they have provided the answer or information I need. That is the sign of dedicated employees.

Spending time at the North Kingstown Free Library is the best gift I give myself. I never take it for granted, and I know for sure that without all of the staff who care about and work hard for the patrons, the library would not be the amazing and special place that it is.



“The view is beautiful and the scenery is peaceful.”

Chapter 18: The Board of Trustees

Library Trustees—Our Unsung Heroes

By Susan Aylward

June 2015

As we think about the 116-year history of the North Kingstown Free Library and talk about the unwavering support of the community for all of those years, we must recognize the dedicated women and men in our community who have given so much of their time and consideration over that long history to serve as members of the Library Board of Trustees.

Appointed by the Town Council to staggered three-year terms, the seven members of the Board of Trustees are the guardians of public library service in our town. They are not involved in the day-to-day operation at the library; that is the purview of the director and his/her staff. Rather, the Trustees provide advice, consent, and support on decisions related to service policies, finances, and capital projects. They defend the principles of intellectual freedom against censorship challenges; they are the financial stewards of library funding from any and all sources; they ensure that the building is an appropriate environment for library service; and they are library advocates in the community at-large. Their most important

responsibility, however, is to hire a library director and to hold him/her accountable for providing the leadership and vision necessary to keep the North Kingstown Free Library moving forward on a pathway that continues to garner the unwavering support of the community that it has enjoyed for its entire history. It is well to remember that the Director acts as the agent of the Board and serves entirely at the Board's pleasure.

The history of the library reveals that the partnership between the Board and the Library Director is an essential one. There has always been a unity of dedication, responsibility, and the highest possible regard for the North Kingstown community on both sides of this partnership. To say that the Trustees are the library's most steadfast volunteers and staunchest advocates is an understatement. The legacies of each of the eight retired directors in the 116-year history of the library are forever intertwined with the legacies of the Boards of Trustees for whom those directors served. I know I can speak for the five of us retired directors who are still alive when I say that the Library Trustees are truly the unsung heroes in the history of the North Kingstown Free Library.

Original Board of Trustees 1899

James A. Greene, President
Joseph Reynolds
William Congdon
Charles Reynolds
Thaddeus Hunt
Lyman Aylesworth
Robert Rodman

Board of Trustees 1975

Elizabeth Rodman, Chair
Arthur G. Brown
Edward O. Ekman
Kenneth E. Hogberg
James V. Koper
Mary S. Whitford
Phebe L. Wilson

Current Board of Trustees 2015

Lori Vernon, Chair
Rick Moore (Chair 2011-2015)
Joan Ehrhardt
Robyn Levine
Marie Pamental
Tom Sgouros
Elizabeth Suvari
Paul Sollitto (2009-2015)



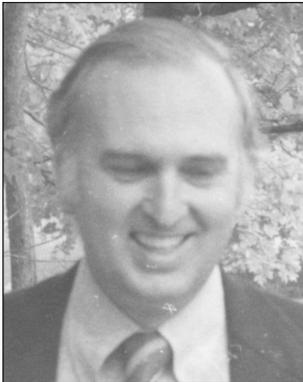
Trustees Marie Pamental, Joan Ehrhardt, Robyn Levine, Lori Vernon, Paul Sollitto and Richard Moore meet in September 2015. (Tom Sgouros not pictured.)

Edward Ekman - Library Trustee 1969-1979

Edward Ekman served as the Chairman of the Building Committee during the construction of the Boone St. library. When asked about his memories of the process, he offered the following:

By Edward Ekman

March 2015



In the mid 1960's, Mary Whitford and Elizabeth Rodman asked if I would be interested in joining them on the Library Board of Trustees. They were very persuasive and, knowing I was a registered architect, they convinced me that I would be able to offer them valuable assistance in the planning process for a new building.

Once on the Board I found that discussions were well underway in regards to the construction of a new facility. I was appointed chairman of the new building committee.

We very boldly asked the town residents to approve a \$1,300,000 bond issue for the project. We asked for these funds without a site plan, a floor plan or anything that would indicate what we had in mind for a new building. The voters had great faith in the library board and the funds were approved.

If the process had been delayed by a year, it might never have happened. The Federal Government announced that the Navy would no longer have a prominent position in the State of Rhode Island. A general malaise fell over the entire state with people having a feeling that both North Kingstown and Newport might "slide into the bay" because of the financial implications associated with the loss of the Navy and its personnel. We, at the library, dodged that one and were able to keep moving forward with our plans.

In a recent discussion with Paul Wilson, I was able to learn a lot more about the property on which the library sits as well as how it was purchased. The land was originally owned by Paul's grandfather and on it sat his home, a cabin and a large barn. The sunken garden area just outside of the current front entrance is where the house was sited. The only access to the property was from the narrow road and bridge that comes in from West Main

Street. After you cross the bridge heading toward the library you can still see an indication of the driveway that led to the barn. The barn eventually fell down and the house and cabin were vandalized to the point that Paul had the town burn them down. Paul thought of building his own home on the site but procrastinated long enough that the Town Council came to him and offered to buy the property for the library. The Town was able to pass along a piece of the school property to the south of the library which is now the driveway for the site.

Our next step was to interview several architectural firms and after a process we selected The Architects Collaborative of Cambridge, Massachusetts. They had as part of their resume the design and completion of several public and college libraries. The principal architect assigned to our project was Roy Dailey, since deceased. From what I recall, the Board was pleased with their design work from the very beginning of the process.

The Board of Trustees approved the design, the necessary documents were completed and the project was put out to bid. The low bidder was a local contractor from Warwick, J. Arvid Johnson Company. The construction superintendent in charge of the day-to-day progress of the project was Arthur Carlson, also deceased.

As I recall, the construction process went smoothly, without delays and within our budgeted monies, which brought us to that day forty years ago when the building on Boone Street was dedicated—December 1975.



Architects Roy Dailey and Mike Kirschmayer

Patricia Carlson - Library Board of Trustees Chair 1991-2011

Patricia Carlson began her tenure on the Board in 1982.

My Favorite Place in Wickford

By Patricia B. Carlson

February 2015

My love affair with the North Kingstown Free Library began just six years before the Friends of the Library came into being. Shortly after my family moved to Wickford in 1949, I accompanied my father to the library on Brown Street where I was given a library card. I don't think it was a proper card as I was probably too young for one of those, but Miss Merithew obviously felt it was important for me to be connected to the library in a way that made me feel valued. That early contact was indeed important as many years later, I would chair the Board of Trustees, a position I held for twenty-five years.



The NKFL was a place that I visited often, sometimes by myself, as I did not have to cross any streets to reach what was to me the most elegant building in the village. As I recall, the entire collection was on the main floor while the second story was devoted to glass cases filled with all sorts of historic materials. All of it was magical to me as I developed a lifetime love of the written word. My father also enjoyed a special privilege. The director put brand new books behind the desk, so that my dad and a half dozen other patrons got first refusal on new mysteries before they entered general circulation. I subsequently realized that this was one of the virtues of a hometown library.

When the Friends of the Library began its work, the fortune and the future of the library were in question. There seemed to be diminished interest on the part of the Town to keep the library as the center of community life. The Friends dedicated themselves to that goal. They were/are prodigious fund raisers, and soon the library was bustling with programs, patrons, and promise. Renovations were made to enlarge the stacks and extend the library, and the library grew as more and more people discovered its beautiful location and wonderful resources. During this time I did small volun-

teer jobs, mostly re-shelving books, for Mrs. Hellewell. Then the library became a victim of its own success.

The Friends and the library staff had done such a superb job with programming that even the enlarged format of the Brown Street library became too small. Plans were begun to build a new library. Land overlooking Academy Cove was purchased from the J. Paul Wilson family, and a building committee undertook the daunting task of creating a space that was up to date and welcoming, with room for expansion in the future. The "new" library was dedicated in 1975 and was an almost overnight success. Groups made regular use of the meeting spaces; exhibitions were hung in the bright interior; and there was room for more BOOKS as well as records and tapes, movies in various formats, periodicals and reference materials.

However, the new library had been built just before computers and other electronic media began to take over our lives. The library did a great job of trying to keep current, but the building had been constructed without accommodations for the wiring and routing needed for sophisticated computer networks. The solution became obvious. We had to "grow" the library AND retro-fit it for technology. Under the leadership of Director Donna J. Dufault, and with the support of the Trustees and Staff, the library was enlarged. All parts of the project were important, although I personally love the room for small children and the "Story Dory," the little boat in that room that sits waiting for visits from our youngest patrons.

The North Kingstown Free Library has been called the "Jewel in the Crown" of North Kingstown. I am personally so proud of all that the library does and all that it means to North Kingstown. The directors have given extraordinary leadership to an amazing staff over the years, and I feel privileged that I may have made a small contribution along the way.

Richard Moore - Library Board of Trustees Chair 2011-2015

Richard Moore began his tenure on the Board in 2009 and continues to serve after stepping down from the position of Chair in September 2015

Forty years have passed since the present library opened having moved from 55 Brown Street. The North Kingstown library was chartered in August 1897 with the following rules and regulations:

- The Library shall be kept open from 10 am to 12 pm, 1:30 to 6, 7 to 9pm.
- No person shall at any time have more than 1 book from the library.
- Books taken from the library may be retained for 14 days, but no longer, unless returned and renewed by the librarian, and no book shall be renewed more than once.
- For every day beyond 14 days that a book unrenewed shall be kept out of the library, the holder shall pay to the librarian a fine of 2 cents a day.
- No transfer of books shall be made while the same are out of the library, and no book shall be retained in the library for any person by pre-engagement, but all books shall be issued to the first applicant after their return.
- All injuries beyond reasonable wear and tear, all mutilation and the loss of volumes shall be compensated by the person liable therefor, and any book detained or missing more than 3 months shall be regarded as lost.
- The use of the library shall be denied to any person refusing to make compensation on demand for detention or loss of books and for non-payment of fines.
- No person not employed in the service of the library shall have access to the shelves or take any books therefrom.

Many changes have taken place since 1897 but we remain true to our mission to meet the changing and enduring cultural, informational, recreational and research needs of the library's users. The library is sustained in its mission by the universal human needs "to know; to understand; to hope; to be gratified, cautioned, and inspired."

*Richard I. Moore, Chairman
North Kingstown Library Board of Trustees
August 2015*



Chapter 19: Friends of the Library History

Among Friends at the North Kingstown Free Library

A small group of citizens met September 16, 1955 to discuss the possibility of starting a Friends organization for the North Kingstown Free Library. Nine days later on September 25, officers were elected and the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library was officially born. Upon organizing, the group felt that one of its main objectives was to reach out to all parts of the town by offering something to people of all ages. By this reaching out, they intended to make the townspeople aware of the library and encourage its use.

As soon as they had organized, the Friends embarked on a plan to start a youth canteen in the basement of the library complete with a soda machine and jukebox; and to furnish a Rhode Island Historical Room on the second floor of the library. By the time the bylaws were adopted on November 18, 1955, the organization had already begun to consider various methods of fund raising and types of membership. With these technical matters out of the way, the Friends settled down to sponsor their first Christmas Open House at the library on December 23, 1955 featuring a roaring fire in the fireplace and the North Kingstown High School Chorus singing carols on the library steps.

Since the library's budget was very small at the time, the Friends organization lent both staff and community support by sponsoring: a preschool story hour; Saturday afternoon programs for sub-teens; exhibits in the library; special library programs; services for the senior citizens of the town; and recreational facilities for teenagers in the "Skippers Canteen." Their early goal of reaching out to the townspeople and encouraging library use was achieved ten-fold. Indeed, at a puppet show sponsored by the Friends of the Library in March 1956, 450 children were entertained.

The opening of the Rhode Island Historical Room on March 18, 1956 was the first of many red-letter days for the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library. After having sponsored the project, they served tea to some 125 townspeople in the gracious manner which has come to be their trademark. From this point on, they were well on the way to becoming the indispensable and vital organization which marks the current Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library.

Since 1955, funds have been solicited mainly from annual membership drives and from the second-hand booksale which began in 1956 and has been an annual event ever since. These funds are used to finance a variety of endeavors. When the Trustees asked for support in their project to add on to the old library building on Brown Street in 1957, the Friends provided it unconditionally. Again in 1972, when the bond issue for a new library was coming before the voters of the town, the Friends solicited support for passage of that bond issue.

Between 1957 and 1972 at the old library on Brown Street, they included among their successful projects: the landscaping of the library grounds; the purchasing of folding chairs, curtains and tile flooring for the library auditorium; redecoration of the powder room on the lower-level; the planning and construction of a kitchenette in the basement; the purchase of a movie projector which is still in use today; and the provision of funds for new titles in the children's book collection and for a music collection. Since 1968, they have sponsored the children's summer reading programs and provided entertainment at the end of the summer for these programs.

At the new location on Boone Street, overlooking Academy Cove, the Friends of the Library have sponsored programs with local authors; programs on topics of local history; openings of art exhibits; creative reading and writing for children; as well as numerous other programs including magicians, puppeteers, folk singers and mimes.

Since 1981, the Friends of the Library have sponsored new annual events which they hope will become traditions for the organization. The Legislative Breakfast, with a menu of fish chowder and other goodies, allows librarians and legislators to get acquainted and discuss the issues which are currently facing libraries. The South County Striders get together with the Friends on the coldest day in January at the Library. The Friends serve hot chocolate and donuts to warm the frosty runners.

The Lafayette Band Concert, on the lawn in August, which takes advantage of the lovely location of the library, can also be added to this list of new and successful annual events. We have only to look around the library to see the many and varied contributions which



At opening tea given in Historical Room by Friends of the Library were (l. to r.) Mrs. E. Knight Whitford, Mrs. Henry C. Chadsey, John J. Hellewell, Mrs. Charles F. Ayres, Mrs. Hellewell, Mrs. Henry E. Dawson, Miss Alice D. Greene and Mrs. Richmond Viall, who donated books to the library on local history.

**Providence Sunday Journal
March 25, 1956**

the Friends have made. Magazine covers, magazine storage boxes and bins to house the record collection make organization of and access to these collections much easier. The public address system, purchased in 1980 by the Friends, is blessed each time there is a program with a speaker in the library meeting room. Last year's main contribution by the Friends, after what was their most successful membership drive ever, was a beautiful color television set.

After twenty-seven years of vital support to the Library, the Friends are still going strong and counting on many more years in which they can lend a hand in whatever area the library needs support. Any time you stop in at the North Kingstown Free Library, you need only to look around to know you are among Friends...

*Susan L. Aylward
Recording Secretary
Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library
1982*



Library's friends

(Standard-Times photo by Daniel G. Dunn)

NEW OFFICERS of the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library were installed at a tea Friday at the library. They are (l-r) Gabriella Adams, treasurer; Joan Peet, corresponding secretary; Marian Carvisiglia, president, and Susan Aylward, recording secretary. Absent when photo was taken was Muriel Flood, vice president. *(Standard Times photo by Daniel G. Dunn)*

Friends of the Library History: 1983-Present

By Elaine Cardente, President, Friends of the Library

As the century continued to progress toward the Friends 45th anniversary celebration in 2000, the mission of the Friends remained constant. The library's award winning publication entitled *A Century of Books for All the Mind's Journeys* was published. Contributions to the library's holdings included an Adult New Reader Collection and over \$5000 in audio books. Memorial gifts made in donation to the Friends furnished science books for beginning readers, popular paperbacks for young adults and additions to the large print collection. In the South County Room, custom-made bookcases were installed, artifacts were restored and additions were made to The Merrymount Press collection. To this date, the Friends annual gift in appreciation of a wonderful library staff has financed the purchase of staff-selected titles to be added to the general collection.

There were improvements to the Meeting Room. In 1985 a lovely piano was donated by a Friend. It was reworked and tuned through the generosity of other Friends. In 1993, further refurbishments and the purchase of a new piano were funded in large part by the Friends. In fact, the Meeting Room underwent a major metamorphosis in 1998 when the Friends not only worked to ensure the approval of the municipal bond issue by a margin of 7:1, but also proudly contributed \$25,000 from the Friends to the capital campaign for a newly enlarged and upgraded library. Since that time, Friends support for the purchase of library furnishings has meant new shelving and display cases as well as special furniture pieces for young readers and lightweight aluminum tables and blackout shades for the exterior doors of the Meeting Room.

Friends-supported programs at the dawn of the 21st century were a combination of tradition and innovation. In a decades-long partnership with the North Kingstown Arts Council, the Friends continue their co-sponsorship of the enduring Sunday Musicales and the Rhode Island Voices series, which gives voice to Rhode Island authors reading from their works. Interested readers can still travel to Elizabethan England through the Shakespeare Studies series and they can revisit timeless masterpieces in book discussion groups. With living performances, patrons have witnessed history come to life at the North Kingstown Free Library. Roger Williams visited to celebrate his 400th birthday. Among many other notables, audiences have welcomed Teddy Roosevelt, Ida Lewis and Abraham Lincoln. In Octo-

ber, 2015, Andrew Carnegie was in attendance to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Friends and the 40th anniversary of the library at the Boone Street location.

Music binds the community. Since its inception, the Friends have supported performances and programs of music appreciation which have exposed participants to a genres from traditional drumming to classical chamber music and everything in between. To showcase young talent in the community, the One More Time series offers a stage to aspiring young musicians for the presentation of their prepared work. Indeed, the Lafayette Band in concert on the library grounds has been a summer staple since 1981! Other Friends-sponsored program categories include concerts and dramatic presentations, programs of reading and literature, lectures, demonstrations and workshops and even cooking programs with free samples!

The library is the gateway to all manner of adventure and decades of the town's first graders have boarded those Friends-sponsored buses to the library to get their first library card. Since 1968, the summer reading initiative of programs and prizes for both children and teens remains a popular mainstay. The colorful parade of storytellers, puppeteers and magicians, among many other equally talented and engaging entertainers, continues to delight. It was noted that in 2007, a total of 3,357 young readers and their parents attended summer reading programs. Since 2010, chick eggs delivered from Casey Farms have found the Young Readers area to be a cozy and welcoming place to hatch and begin their lives.

With the support of the Friends, creative programming ideas such as improv workshops, cartoon and comic-style illustration, movie nights and craft nights reach out to the teens and young adults in our community. As is the case across all generations of patrons, the Friends value the input from this important demographic of library users.

The Friends have reached beyond the library walls. For over a decade the Food for Fines initiative meant that patrons could use donated nonperishable food items as payment for their library fines. Friends then transported those donations to the local food pantry. Sponsored walking tours and bus trips, rich in detail as gathered by local historian Tim Cranston, have treated participants to fact-filled excursions to every corner of the town. Museum passes purchased by the Friends of-

fer free and reduced price admissions to 15 museums throughout Rhode Island and beyond.

The Friends have also embraced the library grounds. In 1986 the first in a series of landscape beautification plans was adopted. In 2006 local sculptor and Friends Executive Board member Ken MacDonald designed and donated the bike rack with the sunrise red mouth, sunburst yellow eye and the navy blue top fin that greets visitors as they approach the front entrance. Further commitment to a quality visit at the library was made in 2010 when almost \$10,000 was appropriated for the restoration and beautification of the historically significant sunken garden area on the library grounds. The Friends trust that the cheery bike rack, well-situated benches and restful garden spaces will entice visitors to linger a while longer and truly experience all that the North Kingstown Free Library has to offer.

No summary of Friends activities would be complete without mention of the technology that has become a part of the lives of library staff and patrons alike. From the TRS80 that was made available to the public in 1983, to the microfilm reader/printer purchased in 1986, to the flat screen monitor at the circulation desk, to the purchase of 6 laptops in 2010; the Friends have supported the library's priority to offer digital opportunities to all patrons. Indeed, even the experience at the wildly popular movie nights was enhanced in 2013 when the Friends earmarked over \$13,000 for the installation of state-of-the-art sound and projection equipment in the Meeting Room. With support from the Friends, the *Among Friends* newsletter was launched in the early 1980s. This publication continues to be the primary way the community finds out about events at the library. With the Apple Macintosh computer purchased in 1992 for the in-house production of *Among Friends* and other graphics projects and the color copier subsequently purchased jointly with the Trustees in 2014, technology has also served the Friends' purpose to produce, print and then mail the monthly newsletter.

The volunteers, those unsung heroes, are critical to the success of the mission of the Friends and events throughout the history of the group have attempted to pay homage to that selflessness and commitment to the library. Volunteer recognition has taken the form of brunches, luncheons, evening entertainment and even picnics. Volunteers have been nominated annually for recognition by the North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce. Among the thank you gifts there have been candy-filled Friends mugs and specially designed note cards, umbrellas and Friends book totes. All these attempts pale in comparison to the monumental gift of self that over half

a century of community-minded volunteers have freely given to the Friends and to the library.

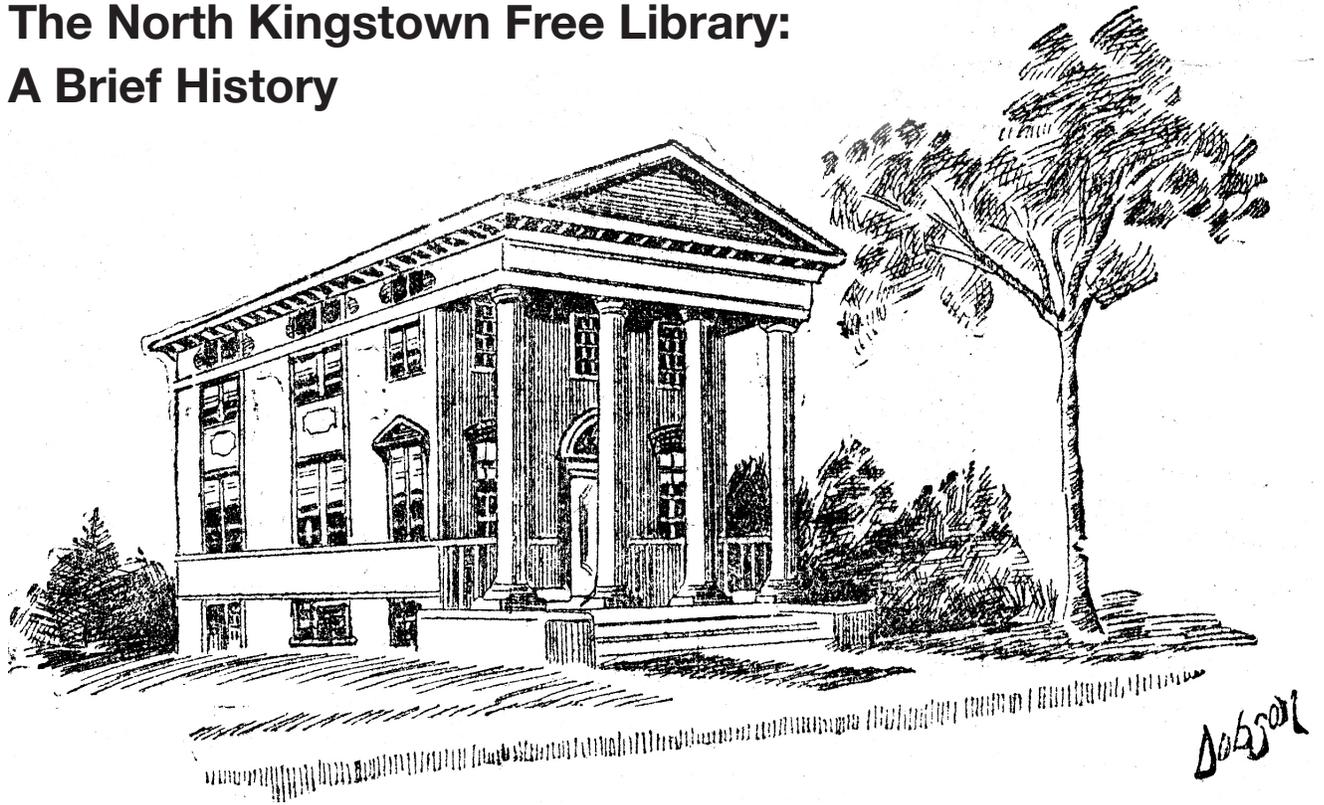
The Friends are only as strong as their collective membership and none of the aforementioned would have been possible without that community of members. For over 40 years, the Friends were the recipient of a generous annual donation from the North Kingstown Women's Club. Indeed, the major sources of income are still membership contributions and generous, unsolicited donations, as well as the proceeds from the donations of gently used books that are sold on the internet, at the annual book sale and at the subject-specific short-term sales. In addition, with the vigorous sales from the three rolling book carts opposite the circulation desk, those shelves are now restocked almost daily by diligent volunteers. Every member of the Friends should take great pride in the fact that with successful membership drives, book sale events and sales of promotional items such as library note cards, book lover's calendars and sturdy book totes, all the programs and activities that the Friends support are still provided free of charge and have always been outside of the town's budget for the library. In 2005, the president of the Friends stated that "In these times of budgetary constraints the Friends have been able to ensure that the library continues to plan and produce wonderful and diverse programs and activities." And refreshments are included!

Now, fifteen years into the new millennium and on the occasion of a momentous 60th anniversary celebration, the Friends have stayed that same course that was originally charted for them by the founding members. It has been a wonderful 60 year journey and it is not over yet! The following paragraph first appeared in 1982 to close a summary of the first 27 years of Friends activities. The sentiment that is expressed is as relevant to the Friends now as it was then.

"after [60] years of vital support to the library, the Friends are going strong and counting on many more years in which they can lend a hand in whatever area the library needs support. any time you stop in at the North Kingstown Free Library, you need only look around to know that you are among Friends..."

Chapter 20: NKFL: A Brief History

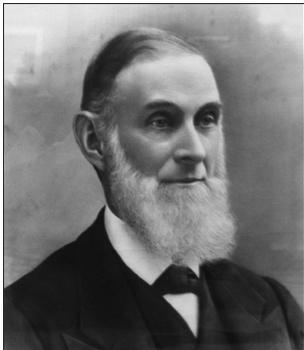
The North Kingstown Free Library: A Brief History



by Shirley Payne

February 1996

On a Wednesday night early in 1899 people from all over North Kingstown–Wickford and the outlying villages–came by foot and horse drawn vehicle to the new library on Brown Street. The Greek Revival structure with its welcoming porch and two-story columns was filled to capacity in spite of the winter cold. *The Wickford Standard* reported that the townspeople “were packed in like sardines” to attend the opening of the North



Caleb Allen Chadsey

Kingstown Free Library. After a musical overture of National Airs, Contractor James H. Bullock turned the keys of the library over to James A. Greene, President of the Board of Trustees. Other Board members were Joseph Reynolds, William Congdon, Charles Reynolds, Thaddeus Hunt, Lyman Aylesworth, and Robert Rodman.

The library had been established and the building erected in 1898 with a gift of land and \$10,000 from Caleb Allen Chadsey. Born in 1822 at the family homestead on Davisville Road and left an orphan as a boy, Chadsey had been apprenticed to a cooper in Newport, had shipped out on whaling voyages, and in 1849 had joined the gold rush to California. On the return trip through the Straits, when the crew mutinied, he had taken command of the vessel and brought passengers and ship safely home. Back in Wickford, Chadsey started a grocery store at the end of Main Street and, until his death in 1894, took an active role in community affairs.

The Rev. Frederick B. Cole of St. Paul’s Church addressed the crowd at the opening ceremonies and dedicated the building “for all that is true and beautiful, for all that is just and lawful, for all that is dignified and courteous, for sound honest government, for the happiness of home and the enlightenment of life.” The library flourished on Brown Street for seventy-seven years.

The first librarian was Addison Luther, once a church organist at St. Paul’s. His library job included custodial

duties. He started with 2,000 volumes, most of which had come from a lending collection organized by St. Paul's Church at the old Guild Hall.

Many citizens were benefactors of the library. William Dean Davis and later Elizabeth Le Moine Miller willed money for books. Davis, a woolen manufacturer, was born in 1813 in Davisville, the village named for his family. He went to public schools in North Kingstown and the Kingston Academy. He joined his father and uncle in woolen manufacturing, spinning, weaving and cloth finishing. For a time he represented North Kingstown in the Rhode Island General Assembly. The owner of woolen mills in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, he died in Providence in 1903. A portrait of Davis as a young man hangs in the South County Room.

Frances Burge Griswold, author of the book *Old Wickford, the Venice of America*, published in 1900, is the subject of the other large oil portrait hanging in the South County Room. This was a gift to the library from her niece.

Daniel Berkeley Updike, a descendant of the original settlers at Smith's Castle, contributed printed portraits of men and women of local historic interest, Italian engravings, maps, books, and a framed letter signed by President James Madison, praising the Gilbert Stuart portrait of his wife, Dolley Madison. D. B. Updike was the founder of Boston's Merrymount Press. He had no descendants and gave generously to North Kingstown as a memorial to his family, the Updikes who had platted the village of Wickford, first called Updike's Newtown. The Audubon prints which now hang in the library meeting room were among Updike's gifts to the townspeople. A number of local histories were printed at the Merrymount Press, and the library now maintains a special collection of Merrymount Press books.

When Annie Merithew was hired as librarian in 1917, a janitor was also hired to tend the building. Miss Merithew lived on West Main Street, where Wickford Gourmet Foods stands now. She could easily walk to her job at the library, where she checked out books to library patrons young and old for thirty-seven years.

The Rhode Island Library Association held its annual meeting at the North Kingstown Free Library in May 1937. Greetings to the group were extended by Mrs. Joseph Warren Greene of the Board of Trustees. Morning activities included a lecture on "Current Trends in Library Service," a forum dialogue on "The Menace of Mediocrity" with Miss Esther Johnston of the New York Public Library and Prof. I. J. Kapstein of Brown University. A chicken pot pie and ice cream lunch followed at

the Wickford House on Main Street. In the afternoon Prof. Herbert Cross of Pleasant Street presented a slide lecture on "Wickford's Most Famous Son Gilbert Stuart." Four private homes were open for tours, as well as the Barn Museum and the Gilbert Stuart House, where tea was served.

By 1950 the collection had grown to over 10,000 volumes. Some had been in the library for many years and were well used. A story-telling group for children five to ten years old was started by Mrs. Sherwood Baldwin. Small wooden chairs for the program were given by the North Kingstown Woman's Club and the North Kingstown Recreation Association.

However, with fifty years of service and changing community needs after World War II, the library had fallen behind the times. The handsome old wooden building, damaged by hurricanes and rot, needed repairs; inflation had eroded finances; and the book, magazine, and reference collections all needed upgrading. When the North Kingstown Town Charter was adopted in 1954, the governance of the library changed significantly. Before this time, the Town Council appointed trustees to the library board for life or until they chose to resign. Now guided by state library law, five trustees were appointed for staggered three year terms. In 1955, through the efforts of the North Kingstown League of Women Voters, the library appropriation was raised from \$3,000 to \$8,000. Gladys Hellewell, former librarian at Quonset Naval Base and a resident of Saunderstown, was hired as librarian when Annie Merithew retired. Renovation and reorganization began.

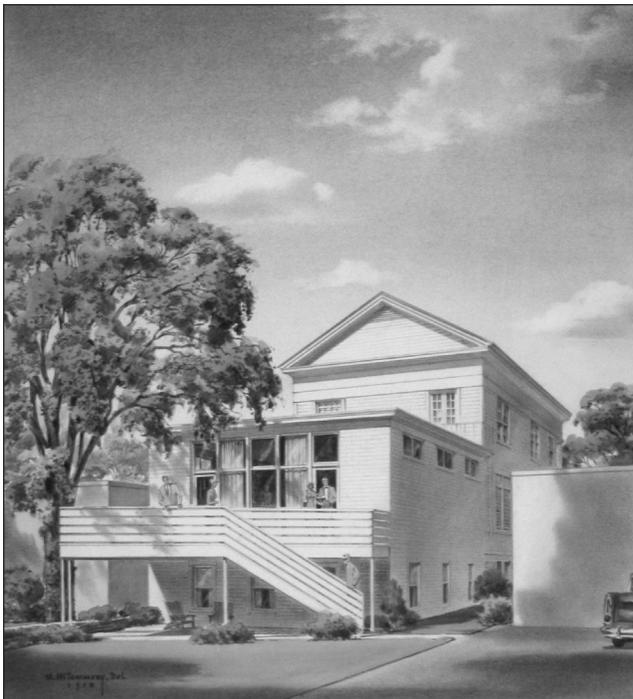
With part-time and volunteer assistants, the collection was weeded and recataloged. Gladys Hellewell reported that children pasted and mended books, sorted cards and applied plastic jackets; and homemakers, high school students, and Navy wives typed, shelved books, lettered, sorted magazines and helped in other ways. Nearly 34,000 new catalog cards were created. A grant from the Rhode Island Foundation was used to mend the porch, with engineering drawings contributed by Charles Ayres. Robert Aldrich and Edwin Schuler gave plumbing and sheet metal work. Mrs. Joseph Warren Greene Jr. provided funds for redecorating the local history room upstairs; Norman B. Smith gave a table and captain's chairs and an antique Terry clock; Mrs. Richmond Viall gave books of Rhode Island history. The North Kingstown Teachers Association, the Pettaquamscutt Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and Ye Kings Towne Garden Club all made substantial contributions.

The newly organized Friends of the North Kingstown

Free Library, with Mrs. Charles Ayres as chairman, planned a fund drive for children's books, a weekly story hour for pre-schoolers, a youth canteen, a home-maker's forum, and programs of lectures and movies. Regina Leeper, a Wickford resident and also Quonset librarian, was hired as Hellewell's assistant. She worked at the North Kingstown Free Library for twenty-five years and was an active member of the Friends of the Library, managing their annual book sale. She ran a weekly team of book menders and had responsibility for keeping the book collection in top condition with additions and withdrawals

Henry Dawson, who had served as chairman of the Board of Trustees, was succeeded by Elizabeth Rodman. A life-long resident of North Kingstown and a librarian at the University of Rhode Island, Miss Rodman was familiar with local library issues.

With the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point, the Construction Battalion Center (Seabees) at Davisville and the trend toward suburban living, North Kingstown population had grown from 4,000 to 20,000, a 500% increase. The library, which had not grown in size, was too small. Because the town was already struggling to build schools, the Library Board decided to raise \$40,000 for an addition through public subscription, rather than requesting tax funds. A Building Committee was formed with Vice Admiral James H. Foskett, chairman, T. Morton Curry, Mrs. W. Henry France, Mrs. John J. Hellewell, secretary, Robert J. Kelley, Harper Moulton,



MacConnell and Walker Architectural Plans

Mrs. Benjamin R. Sturges, and Alden W. Wilson. Miss Rodman presented the first gift in the campaign to the Town Council in March 1960, a check for \$7,584 from Mrs. Arthur Booth of Hamden, Connecticut, in memory of her sister Anne S. Nugent.

Plans for the project, drafted by Wickford architects MacConnell and Walker, called for a two-story addition at the back of the library almost doubling its space: a large reading room on the main floor with a deck outside and a meeting room below. The campaign for funding was a success, and the addition was built. In 1963 the library won a Dorothy Canfield Award from the Book of the Month Club, given to small libraries throughout the United States judged to have rendered outstanding service to their communities. The staff of the library grew with June Walsh and Shirley Payne added as part-time assistants. When Hellewell retired in 1965, she was named an honorary member of the Board of Trustees.

Selecting a new director was always a challenge. One candidate left after a short trial period. But, living in Davisville, was Edna B. Lager, with a library degree from Simmons College, Boston, and experience in the Philadelphia Drexel Institute and in Providence Public Library's Reference Department. She became director and stayed for fourteen years to oversee big changes. It was soon evident that the 1962 addition to the library was not a long term solution, as borrower registrations and circulation statistics continued to rise. Carolyn Thornton was added to the staff.

During the 1950's and 1960's federal and state legislation set standards for libraries to insure that adequate service was available to all. In order to qualify for state and federal funding, libraries were expected to meet these standards by a certain date. Besides space requirements, there were staff and collection requirements and requirements for hours of service. As a start, the three libraries in North Kingstown, the North Kingstown Free Library in Wickford, the Willett Free Library in Saunderstown, and the Davisville Library, formed a loose association under the leadership of the North Kingstown Free Library. The Davisville Library later dropped out.

Rhode Island was divided into regions to provide better access to material through interlibrary loan. The North Kingstown Free Library was part of the Southern Region with the Westerly Public Library designated the regional library for the area. Carolyn B. Hearn was the Regional Coordinator for many years. From her office at the Westerly Library, funded by the Rhode Island Department of State Library Services, she acted as ad-

visor to and liaison between South County libraries and other libraries in the state.

Under the regional system, Providence Public Library became the state's Principal Public Library. Interlibrary loan requests from North Kingstown went first to Westerly, then to Providence, and then to in-state colleges and universities and to other sources outside of Rhode Island. Library networking became an integral part of library service.

By now the library at 55 Brown Street was again too small. The library continued to serve as both an intellectual and a social center for the community. Two special events at the library each year were the Christmas Open House, when the Girl Scouts gathered on the library steps to sing carols to villagers and Christmas shoppers, and the summer Friends of the Library Book Sale, run by Regina Leeper, on the library steps during the Wickford Art Festival.

To address the need for expansion, in 1967 the town bought the Tower Discount property next door. The building was razed and the site cleared, but there were problems. The Brown Street area was subject to hurricane flooding, and there was little space for an enlarged septic system.

Federal grants for library building projects were available at this time. In order to qualify, an initial survey was required. The Trustees hired Francis Keough, library consultant and director of the Springfield, Massachusetts, Public Library, to evaluate library services in town. The Keough Report, completed in December 1968, underscored the need for expansion and recommended a new central facility on a different site, more than tripling the square footage and collection sizes. At that time the library had 17,000 volumes housed in 5,000 square feet. Keough put the town's need at 60,000 volumes housed in 18,000 square feet.

Anticipating a big job ahead for the library board, a referendum amending the Town Charter to enlarge the Board of Trustees from five to seven members was passed in November 1970.

In the early 1970's, the library extended its hours of service from forty-nine to over sixty hours per week. Susan Berman, then a graduate student in URI's library science program, and Edith Shearer were hired. Regina Leeper was put in charge of circulation and technical services, Susan Berman was appointed reference librarian, and Shirley Payne headed children's services. Carolyn Bromley was hired, and Deborah Brennan, who was just beginning a career in librarianship, joined the

staff as cataloger.

With an incentive grant from the Department of State Library Services, the library hired two young photographers, David Perrotta and Susan Thorpe, to do a series of photographs showing the town at the time. Twenty years later, those photographs reflect North Kingstown at the end of the library's era on Brown Street.

The Board of Trustees, with Chair Elizabeth Rodman, Mrs. E. Knight Whitford, James V. Koper, Edward O. Ekman, Jr., Phebe Wilson, Kenneth Hogberg, and Arthur G. Brown, rallied public support for a \$1,300,000 bond issue, approved in November 1972. Matching state and federal funds to pay half the cost were secured, and planning for the new facility was underway.

Six and a half acres of wooded land off Boone Street with a view of Wickford village across Academy Cove was purchased from Paul Wilson. Once his family had a house there, but only the cellar hole remained. The Architects Collaborative of Cambridge, Massachusetts, was hired to design the building. Their concept of a modern brick and glass structure in historic Wickford caused some opposition, but the project proceeded on schedule. The library at 55 Brown Street was closed for two weeks to make the move. Patrons were asked to borrow as many books as they could from the old library and return them to 100 Boone Street when the new library opened.

More than three hundred people turned out on a Sunday afternoon in December 1975 under threatening skies for the dedication and a tour of the new facility. The St. Bernard Braves Drum and Bugle Corps performed a marching concert. Trustee James Koper was Master of Ceremonies. Trustee Kenneth Hogberg stood in for Trustee and Building Committee Chairman Edward Ekman Jr., who was in Washington to support library legislation before the House of Representatives. The Rev. Charles Fountain, pastor of St. Bernard's Church, gave the invocation, and the Rev. Peter Spencer of St. Paul's Church gave the prayer of dedication. State Rep. Harold Cutting presented a flag; and members of American Legion Post 12, which had donated the flagpole, led the flag raising ceremony. Editor Rudolph Hempe of the Standard Times gave the library microfilm copies of the newspaper from its founding in 1888, a gift from the Wilson Publishing Company. With dignitaries looking on, Keith Fisher and Kim Marshall, first graders with their first library cards, had the honor of cutting the traditional ribbon in front of the main entrance.

In the spring the Wickford Lions Club constructed

Lions Memorial Park next to the library overlooking the cove, and Ye Kings Towne Garden Club created a sunken garden in the old cellar hole.

In 1976 the federal government closed the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point and cut back activities at the Seabee Center. Economic uncertainty prevailed in North Kingstown, so the timing of the new library proved fortuitous. Residents took pride in their beautiful new building, which was there to help villagers face the struggle of rebuilding the local economy. When Elizabeth Rodman retired from the Board of Trustees, Mary Whitford, a long time board member, took over as chair; and Albert C. Henry Jr. was a new appointee. Teddy Lager retired as director in 1979. After Mary Whitford's death later that year, Albert Henry succeeded her as chairman of the Board of Trustees.

When Deborah Bowerman Brennan became director, her objective was to use the library to its best advantage. Brennan, a graduate of Wellesley College with an MLS from URI, had worked as cataloger to improve access to the enlarged reference, adult nonfiction, and local history collections. She was interested in library programming and began regular monthly adult programs and library exhibits and displays. She started the newsletter, *Among Friends*, which was distributed to library patrons and members of the Friends of the Library. The library was awarded two incentive grants from the Department of State Library Services: one funded the slide tape show, *North Kingstown: An Illustrated History*; the other funded *South County Authors*, a compilation of biographical sketches of writers associated with our area. An important gift to the library was the file of genealogy records of George Lawrence and his mother Anna Lawrence. H. Paul Lefebure joined the professional staff in the Young Readers Department. He had previously been a reference librarian at the Lincoln, Rhode Island, Public Library.

Brennan resigned as director in 1985 and went to work for the Department of State Library Services on state-wide library programming grants such as "What a Difference a Bay Makes," a series of programs focusing on life around Narragansett Bay. Susan Berman, in addition to her responsibilities for reference, nonfiction and special collections, took over adult programs and the editorship of *Among Friends*. She has established the library's reputation for excellence in these areas.

Shirley Payne, at that time Coordinator of Readers' Services, was chosen as director. Payne had studied at Barnard College, Columbia University, and at URI, where she had earned her master's degree in library science.

Immediate concerns when she became director were complying with new state regulations for library accreditation including filing a long-range plan with the Department of State Library Services; joining CLAN, the newly formed Cooperating Libraries Automated Network; and automating the circulation system.

The Long Range Plan was completed by a committee of Trustees and staff. The task of securing the budget increase for the automation project fell to Shirley Payne and Albert Henry. The task of managing the automation project - supervising the hardware installations and overseeing the inputting of all of the library's records fell to Susan Aylward, who took over technical services when Regina Leeper retired. Aylward had begun working in the library as a high school student and continued while she went to college and graduate school.

The entire staff reinforced by volunteers were barcoding and inputting. Zebra stripping, under Aylward's supervision, was the major thrust of work along with public service. With an LSCA Data Conversion Grant from the Department of State Library Services, 50,000 titles - about two thirds of the collection - and 12,000 patron registrations were entered. The terminals, hardware and software, were bought with a grant from the Champlin Foundations, which has been most generous to libraries. To take reserves on books and to give the circulation staff some freedom from answering reference questions, a Reader's Advisor desk was established in the adult fiction section.

The tenth anniversary of the library's move to 100 Boone Street was celebrated with an open house and concert of baroque music by Affetti Musicali, held on the main floor. The concert was so enjoyed that music became a regular part of library programming. The North Kingstown Arts Council with funding from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts began sponsoring "Sunday Musicales at the Library." The library's first piano was the gift of Pat and Will Kane. Subsequently the Friends of the Library raised money for a new piano, and the original gift was donated to Wickford Elementary School.

Special collections in the South County Room under the leadership of Susan Berman continued to grow with many gifts and purchases. There were additions to the Merrymount Press collection, books published by Daniel Berkeley Updike's small but prestigious Boston publishing house; the Eichenberg collection, Fritz Eichenberg, an internationally recognized artist and illustrator, lived in Kingston; and the collection of works by cartoonist and watercolorist Paule Loring of Wickford, the

gift of his family. The genealogy collection was enhanced with gifts from the North Kingstown Genealogical Society, and Miriam B. Lawrence gave the library her large collection of miniature books. John A. Wilson Sr. and his wife made a generous donation for children's books. The Weaver's Guild gave a hand woven Friendship Quilt which hangs in the stairwell, and many local artists have contributed paintings. Several annual exhibits, much enjoyed, were the fall exhibit of weaving by the Weaver's Guild, the spring exhibition of art work from the North Kingstown schools, and before it got its own building, the annual Member's Show of the Wickford Art Association. The Frosty Fun Run, a road race sponsored by the South County Striders, started and finished at the library and always attracted a crowd in January.

The annual (now semi-annual) Book Sale by the Friends of the Library continued in the library meeting room. The Friends of the Library have helped in many ways, underwriting the costs of programs for children and adults (these are not covered by the town budget) and purchasing audio-visual and other equipment. Gabriella Adams, former first grade teacher and the principal of the Wickford Grammar School, was treasurer of the Friends for thirty-two years. The Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library have been giving their ongoing support for over forty years.

By 1990 the library collection had nearly 100,000 items, including books, magazines, government publications, microforms, and audio-visual materials. The North Kingstown Free Library became a full depository for state documents. Also for the convenience of the patrons notary public service was added. Young Reader's Librarian Paul Lefebure now also managed the music collection, which had changed from records and tapes to CD's and talking books, and had built a very popular collection of videos. For many years the library borrowed films from the Rhode Island Library Film Cooperative based at Warwick Public Library. During 1990 more than 10,600 persons attended library programs. More than 3,660 visited the library in a typical week, or over 190,000 people annually. Annual circulation had reached 274,000 items borrowed, with 26,500 reference questions answered.

In recognition of the administrative aspects of their jobs, their hard work and important contribution to the library, three members of the professional staff were made assistant directors: Susan Berman, Assistant Director of Reference and Adult Services; Susan Aylward, Assistant Director of Circulation and Technical Services; and Paul Lefebure, Assistant Director of Young Readers and Audiovisual Services. Jane Lussier

followed Linda Vancini as head of circulation. Phyllis Cullen became children's librarian, and Linda Caisse reference librarian.

When Albert C. Henry Jr. retired as chairman of the Board of Trustees, John DiMartino, a board member of long standing, took the position. He died soon after, and Henry was reappointed to fill his unexpired term. Patricia Carlson, who had been treasurer of the Board, became chair when Henry again retired.

Donna Dufault was hired as library director when Payne retired in 1991. Formerly assistant director of East Providence Public Library with undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Rhode Island, Dufault had spent fifteen years as a library media specialist at Cranston Public Schools. She was at the time a member of the American Library Association Council, subsequently served as Chair of CLAN, is currently President of the Rhode Island Library Association, and has just been appointed to the Library Board of Rhode Island.

Since she came to North Kingstown, the library has increased its hours open and for the first time is now open on Sunday afternoons. The old card catalogs have been closed, as this information is now accessed by computer. Technology has flourished. At circulation the old date cards have been replaced by printed transaction slips, and there are public access terminals for patrons to use throughout the library. Civic groups continue to use the library for their meetings. Literacy volunteers tutor their students at a quiet table downstairs. Dufault has enlarged the volunteer program at the library, and has initiated Food for Fines at Christmas time to help the North Kingstown Food Pantry care for the needy. By all measures library statistics advance, and once again there is need for refurbishing and expansion. Trustees in 1996 are Chair Patricia Carlson, Gregory Coppa, Jean Tamaro, Muriel Flood, William Nee, Patricia Fuller, and Joan Peet. Leslie Peltier is president of the Friends of the Library.

The library now approaches its 100th birthday. When it opened twenty years ago at 100 Boone Street, an editorial in the Standard Times described the event as "one of the most commendable accomplishments in the history of North Kingstown."

The library, which has had the loving support of residents for almost a century, continues to grow and evolve. It is time once again to consider the future and keep the North Kingstown Free Library strong for today and tomorrow.

The Library's Second Century

This brief update to The North Kingstown Free Library: A Brief History was compiled by Susan Berman.

A plan was developed to raise money for an expansion. A bond for \$1.35 million was put to a vote in 1997 and was passed. Also, volunteer fundraisers created the "Second Century Campaign" and worked diligently to secure another \$500,000 in funding to complete the project.

The renovation included a 4,000 square foot addition to be used to expand the Young Readers' Section and to add space for a climate-controlled local history wing in the level below the new Young Readers' area. Twenty-four new computers were also added, 12 in the Young Readers' department, and 12 in the Reference department. A new staircase was designed, and new views of Academy Cove were opened up. Lastly, the network infrastructure was revamped in order to allow the library to eliminate the makeshift wiring system they had been relying on. The renovation was completed in 1998 and has served the library well through the present day.

In 2002, Donna Dufault retired, and Susan Aylward was appointed to the position of Library Director. Paul Lefebure, Susan Berman and Susan Moreland were all Assistant Directors of different aspects of the library (Young Readers', Reference, and Technology, respectively) until Paul's retirement in 2008, and Susan Ber-

man's retirement in 2009. Susan Aylward and Susan Moreland then comprised the administration of the library until Susan Aylward's retirement in June of 2011.

Under their direction, the library continued to offer great services to the public, including a wide variety of programming (book discussions, concerts, cooking classes, local history tours, etc.), storytimes, readers' advisory, technology instruction classes and much more. A multi-faceted website was also created to help aid library patrons over the internet.

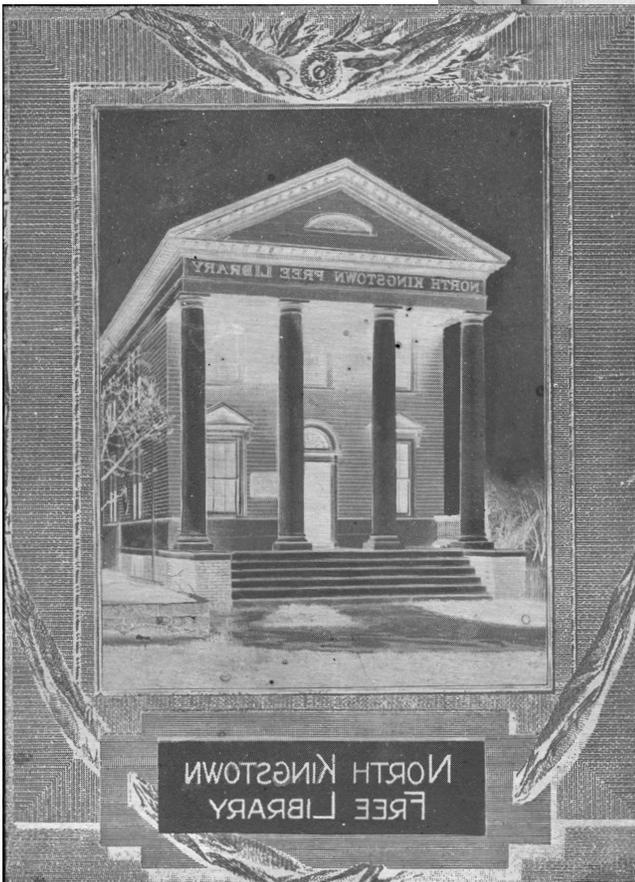
Cultural programming increased under the able direction of Elizabeth Donovan, who was appointed Community Outreach Coordinator during the Aylward Administration. Linda Caisse, in addition to managing the Reference Department, worked with staff and volunteers to improve access to the South County special collections.

When Susan Aylward retired, Cyndi Desrochers who had been acting Director of the West Warwick Public Library became the ninth Director of the North Kingstown Free Library. Cyndi will begin her fifth year in September and will be at the helm to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the opening of the Boone Street building and the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library.

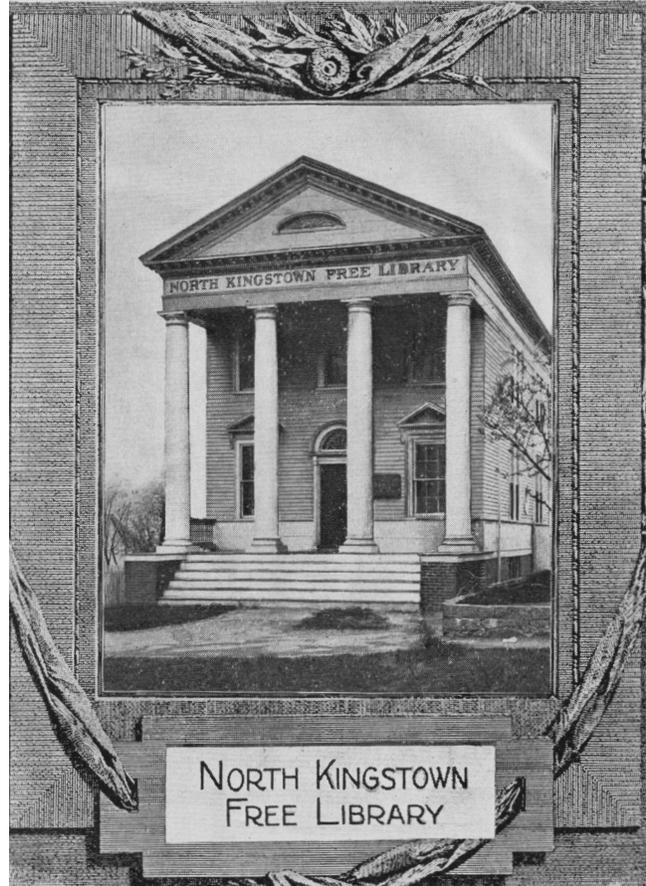
The Making of a Bookplate

The provenance of this bookplate is unknown.

The original photograph was altered to simplify the image.



The image was transferred in reverse onto a copper plate and the design was etched into the surface.



The plate was then run through an etching press to produce the bookplate.

Index

A

Adams, Gabriella "Gay" 42, 108, 112
 Aldrich, Robert 20, 108
 American Legion (Post 12) 33, 110
 American Library Association 73
 Among Friends (Newsletter) 55, 71, 106, 111
 Architects Collaborative 32, 55, 90, 100, 110
 Arnold, Hope 43
 Art Festival 39
 Audubon Bird Prints 42
 Automation 75
 Aylesworth, Lyman 9, 99, 107
 Aylward, Susan 18, 26, 37, 41, 43, 49, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 70,
 71, 72, 73, 75, 78, 79, 80, 84, 85, 86, 97, 99, 108, 111,
 112, 113
 Ayres, Charles 20, 108
 Ayres, Mrs. Charles 21, 104, 109

B

Baldwin, Mrs. Sherwood 108
 Bartlett, Rev. F. J. 9
 Bell and Howell 33
 Berman, Mark 54, 58, 61
 Berman, Susan 18, 37, 41, 42, 43, 47, 50, 54, 58, 60, 61, 62,
 67, 73, 80, 91, 96, 110, 111, 112, 113
 Board of Trustees 24, 25, 33, 35, 36, 41, 43, 45, 48, 56, 63,
 64, 67, 69, 71, 74, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 85, 99, 100, 101,
 103, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112
 Boettger, Jennifer 93, 94
 Bookplate 114
 Booth, Mrs. Arthur 109
 Booth, Mrs. Hortense 22
 Bragg, Robert 32
 Brennan, Deborah 30, 33, 36, 38, 40, 44, 45, 46, 48, 54, 55,
 74, 75, 76, 91, 96, 110, 111
 Briggs, Maybel 82
 Bromley, Carolyn 110
 Brown, Arthur 25, 110
 Brown, Arthur G. 99
 Browne, Maggie 77
 Building Committee 100
 Bullock, James H. 9, 107
 Bundy, Annalee 76
 Burnham, David 66
 Butler, Cheryl L. 86

C

Cain, Frank 32
 Caisse, Linda 55, 96, 98, 112, 113
 Cardente, Elaine 105

Carlson, Arthur 100
 Carlson, Patricia 56, 66, 69, 70, 81, 84, 85, 101, 112
 Carnegie, Andrew 7
 Carpenter, Cynthia 40
 Carpenter, Mrs. Henry 47
 Carvisiglia, Marian 43, 108
 Century of Books 56, 57, 67, 105
 Chadsey, Caleb Allen 7, 9, 17, 20, 107
 Chadsey, George H. 9
 Chadsey, Mrs. Henry C. 104
 Champlin Foundations 76, 77, 111
 Christmas Open House 110
 CLAN 18, 73, 76, 77, 78, 111, 112
 Classical Music Collection 38
 Cold Spring House 60
 Cole, Rev. Frederick B. 9, 10, 107
 Collins, Maureen 97
 Congdon, John L. 9
 Congdon, William 9, 99, 107
 Coons, Deborah (Brennan) 40, 50
 Coppa, Gregory 112
 Coppa, Teddy 66
 Cranston, Tim 56, 59, 60, 74, 105
 Cross, Prof. Herbert 108
 Cullen, Phyllis 42, 112
 Curry, T. Morton 109
 Cutting, Harold 32, 110

D

Dailey, Roy 100
 Davisville Elementary School Library 24
 Davisville Library 109
 Davis, William D. 20, 108
 Dawson, Barbara 63
 Dawson, Harry 17
 Dawson, Henry 109
 Dawson, Mrs. Henry E. 104
 Dedication of Library 9, 31, 34
 Delbanco, Andrew 57
 DePasquale Building and Real Estate 65
 DePasquale, Mark 65
 Desrochers, Cyndi 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 90, 113
 Dewey Decimal 73
 DiMartino, John 112
 Dodge, Rosella 19
 Donovan, Elizabeth 24, 55, 56, 62, 81, 90, 92, 98, 113
 Dorothy Canfield Award 18
 Drew, Sandra 44
 Drickamer, Jewel 32
 Dud Sinker Cartoons 42

Dufault, Donna (Roberts) 56, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70,
78, 79, 87, 101, 112, 113

E

Eastman, John 66
East Providence Public Library 63, 68, 70, 112
Ehrhardt, Joan 99
Eichenberg collection 111
Eichenberg, Fritz 42, 111
Ekman, Edward 25, 32, 63, 99, 100, 110
Eli Terry clock 74
Extrados Architects 63

F

Fisher, Keith 31, 110
Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis 33
Flagpole 32
Fleming, Arline 49, 58, 67, 80, 84
Flood, Muriel 108, 112
Fontaine, Joan 47
Foskett, Vice Admiral James H. 109
Fountain, Rev. Charles 32, 110
France, Mrs. W. Henry 109
Friends of the Library Book Sale 110
Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library 18, 21, 25, 39,
42, 43, 45, 51, 54, 55, 56, 66, 82, 83, 90, 91, 101, 103,
104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111, 112
Fuller, Patricia 112

G

Gaiman, Neil 73
Gardiner, Louise 43
Garland, Judy 51
Garwood, Mrs. Jack 19
Gaylord Book Charger Machines 75, 76, 77
Gellhorn, Martha 73, 81
Gordon, Susan 56
Grayson, Joan 56
Green and Beretta 64
Greene, Alice D. 104
Greene, James A. 9, 99, 107
Greene, Mrs. Joseph Warren Jr. 20, 21, 108
Gregory, William 61, 74
Griswold, Frances Burge 61, 108

H

Hanley, Diane 64
Hearn, Carolyn B. 109
Hearn, Kay 42
Hellewell, Gladys 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 39, 47, 61,
72, 91, 101, 104, 108, 109
Hellewell, John 22, 104
Hempe, Rudolph 33, 110
Henkin, Kevin 94
Henry, Albert 43, 45, 48, 111, 112

Hogberg, Kenneth 25, 32, 99, 110
Howe, Raymond 30
Hunt, Thaddeus 9, 99, 107

J

James, William 57
J. Arvid Johnson Co. 32, 100
Johnston, Esther 108
Jones, Lynn 41

K

Kane, Pat and Will 111
Kapstein, Prof. I. J. 108
Keller, Helen 57
Kelley, Robert J. 109
Keough, Francis 110
Keough Report 110
Kert, Bernice 73
Kinnell, Galway 57
Kirk, Don 53
Kirschmayer, Mike 100
Klein, Maury 55
Kluyve, Mrs. Robert Van 95
Koper, James 25, 32, 99, 110

L

LaFarge, Christopher 57
Lafarge, Oliver 57
Lafayette Band 42
Lager, Carl 24, 36
Lager, Edna "Teddy" 24, 26, 27, 28, 36, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44,
54, 55, 58, 74, 109, 111
Lambert, Joanne 16
Lawrence, Anna 111
Lawrence, George 111
Lawrence, Jean Bordo 15
Lawrence, Miriam B. 112
League of Women Voters 23
Leeper, Regina "Reggie" 25, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47, 54, 76, 109,
110, 111
Lefebure, Paul 42, 51, 52, 53, 55, 111, 112, 113
Levine, Robyn 99
Library Doors 72
Library Renovation 63
Lions Memorial Park 32
Loring, Paule 42, 111
Lussier, Jane 112
Luther, Addison 7, 14, 18, 58, 82, 91, 107

M

MacConnell and Walker 109
MacDonald, Ken 106
MacPherson, John 65
Madison, Dolley 108
Madison, President James 108

Main Street Association 21
 Marco, Mr. 51
 Marshall, Kim 31, 110
 Marshall, Timothy 33
 Maryott, Rev. C. A. 9
 Mason, Bruce 74
 McAleer, Althea 73, 74
 McKay, Mary 98
 Meland, Karen 40
 Merithew, Annie 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 58, 101, 108
 Merithew, Elizabeth 15, 16
 Merrymount Press 56, 105, 108, 111
 Microfilm 33
 Miller, Elizabeth 20, 108
 Moëbius strip 73
 Monroe, Cate 53
 Moore, Richard 99, 102
 Moreland, Susan 66, 81, 84, 87, 89, 90, 98, 113
 Moulton, Harper 109
 Mullane, James 66
 Mullane, Michael 66
 Musicali, Affetti 111
 Mutch, Maria 91

N

National Library Week 73
 Nee, William 112
 North Kingstown Arts Council 42, 56, 105, 111
 North Kingstown Bicentennial Commission 42
 North Kingstown Genealogical Society 112
 North Kingstown League of Women Voters 19, 20, 36, 108
 North Kingstown Recreation Department 56
 North Kingstown Teachers Association 20, 108
 North Kingstown Women's Club 21, 106
 Nugent, Anne S. 109

O

OSL - Ocean State Library 73, 76, 96

P

Pamental, Marie 99
 Pan-Twilight Circus 67
 Patricia Carlson Conference Room 74
 Payne, Kenneth 49
 Payne, Shirley 18, 36, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 54, 55,
 56, 63, 68, 74, 75, 76, 96, 107, 109, 110, 111
 Pearce, Douglas 63
 Peet, Joan 108, 112
 Peirce, Miss. H. S. 9
 Peirce, Tommy 16
 Peltier, Leslie 112
 Perrotta, David 110
 Perry, Carey 32
 Pettaquamscutt Chapter 20, 108
 Phelps, Rev. A. E. 9, 91

Phillips, Kate 92
 Placco, Christopher 64
 Plante, David 57, 74, 81
 Potter, Nancy 55, 56
 Prentice, G. Edward 42, 45
 Pressman, Robert 42
 Providence Public Library 24, 36, 42, 43, 76, 109, 110
 Pyle, Ernie 57

Q

Quilts 42, 112
 Quinn, Henry 15

R

Razee Motorcycles 40
 RBG (Robinson, Green and Beretta) 64
 Reynolds, Charles 9, 99, 107
 Reynolds, Joseph 9, 82, 99, 107
 Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities 42
 Rhode Island Department of Library Services 42, 63
 Rhode Island Foundation 19, 20, 74, 108
 Rhode Island Historical Room 18, 20, 72, 74, 103, 104
 Rhode Island Library Association 108
 Rhode Island Library Film Cooperative 112
 Rhode Island State Council on the Arts 42
 RI Department of State Library Services 43
 Rodman, Elizabeth 25, 33, 35, 99, 100, 109, 110, 111
 Rodman, Irving 9
 Rodman, Robert 9, 99, 107
 Roosevelt, Teddy 57
 Russell, Beth 34

S

Saunders, John and Laura 42, 45
 Schuler, Edwin 20, 108
 Seaview Railroad 42, 45
 Sgouros, Tom 67, 99
 Shea, Margaret 43
 Shearer, Edith 41, 110
 Shippee, Russell and Cathy 64
 Siperstein, Ruth 56
 Smith, Martha 61, 83
 Smith, Mrs. Ralph 19
 Smith, Norman 20, 21, 108
 Smith, Rev. E. F. 9
 Sollitto, Paul 99
 South County Collection 55
 South County Interrelated Library System 42
 South County Room 23, 43, 50, 54, 56, 60, 61, 64, 73, 74,
 96, 105, 111
 Spaulding, Irving A. 66
 Special Collections Wing 64
 Spencer, Rev. Peter 32, 110
 Spitler, Scott 79
 Standard-Times 33

Standard-Times Index 33
St. Bernard Braves Drum and Bugle Corps 32, 110
St. Martin, Charles 69, 78, 89
Stuart, Gilbert 108
Sturges, Mrs. Benjamin R. 109
Sullivan, Nancy 55
Suvari, Elizabeth 99

T

TAC. *See* Architects Collaborative
Tammaro, Jean 63, 112
Terry, Eli 74
Thorpe, Susan 110

U

Updike Collection 56
Updike, Daniel Berkeley 42, 56, 108, 111

V

Van Allsburg, Chris 41
Vancini, Linda 35, 112
Vernon, Lori 99
Viall, Mrs. Richmond 20, 108
Viall, Richmond 104
Volunteers 20
Voting Machine 74

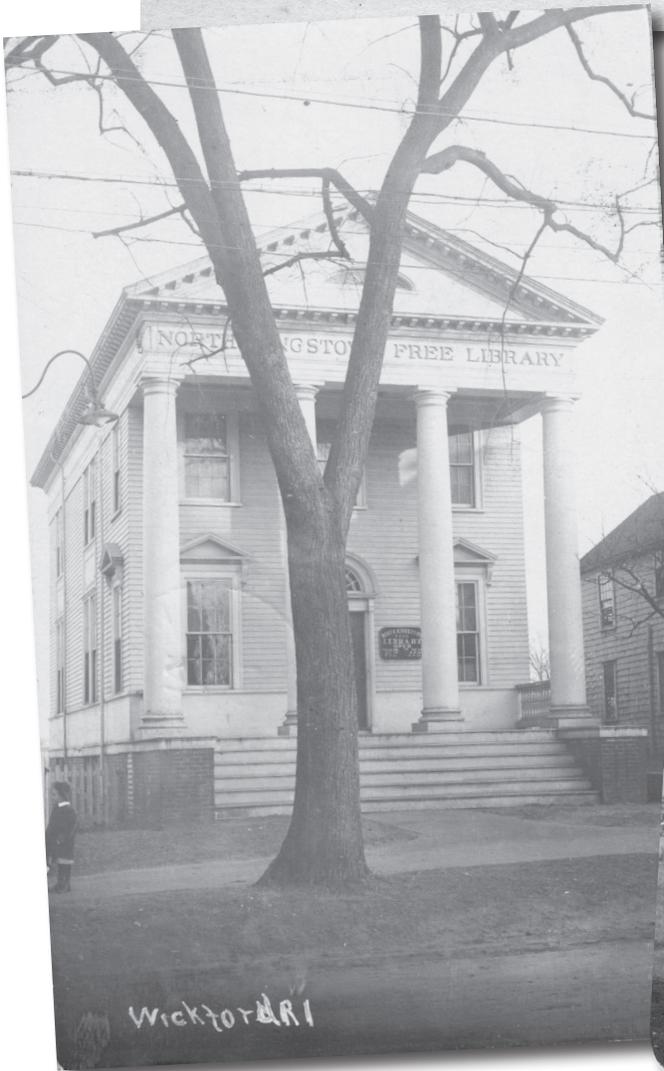
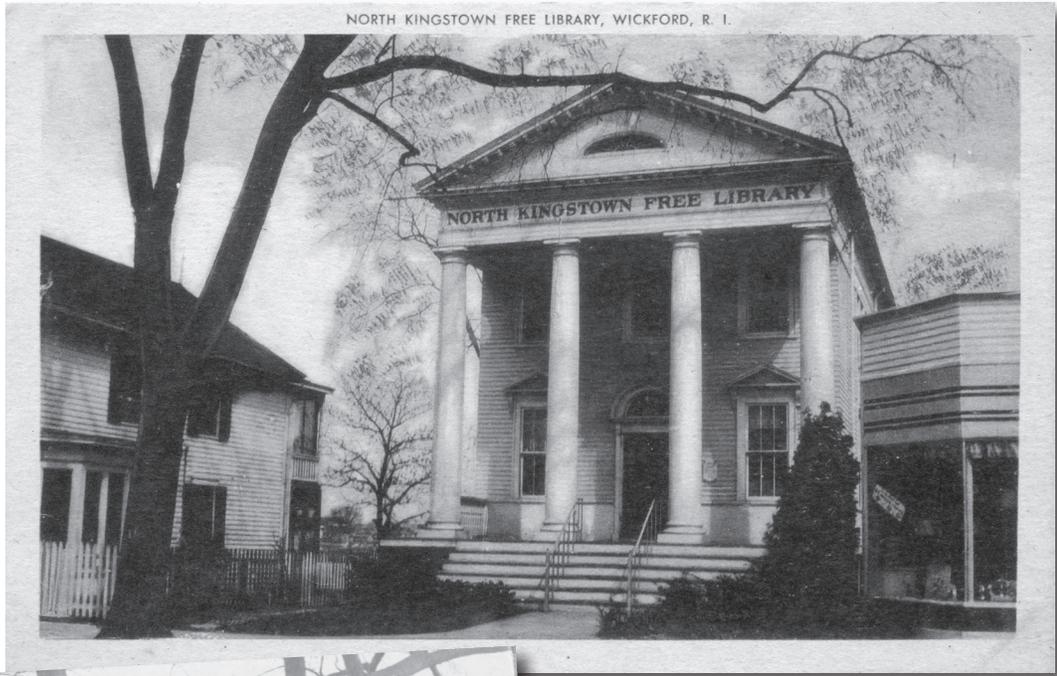
W

Walsh, June 109
Washington Academy 55

Watkins, Patricia 40
Weaver's Guild 112
Weiss, Ellen 42, 55
West Warwick Public Library 83, 84, 86
Whall, Helen 55, 61
Whitford, Mary 25, 43, 99, 100, 111
Whitford, Mrs. E. Knight 104, 110
Wickford Art Association 44
Wickford Elementary School 42, 55
Wickford Library Society 20
Wickford Lions Club 28, 32, 110
Wickford Room 30
Wickford Standard 33
Willett Free Library 109
Williams, Ed 42
Wilson, Alden W. 109
Wilson, Frederick J. Jr. 33
Wilson, John A. Sr. 112
Wilson, Paul 100, 101, 110
Wilson, Paul and Bess 64
Wilson, Phebe 25, 99, 110
Wilson Publishing Company 33, 110
Wister, Owen 56
Wood, Elder E. R. 9
Wright, Richard 57
Wyman, Carolyn 26

Y

Ye Kingstowne Garden Club 20, 21, 32, 108, 111



CATALOGUE.....
NORTH KINGSTOWN..
FREE LIBRARY

1900

RO253

NOR

NORTH KINGSTOWN FREE LIBRARY

Accession No. 13910

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. The Library shall be open on week days from 10 a. m. to 12 m.; from 2 p. m. to 6 p. m. and from 7 p. m. to 9 p. m., except Wednesdays when it shall be open from 10 a. m. to 12 m. only. Closed on legal holidays.
2. No person shall at any time have more than one book from the Library.
3. Books may be retained fourteen days, but no longer unless renewed, and no book shall be renewed more than once.
4. For every day beyond fourteen that a book unrenewed shall be kept out of the Library, the holder shall pay the Librarian a fine of two cents.
5. No transfer of books shall be made while the same are out of the Library, and no book shall be retained in the Library for any person by pre-arrangement.
6. Until books have been in circulation six months they cannot be renewed.
7. For all injuries, beyond reasonable wear and tear, compensation shall be made by the person liable therefor; also for the loss of volumes and any book retained or missing more than three months shall be regarded as lost.
Mutilation is a misdemeanor punishable under the laws of the State.
8. The use of the Library shall be denied to any person refusing to make compensation for loss or mutilation of books or for non-payment of fines.