

August  
2023

# Bookends

Newsletter of the Friends of the Mystic & Noank Library



Join us for...

## 7th Annual Friends FREE Craft Exchange

Saturday, September 9  
10 a.m. - noon

- Drop off unwanted crafting supplies or half finished projects of all kinds at the Library the week prior to the event
- (please, no fabric this year due to space constraints)
- On Saturday, come to browse and take supplies for FREE
- You do not need to donate to take anything
- Please remember to bring you own bags
- This is a great opportunity to donate craft supplies that you no longer want or pick up supplies for charity crafts, for school crafts, or for yourself!



Email [friends@mysticnoanklibrary.org](mailto:friends@mysticnoanklibrary.org) with questions.

### All Things Pumpkin

#### *Magic with Ed Pop!*

a fun-filled family magic show  
with treats!

Saturday, October 6  
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Three Halloween-themed baskets,  
donated by the Friends,  
will be raffled off at the  
end of the month!



The week after Thanksgiving.  
Features new and gently used  
books, holiday items  
and more!  
More details to follow!

## Words from our President, Sally Salancy

The Friends of M&NL are active all year round, but we need help!

The Friends are busiest in late spring, preparing for our biggest event, the Library Fair. This year was no exception. Our Silent Auction began in May and the Preview Book Sale was held the evening of June 2.

This year's Fair Day was another fabulous event on June 3, with live music and the Mystic Garland Dancers, food from Jealous Monk and the Mystic Soup Company, fudge donated by Franklin's General Store, and a wonderful selection of plants and more from the Mystic Garden Club. The day ended at 2:30 p.m. but the Friends' Book Sale continued throughout the next week, till noon the following Saturday.

The net proceeds this year, including the generous gift of Mystic Garden Club's Plant Sale proceeds, came to \$15,765.53!

The Fair has been our largest fundraiser for over 40 years, only interrupted by Covid. We are grateful for your support.

All we were missing from the 2023 Fair were enough volunteers. There is a lot of preparation before and after the Fair and many shifts available for help on Fair Day and during the Book Sale Week.

We will hold other events this year, including the Like New Book Sale, held the week after Thanksgiving. We would love to have your help – even a few hours makes a huge difference! A sign-up book is available at the Circulation Desk before events or you can email [Friends@mysticnoanklibrary.org](mailto:Friends@mysticnoanklibrary.org) to volunteer.

Is there a better way for us to find volunteers? Please let us know, and thank you!



Mystic Garland Dancers





*Shh...*

*by Joanna Case,  
Friend of the Library and  
Former M&NL Director*

(continued from the May Newsletter)

In 1961 the Library received a \$10,000 donation from John W. Fisher in memory of John Benton Copp and Esther Copp Smith. The Board decided to use this money to have the second floor renovated to create two rooms and lower the ceilings. John Dodge, a Stonington architect, was hired to do the job. He was also instructed to install a fire escape from the second floor to the ground on the North side of the building.

Once the second floor was completed, the Children's Room was set up there and it was decided that there should be a Children's Librarian. The Children's Librarian would then have an office upstairs where the original Librarian had her office and where the local history is now.

Mrs. Rollinson saw some major changes during her tenure and major steps in the growth of the Library. In her personal life she was widowed twice and lived to 94 years and is buried with her first husband in Elm Grove Cemetery.

## Open Book

### **Rebecca Spera, Circulation Supervisor**

If you encounter this bright young librarian at the Front Desk, you are sure to receive the help you need. Known as Becca, she is happiest assisting people and ensuring a safe place to visit.



Becca arrived in April 2022 after serving as a library assistant at the Groton Public Library. She had previous experience when, at age 16, she fulfilled her community service at the Waterford Library which recognized her abilities and hired her on staff.

When Becca was 19 she worked in a bakery for a while and at a gas station, debating what she wanted next. When an opening occurred at the Groton Library, she was hired. Eight years later she accepted a position at M&NL, fortuitously for us!

(Cont. p.8)



Mito, a handsome tuxedo cat, was adopted on November 8, 2016 from Focus on Ferals in Uncasville. He had been found on Powerhouse Rd.; hence, his name Mito, which is short for Mitochondrion, the “Powerhouse” of the cell, and was estimated to be 4 years old.

Mito ruled the upstairs of the Library, including leaping to the loft area from the bookshelf lighting below. His weight gain was noted particularly when the lighting began to sag, and a no-treat policy began!

Always a curious and friendly cat, he seemed to appear from nowhere when any staff or patron arrived upstairs, and had no trouble snuggling up on the lap of anyone trying to work on a laptop computer or on the jigsaw puzzle in progress. He enjoyed gazing out the windows or just hanging out where his adoring fans could admire him.

After residing at the Library for a few years, it was found that Mito had health

## Library Cats

### Part 2

issues due to feline stomatitis, a condition which causes severe inflammation of the gums and mouth. Treatment usually includes tooth extraction, which did solve Mito’s symptoms.

While healing, he moved to a more comfortable home with Chris Johnson in February 2019, and it was decided this would be his permanent home. He remains there, enjoying the good life and the company of his “brother” Pepper.

There is something about a library cat that draws people in and Mito was no exception. He developed a serious Instagram following while at M&NL.

by  
Peggy Brissette,  
Friend of the Library





## Fertilizing Library Gardening Programming

### Growing Food Justice



by Ery Caswell,  
Adult Services & Programming  
Librarian

In 2023, the Library has given away hundreds of free seed packets to our patrons and helped people of all ages learn about planting seeds, gardening, and growing their own food. Starting in the fall, we will nurture even more program offerings related to the seed library. Based on the interest we've seen since the pandemic in gardening and foraging programs, this program emphasis is all homegrown!

We also aspire to connect the seed library and all of our garden programming efforts with the missions of food justice: a holistic view of the U.S. and global food system(s) that sees healthy food as a human right and addresses barriers to that right. Food insecurity is intensifying since many of the programs associated with pandemic aid have ended.

In Connecticut, a report by DataHaven and the Sierra College Research Institute found that 17 percent of adults surveyed in a representative sample of several thousand people did not have enough money to buy food in 2022. This figure was up from 10

percent in their report just one year prior.

Even before the pandemic, an Office of Legislative Research report identified an increasing trend in food insecurity across all Connecticut counties. But alarmingly, the food insecurity rate in New London County increased by a staggering 44.3% rate between the years of 2018 and 2020. This rate of increase was the highest of *any* county in Connecticut.

Our Library community is blessed with plenty of knowledgeable gardeners! M&NL has a longstanding relationship with the Mystic Garden Club, which over the years has donated plenty of books about gardening to our collection, helped to create and maintain our beautiful grounds, and last May, hosted a wonderful program about floral arrangements with us.

This next season of garden programming is an open call to those garden clubbers, lovers, and enthusiasts with the means, land, property, and passion for gardening to learn more about food justice and how to support organizations in our county working for food justice.

## Words from our Director, Christine Bradley

As I ready myself to introduce **Ellen Warfield**, our new Fundraising Coordinator, it occurs to me that Ellen is but the latest in a long line of outstanding staff members at Mystic & Noank Library.

Ellen is a recent arrival in Mystic, having moved eastward from New York to join some old friends and settle here with her son. Ellen brings a lot of talent to her role at M&NL, having graduated from both RISD and Baruch University. She has extensive work experience, including many years at Sotheby's, and volunteer fundraising experience with La Grua Center.

Our staff at M&NL are all talented, dedicated professionals. **Loriannelle Figueroa** has launched a most successful weekly Bilingual Storytime. Like **Leslie Weber**, who is an experienced preschool teacher, she has quite a following this summer, as does **Michael Grater** who has made such a success of the weekly afternoon Chess Club. **Ery Caswell** continues the excellent series of writers' workshops. **Katie Kenney** continues to wow us with her inventive social media posts and her stunning graphics. **Julie Worthen** keeps both our collections and our catalog up to date and accurate.

**Roberta Donahue** not only leads a summer reading program to rival any, but oversees the operations of the library, including payroll, supervision, IT, finance, and, well, you name it, and Roberta is in charge of it. **Becca Spera** has taken hold of the Front Desk including scheduling staff, managing our circulation system, and constantly reviewing Library policies and procedures. **Parker Brady** continues to greet patrons in her own inimitable way that keeps them coming back. **Margaret Lincoln** works the desk with efficiency while carrying a heavy academic load at SCSU. And then there is **Philip Kuepper**, the once and future star of the show, a poet extraordinaire, and indefatigable purveyor of Interlibrary Loans. **Connie Readett**, our neighbor, sets the gold standard for customer service. **Katherine Trejo**, the most organized person I know, not only maintains our development database, but has even started installing the bricks! And finally, our bookkeeper, **Lori Slonski**, makes sure it all adds up.

The most important asset of any library goes home at night—the library staff. —Timothy Healy

bookriot.com

## A Play on Words

Trying to get words to act  
is sometimes next to impossible.  
Take the word "actor," for example.  
I ask "actor" to fill the role assigned it.  
"You were born to play it," I coax.  
"Actor" isn't moved.

"Sedate" is having a fit,  
entirely out of character.  
What set "sedate" off,  
I've no idea. I suspect  
"comic" ribbed "sedate,"  
and rubbed it the wrong way.  
I must have a word with "comic."

If, that is, I can find "comic."  
"Comic" is in the habit  
of not showing up.  
"Comic" finds that amusing.  
I do not, particularly  
when I am in need of some humor,  
such as now.

What with "actor," "sedate," and "comic"  
all acting up,  
and not willing to pull their weight,  
then I can't get anything written.  
The stage of the page stays empty.  
The show can't go on,  
because there isn't one.

by Philip Kuepper  
Resident Poet & Librarian

## The Window of Dawn

Gilded gold by first light,  
the meadow lies  
asleep, dreaming. A wren  
alights and sings matins.  
The meadow awakens,  
and causes millions  
of dewdrops glisten.  
A breeze has breathed on them.  
They quiver with light,  
each drop become a lamp.  
A purple finch appears,  
the air become rapt with his song,  
his breast like a piece of stained glass  
looking to fit into a choir window?



The wren and finch sing  
as though in response to one another,  
song that descends and sews the meadow  
in a composition of notes.  
A whitethroat joins them,  
a tenor of such clarity  
the glass air shivers.  
Dust motes have been caught  
in a quiet shaft of light,  
motes that free-fall like shivers of  
shattered window  
(which explains why the finch wears a  
stained-glass breast)?  
Or is it the motes of dust are to rise,  
dried dewdrops, off the meadow,  
stained by the sun?

by Philip Kuepper

(Cont. from p.3)

In her free time, besides being an avid reader, Becca loves hiking with her dog, doing yoga, reading Tarot cards and crystals, and (safely!) riding her motorcycle. She is continuing her education but taking a break this fall to be married - to the General Manager of Bank Square Books. How is that for a perfect match?!

I asked how she might see herself in ten years. Looking dreamily into the distance, she admitted no clear vision, but considered work with the National Parks, having children - and who knows? Opportunities await.

I am personally tremendously grateful for the organizational skills with which Becca assists me in confirming and obtaining our books for the History Book Club. I encourage you to introduce yourself to Becca if you haven't already. She is another gem added to our M&NL treasury!

by Dana Semeraro,  
Friend of the Library

Due to the high cost of print,  
please consider receiving the  
newsletter via email by  
contacting  
friends@mysticnoanklibrary.org  
Thank you!



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