



NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS of the VINALHAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Fall 2015



photo by Pam Wetherbee

IN MEMORIAM: VALERIE MORTON *by Pat L'Herrou*

The life of Valerie Morton, who passed away on October 2, 2015, will be remembered and mourned by her family and friends, many other of the town's people, and perhaps most of all, Vinalhaven library-users, both year-round and seasonal.

Valerie's impact on the library during her many years as librarian has been vast. Her mind's eye for determining which new books to purchase for all its readers was extraordinary. Her willingness to procure a particular book upon a reader's request was generous, whether through a purchase or a borrowing from another library around the state. Her skills of knowledge and interest in books and how to administer a modern library of many functions, in combination with the warm friendliness of the Assistant Librarian, Linda Whittington, has made the Vinalhaven Library a special place for everyone who stepped foot in it, whether to peruse books, bring children to be read to, to do research, request information on island events or simply to socialize with others having their purpose for being there.

Valerie was mostly a quiet person, with a definite sense of humor. Her raspy laugh was a sound often heard in the library setting. Recently over the last couple years, she had developed a creative art form of small vignettes of paper figures set into sardine cans, shown in Elaine Crossman's gallery. These are a unique art form, illustrating interesting and ironic ideas.

This year has been one of sad losses of individuals with significant connections to the library, and this recent loss of Valerie, who loved the library and her work there, will be deeply felt.



photo by Pat L'Herrou

AUTHOR TALK: ANDREW COHEN by *Pat L'Herrou*

In mid-August, The Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library hosted author Andrew Cohen, the Canadian author of *Two Weeks in July*, to speak about his book. As the author's wife introduced her husband, the library's seating space was filled to capacity and more. He spoke about two significant speeches, not publicly noticed at the time, given by President John F. Kennedy during two weeks in 1963, just a few months before his assassination. Mr. Cohen described his research on the topic and why and how these two events were so important for our country during that period of time. His talk was fascinating and he answered a number of questions from an appreciative audience. With his wife and teen-age children present, he also mentioned that they had purchased some land on Vinalhaven and intend to build a home here.



MEMORIAL BOARD by *Pam Wetherbee and June MacDonald*

More than two hundred small brass plaques line a Memorial Board that FOL has maintained at the library for almost a decade. Each plaque lists the name of a person or a couple who have been remembered by friends or loved ones with a memorial donation to the Friends. Sixteen people have already been commemorated this year and a second board has just been added. The next time you're in the library, stop for a moment and read the names of folks who are no longer with us, but whose lives are remembered there.

Sadly, the most recent name added this year was that of one of the founding women of Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library. **Astrid Philbrook** was instrumental in establishing FOL as an organization created to raise money for the library, encourage love of reading and use of the library, and to establish the library as an integral part of the Vinalhaven community. Astrid was the first treasurer of FOL and never stopped supporting it.

She will also be remembered in the community early on as the town telephone operator, or later as a banker with Key Bank. Some of you may remember her teas and her Swedish bread or Swedish Meatballs, for which the recipe may be seen in the library cookbook. She was a kind, caring, elegant, soft-spoken person who will be missed by her friends, some of whom spent Friday nights with her at the Haven.

To make a memorial donation as a lasting tribute, please send a check for \$25 or more to FOL, Box 223, Vinalhaven and let us know who you would like to commemorate.



REMEMBERING RHODA BOUGHTON by *Pat L'Herrou*,
based on an interview with *June MacDonald*

Rhoda Boughton, who passed away in January 2015, worked with her close friend, June MacDonald, and other friends of the library including Wayne Cooper and Mimi Haylor to create the book store that we know as Second Hand Prose, to sell surplus books from the library and books donated by individuals. This store has become a success, patronized by year-round and seasonal residents and visitors alike. June and her friend Rhoda spent much time together over many years, both before and after Second Hand Prose was established. They also worked together with others to enable the library to add the beautiful addition, dedicated in 2007.

Rhoda had come to Vinalhaven to live, with her husband, Stuart, a fellow artist, a sculptor, after teaching art for many years on the east coast. During her many years here she was established as an artist who created and sold

many beautiful paintings. Her husband passed away fifteen years ago, and she lived alone after that until almost the day of her death. However, during those years her art was by no means Rhoda's only enthusiasm or interest. She was an avid patron of the library, loving to read, particularly mysteries written well, along with books on art and Jewish cultural history. Rhoda's life here was busy and full; it included vegetable gardening, using the results in cooking meals she shared with friends, and designing and creating sets and backdrops for the school plays. She particularly enjoyed working with children and young people.

People who came into the bookstore in recent years would not necessarily know that the person who scheduled the work times for the volunteers staffing the store each day was Rhoda. The store was valuable to Vinalhaven residents and to the library and when the previous scheduler moved away, Rhoda wanted to make sure it continued to operate.

She was a vital presence on this island and that presence, in her own unique style of dress, made her instantly recognizable to anyone who knew her. A good friend's described her as 'a giving person' and a gifted one, who in addition to art and artists, loved her friends, Vinalhaven, other people, working with children, the library and books.

This year has seen many losses on Vinalhaven and some of those were significant persons to the library and staff. Rhoda's contributions, along with those of others who have recently passed away, are very much missed here.

MEMORIES OF DOUG HALL by *Pat L'Herrou*, based on an interview with *Buddy Skoog*

Buddy Skoog met Doug Hall growing up in Vinalhaven, and they each went into military service, then on to college. Years later, back in Vinalhaven they became close friends for many years, up until Doug's death earlier this year. During the intervening years, since Doug had been stationed in Germany, when he returned to Maine, he taught German at the University of Maine. After raising his family, he eventually returned to Vinalhaven, where he began fishing and his son Ethan came to live here also. He had an old peapod boat and continued to lobster, with up to a dozen traps until in his 80's. Like Buddy, Doug was an avid reader of histories and novels. He and Buddy spent hours in conversation, often about the books they read. He enjoyed acting, singing in Vinalhaven plays. The two watched movies together weekly.

When the idea of the addition to the library was becoming known, Doug and Buddy, one of the library trustees, supported this effort wholeheartedly, so Doug began to work within the community to convince them of this major project's value, and the need for close to a million dollars in donations it would take to become reality. Later, Doug served as President of the Friends of the Vinalhaven Library.

Doug is missed greatly by his friend, Buddy Skoog, still a library trustee, and by many in the community.

Editor's Note: This newsletter was put together thanks to the efforts of many members of FOL. Pat L'Herrou.

Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library
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www.vinalhavenpubliclibrary.org



Line drawings by Rhoda Boughton

Membership in the Friends of the Library helps our library provide those extra things. We count on YOU. Think of us in your year-end giving or in establishing a bequest. THANK YOU.

Be A Friend!

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 along with this form, sent to FOL, P.O. Box 223, Vinalhaven, ME 04863
 THANKS!

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