



*FRIENDS of the VINALHAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY*  
**NEWSLETTER**

Fall-Winter 2019

## REMEMBERING LIBRARIAN BETSY DICKINSON BATES

Betsy Bates, who passed away October 29, was the very definition of a “giver.” She unreservedly shared her time, her many talents, and her delicious baked goods with the Vinalhaven community. She was hired as Acting Librarian in 1996 and became the full time Librarian in 1997, retiring in 2007. She served for many years on the board of the Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library (FOL), and up until this year, was the liaison from the Friends to the Chamber of Commerce.

This part of a Wind ad placed by Betsy during her time as Librarian speaks volumes about her love of children and books: “Life-long readers start as babies! Please feel comfortable bringing your children to the Library. We love child noises! They are positive noises, similar to building sounds!”

We asked some Vinalhaven library-goers to share memories of Betsy in her role as librarian.

### **Erin Creelman:**

When Betsy was librarian I always felt better after a trip to the library. I remember when my children were small and sometimes they wouldn't be as quiet as I would have liked in the library Betsy would reassure me that everything was ok because, “Happy sounds are just fine.” The reassurance, the support, and the interest Betsy offered whether it was in relation to a new cookbook, a project, being a parent, or local issue was more than was required of a librarian. Betsy saw the best in people and we were the better for it.

### **Linnell Mather:**

25+ years ago, I was on the board of the library trustees (with Pat Crossman, I believe!) Betsy was our new hire for librarian, and she was clearly enjoying making the job her own, while figuring out the system, the budget, etc. Someone asked her a question about some potential programming ideas, to which she responded, “Oh, my stars and garters! Wouldn't that be fun?”



*Photo by Fox Island Photography*

I knew we had a winner. You have all the adjectives: kind, giving, always there, selfless, loved children, dedicated to her church and her community...her smile....

The coffee cakes: she would periodically bring a coffee cake to Chamber of Commerce meetings. It was always devoured.

### **Sue Dempster:**

What I remember most about Betsy was her love of children. She was so warm and welcoming to all of the “littles” that came into the library. She made them feel special and so many of our children need that.

### **Pat Kennan:**

Betsy once came into the library and found me working on the computer and pointed out to me that the library wasn't open yet. We both laughed. She printed out library times for me and we both figured out it was open in the afternoons Tuesday through Friday. She then told me she

hoped we never got internet at home as it was so much fun having me in the space. Really really will miss her.

**Colleen Conlan:**

The main thing I remember about Betsy is that she truly loved to have children come into the library. Her Wind ad always mentioned something like “Babies always welcome.”

Her maiden name was Dickinson, as in Emily Dickinson, who was a distant relative. When she noticed on my email signature that I use my maiden name as my middle name she told me she did the same when she married.

She wrote very thoughtful, personal thank you’s on behalf of the Friends of the Library and Vinalhaven Outreach. She was certainly a thoughtful presence on our FOL committee, and a longtime volunteer at the bookstore, always busy with pricing and shelving books, and she gave me good tips on keeping/culling certain categories of books based on publication date...I guess the librarian in her!

And of course, she was the snickerdoodle queen!

**June MacDonald:**

Betsy was truly a children’s librarian. She worked with young kids to introduce them to the library. One of her activities was to hold a scavenger hunt within the library so that children could get to know the library system and layout, and they were proud to receive their first library card.

From the start of her tenure, Betsy was tremendously supportive of the Friends of the Library, and attended their meetings although the town did not always pay her to do so. She included the Friends in many of the library activities; one that I recall was when she invited kids to come to the library at various times to meet members of the Friends who Betsy had asked to dress up as literary characters or authors. This fostered true interaction between the children and the Friends, and helped the kids make real connections to books. And she was most helpful as the Friends worked on just what was needed in the library when we undertook the 2007 addition.

Valerie Morton, who became Librarian upon Betsy’s retirement in 2007, was trained by Betsy. She started as Assistant to the Librarian, and Betsy pushed with the town to create the position of Assistant Librarian.

**Bunny Sheppard:**

As we all know, there will never be another Betsy.

What has stayed with me is when I have asked her about all she was doing, she would say, “I love everything I am able to do and feel so blessed when others enjoy it.” What a great philosophy for life!

**We Can Stay!**

Second Hand Prose has had our storefront at the Village Center building for many years, thanks to Chet and Cheryl Warren. When the building sold this past summer, many of us – Friends of the Library, customers, and community members alike – were concerned. What would happen with the bookstore?

Well, we didn’t need to worry. It was our good fortune that the new owner is a book lover, and a bookstore lover, as well! We hope to remain for many years, offering a broad range of used books, puzzles, DVDs, and CDs. Every town needs a bookstore, so a big thank-you to Antoine Ohannessian. Welcome to downtown Vinalhaven!

**Thanks from Everyone at Second Hand Prose**

So many thanks to Chet and Cheryl Warren for being stellar landlords for all these past years. They gave us space, kept us warm, and kept our rent stable, so that the money the bookstore earned could go even further toward books and programming at the library.

**A Bookish Holiday**

A book can be an ideal gift, a quiet retreat from the holiday hub-bub after the gifts are opened, the wrapping paper is cleaned up, the hearty family dinner is eaten, and the table is cleared.

Second Hand Prose has a wide selection of brand-new books from the Vinalhaven Historical Society, and their purchase benefits both our organizations.

Many of our used books are in like-new condition, and even the more “pre-loved” books might be just right for someone who likes a particular author or simply loves books.

We have some real oldies-but-goodies, lots of children’s books, and many beautiful art and coffee-table photo books.

If you are a Shakespeare aficionado, come on down! We have plenty of titles by and about Shakespeare.

And don’t forget to choose a puzzle, great for the family to do together during the holidays and through the long, cold winter.

→ *GIVE A GIFT CERTIFICATE* ←

If you’re not sure exactly what to get a book-loving recipient, Second Hand Prose also offers gift certificates.

ALL SALES BENEFIT FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY.

## Year-Round Story Time at the Library

There's some new fun happening at the library: Toddler Story Time, a series of sessions planned for some of the library's youngest patrons. Story time has long been an important part of Saturday mornings throughout the summer at the library. Now the library will offer mid-week sessions in the fall, winter, and spring months, too, thanks to Sue Dempster, who volunteered to plan and run the new program.



Sue has worked with children her entire career, including founding and running Island Playschool for eight years, before there was a Pre-K program at the Vinalhaven School. After that, she worked as the school librarian for sixteen years, with four of those years also serving as teacher in the then-brand new formal Pre-K program. She capped that with another four years of running the Pre-K program, before her retirement in June, 2019. She has an entire adulthood of experience working and playing with our community's youngsters.

What I can say, having sat in on one of her story time sessions, is that Sue is a seasoned pro and a true "child whisperer." Before the story time started, all of the dozen or so children gathered around to chat excitedly, tell how their summer went, or just show how high they could jump.

Then she quickly settled them into participation mode. She started with a finger play song, the classic "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed," that had all the children (and their parents) playing along. Then came a story, with the kids laughing and chiming in on that silly monkey with all his hats. Another song followed, and another book, *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. Alternating between story and song seemed to keep the kids especially engaged and involved. The session ended with a simple craft project, where the kids created their

own "wild thing" monster with colorful shapes Sue had prepared beforehand.

Sue has planned a series of monthly sessions to run through the winter, with a break between sessions. The program targets two- and three-year-olds, with the children accompanied by a parent or other adult, who also takes part in the activities. Each week will focus on a certain theme, such as holidays, seasons, pirates, or feelings, with stories, songs, and projects centered on that theme. Sometimes they will complete a project at the library, or sometimes Sue will send the materials home with the children to continue the fun at home.

The next session begins in December, and will meet in the Children's Room at the library each Wednesday at 10 a.m. Many thanks to Sue!

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## MAINE200: Celebrating Maine's Bicentennial

In March, 1820, Maine gained independence from Massachusetts and became our nation's 23rd state. MAINE200 is a statewide commission overseeing the bicentennial celebration, with programs exploring "all that makes Maine what it is today—our land and waters, history, people and institutions, challenges and successes."

Vinalhaven Public Library will join in the festivities, too. Librarian Scott Candage is forming a special book club, set to begin in February. He's putting together a list of titles by Maine authors and/or about Maine. Watch the Wind for further details on what promises to be an interesting immersion in all things Maine.

### SOCK.tion 2.0

Yes, SOCK.tion will be happening again this summer! SOCK.tion is an auction of socks and other handmade wearables sponsored by the Monday Night Knitters. If you are a knitter, crocheter, or other fiber worker, and want to contribute, get your needles clicking! If you aren't, get ready to bid on your favorite woolies. This was fun in 2018, and we hope this one will be even better.

#### Library Winter Hours

Tue and Thu, 1-5  
Wed and Fri, 9-12 and 1-5  
Sat, 9-12 and 1-4

#### Second Hand Prose

Wed-Sat, 10-4 (December)  
Wed-Sat, 10-1 (Jan-Apr)



# Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library

PO Box 223  
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Front page color drawing by Heather White  
Line drawing by Rhoda Boughton

**Are You a Friend?** Membership in Friends of the Vinalhaven Public 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!**

**If you see “\*\*\*” printed on the newsletter label, this means your membership has lapsed. We’d love to have you renew.**

\*\*\*\*\*

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## Be A Friend!

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**Individual \$10      Family \$25      Patron \$50      Sponsor \$100**

Checks should be made payable to: Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library and, along with this form, sent to FOL, P.O. Box 223, Vinalhaven, ME 04863

THANKS!

FOL is a 501(c)3 organization and gifts to it are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.