



FRIENDS of the VINALHAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWSLETTER

Spring-Summer 2019

FROM THE BOOK SALE TO SECOND HAND PROSE

By June MacDonald

For years, members of Friends of the Library would lug boxes of books from the basement of the library for the annual book sale, and for years many of us complained about it: "We are getting older, the books are getting heavier." Too many unsold books were thrown away afterward. Finally the idea hit us—let's start a used bookstore. We each had a different dream of what it would be like. "Just sell older books." "Have an area for folks to sit and read." "Have coffee and baked goods for sale."

After a search along Main Street and talking with everyone who would listen, Woodrow and Pat Bunker offered us a space in their store...and for free! For days Pat and Bud Crossman and I labored to clean an area, with Pat often sending Bud home to get hot water. Wayne Cooper and Marilyn Wimmergren were also on the work team, with Wayne overseeing non-fiction until his recent move off the island. Finally the space was usable. With my father's small brown bookcase we made our first sale, even before we were officially open, to a couple who wanted their children to be readers. With Bud's hand built bookcases (still in use today: the one under the window and the large ones with mystery paperbacks) and Pat's hand-lettered sign in the window, we started with a FOL-only sale on January 29, 2001. FOL held a contest to choose a name for the new bookstore. Most popular were Book Nook and Second Hand Prose. We voted for SHP as the name.

We soon offered coffee and muffins, but we didn't have enough room for seats. That first year we also had a book sale in the vestry of the brown church (Union Church). SHP was open six days a week: Monday-Friday, 9-4:30, and Saturday 9-1. Early volunteers were Wayne Cooper, Pat Crossman, Marie Dempster, Marilyn Wimmergren, Etta Ames, Betty Fox, Ruth Fox, and myself. I'm sure there were others I can't remember.

We were riding high, expanding SHP in Bunker's, when Woodrow sold the store and Boongie was going to move into the space. After another look up and down Main Street, Karen York told us she was closing her yarn and craft shop. We talked with Cheryl and Chet Warren and they were willing to rent us the space we still occupy for a very reasonable rent. With an ad in the Wind to get helpers, and with food and carts from Carvers Harbor Market, volunteers gathered one Saturday to move all the books from Bunker's to our new home. Books were dusted and shelved amid a large party. I most remember Brooke Conway, then a teenager, and how hard she worked.

Karen left us many of the shelves she had (the white one along the wall and some low ones in the middle.) Others gave us bookcases they no longer wanted: Rachel Noyes provided the special one for children's books, Bodine Ames gave some black iron ones that we used at the 4th of July sale, Bill Brown provided the white bookcase that now holds Maine books and others that have since found new homes. Dick and Ginny Fitts and Lyle and Marilyn Wimmergren painted the store.

Finally we had enough room for a table and chairs (given by my folks) and once again offered coffee and biscotti, courtesy of Harriet Chapman. Sales were brisk and we were able to buy real bookshelves (again thanks to Bud Crossman and Wayne Cooper for always being there to put them together). We even got book carts we could move outside. Someone made a colorful book banner that hung outside until it was shredded by the wind. Jackson Gregory provided a new outside sign, until it was unfortunately vandalized (twice).

Some volunteers have passed on, some have moved off island, and some have changed from shopkeeper to other duties (Jackson Gregory takes care of our trash and recyclables). We no longer serve coffee and goodies. And at some point the Village Center, now for sale, will change hands and we will have to seek a new space. What hasn't changed is we remain a 100% volunteer-run bookstore, with all proceeds going to FOL to help with programming and other needs at the library.

A CHAT WITH SECOND HAND PROSE MANAGER, COLLEEN CONLAN

By Pam Wetherbee

As a teenager, Colleen Conlan was a booklover, saving her babysitting money to buy remaindered books to add to her personal library. When Second Hand Prose opened on Main Street almost 20 years ago, she became a regular customer. Last fall, Colleen stepped into the volunteer role of bookstore manager, taking over from long-time manager Cynthia Dyer.

So far, she has loved learning all aspects of managing the bookstore and its large corps of volunteer staff. She sees SHP's mission as giving used books another chance to get into the hands of booklovers at a very reasonable price. All of SHP's books are donated by community members or come from the library. As Colleen says, "You never know from week to week what you're going to find. There are some real treasures here." Her favorite personal find was poetry books from Ruth Fox's collection, including a signed chapbook given to Ruth by well-known poet, Robert Creeley.

This winter, SHP was open for several hours on Thursday through Saturday each week, giving people a place to pop in from the cold and search for a book or puzzle. The winter hours also allowed people to drop off donations that could be priced and shelved over the winter, helping a bit to alleviate the springtime flood of donations when the bookstore reopened. Now that summer is here, volunteers staff the bookstore from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each Monday through Saturday. Most donated items are priced at \$1, with newer or specialty books a bit higher. Several Vinalhaven Historical Society books are available at retail price.

The store has a large selection of puzzles. One surprise to Colleen has been the huge popularity of puzzles, with many people and families coming by to stock up on them as a winter or rainy summer day tradition.

Children's books are popular; Colleen and the volunteers love to see kids explore this section, then plunk down and read their new selections. There is also a separate section for Young Adult books.

Asked how the inventory is maintained, Colleen explains that each year, books are priced using a different colored sticker, which allows workers to see how long they've been on the shelves. The intention is to sell books, not warehouse them, so after two years on the shelf, books are

marked down even lower. Right now, all books with green or red stickers are half-price.

Colleen has enjoyed putting her own stamp on the bookstore. She's made a few changes in location for different categories of books; check out her location map on the wall above the large-print books to see where your favorite genre resides. Her husband Jim helped out by building some attractive wooden shelves to showcase books. And SHP now has a community bulletin board behind the cashier's desk where flyers for upcoming events can be posted.

As always, donations of good quality (not dusty, moldy or damaged) books, DVDs, CDs and puzzles are welcomed, with the reminder that "Our sales are only as good as your donations." Stop by Second Hand Prose, say hi to the volunteer staffing the store, and see what treasures you can find!



Second Hand Prose Hours:

Mon-Sat, 10-4

Library Hours:

Tue and Thu 1-5 and 6-8

Wed and Fri 9-12 and 1-5

Sat 9-1

PERSPECTIVES KIDS VISIT THE LIBRARY



The library recently welcomed students from Perspectives, the after school program co-sponsored by PIE (Partners in Island Education) and Vinalhaven Land Trust. Two groups, K-1-2 and 3-4-5, meet on consecutive days each week. On a May afternoon, the older students walked from the school to the library. This small but lively group happily explored the stacks, marveled at the large globe in the nonfiction area, and even admired the wood shelves in the original part of the library. One boy remarked, "I've never been here before. I feel like I'm in a British film!"

The children remembered "Mr. Scott," as they called him, from his time as the school librarian. They settled into chairs in the Children's Room while Scott read them *When the Library Lights Go Out*, about animals in a library and their after-hours shenanigans. Even though they are seasoned readers, they enjoyed the time-honored pastime of being read to. Afterwards, they chose books to bring home, and got forms to get their own library card, if they didn't already have one. The younger group came the following day and had just as much fun. Scott is always looking for ways to engage young library patrons and was glad for the opportunity to spend part of an afternoon with the youngsters from Perspectives.

Thanking Heather Seawell

Heather Seawell, who has been the FOL Treasurer since 2007 and helped with fundraising for the library addition for several years prior to that, is passing her financial responsibilities on to Larry Brady. FOL thanks Heather Seawell for her thorough bookkeeping, great attention to detail, and her longtime dedicated service to the Friends.

Upcoming Events at Second Hand Prose

July 4, 9:30-noon: Our big sidewalk sale in front of the bookstore! All books are only 25 cents!

July 8-13: A special sale of a large donated collection of boating and maritime books.

Upcoming Events at the Library

June 28: Artist Patti Bartol, *plein air* painting presentation

July 6: Jane Healey, author of *The Beantown Girls*

July 14: Cassatt String Quartet, part of the Seal Bay Festival

July 19: Paddy and Phil Noble, an evening of poetry and music

July 27: Janann Sherman, women's suffrage presentation

August 15: Huge sale of cookbooks from The Haven, donated by Torry Pratt, to be held at the library. Watch *The Wind* for details!

August 17: Janann Sherman, topic TBA

Date TBA: Bunny Sheppard, Women in Leadership

Oct. 3: Author Bibi Gaston

Help Wanted

We're looking for a volunteer to help us build a new FOL website.

Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library

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Front page color drawing by Heather White

Line drawing by Rhoda Boughton

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

THANKS!

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