



# THOMASTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

**2017 – 2018**

## **Library Personnel**

## **Annual Report**



### **Library Staff**

Blake Donaldson  
Diane Giese  
Melissa Harjula  
Hillary Johansen  
Caroline Ward-Nesbit

### **Library Volunteers**

Lysbeth Andrews  
Maddie Bollinger  
Karen Clarke  
Patty McDonald  
Paula Michaud  
Bailey Noble-Ray  
Erika Pfander  
Owen Forrest Shay  
Mimi Zwick

### **40 Days of Summer Staff**

Hana Baker  
Toby Mergendahl  
Caitlin Raye

### **Library Board of Trustees**

Janet Bosworth, President  
Greg Hamlin, Secretary  
Al Bernier  
Karen Clarke  
William Dashiell  
Holly Doody  
Linda Kruger  
Patricia Smith  
Harold Wiley  
Mimi Zwick

### **Friends of the Library**

Jeff Carty, President  
Patty McDonald, Treasurer  
Amanda Shortall, Secretary  
Lysbeth Andrews  
Janet Bosworth  
Alice Dashiell  
Shirley Hamlin  
Lee Heffner  
Neil Krane  
Erika Pfander

# Annual Report 2017 – 2018

[www.thomaston.lib.me.us](http://www.thomaston.lib.me.us)

(207) 354-2453

[tpl@thomaston.lib.me.us](mailto:tpl@thomaston.lib.me.us)

Monday	11:00	to	7:00
Tuesday	11:00	to	5:00
Wednesday	11:00	to	5:00
Thursday	11:00	to	5:00
Friday	11:00	to	7:00
Saturday	9:00	to	1:00

<b>Total Library Patrons:</b>	2,512
<b>Total New Patrons in 2017:</b>	145
<b>Total Circulation:</b>	24,956
<b>Interlibrary Loans:</b>	1,817
<b>Digital Download (Audio &amp; Ebooks) Circulation:</b>	492
<b>Total Material Onsite:</b>	25,381
<b>Total eBooks and Audiobooks Available Online:</b>	14,537
<b>Total New Material for 2017:</b>	1,319
<b>New Adult Books Added:</b>	810
<b>New Children’s Books Added:</b>	247
<b>New Digital Media Added:</b>	262

**“The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.” — Albert Einstein**

**“Books are a uniquely portable magic.” — Stephen King**

**“Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.”**

— Neil Gaiman

**“A library is a good place to go when you feel unhappy, for there, in a book, you may find encouragement and comfort. A library is a good place to go when you feel bewildered or undecided, for there, in a book, you may have your question answered. Books are good company, in sad times and happy times, for books are people - people who have managed to stay alive by hiding between the covers of a book.”— E. B. White**

## ***A Season of Change***

Thomaston Public Library is delighted to welcome two new staff members, Assistant Librarians Caroline Ward-Nesbit and Hillary Johansen this past year. They have brought with them wonderful energy, enthusiasm, ideas, and knowledge.

The library continues to be a multi-purpose hub of community life. Our monthly Communi-TEA events have grown in attendance, and have become a wonderful opportunity to enjoy neighbors' company, welcome new members to the community, and savor some delicious treats and cups of tea. To better serve our purpose as the community living room, we are excited to share that one of our former storage areas has been renovated into a kitchenette!

Last spring, facilitated by a gift from the Friends of the Thomaston Public Library a gazebo provides a peaceful site for our patrons to enjoy the outdoors comfortably and some much needed shade for the kids during 40 Days of Summer.

We have added new programming, including a family-friendly monthly film & pizza series that is rapidly growing in popularity for kids and adults in the community.

Our staff has embarked on extensive preparatory work required before we migrate to a new circulation system that will allow us to join the statewide shared library system known as MILS, including weeding outdated books, purging old patron records, and re-barcoding our entire materials collection. We expect to join MILS in Fall 2018.

We recently integrated our Maine fiction and mystery into the regular fiction and mystery collections, though they can still be easily identified by the green Maine state logo spine label.

This year, we have also updated our website to a cleaner, easier to use interface, and all of our latest news and events can be found on our homepage. We post regular updates to our social media channels, so make sure to like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram to see all the library's latest happenings.

We held our 4th successful 40 Days of Summer program for the community's kids in 2017, where we served a total of 133 children, and are hard at work planning our 5th for the summer of 2018.

We were awarded a grant from the Maine Community Foundation to offer bookmobile home delivery services to our homebound patrons. This service is now available twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and is open not only to Thomaston residents but to the surrounding community as well.

### ***What Thomaston Public Library Has to Offer You:***

- An outstanding collection of print books, audiobooks, DVDs, magazines, and newspapers
- ***New!*** Bookmobile home delivery services to homebound patrons
- ***New!*** Family Movie & Pizza Night – monthly family-friendly movie selections and free pizza in the main reading room
- Readers' advisory – our extremely knowledgeable staff is always happy to help you find your next book to read or DVD to watch
- Resource sharing (downloadable books, online databases, and library collections across the nation via interlibrary loan services)

- Friday Night Films – carefully curated foreign, classic, and indie films
- Printing, faxing, copying and scanning
- Reference services
- Drop-in technology troubleshooting and assistance
- Eight computers available for patrons and community members to use
- Children’s services, including a weekly family story time, special school vacation programming, and our wildly popular summer reading, activity, and lunch program
- Monthly displays
- Cultural events
- A meeting room available to local non-profit organizations for tutoring, CSC classes, counseling sessions, teacher work sessions, etc.

**Three Rooms Loaded with Books** - Our library comprises three large rooms: the Main Library with circulation desk upstairs, a lower level, and our Children’s Room, all filled with fiction, non-fiction, biographies, and graphic novels.

Upstairs in the Main room, we house our newest books, a growing DVD collection, large print books, and the first parts of our fiction and mystery collections. Magazines and newspapers are available, as are our public computers and a color printer for copying, faxing, and scanning. Our display case features community talents and interests: local art, Finnish heritage, and even library history. We have rotating book displays as well, featuring reading challenges, Black History Month, women’s history, holidays, and other fun themes. Comfortable oversized chairs in welcoming arrangements invite curling up with a good book, or settling in for a great discussion with a friend.

On the lower level, our quiet area offers carrels for studying and a small meeting room, as well as reference and non-fiction sections, and the remainder of our extensive fiction and mystery collections.

The Children’s Room, often a hive of activity, offers shelves filled with new board, picture, early reader and chapter books for children. We offer a great collection of middle grade and young adult fiction and non-fiction, and a growing collection of graphic novels. We also have some wonderful toys for children’s enrichment while parents browse.

**Great Books & DVDs** – The library houses over 25,000 items, approximately a third of those materials are for children (though we certainly won’t judge adults checking out our great middle grade or young adult novels). Our staff holds a monthly advisory committee to discuss which items to add to the collection, and we regularly purchase large-print books, audiobooks on CD, popular and classic films and TV series, Maine authors’ works, literary and best-selling fiction and non-fiction, award-winning children’s literature, and the latest graphic novels. We encourage readers’ suggestions, and we’ve added a recommendation form to our website.

**Ebooks, Audiobooks, and Kindles** – In addition to borrowing audiobooks CDs from our collection, patrons can access downloadable audiobooks and eBooks through cloudLibrary online. Our staff is happy to assist patrons in accessing the app on their devices and logging in to the service. Patrons can also borrow Kindle Fire tablets and access the Intergenerational Book Club’s selections for this year as well as 2014 – 2017, titles by Maine authors, Nathaniel Philbrick’s complete works, and a number of literary classics.

**Public Computers and WiFi** – Wireless internet access is available throughout the library. We also have eight desktop computers for public use, all of which are online, have either Microsoft Office or the compatible equivalent, USB ports for thumb drives, and can print in color or black & white. All of our public computers have access to Ancestry.com and the plethora of digital databases available through the Maine State Library.

**Active Social Media, Newsletter and Website Updates** – Library news can be found on our recently redesigned website, [www.thomaston.lib.me.us](http://www.thomaston.lib.me.us). Our electronic card catalog is available on the website, and if a patron is unable to find the material they would like in our catalog, there is also a form to request materials through interlibrary loan at no charge to the patron. We recently re-launched our monthly newsletter, and patrons and other community members can sign up on the website. We have expanded our social media presence considerably and new posts can be found regularly on Facebook and Instagram.

### **2017 Programs:**

**Programming:** In August, we hosted our annual Poetry Reading, organized by Martha Rhodes, publisher of Four Way Books. Martha read a selection of her own poetry, and we also heard wonderful works from Bruce Willard, Stephen Motika, and Thomaston's own Christopher Fahy.

We were awarded a grant called Public Libraries Advancing Community Engagement (PLACE) from the Califa Group that enabled us to partner with a representative from NOAA and host a public book discussion series for last fall about climate change and environmental literacy. These meetings, along with the horrifying flooding Houston, Puerto Rico, and Florida experienced during the hurricanes at the time, sparked discussion among the participants about Thomaston's emergency preparedness. The library now has guides to emergency preparedness and information from the Knox County Emergency Management Agency available at our circulation desk.

We also hosted several author talks, including:

- Local historian Renny Stackpole, discussing his book about his discovery of the family letters and business papers of the Thomaston Gillchrests in a trunk in his attic
- Maine mystery writers Lea Wait and Barbara Ross
- Kevin Mannix & Linda Rota, talking about their book Weathering Shame and their work to dispel the stigma of mental illness
- Alex Myers, Harvard graduate, Maine native, and author of Revolutionary, a historical fiction novel based on the life of Myers' ancestor Deborah Samson, who disguised herself as a man to serve in the Revolutionary War and became the first woman to be honorably discharged and receive a posthumous pension from the US military

**40 Days of Summer:** During the summer of 2017, TPL hosted the 4th annual 40 Days of Summer Program, which was funded outside of the library budget by grants, generous donations of money and in-kind supplies and sponsorships from community organizations and churches. The program engaged a staff led by Missy Harjula and Caroline Ward-Nesbit, kept busy by the great children who attended. A number of talented community members also donated their time to present compelling programming for the children. Because Thomaston qualifies as a community with over 50% of their children receiving either free or reduced meals when school is in session, 40 Days was able to receive free Federal summer food. This was enhanced by healthy snacks and produce from local farmers and grocery stores.

We fed, read-to, and entertained attending children five days a week for forty days. The program featured events and activities galore, including among others:

- Chewonki Foundation taught us about tide pools and the creatures that live in them
- Northern Stars Planetarium showed us our solar system
- Chris Dorman from Maine State Library taught us how to code and joust with robots
- Maine State Beekeepers demonstrated beekeeping basics

In addition, we offered science experiments, ran obstacle courses, built rockets and launchers, made slime, and even turned the library into Hogwarts, complete with Platform 9 3/4, Sorting Hat, Potions class, and a Whomping Willow.

We're busy planning 40 Days of Summer activities for Summer 2018, and are excited for more games, science, art, sports, animals, and of course books!

### ***Great Ongoing Programs in 2017-18:***

#### **Communi-TEA**

Held on the third Friday of every month, Communi-TEA is a popular recurring event and a great opportunity to gather and gossip with neighbors and friends, as well as enjoy wonderful food and tea. The library encourages attendees to help support the community by bringing a donation to the local food pantry as well.

#### **Friday Night Films**

Film guru Erika Pfander and the Friends of the Thomaston Public Library have continued to host their eclectic mix of classic, foreign, and award-winning films each Friday evening in Room 200 of the Academy building.

#### **Family Movie & Pizza Night - NEW!**

The library has begun hosting a monthly family-friendly film series on the second Monday of every month. Families can enjoy free pizza and new movies like *Despicable Me 3*, *Zootopia*, *Coco*, and 2017's live action version of *Beauty and the Beast* in the main room of the library. Open to all community members, and pajamas are welcome!

#### **Storytime**

The library hosts a weekly family storytime every Thursday at 11 am.

#### **Intergenerational Book Club:**

The IGBC meets the third Tuesday of each month to discuss a book all participants have read. This year's selection include fiction: [News of the World](#) by Paulette Giles, [The Light Between Oceans](#) by M. L. Stedman, [Anne of Green Gables](#) by L. M. Montgomery, and [Small Great Things](#) by Jodi Picoult - and non-fiction: [Daring to Drive](#) by Manal al-Sharif and [Unearthed: Love, Acceptance, and Other Lessons from an Abandoned Garden](#) by Alexandra Risen.

#### **Let's Talk About It**

A grant from the Maine Humanities Council has helped support an ongoing discussion series that takes on different topics. The subject of the February - June 2018 series is *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today?* and the group will be reading and discussing books such as Edith Wharton's [The Age of Innocence](#), Erik Larson's [The Devil in the White City](#), and [The Gilded Age](#), by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner. The group meets the second Tuesday of each month and enjoys light refreshments as well as lively discussion facilitated by local author, friend of the library and mentor Lee Heffner.

## Qi Gong

The library continues to sponsor Tim English's weekly Qi Gong classes held on Saturday mornings in the Thomaston Academy building's gym. Qi Gong, a Chinese practice, involves a combination of slow rhythmic movement and breathing that provides the dual benefits of exercise and meditation.

## School Break Events

During school breaks, we offer daily activities and events for children. For February 2018's break, we offered a week-long "Blood & Bones" program - fun body science activities built from a trunk provided by Cornerstones of Science - as well as slime-making and a showing of the new film Wonder.

## Community Displays

The library provides display space in the main room for any community member to sign up and use, and has often featured local artists and history.

## **Grants, Awards, Donations, and Contributions:**

The library is extremely grateful to all the following entities and individuals for their generous contributions and gifts to the library over the past year:

### **Friends of the Thomaston Public Library**

We are most fortunate to have the unflagging generosity of the Friends of the Thomaston Public Library. The library received over \$12,000 from them to support its operating budget as well as monies to enhance the scope of the community offerings including our Hallway Bookstore, Friday Night Films, and other expenses not covered by the regular budget. The Friends gifted both our gazebo and kitchenette and are actively involved in other library upgrades.

### **40 Days of Summer Donations/Grants**

- St. John the Baptist Church in Thomaston: \$500
- Rockland Kiwanis Club: \$500
- American Legion Post 1 in Rockland, various committees: \$50
- Many community members also donated money, time, in-kind support to the program which made the fourth year of this activities and lunch program successful

**The Rudman Grant** was awarded to the library and allowed us to add lots of titles focusing on Maine authors (both for adults and children) and award winners, large-print books and other books to fill out series.

**The PLACE Grant** was awarded to TPL as one of the public libraries chosen to advance community engagement in environmental literacy through climate change discussions. It consisted of professional development aiming to create a public program series that would develop strategies for the reality of climate change and severe weather events. We were paired with a NOAA representative from Gray, ME, and our successful three-part discussion series last fall resulted in a community conversation and awareness of emergency preparedness in the face of extreme weather events.

**A Maine Community Foundation Grant** was awarded to create a bookmobile home delivery service for library patrons, which we began offering last summer. Twice weekly, library staff will deliver books, audiobooks, or DVDs to homebound patrons in Thomaston and the surrounding community.

Finally, and as always, the library extends gratitude to all our patrons, supporters, Friends, board members, and volunteers, who have given untold hours to the library over the past year, doing everything from cleaning, painting, decorating, baking, running events, arranging displays, culling, shelving, setting up book sales, and keeping our plants vibrant and healthy. We extend a warm Thank You! To every one of you as well as to everyone who responded to the Friends of the Thomaston Public Library's Annual Appeal. You are the "community" in our community living room!