

THE OWL

Vol 25 Issue 1

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORFOLK LIBRARY

January 2019

“Rest, refreshment, and quickening”

“May the library be more and more a true home for rest, refreshment, and quickening,” wrote Sarah Porter to Norfolk Library founder Isabella Eldridge in 1899. The sister of Noah Porter, President of Yale College, Sarah studied privately with Yale College professors before establishing Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Connecticut, in 1843. Isabella and her sisters attended Miss Porter’s School and benefited from an unusually progressive curriculum that included the sciences as well as the humanities.

By 1899 Miss Porter was quite frail and wrote to regret that she could not attend the celebration of the Library’s tenth anniversary on March 6 to which Isabella had invited her. Over one hundred people received formal invitations to the event. A program of music and addresses at the Library was to be followed by a luncheon at the Eldridge residence and an afternoon performance of the popular song cycle “In a Persian Garden” at the Eldridge Gymnasium (now Norfolk’s Town Hall on Maple Avenue). Many of those who responded to the invitation, such as Miss Porter, wrote letters to Isabella, and those letters are part of the Library’s Special Collections. They reflect both Isabella’s wide range of acquaintances and the importance of the Library to the community at large.

Isabella Beecher Hooker, a Norfolk summer resident and leader of the woman suffrage movement, wrote:

Dear Miss Belle,

*(That’s the way I am addressed by intimate friends)—
I am surely going to Norfolk on Monday to return
in the afternoon because I have a big suffrage
convention on hand for Wednesday of next week—
Susan B. Anthony comes to me on Tuesday for the
whole week—I wish you could meet her. But my*

*present thought is that possibly the weather may not
be sunshiny and in that case I should not dare risk
taking cold—so I would like to send my daughter,
Mrs. Dr. Hooker [Mrs. Edward Hooker], and
perhaps Isabel in my place if you cordially approve.
I can’t find notice of the trains in the Courant this
morning but conclude there is an eight o’clock train
and that I go directly to the Library on arriving. Mr.
Hooker sends greetings but having a slight cold must
not go so far from home.*

I am faithfully yours,

Isabella Beecher Hooker

To commemorate the anniversary, Isabella printed a small book in a limited edition of 200 copies. Attractively bound in red cloth on board with tie ribbons and the Norfolk Library insignia in gilt lettering on the cover, the book contains the program of the day’s festivities, a facsimile of the invitation to the opening of the Library on March 6, 1889, a list of the Library’s builders and workers, photographs of the interior of the Library, and the poem *Sanctuary* written by Dr. Richard Burton for the occasion. She gave a copy to each guest and sent a copy to those who could not attend.

Frederick Wells Williams, a professor at Yale, responded:

*We are delighted and gratified beyond expression
by receiving the beautiful little memorial book on
the Library’s tenth anniversary. I wanted extremely
to accept your kind invitation to attend the
ceremonies—and so, I suppose, did everyone who
got one—but my grief at not being able to leave my
work for such a fine spree is assuaged by having such*

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EXHIBITION

Victor Leger

FEBRUARY EXHIBITION

Opening reception: Sunday, January 27, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

A resident of Winchester Center and member of the International Guild of Realism, Victor Leger studied painting at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and at the San Francisco Art Institute. His landscapes depict views of Litchfield County, the coast of Maine, and the Southwest. Leger has displayed his work in ten American museums in a show titled, “The New Reality, Realism in the 21st Century,” and his paintings are in private and public collections across the US and Canada. He teaches art at the secondary level in the Torrington School District, where he has been honored as Torrington’s Teacher of the Year for 2010 as well as Secondary Art Educator for the State of Connecticut in 2015.



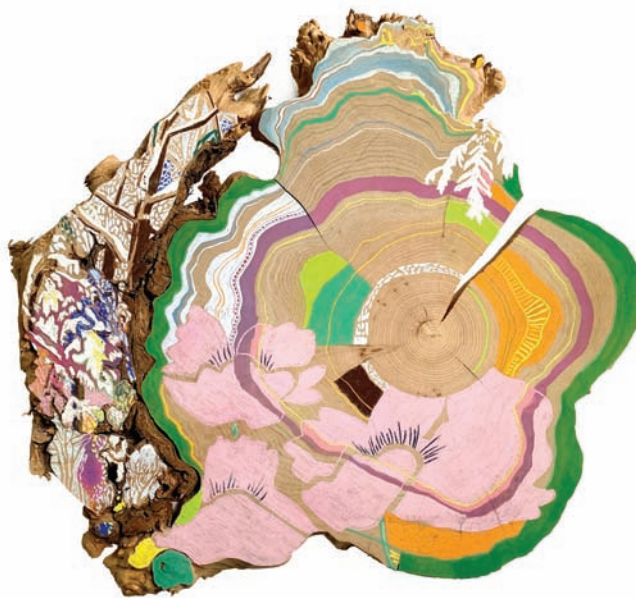
Hilary VanWright

MARCH EXHIBITION

Opening reception: Sunday, March 3, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Hilary VanWright’s paintings on wood burls are inspired by the natural beauty of the Berkshires and surrounding area. In her debut exhibit, *Pastels on Maple*, she honors the natural patterns and shape of the burl while adding geometric and organic designs as revealed to her by each piece. Hilary worked as an Art Director for *Vanity Fair* and *New York*

Magazine before moving her family to Norfolk in 2017. Along with the region’s stunning scenery, the overwhelming feeling of peace and sense of community in Norfolk inspire her every day. She received a B.F.A. from Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia.



Heather Scofield

APRIL EXHIBITION

Opening reception: Sunday, April 7, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Heather Scofield relocated to Kent, CT, from Cleveland, OH, in the early 1990s and is part of the Kent School community, where her husband teaches art. In her work she focuses on the sculptural shapes, lines, and varied colors of trees, from birches to sycamores. Her landscapes have been described as “kinetic and bold” and “vibrating with color and movement.” She has exhibited her paintings at the Kent Art Association, the Akin Museum in Pawling, NY, and the Kent Memorial Library Gallery.

Laura Gill

MAY EXHIBITION

Opening reception: Sunday, May 5, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Laura Gill is a writer and photographer from Norfolk, CT, whose work is embedded in narratives, both linear and fragmented, straightforward and skewed. The first photograph

EXHIBITION

she remembers taking (and liking) was of a vine growing up and around a stop sign on Maple Avenue in Norfolk. She still sees this vine in much of her current work, where she focuses on the relationship between nature and the structures we build to contain it, or let it in, as the case may be.



Lori Racicot

JUNE EXHIBITION

Opening reception: Sunday, June 2, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Simsbury-based artist Lori Racicot is drawn to color. Inspired by the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Abstract Expressionists, she applies multiple layers of color, sometimes straight from the paint tube, other times mixed into unique hues, forever changing and evolving. She writes: “Employing brushes, knives, fingers, spray bottles, cloth, and found objects, I utilize various techniques to spontaneously apply paint and make marks, creating unique and varied textures on a canvas. The multiple layers of paint hide, but at the same time expose, deeper layers of my personal vulnerability and raw emotions.” She has painted with individuals, including those with dementia, at local skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities to promote healing and relieve stress.

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a charming reminder of the Library and its owner.

The professor suggested that the color of the anniversary book—red—symbolized the fact that “in your useful collection, all the volumes are read.” Williams had been born in China, in the Portuguese colony of Macau, in 1857 to American missionary, diplomat, and scholar Samuel Wells Williams. The letterhead on his stationery is in Chinese characters.

In his letter to Isabella Eldridge, Howard Carter, headmaster of the Robbins School in Norfolk, reflected on the generosity of the Eldridge family: “We esteem it a rare privilege to have lived for ten years in the same community with people who could create and sustain such an institution as the Norfolk Library. You have indeed built a monument which will render your memory forever independent of granite or marble.” Carter’s son Howard Cordis Carter was born on March 6, 1889, the very day the Library opened, and on the tenth anniversary Isabella gave the ten-year old boy a silver watch to mark the occasion.

Isabella invited Hartford architect George Keller, who designed the Library, to speak at the event and sent him train tickets from Hartford to Norfolk, perhaps sensing he needed encouragement. In a letter to Isabella, he accepted with

pleasure her invitation to attend and thanked her for the tickets. However, he expressed some trepidation about speaking: “I hope you will not insist on having me ‘speak a piece’ for even the thought of it terrifies me. I would much rather design a new library.” A decade later, Keller would indeed produce a new design for Isabella, expanding the original Library to the north with the addition of the Great Hall.

At the tenth anniversary celebration, guests would have entered the Library under wooden fretwork which spelled out the words Silence is Golden (photo page 10). The fretwork was lost long ago, and the Library today is a busy, and sometimes noisy, place. But there will always be spaces where one can find quiet, and “rest”; programs that “refresh” us, and books that enlighten, animate, and “quicken” our minds.

This year marks the 130th anniversary of this remarkable building, and its beauty has only increased with age. With its high vaulted ceilings of polished wood and luminous stained glass windows, the Library beckons. Its inviting design makes us feel warm, comfortable, and secure. It is the enduring beauty of the architecture that creates a “sanctuary,” as Dr. Burton entitled his poem, and a place for “rest, refreshment, and quickening.”

—Ann Havemeyer, Director

SNAP | SHOTS

Thank you to everyone who made the Library Associates Auction Gala “An Evening in the Tropics” such a fun event and successful fundraiser, especially the outstanding Auction Committee, co-chaired by the amazing team of Sue Dooley and Tom Hlas; the entertaining auctioneers John Fernandez and Howard Estock; the generous donors of live and silent auction items; and all those who supported the auction. Your generosity helps underwrite the Library’s many free special events, films, concerts, book discussions, children’s programs, and more.



Sally Estock and Jan Rathbun organized the extraordinary array of tropical hors d'oeuvres, contributed by a fabulous group of foodies.



Auction guests Steve Getz and Peter Coffeen sport their festive attire.



Doreen and Michael Kelly survey the enticing display of silent auction items.

The Christmas tree was magical this year, decorated with white doves made by children at the Botelle School.



The Great Hall was filled to capacity at the Annual Carol Sing.



Photo by Bruce Frisch

Children's Room Renovation

The Children's Room is being given a facelift this winter! The walls and ceiling will be painted; a new rug, light fixture, and child-friendly sink installed; shelves reconfigured; and cabinetry built to provide seating for adults and storage space for children's toys and apparel.

Children engage with books through programs and activities that promote early literacy and make stories come to life. A dedicated children's space is a vital part of a library. It is a place to meet, play, and communicate. An inviting atmosphere encourages families to use this resource, and a wide range of content equips children with lifelong learning and literacy skills.

Content is, of course, books, CDs, and DVDs, but also non-traditional materials, such as our constructive "maker space" tools (aka toys). Play is important in the lives of young children. Through play, they learn about their world and acquire the necessary skills for critical thinking and problem solving. While we incorporate periods of dramatic and constructive play into our story time programs, we hope that built-in seating for adults and play-based stations will encourage multigenerational use of the Children's Room and enhance the opportunity for friends and family members of all ages, from infant to elderly, to read, discover, and play together.

As a result of positive library experiences, our youngest library patrons will remain library users throughout their lives.

Due to the generosity of the Library Associates and their successful fundraising activities, including the book sale and auction, they have contributed a major gift toward the cost of this important project. We are very grateful for their support!

Corner Club

Eileen Fitzgibbons, Head of Youth Services, schedules special programs on select Wednesdays during the school year. Children will need a note to get off the school bus at the Library. Mark your calendars for these upcoming programs:

- **January 30** — Oompapossom Puppeteer Kim Van Aelst will lead a Moving Puppet Workshop (limit 20 students).
- **February 13** — Make a valentine for your special person.

- **February 27** — "Radical Raptors" (a barred owl and a hawk) visit the Library with the White Memorial Conservation.
- **March 13** — Monica Peterson tells stories about fairies and leprechauns.
- **March 20** — World Day of Puppetry with national award winning puppeteer Deborah Costine



African drum workshop

Pageturners Book Club

Miss Eileen's Pageturners Book Club for 5th and 6th graders is more than just a discussion group. If the book takes place in 1945 England, she serves tea and scones. If it's about a boy lost in the woods with only his hatchet, she builds a fire to sit around during the discussion. If the book takes place in Mexico, the children help cook a Mexican meal. The group meets once a month after school and is limited to about 12 children. Each receives a copy of the book to keep and has three weeks or so to read it. This fall the Pageturners devoured the Newbery Honor novel *Wolf Hollow* by Lauren Wolk, and exchanged ideas and challenging questions about the characters while wolfing down pancakes in Miss Eileen's kitchen. Next up is National Book Award Finalist *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds, an explosive story about a fast and fiery group of kids who have a shot at the Junior Olympics. This will be followed by another Newbery Honor book, *El Deafo* by Cece Bell, a funny, perceptive graphic memoir about growing up deaf. Pageturners still has a few openings so please get in touch with Miss Eileen at efitzgibbons@biblio.org if you would like to join.

PROGRAMS | PERFORMANCES

All programs at the Norfolk Library are free. Please visit our website www.norfolklibrary.org and sign up for our bi-weekly Night Owl e-newsletter for up-to-date information.

FILMS

Thursday Night Film Series @ 7:00 p.m.

January 17 – *Waking Ned Devine* (1998)

A winning lottery ticket transforms the lives of the inhabitants of a rural Irish village in this hilarious film, just the ticket for the winter doldrums!

February 21 – *The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!* (1966)

When a Soviet submarine gets stuck on a sandbar off the coast of New England, villagers go into a tizzy in this comedy with Alan Arkin and Carl Reiner.

March 21 – *The Commitments* (1991)

Based on the novel by Roddy Doyle, the film tells the story of a music fanatic who assembles a group of working class youths to form a soul band to fill the musical void in Dublin. The film has gained cult status and is regarded as one of the best Irish films ever made, perfect for Irish-American Heritage Month.

April 25 – *Time for Ilhan* (2018)

On November 8, 2016, a young, hijab-wearing mother-of-three named Ilhan Omar made history, becoming the first Somali Muslim person to be elected to state office in America. This documentary film intimately chronicles her hard-fought campaign for State Representative in Minnesota's Senate District 60B, home to the nation's largest Somali community. A fresh take on the old story of the American Dream, the film offers an inspiring, stereotype-



busting portrait of a rising political star as she begins a bold and powerful political career. This past November Ilhan Omar was elected to serve the people of Minnesota's fifth congressional district, becoming the first Somali American elected to the United States Congress.

United Skates (2018)

Date and Time, TBA

Recently released in New York and Los Angeles and shortlisted by the International Documentary Association's award for top feature in 2018, the film depicts black roller skating culture "with both elegiac and euphoric beauty" (*The New York Times*), while giving voice to dozens of skaters who tried to skate at unfriendly establishments, facing discrimination, police searches, and arbitrary rules. Replete with archival footage, the film was edited by Katharine Garrison, daughter of the late Lloyd Garrison.

Silent Film Classics with Donald Sosin and Joanna Seaton

Friday, May 10, 7:00 p.m.

Donald Sosin and Joanna Seaton recreate the silent film era, when musicians accompanied films with classical and popular music on piano and created sound effects such as crashes, thunder, or horses galloping.

- *Upstream* is a delightful John Ford comedy about actors in a boarding house.
- *The Kid Brother* with Harold Lloyd. A sheriff's timid son has a chance to prove himself when a medicine show run by con artists comes into town.
- *Safety Last!* with Harold Lloyd. The famous race up the side of a building and hanging from a clock to win a prize and get the girl.

SPEAKERS

Ann Havemeyer, *The Devil in the White City: Kendall, Edison, Coffin, and Tesla at the World's Fair*

Norfolk Historical Society Annual Meeting (all welcome)
Saturday, January 5, 2:00 p.m.

PROGRAMS | PERFORMANCES

The White City is Chicago in 1893, site of the World's Columbian Exposition, organized to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage to America. The devil, for the purpose of this slide talk, is electricity, and the players are Norfolk photographer Marie Kendall, Thomas Edison, Charles Albert Coffin, and Nikola Tesla. Travel back in time to find out how the lives of these four people intersected at the World's Fair.

A Fireside Chat with Officer Clemmons

Saturday, February 2, 5:00 p.m.

We celebrate Black History month with a visit from Francois Clemmons, singer, storyteller, and, as Officer Clemmons on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, one of the first African-Americans with a recurring role on a children's television series. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Clemmons had a close relationship with Rogers, whom he called a surrogate father. Although the show made a powerful statement when the two of them shared a footbath during an episode that aired in 1969 at the height of desegregation, Clemmons was also asked to keep quiet about his identity as a gay man. Clemmons recently retired as artist-in-residence at Middlebury College and director of its Martin Luther King Spiritual Choir. He will be introduced by his close friend and Norfolk native, Kate Gridley.



Michael Gaige, *Wolf Trees: History, Ecology, Conservation*

Norfolk Land Trust Annual Meeting (all welcome)

Saturday, February 23, 4:00 p.m.

In the New England woods stand thousands of old abandoned-pasture trees, legacies of our regional history and ecology. Commonly called wolf trees, the wide-spreading sentinels of the forest have a history and ecology all their own. In this talk, Michael Gaige will journey from

the wolf tree's origins in Europe, to the American beginnings in Thoreau's day, to the ecological role these trees play in contemporary forests.

Peter Christoph, *Discover the Owls of New England*

Saturday, April 6, 4:00 p.m.

In this captivating presentation, wildlife photographer Peter Christoph will deliver stunning photographs of his favorite owls combined with stories that entertain, educate, and inspire. You'll learn the secrets Peter uses to find and photograph these owls in their natural habitat. Eight species of expected owls in New England include the Great Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech Owls, all year-round residents and fairly easy to spot; Long-eared, Short-eared, and Snowy Owls, winter migrants that breed far north of us; Northern Saw-whet Owls, which breed in New England but are quite small and rarely seen; and Barn Owls, the toughest of all to find. He'll wrap up his slide talk with beautiful images of a vagrant migrant, a rare visitor called the Great Gray Owl.

GREAT MOUNTAIN FOREST SERIES

Adam Whelchel, *Charting a Path for Conservation in the 21st Century*

Saturday, January 12, 4:00 p.m.

Melanie Choukas-Bradley, *The Joy of Forest Bathing: Reconnect with Wild Places & Rejuvenate Your Life*

Saturday, February 9, 4:00 p.m.

Hans Carlson, *Walking Toward Moosal-amoo: A Natural History of Terra Nullius*

Saturday, March 2, 4:00 p.m.

CONCERTS

Hilda Huang, Pianist

Saturday, January 19, 4:00 p.m.

Pianist Hilda Huang came to international attention after being awarded first prize in the 2014 Leipzig International

PROGRAMS | PERFORMANCES

Bach Competition. The only American to have received this prize in the history of the competition, she also has the singular distinction of being awarded the top prizes at both the Würzburg and Tureck International Bach Competitions. Her performances of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven have been hailed for achieving “philosophical depths” (*Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*) and for possessing an “alluring extroversion” (*New York Concert Review*). She has been praised for a “mind that can multi-task and ears that can... ‘multi-listen’” (*San Francisco Examiner*). A graduate of Yale College, Hilda Huang studies with Melvin Chen at the Yale School of Music, where she now pursues a Master of Music. She will perform the Beethoven Diabelli Variations, Op. 120.

Berkshire Bateria’s Bossa Triba

Saturday, February 16, 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate the Carnival season at the Library! Twelve musicians from the Berkshire Bateria Escola De Samba, a unique musical ensemble, will perform a wide variety of music from Brazil, including hot samba rhythms and cool bossa nova jazz, with keyboard, bass, vocals, horns, drums, and percussion.

Music Among Friends

Saturday, February 23, 2:00 p.m.

Jim Nelson of the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival returns to Norfolk with a program featuring musicians from the Yale School of Music. Designed to be fun and engaging, the program is an opportunity for both the experienced concertgoer and the classical music novice to enjoy an informal discussion of chamber music among friends, old and new. Members of the audience are encouraged to participate with questions and comments. No background in music is necessary—all you need is an active curiosity.

St. Patrick’s Concert: The Murphy Beds & Friends

Saturday, March 16, 6:00 p.m.

The Norfolk Library’s celebration of St. Patrick’s Day has become an annual tradition for fans of the Emerald Isle. Once again we will host a lively evening of Irish music and

fare as we welcome the Murphy Beds & Friends in a program of traditional and original Irish folk songs with close harmonies and deft instrumental arrangements of bouzouki, guitar, mandolin, flute, and fiddle. Guitarist Eamon O’ Leary, a native of Dublin, and Jefferson Hamer on bouzouki and mandolin will be joined by flutist and singer-songwriter Nuala Kennedy, a native of Dundalk and recognized by the *Irish Times* as “an exceptional interpreter of the tradition,” and four-time all Ireland fiddle champion Dylan Foley, called “one of the finest fiddlers in America...his feel and tone is breathtaking.” (*The Irish Echo*)

Josephine County Band

Thursday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.

Josephine County combines the talents of four powerful traditional musicians into one exceptional musical experience ranging from the United States to Ireland and back: award-winning fiddler and singer Erica Brown; songwriter and multi-instrumentalist (guitar, mandolin, and banjo) Matt Shipman; traditional Irish flute player and singer Hanz Araki; and singer Colleen Raney who brings warmth and authenticity to music from Ireland, Appalachia, Scotland, and beyond. Josephine County has recently released its first album, titled *East to the West*, which features gorgeous four part harmonies, dynamic instrumentals, and a strong commitment to the traditions that brought them together from each of their disciplines.



PROGRAMS | PERFORMANCES

Bernstein & Friends on Broadway

Sunday, May 19, 5:00 p.m.

Natasha Ulyanovsky, pianist, will accompany soprano Monica Krajewska and baritone Patrick Buckley in a performance of solos and duets from beloved Broadway musicals, such as *West Side Story*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, *Candide*, *South Pacific*, and *Can-Can*, along with songs by Gershwin and Sondheim.

POETRY READINGS

Ben Luxon and Charles Fidler, *American Poets Who Broke the Mold*

Sunday, February 10, 4:00 p.m.

Benjamin Luxon C.B.E. and Charles Fidler curate a smorgasbord of iconoclasts including Wallace Stevens, Vachel Lindsay, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Robinson Jeffers, Marianne Moore, and T. S. Eliot.

Lindsay Bernal, *What It Doesn't Have To Do With*

Sunday, April 28, 4:00 p.m.

A graduate of the University of Virginia, Lindsay Bernal holds an M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of Maryland, where she has coordinated the Creative Writing Program and the Writers Here and Now reading series for over a decade. Her first collection of poems, *What It Doesn't Have To Do With* (2018), won the 2017 National Poetry Series competition. The recipient of a scholarship from the Bread Loaf Writers Conference and a fellowship from the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Memorial Fund, Lindsay divides her

time between Front Royal, VA, and Washington, DC, and is a member of the Allyn family of Canaan and Norfolk.

FIELD TRIP

Naumkeag, Stockbridge, MA

Friday, June 7, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Experience Gilded Age style and splendor on our annual library field trip, this year to Naumkeag, the National Historic Landmark summer retreat for three generations of the Choate family. With its gracious shingle-style, 44-room “cottage,” designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, and its magnificent gardens and panoramic views of Monument Mountain, Naumkeag is a quintessential late 19th century country estate. We will have a private group tour of the house and walk through the gardens, created by Joseph Choate’s daughter, Mabel, and Fletcher Steele over 30 years. Their playful, inventive spirit is everywhere evident in the Afternoon Garden, Tree Peony Terrace, Rose Garden, Evergreen Garden, and Chinese Garden.



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NORFOLK LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

The Associates is a group of dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents to support the Library. They organize monthly art exhibitions and raise funds for the cultural programs offered by the Library. The group welcomes new members. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. in the Great Hall.

Tom Hlas, *President* David Davis, *Secretary*
Jan Rathbun, *Vice-President* Paul Madore, *Treasurer*

THE OWL

The Norfolk Library
9 Greenwoods Road East
Post Office Box 605
Norfolk, Connecticut 06058

www.norfolklibrary.org
ph. 860 542-5075

Monday	10:00 am	–	7:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Wednesday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am	–	7:00 pm
Friday	10:00 am	–	5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am	–	2:00 pm
Sunday	1:00 pm	–	4:00 pm

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In 1889, one entered the Library under decorative wooden fretwork, which spelled out the words Silence is Golden.