



THE OWL

WINTER/SPRING 2022

Survival in the Arctic

Although we do not anticipate needing a guide for surviving arctic conditions here in the Icebox of Connecticut, there is a Norfolk connection to the man who penned *The Airman's Arctic Survival Guide: Diagrams and Lectures for the Training of Survival Techniques in the Arctic and North*.

Belmore Browne (1880–1954), artist, explorer, and mountaineer, prepared 38 hand-drawn illustrations for the training of survival techniques in northern climates to USAAF and USAF airmen during World War II and the Korean War. The illustrations included demonstrations of shelters, emergency tools and equipment, fire building, and wilderness travel. They were designed to accompany Belmore's training lectures as Air Force instructor in the high

mountains of Colorado. They were also distributed as posters to airbases throughout Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. As a result, Belmore taught many thousands of men the simple but essential things necessary for wilderness survival.

With a lifetime of experience in the wilderness of Alaska and the Canadian Rockies, Belmore was eminently qualified for the task of training airmen, rescue personnel, and mountain troops for survival in northern and winter conditions. He learned his wilderness skills from Native guides in Alaska, which he first visited with his family when he was eight years old.

Belmore was born in Tompkinsville, Staten Island, to George and Susan Browne. As a broker, importer, and member of the New York Stock Exchange, George

Browne earned a significant fortune that gave him the means to pursue his interests; painting and architecture. In 1883, he and his family relocated to Europe, traveling around France, Italy, and Switzerland. They returned to the United States five years later and settled in the Pacific Northwest. George used his investments to help found the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company, and the children were sent to private schools in New England.

At age eighteen, Belmore decided to pursue a career in art. He received formal training at the New York School of Art and the Académie Julian in Paris. A skilled outdoorsman, Belmore combined his work as an artist with his passion for the wilderness. He joined several expeditions in the unexplored areas of the Pacific Northwest and was part of a group that made the first ascent of Washington's Mount Olympus. In 1902, he participated in Andrew J. Stone's mammal-collecting expeditions in Alaska for the American Museum of Natural History, putting his artistic skills to use in making accurate anatomical drawings of different animals. In a painting that now hangs in the Smithsonian Institute, he commemorated a ride he took down Alaska's Stikine River with Chief Shakes of the Tlingit Indian tribe in his keahyant (war canoe). The painting is pictured at left.

Belmore made three attempts to summit Mount McKinley, now Denali, in 1906, 1910, and 1912, which he described in *The Conquest of Mount McKinley* (first published in 1913). The 1912 expedition
continued on page 6



Belmore Browne, *The Chief's Canoe*, 1926, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Bequest of Henry Ward Ranger through the National Academy of Design.



This past year we have welcomed many new friends to the Library, as the pandemic has changed where and how people live and work. In response, we have increased our library services and explored new ways to offer innovative programs and connect with people near and far, as you will see in this issue of *The Owl*. Yet, in spite of the changes brought on by the pandemic, what remains constant is the warm sense of community we feel as we gather once again in our beautiful historic building.

We are thrilled that the Associates Annual Book Sale returned with great success this summer as well as the monthly art receptions, albeit with masks. We were honored to host the successful Haystack Book Talks Festival in October, and we are looking forward to hosting more in-house programs, such as the popular Great Mountain Forest series, as well as concerts and films this winter and spring in our Great Hall.

The Norfolk Library is indeed a very special place, and the staff and I hope to see you soon!

—Ann Havemeyer

Monthly Art Exhibits Have Resumed!

With thanks to Norfolk Artists & Friends for keeping our library walls filled with beautiful art over the last year, we are excited to be back to solo shows with art opening receptions the first Sunday of the month. Paintings, drawings, and sculpture by Gil Eisner of Southfield opened the new season in September, including intricate wood carvings and constructions. October brought the landscape paintings of Alicia Mordenti of Washington, CT. In November the Rev. Dr. Shelley Best, artist, author, and the senior pastor of Redeemer's AME Zion Church in Plainville, CT, exhibited her art, inspired by meditation, prayer, and community change making. Experimenting with new materials and using familiar ones in ways that invite a closer look, Tom Hlas presented "Potpourri" in December.



The Associates is a group of dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents to support the Library. They organize monthly art exhibits and raise funds for the free cultural programs offered by the Library. The group welcomes new members. Meetings are now held in the Library the first Tuesday of the month at noon. Please join us!

Jack Dillon, *President*

Jennifer Almquist, *Vice-President*

Louise Davis, *Secretary*

Paul Madore, *Treasurer*

Weathervanes by John Garret Thew

For the month of January, the Library will feature a private collection of copper weathervanes by John Garret Thew. John learned the essentials of good art from his father, Robert Garret Thew: good workmanship coupled with good design. "Make your creations so well, no one can do better" was Robert's credo. John took over the business after his father's death in 1964, crafting beautiful copper weathervanes. Please join us for a reception for John on Sunday, January 9, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., hosted by the Norfolk Historical Society.

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

February – Angus Mudge

March – Tina Puckett

April – John Johnson

May – Suzan Scott

June – Lauren Packard



In keeping with a beloved tradition, each child at Botelle School made a colorful paper ornament for the library Christmas tree. Many thanks to art teacher Shana Bazelmans for designing this project and decorating the tree.



Spiderman and friends pat an African Sulcata Tortoise as a group of rescued exotic animals made an appearance for our summer reading program.



The Book Sale "Triumvirate" —Liz Hilpman, Trish Deans & Bridget Taylor, with director Ann Havemeyer; masked cashiers Nancy Kriegel and Alyson Thomson; a young shopper

Our Fall Festival featured Miss Eileen reading on the train, hayrides with John Auclair, and painting pumpkins with Hilary VanWright.



Award-winning author Robert Jones, Jr. gave the Brendan Gill lecture at the Haystack Book Talks Festival.

Zooming “At Home and Abroad”

With many successful programs and delighted patrons, our Zoom programming continues to serve as a silver lining to the pandemic. This summer, we launched a series of virtual artist studio tours. Featured artists were Tom Hlas, Molly Zuckerman-Hartung, Hilary VanWright, and Fox Hysen. We received such a positive response that the series will continue in the winter/spring. If you missed any of the tours, no need to fret – they’re all available on the Norfolk Library’s YouTube channel.

Also popular were our two travel programs. First, Dr. Richard Benefield, Emeritus Professor of Geography at Central Connecticut State University, took us around the world in 80 gardens. Some of us are still talking about the Singapore Airport garden! Next, we packed our virtual bags to visit national parks with John Bunker, who has visited 25 national parks in the last two decades. His advice? Book early – some national park lodges are already completely booked for 2022 – and visit in the “shoulder” season to minimize crowds.

Even though our Tale of Five Norfolks program wasn’t a travel program, it did take us all over the world as staff from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Virginia, and England came together to compare our Norfolks. We had fun listening to each librarian give very different answers to the same question. *Who is/was the most famous person in your town?* For Norfolk, UK, it was Thomas Paine. For Norfolk, Nebraska, Johnny Carson! And for us here in Norfolk, CT, library director Ann Havemeyer chose Mark Twain. Although he was not a resident, his daughter Clara did live here for two summers, and her father came to visit. How about *What is special to your town?* Who knew that Hallmark Cards began as a wholesale postcard business founded by the Hall brothers in Norfolk, Nebraska! There were many other surprises, so make sure to watch the replay on our YouTube channel.

We were thrilled to host book club leader extraordinaire Mark Scarbrough with editor Genevieve Gagne-Hawes as the two discussed Mark’s memoir, *Bookmarked: How the Great Works of Western Literature F*cked Up My Life*. Mark and Genevieve took us on a deep dive into his writing process and the harrowing work of memoir writing. One piece of advice

Mark received from his editor was to try writing naked as a way to make himself more vulnerable to his material. Mark admitted he reluctantly took this advice, spent time writing naked, and actually enjoyed it. Although we do wholeheartedly support the writing process, we kindly ask patrons not to test this advice while at the Library.

We also welcomed back Dr. Leonard Marcus, who was the keynote speaker for *What’s on Your Bookshelf? A Celebration of Children’s Literature*. His address, *Around the (Picture Book) World in 80 Stories*, was in fact broadcast around the world. We

received a thank you email from a librarian in Australia!

Our December programs included lots of celebrations. We celebrated storytelling with Moth GrandSLAM champion Terry Wolfisch Cole and learned the difference between stories and anecdotes and the five beats for an engaging story. In January we have scheduled our own storytelling program. Anyone who wants to share a favorite story will get to do so in front of an attentive Zoom audience. We also celebrated America’s favorite holiday movie with a screening of *It’s a Wonderful Life*, followed by a film discussion with Brian

Rose, Communication and Media Studies Professor Emeritus at Fordham University. The 117th anniversary of the Wright brothers’ first flight was celebrated with a look at Connecticut’s own aviation history presented by John Cilio.

In-house programming saw a few new series. We offered Reclaim Your Life: A Summer Program of Change. The group read and discussed *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* by James Clear. Inspired by this, one participant created a writing habit that has resulted to date in almost 30,000 words of a novel written on her phone.

Several of the Reclaim Your Life participants wanted to continue a discussion series, so we launched a bi-weekly TED Talks group. Participants watched an assigned TED Talks video and then zoomed together to discuss it. So far, we’ve watched videos featuring Oliver Burkeman on how to stop fighting with time, Nigel Marsh on achieving work/life balance, and Louie Schwartzberg on nature, beauty, and gratitude. Although we have plenty of readers in the group, everyone agreed that it’s a nice



Wi-Fi Hotspots, Laptops, and iPads

This past summer, the Norfolk Library received a \$15,200 grant from the Institute for Museum & Library Services (IMLS). These funds were part of the American Rescue Plan Act's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus rescue package designed to facilitate the United States' recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. IMLS established high priority spending categories for these grant funds that would enable libraries to safely respond to the pandemic while meeting the needs of their communities.

The Norfolk Library earmarked grant funds for a thorough cleaning of the Library and for equipment that would support digital inclusion for underserved patrons in Norfolk, who may rely on the Library to access technology. As a result, the Library now has four T-Mobile Wi-Fi hotspots, four new HP laptops, and four iPads.

The Wi-Fi hotspots are designed to provide residents with access to the Internet. As long as a house is near a cell tower, these devices can simply be plugged in to establish an internet connection. In addition, residents with low levels of internet speed will be able to boost their access during times when a faster, more reliable internet speed is necessary for their educational and professional endeavors.

In 2018-2019, the Library's most recent fiscal year unaffected by the pandemic, 847 patrons used our desktop computers for a total of 684 hours of internet use. The four new HP laptops (three for in-library use and one to check out) and four iPads (two for in-library use and two to check out) will allow more patrons to have access to a computer and the Internet. Any adult with a valid Norfolk Library card is welcome to use or checkout our newly-acquired mobile devices.



Zooming continued

change to have a short video as the "required assignment" for the meetings. Please feel free to register for this series at any time.

The Dewey Delights book group has also evolved. Instead of focusing on non-fiction, the group now discusses genre-specific books each month. In November, participants shared their favorite romances. These books included *Less* by Andrew Sean Greer and *One Last Stop* by Casey McQuiston. If you would like to join the Great Reads discussion group, which meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month, check our website for the next meeting. As with all our programs, we'd love to have you join us!

—Kelly Kandra Hughes

We've scheduled lots of great virtual programs, presented just for us, this winter!

Check out our website for a complete list.

Here are a few you won't want to miss:

January 13 Thomas Jefferson and Slavery at Monticello with historian Dianne Pierce

January 16 Louisine Havemeyer and the Suffrage Torch with library director Ann Havemeyer

January 20 Underground Manhattan: The History of the NY Subway System with NYC tour guide Gary Dennis

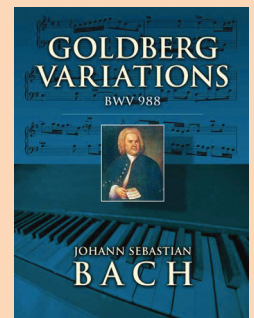
February 3 Winter Gardens with designer and gardener Jana Milbocker

February 19 Connecticut's African American Heroines with the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame

The Goldberg Variations in Conversation

As world-renowned pianist Alexandre Tharaud says, one does not merely play the Goldberg variations; one "goes

on a voyage" with them. The Goldbergs are one of Bach's mature works, a full statement of his musical art and theory in a compact but incredibly emotional package. This winter, get ready to be immersed in some of the finest keyboard music written. Join pianist Anchie Donn and lecturer Mark Scarbrough virtually as they engage in six weeks of conversation about this monumental keyboard work. Sessions will be a fusion of Mark's historical and cultural lectures and Professor Donn's performance of six of the variations per week. The program will run via Zoom on Wednesdays from 10:00-11:30 a.m. January 19 to February 23. To find out more and to register, please visit www.norfolklibrary.org or call 860-542-5075.



Survival in Arctic from page 1

was by dog-sled in the dead of winter from Seward on the coast 400 miles to the north side of Mount McKinley. The men made it to within 300 yards of the summit when snowstorms forced them to retreat.

In 1913, Belmore returned east to marry Agnes Sibley of Philadelphia, and the couple settled in New York where their children Evelyn and George were born. After service in the First World War as captain in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, Belmore and the family moved to Banff, where he immersed himself in his art. Agnes later recalled that this was the most productive period of his artistic career. He painted outdoors, even in winter, when he often needed to wear multiple pairs of socks on his hands “with the brushes pulled through so that he could move his fingers easily within the socks” (Ordeman and Schreiber, *George and Belmore Browne: Artists of the North American Wilderness*, 2004). His best-known paintings show scenes of Alaska, the Northwest, and the Canadian Rockies.

NORFOLK LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rita Freedman, *President*
Michael Selleck, *Vice-President*
Susannah Wood, *Secretary*
Steve Getz, *Treasurer*
Adam Heller
Coleen Hellerman
Ruth Melville
Janice Nimura

LIBRARY STAFF

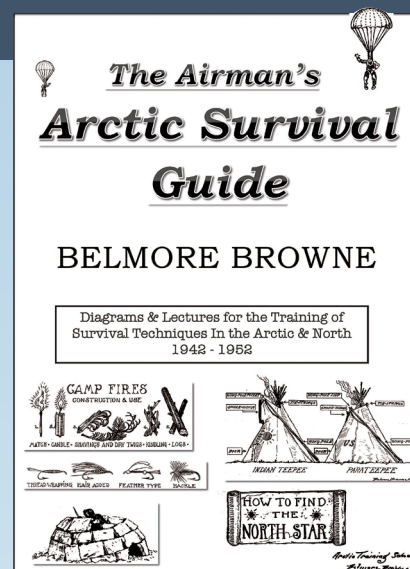
Ann Havemeyer, *Director*
MaryAnn Anderson
Leslie Battis
Eileen Fitzgibbons
Laurie Foulke-Green
Kelly Kandra Hughes
Chris Keyes

Belmore eventually began to spend winters in California with his family and was named director of the Santa Barbara School of Fine Arts in 1930. Just before World War II, he was commissioned to paint diorama backgrounds for big-game exhibits in the North American Hall of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. His last diorama, painted just before his death in 1954, was for a new black bear exhibit at the Museum of Science in Boston.

George Browne followed in his father's footsteps. Belmore had encouraged his son's love of the wilderness and taught him how to paint, even though George's vision was limited because of a childhood injury to his left eye. On summer camping excursions with his family, and during winter days in northern California, George spent much of his time sketching. At age fifteen, with the support of his parents, he quit school, began an apprenticeship under his father, and then enrolled in the California School of Fine Arts. Belmore and George were inseparable companions on the trail in the Canadian Rockies, always handling their own pack train and camping in many upland valleys where they painted well into the fall each year.

In 1947, after his discharge from the army, George reached the 20,320-foot summit of Mount McKinley as part of a Bradford Washburn-led scientific expedition. What is remarkable about this climb is that he created 23 oil paintings along the way. In addition to his climbing gear and food, he carried canvases, brushes, paint, and an easel. As the group ascended the mountain, he painted during periods of good weather, only abandoning his task when, at 11,000 feet with temperatures at 20-below zero, his paint froze. He carried the painted canvases in a plywood box designed so the wet paintings wouldn't smear in transit.

One year later, in 1948, George



married San Francisco-native Isabel (Tibby) McGregor, and the couple moved to Seebe, Alberta. They had two children, Isabel (Busy) and Belmore. As his work gained recognition, George and the family moved to Norfolk, where family friend and fellow sportsman Frederick K. Barbour lived. This brought him closer to the hub of the sporting art industry. Through the 1950s, he had several one-man shows and sold over 200 paintings at art galleries in North America and Canada, emerging in the art world as a gifted painter particularly for his portrayals of waterfowl and upland game birds.

Tragically, George was killed in 1958 at a weekend gathering in the Adirondack Mountains of New York State. An acquaintance unfamiliar with firearms accidentally discharged a bullet from his gun, which hit George in the neck. He was just 40 years old.

Tibby remained in Norfolk and later married Hugh Robinson. She was devoted to the Library and served on the Board of Trustees, masterminding the Library's Second Century Support campaign in the 1980s and overseeing the construction of the Children's Room in 1985.

Two of George Browne's paintings are in the Library collection, and on display this month. *The Airman's Arctic Survival Guide* was published in book form in 2014, assembled by Isabel Browne Driscoll, granddaughter of Belmore, and Peter Driscoll from various archival collections.

—Ann Havemeyer

(Who) Eats Shoots and Leaves?

In a foray through the Library's non-fiction collection, I made some interesting finds. The 400s (language) include books about English grammar and style, which I appreciate as an editor. A particular favorite is *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. The title of the book shows how important a comma can be. There's an old joke about bad punctuation. Who eats shoots and leaves? A panda, of course. But insert a comma after "Eats", and that panda *eats* a sandwich in a cafe, *shoots* a gun in the air and *leaves*.

If instruction in proper grammar doesn't entice you, how about learning a new language? In addition to the usual French, Italian, and Spanish books, we have Latin, Gaelic, Afrikaans, and Egyptian Hieroglyphics.

The 800s (literature) have some of the oldest books in the circulating collection. As I was inventorying these books, I found a copy of Helen Keller's *The Song of the Stone Wall* (1910). This poem is about a stone wall in New England that has witnessed the history of the nation. I like the imagery of Keller reading the stone wall as she would a book – with her hands. This book is now in our Rare Book Room.

The oldest book I've found so far was in Biographies. *The Mountain Wild Flower* by Charles Lester (1838) is a biography of Mary Ann Bise, who lived near the Green River in New York state just northwest of Great Barrington, and died at the age of twenty-three. Listed in the first catalogue of the Norfolk Library (1907), the book has been in our stacks for over 100 years. But it has not been forgotten. Right after I found it, we received an inter-library loan request for the book. Because of its age, we chose not to circulate it.

Perusing biographies, I was at first shocked to find a copy of *Mein Kampf* by

Adolf Hitler. *Mein Kampf* is one of the most disputed books in history and there it was, on our shelf. I wondered why we would have a copy of such a hateful book. The answer to my question was on the inside cover. Our early translation of *Mein Kampf* was published so that people could know what Hitler was like. The editors wrote that *Mein Kampf* "is probably the best written evidence of the character, the mind, and the spirit of Adolf Hitler and his government."

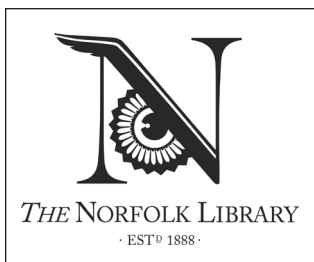
We have the Reynal & Hitchcock translation published in 1939 by Harcourt, Brace with a license from Houghton Mifflin. Our book is from the first US printing. This copy has many annotations that explain German history to an American reader and that refute the racist theories in Hitler's book. The editors wrote that "truth, the accurate truth, is the only argument which in the long run prevails."

Hitler never received royalties from the sale of the Reynal & Hitchcock translation. In 1939, citing the Trading with the Enemy Act, the American government seized all profits and rights to *Mein Kampf* in the US. Royalties were paid into the War Claims Fund, which benefited American POWs and displaced Jews.

In 1979, Houghton Mifflin bought back the rights from the US government. A report in 2000 publicized that the company had made hundreds of thousands of dollars from sales of *Mein Kampf*. Houghton Mifflin responded by donating subsequent royalties to Jewish charities (most of which did not want the money). Houghton Mifflin now donates royalties to Holocaust education and a fund for aging Holocaust survivors.

More Dewey discoveries to come!

—Leslie Battis



NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WINSTED, CT
PERMIT NO. 11

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

HOURS

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

Local Postal Customer



George Browne, *Autumn Afternoon—Pintails*, Private Collection.