

THE OWL

SUMMER/FALL 2023

The Summer Colony

Among the Norfolk Library's collection of rare books and historic artifacts is a complete set of the *Norfolk Chimes*, a glossy magazine published weekly from the end of June to Labor Day during the summer seasons of 1896 to 1900. Despite the magazine's short run, it presents a fascinating glimpse into the life of Norfolk's summer colony at that time. A burgeoning resort, Norfolk attracted many visitors, and each issue of the *Chimes* included a list of the new arrivals.

Norfolk's identity as an attractive resort was carefully marketed in the *Chimes*. The editors observed that it was a certain "class of citizens" that was responsible for Norfolk's genteel character as a resort: "They are people of education and refinement, professional and literary men, who give a distinct and high character to the town, and will continue to do so unless by some unhappy chance Norfolk should lose this valuable class of citizens, and throw itself into the arms of the Philistines, whose ambition is to make it a 'picnic resort' and a 'city of hotels,' to change the good old Anglo-Saxon word 'road' into 'boulevard,' and commit all the atrocities which would turn our fair village into an inland Atlantic City."

Author William Dean Howells described the social stratification among resort towns on the southern coast of Maine with light-hearted humor: "Beyond our colony which calls itself the Port, there is a far more populous watering-place, east of the Port, known as the Beach, which is the resort of people several grades of gentility lower than ours: so many, in fact, that we can never speak of the Beach without averting our faces, or, at best, with a tolerant smile."

With vacation communities divided by distinctions of class, religion, and ethnicity, where would Norfolk fall in the spectrum of resorts? Just as Norfolk abhorred the idea of becoming another Atlantic City, so was it careful to distinguish itself from nearby Lenox and the wealthy cottagers who summered in the

Berkshires. "Although there is wealth and beauty in Norfolk," the *Chimes* editors wrote, "and plenty of gaiety, the town is noticeably free from that social stiffness which pervades the atmosphere of the popular resort of so many from New York's 'Four Hundred.'"

Visitors to Norfolk had their choice of accommodation.

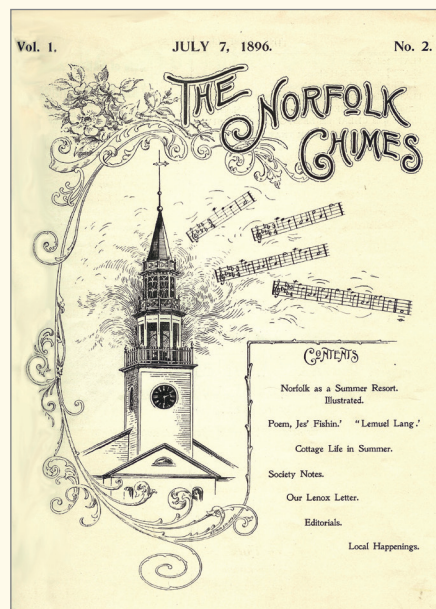
They could spend a week or more in one of the town's popular hotels, such as the Hillhurst on Laurel Way or Crissey Place on the Village Green. Townsfolk often opened rooms in their homes to capitalize on the possibility of extra income. These were the Airbnb's of the late 19th and early 20th century. Farmers in the south Norfolk neighborhood of Grantville advertised the rural experience to attract weekly guests.

On Grant Street, photographer Marie Kendall offered rooms in her house, which she named Edgewood Lodge. In 1906, she placed an advertisement in *The Connecticut Magazine* designed to attract attention. In bold lettering, Norfolk is described as the Switzerland of Connecticut:

"Distinguished globetrotters say that in the

Hills of Norfolk, Connecticut, Nature's Art has an individuality of its own. Well-known Americans come hundreds of miles to sojourn in this hill-top Garden-land and breathe its pure invigorating air." Kendall was careful to insist that only "cultured people" were guests at Edgewood Lodge. She described her house as "a modern, private, hospitable home; sanitary, home-like, heated by hot water; located within a two-minute walk of a thoroughly equipped library and less than a five-minute walk to the post-office, church, gymnasium, and railroad station."

The proximity of Edgewood Lodge to the center of town was indeed an attraction, with tennis, bowling, and evening concerts at the nearby Eldridge Gymnasium (now Town Hall). Lodging on Maple Avenue was even more desirable. Some residents temporarily relocated to make their Maple Avenue
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The Chimes



AS I WRITE THIS column, the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine has just left thousands of residents and buildings at risk from the devastating floodwaters. Russia's war in Ukraine has been particularly cruel in attacking civilian targets and their cultural heritage. Libraries are among the casualties of this attempt to obliterate Ukrainian history, culture, and identity. Mass book removals and burnings in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories support the fact that this attempt has been deliberate.

In a recent article in *Library Journal*, Ulia Gosart reported on the heartbreaking numbers. Gosart was born in the former Soviet Union, and obtained her BA in librarianship from Kiev National University of Culture and Arts. At the start of the war, 14,350 Ukrainian public libraries served villages, cities, and regional districts. By the end of 2022, over 2,000 libraries were no longer

operational. A report issued by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy in December of 2022 stated that the devastation of Ukrainian libraries constituted close to 40 percent of all damage to the country's cultural heritage infrastructure, including 155 fully destroyed libraries.

The loss of libraries to communities is staggering. Marina Latamarchuk, Director of the Chernihiv Regional Library for Youth, described her library as "a hub of the city's cultural and intellectual life. We conducted literary and art events, hosted art exhibitions, poetry nights, and musical events. We provided legal education for the youth and offered English language classes. After winning a national competition on organization of online services in 2013, we bought computer equipment and started literacy classes for the elderly." The library's main building was destroyed.

On a brighter note, many of the

surviving libraries have played a major role in the war. They have provided residents and displaced people with credible, up-to-date information. They have distributed clothes and food. Some have been converted into volunteer headquarters to address the army's needs: weaving camouflage nets and sewing balaclava helmets; sending letters from children and food packages to soldiers; providing books in hospitals and underground metro stations, where people take shelter during bombing raids.

Gosart reflects on the importance of libraries in a time of war: "Despite the hardships wrought by war, Ukrainian libraries continue to serve their communities. In times of peace, libraries aim to liberate individuals by providing knowledge for personal growth; during wartime, they help unite a nation in the common struggle for freedom."

—Ann Havemeyer

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Gerry Goodrich Memorial
Town of Norfolk CT Library
Has been named a

2022 Global Literacy Champion

by the African Library Project for providing books for a library at
*Precious Ones International Christian School
Uganda



www.africanlibraryproject.org

The Norfolk Library has been named a Global Literacy Champion, following a generous donation of 1,200 books from the Book Sale to the African Library Project. The ALP shipped them to Uganda, part of a 67,000 book shipment to schools. The donation was organized by Susan Caughman in memory of Gerry Goodrich. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with this important project!

SAVE THE DATES!

A Festive Summer Cocktail Party

Friday, August 25, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars now for a festive summer evening under the tent. Hors d'oeuvres, signature cocktails, and wine will be served. Tickets are \$35 at the door. Remember, your generosity supports the Library's many free special events, films, concerts, book discussions, children's programs, and more.

Annual Norfolk Library Book Sale

August 26 & 27

We are accepting books for the annual book sale this summer. You won't want to miss the opportunity to browse through these amazing books, 75% of them hardcover, donated from Norfolk's private libraries. Proceeds benefit the Norfolk Library Associates and the Library's free cultural programs they fund. Many thanks to Bridget Taylor and the volunteers who make the annual book sale such a success. *Please try to bring your books by the end of July.* By August the basement will be full!

Haystack Book Festival

September 29–October 1

A stellar lineup of authors is planned.

Greenwoods Puppet Festival

Saturday, October 14

The puppetry community is gearing up with excitement for our second Greenwoods Puppet Festival. Celebrate the art of puppetry with children's and adult puppet shows. Stay tuned for details.

WEEKEND IN NORFOLK EVENT

PuppetKabob presents *The Snowflake Man***Saturday, August 5, 11:00 a.m.**

The story of *The Snowflake Man* is inspired by Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley, the self-educated farmer and scientist who attracted world attention when he became the first person to photograph a single snow crystal. The *Snowflake Man* swings audiences into the historic 1920s through creative storytelling, intricately designed Czech-style marionettes, and a striking pop-up book of watercolor scenery.



Follow us on Instagram for fun and informative content! Our programs are also listed in our Night Owl weekly e-newsletter with registration links.

Upcoming Exhibits

July	Sam Guindon
August	Peter Coffeen
September	Susie Crofut
October	Jane Bevans
November	Amelia de Neergaard
December	Hans Heuberger

Haystack Book Talks

July 9, 4:00 p.m. Karin Roffman, author of *The Songs We Know Best: John Ashbery's Early Life*, and Melvin Chen, Director of the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, explore the life and soundscape of the poet John Ashbery (1927–2017).

August 5, 4:00 p.m. Jennifer Homans, author of the Pulitzer Prize-nominated George Balanchine biography *Mr. B*, and Hugh Eakin, author of *Picasso's War*, will engage in a wide-ranging conversation about the United States and Europe, modernism and tradition, and the individuals who ultimately laid the foundations for contemporary American art and culture.

Mindfulness with Miranda Lee

Fridays beginning July 14

In this 4-week course, mindfulness practitioner Miranda Lee will teach participants how to live a more mindful life and equip them with the tools they need to help build resilience against the challenges of day-to-day life. Classes will be offered in the Great Hall from 9:15–10:00 a.m. on Fridays before the Library opens to the public. **For details and registration, please visit our website.**

Classic Crawford Film Series

Robert Dance, author of *Ferocious Ambition: Joan Crawford's March to Stardom* (to be released in October), will introduce three Crawford films.

Fridays at 7:00 p.m.Oct. 27: *Mildred Pierce* (1945)Nov. 3: *Sudden Fear* (1952)Nov. 17: *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* (1962)

A Look Back and a Look Ahead

Where can you spend a couple of hours once a month with professors from Johns Hopkins and NYU, a best-selling novelist, a documentarian, the counsel for a civil rights organization, a retired DA, a few actors, a publishing editor, psychiatrists of several stripes, an emeritus professor from the Harvard Business School, a few retired physicians, some folks from London, some from Dublin, one from Macau, several from NYC and LA, as well as a set from this part of New England? This is the eclectic and lively group of people who attend Mark Scarbrough's Norfolk Library Book Group. To accommodate the various time zones in play, Mark has offered morning and evening Book Group sessions virtually for the past two years. Mark describes the group as "a nice mix: some committed readers, some intellectuals who are just now exploring novels, and some folks who suddenly find themselves reading Pynchon." Email us if you'd like to join!



Our amazing Events Committee greets the standing-room only crowd at our annual St. Patrick's Day concert: Linda Bell, John DeShazo, Events Coordinator Eileen Fitzgibbons, Marinell Crippen, and Jack Dillon. Not pictured: Betsy Gill and Diego Ongaro.

Another popular program we offered virtually this past year was Miranda Lee's Mindfulness series. The Library partnered with the Woodridge and Rutherford libraries in New Jersey to bring this series to our patrons. One participant shared, "I am very grateful for the weekly Mindfulness class. It has made a profound difference in my daily life and sense of self." Miranda will offer her virtual series again this fall.



Now that we have hopefully put the pandemic behind us, we are thrilled to gather once again in person in our Great Hall for concerts, films, and lectures. Our newest music series, Music Among Neighbors, was a great success with local musicians Jeremy Koch, Trina Hamlin, and The Banjo Babies. Bossa Triba had people dancing in the aisles to celebrate Mardi Gras in February, and Téada performed for our annual St. Patrick's Day Concert. We ended our concert season with mezzo-soprano Dr. Monika Krajewska, who sang opera aria favorites and Broadway show tunes, with pianist Natasha Ulyanovsky. Our music season will get back underway in the late fall.

Other cultural offerings this winter included the premiere of two one-act plays by local playwrights Marinell Crippen and Sara Heller. It was perhaps the first time that the Great Hall looked more like a Black Box Theater than Norfolk's "living room" as it is sometimes called. We are so grateful to John DeShazo for his help in all our audio-visual endeavors. Among other talented Norfolknians who have shared

their expertise with us is filmmaker and director Diego Ongaro. Diego brought us a French New Wave film series last fall and this spring introduced three films from the Berlin School.

We continue to elevate social justice in many of our programs. We hosted director Lisa Riordan Seville to discuss her documentary *A Woman on the Outside* and the injustices of the US prison system. Our partnership with the Missions and Social Justice Team of the Norfolk Church of Christ, Congregational brought book discussions and film screenings. In celebration of Juneteenth, we gathered to discuss Tiya Miles' *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack*.

Our partnership with the Norfolk Land Trust and the Norfolk Church of Christ Green Team continued with bird walks guided by lifelong birders Ayreslea Denny and Laurie Foulke-Green; and Books & Boots hikes in Aton Forest and the North Swamp Trail under the leadership of Hartley Mead. Stay tuned for more!

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 exhibits and raise funds for the cultural programs offered by the Library. The group welcomes new members. Meetings are held in the Library the first Tuesday of the month at noon. Please join us!

Louise Davis, Co-President
Galene Kessin, Co-President
Elizabeth Scheel, Vice-President
Lise Read, Secretary
Paul Madore, Treasurer

The Bridges of Litchfield County

When I was in elementary school, we lived in Salisbury and often went fishing and exploring in the Housatonic River near the covered bridge in West Cornwall. I remember my father driving very slowly through the bridge so we could yell out the window and see if it echoed. Looking back, I'm pretty sure the people living near the bridge were annoyed by our loud antics. Or maybe they were used to them. A covered bridge has been at that location since 1762, but floods and ice jams destroyed those earlier bridges. In 1864, the current bridge was built higher above the river than its predecessors, according to *Old Covered Bridges* (Adelbert Jakeman, 1935).

Jakeman's book is one of several books about covered bridges in the library collection. Originally, 18 covered bridges spanned the Housatonic River. Jakeman lists only three bridges still in use in 1935: West Cornwall, Kent (Bull's Bridge), and Cornwall Bridge. The covered bridge at Cornwall Bridge washed away a year after Jakeman's book was published. Tradition holds that General George Washington crossed that bridge in 1780 when he made a secret journey from New York to Hartford to meet with the patriots' new allies – the French. Washington met Rochambeau in Hartford in September of 1780, so it is possible that he used the covered bridge at Cornwall Bridge. However, there is no written account to substantiate the claim.

There are written accounts to support that Washington crossed the Housatonic River on Bull's Bridge in 1781. According to *Covered Bridges of the Northeast*, written by Richard Sanders Allen in 1957, the first instance of a bridge at this location was constructed by Jacob and Isaac Bull in 1760. The bridge was used to transport the products of Bull's iron furnace. During the Revolutionary War, the bridge was used to get supplies to the Continental Army in Newburgh and the Hudson Highlands. In early 1781, Jacob Bull started a new bridge to replace one that washed away. The bridge was still an uncovered span when he led General Washington's horse across while the General followed on

foot. The horse fell in the river. General Washington billed the army for removal of a horse from the water at Mr. Bull's bridge. Good thing he wasn't riding the horse!

By 1985, when *Covered Bridges of Connecticut* was written by Andrew R. Howard, Bull's Bridge and West Cornwall Bridge were still in use. Both are on the National Register of Historic Places. Bull's Bridge was rebuilt in 1842 with a Town lattice design that was patented by Ithiel Town, a Connecticut architect. West Cornwall Bridge also used a Town Lattice design when it was rebuilt in 1864. A Queen Truss was added in 1887 for additional support.

The iconic West Cornwall Bridge has been in continuous use since 1864, having survived high water, ice jams, the 1938 hurricane, and the flood of 1955. Over a century later, the State of Connecticut considered replacing the covered bridge with a modern bridge. A local committee in West Cornwall convinced the state to renovate the bridge instead. In 1973, the bridge was raised an additional two feet above the river and the floor was reinforced with a concealed steel deck. This project won the Federal Highway Administration's award for outstanding historic preservation. The award states that "No effort should be spared to assure its preservation for the indefinite future, especially as it is not simply a museum piece." Let's hope that both covered bridges continue to be valued by their communities and by kids who hope to hear an echo.

—Leslie Battis

LIBRARY OF THINGS

Our Library of Things is a collection of items such as electronics, sports equipment, instruments, and more that you can check out with your library card. Going on vacation? We have wifi hotspots you can take with you to boost your connectivity while away. Give pickleball a try before purchasing a racket! We have ipads and laptops, a portable DVD player, and ukuleles to check out.



Built in 1892, the Eldridge Gymnasium had two grass tennis courts, where the Norfolk Farmers Market now takes place. In August, tennis tournaments were held there, including the Connecticut State Tennis Championships in 1915.

“cottages” available for rent to summer cottagers.

Many of the cottagers would go on to purchase property and build their own houses, becoming fulltime summer residents. They are listed in a small booklet published by the Village Improvement Association between 1900 and 1905 entitled “What’s in a Name?” For a small contribution, summer residents were listed along with the names of their houses, for every house had to have a name.

The Alders, now known as Manor House, was the home of Charles Spofford. Spofford designed the Underground Transit system in London and was the son of Ainsworth Spofford, the first Librarian of Congress. On Laurel Way, Laurelese was the residence of James Mabon, president of the New York Stock Exchange. Next door, the Breezes was built by Abel I. Smith. His son would later fund the construction of the Smith Children’s Room at the Library.

Abel I. Smith’s father was one of the earliest summer visitors to Norfolk. An attorney and district court judge from Hoboken, NJ, he was invited to “this charming mountain village” by Alfred Dennis in 1870. To get here at that time, he had to travel by steamboat from New York to Bridgeport, take the Naugatuck Railroad to Winsted, and then drive to Norfolk.

Alfred Dennis lived in a house overlooking the Village Green. His son, Dr. Frederic Shepard Dennis, wrote a book about the Village Green in 1917 (available at the Library). He dedicated it to his mother, Eliza Shepard Dennis, “who was born in a house near the Green, who played in her childhood upon the Green, who was married in meeting house facing the Green.” Dr. Dennis was a professor at Columbia University, and his estate is now Dennis Hill State Park. He was one of several Columbia professors who summered in Norfolk.

Other Columbia professors included Michael Pupin,



The Alders (1898) sat majestically on Maple Avenue with the treeless landscape providing a fine view of Haystack Mountain.

Professor of Electro-mechanics, who built Hemlock Farm on Westside Road (now the home of the CT-Asia Cultural Center); and Henry Todd, Professor of Romance Languages, who engaged architect Alfredo Taylor to design his house Brocklebank on Litchfield Road. Across the road from Brocklebank stood Elmslea, the summer home of Professor Gustave Stoeckel of Yale University. In the *Chimes*, the Reverend John Calvin Goddard described those who gave “a distinct and high character” to the town: “You could stock a university faculty or man a metropolitan pulpit any day in August without going off the veranda of the Hillhurst hotel.”

Yet all were not upstanding citizens. Mrs. Margaret Mulhall built a summer residence on Litchfield Road in 1905. We don’t know much about her, except that shortly after the house was completed, contractors took out liens against the property for lack of payment. Mrs. Mulhall apparently left town and disappeared. That is until she appeared in the New York newspapers with the notice that she had been arrested at the New York pier for smuggling lace into this country from France. She had wrapped it around her body under her clothing. Mrs. Mulhall’s residence no longer stands.

—Ann Havemeyer

Summer Book Bingo

Pick up your Bingo sheet at the Library. Read books from the categories in the squares, and turn your sheet in to Front Desk Circulation by September 8. For every BINGO you have, you will be entered into a drawing for the GRAND PRIZE. A full card = 12 BINGOs!

Norfolk Library Summer Reading 2023



Roaring Brook Nature Center brought snakes to Corner Club this spring.

Our science and art-based summer reading program "All Together Now" is geared towards children from ages 5 to 13 years old. If you are a little younger or older than this range, please join in if you wish. Each child must be registered. After registration, children will be given a special journal with activities to complete. There will be prizes for every child who registers and completes 12 or more activities. And be sure to come to our special Monday programs from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. It's a great time to check out books! Any questions? Please email Miss Eileen at efitzgibbons@biblio.org

**Norfolk Library
Summer Reading
2023**

All Together Mondays
@ 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

June 26
Wild Weaving with Jean Bronson.
Learn to weave yarn with flowers, feathers, and other natural materials. Limited to 12

July 10
Drumming with Bob Bloom. Help fill the Great Hall with Bob's caravan of drums and musical instruments.

July 17
Let's Get Creative with Leslie Watkins.
Leslie will lead children in observing nature and creating a special notecard with their art work.
Suggested ages 9 and up. Limited to 10

July 24
Blue Moon Raptors. Meet a Great Horned Owl, a Screech Owl, a Peregrine Falcon and other feathered guests.

July 31
Cool-ology's Super Slime Lab. Learn about the science behind slime. Limited to 15

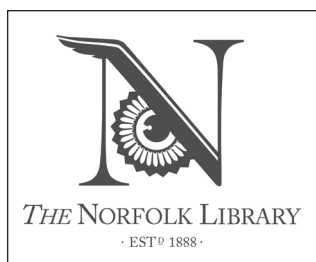
August 7
Come Together for the Grand Finale with Judi Ann "Energizer" Jones.
Music, dance, creative movement, play with hoops, and cake!



At one of our outreach programs, children at the Norfolk Learning Center gather around Miss Eileen for a special story time. Look for her at Tobey Pond this summer!



Mask-making was one of many creative workshops lead by artist Erika Crofut.



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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



Our Teen Advisory Council has done a great job this year. Thanks to Dahlia Alexander, Samantha Barbagallo, Jeylyn Collado, Ginny DeCerbo, Leif Johnson, and Carter Nadeau. The teen Owl Cove is now open with a smart screen, printer, podcast equipment, games, food and more! Applications for two openings on the Council are available on the library website.