Friends work year round to channel your support for the many aspects of FOL programming and resources. Some of the Friends who do this are shown at a recent meeting: (from left to right), Doug Hall, chair Cynthia Dyer, Betsy Bates, and Pam Alley. Please consider attending one or more of the monthly Friends meetings. These reporting and planning sessions are held the third Thursday of the month and start at 9 AM in the Friends Reading Room at the Vinalhaven Public Library—your library.

WHAT ARE FRIENDS?
- The Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library (FOL) is a non-profit group that provides support for the Library. Through dues, gifts, fundraising, and special projects, we support programming, resources, and services for Library patrons: children, young adults, and adults. (continued on next page)
WHAT ARE FRIENDS?

- We purchase books, magazines, media and meet special equipment needs—providing assistance when identified by the Library staff.
- We pay for all the costs of Inter-Library Loan services.
- We support the “Books for Babies” project that encourages being read to and reading at the earliest of ages.
- We promote public awareness of the Library and stimulate use of its resources and services including the publication of a newsletter twice a year.
- We assist the Library Staff where needed and we staff our used bookstore on Main Street, called Second Hand Prose.
- We work at keeping our Library looking great including the outside plantings.
- We place funds in an Endowment for the Vinalhaven Public Library.

THE VINALHAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY: A Brief History of a Public Institution Part 1

by Wayne F. Cooper

In The Beginning
At the dedication of Vinalhaven’s new Andrew Carnegie library on August 15, 1907, Thomas J. Lyons, former library trustee, Librarian, and chairman of the building committee for the new library gave an important speech, which fortunately was reported verbatim in the Rockland Courier-Gazette on August 20, 1907. In the speech, he summarized the history of the library, mentioned some of the concerns of the community regarding both the old and new institution, and detailed his own intimate involvement with the library from its inception.

The library did not begin as town owned or run. It originated in 1887 with the decision of J.R. Bodwell, the president of the Bodwell Granite Company, Vinalhaven’s most important quarrying business at the time, to provide “a reading room, in order that the men might have some place where they could sit down and read the papers, magazines etc.” Bodwell required that his employees must first agree to contribute some money to pay for books, newspapers, and magazines. The company would then “provide and furnish” a reading room. The workers duly collected “about $118.00,” and the Bodwell Company rented a room that had formerly housed a fire engine “the old hand tub, the E. P. Walker.” A public meeting was then held in this room and a board of trustees was elected to oversee the new library. The trustees included Thomas J. Lyons, John A. Babbidge, Alex. Davidson, F.V. Crocker, Thomas G. Libby, John Lowe, and O.P. Lyons, the brother of Thomas. This library officially opened its doors August 15, 1887. From the first its “books…were allowed to be taken with the same freedom that has always been extended to the patrons of the library.” For this reason, Lyons emphasized this was the true beginning of Vinalhaven’s public library.

It did not, in fact, remain under the control of the Bodwell Company for long. In 1888 at the annual town meeting, the town voted to establish a public library and raised $300, and appointed the same board of Trustees elected the previous year to supervise the new Vinalhaven Public Library. Other private funds were also contributed and the Bodwell Granite Company continued to pay for the room and to provide its furnishings. Under this new arrangement, the doors of the library had a second official opening on April 16, 1888.

During its first year the library only had 337 books but an astonishing circulation of 5,000. This may have included some magazines because quite early in the 1890s, it was noted they were
allowed to circulate after a month on the shelf, a tradition that continues today. This practice may have begun in 1887. The library was open every evening and Saturday afternoon. These hours reflected the concern at the time that the town’s large working class population have a chance to enjoy the library.

The library grew rapidly. In 1890, the ladies “of the Vinalhaven Circulating Library,” a private subscription library in town, about which little is known, contributed its entire collection, some 500 to 800 volumes, free to the public library. In addition in 1890, the Rock Bound Assembly no. 3,575 Knights of Labor, “invested $180.00 in books and presented” them to the library. Thus, the women of the town and labor, along with its business men, all supported the library.

The library soon outgrew the old engine hall. It moved first to the Firemen’s Hall, then to a room over the Lyford and Ginn Drugstore, before settling in 1895 in one of the lower rooms of the new Memorial Hall. This space, too, soon became insufficient, and after due deliberation, planning, and the purchase of the present library site, the town accepted Andrew Carnegie’s gift of $5,200. Finally, in 1906-07, the structure that for over one hundred years has housed the public library came into being.

In his dedication speech, Thomas J. Lyons noted that in 1903 the town had declined to approach Carnegie, the steel magnate who had begun to finance libraries and other institutions across the nation with the huge fortune he had acquired while building the largest steel corporation in the country during the post-Civil War age of the “Robber Barons.” In part, the town’s traditional conservatism undoubtedly made it cautious about undertaking a relatively large capital project. But Lyons in his speech alluded to another concern voiced by some citizens, many with strong union and even anti-capitalist ties that stretched back to their old homelands in Great Britain, Scandinavia, and other parts of Europe. Here is how Lyons, himself a union man and regular writer for the stone-cutters national journal, put it: “There are some who raise objection to accepting a gift from Mr. Carnegie [because] his immense wealth has been acquired through his oppression of his workmen and that his gift is ‘blood’ money.” Lyons stressed “this argument does not appeal to me” partly, he explained, because those who propounded it would not hesitate to profit from any pirate treasure they might find on Vinalhaven. And additionally, he went on
assuming what they say is true, the divine and only honest way to correct an injustice is to make restitution. If Mr. Carnegie’s wealth has been wrongfully acquired he can undo the wrong by …distributing his wealth among the whole people. Upon this principle [and on] the basis of our population, Vinalhaven would have coming to her about $5,000. We have received $5,200 which…should satisfy his critics.

As for himself, Lyons stressed how happy he was to participate in the opening of the new library: Friends, I don’t think it necessary for me to say to you that I am pleased to be with you upon this occasion. For 20 years I have been continuously associated with the library [as] librarian and trustee. I have had something to do with the selecting of every book in the library, and they are as familiar to me as the members of my own family (to be continued on fall newsletter).

LIBRARIAN’S REPORT by Valerie Morton

Sadly, Swans Island suffered a terrible loss on July 24, 2008 when both their library and their historical society, both housed in the same building, were struck by lightning. The library held over 10,000 books and "artifacts from the island's historical museum, including genealogy records and hundreds of historic photographs, all of which are destroyed." In November, Vinalhaven’s school and the public library were visited by members of the Swans Island Educational Society (seen here). In order to make a more informed decision when they rebuild, they visited towns along the coast, touring libraries and interviewing staff members, to find out what is both good and bad about their buildings. We were pleased to show them our new spaces. Our hearts go out to them and we hope that they will be able to rebuild soon.

Our Library has become a member of the Maine Discovery Museum located in historic Bangor, MDM is just an hour’s drive from mid-coast Maine. Our membership entitles up to four people a day to use our membership card for free admission to the Museum. With seven major interactive exhibit areas on three floors, Maine Discovery Museum is the largest children's museum north of Boston. The interactive exhibits invite you to explore the worlds of nature, geography, children's literature, music, art, science and anatomy.
Stop by the Library and talk to me about how you can visit using our card.

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**Summer and Early Fall Programming 2009**

This year will see varied FOL programming efforts, some of which will include team work with other island organizations like PIE. All are meant to revolve around books and other learning experiences. Look for posters around town and in *The Wind* for exact times. Save these pages for your fridge or bulletin board.

Thank you Pam Alley, Barbara Kinder, and Doug Hall for your contacts and work on this program series.

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**May 22:**

Nationally known author and Isle au Haut neighbor, Linda Greenlaw will be coming to Vinalhaven. The Friends of the Library will be working together with Vinalhaven’s Partners in Education (PIE) on this event. Teacher Karen Burns will be doing a workshop with our high school English students and the FOL will have Linda speak to the public in the evening at Smith Hokanson Memorial Hall. Linda has written a wonderful series of six non-fiction and fiction books starting with *The Hungry Ocean*. Another was a cookbook she co-authored with her mother Martha Greenlaw called *Recipes from a Very Small Island*. Linda’s most recent book came out last summer and was the mystery *Fisher’s Bend*.

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**July 24:**

Andrew and Bonnie Periale of the Perry Alley Theater will be doing a puppet workshop at the Vinalhaven Public Library in the afternoon, followed by a puppet show at Smith Hokanson Memorial Hall in the evening. The Perry Alley Theatre from New Hampshire has been bringing exciting, imaginative theatre to audiences for over 20 years. Their original retelling of such favorites as *Tom Thumb*, *Snow White*, and *The Princess and the Pea* using puppets, masks, music, and sometimes
even kitchen utensils has made them a favorite. Perry Alley Theatre has been supported by Puppeteers of America and the Henson Foundation, and they have been featured at regional and national puppet festivals and on New Hampshire Public Television.

**QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.**

*Perry Alley Theatre*

**August 12:**

Richard Clark returns to Vinalhaven, not as Andrew Carnegie but, this time, as Mark Twain. This, not-to-be-missed event, will be held at the Union Church.

**August 16:**

Bibi Gaston, author of *The Loveliest Woman in America*, will talk about her book. In 1927, at the age of twenty-three, Rosamond Pinchot was hailed as "The Loveliest Woman in America." At thirty-three, in a sudden, shocking, and highly public act, Rosamond Pinchot Gaston took her own life. Nearly seventy years later Rosamond’s granddaughter, Bibi, received more than 1,500 pages of Rosamond's diaries and embarked on a seven-year journey to make sense of the silence that surrounded Rosamond's death. The Gastons summered on Hurricane.

*QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.*
September 12:

Kenneth Gloss, our speaker, is the owner of the Brattle Book Shop located in downtown Boston and established 1825. It features two floors of general used books, outdoor sale tables, and a third floor with a premier collection of rare and antiquarian books.

Ken Gloss is a past President of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America's New England Chapter and sits on the Associate Board of the Boston Public Library. Ken Gloss appraises books and libraries for Harvard, Boston University, Boston College, Northeastern, Simmons, Suffolk, Tufts, Babson, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, the FBI and others. He has appeared on numerous local and National television and radio programs talking about books and their values. He also has written many articles on appraising books, book collecting and selling. You never know what treasures might be in your own attic!

First week of October:

Tony Sohns is coming back to do his Bug Zoo for students K-8. Exact date and time to be announced for his presentation at the library will be announced later. A great informative and fun children’s event.

October 24:

Ghost Hunters coming just in time for Halloween. Stay tuned!

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WATCH for childrens' book authors to read for reading hour at the library. Your Vinalhaven library is a happening place thanks to the Friends of the Library. Become a FOL.
Please renew your membership for 2009 if your mailing label on the last page does not have a 2009 or L above your name. Thanks!

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Be A Friend!

Friends of the Library
Officers/Committee Chairs
Chair
Cynthia Dyer
Treasurer
June MacDonald
Assistant Treasurer
Heather Bruns
Secretary
Erin Creelman

NAME______________________________
ADDRESS____________________________________________________________
TEAM-LINE___________________
E-MAIL, TELEPHONE__________________________

Individual $10 Family $25 Patron $50 Sponsor $100

Checks should be made payable to: Friends of the Vinalhaven Public Library and, along with this form, sent to FOL P.O. Box 223, Vinalhaven, ME 04863

THANKS!

Also, I want to learn more about or volunteer for (please check off):

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMING ADULT PROGRAMMING
SECOND-HAND PROSE LIBRARY VOLUNTEERING
LIBRARY WEB SITE NEWSLETTER MAILING
BOOKS ON WHEELS GARDENING AT LIBRARY
YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMMING PUBLICITY
FUNDRAISING MEMBERSHIP
MEND BOOKS SHELVE BOOKS

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Valerie Morton, Librarian
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