

# FORBES library

NORTHAMPTON'S PUBLIC LIBRARY

## New Faces in the Library

One of the new faces this fall in the Children's and Young Adult Department of Forbes is Julia Cornick. Originally from Atlanta, Julia just graduated this spring from Smith College and is familiar both with Northampton and with Forbes Library. She did a double major at Smith, Women & Gender and Spanish. Modest about her fluency in another language, she says she has conversational Spanish.

Julia sounds like a perfect fit for the Children's and Young Adult Department. She loves kids and children's books and has always wanted to be a children's librarian. While a student at Smith, she worked at the Smith Campus School library. She is excited about being able to work at Forbes, and coming to Northampton, she says, is like coming back to her second home. Welcome home, Julia!



Julia Cornick



Another new face in the library this fall is Library Assistant Pamela Acosta. Originally from Brownsville, Texas, Pam has been living in Northampton since 2016. She loves libraries and reading, and not having worked in a library before, she is very excited to be working at Forbes in several different departments.

A plant lover, Pam says she has a lot of houseplants and enjoys filling the balcony at her apartment with plants in the warmer seasons. She also is bilingual, speaks Spanish.

**Help Support  
Forbes Library**  
by becoming a member of  
the Friends  
Visit our website at  
[forbeslibrary.org/friends](https://forbeslibrary.org/friends)  
and use the PayPal button  
or  
pick up an envelope at the  
circulation desk

## Provisions Provides

For the second year in a row, **Provisions** in Northampton has partnered with the Friends of Forbes in an appetizing autumn fundraiser. The popular store put together a generous pack of 2 intriguing European wines with a divine soft cheese and crisp crackers from New England locales. The pack sold for 2 weeks in October with all profit from the sales going to the Friends of Forbes. Everything was delicious, and the campaign was a big success. We can't thank Provisions enough. They are certainly friends of Forbes Library!

The 27<sup>th</sup> Northampton Garden Tour to benefit the Friends of Forbes Library took place this summer on July 17. After missing a year because of the virus, garden lovers were excited to attend, making it a sold-out event. It was a lovely, sunny day, and in addition to the gardens there was an array of tempting raffle items, including baskets and a handsome garden bench. The weather gods were with us, because only a few moments after the close of the tour in the afternoon, the rain came!

The Garden Tour raised almost \$17,000 which will directly support Forbes Library's most important needs, such as the books and media budget. Sincere thanks to all who volunteered and participated in this wonderful annual tradition.

## Successful Garden Tour

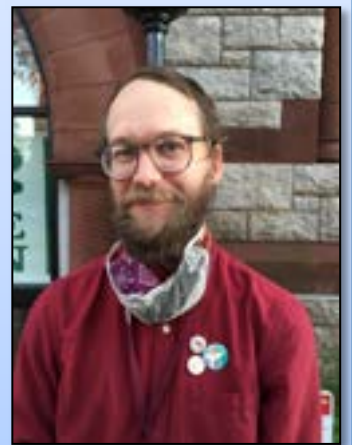
## Seeking Garden Tour Planning Volunteers

As we put our gardens to bed this fall, we are still celebrating the amazing turnout for the Garden Tour this past summer. Despite Covid and having to postpone the 2020 tour until 2021, we broke all records for attendance and funds raised.

Now it is time to begin planning next summer's tour. Our fabulous team of 10 members is looking for a few new members who might have experience with publicity/marketing in both conventional and social media, who might be comfortable soliciting sponsors, or who might be available on the day of the tour for various tasks. We meet once per month beginning in January, using email and Zoom. Interested? Contact Jody at [jody.kabloom@gmail.com](mailto:jody.kabloom@gmail.com)

You may recognize new Library Assistant Joshua Vrysen when you see him at Forbes. He has been working part-time at the library for 6 years and is now very excited to be full-time. He loves the library and loves spending time in it, he says. Born in Ontario, Canada, Joshua came to this area in 2000 from eastern Mass.

In his spare time, Joshua is interested in both art and music, does drawings in self-published books and zines, and from younger years playing percussion, he more recently experiments with electronic music. He will be right at home wherever you may find him at the library.



## PACO



Paco, the beloved denizen of the children's room, is clearly delighted by the increased activity at the library. While she was well taken care of and got through the shutdown swimmingly, she is never so happy as when she can offer a smile to and interact with staff and visitors. Paco tee shirts have been a popular item for sale at the library. They are great for gift giving, to commemorate a visit with Paco, or to keep Paco in one's heart when a visit isn't possible. Paco tees are available in a wide range of sizes from toddler to adult. You might know a little fan who would appreciate a tee, or you might know an adult who was a fan of Paco as a child. Remember, Paco has been around for years and is loved by children and their parents alike. Due to their popularity, several sizes sold out. A new batch of tees has been ordered and will be available for purchase in December. They can be purchased at the children's room desk. They can also be ordered on-line and then picked up at the library.

## T-Shirts



**\$15**  
All Proceeds Benefit  
The Friends of Forbes Library

## *Forbes Through the Pandemic* An Interview with Director Lisa Downing

For those of us who love Forbes, the first thing to know is that staff are doing well and all positions were retained through the pandemic. Many staff members worked remotely and took on jobs different from what they were used to, but remained flexible and patron-focused. In fact, their focus was *how can we continue to not just serve patrons but enhance our services*. Staff took turns being in the library to process hold requests, provide curbside pick-up, and allow new patrons to register for library cards. As it was for all of us, this was a difficult and stressful time, but Forbes staff continued to adapt and provide services in innovative and helpful ways. Above all, safety remained the focus so that both patrons and staff were protected.

Forbes is well known for its programming and community services, and these continued in new and creative ways during the pandemic. For instance, staff in the Children's Department continued with story time via videos that were posted on the library's YouTube channel. Chat service through the library's website, providing real time assistance during open hours, also started during the pandemic, and it will remain in place.

The library opened to patrons on June 20<sup>th</sup> this summer. Both staff and patrons are happy to be back in the library in person. To ensure the wellbeing of all, there continues to be an emphasis around personal safety, mask compliance, and increased cleaning. Along with the custodial staff, all staff continue to wipe down surfaces in an effort to keep everyone safe.

Virtual programming has now been expanded to hybrid – both inside the library and remote - as well as asynchronously streamed online. A permanent policy change is that all fines have been deleted. Additionally, there are flexible online library card applications, and delivery services to homes have been enhanced on an ongoing or one-time basis as needed. Patrons can access wifi on the library grounds; in fact, wifi was improved during the pandemic.

Self-service checkout has been expanded to include the Children's and Arts and Music Departments. It is important to note that staff have not been cut as a result of self-service checkout areas. The library has become busier over the past two decades, but staffing has been maintained at the same level. Self-checkout has allowed staff to spend more time assisting patrons and doing other crucial work. As a result, the library has been able to add a greeter to help people find areas of the building as needed.

The pandemic raised barriers but, in fact, some were issues that the staff had identified as being ongoing. As a result, staff came up with solutions, which will broaden access permanently. For instance, many people who are hard of hearing have wanted to participate in programs but often were unable to do so. Now, through programs offered through Zoom with closed captioning, they can. Others were interested in talks and discussions that occurred in the evening but could not attend because of difficulties with driving at night; people can now take advantage of the hybrid programming so they can participate but remain at home.

The library has now resumed full hours. Full-time programming has not yet resumed because of safety concerns, but Director Downing is hopeful that this will change by early 2022 depending on local Covid numbers. Some meeting rooms are now open for 1-2 people to meet in person or conduct Zoom meetings. The Career Center is back onsite on a part-time basis for now.

The Children's Department was the last to be accessible in person. When they opened, one young patron rushed in, hugged a bookcase and said, 'I'm so happy to be back'. I think many of us felt exactly the same way!

# Racial and Social Justice Advisory Group

Forbes Library's Racial and Social Justice Advisory Group formed a year ago and is composed of community members and representatives from the Library staff, the Board of Trustees and the Friends of Forbes. The group's charge is to advise the Racial & Social Justice Committee of the Trustees of Forbes Library on matters of access and racial and social justice issues. In the past year the group has reviewed and made suggestions regarding the Library's ongoing work on these topics, including collection development, programing outreach and staff development. This past summer the group held a very productive Racial Equity Symposium, examining barriers that keep patrons from making full use of library resources, and in September the group participated in a state-wide watch party to discuss Isabelle Wilkerson's book *Caste*. In the coming months, the group will think about ways the Library can participate in implementing recommendations of the Northampton Policing Review Commission.

The Racial and Social Justice Advisory Group meets four to eight times a year. Meetings are open to the public. To find out more about the group or to request an item be discussed at a future meeting, contact Library Director Lisa Downing. Copies of previous meeting minutes are available upon request.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Friends of Forbes Library board notes with sadness the passing of two women who were supporters of the library into their nineties. Mary Harding's involvement with the library spanned decades. Former Friends president Christine Nolan remembers her fondly, citing her leadership and devotion to the library. "She proved to be an exceptional role model," says Nolan. "I remember gatherings at her home where we would brainstorm ideas for raising money and for possible programs and events that could be supported by the library." Director Lisa Downing remembers Ms. Harding's kindness to her and the staff, noting that at the end of each year, Ms. Harding would bake cookies to show her appreciation for the staff. Director Downing notes that the cookies were of "gourmet quality." Ms. Harding served as a trustee of Forbes from 2002 through 2009, and she was the recipient of the Trustees Award in 2010. Trustee Russ Carrier worked with Ms. Harding and calls her an exceptional trustee. "Mary really cared about Forbes and was always willing to help in any way she could. She was very wise, pragmatic, and sensible. Mary was one of the best trustees I have had the pleasure of serving with." Ms. Harding's hard work, dedication and kindness will long be remembered.

Support for the library can take many forms, and although Yvonne Boucher did not serve in a formal role, she was a longtime member of the Friends of Forbes Library, and she was certainly the "attende in chief" at library events for decades. Former Friends presidents Christine Nolan and Martha McCormick, and current president Jo Ellen Mackenzie taught in the Northampton school department where Ms. Boucher taught English as a Second Language. They remember her passion for language acquisition and her fierce advocacy for her students. Her support for Forbes Library was equally steadfast. Ms. Boucher was a smiling presence at every library sponsored event for decades, including lectures on local history, the annual meeting of the Friends organization, fundraisers, outdoor concerts, and Trustees Award ceremonies, to name a few. She always appeared delighted to be part of the library community, and her presence at future events will be missed.





## Neighborhood Free Book Box

To promote access to reading for everyone in Northampton, Florence and Leeds, Forbes Library will install five Neighborhood Free Book Boxes this month with five more to come in spring. The "Forbes red" metal book boxes will offer children and teen books, fiction, nonfiction, Spanish language and large-print titles. Volunteers will rotate the selection weekly. Community members are welcome and encouraged to pick up a book to keep. Check out the Forbes website ([forbeslibrary.org](http://forbeslibrary.org)) for locations.

Closing during the pandemic challenged Forbes to seek new ways to connect books and readers. Maria Sperduti, Outreach Delivery Services Coordinator, pitched the book box idea to Lisa Downing, who responded with enthusiasm. Lilly Library has also joined in.

The Neighborhood Free Book Box project supplements the Little Free Libraries found across town. ([littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org)) Forbes and Lilly libraries will accept book donations and especially need children, teen, nonfiction and Spanish language books. Volunteers will spend 2-3 hours per week rotating the materials. For more information or to volunteer, email [outreach@forbeslibrary.org](mailto:outreach@forbeslibrary.org).

## Welcome to our Newest Trustee



Debin Bruce was elected as a Forbes Library Trustee on November 2nd in the citywide election. She loves Forbes Library and states that her goal as a trustee is to strengthen the connection between the library and the community. She sees Forbes as an anchor to the west end of Main Street and a key player in the revitalization of Main Street. She hopes to work as an ambassador attending community meetings and promoting the wide range of services

the library provides.

Debin's past work involved transportation safety research. She has served on numerous boards and commissions in Northampton since moving from Washington DC in 2006, including Chair of the Northampton Survival Center Board, Chair of the city's Planning Board, and a member of the Transportation and Parking Commission.

She has been an active patron of Forbes, has expressed her appreciation for the library's services during the pandemic, and has been a supporter of the Friends of Forbes. We all look forward to working with her. Congratulations, Trustee Debin!

## WiFi Hotspots

Forbes Library is now offering 20 circulating WiFi hotspots. Hotspots will be available to check out for three weeks at a time from the Main Desk during the library's open hours. Hotspots provide free wireless internet access over the T-Mobile network that lets you connect phones, tablets, computers, and other devices.

Any resident over 17 years old with a library card from a certified Massachusetts library is eligible to borrow a hotspot. Each hotspot will support up to ten connected devices.

Hotspots may be reserved, just like a book, through the library catalog, or by calling the library during normal business hours: (413) 587-1011.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has distributed over 3000 hotspots to approximately 220 public libraries for loan to library users.

# HOSMER GALLERY



## December

Zea Mays  
Printmaking

Liz Chalfin



Immer Mowry Cook

## March

Paintings  
Photographs  
Clay sculpture



Christopher Curtis



Rhea Baker

## January

Photographs



Paul Hetzel



Susan Valentine

## April

Portrait Ink Stamps



Alison Johnson

“Thread” Mixed Media



Jenifer Dieringer

## February

Knife, Scissors, Paper



Scott McDaniel



Alex Kessler,



Greta Kessler

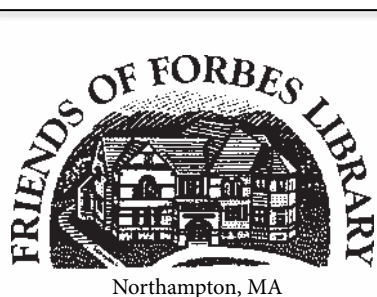
Photography



Mark Chester

## May

Northampton High School  
Student Show



## Car Window Stickers and More!

Show your support for Forbes and the Friends by purchasing a window sticker for your car! Stickers are 2.5 “X 3 “. They are available at the Circulation Desk along with all sorts of other cool library merchandise.

Perfect Holiday gifts for the book lover and Forbes Fan!