

FORBES library

NORTHAMPTON'S PUBLIC LIBRARY

*Please Join
the Friends
of
Forbes*

New Head of Borrower Services

Mary Biddle, Forbes's new Head of Borrower Services, may be the first library staff member to have won an Emmy. In fact, she has THREE Emmys for her work in sports broadcasting! Those awards reflect some impressive project coordination skills that Forbes will certainly use. More on that below.

Mary grew up in Leverett and attended Amherst High before going on to Harvard for a degree in East Asian Studies. She taught English in Japan for a while before joining Tokyo Broadcasting and moving to New York City, which led to jobs with CBS, NBC, and ESPN coordinating international production operations for the Olympic Games. She traveled to Olympic venues around the world, winning Emmys for her work on the Summer Games in Sydney in 2000 and the Salt Lake City Winter Games in 2002. Between those events she helped produce programming for other sporting events.

That was exciting, Mary says, but the hectic TV production life wasn't compatible with raising a family, so she and her husband moved back to western Massachusetts where she had grown up. For several years Mary was the Conference Director and Deputy Executive Director for the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association. She was also appointed by the mayor to the Northampton Energy and Sustainability Commission, where she served for 8 years.

In 2017 Mary joined Smith College Libraries. Her first task was to coordinate the moving of Special Collections from Neilson while that library was being renovated. She then became the Special Collections Reading Room Supervisor until she came to Forbes Library. She's currently working on a Masters in Library and Information Science through San Jose State University with a focus on public libraries.

When she's not working, Mary does yoga, and likes hiking and other outdoor activities with her family.

I asked Mary what she likes best about Forbes. The first thing she said was the focus on community and the passion with which the staff members embody that focus. She's excited about the new Library of Things, especially the outdoor games that are coming soon. And of course, like all of us, she loves the building as well as the work that goes on inside.



First Annual Artisans Fair



Birdhouses made from teapots; wreaths made of pages from Harry Potter books; colorful fabric bags and bowls; pottery with whimsical animal faces; jewelry for every taste - 36 talented vendors displayed their creations at the first Friends of Forbes Artisans Fair held Sunday, Oct 2. All day long attendees flowed through the Forbes grounds, talked with the artisans, and found wonderful treasures to take home. The Holyoke Hummus truck served delicious food, luring people in with the most wonderful smells wafting through the area.

Two raffles also attracted a lot of interest. One featured items donated by participating artisans; the other, items donated by local businesses including a stunning Janna Ugone lamp; two gift certificates for bicycle tune-ups from Northampton Bicycle; four entry passes and several exhibition catalogs from the Smith College Museum of Art, and a gift basket from Joia. Lucky winners were selected at the end of the day.

Five area businesses generously sponsored this first-time event :

Doherty,Wallace, Pillsbury &Murphy
Fierst, Bloomberg Ohm LLC
Downtown Sounds
Webs



Arrive@5 Event a Success

On Wednesday, November 2, Forbes Library hosted a Chamber of Commerce networking event, Arrive@5. An estimated 90 people attended, the largest indoor group gathering since before Covid. Director Lisa Downing and her staff were delighted to have chambermembers and representatives from local businesses at the library for a fun evening of networking and an opportunity to showcase the library's collections and services. Members of the Friends of Forbes Library board were there to talk to attendees about the role the Friends play in raising funds to support library programs. Additional support for the event was provided by Smith College, the Straw Dogs Writers Guild, Artifact Cider, and State Street Fruit Store.

Are you a Florence Bank customer? You can help the Friends of Forbes win a Customer's Choice Community Grant from Florence Bank with a simple vote by December 31! Be sure to vote before December 31st to make your vote count. It's easy! Go to the Florence Bank Customer's Choice page and type Friends of Forbes and Northampton in the organization and city fields. Enter your name and email, click the "count my vote" button and that's it! Your vote will help us win a grant from Florence Bank.

Thank You for Your Vote!

Judge Forbes Legacy Society

Judge Forbes's transformative gift to the City of Northampton established the Forbes Library as a public-private partnership in 1876. Today, the library invites you to join the Judge Forbes Legacy Society and follow in the steps of Judge Forbes and others like him. The generosity of legacy society members supports the resources and programs that ensure the Library continues to thrive, offering insights into the past while opening gateways to the future for everyone in our community.

We are thrilled to profile a recent new member to the Judge Forbes Legacy Society, Mary Ellen (Keogh) Osgood. Mary Ellen joined the Forbes Legacy society through the establishment of the Keogh Family Fund this year in recognition of the important role Forbes Library has in the lives of its community members.


Mary Ellen and her siblings, Arthur and Margaret Connor Keogh, have fond memories of Forbes Library as children. Mary Ellen recalled spending the day at the library, going home only for lunch, during a particularly difficult time after she lost her father. She was an avid and quick reader - reading 3 to 6 books a day! "Forbes saved us that summer," said Mary Ellen when reminiscing.

Regarding Mary Ellen's wonderful gift, library director Lisa Downing, said, "We are honored to have this named fund knowing that it will grow and continue to support the library for years to come."

If you are interested in learning more about the Judge Forbes Legacy Society please contact Lisa Downing at 413-587-1016 or director@forbeslibrary.org.

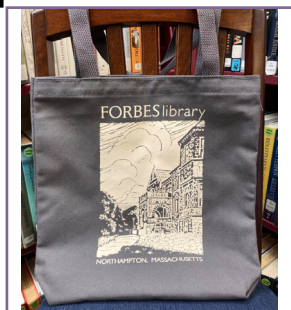
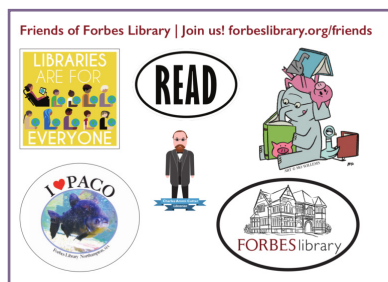
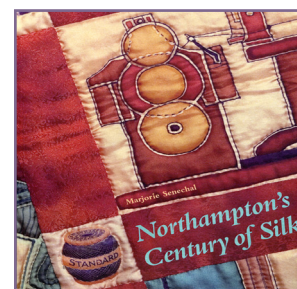
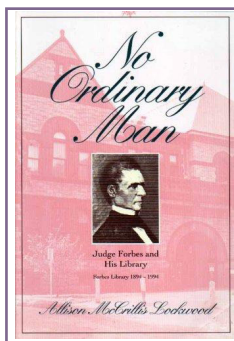
New T-Shirt Design

A new t-shirt is available featuring our own Calvin Coolidge and one of his more famous quotes. Available now from the Forbes Library Store, along with many other library and book related items for Holiday giving. <https://forbeslibrary.org/store>



"I Do Not Choose to Run"
-Calvin Coolidge

Forbes Library Northampton, Massachusetts
The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum





THOUGHTS ON GRACE

By Richard Szlosek



For the past decade I have been a volunteer docent at the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Museum in Forbes Library. In that time, I have heard countless tales of Coolidge's frugality, but I have never read or been told a disparaging anecdote about Grace. In fact, museum visitors these days seem to have as much interest in her as they do in the former president.

She was born Grace Goodhue in 1879 in Burlington, Vermont and graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in teaching in 1902. She accepted a position to teach deaf children at Clarke School and moved to Northampton that fall. (That teaching position would eventually make her the initial first lady to earn a paycheck in her own name.) While Grace was living in a residential hall on campus, Calvin was residing in a nearby apartment also located on the school property. When visitors to the museum ask how they met, I always relate the following story:

"One day Grace went out to water some flowers. She heard someone singing at the top of his voice and looked up at the top floor of a neighboring building. She spotted a red-headed man standing by an open window. He was in his long-johns and wearing a derby hat while shaving his face. She burst out laughing at the sight. Coolidge (for it was indeed he) heard the laughter, looked down, and decided he had to meet the young lady, which happened shortly thereafter. And so, of all the first ladies, Grace was the only one whose first glimpse of her future husband, in his underwear, caused her to laugh aloud." I tell that story because I think it makes the couple very human and not just lifeless, one dimensional characters in a history book.

Grace and Calvin were married in October 1905 in a small ceremony in the living room of her childhood home with only the couple's parents and a few friends present. Fewer than twenty years later the small-town lawyer and the former school-teacher would become the best-known couple in the nation. Calvin would remain in the public eye for the entire marriage, while for a long time Grace managed to maintain her privacy. The responsibility for raising their two sons largely fell on her shoulders, as Calvin was so often away in Boston. She volunteered with groups such as the Visiting Nurses Association and the Red Cross. She enjoyed long walks, playing the piano, knitting, and crocheting.

Although Grace valued her privacy, she was never aloof. This became very evident after Calvin was elected vice-president in 1920, and the couple moved to Washington. Grace was now expected to entertain dignitaries on a regular basis, and she excelled at it. When Grace became first lady, she blossomed at the formal state affairs, while the introverted Calvin seemed stiff and uneasy. He became "Silent Cal" and the source of humor, while Grace was always treated with respect. She grew immensely in the public's esteem after the tragic death of their sixteen-year-old son, Calvin Jr., in 1924. Other first couples had lost children while serving in the White House, but, unlike previous first ladies who had disappeared from view after the tragedy, Grace, despite the intense emotional pain she was enduring, was soon back in public and performing her responsibilities. Based on her character and demeanor, Grace was voted one of the ten most influential women in America in 1930. Nevertheless, the overwhelming grief caused by their son's death played a significant role in the couple's decision to leave Washington and return to Northampton after the election of 1928.



Calvin died on January 5, 1933, and a few years later Grace sold their home, known locally as the Beeches, and built a new one for herself on Ward Avenue. She wrote articles for some magazines in the mid 1930's but eventually resumed a life of privacy similar to the one she had lived prior to 1920. She continued to support many volunteer associations and served as a trustee for Clarke School and Mercerburg Academy, which had been attended by both her sons. During World War II she opened up her house for the benefit of the Smith College WAVE training program. Grace was an avid Red Sox fan – always listening to the games on the radio and often attending in person. She was often spotted shopping in downtown Northampton. Her last public appearance was at the dedication of the Coolidge Museum in Forbes Library in October 1956. She died on July 8, 1957 and was buried next to Calvin in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. Sixty-five years after her demise, she is still spoken of with respect and fondness by all who are familiar with her life.

Hosmer Gallery



December

Olwen Dowling
Mixed media

Dave Madeloni
photography

Brian McQuillan
Metal sculpture



Brian McQuillan



Olwen Dowling



Dave Madeloni

March

Margaret Lloyd
Paintings

Lydia Kinney
Paintings

Kate Marion Lapierre
Paintings



Margaret Lloyd



Kate Marion Lapierre

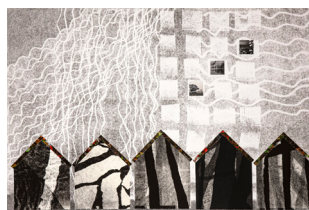


Lydia Kinney

April

Four Monoprint Collage Printmakers

Betsy Feick, Kate Jenkins,
Lynn Peterfreund, Rich Turnbull



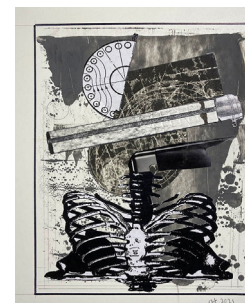
Betsy Feick



Lynn Peterfreund



Kate Jenkins



Rich Turnbull

January

Paul Yandoli
Photography

Cynthia Fisher
Mosaics



Paul Yandoli



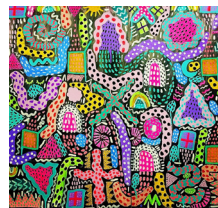
Cynthia Fisher

February

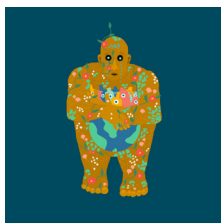
Ella Nathanael Alkiewicz
Paintings & digital art

Jay Smith
Digital art

Sunny Allis
Paintings



Sunny Allis



Jay Smith



Ella Nathanael Alkiewicz

May

JFK Middle School
Student Art Exhibition

Art For All: Expanding Access to Art with grant from LSTA/MBLC

Forbes Library was recently awarded a federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant for \$7500 from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).

With this support we will expand access to our art collections, removing barriers to access and engagement for people with and without disabilities or mobility issues, in person or remotely. The Library’s extensive collection of Fine and Decorative Arts has been evolving more rapidly in recent years, reflecting our commitment to inclusive, diverse, and current collection development. The value of these acquisitions depends on their being accessible to users in and out of the library building. We will create large-print labels with links to audio description of the art works, so visitors in the library can explore the art works more easily. And in October we had a 3-day professional photoshoot to produce high quality digital photographs of art and objects in the collections. These images will be included in the new online collection management system we’ll launch in 2023, so people anywhere in the world will be able to access them and increase their knowledge and appreciation of these unique works, the people who created them, and the communities they represent.

Paco

Meet Paco, Forbes’ most popular staff member! She’s a South American freshwater fish called a pacu. Paco is about 33 years old; pacu fish live long lives. Several years ago, a pet psychic visited Forbes and, after consulting with Paco, informed the library that Paco is female!

Children love Paco; many of them make visiting Paco their first priority on arriving at the library. Paco will come to the front of her aquarium to greet her fans and will often swim back and forth with them, playing ‘tag’! She’s extremely social and very interactive with those who visit her. Her favorite snacks are strawberries and bananas. You might wonder if Paco is lonely being by herself in her tank but it’s actually best that way; pacu fish prefer to be housed alone.

Generations of children have visited with Paco. However, it’s not just children who are fans; many adults also make visiting with Paco a priority when visiting Forbes. At the recent Artisans Fair the first person who bought a Paco t-shirt was a young adult who grew up with Paco. If you haven’t had a chance to meet Paco yet, she can be found in the children’s section downstairs at Forbes. Spend some time with with her. She’s great company!



And don’t forget to buy your Paco t-shirt!

Paco’s People’s Institute Friends



Left: by Priya Greene
Progressions 1, 2020 Oil on Canvas

Right: by Ryan Murray
The Transition, 2017 Spray paint on canvas

Two of the new acquisitions from the BIPOC Art Fund that are now on display in the library