

Friends of Forbes Library

Newsletter

Celebrating 45 Years

Artisans Fair

The 4th annual Forbes Artisans Fair was held on October 25 under sunny skies. The fair has become an anticipated local event, and shoppers were able to browse and purchase a variety of hand-crafted items from 49 vendors. From watercolors and pottery to artisan soap and jewelry, it was the perfect opportunity to get a jump on holiday shopping.

Musical performances by the Park Hill Boys, The Forbes Ukulele Strum Group and the Fiddle Orchestra of Western MA added to the festive atmosphere, and the musicians were able to play on the new performance stage.



There were long lines at the food vendors, including Masa Mexicano, Thai Garden, Holyoke Hummus Co., and Crooked Stick Pops.

The fair is one of our two major fundraisers, and this was our most successful year. Thanks to our sponsors and community support for the event, we were able to raise over \$9,000 which will go directly to help finance library programs and initiatives. We will soon begin planning next year's event, so stay tuned.

Exciting New Construction

This fall, construction began on a new youth programming room that will enable the library to increase programming for young people and serve more families.. The room will be located in the children's department, adjacent to the Wizard of Oz Room in the children's nonfiction section in space that was most recently used for storage. The room will be specifically designed to meet the needs of children, teens, and families and will free up the Community Room, the library's other main programming room, for adult events, thereby enabling the library to serve more patrons of all ages.

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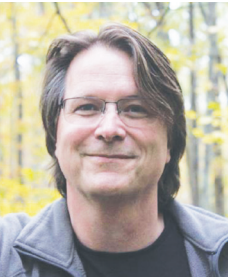


Newly Elected Trustees



Shelly Ruocco

Shelly brings over 25 years of HR experience to this role. She has supported Forbes in areas of need including policy, recruitment, compensation and racial and social justice. She notes that Forbes is a central gathering place for all who wish to access it. She wants to support this 'community gem' and its multitude of efforts to serve the community. Her priorities are to ensure that Forbes has the necessary funding to keep the collection updated, its staff compensation fair, building and renovation efforts on track, and relevant programming for the whole community.



Fred Kass

Fred has spent almost 30 years working for liberal arts college libraries and information technology organizations. He is skilled in budgeting and process improvement.

He supports continued improvement in the same areas that Forbes is already focused on, around its values of Welcoming, Inspiring, and Equity. What he appreciates about Forbes Library is its ability to be responsive to community needs. His vision is for a library that continues to make improvements to make it an even more welcoming, inspiring, and equitable place than it already is.



Rebekah Anderson

Rebekah is a retired librarian with over 40 years of experience. She notes that Northampton is blessed to be served by Forbes. She would like to see Forbes Library continue its strong commitment to its mission while changing with the times.

She stated that Forbes is strongly committed to serving its community by adapting to new and changing needs of the community, taking advantage of new opportunities, technologies, partnerships, service models, funding, and more. She recognizes and supports the continued ideas and opportunities that the library has.



Lolan Sevilla

Lolan has spent her career organizing across sectors – from service providers and public defenders to medical professionals and philanthropic funders. These experiences have helped her to gain skills to build relationships, mobilize resources, and bring people together across differences.

She noted that Forbes Library is a cornerstone of civic life and she wants to help ensure it continues to be welcoming, equitable, and inspiring for everyone. She notes that as technology transforms how people engage with information, Forbes needs to keep future generations connected to the soul of what libraries offer: belonging, creativity, and the joy of discovery.

Garden Tour

The 31st Annual Friends of Forbes Library Northampton Garden Tour took place on Saturday, June 14. The slightly wet start did not deter lovers of gardens and fans of Forbes Library from exploring the six beautiful home gardens. Each year the Tour inspires and educates with a variety of landscape styles, plants, and gardening methods.

Live music and plein-air painters provided further entertainment for tour participants. The raffle prizes included a garden bench, organic compost, gift certificates, and garden supplies.

All proceeds from the tour, raffle and t-shirt sales benefit the Friends of Forbes Library, Inc to support library programs, events, and projects that could not otherwise be funded. This year's Tour raised almost \$22,000.

If you've ever wondered, how can I financially support Forbes Library, there are a number of ways to make a contribution. One is to become a Friends of Forbes Library (FoF) member. Any donation to the FoF makes you a member! Besides all of the membership money going directly to the library, the FoF established an endowment fund in 2001 from a bequest of the estate of a local patron. The endowment money has been invested in a diverse portfolio managed by a Massachusetts-based financial management company.

**Friends of
Forbes Library**

Online (credit card)

Visit friends.forbeslibrary.org to donate via credit card, PayPal, or Venmo.

Or use this QR Code



Mail (check)

Send your check made out to Friends of Forbes Library to P.O. Box 1363, Northampton, MA 01060.

Bequests and Deferred Giving

Email friends@forbeslibrary.org to let us know about your intentions. Sample language is available on the Forbes Library's giving page forbeslibrary.org/giving. Individuals including the library in their estate plans are honored as members of the Charles Forbes Legacy Society.

IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can make a tax-free distribution from your IRA. Email friends@forbeslibrary.org with questions. Checks made out to Friends of Forbes Library can be mailed to P.O. Box 1363, Northampton, MA 01060.

In Person

Library staff at all service desks will be able to take your donation.

Why We are Members of the Friends

I love reading and am always somewhat amazed that I can read for free - and so easily - through my Libby app. I value how the library, and public libraries as institutions, are accessible to all without cost. I also appreciate how Forbes puts extra effort into expansive community programming and creating points of contact. I give to Forbes to support their strong community engagement and to support the library's core mission.

From Member Lisa Clauson:



I give to Friends of Forbes because I love books! Reading is one of my favorite activities when I want to relax, and as an early childhood teacher I get to share the magic of reading with my students. Not only do I appreciate checking out books and museum passes from Forbes, but I also appreciate that our library supports civic outreach and community events.

From Member
Danielle L'Heureux

Dedication of the Hess Performance Stage

On September 13, a warm Saturday marked by sunshine and a few brief rain showers, Northampton Mayor Gina Louise Sciarra and the Trustees of Forbes Library cut the ribbon to officially dedicate the Hess Performance Stage. A happy crowd of supporters and friends gathered on the lawn to witness the dedication and to dance, even in the rain, to the lively music of the O-Tones, the first group to officially perform on the new stage. Forbes Library Director Lisa Downing, State Senator Jo Comerford, Representative to the General Court Lindsay Sabadosa, Mayor Sciarra, stage designer and architect Rick Katsonos from HAI Architecture, and Marjorie Hess herself all spoke to the variety of performances that the stage would be used for.

The open-air stage faces northwest, looking out onto the sloping lawn. It has a ramped handicap access, lights and electricity, and a sound system. The project was funded by substantial gifts from former Trustee of Forbes Library Marjorie Hess, and Rudolph Talaber, as well as support provided by the Friends of Forbes Library, the city of Northampton, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, MassDevelopment, AARP Massachusetts, and many, many individual donors.



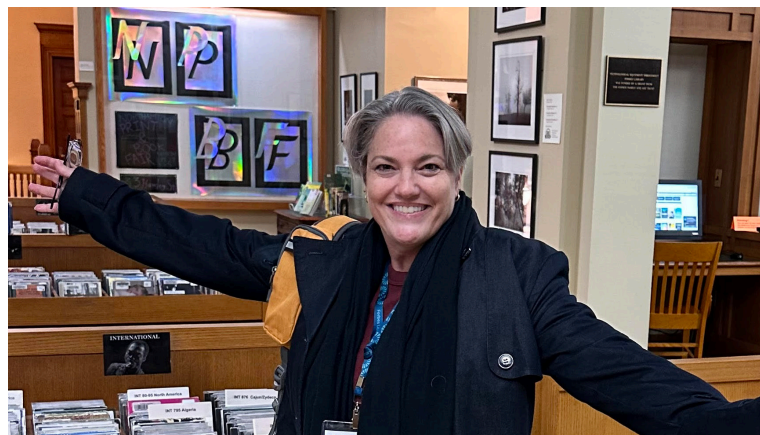
Here is a simple way to donate up to \$5,000 to the Friends of Forbes

Florence Savings Bank Free Money for Forbes

If you are a Florence Bank Customer, simply fill out their on-line Community Choice ballot and vote for us! You may also fill out a ballot at the circulation desk at the library or at the bank. PLEASE VOTE before December 31st.

Introducing our new Adult Services Librarian

Robin Williams recently joined the staff at Forbes as the new Adult Services Librarian. She comes to Forbes from Athens, GA, after seventeen years as a Digital Content Specialist at Oracle Corporation. Before joining Oracle,



Robin taught computers and English in California and Moscow at all levels from kindergarten to adults. She is fluent in Spanish and Russian, and conversant in several other languages, useful skills for a librarian in a city like ours. Robin, who's a very social person, worked from home while she was at Oracle and missed connecting with people. She says she loves working at Forbes, and has from her first day. She says the library surprises her every day.

Robin loves the number and variety of people she meets. Helping them find answers to questions or solutions to problems and helping them discover their own abilities has always been important to her. She

has helped people work through the unemployment bureaucracy, and spoke of helping a mother add her children's numbers to her favorites on a new phone.

In her off-work life, Robin enjoys martial arts, video games ("more than I should") and taking her three dogs to the park. She also writes a comedy fiction podcast "Great Voice No Training" and is a voice actor, whom you might have heard in a training video or commercial. She has found Northampton welcoming and lively. There were no sidewalks where she lived in Georgia, so she enjoys walking to restaurants and parks. Robin brings a delightful energy and, as you can see, an engaging smile to Forbes Library.

Reflections on the New Youth Programming Room Construction Project



by Paco, Resident Pacu & Noticer of All Things Vibrational at Forbes Library

Hello, friends! Paco here — your loyal library fish, swimming in my tank as usual in the children’s department... except lately, things haven’t been quite as usual. I can’t see the construction of the new youth programming room from where I swim, but I’ve definitely been hearing it. During the demolition, which is almost done now, I have heard and felt all kinds of surprising and unfamiliar noises and vibrations — big thuds, clanks, rumbles, scrapes, and drilling. This isn’t scary for me, but I must have had a worried look on my face, because one of the construction workers came over and said, “Paco, sorry we’re making so much noise, but we’re making something beautiful in there. You know all those kids you love seeing visit your tank? We’re going to put some big smiles on their faces when we’re done.” A bright, welcoming new space for stories, creativity, and gatherings of young friends is coming — more people for me to meet!

Until then, I’ll be here listening, observing, and staying curious...
— Paco



July 2024-June 2025
in Review



Over 215,000 visits by library patrons!

+9%

+22%

Over 500,000 items circulated!



13,757 adults attended programs

+95%

+65%

596 children and teens participated in the summer reading program



+10%

Over 22,000 computer sessions



1,842 meeting room reservations



+8% and new study nook

forbeslibrary.org

Coolidge Corner



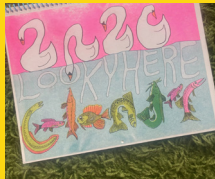
With design plans complete, the campaign to fund the Coolidge Museum renovation is underway. We are excited about what vibrant, new exhibits will mean to increase visitation and help boost the regional tourism and hospitality industry. If you would like to contribute to this project, you may do so on the museum’s website at:
<https://forbeslibrary.org/coolidge/giving/>.

We are happy to announce that we’ve received a \$3,000 Community Preservation Act grant from the city to help cover the costs of repairing and preserving the city Council desk used by Calvin Coolidge when he served in city government. The desk will be incorporated into the new exhibits.

In other news, as part of the on-going Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum’s Centennial Series, a panel discussion, Coolidge and the Jewish Community in the 1920s, was held at Congregation B’Nai Israel. Jennifer Young, education program manager at the Yiddish Book Center, and Aaron Berman, professor emeritus at Hampshire College, were the guest speakers. Bill Scher, vice president of the Coolidge Standing Committee, moderated the discussion. The event was well attended and well received. Both the Presidents and the Herstory book groups continue to explore both presidents and notable women in history. You may join at any time if you’re interested. Details are on the museum website.

Hosmer Gallery

December 2025



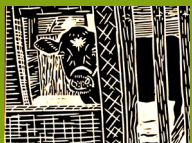
Looky Here calendar show

March 2026



Susan Byrne, Kate Jenkins, Judith Wolf, & Malinda Labriola

January 2026



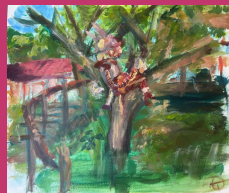
Esther S White, Chenda Cope, Myrrh Brooks, & Sasha Kopf

April 2026

The Fiberistas



February 2026



Forbes Library staff art show

May 2026

JFK Middle School Art Show

(continued from page 1)

We look forward to having a programming room that will be bright, welcoming and comfortable for our young patrons,” said Lisa Downing, Library Director. “This space will be an integral part of the community and will open up countless opportunities for children and teens to learn, explore, and build new friendships.”

The youth programming room is being made possible by funding from the City of Northampton through the Capital Improvement Plan as well as additional funding by the Friends of Forbes Library and private donations. Funding to furnish the room is still needed and the library welcomes donations from the public. Please donate today towards outfitting the youth programming room with child-sized furniture, technology, and other equipment so that it can be an accessible, flexible, inspiring place for children and their friends to gather and learn.

for donations use this QR Code

