



Friends of Forbes Newsletter

Garden Tour 2026

The Friends of Forbes Library Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, June 13, from 10 am to 4 pm, rain or shine. The tour raises funds to support Northampton's historic public library. Attendees will explore six diverse and lovely home gardens with a variety of landscape styles, plants, and gardening methods on display.

Volunteer guides are available at each garden to answer questions about plants and gardens. There will be live music at several gardens as well as plein-air painters for your enjoyment. All gardens are located within 5 miles of the library.

Tour tickets are \$20 if bought in advance or \$25 on the day of the event. Day of tour tickets are only sold at Forbes Library from 10 am – 1 pm on Saturday, June 13.

Tickets can be purchased from May 4 through June 12 at Bay State Perennial Farm (Whately), Cooper's Corner (Florence), State Street Fruit Store (Northampton), Sugarloaf Gardens (Sunderland), or at Forbes Library.

For ease of purchase, tickets may be paid for online through the Friends of Forbes Library website (friends.forbeslibrary.org) and picked up in person during Forbes Library hours Thursday evening – Saturday morning the week of the tour (June 11-13).

Again, this year, there are wonderful **raffle prizes** including a beautiful garden bench, a set of planting urns, a garden theme quilted throw, organic compost, gift certificates, and garden supplies. Raffle tickets are available for purchase at the tour or at Forbes Library May 4 - June 13. The raffle drawing will take place at the end of the tour and winners will be notified by phone.

Northampton Garden Tour t-shirts may be purchased during the tour at Forbes Library and at the Tour itself. The cost is \$25 each or 2 for \$40.

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.



The Coolidge Corner



The new design for the Coolidge Museum features more dynamic exhibits and will give the visitor a better understanding of the complex man who was more than just "Silent Cal." Coolidge's story would not be complete, however, without the inclusion of his wife, Grace, whose warmth and sociability were an asset to his career and softened his image. She became a very popular first lady. The new exhibits will shine a light on Grace as First Lady but will also highlight her deep connection with Northampton.

Calvin Coolidge is often first on a list of notable people from Northampton, but it is Grace who spent the longest time here. The Coolidges chose to return to Northampton after his presidency. After his death in 1933, Grace remained in Northampton and lived here until her death in 1957.

Grace valued her privacy, but she was very active in the community. She attracted little attention because people were so used to seeing her. She frequented local shops, attended the theater, sold aprons at the Edwards Church bazaars, and poured tea at Smith College events.

There are still people in town who can remember seeing Grace walking on Main Street, nodding and smiling hello, shopping at McCallum's or having lunch at Wiggins Tavern. She deserves a place in local history, and the new museum design will give Grace her due.



Summer Reading for Kids!

You're invited to a Summer Reading Kickoff Party on Saturday, June 20!

Enjoy live music, hula hooping on the lawn, have a popsicle, and sign up for Summer Reading! We'll have:

10-11am Live Performance from the Grumpy-time Club Band

11am-12pm Hula Hooping on the Lawn with Wildkat Hoops

We have lots of special events planned all summer long, including a make-your-own fairy house program, escape rooms with Wick-ed Fun Games, a kids' pasta making program with Food Explorers, and a magic show with Scott Martel! Learn more at forbeslibrary.org/events.

We Have a brand-new Youth Programing Room!

The bright space was carved out of a storage area and turned into an inviting place for kids, teens, and caregivers to attend library programming. "We have been dreaming of a space like this for a long time", said library director Lisa Downing. The grand opening event was an author reading by Esme Shapiro of her latest picture book, *Ruthie*, in front of a woodland mural painted by Shapiro. "All of us at Forbes are so honored to have Esmé's work here on our wall for our whole community to enjoy. She somehow was able to capture exactly the feeling we hoped our room would evoke," said Sarah Johnson, Head of Children's and Young Adult Services. After the reading, there was a *Ruthie*-shaped cake to enjoy along with a craft activity. This room will be the hub of activity for everyone from babies through teens and we are so grateful to the **Friends of Forbes** who helped build and furnish it. Please stop by and see it next time you are in the library



Sarah Johnson and Esme Shapiro

Welcome, Harrison



If you see a new face in the Public Services desk at Forbes that seems to look familiar, you're probably seeing Harrison Greene. Harrison has worked for the library for 7 years, part-time in Facilities and part-time in Borrower Services, where he was trained by the legendary Brian Taber. He also worked with Dylan Gaffney on Outside Voices, a grant-funded project to strengthen local history resources at Forbes, with a focus on oral history and digitization. This spring his household hosted Esme Shapiro while she painted the mural in the new Youth Programming Room.

Harrison has lived in Western Massachusetts for about 16 years. He has been a musician, ski instructor and studied journalism at UMass. In his free time Harrison enjoys music and hiking. Later this spring, he'll be travelling to Colorado for a mountain hiking adventure with a friend.

When asked what he likes best about his work, Harrison said helping people find what they need and making sure they have access to resources. Harrison is in exactly the right place!

Trustees Award

Each year the Trustees of Forbes Library honor a community member who has given exceptional volunteer service to Forbes Library. The Gertrude P. Smith Trustee Award will be given to J.R. Greene and Debin Bruce on Thursday, June 11th at 6:30 pm. The event will be held on the new Hess Performance Stage with the Coolidge Museum as a backup location in the event of rain. Folk singers Tracy Grammer and Jim Henry will perform after a brief award ceremony. This event is open to the public.

J.R. Greene served as the President of the Coolidge Standing Committee for many years, stepping down last year. He is an authority on Coolidge history as well as the Quabbin Reservoir and has shared his wisdom generously. Debin Bruce served as an exemplary Trustee of Forbes Library. During her tenure, she spearheaded the effort to build an outdoor stage. Both recipients embody the spirit of the award.

Library Giving Day

Library Giving Day 2026 was a big success with 338 donors donating \$55,790. The Friends of Forbes was excited to have been part of this fantastic day by providing \$25,000 in matching funds.

Gifts from Library Giving Day will work in support of the new renovation for the Children's and Youth Programming rooms and the many library and community events that will take place in that new space. The money will also support the library in its mission to grow its collection in a way that reflects and celebrates our diverse community. Many individuals chose to make their Library Giving Day contribution in honor of former long-time Trustee, Russell Carrier.

Thank you again for joining the Friends to make Library Giving Day a success and for all that your gifts make possible for Forbes!

**Florence 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.

florencebank.com/vote Friends of Forbes

RUSS CARRIER STEPS DOWN AS TRUSTEE

Russ Carrier was first elected to the Board of Trustees in 1981 and was chosen as President of the Board at his very first meeting. Over the next four decades, his leadership helped shape nearly every major improvement to the library. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Russ guided the library through a decade of ambitious renovations that restored the historic building, modernized its infrastructure, redesigned every floor, and introduced computer technology throughout the library. His leadership continued through major projects in the years that followed, including extensive exterior repairs in 2008 and a renovation of the Children's Department in 2010. In 2013, Russ spearheaded the campaign to fund the accessible elevator at the library's front entrance, dramatically improving access to the building. More recently, he led fundraising efforts for the library's outdoor performance stage, renovations of children's and teen spaces, and planning for a major redesign of the Coolidge Musum.



Over the course of his tenure, Russ worked alongside three library directors, four Northampton mayors, and generations of trustees. Twice, he helped guide the library through legal processes to expand the size of the Board of Trustees, strengthening governance for the future. His steady leadership also helped the library navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining a strong partnership between the City of Northampton and the library.

During his time as Board President, Russ celebrated several important milestones in the library's history, including the 100th and 125th anniversaries of Forbes Library and the 50th anniversary of the Coolidge Museum. He helped usher the library into the digital age, served as a founding member of the **Friends of Forbes Library**, and played a key role in establishing endowment funds that continue to provide vital support today. The 130-year-old Forbes Library building stands in beautiful condition thanks in no small part to Russ's decades of dedicated volunteer service.

HEALTHY BONES AND BALANCE



Forbes Library has recently added a new program to its offerings; Healthy Bones and Balance. Mary Biddle, Head of Borrower Services, became a certified instructor so she could lead the classes. Equipment was happily funded by the **Friends of Forbes**. Sessions are held on Mondays from 11 am - noon and Thursdays from 1 - 2 pm, in the Forbes Community Room.

The class begins with gentle movements and then Mary guides the group through an hour of strength and balance exercises - seated and standing - using light hand weights, a medium sized rubber ball, and two squeeze balls. Calf raises, squats, hammer curls, isometric facial movement - every muscle from ankles to eyeballs is targeted.

Participants have developed a sense of community that is fun and friendly, non-competitive, and supportive. Many have noticed improved balance, especially when walking on uneven sidewalks and icy surfaces. An extra bonus - they go home with some good books! Anyone interested can sign up through the Forbes weekly event calendar.



Mary Biddle and the
Healthy Bones and Balance Class

Winter Exquisite, 2026: Zine Fest and Puppet Pageant

Forbes Library hosted Zine Club's 2nd Annual Winter Exquisite, a month-long multi-media event featuring artists from the region and beyond. Zine Club is a staff-organized program focused on print-arts and self-publishing, with Pam Acosta and Steven Stover currently holding the reins. Originally conceived as a drop-in for teens, this multi-faceted enterprise holds monthly intergenerational drop-in meetings and engages the community through artist talks, skill development workshops, and seasonal events, as well as managing the growing zine collection. Winter Exquisite is their signature event, consisting of a month-long art exhibit, a one-day zine fest, and one-day puppet pageant. This year it played host to more than fifty artists across several mediums and was attended by over 1,000 attendees. The puppetry show drew many participants including delighted children.

Zine Fests, similar to artisan fairs, are an international phenomenon that celebrate artists whose work centers around printed media, commonly small-edition self-published books made on xerox machines or by enlisting the services of local copy shops. Artists sell their wares to the public.



The Friends of Forbes Library
Presents an

Artisans Fair

The Friends of Forbes will be holding its fifth Annual
Artisan Fair on

Sunday, October 4th. from 10am to 3pm

Please join us for this fun fall event.

We will feature 50 artisans selling
a wide array of art and craft.

There will be food trucks, raffles, music and fun.

Every year has seen growing crowds and all profits go
to the

Friends of Forbes. Mark your calendars!

If you are interested in **sponsoring** our Fair, please
contact us at friends@forbeslibrary.org

If you would like to participate as an Artisan,
go to our web page for an application
forbeslibrary.org/friends

Hampshire Room for Local History & Special Collections: The Power of Partnerships

Slavery and Freedom in Northampton, 1654 - 1783 at Historic Northampton

Forbes' local history staff and volunteers collaborated with Historic Northampton to create this groundbreaking exhibit that explores the role of slavery in the city's history. At least 50 identified enslaved individuals lived in Northampton from the time of the town's founding in 1654 until 1783 when slavery was abolished in Massachusetts. Documents discovered at Forbes are featured prominently in the exhibit. Dylan Gaffney, local history specialist at Forbes, was a member of the exhibit committee. Slavery and Freedom in Northampton, 1654 - 1783 is on display at Historic Northampton until December 11, 2026.

Positively Center Street: An Iron Horse History Event

Forbes helped bring to life the city's rich music history in February when the Iron Horse marked its 47th anniversary. Hosted by Jim Olsen, founder Jordi Herold and others shared memories and backstage stories of the music hall's early years. Highlights of the Library's Iron Horse archive – including posters, photos, shirts, and calendars – were on display at this stirring celebration of the beloved venue's impact.

Friends of Forbes is proud to support these and other projects of the Hampshire Room for Local History & Special Collections - thank you to our members for making this possible!



Hosmer Gallery
at Forbes Library

June
The People's
Puppet Parade

July
Angela Zammarelli
Hannah Brookman

August
Maggie Whittemore
13 Roots Art
Laura Boban

September
Lennie Kaumzha
Laura C. Davis
Catherine Aiello

October
David Andrews
Brian McQuillan
Maryanne Bennis

November 2026
James Crowell
Michael Donahue
The Sunflower Dreams
Project.
Curated by Robert Freedman



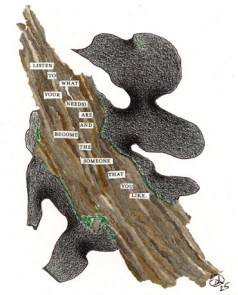
Robert Freedman



Maryanne Bennis



Laura C. Davis



David Andrews



Sequoia LeBreux BurntHill



The Sunflower Dreams Project.



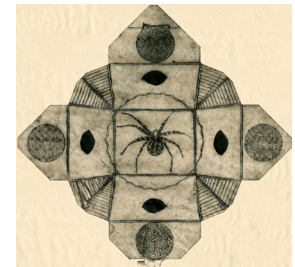
Michael Donahue



Laura Boban



The People's Puppet Parade



Angela Zammarelli



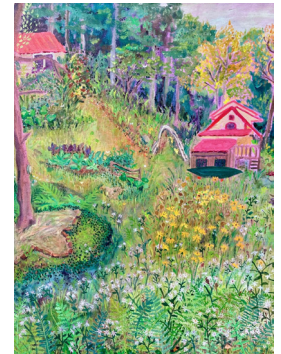
Brian McQuillan



Catherine Aiello



Lennie Kaumzha



Hannah Brookman



James Crowell

Staff Display

The staff of Forbes took over the Hosmer Gallery in February to display examples of their own creativity with an exhibit titled "What We Do in the Shadows." And creative they are— there were sculptures, paintings, drawings, photographs, fiber art and quilts! A collection entitled "Missed Connections" was found art, a collection of ephemeral objects found in library books at Forbes, things like postcards, hand-drawn cartoons, autumn leaves, and photos. We can hope this will be an annual event.

