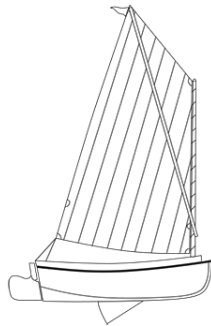


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The Spritsail is a small boat rig of respectable antiquity used around the world. Its name comes from the sprit, a spar comparable to a gaff, but attached much lower on the mast.

The sprit crosses diagonally to the uppermost corner of the sail, which it extends and elevates. The Woods Hole Spritsail Boat was originally used for fishing and later became popular among local and summer residents for racing and sailing. —Mary Lou Smith

## From the Editors

With this summer issue of *Spritsail*, four different articles highlight the accomplishments of scientists and community leaders in our coastal town of Falmouth. Deborah G. Scanlon and Donald S. Burke describe the convergence of future polio titans Jonas Salk, Isabel Morgan, David Bodian, and Albert Sabin at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, whose later research resulted in the polio vaccine.

Robert Reynolds writes about Mary Sears, who overcame gender discrimination to become among the first female oceanographers. At the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, she was known as “the conscience of oceanography.” Recognizing her service during World War II, the US Navy named a research ship after her, the USNS *Mary Sears*.

Captain John Christian grew up in a house across from Little Harbor in Woods Hole, receiving his first spinning reel when he was 10 years old. Jane Griffin Burke describes Captain John’s early exploration of Vineyard Sound and his career as a charter guide and fisherman.

Joanne Briana-Gartner chronicles the evolution of the “Falmouth Reads Together” program over the past 20 years. This shared reading experience is a town-wide activity to encourage literacy as a community event. The first book selection in 2003 was *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, with *Station Eleven* by Hilary St. John Mandel as the 2023 selection.

# Convergence of Science in Woods Hole and the Polio Vaccine

*By Deborah G. Scanlon and Donald S. Burke*

Every summer hundreds of scientists and students converge on Woods Hole. Some are already famous; many are just getting started on their careers. And some of them will later change the world.

At the dedication of the Polio Hall of Fame by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis in 1958, 15 leaders in the effort to eradicate polio were honored. Among those at the ceremony in Warm Springs, Georgia, were four scientists with Woods Hole connections: Jonas Salk, Isabel Morgan, David Bodian, and Albert Sabin.

All four had conducted research at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in the late 1930s. In 1938, Salk, Morgan, Bodian, and Sabin, were just at the start of their scientific careers, at 24, 27, 28, and 32 years of age respectively. Years later in the mid-1950s, the research of these scientists led to the development of the first effective polio vaccines, even though no one would have predicted decades earlier that they would later emerge as world leaders in polio vaccine development.

## Jonas Salk

The individual most acknowledged for the polio vaccine is Jonas Salk, whose inactivated polio vaccine was licensed on April 12, 1955.



Jonas Salk, holding flasks of cell cultures with cell culture fluid, presumably infected with polio virus.  
(Courtesy of University of Pittsburgh)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), by 1957 annual cases had dropped from 58,000 to 5,600, and by 1961 only 161 cases remained. Dr. Salk became a national hero.

He was graduated from City College of New York in 1934 and entered New York University College of Medicine in the fall of that year. During his second year he took a year off from

his medical studies to work in the laboratory of R. Keith Cannan, a professor of chemistry at the school. His son, Peter Salk, thinks his leave was due to finances because a stipend was likely associated with the position in Dr. Cannan's lab.

Jonas Salk's stay in Woods Hole only lasted two summers, but his time here was formative.

Every year, Cannan selected several students from his first-year medical school chemistry class to work in his MBL lab in the summer. During the summer of 1936, Jonas Salk was a "fellow in chemistry" working on the "biochemistry of proteins" with Keith Cannan, according to his MBL application. The following year he worked again at the MBL for Dr. F.W. Cotui on "Pyrogen - particularly the pyrogen of the typhoid bacillus."

Cannan's daughter, Cecily Cannan Selby, fondly remembers the students who would gather in their house on Gardiner Road across from Gosnold Road. In a recent interview, she recalls Jonas and "how very nice he was when he visited our house." She was 10 years old and loved the tweed jacket he wore. "I had a crush on him because of that jacket."

Later in life, they became close friends, and in her book, *Opening Science For All*, she recalls that Jonas told her "about his beginnings as a poor boy from the Bronx who chose medicine, at first, as a 'way to get out of the ghetto,' until my father brought him to Woods Hole. There, Jonas said, 'I discovered research, and there was no turning back.' "

That year was also notable because Jonas Salk met his future wife, Donna Lindsay, in Woods Hole.

Donna was best friends with Marianne Kaufmann, and both lived in Central Park West in New York City and attended high school together, Birch Wathen School in Manhattan, and Smith College, each graduating summa cum laude and members of Phi Beta Kappa.

Marianne's family spent summer vacations in Woods Hole, where Donna would visit Marianne. During the summer of 1937, a friend set them up on a blind double date with two medical students who were at the MBL: Marianne with Jonas Salk and Donna with Renato Ricca. It was a success, even though they switched partners.



Donna Lindsay (left) came to Woods Hole with her friend and Smith College classmate, Marianne Kaufmann (right), whose family spent summers here. Donna met her future husband, Jonas Salk, and Marianne met her future husband, Renato Ricca, in Woods Hole. (Photo from Smith College yearbook, courtesy of Andrea Ricca)

*Jonas told her "about his beginnings as a poor boy from the Bronx who chose medicine, at first, as a 'way to get out of the ghetto,' until my father brought him to Woods Hole. There, Jonas said, 'I discovered research, and there was no turning back.' "*



Donna and Jonas Salk with Jonas's brothers.  
(Photo courtesy of Peter Salk)

In her diary, Donna writes about meeting Jonas Salk, "a damn nice kid." They married in June 1939, shortly after his graduation from medical school because Donna's father "wanted to have an 'M.D.' after my father's name on the wedding announcement," Peter Salk said.

Marianne married Renato Ricca and according to their daughter Andrea Ricca, Donna and Marianne remained close friends for years.

Jonas and Donna Salk moved to Michigan, where he focused on influenza immunization at the University of Michigan, later moving to the University of Pittsburgh where he conducted his studies on the killed-virus vaccine for polio. By 1955, Salk's polio vaccine was made available to the general public.

### Isabel Morgan

If Jonas Salk was the best known polio researcher, Isabel Morgan was one of the least recognized. Author David Oshinsky in his book, *Polio: An American Story*, speculates that Dr. Morgan might "have beaten Dr. Salk to the polio vaccine" but she left her research at Johns Hopkins University for several reasons, family being the primary one, and she felt strongly about not testing a vaccine on humans. She was also working in an era when women were paid less and not taken as seriously as men. Her research, however, was key to the later development of the vaccine.

Isabel was the youngest daughter of biologists Thomas Hunt Morgan, who won the No-

bel prize in 1933, and Lilian Vaughn Sampson, one of the founders of the Children's School of Science. She was born in 1911 in St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, the hospital closest to Woods Hole at the time. She studied and obtained degrees at Stanford, Cornell, and the University of Pennsylvania, writing her doctoral thesis on "Histopathological changes produced in rabbits by experimental inoculation with hemolytic streptococci and certain of their component factors." In 1938 she took a position with Peter Olitsky at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York to work on viruses that invaded the nervous system. In 1944, Morgan joined a group of virologists, including David Bodian and Howard Howe, at Johns Hopkins.

Her father started doing research at the MBL in 1890, and had spent the previous summer at the US Bureau of Fisheries. After a fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, he became chair of the biology department at Bryn Mawr College, succeeding his good friend, E.B. Wilson, who was also at the MBL.

Isabel Morgan shared her memories with the Woods Hole Historical Museum in 1987. She relayed the story of how her parents met when Wilson brought Lilian Vaughn Sampson, a student of his, to the MBL's "wooden laboratory" (Old Main) to meet Morgan.



Isabel Morgan Mountain, in the late 1980s, in her summer home on Buzzards Bay Avenue. (Photo courtesy of MBL Archives)

Wilson took Lilian to the lab building and "fetched Morgan who was engrossed in an experiment in marine sea spiders. Dr. Morgan, wiping the sea water from his hands with his handkerchief, appeared, blinking in the bright light outdoors, scarcely revealing his customary charm. He remained barely long enough for conventional courtesy, then ducked back to his experiments."

Fortunately, he later spent more time with Lilian, and they were married in 1904.

In 1906, Lilian and Thomas Morgan spent the summer at the MBL with their newborn son, boarding at the house on the corner of North Street and Albatross. That winter, they hired a builder, Edward Bowles, to construct a new house at the end of Buzzards Bay Avenue near



Gardiner Road. The house was a vibrant home for the family of six. But there were no frills, Isabel recalled, with one bathroom and one lavatory in the basement. "Swimming substituted for bathing!"

In 1913, the Morgans purchased additional land near their house for gardening, including the farm of Isaac W. Grinnell and an adjacent lot from Sarah H. Prescott. The deed, Isabel Morgan wrote, read "Beginning at the post and ditch adjoining the marsh of Benjamin R. Gifford, deceased, running south-westerly 67 feet more or less, to a post and ditch adjoining the marsh of Joseph S. Fay...."

They bought seedlings from the Columbia University greenhouse across the street from their house on 117th Street and brought them on the ferry from Fall River to the barn in Woods Hole. They also had pigeons, and a cow that provided enough milk for the neighborhood.

Thomas Morgan was affiliated with the MBL from 1890 to 1945 as faculty, investigator, corporation member and trustee. Lilian Vaughn Morgan was an MBL investigator from 1891 to 1906, and had an MBL affiliation through 1943. Isabel's connection with the MBL start-

ed in 1931, when she was a student in physiology in 1931, then in 1937 as a beginning investigator, returning in 1939, 1940 and 1941 as an investigator. She was an MBL Corporation member from 1941 to 1948.

After Thomas Morgan died in 1945, Lilian Morgan sold the house at the end of Buzzards Bay Avenue. But Isabel "became more and more wistful over the prospect of pulling out of Woods Hole completely."

Her mother deeded her the barn and Isabel had it rebuilt as a cottage by local builder Herbert McLane.

At the time, she was at Johns Hopkins University, "engaged in research on poliomyelitis. Little did I know that I would be married within the year to Joseph D. Mountain, complete with an 8 1/2-year-old son," she recalled. "Joe and Jim and I came for a short time every summer, swimming, snorkeling and sailing on our sailfish..."

"Jim was killed in a plane crash in 1960, coming home from college. After Joe's death in 1970, I gradually spent more and more time in Woods Hole." She left her job at Johns Hopkins and got a master's degree in biostatistics. She never returned to polio research.

### ***First Salk Vaccine Due This Afternoon***

**First Salk vaccine is expected to reach Falmouth this afternoon, a small consignment of several vials ordered for Dr. Donald S. Bullock by Madden's Pharmacy. It may be the first to reach the Cape. The vaccine will come from Parke Davis & Co., the pharmaceutical firm for which Henry E. Madden Jr. worked until he came to Falmouth in December.**

On April 15, 1955, *The Falmouth Enterprise* announced the news about the vaccine to the community.

The barn in Woods Hole served as Isabel Morgan's summer residence. She was proud of the Hiawatha roses in her garden, developed by Michael Walsh, Joseph Fay's gardener who became famous for his hybrid roses. "The barn is my hideaway, the joy of my life," she said in her 1987 museum interview.

### David Bodian

David Bodian spent many summers at the MBL, starting in 1938, and he was a corporation member from 1949 to 1992. In 1942 he joined the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health as an assistant professor and began working in the poliomyelitis laboratory. He met Isabel Morgan at her parents' house in 1944 and convinced her to come to Johns Hopkins.

*The Falmouth Enterprise* reported in "Woods Hole Notes" on August 19, 1949, that "Mr. and Mrs. David Bodian and their two children Helen and Marian returned to their home in Baltimore, MD, after spending the summer in the Moran [Morgan] cottage on Buzzards Bay Avenue."

The Johns Hopkins University website notes that "With colleagues Howard Howe and Isabel Morgan, he helped lay the groundwork for the Salk and Sabin polio vaccines through research into the neuropathology of poliomyelitis."

But when Isabel Morgan left Hopkins in 1960, no one there emerged to aggressively pursue

her work, according to author David Oshinsky. "Bodian was more interested in the pathology of polio than the development of a vaccine."

Bodian died in 1992, and is buried in the Village Cemetery in Woods Hole.

### Albert Sabin

Albert Sabin became a nationally known figure when the trivalent live oral polio vaccine he developed was adopted for universal childhood immunization in the USA in 1963, replacing the Salk injected killed-polio vaccine.

Sabin had emigrated with his family as a teenager to the United States from Poland in 1921. Upon graduation from NYU Medical School in 1931 he took a position with the Public Health Laboratories of the City of New York, just as a terrible polio epidemic struck the city. The experience set his career path working on polio and other virus diseases of the nervous system. One of his earliest scientific papers, as a 26-year-old, was titled "Experiments on the purification and concentration of the virus of poliomyelitis."

After an internship and a research fellowship, he took a position at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, working with the leading polio expert Peter Olitsky. (Isabel Morgan also worked with Olitsky; she and Sabin overlapped in the lab in 1938-1939). Sabin also came to know Max Theiler who was then at the Rockefeller Institute working on a live attenuated yellow fever vaccine, for which he would later win the Nobel Prize. Sabin was no





Albert Sabin. (Photo courtesy of MBL/WHOI Library)

doubt influenced by Theiler's success with a live vaccine against a virus disease. Among his many important studies at the time Sabin (with Olitsky) demonstrated that monkeys that had recovered from experimental poliomyelitis developed immunity to that virus.

Sabin came to Woods Hole in 1936, according to records at the MBL, working as an "assistant on the scientific staff, associate in pathology and bacteriology, and associate," in 1936, 1938, and 1939, respectively. An archival 1936 photo shows a dark-haired mustached Sabin in a suit and tie, with a pipe in his mouth, staring intently at the camera.

In an interview later in life with oral historian Saul Benison, Sabin explained that he went to Woods Hole "because the Rockefeller In-

stitute had a few laboratories at the Marine Biological Laboratory. I used to take my hundreds of serial sections with me. I had a microscope. I would spend the mornings examining sections. I would write my papers and reports during the summer in the afternoon. Go out swimming or fishing. And in the evening listen to music," he told Benison, whose interview with Sabin is located in the Sabin archives of the University of Cincinnati Libraries. "No, I haven't been back to Woods Hole since 1939. But during that period, it was a remarkable opportunity to get together with people interested in different fields of investigation, mostly biological investigation. Some of the seminars that they would have I found it to be a very useful and stimulating experience. But it was one of the many ways in which, let us say, interaction between scientists proved useful."

When asked if he recalled when he first met Salk, Sabin replied " I remember particularly either 1938 or '39 or both when he and his wife were at Woods Hole, and I was at Woods Hole, and we spent quite a lot of time together then."

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## The Science of the Polio Vaccine

Jonas Salk was 22 years old in 1936 when he studied the biochemistry of formaldehyde's interaction with proteins in Woods Hole. In 1953, at age 39, Dr. Salk became world-famous when he announced that he had developed a polio vaccine by growing the virus to high

levels in monkey kidney cell cultures, inactivating, or “killing,” the virus with just the right amount of formaldehyde, and then injecting the killed virus into human subjects. Dr. Salk’s success was built in part upon the important scientific findings of three other scientists with Woods Hole and MBL ties, Albert Sabin, David Bodian and Isabel Morgan.

Prior to the work of Drs. Sabin, Bodian, Morgan, and Salk, the mechanism of the spread of polio in communities was unknown, and there were no effective means of prevention.

In the late 1930’s, working with Peter Olitsky at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Albert Sabin conducted studies that showed that monkeys that had recovered from experimental polio became immune to polio, and that the immunity was related to serum antibodies. He conducted studies on a large number of tissues obtained from fatal cases of human poliomyelitis and demonstrated that the virus was distributed predominantly in two systems, namely certain regions of the nervous system, and the alimentary tract.

In a crucial series of studies in the early 1940s, David Bodian and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins showed that the polio virus could be transmitted to monkeys and chimpanzees by feeding the animals virus-contaminated food, and that the virus then grew in the animals’ intestinal tracts and was shed in their feces. In other studies, they found virus in the throats of symptomless children. They went on to show that blood serum antibodies drawn from animals that had recovered from polio, when

transfused into virus naïve animals, rendered them immune to infection when challenged with the virus. These last experiments proved that immune stimulation of blood serum antibodies would be a key to protection by any polio vaccines.

In 1944, Isabel Morgan joined Dr. Bodian and the Johns Hopkins team, where she led studies on protection of non-human primates against polio. In a pathbreaking set of experiments, she prepared an experimental polio vaccine by extracting infected nervous tissue from infected animals and adding formaldehyde to the slurry to inactivate the live polio virus. Animals that were repeatedly inoculated with this mix of nervous tissue plus the polio virus plus formaldehyde developed anti-polio serum antibodies, and were immune to infection when challenged with live virus. This was the first demonstration of protection against polio with a “killed” virus vaccine. Though it was a scientific breakthrough, Dr. Morgan’s experimental vaccine was not practical as a vaccine for humans because it would require huge numbers of infected animals, and because of concerns that vaccination of humans with primate nervous tissue might stimulate auto-immunity against a human’s own nervous system.

One other key advance toward a polio vaccine occurred 75 miles to the north of Woods Hole at Boston Children’s Hospital where in 1948, John Enders, Thomas Weller, and Frederick Robbins showed that the polio virus could be grown outside the body in cultures of non-nervous tissue cells. They received the Nobel Prize in 1954 for their discovery.



Jonas Salk, Isabel Morgan, Albert Sabin and David Bodian were among the leaders in developing the polio vaccine who were honored at the opening of the Polio Hall of Fame on January 2, 1958, in Warm Springs, Georgia. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, National Archives and Records Administration). *Full caption inside front cover.*

Jonas Salk and his team at the University of Pittsburgh put it all together. He mass-produced monkey kidney tissue (non-nervous tissues) cell cultures, grew large quantities of polioviruses in these cells, inactivated the virus with formaldehyde, and used this preparation to stimulate anti-polio virus antibodies in vaccinees, and it worked! The unprecedented 1954 polio vaccine study in 1.8 million school children showed the Salk vaccine to be safe and effective in protecting against paralysis and death caused by polioviruses.

Later, in 1963 the Sabin live attenuated oral polio vaccine replaced the Salk inactivated injected polio vaccine for routine use in the USA. This change was made due to the ease of use of the Sabin vaccine, and its property of immunizing the intestinal tract. By 1979 wild

polio was eliminated from the USA, but for the next many years sporadic cases of paralysis occurred from live oral polio vaccine viruses that had mutated back to partial virulence, so in 2000 for safety reasons the USA switched back to the Salk-type inactivated polio vaccine.

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**Donald S. Burke, MD**, is Emeritus Dean of the Graduate School of Public Health and former Jonas Salk Chair in Population Health at the University of Pittsburgh. He specializes in epidemiology and vaccines. He first worked at the MBL 60 years ago, as a student researcher in Old Main.

**Deborah G. Scanlon** retired recently as executive director of the Woods Hole Historical Museum. She continues to share her love of Woods Hole history as the editor of *Spritsail* and as a freelance writer.

# Mary Sears, Local War Hero

By Robert Reynolds



Mary Sears christens WHOI's *Atlantis II* in 1962.  
(Photo courtesy of WHOI Archives)

*This article was inspired by Catherine Musemeche's recent biography of Dr. Sears, Lethal Tides, Mary Sears and the Marine Scientists Who Helped Win World War II, and conversations with the author.*

*"The ocean would serve neither side in the war. It would merely treat more kindly those who knew it best."*  
— Columbus Iselin, director of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution during World War II.

Which scientist associated with Woods Hole was one of the most instrumental people in the effort to win World War II? Who was denied the opportunity to advance her career because she was not allowed to go on shipboard cruises? Who was not allowed to freely access world-class museums? Who overcame gender discrimination to become a crucial leader in the nation's war effort and head oceanographer at the US Hydrographic Office?

The answer is Mary Sears, longtime Woods Hole resident. Born in 1905 in Wayland, Massachusetts, Dr. Sears attended Radcliffe College and earned her PhD there. Through many improbable events, including a career spent largely in Woods Hole that presented opportunities to such a dedicated scientist, she overcame discrimination based on her gender to become one of the first female oceanographers and contributed immeasurably to the Navy's war effort in World War II.

While she was a student doing research at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoolo-



gy, she caught the attention of Henry Bryant Bigelow, who admired her studiousness. Bigelow was soon to become the first director of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). He hired her at Harvard to help with his plankton research that resulted in her employment at WHOI. Later, through Bigelow, she met William Vogt, which led to a six-month research expedition off Peru in 1941. This required a dangerous voyage (due to possible German submarines) down the US East Coast, through the Panama Canal and on to Peru. As an expert in plankton, she had been hired by Vogt to study the relationship between plankton, anchovies and the guano birds. The anchovy population in the eastern South Pacific had crashed, crippling Peru's lucrative guano industry. Despite the hardship of living on a fishing boat with little in the way of amenities, participating in a scientific cruise and collecting her own data were crucial in advancing her scientific credibility. At the time, she was not allowed to go to sea on WHOI ships. Women on ships had long been considered to be bad luck. The belief they would be a distraction, as well as a lack of restroom facilities, led to a policy of exclusion.

When Mary Sears returned from Peru, WHOI's research was in support of the Navy, in particular collecting and analyzing ocean temperatures. Temperature layering in the ocean affects sound propagation. Understanding the depth of the thermocline in different areas, and how it varies seasonally, greatly improved submarine warfare capability. By knowing how

and where US Navy submarines could acoustically hide, and where German submarines might be hidden, US convoys stood a much better chance of surviving the transit to Europe. The primary instrument used for this was a bathythermograph, which was developed at MIT and improved at WHOI for submarine deployment. Among Sears's assignments was to collate, analyze and disseminate this data up the chain of command.

After Pearl Harbor, it became clear the US would have to island-hop across the Pacific to Japan. Only by working its way across and taking islands to serve as air bases could the US attack the mainland. The US had virtually no knowledge of the oceanographic, meteorologic, and bathymetric (water depth) information needed for these operations. To address this need, oceanographer Dr. Roger Revelle, director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California, was assigned to the US Navy Hydrographic Office (Hydro). He recognized that he would have to form a group to research all available sources of information and rapidly produce the necessary data to the armed forces. He approached Columbus Iselin, then director of WHOI, to provide an oceanographer to head up this effort. Iselin didn't have a senior oceanographer to spare, so he suggested Mary Sears. It is hard now to appreciate what a revolutionary idea it was to appoint a woman to such a position in a male-dominated field.

Mary joined the newly-formed WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Ser-



## Women Who Brought Changes to WHOI's Gender Policy



Mary Sears in her WHOI office.  
(Photo courtesy of WHOI Archives)

Three women, in different ways, very gradually led to a change in the “no women onboard” policy at WHOI. Mary Sears was among the first who showed absolute expertise in science but was never allowed onboard. Roberta Eike, a graduate student at Radcliffe who was working at WHOI stowed away on a five-day research cruise aboard the RV *Caryn*. When she was discovered, the ship turned around to bring her back to the dock but technically she was the first woman onboard. Finally, Betty Bunce broke the barrier in 1959 and became chief scientist on multiple cruises. It can be said Sears knocked on the door, Eike sneaked through it, and Bunce kicked it in.

vice) and started to assemble a staff, primarily made up of WAVES who became specialists in data researching and mapmaking as part of the Hydro office. One of the early challenges was to provide drift data to the U.S. Army Air Forces and Navy to assist in finding airmen who had been shot down over the Pacific. This involved collating meteorologic and oceanographic data to predict speed and direction of drift from their crash (or ejection) location. In addition to providing this information to search teams, Mary's group made maps and had them sewn into airmen's scarves. Remarkably, while visiting Sweden well after the war, she found and purchased one of these scarves.

As the group was being formed, the US Marines suffered tragic losses during their amphibious assault on the island of Tarawa, one of the first islands to be conquered in the Pacific. Pacific Islands are typically surrounded by coral reefs. Knowing the prevailing wind direction, reef depths and tidal information is critical for operational planning. In the case of the Tarawa assault, without information of an unusual tidal condition, the landing crafts were not able to successfully cross over the reef. In fact, due to the phase of the moon causing a neap tide, and a once-yearly apogee condition (neap tide compounded by the moon being the furthest distance from the Earth) there was virtually no high tide for 48 hours, thus mak-

ing a successful crossing and landing nearly impossible. Five thousand marines attempted to make the landing, of which more than 1,000 were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. It was estimated that more than 300 were killed in the attempt to cross the barrier reef. The tragic number of casualties

made it clear that having advance knowledge of oceanographic conditions would be critical in the Pacific War.

A new strategy including the understanding of site conditions was required for these assaults. The term "Characterize the Battle Space" was used to describe the challenge. Working almost side-by-side with the war planners, Hydro produced thousands of maps that were credited with her staff's research of known copies of Japanese Imperial Fisheries Institute reports. Often working nearly around the clock, Mary's group provided charts and reports including prevailing weather conditions, water depth, surf conditions, and bottom and beach material of many islands. These were used to determine landing locations, landing timing, and what landing craft and other surf vehicles would be required.

After the Tarawa disaster, many more islands still had to be taken, including important battles at Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Stories of these can best be found in the book *Lethal*

*One of the early challenges was to provide drift data to the U.S. Army Air Forces and Navy to assist in finding airmen who had been shot down over the Pacific. This involved collating meteorologic and oceanographic data to predict speed and direction of drift from their crash (or ejection) location.*

*Tides.* It wasn't unusual for some reports of site conditions to run over 150 pages. Tragically, due to the uncertainty and the nature of wartime changes in strategy, there wasn't advance notice to produce a report on Iwo Jima. The lack of information resulted in heavy losses.

By mid-1945 Hydro began compiling data on potential landing sites on mainland Japan. The many miles of coastline, seasonal variability, and the lack of data presented a daunting task for the group. Fortunately, this amphibious assault was never needed. The losses on both sides would have been devastating.

After the war, Mary Sears returned to Woods Hole and proceeded to become what Roger Revelle called "the conscience of oceanography." She co-founded the publication *Deep Sea Research* and organized over 250,000 entries into an oceanographic catalogue, essentially organizing the field of oceanography.

Although not allowed to participate in scientific cruises during her career, the US Navy posthumously recognized her service in 2000 by naming a ship after her, the USNS *Mary Sears*. It was the first oceanographic ship named after a woman and was dedicated that year by her sister Leila Sears.



USNS *Mary Sears* at the WHOI dock, within sight of the Bigelow building, where Mary worked for many years.  
(Photo courtesy of WHOI Archives)

Mary Sears was also very involved in the community. She was a member of the Falmouth School Committee from 1952 to 1973, serving as its chair from 1960 to 1969. She also served on the school committee for the Upper Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical School District from 1963 to 1965. She was chair of the board of directors of the Children's School of Science in Woods Hole, and for 35 years was a Falmouth Town Meeting member.

She served as a trustee of the Marine Biological Laboratory from 1956 to 1962 and was a trustee emeritus from 1976 until her death. She also was a life member of the corporation of the Bermuda Biological Station.

In her final years, she was able to stay in her long-time home with the love and support of her "adopted" family of Paul and Wendy (Nies) Denton and their children, Frederick and Jeremy.

Mary Sears died at home in 1997 at the age of 92.

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**Rob Reynolds** came to Woods Hole as a summer kid in the early 1960s and he worked on the crew on the collecting boats at MBL. He returned in the early 1980s to work at ORE Int'l (Ocean Research Equipment) in Falmouth and in 2009, founded Zephyr Education Foundation, based in Woods Hole.

# A Life On The Water: Fishing with Captain John Christian

*By Jane Griffin Burke*

John Christian, a native local bass fishing guide, grew up in a house on Little Harbor in Woods Hole, less than 100 feet from the water. He recalls becoming aware of marine life when he was 5 or 6 years old. Each day in early spring he would cross the street hoping to see some action on the water. He knew that very clear water meant there wasn't anything going on.

One day the air had a heavy scent to it. He walked across the street with great anticipation knowing things would be picking up. The water had gained color from the aquatic bloom that was forming. He flipped over a partially submerged seaweed-covered rock and found a 3-inch glass eel. The first sign of life. The beginning! As each day passed, schools of minnows appeared, then larger fish.



Captain John Christian on his boat *Susan Jean*, named after his wife. (Photo courtesy of John Christian)



His first memory of fishing was with his great uncle, Perry Griffin. They fished Fay's dock in Little Harbor using hand lines for cunners or small scup. As years went by, he fished with the porters from trains out of New York. The trains would lay over for the night and the porters would fish for eels. They considered eels a delicacy. He remembers one porter named Mr. Day, who returned to Woods Hole for several years. He always asked John why he wanted to catch the 4-foot dogfish that occasionally swam by, and not eels. He said you couldn't eat the dog fish and all it would do was tangle the lines. However, to 7-year-old John, a 4-foot dogfish looked like a great white and he wanted to catch it!

At the ripe old age of 10 he got his first spinning reel. It was a Herter's and was a quantum leap in casting. From this point on he became a striper fisherman. By the time John was 14, he was selling stripers one or two at a time to Sam Cahoon's Harborside Fish Market in Woods Hole. He was paid 14 cents a pound. He remembers one big trip off Penzance Point in the Woods Hole gut. He had so many fish that their tails got caught in the spokes of his bicycle as he pedaled home. He walked out of Cahoon's Market with a little over \$7, big money for a kid in 1962, especially when he was doing something he loved.

John left town to go to college, then spent a short time in Fort Lauderdale. He has been back in town and fishing ever since. He supplemented his earnings selling bass from a small boat and then decided to purchase a 22-foot Aquasport. He then considered chartering be-



John in 1987 with a 56-pound bass.  
(Photo courtesy of John Christian)

cause that income would be more reliable but he was not certain chartering would work with his Aquasport.

At the time all the charter boats around Falmouth were larger inboards but a chance encounter with Bill Beardsley changed that. Bill was a former editor for *The Wall Street Journal* and he wrote the weekly fishing column for *The Falmouth Enterprise*. Bill asked John why he wasn't chartering and offered to help create a brochure. He also suggested John take him



out on a fishing trip so he could write a newspaper article about the trip. And so John's charter fishing career began in 1987. John is still fishing the local waters from Woods Hole to Cuttyhunk.

Each year John writes a newsletter about his fishing season, "Fish Tales." Some of his fishing wisdom deals with time of the year, moon phases, and fishing hot spots.

### Time of the Year

Looking back over 60 years, June has been consistently good for bass fishing. The spring run of alewives combined with great squid populations have drawn the stripers close to our shores. This good fishing still occurs. The real mystery is what happened to the big fall runs in the 1950s, 1960s and perhaps 1970s. If those fish pass us by close to shore in June, why don't they pass back through in the fall like they used to? You probably know the saying about theories and how everyone has one. John's theory is that fall fishing is poor simply because the bait is not around. The large menhaden are not in the harbors like they used to be. The numbers of the small ones ("peanut bunkers") are down. He believes another possibility could be that the population explosion of black sea bass has heavily dented the numbers of lobster and crabs that are all along the Elizabeth Islands. The low numbers of this fall feed have forced the bass to migrate back into deeper water where a meal such as sand eels is more prevalent. Years ago, John would fish trolling eels the first two weeks of

November and guarantee someone a striper over 35 pounds. He even remembers a few 50-pounders were taken on those trips. He says they may still be coming through but cold November nights on the water are now left for younger fishermen.

### Phases of the Moon

In his youth, John was led to believe that the full moon was the best for bass fishing. The mystique of the "Moon in June" at Cuttyhunk was widespread. It was said that getting tickets for third-base seats at game seven of a Red Sox vs. Yankees World Series game would be easier than booking a fishing charter with a Cuttyhunk guide during this time period. Why the full moon? The bright moonlight reduces the sharp glow of the phosphorescence in the water. Phosphorescence lights up the lines, terminal tackle and propellers and scares the fish. John feels it probably worked for those guides but he fishes in a different area. He likes casting eels in the shallows at night along the Elizabeth Islands. He feels the full moon offers less safety for the bass and makes them wary. However, John says that the day fishing can be sporadic as well so wonders if the moonlight confuses the fish's internal clock and spreads out the feed thus resulting in an occasional night fish catch. John points out that is simply a guess on his part. His recommendation is to fish anytime three days on either side of the full moon. However, like most things, there are exceptions. As the old saying goes, "The best time to go fishing is when you can."

*"The best time to go fishing is when you can."*  
— John Christian

## Fishing Hot Spots

In discussing fishing before the use of many navigational instruments, John talks about using ranges to locate and stay on hot spots. This was before LORAN (long-range navigation) became affordable, and GPS (global positioning system) was not available.

One great structure was a small rock pile inside Middle Ground near the Vineyard in 33 feet of water. John recalls one season when he took twelve 48-pounders from that small area. He said it was very important to be right on the rock pile or his chances of hooking up with a bass were slim. With no sophisticated electronics available to most fishermen in those days, the ability to use ranges was essential. That boulder field was located by lining a flag pole and a house chimney for one line and being abeam of a house dormer and then continuing the drift until he reached a very long house. The second bearing was not as reliable



Captain John Christian with Debbie and Jack Scanlon. (Photo courtesy of John Christian)

as the first line of sight but he felt like it kept him close enough so he could make a good day's pay.

A second good fishing spot lies about a mile east of Nobska Point. There is a 60-foot hole that holds big bass feeding on squid in late May and early June. One can go over it by lining up the Junction Buoy and a motel in Falmouth Heights.

The other bearing is a house on Nobska Point. It was there that back in the 1980s John caught a 56-pounder, the biggest bass of his life.

The third and final spot is a hump off Pasque Island. The range for this spot is a big rock on the beach and a telephone pole on the island, and the other one is determined by your depth sounder. He says that spot saved his "bacon" on many trips up until a few years ago, and now he cannot catch a fish there anymore. His guess is a mussel bed died off.

John goes on to note that he did not give away all his secrets about tide, time of day or current

direction along with a few other variables. He says that is for you to fathom out. He hopes this information will be helpful but he notes that times have changed somewhat as to when to be there, and that some of these were hot spots 30 or 40 years ago. Much can change in that time period

Professional fishermen share little information. John recalls as a kid asking a local professional fisherman the best way to catch a big bass. The reply was "stay within 500 yards of shore while it is dark."

In guarding their fishing spots, local charter guides may not outright lie, but they do obfuscate. In 2020, John found a new spot not too far out of Woods Hole. For years he said he would drive by the spot and notice a beautiful rip that was created under certain conditions. More than 40 years ago, John asked a local legendary charter guide about it, who said he agreed that "the rip looks good but not all rips hold fish." This (mis)information kept John out of this hot spot for 40 years.

### Customers, their Children, and Grandchildren

Captain John has many devotees who return to fish with him every season. He remembers telling Falmouth charter boat captain, John Macedo, that he was starting to get the children of some of his clients booking their own trips. Captain Macedo said, "Wait until you start getting the grandkids, then you will know you have been chartering a long time." That is now happening.



C.J. Sweeney (left) and Doug Handy (right) with their catches. (Photos courtesy of John Christian)

When John went off to college, he did so to fulfill his family's expectations. He says he's glad he went but that he's very glad he ended up as a fishing guide. The many people who have been fortunate to fish with John over the years are also very thankful that fishing guide was his choice.

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Jane Griffin Burke calls herself "the family gypsy." All the rest of her family lives in Falmouth and has for generations. She just keeps moving except that she always shows up in Woods Hole for the summer. She is also a first cousin of Captain John Christian.

# Falmouth Reads Together Celebrates 20 Years

By Joanne Briana-Gartner

John Lennon may have imagined all the people living life in peace, but the Falmouth Reads Together committee imagines all the people, at least all those in Falmouth, reading and discussing the same book. For the past 20 years, the committee has chosen a book, coupling their choice with events and activities, presenting the programs and the book to the public for community consumption.

In April of 2002, a group of teachers and librarians invited members of the public to a brainstorming meeting to discuss ways to “involve the entire community in enthusiasm for reading.”

With a goal of making children effective readers and encouraging literacy as a community effort, the group came up with a variety of suggestions to achieve its goals: mentoring, a televised book club, read-a-thons, and free book bins. Another idea suggested was having a town-wide book of the month that everyone would be encouraged to read.



2010 Town-wide reading of *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville.  
(Photo courtesy of Jill Erickson)

That suggestion was the one on which the group settled. Rather than a monthly book, however, the new committee would focus on one community read per year. In 2003, “Year of the Reader” was born in Falmouth.

## The Evolution of the Program’s Mission

The idea of a town-wide read was born of a desire to promote literacy among school children. Over the years, its mission has morphed

*"The mission of Falmouth Reads Together is to promote reading across the Falmouth community through a shared reading experience. Its goals are to encourage an appreciation of reading and books, and create access to a variety of books for all members of the community, with special attention to children," and to offer, without charge, a variety of programs that further the understanding and knowledge of the themes of the community read."*

into one that is shared by the many communities that promote town-wide reads. The philosophy behind a town-wide read is perhaps best summed up on the website [allcityreads.org](http://allcityreads.org): "Community reading is a way to connect people through the shared experience of reading the same book together. There are many names for community reading programs ... but they all share the idea that we can better understand our world, our community and ourselves through reading and discussing impactful books together."

In the early years of the Falmouth program, the committee defined its mission: "to promote reading across the Falmouth community through a shared reading experience and to increase access to books for all members of the community, with special attention to children." The initiative listed its goals: "to encourage an appreciation of reading and books in Falmouth," and "to promote access to a variety of books for all ages."

By 2017 the mission statement for the town-wide read had been updated and read: "The mission of Falmouth Reads Together is to promote reading across the Falmouth community through a shared reading experience." Three goals listed were: "To encourage an apprecia-

tion of reading and books; to create access to a variety of books for all members of the community, with special attention to children," and "to offer, without charge, a variety of programs that further the understanding and knowledge of the themes of the community read."

Retired Falmouth Public Library reference librarian Kathy Mortenson, a member of the committee in its early years, recalled that early on, activities surrounding Year of The Reader took place in the winter. Ms. Mortenson remembered the early committee as being quite large. "There were between 15 and 20 people at every meeting."

From the onset, the read was for both adults and youth. "We started talking by the second or third year about having a companion book for younger readers," said Ms. Mortenson, adding, "there were a lot of school librarians on the committee."

Companion book suggestions for teens and middle school readers have included 2004's *Among The Hidden*, by Margaret Peterson Haddix, 2005's *Bud Not Buddy*, by Christopher Paul Curtis, and 2007's *Al Capone Does My Shirts* by Gennifer Choldenko.



"We wanted to involve everyone in the community and we thought that if we did it in the winter people would be less busy," said retired librarian Jill Erickson, who served on the committee from its inception until 2017.

## Choosing the Community Read

Historically, choosing the year's book selection would take place the preceding year with members of the committee often asked to read several of the suggested books in order to make the most informed decision.

A 2008 graph lists the many criteria committee members used when trying to appraise a book. Among the considerations were whether the book had a regional theme, its appeal range, cost to purchase extra copies, whether it was available on CD or in large print, page count, potential to inspire programming and generate discussion, and whether or not the book "stayed with you."

The process for suggesting a book was spelled out in a 2010 memo, which advised that committee members could only nominate books they had read and for which they had filled out evaluation forms. The list would be discussed and narrowed down to five viable choices. Members would then have the summer to read and evaluate the short list. Titles were chosen over a year in advance in the event that high school teachers wanted to add the book to their summer reading list.

"It's a huge responsibility to pick something the whole community would be interested in

reading," said chairperson of the committee, Marsha Zafiriou, in a 2009 *Falmouth Enterprise* article. And if choosing a book weren't difficult enough, "it can be hard to think up ways to get people to interact with one another over reading a book," said Ms. Erickson.

## What's in a Name?

In 2008 the committee officially changed its name from Year of the Reader to What's Falmouth Reading? in order to separate Falmouth's specific town-wide read from the larger, Year of the Reader initiative.

In 2013 the committee decided to change its name again, from What's Falmouth Reading? to Falmouth Reads Together. This change was prompted by the feeling that the question mark at the end of What's Falmouth Reading? made for awkward sentence structure in press release materials and a desire to adopt a name, according to a meeting summary from June 2013, that "speaks to the spirit of community."

## Many Are Called, but Only a Few Are Chosen

In addition to the titles that have been chosen over the years, there have been many well-known titles that were not selected, although they came close to becoming the town-wide read. Some examples of these "near misses" included: *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, by John Irving; *The Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd;



Falmouth Reads Together celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2013. (Photo courtesy of Jill Erickson)

*Eve of Destruction*, by James Patterson; *A Walk in the Woods*, by Bill Bryson; *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain; *On War*, by Howard Zinn; *A Lesson Before Dying*, by Ernest J. Gaines; *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, by Betty Smith; *It Can't Happen Here*, by Sinclair Lewis; *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand; and *Empire of the Summer Moon*, by S. C. Gwynne, to name a few.

### From the Inaugural Book until 2023

Harper Lee's 1960 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill A Mockingbird* was the first book to be

selected for the community read. Ms. Mortenson remembered that the schools backed the choice of *To Kill A Mockingbird* because it was often taught as part of the junior class English curriculum. Events surrounding *To Kill A Mockingbird* took place in late February 2003.

In addition to book discussions held in different venues around town and a screening of the film at the high school, the committee secured the rights to perform the book's pivotal courtroom scene at Falmouth District Court.

Ms. Erickson described the performance as "incredible" and said that the courtroom was

packed. "It was extraordinary that so many people showed up." So many people turned out for the performance, in fact, that the cast ended up doing a second performance later that same night. Both Ms. Erickson and Ms. Mortenson said that they still have the paper fans that were created as programs for the event.



Falmouth Public Library's arched windows display the 2011 Town-wide Read, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. (Photo courtesy of Jill Erickson)

"That was the beginning and we didn't know how big it would get," said Ms. Erickson, adding, "it was successful beyond what we could imagine."

"By April we were accepting suggestions for next year," said Ms. Mortenson.

For Year of the Reader 2004, the committee chose George Orwell's *1984*, another pick that's often part of the high school reading list.

Book discussions and events were held in March that year, rather than February, the hope being the weather would be better and even more people would turn out. As part of the programming, Tim Miller, film critic and

features editor for *The Cape Cod Times*, was invited to give an introduction before a screening of the film version of the book. Unfortunately, attendance was limited due to a considerable amount of snowfall. "Tim did a great job but the numbers were not so great because of the snow," said Ms. Mortenson.

Starting in 2005 with the selection of *The Color of Water*, the first year the committee chose a book by a living author, author talks frequently became part of the event lineup. Author James McBride came to speak, followed by Tracy Kidder in 2006, for his book *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. "People loved hearing the author's talk," said Ms. Mortenson.

Due to its protagonist's proclivity for mathematics and astronomy, the 2007 pick, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, lent itself to an all-ages stargazing session at Chapoquoit Beach with astrophysicist Frank Primini.

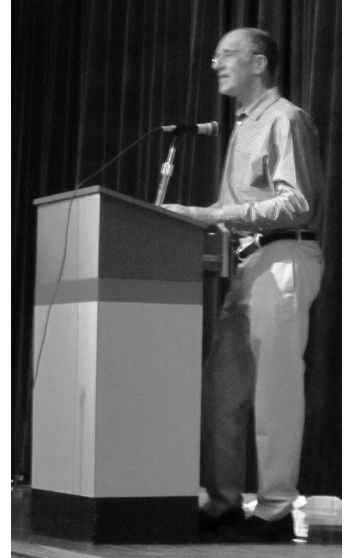
*This I Believe*, the 2008 selection, was a different kind of choice for the committee. The book features an array of essays by famous as well as ordinary citizens, each espousing a personal belief about life. The book revived the 1951 project of the same name where prominent individuals wrote essays that were read on the radio; journalist Edward R. Murrow also ran the essays as a weekly column and eventually turned them into four best-selling books. Local radio producer Jay Allison, with public radio producer Dan Gediman, spearheaded the contemporary project.

A March 2008 talk by Mr. Allison was accompanied by an essay-writing workshop with author Jamie Cat Callan. "It's not your typical beginning, middle, and ending," said the committee chairperson Marsha Zafiriou about the book, "but it will promote community dialogue." *This I Believe* also inspired high school students to write their own essays, many of which were printed in a special edition of the school newspaper, *The Intelligencer*.

In another departure from general fiction and nonfiction selections, in 2009 the committee chose *An Invitation To Poetry*, an anthology of favorite poems selected by a cross-section of the American public. As part of the accompanying programming, the book's co-editor, American Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, visited Falmouth to talk about *The Favorite Poem Project*; local poet Alice Kociemba led a book discussion of Edward Hurst's *How To Read A Poem And Fall In Love With Poetry*; and poet and committee member Jarita Davis invited children to a poetry writing workshop at the Woods Hole Public Library. The pick coincided with the 150th birthday of Katharine Lee Bates, which was marked by a full slate of programming at Falmouth's Museums on the Green.

Events are always memorable when something unexpected happens. Ms. Erickson recalled that when Robert Pinsky came to town as part of *An Invitation To Poetry*, "he read essentially in the dark because nobody had told us how to turn on the lights in the high school auditorium."

John Hough Jr.  
talking about his  
book *Seen the Glory*,  
Falmouth's 2012  
town-wide read.  
(Photo courtesy of  
Jill Erickson)



"There were lots of writing groups that came out of *This I Believe* as well as *An Invitation to Poetry*," recalled Ms. Erickson.

With the events surrounding the 2010 pick, Herman Melville's classic *Moby-Dick*, What's Falmouth Reading? joined the ranks of the New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Mystic Seaport Museum in hosting a 24-hour *Moby-Dick* Marathon. Falmouth's marathon took place, despite inclement weather, from noon on March 13 to noon on March 14 in the Hermann Room of the Main Library. Waquoit resident and then state representative Matt Patrick, kicked off the event with the immortal opening words, "Call Me Ishmael." Seventy-seven readers took part in the event.

"That was an amazing year," said Ms. Erickson. "It astonished me that we succeeded in the marathon. It was a huge amount of effort and it was pretty spectacular." Ms. Erickson said



she was also impressed with the number of people who finished the novel, recalling that people formed groups to read and discuss the book together. Even Ms. Erickson confessed that she had never read *Moby-Dick* all the way through, "until that event."

In 2012 Gerry Wright presented his one-man play "Walt Whitman: The Civil War Years" in conjunction with that year's book pick, John Hough Jr.'s Civil War historical novel, *Seen The Glory*. That year also saw an entire brochure full of suggestions for younger readers, both fiction and nonfiction picks that included *Gettysburg: The Graphic Novel*, by C.M. Butzer.

Occasionally the committee is split on which book to choose and two books will be promoted, such as the 2013 selections: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver, and *Candyfreak*, by Steve Almond. The committee organized a "Reel Food" film festival as part of the events surrounding the 2013 books. Selected films included everything from the feature film "Big Night" to the documentary "Food, Inc." and the animated Disney/Pixar film "Ratatouille." Suggestions for younger readers that year included the picture books *Westlandia*, by Paul Fleischman, and *Growing Vegetable Soup*, by Lois Ehlert.



Falmouth's town-wide reading of *Moby-Dick* in 2010.  
(Photo courtesy of Jill Erickson)

Poetry was featured again in 2017 when the committee hosted an open mic night on the theme of "The Art of Losing: Poetry, Story and Song about Death, Dying & Loss," which coincided with that year's book choices, *Being Mortal*, by Atul Gawande, and *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*, the graphic novel memoir by Roz Chast that chronicles the challenges of caring for elderly parents.

That selection also marked the committee's venture into graphic novel territory.

The 2018 pick, *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates, lent itself to a slew of titles for younger readers, including the young adult novel *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas; the middle school book, *The Jacket*, by Andrew Clements; and the picture book, *Little Blue and Little Yellow*, by Leo Lionni.



### Through The Years: Falmouth Reads Together

- 2003 *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- 2004 *1984* by George Orwell
- 2005 *The Color of Water* by James McBride
- 2006 *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* by Tracy Kidder
- 2007 *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
- 2008 *This I Believe* edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman
- 2009 *An Invitation To Poetry* by Robert Pinsky
- 2010 *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville
- 2011 *Silent Spring* by Rachael Carson
- 2012 *Seen The Glory* by John Hough, Jr.
- 2013 *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver and  
*Candyfreak: A Journey through the Chocolate Underbelly of America* by Steve Almond
- 2014 *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly
- 2015 *Shakespeare Saved My Life* by Laura Bates
- 2016 *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* by Karen Joy Fowler.
- 2017 *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande and  
*Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* by Roz Chast
- 2018 *Between The World And Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- 2019 *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- 2020 *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* by Nathaniel Philbrick
- 2021 *Circe* by Madeline Miller
- 2022 *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness*  
by Sy Montgomery
- 2023 *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel

The 2019 pick, *The Little Prince*, by Antoine Saint-Exupéry, presented an opportunity for a read-aloud of the book in both French and English. For the French reading, a number of Falmouth high school students participated including: Ava Warner, Isabel Krueger, Nicole Fusaro, Molly LeBrun, Olivia de Punté, Alex LaRuffa, Sage Bethel, Shutong Murray, and Celeste Newman.

The community was encouraged to read the 2020 selection, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War*, by Nathaniel Philbrick, even though all events surrounding the pick were cancelled along with the majority of live events during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2021, Falmouth Reads Together events resumed with a Zoom talk by *Circe* author Madeleine Miller and an art show at the Falmouth Art Center.

### Maintaining Momentum

As far as fundraising efforts go, the Falmouth Road Race and the Cape Cod Marathon have been long-time supporters of the committee, offering volunteer opportunities in exchange for donations. Friends of the Falmouth Public Library have also supported requests from the group, helping to finance the purchase of books as well as securing funds for author talks and other special events surrounding the year's book selection.

"Our job is fairly easy, but [the Falmouth Road Race] serves as our major fundraiser for the year," said committee member Linda Crawford, in a *Falmouth Enterprise* article. Ms. Crawford volunteered at the road race's finish line in 2005. In addition to purchasing extra copies of that year's book to distribute, the committee, in its early years, also purchased books for school-aged children that were distributed through the Falmouth Service Center.

Copies of the books that were purchased to be circulated throughout the community could also service other towns as well. In 2010 the committee authorized shipping 32 copies of *Moby-Dick* to a grade 10 boys' English class in Alabama at the request of their teacher.

Girl Scout troops helped out multiple years by decorating the boxes used by the committee to distribute copies of that year's selection. In 2010 the decorated boxes contained the following message to the community: "Take one, read it, pass it along or return it to this box for another reader."

"From the group that first came together in 2003 for *To Kill A Mockingbird*, I would say that if anybody had told us it would still be happening in 2023, I would have never believed it," said Ms. Erickson. "It's remarkable that it's gone on as long as it has."

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Joanne Briana-Gartner is the arts & entertainment editor for *The Falmouth Enterprise* and a member of the Falmouth Reads Together Committee.



## Woods Hole Historical Museum

579 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543

(508) 548-7270

whhmdirector@gmail.com / woodsholemuseum.org

Museum open June 17 to October 7, 2023,  
11 AM to 3 PM, Tuesday through Saturday.

Archives open year-round, Tuesday & Thursday, 9 AM to 1 PM. Admission: Free, donations welcome.

Guided Walking Tours of Historic Woods Hole, Tuesdays 10 AM (July-August) and by appointment.

### Upcoming Events:

August 8, Annual meeting with talk by Dan Robb, author of *Sloop*, Church of the Messiah, 5 PM

August 24, Oyster Talk and Tasting, Museum courtyard, 5 to 7 PM

September 16, New Bedford Sea Chantey Chorus, Woods Hole Community Hall, 4 PM. Tickets \$20.

### 2023 Exhibits:

"History of Woods Hole" — Gallery One

"Discovery & Charting of the Gulf Stream: Science of the 20th Century Analog to the Digital Age" — Gallery Two

"Honoring Jewel Plummer Cobb" hallway banner

### Campus:

*Bradley House*, built in 1804, features galleries with changing exhibits, a permanent scale model of Woods Hole circa 1895, a collection of ships in bottles, our offices, and archives.

*Swift Barn Small Boat Museum* houses an 1890s Woods Hole Spritsail Boat, a Herreshoff 12 ½, a Cape Cod Knockabout, a Woods Hole Chamberlain Dory, a 1922 Old Town canoe, a Mirror dinghy, and many boat models and maritime artifacts.

*Yale Workshop*, 1890s workshop of Dr. Leroy Milton Yale, Jr. who summered in Quissett. The Workshop includes original and representative tools, fishing gear, maps, books, etchings and artifacts appropriate to Dr. Yale's varied interests.

*Penguin Shed*, where children are welcome to climb aboard Cape Cod Knockabout *Penguin*, practice tying nautical knots, and pulling block and tackle rigs.

*Walsh Rambler Rose Garden* features a few of the hybridized Walsh Ramblers that are in full bloom June and July.



## Falmouth Museums on the Green

Home of the Falmouth Historical Society

55-65 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, MA 02541

(508)548-4857 / museumsongthegreen.org

Museums are open May 12 – October 14,  
10 AM to 2 PM, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday,  
and Saturday.

**Walking Tours**— 10:30 AM on open days.  
Friday's tour starts at the Old Burying  
Ground at 4 PM.

**Town Green Scavenger Hunt**—An Ongoing  
Family Program, April 14, 10 AM and  
December 19, 3 PM. Free admission.

**Talk-Oh Tuesdays**—Tuesday Night Lecture  
Series, July 11 - August 29, 7:00 PM.  
\$20/\$15 Members.

**Falmouth in the Civil War**— Lecture with  
Michael McNaught, August 9, 4 PM.  
\$20/ \$10 Members.

**Whales' Tales**—Walking Tour, Lecture &  
Reception, August 17th. \$50/\$35 Members.

**Art & Wellness**— Stretch and Sketch Series,  
August 22 at 11:30 AM. \$30 per person.

**Nooks and Crannies Tour: The Hidden  
Spaces at the Museums on the Green**  
September 7, 4:30 PM. \$20/\$10 Members.

**Art After Hours: The History of  
Wallpaper**— Lecture with Robert M. Kelly,  
September 14, 4 PM. \$20 /\$10 Members.

**Annual Antiques & Crafts Sale**, September  
16, 10 AM - 3 PM. \$10 per person.

**Cape Cod Noir**— Book talk with Dana  
Cameron, October 5, 5 PM.  
\$20/ \$10Members.

**Sins, Sips, and Secrets**—A Halloween Tour  
of the Dr. Francis Wicks House, October 21  
and 28, at 5 PM and 8 PM, every half hour.  
\$30/\$15 Members.

**On the Road to the Mayflower** — Lecture  
with Karen Rinaldo and Kevin Doyle,  
October 24, 4PM. \$30/\$15 Members.

**Wicked at Wicks**—A Children's Halloween  
Celebration, October 27, 4 PM.  
\$10/\$5 Members.

**The Bells of Falmouth**—Lecture with Ken  
Peal, November 9, 4 PM. \$20/\$15 Members.

**Children's Drop in Activities & Gift Shop  
Open with Artisan Crafts**—Falmouth  
Holiday Stroll, December 3, 3-5 PM.  
Free admission.