

# NEWSLETTER

❄️ WINTER 2006 ❄️

*It's that time of year on Cape Cod.*

## ***It is cold.***

It is dreary. The wind howls. It is damp and the dampness chills your bones. The days are long and the sun is stingy with its rays. We didn't go to Florida or to Arizona or to the Islands because in spite of it all we like the Cape in the winter. When else can we do all those projects and all that reading that there is no time for in the summer? But we do need to get out of the doldrums and get started.

## ***Books***



## ***Travel***



## ***Movies***



***The Friends have lots of ideas*** and we would like to share them with you. This issue of the Newsletter will be devoted even more than usual to what we have read, what movies we recommend and even where we have been. We hope that you will enjoy them.

***You may travel a lot***, but have you ever been on a freighter from Mexico to Venezuela? And have you ever read a list of books especially chosen for a long trip on that freighter? You may like old movies but have you ever read an annotated list of the best ones compiled by a persnickety critic?

***And if by chance*** you need a real live person to inspire you, would you like to attend one or two or three of our popular Joy of Learning courses in March? You can sign up upon receipt of this Newsletter.



## ***Joy of Learning Schedule***



*Please See Details Inside*





# Joy of Learning

## Schedule of Courses for Spring 2006

*The Friends of the Falmouth Public Library will offer three new courses which will begin Friday March 3rd, 2006.*

*Classes will meet one hour per week for four weeks.*

*The classes are free and open to the public.*

### THE COURSES ARE AS FOLLOWS

**Mondays ~ 10am - 11am ~ March 6, 13, 20, 27**

#### ***The Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis & Clark Expedition***

Through lecture and video: how we negotiated for the Louisiana Purchase and sent a scientific expedition to investigate what we had bought. What made up Napoleon's mind to sell us this area and part of Canada?

How did Thomas Jefferson try to influence the outcome?

*John Schlee B.S. University of Michigan, M.A. University of California at Los Angeles, PHD John Hopkins University*

**Tuesdays ~ 10am - 11am ~ March 6, 14, 21, 28**

#### ***Movies! Movies! Movies! #2 and All New!***

If you enjoyed the first course don't miss the second. If you missed the first course don't miss out on this one. Part film clips, part discussion about the elements that make a movie memorable.

*Fred Gitlitz, B.A. Colgate, M.A. Columbia University*

**Fridays ~ 10am - 11am ~ March 3, 10, 17, 24**

#### ***Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Artists and the Luminists***

This Series will begin talking about major 19th American painting and will continue with a detailed analysis of several American masters including Homer, Bierstadt and Church as well as the Luminists. The course will conclude with a look at early 20th Century American moderns.

*William Adelman Jr. PHD University of Rochester*

CUT OUT HERE

To register: Send your selections with your name, address and phone number to:  
Joy of Learning, Post Office Box 480, Falmouth, Massachusetts 02541  
Please keep course descriptions as your record.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to enroll in the following course (or courses):

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_





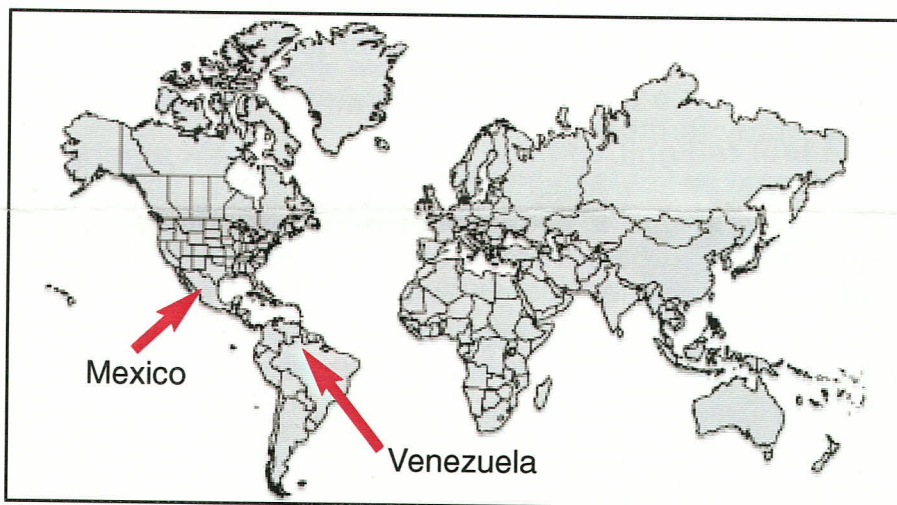
# A Winter's Journey

by Lenny Miele

For the past fifty years, library trustee and past president of the Friends, Kathleen Murray, has dreamed about taking a trip on a commercial freighter. During the Christmas and New Year's holidays, this dream came true when she boarded the container ship MV Lykes Commodore in Houston, Texas and cruised the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea for an unforgettable three-week adventure. From the 20th of December to the 11th of January, Kathleen was one of only two passengers who joined Captain K. Gosharski and his crew as they transported goods from Mexico to Venezuela. In the daily diary that Kathleen kept of the journey, she explains her accommodations and her fellow passengers:

*The crew numbers nineteen: the passengers two, with the other one being Marilyn Sullivan, a high school English teacher from California. She took this trip last summer and liked it so well she returned. The Captain is from Poland and we will have some traditional Polish food at the Christmas Eve dinner. The other officers are from Germany, Portugal (via Africa) and the Philippines. The fifteen crew are from the Philippines. The quarters are spacious. I have a living room with desk, sofa, two chairs, coffee table, television and refrigerator. I also have a small bedroom and private bath with shower. Lots of storage space - more that I can fill. Lighting is good.*

Kathleen realized how important it is to bring your own entertainment with you while traveling on a freighter for during two-thirds of the trip passengers are at sea and confined to the ship. She took about fifteen books with her, reading one book every day and a half. She also kept busy with crossword puzzles, sudokus, sketching in a drawing pad, viewing DVDs, and visiting the bridge whenever the captain was on duty. Fortunately, Kathleen was able to go ashore for a few hours in Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela. On Christmas Day, for example, she writes in her diary that the captain escorted his two female passengers on an interesting tour of Veracruz, Mexico:

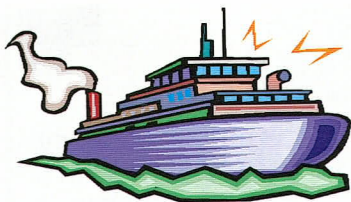


*Captain K. Goschorski, Marilyn and I go into Veracruz from ten until four. This is my first introduction to a shore pass and I feel like a real sailor. Port security is tight. The square had the three wise men mounted on horse, elephant and camel just as I saw them mounted in Mexico City in 1958. Actually that makes a lot of sense, and it was a good memory to recall my last time in Mexico. We walked along the Malacon to the Veracruz Aquarium, the largest aquarium in Latin America. The place was very crowded and included a fifteen-minute wait just to enter. All of this was a surprise to me, as I cannot think of a museum open in the USA on Christmas Day. No bus waiting at the port entrance so we hitched rides on two succeeding pickup trucks to return to ship.*

Eating on the MV Lykes Commodore was always a convivial and interesting endeavor. On Christmas, the crew served an elaborate dinner in the crewman's mess. The exotic menu for dinner included fried rabbit, fish jelly, polish salad, grilled mussels, perogis and fresh coconut salad. And, on December 26, the captain had a Christmas party for everyone. A grill was set up on the deck to cook mussels, shrimp, chicken, steak and fish. Other interesting food served during the trip included squid, avocado pudding, sauerkraut soup and an entire roasted pig for the New Year's feast. Kathleen became part of the everyday activities of the ship. As she notes on December 23,

continued on page 5





## BOOKS FOR A FREIGHTER TRIP

Kathleen Murray

*As you may read elsewhere in this newsletter* (pages 3 & 5), I recently took a three week freighter trip. Passengers must provide their own entertainment and my primary source was books. Thanks to the Friends of the Falmouth Public Library book sales, I

was able to take a number of books and the cost was so reasonable that most were left on board. I took a variety of styles and genre that were written in various years and found this was also a good idea. I found I had a Maeve Binchy started on a previous trip, so I finished **ECHOES** (1985). A Binchy book is always a good travel book.

I enjoy reading **mysteries** and packed quite a few of them. Among those that I read and recommend are:

~**M~Morality For Beautiful Girls** by Alexander McCall Smith (2001) is one of the series that takes place in Botswana. I thought this book was better than the first . . .

~**M~The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency.**

~**M~Lord Mullion's Secret** is by Michael Innis, also known as J.M.L. Stewart (1981).

~**M~Wycliff & The Quiet Virgin** by W.J. Burley (1988) was chosen because it was a Christmas mystery.

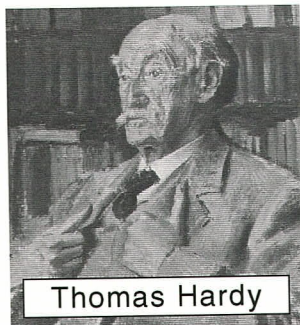
~**M~The Fly On The Wall** by Tony Hillerman (1971) is not one of his Navajo mysteries but does take place in the southwest.

~**M~Saint Peter's Fair** by Ellis Peters (1981) is one of the Brother Cadfael books situated in Shrewsbury, England in 1139.

~**M~Death At La Fenice** by Donna Leon (1992) takes place in Venice and the detective is Guido Brunetti. Leon was a new author to me and a nice surprise.

~**M~Murder In The Queen's Arms** by Aaron J. Elkins (1985) involved archeology in Wessex - Thomas Hardy territory.

That last location leads to another genre. I decided to bring two unread **classics** and I am glad that I did, for I enjoyed both as well as the change of pace in reading them.



Thomas Hardy

**Far From The Madding Crowd** by Thomas Hardy (1884) also takes place in Wessex but in a very different time.

**Barchester Towers** is by Anthony Trollope (1857) and is really quite humorous. Another humorous book that I read on the trip was **Espirit De Corps** by Lawrence Durrell (1957). This was quite different from his **The Alexandria Quartet**, as it contains amusing episodes in the diplomatic corps, primarily in Serbia. **The Adams Women** (Abigail and Louisa Adams, Their Sisters and Daughters) is by Paul C. Nagel (1987). This biography was given to me to take on the trip and deserves a review all to itself. (Please see Yang Conley's review on page 6) All I will say is I will

never look quite the same way upon the Adams women.

There was one other passenger on the trip and she was previewing books for incoming ninth and twelfth graders for a high school in California. As I coordinate the volunteers at the Lawrence School I chose to read from my colleague's collection **Buddha Boy** by Kathe Koja (2003) and **The Perks of Being a Wallflower** by Stephan Chbosky (1999). She was also previewing **The Color of Water**, and I was able to share what we did with that book in Falmouth last year when it was chosen the book of the year.

The day before the end of the trip I started Dan Brown's **Angels & Demons** (2000). I read it all the way home and had to finish it before completing unpacking. This was written before **The Da Vinci Code**, and I found that I preferred this earlier book.

I took one book on CDs and was able to listen to **Krakatoa** (The Day the World Exploded: August 27, 1883). This book by Simon Winchester (2003) was an amazing, fascinating book and I plan to listen to it again (or maybe read it). It discusses the history of the Dutch East Indies, natural history, evolution, geology, and other sciences, plus Islam art, and the explosion of the volcano itself. This was the hidden gem of all the books for me.

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As there was a DVD player in my room, I not only listened to **Krakatoa** I borrowed and saw **The Insider and Out of Africa** and both were very good.



★ ★ ★ ★ **A Winter's Journey** - continued ★ ★ ★

"I spent the morning supervising the loading of containers on this ship and the unloading of coal on another." In a later diary entry she says. "Have never gotten tired of watching the procedures. Cranes must be in my blood. Tugs are of unending interest. They help maneuver the large ships that are unable to turn in tight quarters. In reverse, these ships create a great deal of smoke because the engines have to work so hard." And her most informative entries were on December 27th and 28th when she explains her daily routine and observations:

*Tuesday is laundry day for officers and passengers and I did some as we were going around the Yucatan. A day at sea - some clouds, a bit of rain, a few fishing boats seen. As usual, soup and fruit (today kiwi) were offered at lunch besides a main course. Today we had ham hocks and I thought of Mother and how I liked the way she cooked them.*

*Some miscellaneous data about the ship: 149.5 m long 7.4 m draught can hold 1,104 containers 18.5 K service speed - 23.1 m breadth*

*As we near port and above the bridge the host's flag is flown as well as one red and one yellow flag. Red means we carry dangerous cargo and yellow asks permission to enter.*

Kathleen's trip enabled her to "unwind completely" and to experience one of the great adventures of her lifetime. She is certainly an explorer at heart and is now energized to deal with all of life journeys whether at home in Falmouth or from sea to shining sea.

**Book Review** by Anne Toran

★ **Becoming Madame Mao - A Novel by Anchee Min**

***I began this book on my way home*** from visiting my daughter in Berkeley, California. Usually, I read for pleasure but this book was not what I would call a pleasant read. It was, however, historical, interesting and intense.

It begins when Yunhe (the future Madame Mao) was a young child getting her feet bound by her mother, a lowly concubine. This barbaric tradition destroys a young, female child's feet. Her mother thought this would raise her daughter to a different economic and social level. Yunhe tolerates the excruciating pain and bad infection for about three weeks, but when the pain becomes unbearable, she rips off the bindings and refuses to put them back on. This is the beginning of a life of rebellion which carries her on a long journey to becoming Madame Mao Tse-tung. This journey lasts from 1919 - 1991.

She is called Yunhe from 1919-1933; LanPing from 1934-1937; and Jiang Chang from 1938-1991. In 1991, she dies after being a prisoner for 14 years. She has been at the top of the political ladder and dies at the bottom. Along the way she has used her beauty and intelligence to become powerful and evil. She never forgets and never forgives her enemies, and she has many. She marries three times and loves the powerful Mao Tse-tung with a fervor that won't go away. That love is one that burns out quickly (on Mao's part) and he leaves her destitute and politically a criminal when he dies.

This book was not easy to read but it was amazing to see how a simple peasant girl becomes, for a time, the most powerful woman in China.

A few other books I've read this winter: ★ **Before Women Had Wings** by Connie May Fowler-Recommended by Oprah. I chose to read this book because of the title but it was sad and depressing, a story about alcoholism and child abuse. I did not like it but I did learn.

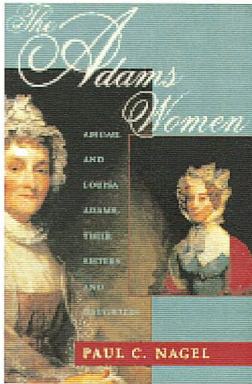
Another Oprah pick: ★ **Open House** by Elizabeth Berg. This novel was about life after divorce for a nice woman. This one was fun.

★ **The Sunday Wife**, a novel by Cassandra King. This book tells the story of a minister's wife and her life with a man who preaches one thing but treats his wife differently. I liked it because it does have a happy ending.



# Some People Take Freighter Trips - Others Have a Shoulder Replacement

*I am one of those persons* who has always complained of "never enough time for reading". Some people take a freighter trip to catch up on their reading, but I opted for JML and home because of a shoulder replacement in November. So I have had ample time to catch up on my reading in the past two months. Among the books I have particularly enjoyed while recuperating are **The Adams Women**, which I passed on to Kathleen Murray for her freighter trip, **Rise to Rebellion**, **The Tale of Hill Top Farm** and **Past Caring** by Robert Goddard.

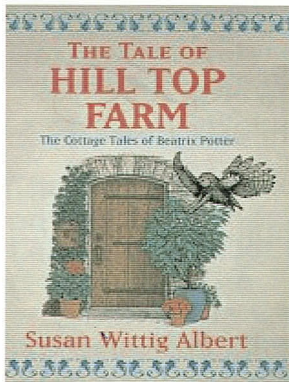


**The Adams Women** by Paul Nagel focuses mainly on Abigail Adams and Louisa, John Quincy Adams' wife, while touching on other Adams family women as well. Abigail Adams was a woman with native intelligence, well-read, strong willed, opinionated, devoted to her husband, her family and extended family; a true matriarch and a very controlling person. She was not an easy mother-in-law for Louisa who was very gentle and accomplished, quieter, and less outspoken. She was Abigail's match in intelligence but better educated and more intellectual by nature than Abigail. John Quincy appears to be a man incapable of intimacy and he and Louisa did not share the same degree of closeness as did his parents, in part due to Abigail. Abigail and John's daughter, Nabby, made a most unfortunate marriage to a ne'er-do-well, a marriage encouraged by Abigail.

The Adams family had its share of burdens, some caused by alcoholism which plagued a number of the men in each generation including one of John and Abigail's sons. Generally the women in the family were the ones who coped with the vagaries of nature, the care and rearing of children, the management of property and the rescuing of family members afflicted with financial and emotional hardships.

This book reveals the complex lives these women led, juggling many responsibilities with limited resources, coping with serious day to day family problems as well as trying to live up to the positions their husbands held in the seats of power in the early years of American democracy. **The Adams Women** offers an interesting look into the lives of the Adams women and the roles they played in their husband's lives and careers.

**Rise to Rebellion** by Jeff Shaara is part one of a two-part story of the American Revolution. This book covers the period from 1770-1776 and focuses on the activities of four men: John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and British Lt. General Thomas Gage during this period. An interesting and readable history.



**The Tale of Hill Top Farm** by Susan Wittig Albert. I was delighted to discover a mystery writer new to me whom I really enjoyed. Susan Wittig Albert has written a delightful mystery series The Cottage Tales of Beatrix Potter. I found **The Tale of Hill Top Farm** charming. Can the word "charming" be used to describe a murder mystery? In this case I believe it can.

**Past Caring** by Robert Goddard, is an historical thriller/romantic novel, set in the present day and in Edwardian England. The quasi-hero of the book is Martin Radford, an historian who is hired to do research into the past of a promising young Edwardian who rose to a prominent position in the British cabinet. Suddenly, in 1910, he found himself in disgrace, his position lost, and rejected by his fiancée. He has lost both the woman he loves and his position and he doesn't know why. This is the mystery that challenges Martin Radford. The many surprising twists and turns in the plot held my total attention as I traveled with Martin Radford on his journey toward discovering the truth about Edwin Stafford and about himself.

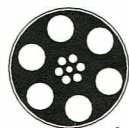
The book is 501 pages and I was sorry when it ended.

6 All the books reviewed in this article are available at the Falmouth Public Library or in the Clams system. **Rise to Rebellion** is also available as a book on tape and on CD. Jeff Shaara's father, Michael Shaara, wrote The Killer Angels.

Yang Conley



## MOVIES: Editor's Best



**Through the last several issues** of this Newsletter there has been a column about the movies, and as often as not the reviews have been negative or at least lukewarm. In an effort to correct an erroneous impression, this column will deal with movies for which your editor has had nothing but praise. The list started out small but it grew to such a length that it became necessary to categorize and even weed out. The categories are arbitrary and at the whim of the writer. That there is no mention of such huge stars as Jimmy Stewart, Cary Grant, John Wayne, Robert Taylor, Richard Burton and Humphrey Bogart is purely coincidental. **This issue will deal only with . . .**

### ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ DRAMA ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



**BRIEF ENCOUNTER:** An old black and white film with Trevor Howard that is shown periodically on Turner Classic Movies or perhaps PBS, a poignant love story which holds the viewer in suspense until the very end, the kind of thing the British do so well. Many women weep at the finale.



**CARRINGTON:** If you know the notorious Bloomsbury Group that flourished in London during the early 1900s, this is a must see. If you don't know them you are in for an eye opener. The artist, Dora Carrington, is certainly less well known than Virginia Woolf or even her sister, Vanessa Bell, but Carrington may have been even more eccentric in her behavior. The excellent Emma Thompson plays Carrington, and why her real life ex-husband, Kenneth Brannagh, ever left her for Helena Bonham Carter, I will never understand.



**CIDER HOUSE RULES:** A controversial film based on a controversial book by a master storyteller. Perhaps the best of John Irving's eleven novels, it stars Michael Caine in the role of a doctor who runs an orphanage in Maine and helps unmarried girls. Just how he helps them can be seen as good deeds or illegal or both. Read the book either before or after seeing the film.



**COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER:** This film is one of Cissy Spacek's best, and her best is superb. All that acting talent and she can sing too (did you know that Gwyneth Paltrow can also sing?). It hardly seems fair. Cissy plays the country singer Loretta Lynn and Tommy Lee Jones is her husband. Even if you hate country music, this movie is worth five stars.



**DEAD POET'S SOCIETY:** The multitalented Robin Williams as a prep school teacher who inspires his male students. Filled with wonderful humor but with a tragic overtone. Pair this with his role as a psychiatrist in the equally wonderful film **Good Will Hunting** co-starring Matt Damon as a troubled young math genius from South Boston.



**GONE WITH THE WIND:** The most famous movie ever made and probably the greatest movie ever made. Could there ever have been a more perfect Scarlett than Vivian Leigh? Can you think of any other actor that could have played Rhett better than Gable? We watched them for four hours and hated to have it end. Critics called it Civil War soap opera but who cares? We learned a lot and we had Shelby Foote to set us straight in Ken Burns's magnificent TV documentary. The less said about the sequel the better.



**THE WAY WE WERE:** This may belong in romantic comedy but there wasn't anything amusing about Redford and Streisand trying to make their marriage succeed. They were like oil and water but oh that final scene in front of the Plaza in New York. Too bad Redford has grown old so ungracefully. I guess it was all that sun out in Utah that did him in.



**THE HEIRESS:** Olivia de Havilland, Montgomery Clift and the late great Sir Ralph Richardson give superb performances in this essentially tragic story based on Henry James's Washington Square. You'll have to sit through another one of those suspenseful endings. de Havilland is particularly marvelous.



**THE LION IN WINTER:** Katherine Hepburn and Peter O'Toole turn what could have been just another king, queen and mistress triangle into a tour de force because of the powerful acting and the brilliant dialogue. You literally hang on to every word spoken. Best of all, they don't have those unintelligible British accents that are so frustrating to Americans. Anthony Hopkins debuts in this film.



**SOPHIE'S CHOICE:** Based on William Styron's book and starring the incomparable Meryl Streep, this time with a Polish accent I think. The talented Kevin Kline plays a serious role as her lover. The narrator is the funny little guy from Ally McBeal. He is also in love with Meryl.



# *The Friends of the Falmouth Public Library*

cordially invite you to join them at their  
**Annual Meeting and Election of Officers  
at the First Congregational Church**

68 Main Street, Falmouth ~ Saturday, April 22nd, 2006


at 1:00 pm


Featuring at 1:30 pm  
**Norm Conrad**


who does "mini Minstrels" as Mr. Tambo and Mr. Bones. In a series of clever pantomimes, Conrad portrays some of the stars of the minstrel and vaudeville stage while dressed in an array of costumes. Refreshments will be served at the close of the program. The entertainment is free and open to the public.


## ★ ★ ★ MOVIES: Editor's Best ★ ★ ★

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

 **LAST PICTURE SHOW:** Based on Larry McMurtry's novel and directed by Peter Bogdonovitch, this film satisfies a New Englander's curiosity about those bleak little towns in the Southwest and the people who live in them. Even a young Sybil Shepherd can't overcome the general impression of a place you only want to drive through without even braking. Remember McMurtry's brilliant mini series on television several years ago - Lonesome Dove?

 **REBECCA:** This film has it all, a great love story, intrigue, fear, horror, suspense, the perfect setting in DuMaurier's Cornwall and actors who can portray all this vividly - Joan Fontaine, Lawrence Olivier and the great Judith Anderson. I don't think anyone has tried a newer version but I could be wrong.

 **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND:** Even if you don't like Star Wars or Star Trek, you will like this. It is so enormously real at the same time that incredibly strange things are happening. It is Stephen Spielberg isn't it? Richard Dreyfuss is great in this film but he always is. I almost wanted to get on that spaceship myself and I am agoraphobic.

 **GRAPES OF WRATH:** If not the great American novel it is difficult to find one better and it was an excellent film also. Henry Fonda's role as Tom Joad rivals that of Gregory Peck's Atticus in To Kill A Mockingbird.

 **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD:** This movie stands alone. It is perfect! Enough said.

*Friends of the Falmouth Public Library*

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