

**New, Earlier  
Book Sale  
this year!  
May 15 - 18!**

# *The Buzz* from and about the Friends of the Beebe Library *Winter 2024*



## ***Museum Pass Spotlight: Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art***

*By Lucy Skeldon*

For our winter expedition, the Museum Pass Wielders were feeling edgy, so we donned our bowling shirts, as truly hip folks do, and hied ourselves off to the Institute of Contemporary Art in the Seaport District to see what was happening. Well, the first thing that was happening was the ICA building itself. Leave it to the ICA, which for most of its 88 years has led a rather nomadic existence, to construct in 2006 a standout artsy contemporary (but a little bit of a nod to mid-century) glass-and-light-and-air structure that only looks a

## ***Beebe's Queen of the Reference Desk***

*By Lavender Li C.*

Today, I had the honor of interviewing the Head of Reference and Information Services at the Wakefield Beebe Public Library, Karen Stern. She says her favorite store to shop at is Anthropologie. She is dressed fashion forward as usual, wearing a floral zip-up dress with coral flowers, tortoise-shell

*Continued on page 4*

little like someone wearing a VR headset, and what's more, to do so right where everyone would want to be fifteen years later. And right on the waterfront! We forgot to take photos before we scuttled in, but do take a moment to appreciate it. It's especially striking at night.

Our pass allowed us to buy two tickets at \$10 each. General adult admission is usually \$20, but there are a lot of opportunities to visit for free, too. Check their website. Oh, and the 18-and-unders always get in free at the ICA. There are engaging options for kids here, too (although material in some exhibits might be scary for the littles). Look for activity cards, available by the elevators, with scavenger hunts and other games. There is also a creativity area on the 4th floor, where kids and adults can pursue their own artistic ideas.

We climbed aboard the Great Glass Elevator and rode up to the gallery space on the 4th floor.

The Thing We Wish We'd Known Beforehand: If you install the *Bloomberg Connects App* on your phone and bring your earbuds, you can access a variety of additional information and commentaries by artists on the ICA and some of the works currently on exhibit.

The first exhibition we encountered was "*Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s-Today*". This sometimes beautiful, often unsettling collection presents a wide range of works in a variety of media, all by artists of Caribbean background or with a connection to the region. They touch on themes of colonialism, slavery, subjugation of women, strength of women, political violence, the impact of climate change, nature, migration, religion, and corporate exploitation. María Magdalena Campos-Pons's 2010 installation *Sugar/Bittersweet* made a particularly strong impression on us, with its symbolic and grim reminder of the historical impact of the slave trade on the islands. After some of these more sobering pieces, we enjoyed the more upbeat story of

cultural interaction told by Alia Farid's work *Mezquitas de Puerto Rico (2022)*, a beautiful prayer rug woven in Iran which depicts a Puerto Rican street scene.

Before continuing to the next exhibition, we indulged in a palate-cleansing stroll down the glass-walled corridor that spans the harbor side of the ICA between its galleries.

The other major exhibit on site that day was the "*2023 James and Audrey Foster Prize*" show, featuring the works of prizewinners Cicely Carew, Venetia Dale, and Yu-Wen Wu, all Boston area artists. Dale works with fibers and found objects to consider aspects of daily life; Wu, born in Taiwan, references her immigrant experience and her Asian heritage in her works. Carew embraces color and works with textiles and paint to communicate feelings of "radical joy and liberation." Her work was the dessert course of our visit, visual candy to top off the weightier substance of some of the other works.

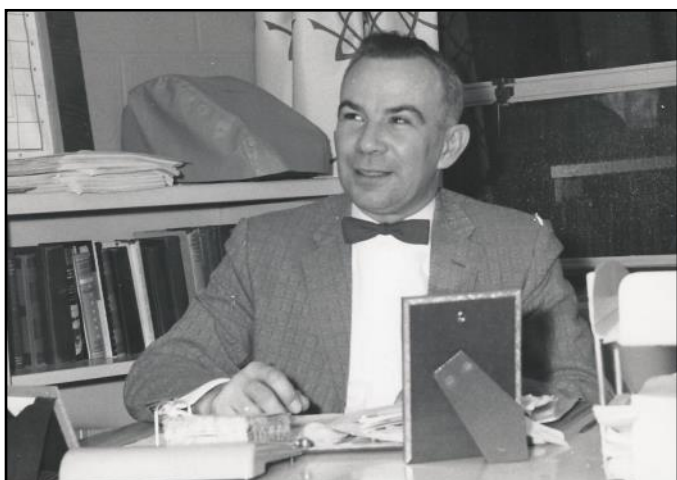
The ICA does not have any permanent exhibitions;



*Frequency (detail), Cicely Carew, 2023*

shows are regularly coming and going. The *Foster Prize* exhibit has already closed, but a new one, “*Wordplay*” has arrived, which includes many pieces from the ICA’s permanent collection, not often seen on display.

And, finally, gift shop aficionados that we are, we have to give four thumbs up to the ICA’s fabulous store! As well curated as the exhibits, it offers a fantastic array of the practical and the impractical, the beautiful and the whimsical, the educational and the just plain silly. It’s tucked away behind the ticket counter; don’t forget to check it out!



*Principal Gordon J. McRae*

## ***Passing on a Legacy of Love for Friends of the Beebe***

***By Karen King***

The Friends of Beebe were recently asked to assist a local gentleman with some disabilities in picking up boxes of books as he was preparing to down-size. Volunteers Karen and Jim King went to his home on a cold January morning and began to load approximately 150 books into their car to take to book storage as the Book Sale Team prepares for the Annual Book Sale. As we were loading the car and chatting, this remarkable family story began to unfold.

Andrew McRae told us that he grew up in a house-

hold where both parents constantly had a book close at hand and had been long time supporters of the Friends of Beebe Library. Both had wide interests in reading and the passion his dad had for history was passed to his son. Andrew has fond childhood memories of being allowed to accompany his dad on weekly visits to the Beebe Library, nights, where each of them would wander to their favorite section of the library. “I can still smell the distinctive “book smell” in the building from those times and hear that old fashioned “kachunk” sound when the checkout card was put into the machine for the imprint from our library cards. Needless to say, we were a book centered family (we didn’t even get a color TV until I was in high school!), and that trait passed to all three sons. We basically grew up going to the Beebe Library, and my younger brother Rob worked there in high school - now there was perfect synergy.”

At the age of twelve, in 1970, upon completion of what was then a new addition to the Beebe Library, a call was put out for help to move the books from the old building to the new. “I think groups of Boy Scouts, etc., helped out, but my best



*Joan L. McRae, teacher*

friend Charlie and I, all of 12 years old, walked down and volunteered, and wouldn't you know it, the late Joe Hakey took our picture and it was in the Wakefield Item.”

“My mother, Joan L. McRae, joined the Friends probably when the group first formed in 1972, I think, and supported the Friends to the end of her life, and I've been a member for many years, but couldn't tell you when I joined. Mom spent her entire career teaching in Wakefield at the Warren, Hurd and Lincoln schools. Upon her retirement, the Hurd School Library was named in her honor.” It is so appropriate that some of the books owned by her children will be taken care of at the Hurd School and then sold to local residents, all benefiting the Friends of Beebe.

Dad, Gordon J. McRae was a beloved Wakefield teacher and administrator active in the Wakefield Teachers Association. Following graduation from Salem State College in 1948, he first taught at the Hurd School, then the Atwell Junior High, eventually becoming Assistant Principal of the Atwell and then on to a brand-new Wakefield Junior High School on Farm Street. He left Wakefield to become Principal of the Francis Wyman Junior High in Burlington for many years, but eventually came back and finished his career in Wakefield running the GED program until his death in 1986.

But all these years have gone by and the adult children of this couple honored their love of books. Andrew is still a member of the Friends and continues to honor his parents with this wonderful donation of books to our organization. The volunteers for the Book Sale Committee have unique opportunities to meet our donors and often, we can assist them by picking up books from their home and, in so doing, pass along information about Beebe Library events and online offerings that some of our older residents are unaware of. But what keeps the volunteers motivated are stories such as this where we feel honored to accept book donations knowing that they came from a family

with deep roots to the Friends.

Andrew McRae, we thank you for your donation and we honor and thank your parents for many years of support and for instilling in a new generation a love for books and for reading.

*Reference Librarian — Karen Stern, from Page 1*

glasses and a sleek silver-fox hair bob. She looks on-point, and approachable, not stern at all, but kind. When asked how she came to be the Beebe library's head of Reference, she said she started off with just one night a week in 2007. “I really liked the vibes at Wakefield Beebe Public Library, especially since I started taking my kids to Storytime downstairs.”

She has a Bachelors in English from Indiana University and when she went to get her Master's Degree at Simmons and had to do projects for her degree, she decided to interview librarians at Beebe. Karen also has a second Master's Degree in English from the University College of London.

She says that Wakefield is a great place to work and is also a really supportive town. I couldn't agree more! Not to mention there are a variety of amazing things the library has to offer. Karen says that it was her dream position to work in reference. “I love working at this desk because there are such a variety of projects to make happen here. There are services to provide information, advice to give for books, programs and tech support.” Sounds intriguing!

When I asked what she wanted to do with her future, she said “My favorite aspect about this library are the patrons and staff. It helps to work with my amazing colleagues too. A great bunch of people. A long while.” While it's been seventeen years already, we look forward to having the Queen here for longer. Make sure to say hi to Karen when you see her and the rest of the Beehive staff like Amanda, Catie, Erin & Jackie!



## *Support of Friends*

### HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS US TO SUPPORT THE LIBRARY

*By Karen Williams*

The Beebe Library is one of the gems of Wakefield, perhaps second only to Lake Quannapowitt. It is a showpiece that our neighbors in other towns seek out. The Beebe Library is more than just books. It is also a hub for adult and children's programming, tech help, the business center, the digital media lab, and the library of things. Our library's program offerings exceed what is offered in most local towns, giving library users a wide variety of options to meet their interests and needs.

**The Friends of Beebe Library exists to support the library.** The primary, and most visible, way the Friends support the Library is by raising mon-

ey and donating it to the Library. These monies fund activities and services which are not covered by the budget passed at Town Meeting. These "extras" includes things such as adult programs, including the online lecture series; Plaza Jazz; museum passes; and the document center. We also pay for children's and youth programs.

**Approximately one-third of the Friends' revenue is from book sales.** Your generous donations of books are so valuable, providing inventory for the annual book sale and the Everyday Book Sale shelves in the lower level of the library. After the Annual Sale, books are offered (free!) to teachers. We also conduct book giveaways at the Festival by the Lake and the Farmer's Market, which generate additional monetary donations. Remaining books are offered to local churches for their community meal events, and to numerous other non-profits. We love the sense of community that the book sale and its ancillary activities create, as we know many of you also do, on top of the money that it raises for the library.

**About fifty percent of the Friends' revenue currently comes from memberships and donations** not directly related to the book sale or giveaways. The balance of our revenues is primarily from sales of our Friends of Beebe Library honey and copy/fax machine fees.

**I'd like to recognize a non-monetary, but no less important, resource that is donated to us each year - the time given by our volunteers.** We are a volunteer-run organization with dozens of volunteers assisting us in our various efforts. We could not do it without you!

**Unfortunately, our book sale's future is in jeopardy due to the impending loss of our current space at the Hurd School.** That's where we currently collect, store, and sort books, and hold the annual sale. We have been unsuccessful in identifying an alternative site for these activities. We ask you to contact us if you become aware of any

no-cost or low cost local spaces that might be available and suitable.

It is our belief that if we were unable to hold the book sale we would see a drop in membership as many members join specifically so that they can attend the members-only first day of the book sale and get first access to our offerings. This would make the loss of the book sale a double whammy to our ability to fund those library “extras” mentioned above.

We hope to continue the book sale as long as feasible, and we hope that all of you will continue to renew your memberships regardless of its status, consider us as part of your charitable donations, and support us by volunteering your time. **Working together we can find ways to continue to support the library in the manner that it deserves so that it can provide us with all of the programs and services that we value.**

*P.S. – We do still have the Hurd School for the book sale in 2024, so please continue to donate your spare books to us at one of our drop-off events. We look forward to seeing you at the Sale!*



## Beebe Librarians Suggest Books Just for You

By Manavi Sharma

**F**resh off of a beach vacation last October after spending amazing days reading by the ocean, I struggled to keep my reading streak going; I had used all my ideas to pick books for the holiday and now I couldn't decide what came next. So, I went to the Beebe library website to check out some of their

Recommendation Lists, and came across something interesting - a form called

### Suggestions For You!

The process is simple! Fill out this form and receive personalized book suggestions. Answer questions that let the librarians know about books you've read and why you liked or disliked them. You can also let them know the genres you love, and the mood you are looking for. Maybe you want a cozy mystery, are hankering after a gothic thriller or are looking for a heartwarming romance - you can put those down as answers to *Is there a certain type of book you are in the mood for right now?* Not every question is mandatory but I did answer them all. I briefly wrote down my thoughts about the books I listed as read; that I didn't want horror books and that science-fiction/mystery were welcome. Five days later, I received an email with *multiple* titles, descriptions and links to borrow them at the library! Shoutout to **Beebe librarians Amanda, Erin, Beth, Catie and Karen** for stellar recommendations - a couple I had read and loved, reinforcing how spot-on these ideas were! I have since enjoyed reading some suggestions (The Essex Serpent and The Shadow of the Wind); I have holds on others!

This was a great find and adds a personal touch to the entire library experience. Whether you're a library regular looking for your next book or trying to get into reading but don't know where to start, I highly recommend this form to get some great tailored suggestions. After all, it is the perfect weather to get cozy with a hot beverage and a great book!



Follow us on Instagram  
[@friends\\_beebe\\_library\\_](https://www.instagram.com/friends_beebe_library_)

# The “Library of Things”

*By Nancy Tolleson*

There is nothing like doctors’ orders to stay home and do nothing for 2 weeks to inspire me to check out the “Library of Things” at the Beebe Library. My goal was to catch up on Ted Lasso while I helped my husband recover from surgery, and the Library of Things had what I needed. You can enter Library of Things in the general website search tool to get an overview of what is offered. Step 1 is to read and fill out a lender agreement. You only need to do this once. Then you can search for the item you want in the regular catalog and put a hold on it.

The Library of Things has 3 Roku sticks you can borrow for a week: Disney+, Apple TV+ or HBO Max. The Roku stick is easy to set up and you are ready to go in just a minute. There is a wide variety of original programming as well as access to old favorite series and many movies. But the options don’t stop there. You can also get a hotspot to help you access the Internet where you wouldn’t normally get it. Try out a Chromebook which is like a laptop where you access everything via the Internet.

Are you outdoorsy? Then you can sign out binoculars and special nature guides or even a pickle ball set to learn this new sport.

Are you a DYIer? Then you can try the electricity usage monitor or thermal scan to see how heat leaky your old New England house really is. You can even practice a ukulele while trying out the portable induction cooktop. In all, there are 27 items to try out. I enjoyed the chance to try out this unique set of non-book items. By the way Ted Lasso is very charming and upbeat.



# Volunteers Needed!!

*In addition to our ongoing need for volunteers to assist with book drops, sorting, and preparation for the book sale, we are in need of volunteers to fill these roles:*

- *Assistant Treasurer*
- *Director*
- *Newsletter Co-editor*
- *Digital Specialist to organize our records in Google Workspace*
- *Volunteer to digitize our financial records*
- *Float coordinator for the 4th of July parade*

Please contact us at

[friends@friendsofbeebe.org](mailto:friends@friendsofbeebe.org)

for more information.

# Booksale: May 15-18

*By the Book Sale Team*

The Annual Book Sale is moving to May!

The Preview Night for Friends’ members will take place Wednesday, May 15 from 2-7 pm.

The sale continues on Thursday, May 16 (2-7 pm),

Friday, May 17 (2-7 pm) and

Saturday May, 18 (9am-2pm).

*Book Sale location: 27 Cordis Street, Wakefield*

There are **3 more book donation dates** before

the sale starts: Tuesday, March 12 (1-4 pm),

Saturday, March 23 (9-Noon) and

Thursday, April 25 (3-7 pm).

The Hurd School is located at the corner of

Cordis Street and Pleasant Street in Wakefield.

Drop-offs are at the rear entrance off of the

Pleasant Street parking lot.

Questions about book donations?

Contact us at [beebebooksale@gmail.com](mailto:beebebooksale@gmail.com)

**FRIENDS OF THE BEEBE LIBRARY**

**P.O. Box 1610**

**WAKEFIELD, MA 01880**



**LUCIUS  
BEEBE**

**Where Wakefield Connects**



**Find us on  
Facebook**

President..... Karen Williams  
Vice President.....Andrea Ahearne  
Secretary.....Karen King  
Treasurer ..... Keith LaGraves  
Assistant Treasurer .....open

Director .....Jody Sherman  
Director ..... Greta Garniss  
Director ..... Bhushan Kulkarni  
Newsletter Editor.....James Horne  
Photographer ..... Lavender Li C.

*Everyone is invited to our Board meetings on the second Thursday of the month, September through June, starting at 7 p.m., at the Beebe Library.*

**Become a member.** Visit our web page to download an application or pay online via PayPal.  
*For more information, visit [www.FriendsofBeebe.org](http://www.FriendsofBeebe.org)*