

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

*Summer 2022*

## **BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY - COPLEY SQUARE**

*By Marlene A. Veldwisch*

Considered the Grande Dame of Copley Square, the original branch of the Boston Public Library - located in the McKim Building - is an outstanding example of Renaissance Beaux-Arts architecture. Opened in 1895, it is known for its outstanding artwork as well as revered research and special collections, which include not only books but letters, manuscripts, drawings and original works from as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The library hosts Art/Architecture Tours, which can be taken in-person or viewed virtually [via the [Art & Architecture booklet](#)]. On the second floor, the Bates Hall Reading Room is stately, iconic and a quiet sanctuary from the “noise” of Copley Square.

An elegant interior courtyard connects this building with a modern addition, first opened in 1972 with renovations completed in 2016. In addition to adult, children’s and specialized book collections, it houses a business library, innovation center, computer lab, café and satellite WGBH broadcast studio.

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## ***Museum Pass Spotlight: Wakefield Community Boating***

*By Lucy Skeldon*

As a Friend, you are probably familiar with the Beebe’s Museum Pass program, which gives library patrons opportunities to enjoy some of the Boston area’s greatest attractions for free or reduced rates...but it’s not just about museums! Thanks to a gift from National Grid, the library now offers passes to Wakefield Community Boating, the boat concession at Lake Quannapowitt managed by the Boys’ and Girls’ Club. We, your intrepid reporters, decided to try it out.

You can reserve the passes on the Beebe’s website, through the Museum Pass page.

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As with most passes, it's a good idea to reserve them a few days in advance. Community Boating passes are only available for weekdays during the schools' summer vacation. Once you have the pass, you will still need to call Community Boating to reserve a boat or boats. The pass entitles you +1 to one hour of kayaking for free in either single or tandem kayaks, paddles and life vests included.

The launch area is easy to spot – on the shore near the Spaulding Street Playground. After signing in, we picked up life vests, and were escorted to a pair of single kayaks. We alighted gracefully in our kayaks (just kidding, that is almost impossible to do), were handed paddles (Whatever you do, don't drop that paddle!), and off we went. It was a pretty windy, wavy day, so leaving shore was a good upper-body workout. We glided across the lake, getting a whole new view of Wakefield and a fair amount of Lake Q on our pants (you're going to get wet; dress accordingly). There were lots of kayakers and pedal-boaters out enjoying the Lake, and a scattering of mallards supervising us. We visited the Giant Rubber Duck, failed in an attempt to take selfies with it (but succeeded in not dropping any phones in the lake), greeted some kayaking friends, paddled to the southwest cove, realized that our time was almost up, and raced back to the launch site as if the legendary Sea Monster of Lake Quannapowitt was after us. Lots of fun, and a great workout! Highly recommended.

*Please note that Wakefield Community Boating will close if it is too windy.*

## *From the Board*

*By Patricia Murphy*

Hello, I hope everyone is enjoying our summer break. I would like to thank the board of Friends of the Beebe Library for electing me as their new President. I am honored to help lead Friends of the Beebe Library. I want to personally thank Helen for her leadership/dedication and look forward to continuing working together. I want to thank all departing members of the board and welcome our new members. I am looking forward to our Fall meeting with our new board members.

We have been successful thanks to the diligence of our hardworking volunteers, cooperation with the Trustees, library staff and community leaders. I am hoping to foster our climate of co-operation and help in the funding of apolitical programs that showcase our superb, all inclusive, library. We have many challenges ahead of us, foremost in preserving our largest fund raiser, 'The Annual Book Sale'. In order to preserve the sale, it is essential that we have a safe accessible location for the storage of our donated books as well as a location for the sale. I ask all members to keep their eyes and ears open for a possible new venue. The Hurd School has been a boon, but the future is not promised. We have been fortunate to have Cindy and Gretta spearhead all aspects of the sale with their troop of wonderful volunteers. I know we are still in the midst of our summer giveaway programs and love the promotion of reading in our community.

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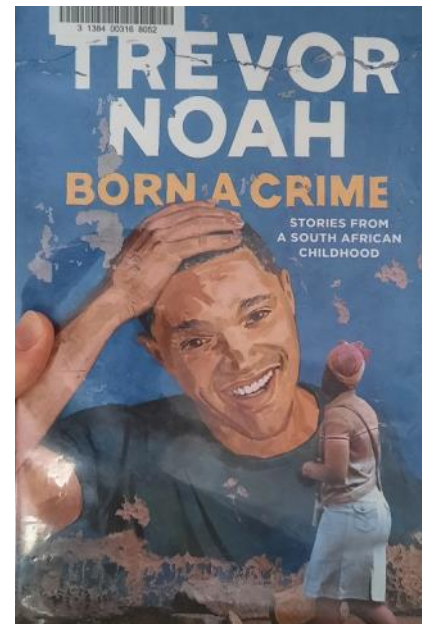
# *Born A Crime*

(By Trevor Noah)

*Book Review by Kyle Donohue*

During the pandemic, we have learned about many different issues: supply chains, healthcare, and inflation to name a few. *Born A Crime* by comedian Trevor Noah (host of *The Daily Show*) focuses on apartheid, an issue from one to two generations ago and re-educates us on what happens when groups of people are manipulated to be turned against each other in various ways. What made this book compelling to me was how masterfully it blended his retelling of his childhood with the broader context of an oppressive South African government, which artificially segregated white people, mixed-race people, and black people from the 1950s through 1990. Noah also tells us that black people were divided against each other based on language (like Xhosa and Zulu, while Afrikaans was spoken by white and colored/mix-race South Africans) and that society (in terms of schools, professions, marriages, and social interactions) was heavily policed.

Trevor Noah, whose birth was a crime due to racist apartheid laws from 1949/1950 (born to a black mother and a Swiss-German father), had to navigate a tricky and dangerous childhood based on government restrictions on non-white citizens, but he and his mom did it with fearlessness and sometimes a smile! Trevor gave his mother a run for her money, though, as he recalls her chasing him so fast she flicked off her heels while running! Focusing on his hi-



jinks as a toddler to a child, to his hijinks as a middle schooler and as a high schooler (including running an unofficial snack business for his classmates), Noah shows us how unique, vibrant, and dangerous his childhood was. For example, though he grew up in a two-room shantytown house in the ghetto of Soweto (and later the suburbs), he was not punished as much as other kids due to his lighter skin, but he said (as he ate large amounts of cookies when not allowed): “I was trouble.” He just wanted to be a normal kid (even had two dogs, Panther and Fufi), and while some chose to follow the rules, Trevor got into many a dastardly situation, including being thrown from a minibus (for his safety)! Please note: this book, while humorous in tone, is very accurate in depicting the mixed-race experience in South Africa and can get violent at times though Trevor and his mother are together through it all. This book, also available in audiobook format, is worth the read for understanding the formative years of Trevor Noah, successor to Jon Stewart and global citizen!



Is this a research library, an art museum, a radio station, and/or a community resource offering courtyard concerts, lecture series, state-of-the-art conference facilities? It is all of these and so much more. The McKim Building, in particular, is a unique venue, which can be rented for conferences, holiday parties and even weddings. Imagine a courtyard ceremony followed by a catered reception in Bates Hall. In the mood for an elegant high tea? At the Courtyard Tea Room, you can order a classic afternoon tea with sandwiches, scones and sweets at one of three 90-minute reserved seatings. To experience a different ambience and treat, the Map Room Tea Lounge serves literary inspired cocktails and bar bites. To enjoy more casual snacks or lunch, the Newsfeed Café (at the Boylston St. entrance) is bright and airy and on Tuesdays/Fridays, you can be a Boston Public Radio audience member.



I have spent hours since my teens exploring various corners of both buildings ... reading in the courtyard ... studying in Bates Hall and more recently having coffee in the Newsfeed Café. Now that the library is fully open again, it is worth taking a day (or more) to explore on your own or take one of their tours. Read, relax, eat ... to find out program/tour offerings and restaurant hours or to just enjoy the many pictures of this treasure, visit their website at [www.bpl.org](http://www.bpl.org).



# Annual Book Sale *a great success!*

*By Karen King*

It was so great to open the doors at the Hurd and welcome people back to the Friends of the Beebe Library Annual Sale. Upon opening those doors on day #1, we found more than 30 people in line, waiting to get first choice on the thousands of books that we had inside the Hurd, all sorted on tables and waiting to find a new owner. Fiction, history, biography and children's books were the "most wanted" and our volunteer staff had a blast answering questions and often making reading recommendations.

As the Book Sale Committee was in the planning process, they planned for a 4-day event so as to keep crowds to a minimum and be mindful of the COVID concerns. Customers were pleased at the spread of hours, covering afternoon, evening and then Saturday hours and appreciated having all books sorted on tables; no bending to look at boxes below tables. Feedback was positive and the community so appreciated the sale returning to Wakefield on the first week in June. The Committee followed the Sale with a giveaway at Festival by the Lake and we were all so thrilled to see children sitting on the grass deciding which books they were interested in taking home for summer reading. Festival had great weather for the event and again, we loved the opportunity to be part of a community

event, see neighbors and enjoy what Wakefield offers.

The Book Sale Committee works all year on collecting book donations, sorting and preparing for the sale, followed by a summer full of being present at Festival and Farmers Market. We are always looking for new volunteers to help with our work and encourage you to consider some hours helping out; perhaps with your teenagers? We thank all who are Friends of the Beebe Library members, thank you for your support and hours of volunteer time. If our schedule didn't work for you this year, please consider helping out during upcoming fall donation drives.

Watch our social media sites as well as the Friends of Beebe website for fall dates for donation drives.



*Caught reading at the Booksale.*

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# Farmer's Market

## *a short announcement*

*by Karen King*

Once again, the Friends of the Beebe Library will be giving back to the Wakefield Community at Farmers Market. On July 23rd and again on Aug. 20th, we will be putting up the tent and giving away books at Farmers Market. Donations are very welcome but we hope that all local residents come and grab some summer reading.

And don't forget cookbooks....we provide the Wakefield Farmers Market team with cookbooks to be given out each Saturday throughout the FM season. It is our hope that you check them out by greeting the FM Team that works so hard for all of us each Saturday during the summer and fall months.

In addition, the Book Sale Committee has established dates for Teachers Give a Way. On August 17th, from 4-8 PM, we will invite any/all teachers to come to Hurd and take books that will help their students in the upcoming school year. We know that teachers often spend their own money to bring books to the classrooms and we invite them to attend and choose books that will incite their students to enjoy reading. We have many kids' books remaining and are happy to support the work they do. If you personally know teachers, please share this info. While we do have a list of teachers who came last year, we ask you to help get the word out.

# Alternate History...

## *not an oxymoron.*

*By Michael Nester*

"What if..." Anyone who has read a history book, at some point has probably thought..."but, what if..." What if Napoleon kept the Louisiana Purchase instead of selling it? What if the South won the Civil War? What if the atom bomb didn't work? The answers to these questions, along with many others, is taken up by a sub-genre of books called 'alternate history'. Much has been made of comparatively minor decisions or changes having massive impacts on history, i.e. 'for want of a nail, a kingdom was lost' - Benjamin Franklin. Alternate history authors take this premise a great deal further.

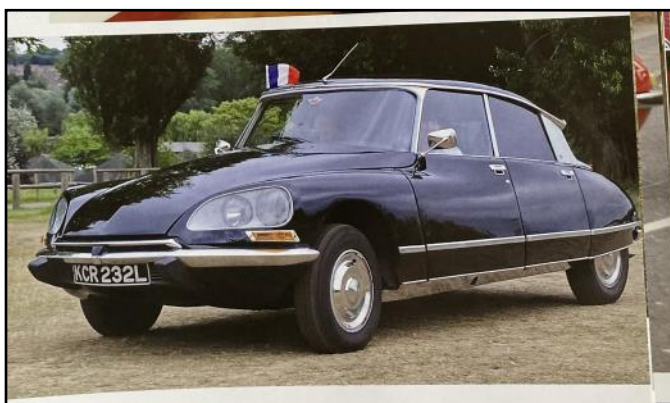
The name most often associated with this area is Harry Turtledove. His works range from 'Guns of The South' (what if the South had modern assault rifles at Appomattox) to his 'Worldwar' series (what if aliens invaded during the first years of WW II and the combatants had to work together). Other authors have combined genres. Robert Harris wrote 'Fatherland' as a murder-mystery set in a post-WW II era where the Nazis had won. 'The Years of Rice and Salt' by Kim Stanley Robinson is a social commentary set in a world where the Black Death killed 99% of the population in the 14th century. A political perspective is the subject of Jeff Greenfield's 'If Kennedy Lived', which is self-

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## *Enjoy Oversized Books for a Quick Respite at the Library*

*By Nancy Tolleson*

Summer heat is ramping up. Looking for a cool quiet spot to steal a few moments of relaxation? Check out the Living Room - with pale yellow walls, comfortable chairs and air conditioning. The library's collection of oversized books, aka coffee table books, have been gathered in one spot to entice you and offer easy browsing. They are big, beautiful and heavy! So grab a title, sit down, and enjoy a few minutes escape to another beautiful land or delve in a historic period, or revel in a favorite hobby. Just sitting in the Yellow Room is calming. Forget your errands, ignore your phone, just sit back and indulge in time for yourself. Once you are in the Yellow Room, note that there are other great materials: magazines, journals, all grouped for easy browsing and the serendipity of finding something you didn't even now you were looking for. Want to take some home? Sure, go ahead, check them out and come back again.



*A sampling from a coffee table book.*

explanatory. Science Fiction/Fantasy is replete with alternate history books. 'The Man in the High Castle' by Phillip K. Dick, '1632' by Eric Flint, the 'Wild Cards' series by George R.R. Martin, and the classic 'Lest Darkness Fall' by L. Sprague de Camp, are all superb examples.

There is a literary magazine online called Alt Hist (<https://althistory.com>) though it has not published a new issue since 2020, and several forums dedicated to alternate history discussion. If the social and political turmoil of the last few years have made you long for some submersion into 'what-if's', give this expanding sub-genre some consideration.

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



Over the next few weeks, I hope to get to know all of our hardworking committee members and am looking forward to hearing all of your ideas to help improve our organization. Please feel free to contact me thru Facebook messenger on our Facebook page, text at 781-228-0358 or email at [president@friendsofbeebe.org](mailto:president@friendsofbeebe.org) I will be reaching out to our committee members over the next few weeks. I am excited to get to know and work with all of you. I hope you can all attend our September meeting whether in person or Zoom. I sincerely hope everyone is enjoying our summer break and look forward to working with you in the fall.

Regards, Patricia

**FRIENDS OF THE BEEBE LIBRARY**

**P.O. Box 1610**

**WAKEFIELD, MA 01880**



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**Where Wakefield Connects**



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*All Friends are invited to our Board meetings on the second Thursday of the month, September through June, starting at 7 p.m., via Zoom.*

**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)

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