

KML FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: Jon Lafleur

The Friends of Kent Memorial Library are thrilled to announce our Volunteer of the Year is Jon Lafleur! Jon has been involved with the Library since 1974 when he moved to Kent and he became a volunteer in 2005. He is originally from the beautiful White Mountains where he still hikes and cross country skis with three of his 100 cousins. He moved to Warren and then Kent because he taught algebra and vocal music at Shepaug Valley School.

As a volunteer at the Library, he is a part of the book sale corps. Jon's dedication to the Book Sale has been unrelenting, and it's been quite a challenge to keep up with donations with no sale due to COVID-19. This year he is working on "my dumpster Piled Higher Deeper degree." With his help, the Book Sale is poised to open next season

with a streamlined collection of excellent materials.

When not at the Library, he hikes in Macedonia, plays cribbage, does jigsaw puzzles, and enjoys evenings by the fire. He also practices the pipe organ for St. John's Church in Washington. (he has played in 65 churches).

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Library Director, Sarah Marshall (L) awards Book Sale Volunteer, Jon Lafleur (R) with 2020 Volunteer of the Year.

He has played the piccolo part to *Stars and Stripes Forever*; hiked the 100-mile Tour de Mt. Blanc, but the highlight of his life was when he accompanied the Trumbull High School singers in Salzburg, Vienna and Prague. He hopes his postponed hiking trip to England can, indeed, happen next year.

FEATURED FRIEND: Sergio Troncoso



Author Sergio Troncoso has a home in South Kent and wanted to give back to the Library by way of teaching a writing workshop for anyone who has ever wanted to write a short story or start a novel. The son of Mexican immigrants, he was born in El Paso, Texas and now lives in New York City and South Kent. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College and received two graduate degrees in international relations and philosophy from Yale University. He won a Fulbright scholarship to Mexico, where he studied economics, politics, and literature. He was inducted into the Hispanic Scholarship Fund's Alumni Hall of Fame and the Texas Institute of Letters.

In 2016 he served as a judge for the prestigious PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and the *New Letters* Literary Awards in the Essay category.

Sergio has done two book talks for the Library and during the last one participants were asking questions about his writing process and he decided that he wanted to offer a two-session writing workshop meant to generate new fiction work, called "Write The First Draft."

He is author of *A Peculiar Kind of Immigrant's Son*, a collection of linked short stories which Luis Alberto Urrea called "a world-class collection." The collection won the Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story and the International Latino Book Award for Best Collection of Short Stories. Troncoso also wrote *From This Wicked Patch of Dust*, which Kirkus Reviews named one of the best books of 2012 in a starred review. The novel won the Southwest Book Award. Troncoso wrote *Crossing Borders: Personal Essays*, winner of the Bronze Award for Essays from *Foreword Reviews*. He is also the author of *The Nature of Truth*, hailed by the *Chicago Tribune* as "impressively lucid." *Publishers Weekly* called his first book, *The Last Tortilla and Other Stories*, "Richly satisfying." He is currently president of the Texas Institute of Letters and a resident faculty member of the Yale Writers' Workshop.

KID'S CORNER

Beginning in March, due to Covid-19, all children's programs became virtual. Weekly Baby Group, Story Hours and Teen/Tween programs met live over Zoom or the staff shared recorded programs for families to enjoy at their convenience. When the weather improved and Connecticut's restrictions were loosened, we began offering several of our programs outside in the fresh air. We gained permission to use space behind the Visitor's Center, where there is plenty of room for social distancing. With all our outdoor programs, we have been careful to follow safety guidelines, requiring registration (including email address and phone number for contact tracing) to insure numbers are limited. Our participants, save the youngest, wear masks, and all props and materials are sanitized and quarantined after use.



Above (L): Outdoor Story Hour. Above (R): Outdoor Baby Group. Below: Outdoor TAB (Teen Advisory Board) Meeting.

Some teen programs continued to be live on Zoom, but with the warmer weather we moved the TAB meeting and book club outdoors, with some joining in person and other tweens joining remotely. Starting in the summer we have offered a Wednesday morning outdoor Baby



Group (in addition to the ongoing Zoom identical program on Tuesday morning), which has been very well received, and we plan to continue offering Baby Group in the Grass until the weather no longer permits.

As for our Outreach programs, all three schools in town are closed campuses, so we are setting up Zoom visits. This week we had our annual visit with the third grade, but virtually this year. In November we will "visit" Kent Center School's kindergarten, first, second, and fourth grade class. It is a time to introduce ourselves, the Library, promote Library cards and explain how the Library and our books can still be accessed, all of which has changed markedly since the pandemic. We miss the presence, vitality, and creativity of larger groups of the children from our community. And while we look forward to the day when we can safely welcome children back into our Library for program, until then, we continue to find ways to engage our young readers, encouraging families to make appointments to visit in person, or to call or email for curbside service.



FEATURED FRIEND: Abigail Victory



Abigail Victory has been a resident of Kent since 2015 when she moved from Cornwall to Kent because her Mom works at Kent School. These days she spends most of her Library volunteer time preparing crafts for lunch bunch kids.

When she's not at the Library, she enjoys playing hockey, hiking, and listening to audio books while making crafts. Abigail has a little business making homemade dog treats.

She thinks it's important to support the Library because there are so many great books to be found there and it is so important to read. And the Library has lots of fun activities for kids. The book she recently read is *Restart* by Gordon Koman.

WHAT'S ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND?

Here's what some of (y)our Friends are reading:

Carol Linn - *The Mountains Sing* by Nguyen Phan Que.

Sandra Edelman: *The Searcher* by Tana French.

Sam Callaway: *The Hour of Land* by Terry Tempest Williams

John Youngblood: *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson

Eric Roper: *The First Conspiracy* by Brad Meltzer

Sarah Marshall: *Sharks in the Time of Saviors* by Kawai Strong Washburn

Mary Ellen Casey: *You Again* by Debra Jo Immergut

Rudy Molho: *The Splendid & the Vile* by Eric Larson

Lucy C. Pierpont: *The Book of Two Ways* by Jodi Picoult