

Waverly Free Library

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

Special Events

Fun Friday: When I Grow Up
Friday, April 5, all day

Presentation: A Lesson in Chocolate
Tuesday, April 2, 5:30 p.m.

Meet & Greet with Local Actor: Tim O'Hearn
Saturday, April 6, 11:00 a.m.

Sled Dogs of Smokey Hill
Tuesday, April 16, 5:30 p.m.

Reading Challenge & Poetry Writing Contest

The Spring Reading Challenge begins April 1. Participants can earn one free book after reading eight hours and returning their reading log to a library staff member. Stop by the library to pick up your packets.

The third annual Poetry Writing Contest will be held throughout the month of April and is open to all ages. To enter, write an original poem and submit it to the library by April 30. See staff for a complete listing of rules. Winners will be announced in mid-May.

What's In This Month's Issue?

- Special Events
- Reading Challenge & Poetry Writing Contest
- Story Times
- Arts Clubs
- Seed Swap
- Dress Drive
- Interview with local actor Tim O'Hearn
- Interview with owners of the Sled Dogs of Smokey Hill

Story Times & Music Class



Story Times are held virtually on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. on the Waverly Free Library Facebook page. In-person programs are held on Thursdays: Toddler Time at 10:30 a.m., Story Time at 11:15 a.m., and Music Class every other week following Story Time.

ARTS CLUBS



Join us for one of our upcoming Arts Clubs!

Kids Art Club: Paper Sculptures - Tuesday, April 9, 4:00 p.m.

Pre-K Art Class: Color Flowing Butterflies - Friday, April 19, 11:30 a.m.

Teen & Adult Art Club: Cardboard Collage Creatures - Tuesday, April 23, 5:00 p.m.

For questions or to register, email Jae at jgorski@waverlyfreelibrary.org

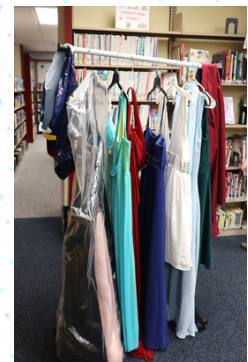
SEED SWAP

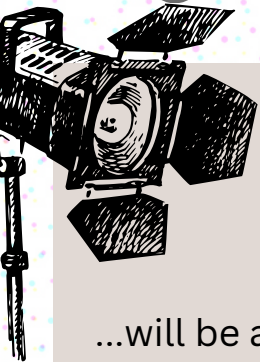


Above: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga County and Family Resource Centers of Tioga County host a seed swap at the library.

DRESS DRIVE

Right: Prom dresses and formal attire were collected throughout the month of March for the Candor Children's Closet to benefit students at local schools.





LOCAL ACTOR TIM O'HEARN

John Spencer
03/27/2024

...will be at Waverly Free Library for a Meet and Greet on Saturday, April 6th at 11:00 am, with DVDs for sale. We talked with Tim about his acting career and his recent film, "Showdown in Yesteryear."

Tim O'Hearn

Q: Could you tell me a bit about yourself?

"I grew up near Watertown, New York. After high school, I went in to the military. I was stationed in the Rome, NY Air Force Base. From there, I ended up moving to this area. I worked for the federal government at Lockheed in Owego for thirty-five years."

Q: When did you start getting interested in film?

"Actually, I did a little Super 8 mm, three minute [short] when I was 13. It was called 'The Creep.' It was based on an old movie, 'I Was a Teenage Frankenstein.' I was always really interested in the horror stuff, like, special effects, make-up, always fascinated me. I always thought about getting into that."

"I always wanted to be an actor ... I always thought you had to be this blonde-haired, blue-eyed 'pretty boy.' [My girlfriend] talked me into getting headshots done, and I just started looking for stuff. I ended up doing a couple of low-budget movies in Buffalo, this was around 2006."

"And then I was in a film shot in Florida called 'A Hundred Tears.' It's like a super gory slasher movie - clown movie - that has a cult following at this point. Underground type thing. So that came about because I've played drums in rock bands for like 40 years now, and my punk band from Elmira did some shows in Florida, and got to meet the director of the film. I told him I had just started getting into acting, so I ended up going down there for that film. I'm still good friends with him."

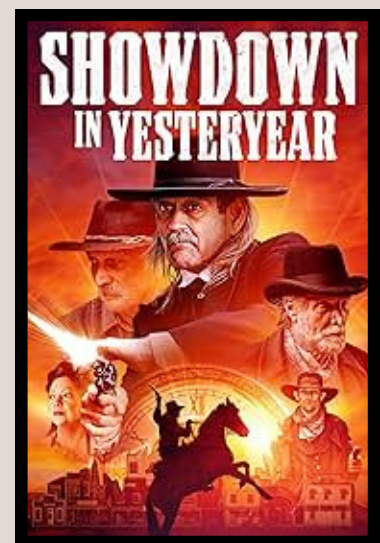
Showdown in Yesteryear

Q: You not only acted in the film, but produced and wrote for it, right?

“Right, so it’s based on a short film I did called ‘The Door.’ We shot it at the same old west town in Ohio. That won a bunch of awards in film festivals as well, and everybody was like, ‘you need to make this a full feature film.’ So I did. I hired Greg Lamberson from Buffalo, a friend of mine – I’ve been in five or six of his films. He and I talked in previous years about a western. He always wanted to do one. So I hired him to write the feature film. Greg and I had a few meetings, and I told him what I wanted and didn’t want, and we took it from there.”

Q: What were your inspirations for the film?

“I acted in another film that was shot here, that’s how I knew about the location. It’s a place called ‘Dogwood Pass.’ They do Wild West re-enactment shows and stuff there in the summer ... I fell in love with the place, the people, everybody there was super cool. So a lot of people in ‘Showdown’ and ‘The Door’ actually worked there. It’s hard to do a period piece with costuming and everything, but obviously everybody that works there has their own costumes already. When I came back from shooting the other film, I wanted to go back there. Like, ‘I’d love to shoot something there of my own.’ And that’s when I came up with this idea of the door taking somebody back into the old west.”



Acting

Q: Do you have a preferred type of character you like to play?

“The bad guy, I guess. Those are fun.”

Q: Do you have any advice for people living in the area who might be interested in making films or acting in films?

“If it’s something you’re really passionate about, or really want to do, just study it. Look stuff up on YouTube. Start looking for casting calls. At first, it doesn’t matter what it is. It might be a student film, that’s a good way to start too. Just don’t give up, for one. It’s a pretty brutal business. You’re always going to audition for a bunch of stuff, and obviously you don’t get all the roles. Typically, you don’t get many of the roles, to be honest, but you can’t get discouraged. Just keep going ... Don’t talk about it, do it.”

A DVD of ‘Showdown in Yesteryear’ is available to be borrowed from the Waverly Free Library. It can also be streamed on Tubi, Amazon Prime, and Hoopla. Tim would like to encourage anyone who watches the film to leave a review on IMDB or any streaming site it’s available on. The ‘Definitive Cut’ of ‘Showdown in Yesteryear’ will be shown on April 19th and 20th at the Cider Mill in Endicott.

Tim O’Hearn’s other projects include ‘Demon Behind the Glass,’ an investigative horror film which won the ‘Outstanding Western New York Feature’ award at the Buffalo Fantastic Film Festival, and was shown at the Lusca Film Fest in Puerto Rico. He has also appeared on the shows ‘Fatal Attractions,’ ‘Deadly Affairs,’ and ‘Mysteries at the Museum.’ An upcoming project is currently in the editing process.



SLED DOGS OF SMOKEY HILL

John Spencer

03/29/2024

Dale and Mary Pitcher's 'Sled Dogs of Smokey Hill' will be at the Waverly Free Library on Tuesday, April 16th at 5:30 pm. We sat down with them to talk about sled dogs, their history with the sport, and the programs they offer.

Q: How did you get started?

Dale: "We've loved the arctic breeds for years. Clear back into the 1970s when we bred Norwegian Elkhounds. The Huskies were a very similar breed to the Elkhound. We didn't pick up breeding or working with the Huskies until the mid 90's."

Mary: "You start with one, and then two, and then..."

Dale: "Yeah, it's that potato chip syndrome. Can't have just one."

Q: How long ago did you start?

Dale: "About seventeen years."

Q: That's a long time. Have you always operated in Pennsylvania?

Dale: "Yeah, out of our home. It was quite limited to begin with. Our first few years, it was just maybe two or three dogs. We'd go to library events and so on, and we kind of just expanded out from there."

"We've grown through the years. We've taken it to state parks now, as well as schools. We've done schools in Pennsylvania and in New York State. ... We also have supported, for most of this sixteen, seventeen years ... the Wolf Mountain Nature Center up in Smyrna, New York. That's a long-time association. ... A lot of our members who join us love to go up to the Wolf Mountain to see the wolves. They've got wolves in a natural setting up there, and it's just amazing. It's not a zoo, it's a nature center. And it fits right in with what we do."

"We put on a lot of different events for kids. That's mostly what we've worked with through the years. After our start with the libraries it just seemed to be natural. The kids love the dogs ... they have a lot of fun together. We put on an event called 'Ikidarod,' we've done that for several years. We make up a competition trail where the kids take the place of the dogs and pull a cart or a sled through the trail. That always brought on a lot of fun."



“Lately, in the past four or five years, we’ve been hosting a cardboard sled dog race. We invite kids and families to build a sled out of strictly cardboard and duct tape, and we set up a fence trail, and we let the dogs pull their homemade sleds through the trail, and award prizes accordingly. We’ve done that in this area quite a bit.”

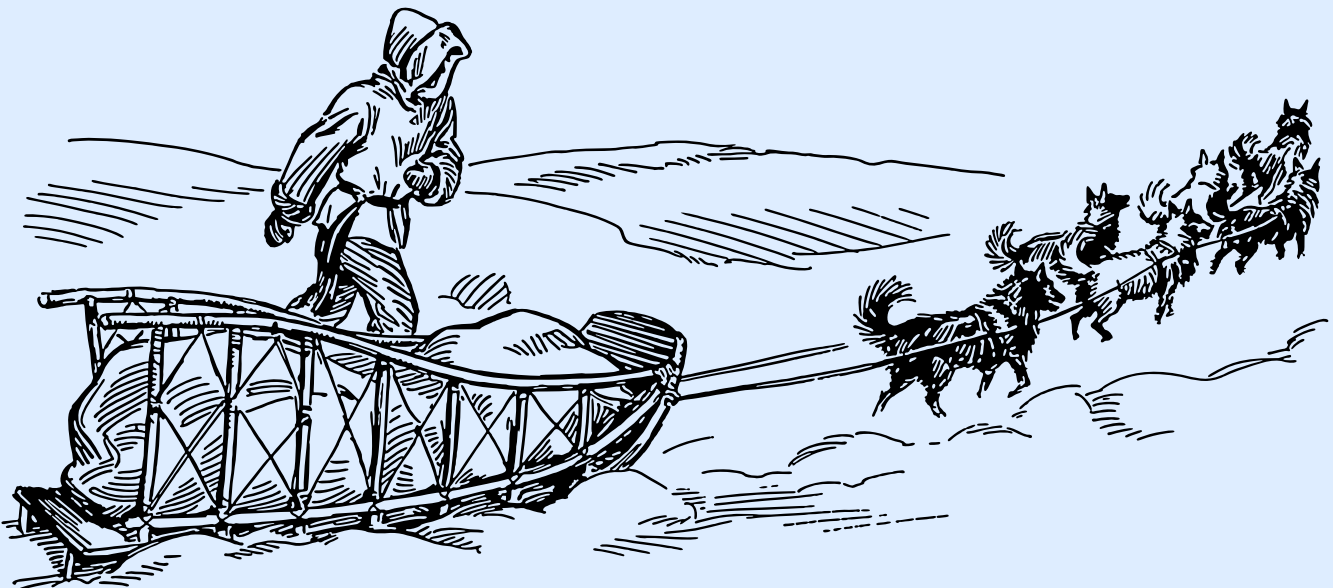
“We also do demonstrations. We show just what the dogs were born to do, what they love to do. We have a mountain scooter, and I build four-wheel carts for training, so we can train and work with the dogs all year round. We don’t have to have snow. It’s a lot of fun. People are amazed at what these dogs are capable of.”

“We mentor youngsters in the handling and training of sled dogs. Sometimes we have to look at the physical capabilities of the youngster, and see if they would fit the program. If they can learn to handle a dog, and a scooter or four-wheel cart, and so on.”

“There’s two facets to our organization. ‘Sled Dogs of Smokey Hill’ is obviously the name of our kennel, and the basic team, but everything that we do for youngsters is supported by our non-profit called ‘Bandit’s Mission.’ We made a promise years ago that no youngster that ever took part in any of our events ... would pay for that experience. So when we do cardboard sled races, we don’t take an entry fee. When we take a kid in on our team ... Bandit’s Mission supplies all the equipment they need to do that. They don’t pay a fee to join, their shirts and hoodies are supplied by Bandit’s Mission ...

Mary: “Helmets, everything.”

Dale: “All of the equipment for hooking up the dogs, and the carts and scooter, are supplied for them. So a youngster can actually experience this and not have a major expense out of their family’s budget, and they can enjoy it. We’ve had kids stay with us for eight or nine years, from high school to when they graduate. We’ve got one young man that’s going to be graduating here in a couple of months, and he’s going into the reserves. He’s going to be a Marine. And he’s been with us since he’s been nine or ten years old. ... It’s different. And we really started this to help show kids that winter isn’t a curse. ... And if they do join with us, they get to see a lot of nature.”



Q: When a lot of people think of sled dogs, they think of Canada or Alaska. Tundras, places with snow all year round. Is there anything particularly challenging or unique about having sled dogs in a more seasonal climate like Pennsylvania?

“Not so much, if you’ve got the wheel carts and the mountain scooters. These dogs love to work, they’re working dogs. They’re an arctic breed, but they’re working dogs. They love to do what they do. That’s what nature put them on this planet for. The breed goes back 8,000 years and more, and these dogs have been largely responsible for the survival of humans in some of the harshest environments on earth. It’s in their blood.

“People quite often ask, ‘Well, how do you train them? How do you get them to do this?’ And I have a simple answer: Nature put it in all of them. You just have to find the right combination to bring it out. ... But the only real restriction to letting the dogs work ... is temperature. We don’t try to run the dogs or train when we’re in the real warmer temps of the year. There’s a formula that we use so we maintain the safety for the dogs.”

“The dogs are very capable. They’re capable of more than just being sled dogs. They can make great pets. They do have a spirit, and they do need exercise, but they can be awesome support dogs.”

Mary: “When we’ve taken them into nursing homes, and so on, the dogs are so gentle and so quiet. They don’t even bark when they’re in there. ... They just know not to bark. We never taught them that, they just don’t.”

Dale: “The dogs, by their nature, are human-friendly. ... I’ve been called a few times to help train a Husky that had a problem, but mostly it was a problem where the people didn’t understand what the dog needed.”

Q: Does your team ever do any competitive racing?

“We do some. We would do, what I consider short courses. And most of the time, when we do that, we do that for the benefit of the kids that join us. Through the years, I think our kids have won about 18 of those short course races.”

Q: Any final thoughts?

“We are always interested in meeting youngsters that would like to be part of the program. We hope that the youngsters that come to us will come to us with a sincere dedication and interest in learning.”

The Pitchers plan to bring four or five sled dogs to the library on April 16th. ‘Sled Dogs of Smokey Hill’ is based out of Warren Center, PA, and can be found on Facebook.