

## BOOKMARKS

### Author speaks on 'Titanic' at Penobscot Shores

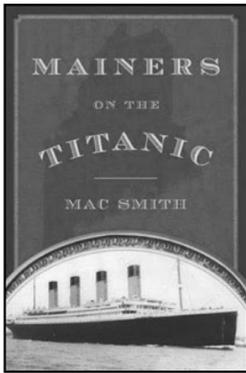
BELFAST — Penobscot Shores' monthly Enrichment Series for adults 50-plus will kick off its Winter/Spring 2020 line-up of programs with "Mainers on the Titanic" on Wednesday, Jan. 8, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Penobscot Shores' Ocean House, 10 Shoreland Drive. The snow date is Thursday, Jan. 9.

In a talk based on his book, "Mainers on the Titanic," Mac Smith will offer a unique and fascinating addition to the Titanic story and to Maine history. His meticulously researched book traces the stories of the passengers



Mac Smith

on that fateful ship who had ties to Maine. Their tales are retold in a lively way along with the sinking-related events in the state at the time. Books will be



available for purchase and signing.

A Navy veteran of the First Gulf War and former news reporter for

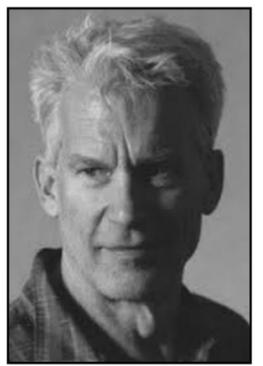
the Bar Harbor Times, Smith lives in Stockton Springs, in the village of Sandy Point, where he is restoring the family homestead. His second book, "Peyton Place Comes Home To Maine: The Making Of The Iconic Film," will be released by Down East Books in January 2020.

With programs designed to educate, inspire and connect older adults, admission to all Penobscot Shores' Enrichment Series programs is free, but registration is required. To sign up, please call 338-2332.

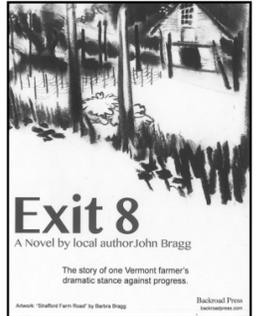
### Author talk with Bragg at Thomaston library Jan. 6

THOMASTON — Midcoast author John Bragg will be at Thomaston Public Library, 60 Main St., on Monday, Jan. 6, at 5 p.m. to discuss his recently published book, "Exit 8."

"Exit 8" was just selected as winner of the 2019 BookLife Fiction Prize by Publishers Weekly. The judges praised it as "poignant and beautifully written" and a "deeply impactful work." In Bragg's novel, construction of the nation's massive Interstate Highway System is underway, heading north, tearing through the bucolic Connecticut River Valley. Unstoppable. In its path, sits the small Vermont hill farm that Roland Tuttle's ancestors settled generations ago, where Roland has spent his entire life — caring for his animals, plowing with his team of horses, harvesting by hand, walking to town. Living in the past. "Exit 8" tells the history of the Tuttle family and Roland's place in that history. It is a story of personal choice, nature's dark beauty, and the often unremarked costs of progress, but most of all it is the story of Roland Tuttle, a man confronted with the loss of the only



John Bragg

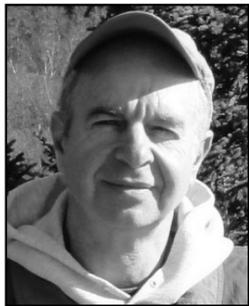


world he knows and loves. The event is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be served. American Sign Language interpretation will be provided. For more information, please contact Thomaston Public Library at 354-2453.

### Writer talks 'Life on Mars' at Camden library

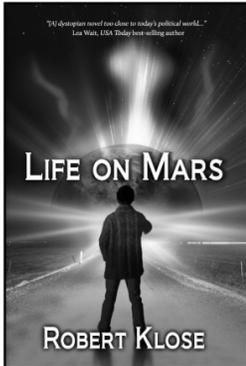
CAMDEN — On Tuesday, Jan. 7, at 6:30 p.m., the Camden Public Library, 55 Main St., welcomes back author Robert Klose to discuss his new book "Life on Mars." Klose's second novel takes a satirical look at Evolution vs. Intelligent Design.

In something of an absurdist recap of the Scopes Trial, a college professor is taken to task by the government for teaching Evolution in contravention of the religious principles of the newly established Theocratic Union of American States. The story's conceit is this: what if the scientists are wrong and the evangelicals are



Robert Klose

right, and life on earth is the product of a higher intelligence? However, no one is prepared for who — or what — this intelligence turns out to be. With wit, colorful characters, and biting dialog, Klose,



in the words of novelist Monica Wood, "...sheds the cleansing light of comedy on our pitiful times."

Klose teaches at the University of Maine at Augusta. He is a regular

contributor of essays to The Christian Science Monitor. His work has also appeared in Newsweek, The Boston Globe, Exquisite Corpse, Confrontation, and elsewhere. His other books include "Adopting Alyosha — A Single Man Finds a Son in Russia," "Small Worlds — Adopted Sons, Pet Piranhas and Other Mortal Concerns," "The Three-Legged Woman & Other Excursions in Teaching" and the novel, "Long Live Grover Cleveland," which won a 2016 Ben Franklin Literary Award and a USA Book News Award.

Books will be available for purchase and signing at the program. For more information, please visit [librarycamden.org](http://librarycamden.org).

### PUPPETS, from page B1

two decades, the siblings are performance experts, having come up with ways to make equipment easier to transport and set up for shows to run as smoothly as possible.

"When we put together our first show, we had no idea that we'd ever do the show again, let alone still be performing the same show 20 years later," Robin said. "After about 10 years of touring, we finally bought a cart to wheel in our gear that also converts into a stepladder. I think it was the best \$80 we ever spent!"

Brian, who has become the main puppet builder, has learned a lot about puppet construction — from what materials hold up better to wear and tear, to how to make moving eyebrows and other mechanisms. Erik, who deals with all the sound equipment, has a lot of knowledge now compared to the first show when they rented hand-held microphones and strung them along the front of the stage.

Robin takes care of the business side of running the puppet company. "I have had to learn about taxes and other fun non-puppet business stuff like that," she said.

"[We've] also learned some things about performing, such as how to do certain character voices in a sustainable way that doesn't hurt your vocal chords or throat," Erik said.

Still, having done hundreds of performances

together doesn't mean things always go according to plan. Robin recalls a time when Erik's elbow accidentally pushed her head microphone strap over her eyes. So, she couldn't see and her mic was pushed too far away from her mouth.

"I had a puppet on each hand, so there was nothing I could do," she said. "I ended up trying to move my mic back to my mouth with my tongue, while still having both eyes covered with the strap, which is when Erik looked over and of course started to laugh seeing me like that. It's always dangerous when one of us starts laughing during a show because it is really contagious!"

The troupe writes and creates all the shows they perform and their mastery of movement and jokes is contagious for the audience as well.

"What we really enjoy the most is hearing the laughter of an audience enjoying the humor in our shows," Brian said. "Having an audience member recount favorite parts or lines of a show afterward, sometimes days or even years later, is also a real benefit of our profession."

Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers has performed at festivals, schools, libraries and theaters in the United States and Canada. Other shows besides "The Banana Kid" are the aforementioned "Sleepy Hollow" and "Everybody Loves Pirates," where 8-year-old Lucy and her goofy pal, Little Chucky, are

searching for buried treasure, but a gang of bumbling pirates keeps getting in the way. Their version of "The Grinch" is a fan favorite at the Farnsworth's annual Share the Wonder event Thanksgiving weekend.

"We have been working on a musical about dinosaurs," Robin said. "Erik wrote music and lyrics for 12 songs, and Brian has made about 20 dinosaur and cave people puppets."

Erik said they also made a recycling-themed DVD a few years ago that was originally created as a pilot episode of an environmental kids show. It can be found on YouTube. "It's called 'Up On Frogtown Mountain' and we hope someday to make more about other subjects, such as solar energy."

For people who hang out with puppets on a regular basis, they are well-versed in puppet theatrics and must have a pop culture character that really speaks to them. (Pun intended.)

Brian said, "Tough decision, [there are] so many great characters. I would say I felt the most connection with some of the characters that Jim Henson performed: Kermit, Rowlf, Ernie, Dr. Teeth. I guess that's more than one!"

"I've always liked Gonzo and his zany weirdness," Robin said.

And from Erik: "I second Gonzo, I love that weirdo!"

Such zany weirdness is present in the Frogtown shows as well, and it

doesn't stop with this generation of puppet lovers.

Robin's 7-year-old son, Otto, states that he not only wants to be a puppeteer when he grows up, but that he is one now. "He has his own puppet stage and a huge collection of puppets, many that he's made himself," Brian said. "Just this past year he has started to perform a couple small roles in our shows and often gives us honest, constructive criticism." Uncle Brian hints that Otto may be liable to change his mind about future career plans, as he also wants to be an underwater explorer.

Here's where Otto jumps in with his two cents and to correct his uncle — he does not want to be an underwater explorer anymore because he doesn't want "his submarine to get crushed."

Otto said, "Yeah, I'm already part of the crew! Frogtown Puppets are the greatest puppets ever!"

Yes, Otto, they certainly are.

As part of the Strand Family Series, admission to this show is "Pay-What-You-Can;" ticket prices are set at \$20, \$10, \$5 or \$0 per person, so that cost is not a barrier to attend. The Strand is located at 345 Main St., Rockland. The show length is approximately 45 minutes; learn more at [rocklandstrand.com](http://rocklandstrand.com). For more information about the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, visit [frogtownpuppets.com](http://frogtownpuppets.com).

## Call for essay, artwork submissions from high schoolers on inclusion

MAINE — The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council recently put out a call for submissions for its 2020 Inclusion Awards, which celebrate extraordinary high school students who think deeply about issues of inclusion for people living with developmental disabilities. Open to all Maine high school juniors and seniors, the awards have two components: an Essay Contest and a Visual Arts Contest, which allow students to express these ideas as artwork.

This year, students are asked to write essays or create two-dimensional artworks responding to the following prompt: "What does the full inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities mean to you?"

The experience of participating in these contests has been a rewarding one for both teachers and students. "The contest allowed me to have the ability to express myself while standing up for others and hopefully having an impact within the community on how people interact with someone with developmental disabilities," writes Madison Landry, a participant in 2019. Linda Garcia, an educator at Hodgdon High School, says, "By participating in

the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council's Inclusion Awards, my students become advocates for a special segment of communities across Maine and beyond. Through their participation, my students share stories about inspiring individuals who make our world a more beautiful place."

The deadline for entries is Monday, Feb. 3, 2020, and educational awards range from \$250 to \$1,000 for individual entries. Teachers and schools will also have an opportunity to win educational grants to support their commitment to educating their students on the value of inclusion.

The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) is a partnership of people with disabilities, their families, and agencies that identifies barriers to community inclusion, self-determination, and independence. MDDC is committed to creating a Maine in which all people are valued and respected because the council believes communities are stronger when everyone is included.

For more information, contest rules and entry guidelines, visit [maineddc.org/inclusion](http://maineddc.org/inclusion), email [maineddc@gmail.com](mailto:maineddc@gmail.com), or call Jessica Gorton at 287-4215.

### FLIX, from page B2

to make his latest movie. The film runs 138 minutes and is in Italian with English subtitles.

Born April 1, 1920, Toshiro Mifune is generally considered Japan's greatest movie star. In "Yojimbo" (1961, Japan), showing Jan. 10, he plays one of his most iconic roles, as a wandering samurai who arrives in a small town and become the object of attention as two rival crime lords attempt to hire him for their own purposes. "Yojimbo" was later remade as the western "A Fistful Of Dollars." The film runs 110 minutes and is in Japanese with English subtitles.

Gene Tierney, born Nov. 19, 1920, was one of the great leading ladies of the Golden Age of Hollywood. In the suspense film "Laura" (1944, USA), she gave her most acclaimed performance as a mysterious missing woman who becomes

the object of a detective's (Dana Andrews) obsession. "Laura" will be shown on Jan. 17. The film runs 88 minutes.

The screening on Jan. 24 will be "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three" (1974, USA), celebrating the long career of Walter Matthau (born Oct. 1, 1920), in which he rose from gifted character actor to a skilled leading man, capable of fine performances both in comedy and drama. In this action thriller,

he takes a lead role as a police lieutenant confronted with a hostage situation in the New York subway. The film runs 104 minutes.

In "From Here To Eternity" (1953, USA), one of the great Hollywood classics, Montgomery Clift (born Oct. 17, 1920) shows why he is considered one of the finest and most influential actors of his generation. Among an all-star cast that includes Burt Lancaster, Deborah Carr and Frank Sinatra, Clift

stands out. "From Here To Eternity" will close out the month on Jan. 31. The film runs 118 minutes.

The A&E deadline is Thursdays at 5 p.m. for events dated on/between the following two Thursdays. Please email [press\\_releases/photos@villagesoup.com](mailto:press_releases/photos@villagesoup.com).

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