

Check It Out:

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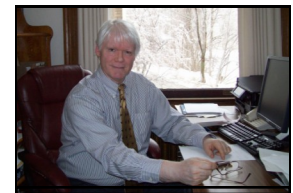
MSL TV Show 3

### Meet Jim Knowlton—Part 2

Jim painted a verbal picture of how libraries are changing. He stressed that libraries are becoming community centers where customers can find services that fit their needs. Because libraries are open to the public, they are the perfect places for people to access a wide range of services. Some states are using them as repositories for access to all social services, from health

care to financial aid to legal assistance. Vermont seems headed in a similar direction.

In terms of personal library preferences, Jim said that his favorite areas of the library are the non-fiction and reference sections. As an aside, he mentioned that the reference section is probably going to be the first one replaced completely by on-line resources; the days of multi-volume



Executive Director,  
Jim Knowlton

encyclopedias and massive dictionary tomes are long gone. Jim admitted to enjoying mysteries and the Harry Potter books, but said that popular fiction books are rarely on his personal reading list.

**Director** *continued on 2*

### Looking Back as We Look Forward

*With the announcement of the Board of Trustee's plans for a new library building, it is appropriate for us to look back at the history of libraries in Manchester.*

Manchester was not the first town in Vermont to have a library; the Brookfield Free Public Library claims that title. It is the oldest, continually operating library in

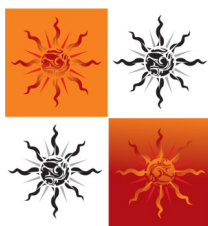
Vermont, opening its doors in 1791, sixteen years after Brookfield's original incorporation.

Over the years, Manchester has had a series of libraries in a variety of venues, according to the 1961 book, *Manchester Vermont, a Pleasant Land among the Mountains*, written by Edwin

L. Bigelow and Nancy H. Otis. There are references to library services in Manchester as early as 1828. By 1855, a collection of books was housed at the Congregational Church. These were available to the public, but most of the books dealt with church-related topics.

**Building** *continued on 2*

## Meet Jim Knowlton –Part 2



**Director** *continued from 1*

When asked what was on his wish list for the library Jim responded, “more computers, more space and expanded data bases.”

He spoke of wanting to add a full set of the *Chilton Repair Manuals* to help people interested in auto and truck repairs. He described his plans to augment the library’s access to lectures, concerts,

classes, and credit and non-credit self-paced courses.

Jim is pleased to be in Manchester and is enthusiastic about his new role at the Mark Skinner Library.

## Looking Back as We Look Forward

**Building** *continued from 1*



***We are now looking forward to a new library, which like its predecessors will enrich the lives of the citizens of Manchester.***

The next home for books in Manchester, probably beginning in the 1860’s, was the Manchester Agricultural Library Association. This was followed by a collection of books housed at the Ondawa Fish and Game Club, which burned down in 1893. Books were allowed to be taken for three cents per book “by all responsible persons over ten years of age, resident in the town of Manchester and personally known to the Librarian.”

Frances Willing, the daughter of Mark Skinner, was the person with the dream and the means to bring a “real” library to the town of Manchester. She had an example to follow; her father had visualized, and provided the land and most of the means to

build the Dellwood Cemetery in 1865. Like her father, Mrs. Willing lived in Chicago, but spent her summers in Manchester. She lived only seven years after the dedication of the library but spent much of that time supervising its work. Her original agreement with the town, which is included in the program for the dedication, mandates that books for the library should be of high moral quality, Christian and preferably, not French.

The dedication program is worth reading for a number of reasons, one of which is the speech by the Hon. Edward Isham, Robert Todd Lincoln’s law partner in Chicago. One line especially speaks to the importance of libraries. “The operation of libraries tends to prolong, in effect indefinitely, the term of a human life.” He notes that

the average human life is short and whatever a human learns or discovers during his lifetime would be lost without books and libraries. Libraries allow us to build on the work, knowledge and experiences of others. Following the dedication of the library in 1897, the community has continued to commemorate its anniversaries and changes. The last major change came in 1964 when an addition altered the face of the building. In 1997, under then-librarian, Gail Rice, Manchester celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the library. We are now looking forward to a new library, which like its predecessors will enrich the lives of the citizens of Manchester.

Note: The books mentioned above, and *Manchester: Memories of a Mountain Valley*, by Mary Hard Bort, may all be found at the library.

## *First Wednesdays Discovers The Unseen Alistair Cooke*

More than fifty people braved cold winds and the threat of rain to attend April's First Wednesdays program. **The Unseen Alistair Cooke** was hosted by the Mark Skinner Library and sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council. All First Wednesdays talks take place at the First Congregational Church.

A better name for the program might have been "With Love, from Susan" because the program definitely was a love letter from Susan Cooke Kittredge to her famous dad.

Ms. Kittredge, a United Church of Christ minister and a commentator on Vermont Public Radio, has the same problem that many of us do. As you age, it becomes more and more difficult to find people who knew your parents and with whom you can reminisce about your parents' early days. Ms. Kittredge has a parent that many of us remember well from his programs on the radio and television, his newspaper columns and his books.

Her recollections were wound around

the showing of a home movie made in the 30's by a young Alistair Cooke and his friends, Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard. However, it was Ms. Kittredge's reminiscences that highlighted the presentation. With humor and obvious devotion, she spoke of her father's life from his birth in Blackpool, England to his death, at 95, in his NYC apartment.

There is one program left in this series of First Wednesdays talks.

**First Wednesdays**  
*continued on 4*



## *Tune In to Your Public Library*

There is a new way to visit the Mark Skinner Library. MSL can now be found on GNAT-TV's Educational Channel 16. Co-hosted by MSL info pros Janet Kleinberg and Cindy Waters, the half-hour show has no set time slot. Log on to [www.gnat-tv.org/channel-16-schedule](http://www.gnat-tv.org/channel-16-schedule) and look for the program entitled,

appropriately, "Check It Out." New shows are produced under the watchful eye of the program's talented videographer/editor, David Rose.

The mission of the show is to highlight the services, programs, events and collections of the MSL. There is a regular Trivia question for viewers and a fea-

ture that allows viewers to email in questions and comments about the library, books, local events or anything else that they are talking about around the "Water Cooler." The show's hosts are always looking for suggestions for speakers and discussion topics.



Hosts Cindy & Janet



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The Mark Skinner Library: Manchester's Public Library is committed to serving the life-long journey of learning by providing information and opportunities for personal enrichment and enjoyment to people of all ages in our community.



## Tune In to Your Public Library

### TV Show *continued from 3*

Interviews with authors and "Rapid Reviews," short talks about favorite books, will also be included in upcoming shows. Already "in the can," as they say in the movies, is an inter-

view with Rich Marantz, owner of Green Mountain Tai Chi. He speaks about his new book, *The Way of the Voice of Peace*, which documents the "keys to his transformation through captivating

points and lessons gleaned in the midst of life's everyday moments and challenges."



## First Wednesdays

### First Wednesdays *continued from 3*

**Barbie After 50**, led by Williams College art professor Carol Ockman, considers Barbie both as a cultural phenomenon and in relation to

the nude in Western art.

The program will be held at the First Congregational Church on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM.



*Barbie and the nude in Western art will be the topic of the FW talk in May.*