

Maine writer pens book on moving

'Moo' is Sharon Creech's 20th novel

BY SARAH WALKER CARON
BDN STAFF

Moving to a new town can be hard for kids. And when that move is from a busy city to a rural area, it's even more challenging. A new book by a Maine-based John Newbery Medal-winning author explores the complexities of this, and how opening up to a new experience can help.

"Moo," by author Sharon Creech, is a middle-grade novel that tells the story of a family's move from the city to rural Maine, and the relationships that develop as a result — including between 12-year-old Reena and a stubborn cow named Zora. This is Creech's 20th book, all published with HarperCollins, a rarity for authors.

Told in both poetry and prose, the book is a little different from most novels.

"The character Reena started in this kind of lyrical way and then she evolved," Creech said. "I think it works better if she alternates because she has these two different kinds of voices ... like people in real life."

Creech liked being able to mix poetry and prose in the book because it added an element of playfulness, which she said enhanced the reading of it.

"I've been wanting to do that in a book for a long time," Creech said.

The story was inspired by her grandchildren's real-life move to Maine, as well as her own.

"[My husband and I] had been living overseas for almost 20 years in England and Switzerland," Creech explained. When she and her husband moved back to the United States, they were planning to settle in western New York in a house they had renovated. But when their daughter and her husband decided to move with their kids to Camden, everything changed.

See *Moo*, Page C2

Netflix renews 'Stranger Things'

BY ELIZABETH WAGMEISTER
REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — In a not-so-strange turn of events, Netflix has renewed breakout hit "Stranger Things" for a second season, Variety has learned.

Season 2 will debut in 2017 and will consist of nine episodes, in comparison to the first season that spanned eight episodes.

The news comes hardly as a surprise, as the supernatural drama has become arguably the buzziest series of the summer. Insiders tell Variety that work on the second season has already been underway for quite some time.

The Duffer Brothers will return as writers for the second season and will executive produce with Shawn Levy and Dan Cohen once again. 21 Laps Entertainment produces "Stranger Things."

"Stranger Things" stars Winona Ryder in her first major TV role. In the first season, she starred alongside David Harbour, Matthew Modine, Finn Wolfhard, See *Stranger*, Page C2



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Country Keepsakes owner Pamela Patten shows two of the many different whirligigs she sells at her Trenton store. Patten opened the shop, where she sells lawn decorations and gifts to tourists, more than 30 years ago.

The 'Whirligig Lady'

Eye-catching Trenton shop celebrates 30 years

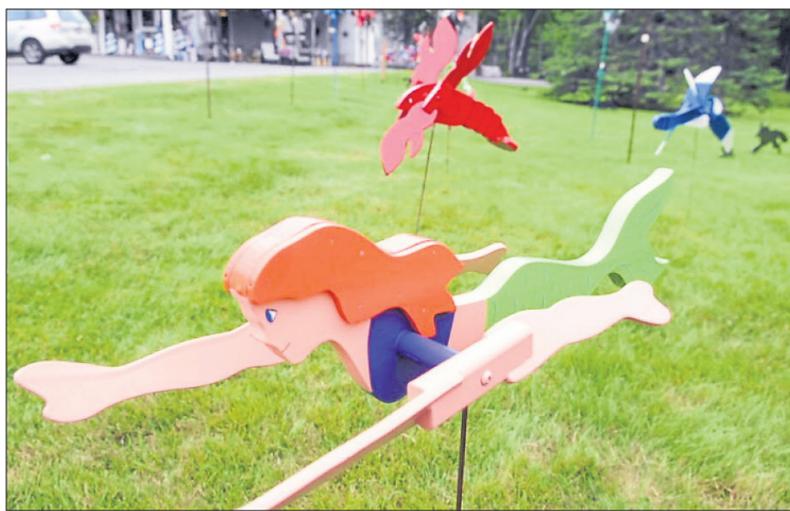
BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

Twirling, rocking, waving and spinning, the moving lawn ornaments of Country Keepsakes gift shop in Trenton tend to draw the eyes of travelers on Route 1. All it takes is the slightest puff of wind, and these wood and wire ornaments — formally known as "whirligigs" — are propelled into a flurry of movement.

"I sell thousands of them," said Pam Patten, who opened Country Keepsakes just over 30 years ago beside the busy road leading to Mount Desert Island.

Whirligigs, also known as "buzzers," "gee-haws," "spinners" and "pinwheels," are objects of American folk art that began appearing in the United States nearly 200 years ago to spice up people's lawns and gardens. Traditional whirligig designs depict scenes from rural life: a farmer milking a cow, a lumberjack sawing a log or a fisherman rowing a boat. Outfitted with propellers, these simple lawn ornaments are powered by the wind. As the propeller turns, it sets into motion simple mechanics of wheels and thin metal rods, which in turn moves parts of the wooden whirligig, such as a character's arms or legs.

"It's an old-time thing," Patten said, "and people really like that."



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

One of the many different whirligigs at Pamela Patten's Country Keepsakes store in Trenton. Patten says about half the merchandise is made in Maine.

"I find a lot of people, especially older people who are home all the time, they love their lawns," she added. "They sit on their porch, and they like to see [whirligigs] out on their lawns, twirling around."

Pam Patten moved to Trenton 34 years ago with her husband, James "Putt" Patten, owner of Ellsworth Chainsaw Sales and Services. Today, they run their two businesses side by side. And when they close up shop at night, they simply move upstairs to their living space.

"He's the outdoor equipment guy, and I'm the whirligig lady," Pam Patten said.

Pam Patten was a stay-at-home mom raising two daughters when she decided to

open Country Keepsakes as a way to contribute to the family income. She started small, with just a few lawn ornaments staked out on the lawn, then steadily added to her inventory, building a large gift shop with hundreds of lawn ornaments.

On her shop's perfectly manicured front lawn is a fantastical display of Amish-made model lighthouses and lobster buoy birdhouses, silhouette garden ornaments and metal sculptures. But whirligigs continue to be at the center of her business. Staked in the grass beside Route 1, the whirling ornaments beckon to potential customers as they drive by.

See *Whirligig*, Page C2

Opera House Arts premieres eye-popping 'Mr. Burns'

BY JUDY HARRISON
BDN STAFF

In seven days, there will be a meltdown. The electricity grid will be gone. People will leave their homes in the cities and suburbs to flee for shelter in the forests.

In small groups, these refugees will gather around campfires to quiz each other about the folks they've met in their travels to determine if family and friends escaped alive or not. The survivors will share food, water, batteries and loss.

Despite that, they will find companionship and comfort in remembering and retelling one epic

episode of "The Simpsons."

This is how Anne Washburn's three-act play, "Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play," being performed at the

THEATER REVIEW
Stonington Opera House through Sunday, begins. It ends 75 years later with a re-enactment of that episode, titled "Cape Feare," as an intricate religious ceremony replete with song.

Opera House Arts isn't letting its audience off easy this season. "Mr. Burns" is challenging stuff as were its productions of "Orlando," "An Iliad" and "Julius Caesar." While Washburn's play is entertaining, it also demands that theatergoers think about how pop

culture influences a society and how that society might defy one tiny element of it to survive. Even without electricity, it's a brain-frier of a show.

"Mr. Burns" was first performed in 2012 at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. Later that year, it moved to Playwrights Horizons in New York City. Opera House Arts is mounting the play's first production in Maine.

Directors Sarah Gazdowicz and Meg Taintor, the organization's producing artistic director, create a strong ensemble that allows every actor a moment in the spotlight. They also perfectly pace the show so that by the time the daz-

zling third act rolls around, the theatergoers are ready to see the cast of "The Simpsons" alive and on stage.

The acting troupe that includes Matt Hurley, Meredith Gosselin, Melody Bates, Jason Martin, Margaret Ann Brady, Bari Robinson and Zillah Glory is tight and the performances so equally good that it is difficult to say one outshines another. But Martin and Bates redeem themselves in "Mr. Burns" after lackluster performances in "Julius Caesar."

Martin is mesmerizingly menacing in the third act as Bart Simpson's nemesis Sideshow Bob and as Mr. Burns. Bates' Lisa See *Burns*, Page C2



The Capitol Steps
... we put the **MOCK** in Democracy!
Performing songs from their new album and MORE! Always fresh and up to date

SATURDAY, SEPT. 17, 2016
8 P.M.
GALA PERFORMANCE!
FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFO:
COLLINSCENTERFORTHEARTS.COM
800.622.TIXX • 207.581.1755

