



CHELSEA DISTRICT LIBRARY
BEST SMALL LIBRARY IN AMERICA

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AUTHOR: Lori Coryell, CDL Director

CONTACT: Patty Roberts, Head of Marketing

PHONE: 734-475-8732 x 216

E-MAIL: proberts@chelseadistrictlibrary.org

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Chelsea District Library Celebrates Local Farming Heritage with *American Farmer* Exhibition

When photographer Paul Mobley set out to capture the soul of our country's farm communities, he encountered an enduring rural culture that remains rooted in the principles of tradition, family, integrity, and hard work. Crisscrossing the country, from Alaska to Florida, Mobley and his camera were welcomed time and time again into the homes of hundreds of farm families. Visit after visit, Mobley came to know the independent farmer's spirit from both behind the lens and across the dinner table. He sought the elusive spirit of agriculture, looking for subjects that mirrored the project's sense of risk and independence. The resulting images show farmers with a strong sense of where they belong in the universe, a close connection to the land and their day-to-day work as it affects the rest of the world. *American Farmer* opens September 5 in the McKune Room at the Chelsea District Library and runs through October 20, 2018. Gallery hours are Mondays 5–8:30pm, Wednesdays through Fridays 10am–5pm, Saturdays 1–4:30pm, and Sundays 1–5pm. *American Farmer* is open to the public and free of charge.

Out of a collection of more than 200 of these portraits, ExhibitsUSA has distilled a selection of forty-five iconic portraits showing the geographic and cultural diversity of the American Farmer. This vivid portfolio is accompanied by anecdotes and memories in

the farmers' own words that are both a testament to their enduring hospitality and a moving glimpse into the hardships and joys of a quickly disappearing way of life—one that once defined our national identity and now struggles to remain vital. From Jim Taber, a young single father raising cattle in Montana, to Shirley Schollenberg, the daughter of Alaskan homesteaders, Mobley's heroic photographs reveal the true face of American farming and remind us what it means to live with simplicity, contentment, and decency in a world that so often forgets.

Paul Mobley is an American photographer who has traveled from remote Alaskan villages to the majestic palaces of Croatia to find the face of a thousand words. Mobley's first book, *American Farmer: Portraits from the Heartland*, was first published in the fall of 2008 by Welcome Books and received the 2009 Western Heritage Award for Best Photography Book from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

In support of the exhibition CDL will host several programs for agri-lovers of all ages. On Saturday, September 8, Farmer Jason (Jason Ringenberg) will be at the Chelsea Farmers Market (in the Park Street parking lot adjacent to the Library) for a rollicking performance sure to entertain young and old alike. After the market, he'll hightail it over to Bel Liberty Farm (9741 Liberty Road in Chelsea) for *Rockin' on the Farm with CDL* from 1–5 pm. The afternoon will be filled with music, activities, and family fun celebrating our community's rich farming heritage.

Learn about Michigan Centennial Farms—farms that have remained in the same family for 100 years or more— at the *Centennial Farm Talk Program*, on Tuesday, September 25 at 7 pm in the Library's McKune Room. Legacy Trustee Larry Doll will talk about his Centennial Farm, what it means to have this designation, how to apply, and the impact these farms have on their communities. This program is in partnership with the Legacy Land Conservancy.

On Wednesday, October 3, the Conservancy teams up with the Chelsea Adult Learners Institute to present *Making Conservation Work for You* at 7 pm in the Library's McKune Room. Conservation is essential in keeping our land, air, and water clean as well as

making sure our habitats and farmlands continue to thrive. Join Landowner Outreach Coordinator Meghan Prindle to learn about the many different programs farmers can access and the impact they can have on our working farms and our local lands. For more information about the *American Farmer* exhibition or supporting programs, please visit chelseadistrictlibrary.org or call (734) 475-8732.

This exhibition is a program of ExhibitsUSA, the National Endowment for the Arts and is sponsored in part by GreenStone Farm Credit Services.

About Us: Chelsea District Library is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to engage, inspire and equip through evolving services and resources. The Library currently serves 15,100 residents in the Chelsea district, which includes the City of Chelsea and the Dexter, Lima, Lyndon, and Sylvan townships. Approximately 16,000 individuals visit the library each month. For more information visit chelseadistrictlibrary.org.

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