

Director's Report July/August 2024

Respectfully submitted by Chelsea Jordan-Makely on August 7, 2024, with updates added August 12th

Joys and successes:

- Chelsea, Betty and Pete, Nancy and Haynes, Dago, and Rhonda travelled to Washington, D.C. to receive the National Medal for Library Service! We were joined by Congressman Jim McGovern, who nominated the library for the award, as well as Maureen Amyot, who is the new Executive Director at the MBLC, and Kate Laughlin, who is the Executive Director at ARSL (the Association of Rural and Small Libraries). The ceremony was a great opportunity to hear about some of the ways that other libraries and museums are providing for their communities and to connect about funding and other opportunities on the horizon. Thank you to everyone for making the trip and helping us to mark this very special occasion!



[Left to right: Nancy Turkle, Dago Lydgate-Driggs, Rhonda Anderson, Chelsea Jordan-Makely, Congressman Jim McGovern, Maureen Amyot, Pete Johnson, and Betty Purington Johnson at the IMLS Awards Ceremony at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., July 30, 2024]

- Thanks to the Friends! The library's front gardens are full of flowers in bloom, including many native species and perennials. Today we noticed some visitors taking a selfie!

- One adult Summer Reading Club participant told us they are proud to have read over 1,000 pages so far this summer!
- We received a copy of the book *Attack from Within: How disinformation is sabotaging America*, by Barbara McQuade, as a gift from Judy Stone, with a note of congratulations on the IMLS medal. The book is inscribed by the author, "To the democracy-loving people of Colrain."

Building & Grounds:

- The library HVAC stopped working sometime around July 3rd or 4th, and we reached out to Sandri on the 5th to schedule maintenance. They advised that they wouldn't be able to reach us until the 11th, though Chelsea advised that the library acts as a cooling center for our community. On Saturday the 6th, a library patron said that she was having trouble breathing, and said she believed that the mold/mildew she smelled was setting off her asthma. On Monday morning, the library was 80 degrees and the odor was very strong, so we called Sandri again, and made the decision not to open to the public that day or until the situation was resolved. Sandri rearranged their schedule to visit us that day, but found that our condenser unit needed to be repaired and parts were required. Chelsea gave the okay to expedite shipping for these parts, and Sandri returned on Wednesday to install the new parts. They advised that we close the building and let the HVAC run overnight to ameliorate the moisture/odor in the air.
- We are finalizing the contract with Larocque Architecture & Planning (Weston, MA) for the feasibility study. In August, a local team led by Doug Macleay will commence with the first phase of the project, which includes a topographical survey, soil pits, and wetlands delineation.
- We contacted Hartnett Plumbing to address the backflow of water into the basement from the roof drains. While visiting they also fixed the dehumidifier in the basement. We have been running one dehumidifier in the basement and two upstairs. We also began tracking the humidity level to monitor how we are doing over time. This is in line with the recommendations in the 2020 NEDCC Preservation Assessment report.

On August 12th after a weekend of pretty significant flooding in the basement, Hartnett advised that the pipes leading from the basement (which handle the outflow from the roof) are clogged and full of water, even on dry days. These will need to be dug up and replaced. Chelsea asked Hartnett to be in contact with Doug Macleay and the engineer on the Larocque architecture plan. In the meantime, the pipe from the sump pump should be replaced, and a catch valve should be added. This part of the work will probably cost about \$1,000.

- Chelsea has been speaking with a few sign makers to get quotes for a new sign, one possible use for the IMLS Award (see below).

Programs and services:

- FRCOG hosted a new cohort of Baystate Health Family Medicine Residents on a bus tour around Franklin County, which included a stop at GML. Meg Ryan was eager to talk about the monthly Public Health Nurse hours she offers at our library, and to show off the personal care items that we make available in the library, and Chelsea talked about the ways that public libraries help people in rural communities to access information and combat loneliness.



[A group of visiting Family Medicine Residents with Chelsea and Meg Ryan]

- Chelsea delivered outreach services at the Franklin County Jail on July 9th and 11th, and at the Reentry Center on July 18th, reaching a total of 81 people. We also provided services to the jail on August 6th, and connected with about 20 patrons who were excited to borrow books, and asked about the trip to Washington and the IMLS Medals Ceremony.
- The library hosted a Meet & Greet for the new town administrator, Diana Parsons, on July 17th. It was a stormy evening, and the event had been postponed due to the problem with our HVAC; this may have resulted in low attendance—just 12 people. We provided discussion prompts, “What do you love most about Colrain?” and “What do you hope for in our future?”
- Chelsea offered outreach services at the Colrain Transfer Station on July 20th, where she connected with 26 people about library services. Several people signed up for Summer Reading Club, congratulated us on the IMLS award, borrowed books to read, and/or talked about the town meeting and the issue of the busts. We offered cookies that were left over from the Meet & Greet with Diana a few days earlier.

Chelsea was back at the transfer station on August 10th. The weather was lovely but it was a comparably slow day, with only 22 visitors. We did succeed in signing one child up for Summer Reading Club, and we loaned nine books/DVDs.

- Our new StoryWalk will be open Pick-Your-Own weekend at Pine Hill Orchard! The featured book is *A Big Mooncake for Little Star* by local author Grace Lin, who will be signing books at 11:00. We will host our Summer Reading Club Awards Ceremony at this same event, followed by live music and storytelling for all ages by Davis Bates! Boswell's Books has agreed to partner with us and to sell copies of the author's books.


Summer Reading Awards Ceremony

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31ST
11 AM - 1 PM

✓ FUN!
 ✓ Author signing with Grace Lin!
 ✓ Live music by Davis Bates!
 ✓ StoryWalk Launch!
 ✓ Great Prizes!

At Pine Hill Orchards
 PLEASE NOTE THAT KIDS CAN RETURN READING RECORDS/CLAIM PRIZES EVEN AFTER 8/31. BUT THE DRAWING FOR ADULTS WILL TAKE PLACE ON 8/31!
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT PINE HILL!






[A banner advertisement for the SRC Awards Ceremony, StoryWalk launch, and book signing with Grace Lin at Pine Hill Orchards, Saturday, August 31st from 11:00-1:00]

Administration:

- GML has received two awards, both in the amount of \$10,000, for the ALA Building Capacity grant and for the IMLS National Medal. The ALA Building Capacity grant is earmarked per our application for our regular services at the Franklin County Jail and Reentry Center, paperback books to support this population, and a program during Prison Banned Books Week in October.

The IMLS award money can be spent as follows:

- Funds must be spent on something specific;
- Funds must be spent during the award period (by June 30, 2025);
- Funds should further the good work of the institution;
- Examples include staff salaries; supplies; materials and equipment for programs; travel costs for program participants;
- Funds *can't* be used for:
 - Construction; entertainment; endowment; cost share for another federal grant; general operating support.

Chelsea therefore proposes to spend the funds on a new sign for our building, plus two additional hours per week for the new Assistant Director position (\$2,753.00). We could also think about changing the shelving and furniture arrangement in the east room to accommodate public meetings.

- Chelsea attended the CWMARS' Users Council meeting in Greenfield on June 18th, where she joined Sarah Hertel-Fernandez of Belding Memorial Library in speaking about services to patrons who are or have previously been incarcerated, and improving library services for all people through better policies and cataloging practices, such as fine-free lending, and making it easier to identify paperbacks in the CWMARS catalog.
- Chelsea met with Sheriff Donelan and the FCSO education team on June 25th, as well as several patrons who have participated in the Read to the Children program or outreach services at the Franklin County Jail, and we [recorded a short video about why these programs matter](#). This is funded through a \$10,00 grant from the American Library Association.



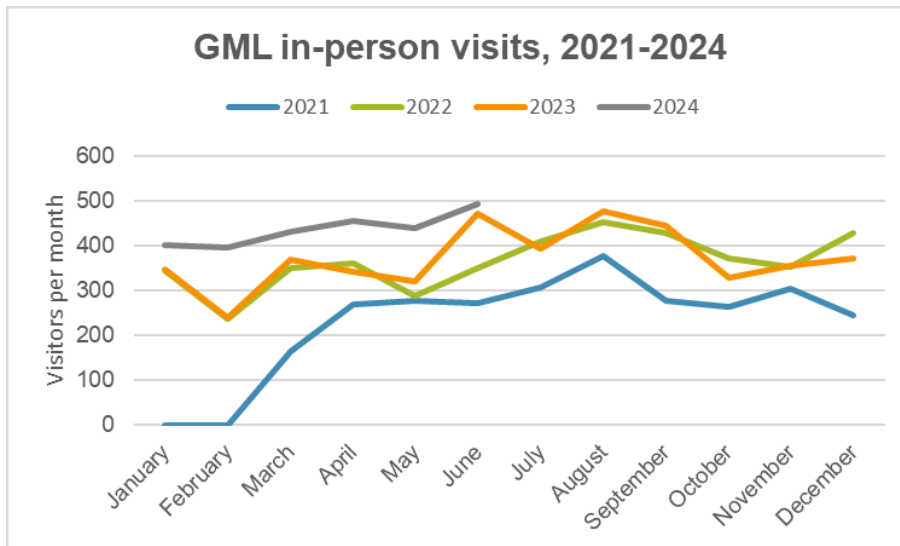
[Sheriff Donelan speaking on camera about the “Read to the Children” program.]

- Chelsea attended the ALA Annual Convention in San Diego from June 26th to June 30th for professional development and as a representative of the LSJI interest group.
- The new town administrator, Diana Parsons, hosted a meeting with the heads of all the town departments and the town administrator, to discuss immediate priorities and the year ahead.
- Chelsea was invited to meet with Senator Ed Markey at his office in Washington, D.C., along with Marie Beam from the Discovery Museum in Acton, MA. We discussed the importance of childhood education and literacy, sustainable planning, broadband access, and state and federal funding. The Senator suggested a picture in front of the map because “Libraries are a portal to the world!”



[Chelsea with Senator Ed Markey at his office in Washington, D.C.]

- We will submit our ARIS (Annual Report Information Survey) by August 16th. Preliminary findings show that visits to the library have increased each year since the pandemic.



[A line graph shows in-person visits since the library reopened in 2021]

- Please consider joining our virtual meeting with Oscar Lanza-Galindo, a Consultant with Massachusetts Library System, at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 21st to discuss the library's 2025-2030 strategic plan. Note that the Community Input Survey is still underway, and we will also host some conversations in person before we begin writing the new strategic plan. Oscar will be able to offer the trustees some advice, and may be able to help us with this process.
- We're looking into updating our phone system so that we can have more than three rings to answer calls, and caller ID.
- We have a new iPad, which we've programmed with our library apps, and put out for public use and for people to search our catalog/browse what's new.
- We transferred the lithograph roll-up wall maps that were stacked above the nonfiction and show some signs of mold to the Colrain Historical Society, per Liz Sonnenberg's recommendations. The "Personal War Sketches presented to H.S. Greenleaf Post No. 20, Department of Massachusetts, by Lorenzo Griswold, Colerain, 1890, Grand Army of the Republic," ca. 1890, and "Records, Colrain soldiers in Company B, 52nd Regiment, M.V.M.," ca. 1888 are now digitized, and available on the Griswold Memorial Library Internet Archive page! Visit <https://archive.org/details/griswoldmemoriallibrary> for access.
- We submitted a letter of support for a grant proposal from Knology (<https://knology.org/>) in support of gaming/robotics programs for teens and tweens in rural communities. If the grant application is successful, GML will receive \$1,000 for each program they host at our library.
- There is some unfortunate [news that a library worker was attacked by a patron in Worcester this week](#). The employee was hospitalized, and the library closed temporarily, but [reopened on Saturday for their annual block party event](#). "We're never gonna change who we are as a community that cares for the larger community. And we'll keep at that no matter what happens," their Director, Jason Homer told the media.

Further Reading:

- Read [Every Library's report on threats posed to libraries by Project 2025](#), and their subsequent post, "[Project 2025 is canceled?](#)". From the original report: "The Project 2025 proposals must be taken seriously. We have seen the impact of the alignments between Heritage and like-minded movements like Moms for Liberty, which has focused on censorship, the Koch Brothers network, which has focused on anti-tax movements, and the Trump administration's repeated

proposals to defund IMLS. Voters who care about libraries—and the people they serve—need to understand the impact that implementing Project 2025 will have on society and libraries."

- ["Utah outlaws books by Judy Blume and Sarah J Maas in first statewide ban: State has ordered books by 13 authors, 12 of them women, to be removed from every public school, classroom and library."](#) in *The Guardian*, August 7, 2024