

Director's Report January 2022

Submitted by Chelsea Jordan-Makely on January 15, 2022

Joys and successes:

- We were grateful to the Friends of the Library, Nancy, and Jonathan Lagreze for their assistance in decorating GML for the holidays. A number of people came to the library expressly to contribute to the Solstice Wreath, the greenery and red bows looked sharp, and a poster that Nancy helped to design wished passersby “tidings of comfort and joy”!
- GML helped to distribute 90 rapid test kits to Colrainers just prior to the holidays, and also helped with a community effort to distribute groceries to folks in the community who maybe needed a little extra holiday cheer. Several of these folks called the library to give thanks.
- Ms. Betty's Take & Make Crafts are much appreciated, especially as cold temps and the effects of the pandemic are keeping many families isolated and indoors.
- Thanks to Eileen, the Friends of the Library, Nancy, and the Town for creating and distributing this year's town mailer, which we sent to 721 households in total!
- Having a team has been essential during the surge in positive coronavirus cases, as we've been able to reach out to one another to swap shifts as people take turns isolating or arranging for tests as need be.
- The Carol Purington Poetry Collective was mentioned in the [Greenfield Recorder article, "Quotable quotes of 2021: What did they say?"](#)
“The whole idea is just to share the love of poetry.” — Griswold Memorial Library Director Chelsea Jordan-Makely on establishing the Carol Purington Poetry Collective. Purington was a poet and Colrain resident who died Dec. 8, 2020 at 71. She lay flat on her back and breathed through the assistance of ventilators since getting polio in 1955.
- The [finding aid/inventory](#) that Liz Sonnenberg made for us last year proved really useful this week when Belden was seeking a specific document in the local history collection. This also created an opportunity for Belden to review the itemized list, and she said that she is able to provide feedback as to which items the Historical Society is interested and able to receive in the immediate future, and also to identify some materials that are included in both of our collections.

Building & Grounds:

- Handrails have been installed on either side of the new front steps (leading up from the sidewalk). They will make
- Chelsea met with Aaron Wooley, a professional maintenance person who lives in Conway, to discuss renovating and fixing the main entryway door, which is difficult to open and close since moisture has warped the floor (see picture). Aaron is available to do the work on the door this spring and can be on-call for other projects as needed throughout the coming year.



(Photo: Frost and mold around the doorway on a cold morning. Moisture has caused the floor boards to swell and keeps the door from opening or closing smoothly. This same issue was to blame for the broken handle that Nick fixed for us last month.)

- Betsy and Betty have begun dismantling the large wooden card catalog, which will free up considerable space in the basement. The last of the *National Geographic* magazines have been removed as well. Next steps are to reorganize the food/event supplies, and the supply of paperback books for Franklin County Jail/Books Through Bars. As noted on the 2022 Action Plan, Chelsea intends to create a usable office space in the basement to help keep the shared desk streamlined and clutter-free. Another goal for the basement and collection is to reimagine how we can put the Library of Things supplies that were displaced by the pandemic/reorganization back into use—for example, could patrons review and order supplies from a “menu” of options and craft ideas? This follows Betty’s idea to repurpose some of the toys that we removed from the children’s area into the next round of Busy Bags.

Programs and services:

- Chelsea and Sarah Hertel-Fernandez met twice with B-Pod, the women’s unit at the Franklin County Jail, before all programming was suspended as a response to the spike in positive COVID cases. As of this time, our usual book donations are also on hold.
- The Kindness Reading Project met on December 15th to discuss *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson, with nine participants other than Chelsea. The group will meet next on February 16th to discuss *Parable of the Sower*, by Octavia Butler. The next books in the series after that will be *Through an Indian’s Looking Glass*, with special guest Drew Lopenzina, and then the *1619 Project* in June—this would be a joint initiative with the Heath Free Public Library, just in time for Juneteenth.
- The video, “[Make Kimchi with Kate](#),” from our November workshop is now available online via our YouTube and Facebook pages.
- The Carol Purington Poetry Collective met on January 7th, with eight people in attendance! One person who has participated for several months running stopped by the library to share that the program has meant the world to her, and though she did not share personal details she called the group “lifesaving”.
- We are prepared to launch “one-on-one tech help,” as soon as the wave of coronavirus cases has abated. Sessions will be available on Wednesday afternoons or by appointment, and will last 30-minutes each.



- Chelsea is in conversations with Melissa Pincus and two other library directors in the area about using CFCE funds to re-vamp Stories & Songs Online. In the meantime, Betty is creating some new Busy Bags with existing CFCE funds.

Administration:

- Please see the attached [budget planning workbook for fiscal year 2023](#). This includes a request for more staff hours to cover vacation/personal/sick days, as well as 30 more hours of outreach at the Colrain transfer station; a request for \$2,400 for library furnishings for a mat and stool for the staff workstation, and a washable area rug and/or cushions for the children’s area); and the costs of upgrading hardware and outsourcing security and maintenance to Northeast IT. As of this time, we are still waiting on a firm quote from Northeast IT—the \$3,073 line item is a placeholder based on the previous year’s budget/savings from discontinuing the previous line from CW Mars, now that we are set up with Whip City.
- Chelsea submitted the attached [2022-2023 draft “action plan”](#) to the MBLC, and will appreciate discussion and feedback around these proposed goals.
- Chelsea submitted the attached [DLTA grant application](#) for the consideration of the Colrain Select Board. They may be discussing this proposal as part of their January 25 meeting when they will set their priorities before submitting the Town’s application to FRCOG.
- [Check out this link to share feedback about potential fundraising initiatives](#). At this time, this survey is for internal use only (Library Board and fundraising committee members/Friends of the Library).