



## Director's Report May 2022

Submitted by Chelsea Jordan-Makely on May 11, 2022

### Joys and successes:

- Congratulations to our new trustee, Marty Dagoberto Lydgate-Driggs on his appointment to the Library Board of Trustees, and to Betsy Browning for being re-elected to her seat!
- Our Candidates' Night received mostly positive feedback, such as, "I was not able to attend, very helpful to have this available on FB," and, "I've gotten a lot of feedback . . . about Candidate's Night and I'm hearing so many great things. The library has made new friends and Jenn is forever thankful for the support. The article in the Recorder really helped with visibility as well. So many people have told me that after reading the article, they regret not going but will definitely be going next year. Great work. Thank you for being such an encouraging hand in our community. You offer so much knowledge and support and by the time we are done everyone will know how great you are."
- One of our patrons was telling us about the homeschooling module they are working on (botany) and was delighted to find out that we had microscopes for loan, and beyond that, videos to help support their learning! This person said they came by the library without intending to borrow anything, but just couldn't help themselves once they learned about the Betty Purington Johnson Library of Things. Besides the microscope, they also ended up borrowing *What's Inside a Flower? And other questions about science and nature*. This is an example of the "value-added" service we strive to offer.

### Building & Grounds:

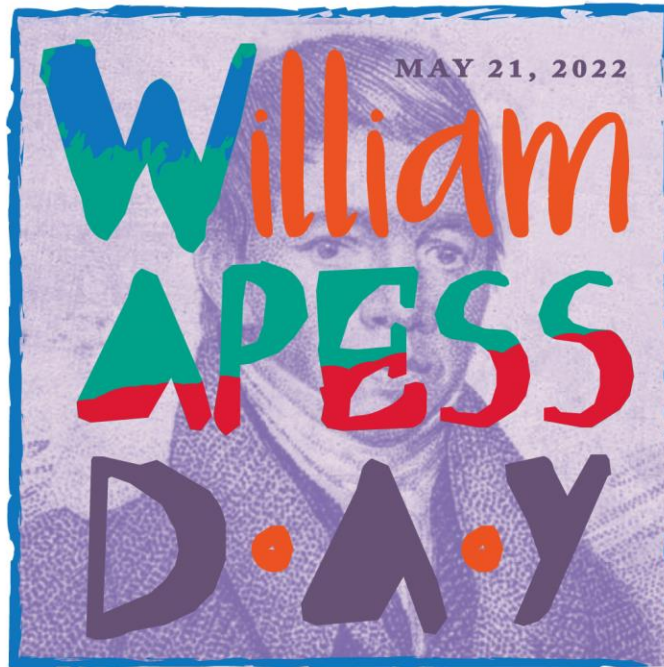
- The two lights on the front walk, closest to the road, which haven't been working since the paving project this past summer have been fixed!
- There has not been further progress to repair the holes in the concrete by the book drop/rear steps, though Chelsea spoke to Mike Slowinski about these again last month. He had previously advised that he would get these patched up for us as soon as possible. Is there a library trustee who would be willing to follow up with Mike about this?
- We received a second, follow-up request to improve the lighting over the new fiction. The last time that we received this request, we followed up by turning on the spotlights (Chelsea had not been using them because they can bother her post-concussion syndrome), and adding a request to re-direct this specific spotlight to the pending maintenance list. Now, Chelsea has managed to reposition that spotlight without help from a maintenance person, and is looking for track lighting or a clip-on reading light that may work in that area.
- Peter Brooks presented to the Select Board on May 10th regarding a proposal to install "low e" glass inserts in the library windows to keep UV lights out, while keeping energy from escaping. The request was to submit a project narrative to the DER. If approved, they would send an expert to assess the library and provide advice as to next steps. The Select Board suggested that the narrative include installation by a professional, and that the library should meanwhile

pursue an energy audit to find if/where any of the windows leak. Looking back at the February Director's Report, Bing Waldsmith had looked at the windows and suggested that they need to be re-caulked. There is also one window pane that is cracked.

- Follow up from the April director's report: The mulberry and apple trees on the library grounds are in need of care! Is this something that the Trustees have managed in the past?
- Chelsea gave a thumbs up to Sue Booth-Daniels to use the library grounds to grow pumpkins for the Arthur A. Smith Bridge Halloween event/Colrain school service learning. There will be another pumpkin patch at the school. This could be a great way for us to use the kiosk (see the April Director's Report) and to promote the pollinator gardens, service learning, and collaboration between the library and Colrain Central School.
- Paula Harrison was asking about building projects, and why we were pursuing a survey or waiting on a survey before proceeding with the other projects to improve the drainage, etc. This prompted Chelsea to look back over previous reports and compile a timeline relating to the drainage/parking/entryway/ramp, which is available [here](#), in addition to the building maintenance log available [here](#). Other, outstanding projects include cleaning the building and windows.

#### **Programs and services:**

- GML hosted Candidates' Night on April 27th, with 38 people in all attending in person, and more viewing online. The *Greenfield Recorder* covered the event: "[Select board, town clerk races top ballot.](#)" Feedback was very positive, as noted above.
- Kate Barrows from the Heath Free Public Library led this month's meeting of the Carol Purington Poetry Collective, with five people in attendance. That same night, Chelsea and Betty attended Literacy Night at Colrain Central School. There were 18 people in Chelsea's session, where she read three books. At least one family came to the library after and signed up for library cards!
- The library has been offering free at home COVID-19 testing kits, thanks to FRCOG. These have brought a few new folks to the library.
- Much back-and-forth has gone into planning William Apess Day, which conflicted with the Nolumbeka Project's annual Day of Remembrance. Our solution was to host William Apess Day that same day immediately following events in Great Falls. Please check out our invitation, below, and plan to attend and take part!



The Griswold Memorial Library invites you to celebrate  
William Apess Day and the Mashpee Declaration of Independence  
at 12 Main Road in Colrain, Massachusetts,  
Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 4:00 to 7:00

A community potluck and reception following the Nolumbeka Day of Remembrance in Great Falls,  
honoring guests from the Mashpee Wampanoag community and the legacy of Colrain's  
own William Apess. Guests are welcomed to share poems, songs, favorite quotes or passages from  
Apess' writings, or remarks honoring this historic occasion. Donations will be accepted  
to the Native Land Conservancy at, [nativelandconservancy.org](http://nativelandconservancy.org)

Address *12 Main St., Colrain, MA 01340*  
Email [griswold@colrain-ma.gov](mailto:griswold@colrain-ma.gov)  
Website <https://colrain-ma.gov/GML>  
413.624.3619



#### Administration:

- Please review and share feedback on the gift acknowledgment forms documenting the transfer of the [“Colrain Bicentennial poster, 14x22, black and white on heavy stock”](#) to the [Colrain Historical Society](#), and the [“framed copy of the Colrain Act for Incorporation \(20x13, black writing on gray paper in brown frame\)”](#) to the [Town of Colrain](#). The purpose of these forms is to create a record of their transfer from GML's collection to other entities.
- Previous to Candidates' Night, Jonathan Rehmus sent an email to the Kindness Project email list, which includes several of our trustees, a question intended for the Board of Trustee candidates:

*Would the GML Trustees support a letter -- maybe published in the Greenfield and SF papers and copied to the Mohawk Trail principal -- expressing support for our libraries as places high school students can access controversial books?*

*I looked at a book subject to banning recently -- The Hate U Give -- having seen recommendations for it from BLM and Christian sources. It's about differing perspectives on a*

police shooting. I haven't read it (it was in expensive hardcover), but it seems like the kind of book Mohawk Trail students should know our public libraries always make accessible.

Teachers have reason to be anxious these days: parental empowerment is being encouraged to points of out of control. With so much on their plate, does even the MTRSD teacher face the temptation to eliminate from their syllabus one less thing to worry about? Even in our progressive region, I worry about localized grievance/minimob-incitement behaviors to produce chilling effects. Kate with the school board or Chelsea with the librarians' relationship with school libraries have worthy thoughts on all of this.

The libraries are a bastion of democracy as it relates to a well-informed, critically-thinking citizenry, and I want to support our adolescents toward that end. And they like brash public statements related to them and controversial topics posted on their high school bulletin boards (old-fashioned person emoji) and platforms!

After speaking with Emily about the climate at the high school, Chelsea responded to the Kindness group with the following points:

- *It seems like the issues we hear so much about in the media are pretty much keeping to the media. For my part here, I've only had one parent raise the topic of "critical race theory." This came when I was doing outreach at the transfer station and asking people about their concerns and hopes for the future of Colrain last summer. I was encouraged to hear [this story about the findings of a recent poll](#): "By wide margins – and regardless of their political affiliation – parents express satisfaction with their children's schools and what is being taught in them."*
- *The [Hate U Give](#) is a really tremendous book, and is available here at GML, along with the author's more recent book. It would be an excellent consideration for The Kindness Reading Project, though my list is always growing!*
- *I really hope everyone is planning to join us next month for The 1619 Project, another book that is being challenged. Just google it to get a sense of what I mean, and here is an overview: ["The Fight About the 1619 Project Is Not About the Facts."](#)*
- *The Library Trustees are currently reviewing my 2022-2023 priorities. These include "the library will continue to grow the number of books featuring people from diverse backgrounds." I do worry about poking the tiger, or drawing undue attention to these materials, though we often highlight them in our staff picks and personalized recommendations. Let's add this topic to our next agenda, and they can decide if they want to take further action such as writing a letter, like Jonathan suggests.*
- *Some bigger libraries are taking on this cause by offering free access to their online collections to everyone nationwide. [More about that here.](#)*
- *We keep in contact with the school librarian for MTRSD, Emily Willis. Recently we've been talking about our plans/grant for "A People's History of Colrain [podcast]" that will recover and make accessible more diverse viewpoints and first person stories than those that are usually centered in our local history. We'll be catching up this week and I will be sure to ask if they need any more support from area libraries. Also it will be interesting to hear whether they've received any challenges.*
- *I'll be attending Family Literacy Night at the Colrain Central School this Friday night. It will be a great opportunity to connect with families who might not use the library and to invite them in.*
- The following week, a patron expressed concern about the Kindness Reading Project, and asked that a disclaimer be added to any promotional materials and to our website stating something to the effect of, "These resources are provided as starting points for inclusive discussions about issues relevant to our community. The viewpoints and statements expressed in these materials are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Town of Colrain or its employees." Chelsea passed this draft language on to the Town Administrator, and asked if he thought it should be shared with Town Counsel, but he said he

thought it was not necessary and that instead, this was simply a matter for the Library's Board of Trustees to consider. <https://colrain-ma.gov/p/41/Website-UsagePrivacy-Policy>

- Chelsea followed through with plans to disconnect from the CW Mars Crocker telecommunications network, and migrate to the Whip City network with support from Northeast IT. CW Mars will continue to provide the library with the following, per our updated MOU:
  - CW MARS ILS (Evergreen)
  - Troubleshooting of ILS problems
  - ILS Documentation and Training
  - Cataloging Services
  - Approved authentication services
  - Representation in the MA library community and with various service and product vendors