

Director's Report December 2022

Respectfully submitted by Chelsea Jordan-Makely on December 14, 2022

Joys and successes:

- Thank you to the Friends of the Library for decorating the library for the holidays! Besides the festive greenery and red bows, we also put up some lights, with help from Aaron Foster. Feedback has been only positive: one Colrainer who is not a library user messaged Chelsea to say "thank you" and that the lights "really cheered me as I drive thru town." Another person sent a message, "I was such a weary traveler but then I was so spirited to see the library lights!"
- Welcome back to Sasha, who was away through October and November.
- The Friends of the Library received another generous gift from the estate of Hale Johnson: approximately 300 prints of the brick meeting house print to use in our fundraising efforts. As it is that time of year to send off the Friends of the Library mailer, it makes sense that we can advertise and sell the prints to anyone who makes a suggested donation of \$45. A copy of the print is now on display at the library and available for sale. See below (Administration) for more information about the mailer.

Building & Grounds:

- Chelsea met several times with Emma from the Conway School of Landscape Design regarding plans for the library parking/ramp/gathering and programming space. The semester ends on December 21st. Final materials will be sent on January 7th. We are grateful to Emma for joining our December 19th meeting to give an overview of her project.
- While decorating the building for the holidays, one of our helpers noticed that some of the masonry is chipped on the front left side of the building. We will need to contact the mason about this in the springtime.
- The library does not yet have anyone in place to help with snow removal. The Town plows the driveway and parking area. There is some question as to whether they may take on shoveling our ramp and sidewalks, also.
- Chelsea is still arranging a date for us to dry window sills in keeping with the advice we received last month from Heartwood Window Restoration.

Programs and services:

- Book club is back! It has been rebranded as "Colrain Reads," and the first book selection is *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. The club will meet on February 8th at 6:00 p.m. by Zoom.
- Chelsea offered to host a resume-writing workshop this month, after hearing that Barnhardt would be terminating its local operations, and will offer the workshop again on January 9th at

6:00 p.m. We will offer a “Technology Basics” class on January 18th at 6:00 p.m.

- The Regional Public Health Nurses from FRCOG who facilitate Wellness Wednesdays have decided to continue offering this monthly program into the new year, though they will no longer be bringing vaccines.
- The Carol Purington Poetry Collective met on December 2nd. There were seven people in attendance, and some really great poems and experiences were shared.
- Please be sure to attend the Winter Solstice Party on December 21st at 6:00 p.m. A local photographer will be in attendance to take some pictures that we can use on the library website.

Administration:

- Please find in this month’s Board package a draft FY2024 budget for your review and consideration. Chelsea met with Betty on December 14th to review this proposed budget, and has also shared it with the town administrator and accountant.
- Chelsea updated our website to add info about the Library of Things, museum passes, printing and scanning, and other “helpful” links. We intend to add more content about William Apess Day and the Local History Collection, and “Craft Central” in the near future.
- A change in life circumstances prevented our new library assistant from joining the GML team.
- Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist for the MBLC contacted Chelsea on December 14th to advise that further to the library’s collection development policy, we also adopt a “reconsideration policy.” Our collection development policy already states the following:

Controversial Materials and Intellectual Freedom:

The Library recognizes its obligation to provide as wide a spectrum of materials as possible. Selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that certain materials might be considered objectionable by some users on moral, religious, political or other grounds. The Library endorses the principles of the Freedom to Read Statement and the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. The Library believes it is essential in a free society to provide access to all library materials. No restrictions are placed on what anyone may read or view. Individuals or groups may occasionally question the inclusion of an item in the collection because of fear or doubt about the effects of the material on an impressionable person. Although the Library understands this concern, it is the Library's position that the risk to society is far greater if public access to ideas and information is restricted. Neither an individual, nor group, not even the Library itself has the right to decide what others may or may not read. The Library is opposed to removing from its shelves, at the request of any individual or group, materials that have been chosen according to the collection development policy. In addition, the library will oppose coercion on the part of an individual or group seeking to have material added to the collection that is contrary to the criteria selection stated above.

Chelsea responded to Maura to ask if this was sufficient and has not yet heard back, but notes that Maura [shared some examples of reconsideration policies](#) for reference. Maura gave us kudos for having already posted our collection development policy to our website.

- The Town Mailer will be sent in January. As mentioned above, the Friends would like to use this opportunity to fundraise above and beyond the usual by offering prints of the brick meeting house in exchange for a \$45 donation. One idea for a header is “Rising together.” Chelsea will pull highlights from the Annual Report to show how the library provides return on investment through our services and collection.

- November circulation of print and other physical materials was up slightly over October, with 1,594 checkouts/renewals in total (7% more than October's 1,486 checkouts).

We helped 352 visitors in person, an average of 2.5 per hour that the library was open. This was a little less than in previous months.

Our patrons borrowed 104 eBooks, and 142 audiobooks in November. This is an increase over October. The YTD averages are 95 eBooks and 152 audiobooks per month.

- As per our discussion on The library's draft budget for the November 21st, Chelsea submitted a "letter of intent" to the MBLC for an Archives Arrangement & Description grant that would go towards digitizing materials in our local history collection.

We also intend to apply for [Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Feasibility & Technical Assistance Grants](#) up to \$50,000 (1:1 match) for costs and expenses related to overall planning and feasibility for a proposed eligible project. Applications are due February 2nd.