

Director's Report December 2023

Respectfully submitted by Chelsea Jordan-Makely on December 5, 2023

Joys and successes:

- Thank you to the Friends of the Library and to two super secret elves for decorating the library exterior with greenery and red ribbons! The lights are also up, and we have heard from one commuter who was returning home at night, "Library looks amazing!"
- Welcome, Foster Ranney! Foster has been training in the role of library assistant. Foster is from Leyden and will be working also at Greenfield Public Library. He worked at the same university library (Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, Canada), as Chelsea! (They didn't know each other, though.)
- Chelsea's submission to the Massachusetts Library Association Annual Conference has been accepted! The conference will be held in Framingham May 6th and 7th.

Building & Grounds:

- Hartnett Plumbing cleared the downspouts that lead from the roof through the basement and out front to get the standing water off of the library's roof. Hartnett is also replacing the on-demand hot water heater that heats water to the bathroom sink.
- A patron asked if we would be following up to get the building power washed? This was the same person who first inquired, several years ago, and he repeated his original offer to do this work himself. Chelsea can pass his information on to Chelli.
- Aaron moved the stage to the library basement for the winter. He raised concerns about the mold and said we probably should not be storing anything down there besides outdoor equipment. Besides this comment, a patron who was attending a program a few months ago began sniffing and sneezing, and surmised that it was from mildew or mold. Another patron said that it smelled moldy. Chelsea will continue working towards evaluating and packaging moldy historical books.
- Aaron and Kevin French are in agreement that the picnic tables and bench that are outside could weather the winter sufficiently, since they are plastic composite, but Kevin did recommend that we put these items up on bricks.
- Dylan Norwood has agreed to shovel the library sidewalks this winter for \$30/hour.

Programs and services:

- Snow shoes have been added to the Betty Purington Johnson Library of Things! Our Facebook post about this reached over 1,000 people, and 86 people "engaged" with this post, including 23 people who "liked" it.

- We are looking to start up “Yoga Story Hour” in the New Year, led by Judith Roberts! And, Bill Dornbusch is interested in volunteering in a “tech cafe” where people could get peer-to-peer support with their technology.
- Two episodes of the People’s History of Colrain podcast are complete! All we have to do is to post them online. Look for these on social media and the library website sometime soon!
- The jail book club in the pre-trial unit was attended by six people (plus Sarah and myself). We had a really interesting discussion of Siddhartha by Herman Hesse. We also visited the women’s unit on November 14th for regular library outreach services.
- Checkouts to the Colrain Central School account, aka “Ms. Miller” are working well so far! We have been appreciating their requests and suggestions.
- Eight people attended the Carol Purington Poetry Collective on December 1st, including one first-time participant!

Administration:

- Mikaela Whittaker is interested in joining the GML Board of Trustees! Due to the timing, the process would be for the library trustees to vote to recommend Mikaela to the Select Board, who would make her appointment official through their vote. This is already on the Select Board agenda for Tuesday, December 12th at 4:30.
- The procurement process for the library feasibility study is underway. Fortunately, the Town of Colrain already has a Designer Selection Procedure on file with FRCOG, so that saves a step. The Select Board has voted to move forward with a survey of the library’s land, a step which FRCOG anticipates any designer/engineer would require for the library’s feasibility study. This expense could not be paid for out of the \$35,000 appropriated for the feasibility study itself. An estimate from the surveyor who began working on this project some time ago is expected soon.
- As another administrative point related to the Cornerstone Committee, there is some question and need for clarification as to whether this committee is *ad hoc* and if it is formed for the entirety of the project, or if it is simply to the end of supervising the feasibility study itself. There is also question as to what decision-making powers this group would hold, and how they should make decisions. To these points, Chelsea found the following in the [MA Public Library Trustees Handbook](#):

In some communities the Committee is given decision making authority; in others it performs an advisory function. In almost all municipalities, actual decisions concerning financial expenditures or entering into contracts remain with the trustees or elected officials. It is important that the Committee have a written, detailed charge that delineates its authority and responsibilities, and gives a clear statement of its relation to the trustees, the director, and the architect. In early stages, this committee may be called a Facilities Needs Assessment Committee or Building Study Committee. As the project progresses, it may evolve (with the addition or subtraction of some members) into a Construction Committee that will oversee the actual construction process. (p. 107, but begin reading on p. 105)

- The Colrain Historical Society is not able to house/exhibit the plaster busts. All of the busts, including Columbus, remain on display at the library at this time. Here is what Rhonda Anderson, Western Massachusetts Commissioner on Indian Affairs, shared through her Facebook account over the summer when she was visiting the library to help with the People’s History of Colrain Podcast:

I was at the town library for a research project, and I noticed some fabulous changes. This was one of the best. 🤗🤗 #ColumbusIsntStaringDownOnMe #EveryonesWelcome



The bust pictured above has since been uncovered, out of concern that the so-called First Amendment Auditor would respond poorly (in other videos, he takes lots of interest in history and asks questions about artifacts that are on display in the spaces he visits). Speaking of, the Town Administrator received a call warning that this person could be in our area.

- The library was closed for the first snow day of the year on December 22nd.
- Northeast IT helped us to resolve several tech issues, concerning our Outlook email (griswold@colrain-ma.gov) and our printer/scanner device and the app it uses.

Further Reading:

- More info on First Amendment Audits (note that some of the resources linked here have been presented previously): <https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/c.php?g=43533&p=9658229>