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colrain-ma.gov/GML

Director's Report May 2025

Respectfully submitted by Chelsea Jordan-Makely on May 19, 2025

Joys and successes:

- We've helped to answer some interesting questions about local history this month, including a question about "Old Remus," one of the original deed-holders who owned a parcel on the Leyden town line.

There was a question from the Town of Colrain regarding the original balance of a tax relief fund set up in 1912, and we were able to find the answer by searching our recently digitized [Annual Reports](#).

We also learned the following after an inquiry about one "William Apes," who died of dysentery:

This was in reference to a brother that William Apess probably never even knew that he had. The details are vague at best, but after Apess's parents split up sometime around 1802, his father came back to Colrain, which he often called home, and apparently fathered another child. We know that Apess' father remarried and that he had a number of children with this other wife. This child was apparently born in Colrain and died at a very young age from the dysentery that was sweeping through the area that year.

- Big thanks to the Colrain Fire Department for helping us out when the basement flooded especially badly.
- Thank you, Betsy Browning, for helping to hang the buntings in time for Patriots' Day!



- We were able to help a young parent by giving them a few gift certificates to the Catamount Store. Also, our new initiative to share fruit and granola bars has been very popular! One person also complimented us on the "personal care" items that we make available in the bathroom, saying, "That's the best back of a door I have ever seen!" Lastly, when we were at the Health

Expo at Greenfield Community College, one of the nursing students said that when she was doing a project to find community resources for people in need, our name had come up “actually, a lot”!

- Our \$10,000 grant from the IMLS came through!

Building & Grounds:

- The Cornerstone Committee will meet with the team from Larocque Architecture on May 21st at 4:00 by Zoom and at the Library. The Trustees are invited to attend and this will be posted as a public meeting. There will be another opportunity for public comment after this.
- The exterior window sills look like they may need to be repainted in the near future, as the paint is flaking away and water is seeping into the wood.
- As mentioned above, the basement flooded pretty badly last week when the hose leading out from the sump pump broke. Water pooled outside the building then came in under the basement door. There was more than a foot of water in the bulkhead and several inches in the basement. We are back to running the dehumidifiers upstairs, and it has begun to smell of mildew again.

Programs and services:

- We celebrated Earth Day on April 19th, with live music, dancing, and a craft: making paper flowers. The event took place indoors due to inclement weather. There were 32 people in attendance.



- Candidates' Night took place on April 23rd, and was moderated by Betty Johnson, with candidates for Town Clerk and Library Trustee speaking about their aspirations for office. As well, Chelsea was able to speak about the Library's request for \$1,500 for crisis management (Article 13 on the Warrant). There were 20 people who attended in person, and another seven who watched the live feed on the GML Colrain Facebook page.

- Chelsea took the “pop-up library” on the road to the Health Expo at Greenfield Community College on April 26th. There were more than 100 people in attendance, and Chelsea interacted directly with 33 people. It felt great to help healthcare professionals see the ways that public libraries can be a partner in regards to health literacy, safe spaces, and information access.
- The Carol Purington Poetry Collective met on May 2nd, with nine people in attendance.
- The “pop-up library” also made an appearance at the Remembrance Day event in Great Falls on Saturday, May 17th. There were about 120 people there in total. We promoted William Apress Day and talked a bit about the roles that libraries play as information centers and a hub for community. We loaned nine books over the course of the day.

Administration:

- The revised land acknowledgement has been uploaded to the [library web page](#).

Land Acknowledgment

Every community, including ours, owes its existence and vitality to generations of people from around the world who brought their hopes, dreams, and energy to this place. Some came seeking a better life, some were brought here against their will, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are essential to building mutual respect across barriers of heritage, difference, and time.

We gather on land stewarded for thousands of years by the Abenaki, Wabanaki, Pocumtuc, Mohican and neighboring nations. We commit to learning and action that support Native sovereignty, protect land and water, and uphold the dignity and well-being of all who call this place home.



Members of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe gather in front of the library on William Apress Day, 2021

- The Strategic Planning Committee met on April 28th, with Sara Wik of the Friends of the Library, Dago Lydgate-Driggs and Mikaela Whitaker of the Library Trustees, and Val Finkel and Chelsea representing the GML staff. An outcome of this meeting was to finalize the [2024 Community Questionnaire Report](#) and to begin drafting questions and thinking of what groups and individuals we will want to meet with to solicit more input for the Library’s 2026-2030 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet again on June 2nd at 6:00.
- We held a staff meeting on May 15th to plan Summer Reading, updates to the website/catalog, and other projects.

Further reading/Good to know

- Massive Victory in Lawsuit Filed Against Trump Administration’s Dismantling of IMLS
In what could be seen as a total victory, today Judge John J. McConnell, Jr. issued a temporary injunction in the case of 21 state attorneys general who sued Donald Trump over the unlawful dismantling of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
- “Call on Congress to Fund Libraries in FY26,” campaign, in [United for Libraries](#) and from the [American Library Association \(ALA\) #FundLibraries](#).

The White House proposed a budget for the next fiscal year (FY26) that would eliminate the only federal agency dedicated to library funding, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Members of Congress must demonstrate their support for federal library funding, and the deadline to do so is coming up in mid-May.

- [“Trump Administration Fires Librarian of Congress,” CNN, May 8, 2025](#)

Hayden was sworn in as the librarian of Congress in September 2016, becoming the first

woman and Black person to hold the position. She had about a year and a half left in her 10-year term.

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library and the US Congress' primary research arm, according to its website. The library houses more than 178 million items, including books, photographs, musical instruments and ancient artifacts.

- Learning Opportunity: "Advocacy and the New Administration," a live webinar with United for Libraries, June 10th at 2:00 p.m.

This webinar will start with a sobering assessment of what's different and what's the same in these times. Participants will learn what basic elements of advocacy they can employ to ensure their voices are heard, and what tools still work. The program will also cover basic advocacy techniques both in state/federal capitals and back home. It will conclude with some successful advocacy case studies, reminding participants that democracy still can function in times of crisis. Register [here](#).