



**Report presented to the Board of Trustees  
by Margaret Morrissey, Director  
presented September 24, 2024**

**ARIS**

- Annual Report Information Survey was submitted which is the statistical component of the State Aid Grant. Currently working on the financial report, due October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Requesting \$45,000 for Books and Materials to supplement the operating budget line.

**Building**

- R & M Electric installed a new box to restore operation of the emergency lighting system 8/8.
- The contract for the elevator maintenance will be switching to one vendor-model for all the town departments. DPW conducted a walkthrough of all town buildings for prospective elevator maintenance on 8/15. During the month, the elevator had an issue with the door, same issue as noted 4/25/24
- National Grid has declined to offer the incentive program for the automatic louvre project in the 1914 attic. However, the motorized dampers project was accepted for funding (\$20,258) by the Green Communities Grant.
- DPW noticed there is a slate missing over 1914 section of the roof 7/30. Quannah Roofing replacing the slates 9/24.
- Requested meeting with DPW about the landscaping (the perimeter area in particular and other needs) and custodian duties.
- Contacted DiMauro Carpet regarding some fraying noticed in the stairs. Installer will be coming by to review.
- Annual state elevator inspection scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Chess Park**

- The group met 8/15 and 9/19 in the Pioppi Room. Project is moving forward. Steven Brady – Chairman, Urban Community Forestry Advisory Board and Jeff Hehman of Opacum Land Trust provided a report with comments regarding the impact of the chess park on the contiguous trees (pin oak and Norwegian maple).

**Children’s Room Summer reading program “Read Renew Repeat”**

- Summer Reading 2024 June 24<sup>th</sup>-August 2<sup>nd</sup> Total 180 registered  
Birth to 5y= 29      6y-11y=151
- Book Mark Contest with prizes offered by FOJEL

- Guest speakers to include a beekeeper, Tatum the police comfort dog and his handler, Woo Sox, Health/Recycling and financial literacy. There is an organized activity each day.
- Davis Bates storyteller, 8/5 program sponsored by Southbridge Cultural Council.
- Local author Clara Dowdle presented her first book *Dragonfly Magic* – a story about helping others and the PanMass Challenge 8/14.
- *Wiggles and Giggles / Littles* returned on Thursday September 12 for 7 weeks
- Katelyn Cramer returned Tuesday September 17 with a generous grant from FOJEL for 7 week session of *Me and My Mini* and *Let's Read A Story*. *Katelyn had offered a complimentary series in August w/o SR 2025 Let's Dance A Story*
- Author Emily Franke presented a book talk on her book *The Ladybug Who Lived On A Four Leaf Clover* 9/7
- *International Dot Day* was celebrated on 9/13
- *Sensory Space* – every fourth Thursday, starting 9/26.
- Fall preparations underway. New displays in Children's room.

#### Collection Development

- Cataloging materials in the History Room continues. Working on the Southbridge Womens Club Archive.
- YA fiction weeding
- Memory Kits have been added to the collection and are proving popular.
- Displays created by staff to promote the library materials
  - August is Immunization Awareness Month
  - Summer Reading - Conservation/Upcycling as it is the Summer Reading theme
  - Olympics
  - Have You "Red" Any Good Books Lately,
  - Picnics and Grilling,
  - Dog Days of Summer
  - Small table rotating themes - Joke Day, and Read Comics
- September Displays
  - Hispanic Heritage
  - Library Card Sign Up and Book Banning
  - Football v. Football
  - Leaves are Falling, Books are Calling
  - Healthy Aging Awareness
- Lots of compliments from patrons on the various displays, especially the butterflies and book located over the Information Desk. They notice!

#### Digital Commonwealth – Boston Public Library

- Participated in a call with Jake Sadow of BPL to discuss the digitization of newspapers. BPL will undertake to digitize the pre1928 newspapers and work with New England Micrographics to obtain the master

## FOJEL

- Next meeting Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup> in the Pioppi Room, at 2 pm.
- Bookmark contest was judged by the FOJEL members 7/29. Prizes were distributed.
- Raffle of craft basket and a hand made quilt will be in November and December respectively.

## Grants and Donations

- Waiting for response from the MA Office of Disability on our Municipal Grant application of \$200k in support of the modernization of the elevator.
- Southbridge Womens Club has donated their archive to the library as the club is now defunct 7/31.
- Nancy Coderre donated two large framed maps of Southbridge
- Participated in a call regarding Make It Public – the art grant award. Working with Peg Dean, Economic Development Director on a *call for art* for the pocket park at 76 Central Street.

## Literacy Volunteers

- Literacy Volunteers offering an ESOL Basic Class and Literacy Café and Naturalization Preparation Class, as well as the usual one-on-one tutoring.

## Local History

- Attended the MOTT (MA Office of Travel and Tourism) grant group meeting to compile a database of historic buildings, as part of a series of walking tours that are being planned.
- Digitized some materials locally and posted to the Reference Tab on the JEL website
- Worked with researcher on the Community Scanning day 7/8

## Long Range Plan

- Staff is promoting the databases subscribed to by the library and other free information resources available through Boston Public Library.

## Outreach

- *MIP (Making It Public)* program that Peg Dean and I are participating in. There is a \$15,000 grant available for public art in the community. Feedback was requested from the Redevelopment Authority. There is a commitment to attend a series of webinars and submit some 'homework' that will work towards a "Call for Art"
- Attended the monthly MOTT meeting to discuss the Downtown Walking Tour.

## Programs

- Portrait photographer Dino Lusa was the August artist of the month. SCTV recorded the event.
- Financial Wellness presented by Cornerstone Bank had five attendees. The bank is interested in presenting more topics in the series.
- JEL Book Club: *Fellowship Point* by Alice Elliot Dark was discussed 8/21
- *Afternoon Author Talk* with Eileen O'Finlan presented a program on *The Folklorist* and her other published works on 7/24 and was recorded by SCTV.

- *Native Links: The Surprising History of Our First People in Golf* was introduced by author Mark Wagner on 8/29 and was recorded by SCTV.
- *Tuesday Knitting* continues to attract participants from area towns and from CT too.
- Series of *Mindful Meditation* sessions offered by Iris Vega offered sessions on Wednesdays at 3:30 pm during the summer in the Pioppi Room. Iris continues her program on Saturdays starting in September.
- *Cro-Magnon Blues: History and Legends Through Song* August 8<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the Southbridge Cultural Council and recorded by SCTV
- *Betty's Bounce* a jazz trio presented a show on August 15<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by Friends of JEL and recorded by SCTV
- *Blue Skies with Sarah Clay and the StarCats* presented on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, sponsored by Southbridge Cultural Council and recorded by SCTV. There were 19 people in attendance.
- *Afternoon Author Talk* presented by Royce Singleton on his book "At Home and At Sea" on 8/28 and was recorded by SCTV.
- Maria Payano is the September Artist of the Month. Her work is on display in the main hall. The Meet and Greet on 9/5 with special guest interviewer Charles Diaz. The event was recorded by SCTV.
- *Two Poets in Southbridge* with Bill O'Connell and Stephen Campiglio 9/12. SCTV was present to record the event. 11 attended.
- *Travels with Charlie in Search of America* by John Steinbeck 9/18. 3 attended.
- *Carlos Odria Trio performed* in concert on 9/19. The event was sponsored by the Southbridge Cultural Council and recorded by SCTV. 23 attended.
  - **Forthcoming Programs**
  - Tech Training 9/24
  - Afternoon Author Talk with Michael Perna who will discuss his book *Spag: His Life and Legacy* 9/25
  - Cancelled - *If I Can Smile I Can Live* that was scheduled for 9/26
  - *Book Club: Demon of Unrest*

#### Reference

- Uploaded materials to the reference section of the JEL website, created the September eNewsletter
- Reference:
  - 82 transactions comprised of looking though for historical photographs and newspaper articles
  - 1-on-1 Tech Trainings: 5
  - SEN headline re: Mill Fire
  - Charles E (Chuck) Walsh books
  - Naming of Southbridge
  - Deneson Rock photo
  - 70 Foster Street parking lot photos

### Safety and Security

- Alerted the Police Department to a man who was agitated and was screaming, at the entrance door of the library. He left after he had hurled some abuse at the staff.
- Police officers have been doing walk-throughs on a regular basis.
- Some No Trespass orders were issued by the police, after some unhoused patrons who were sleeping at the north entrance of the building refused to leave the area.
- Status of suspended students being tutored in the library to be determined, following an issue at the end of the academic year.

### Service

- Closed in honor of Labor Day.
- The library is open on Saturdays, starting September 7<sup>th</sup> from 9 am – 1 pm.

### Staff

- Interviews were conducted for the Library Page position. Abigail DeMelo started work on 8/19.
- Noah Wallace, Circulation Assistant has resigned to pursue his career in zoology. His last day was 8/23.
- Lily Larcheveque will be starting 9/24 as a Circulation Assistant – 30 hours per week
- Samuel Korstvedt, Circulation Supervisor has resigned and will be leaving 9/28
- Jillian Chiapocha has been appointed as Interim Circulation Supervisor

### Summer Feeding

- Summer Feeding started July 1st through August 2<sup>nd</sup>. The program was staffed by some of the Tax Abatement Personnel. There are an average of 16 meals served.

### Summer Reading

- 30 teens / 97 adults are signed up
- New signage designed and ready for next year.
- 2025 theme is “Level up at your Library”

### Tax Preparation Assistance

- VITA was in contact on 8/26 and will offer tax prep assistance in 2025. Two dates already established 2/8/25 and 4/12/25 with more to follow.

### Technology

- Postings were made to social media. Newsletter/displays /statistics /promotional materials
  - General site/link maintenance
- One-on-One Tech Training: 5 participants
- CW MARS tickets
  - Aspen/staff catalog record inconsistencies
  - Saturday schedule/public computer access
  - Laptop issues
- Worcester T&G login issues

## Teen

- Summer Reading: 30 teens / 97 adults are signed up
- Dungeons and Dragons presented by Noah Wallace, 8/7.
- Teen Advisory Group (TAG) 9/11
- September Take and Makes – Pokemon Corner Bookmarks
- *Loteria* Saturday 9/21 in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month

## Training

- Two staff are working on part two of the administration training offered by MA Library System. This course is part of the Basic Library Techniques program and staff will be encouraged to continue with the other two sections, leading to a certificate.
- Professional development:
  - Heritage Hub webinar
  - MBLC AI Chat (database vendors)

## Unhoused patrons

- The area at the north entrance was being used by unhoused people to sleep under the awning. In two separate instances concerned patrons addressed this issue with the director, as access to the book return and electrical outlet was now considered uncomfortable. In consultation with the Town Manager and the Police Chief, the folks were spoken to and advised that town property was not an appropriate place to sleep. Those that refused to move were 'No Trespassed' by the Police Department.
- Earlier in the month, Open Sky had been contacted and they indicated they had contacted and offered assistance but the services had been refused. The agency provided some hygiene items and toys to distribute.