



Date: January 8th, 2025

To: David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees

Prepared by: Angela Zimmermann, Library Director

Administrative and Staff Reports for January 8th Board Meeting

Library Director, Angela Zimmermann

This past month has largely been routine. I was away quite a bit, so I want to extend my thanks to the staff for “holding down the fort” and ensuring everything ran smoothly in my absence. We're all eager to step into the new year and embark on fresh initiatives and projects.

Personnel

On behalf of the staff, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation again to the Board of Trustees for the year-end bonuses!

Otherwise, not too much to mention in regards to personnel except in relation to our wonderful interns:

Douglas Piñeda Gutierrez will be returning in February to continue 1:1 Tech Times.

Valen Freitas will return towards the end of January and continue in the Community Resources Services intern position with a focus on starting community social justice talks and potentially starting ‘community resources services open hours’ for patrons.

Shirel Quintanilla Raymond will be joining us for the month of January during Williams’ winter study as our Web Technologies Intern and will be working closely with Brianna.

Aunonto Rahman will be joining us as well for the month of January during Williams’ winter study as our Education Outreach & Tech Support Intern and will focus on 1:1 Tech Times and digital literacy classes.

Building and Grounds

We're making decent progress on several of the capital funds initiatives (please see Alex's report down below for further details), and I also have a meeting scheduled with Bob on Monday, January 6th, to further discuss and prioritize the funds. Unfortunately, a lot of the spending does depend yet on the direction of Boiler #1, but I feel we're covering some ground with all of this... slowly but surely. I'm happy to answer any questions about this at the Board meeting.

Various

To kick off the new year and continue warmly greeting new patrons, we'll begin to offer welcome bags filled with library swag and informational brochures about our services and resources.

Additionally, the League of Women Voters has approached the library to collaborate on launching a Citizens Academy - an educational program designed to give residents a deeper understanding of how their local government operates. Kira, Head of Adult Services, and I have already met with several League members, and we're all enthusiastic about this initiative. Next week, we'll meet with Bob to gather his input and discuss securing the Town's support for this program.

The David & Joyce Milne Public Library is set to present its first-ever 2024 year-end report in the coming weeks. This report will provide a comprehensive overview of the past year and offer insights into the year ahead. A special thanks to Brianna for her diligent and creative efforts in crafting this document!

Upcoming Projects

Collections

In the months ahead, I'm optimistic that we'll be able to continue to reorganize further collections and create more open areas, thanks to the extensive weeding efforts over the past six months. Our plans include relocating the magazines and CDs from the Community Room, continuing to genrefy the Adult Fiction section, and reimagining the Adult Nonfiction area to enhance space and create more of a communal atmosphere.

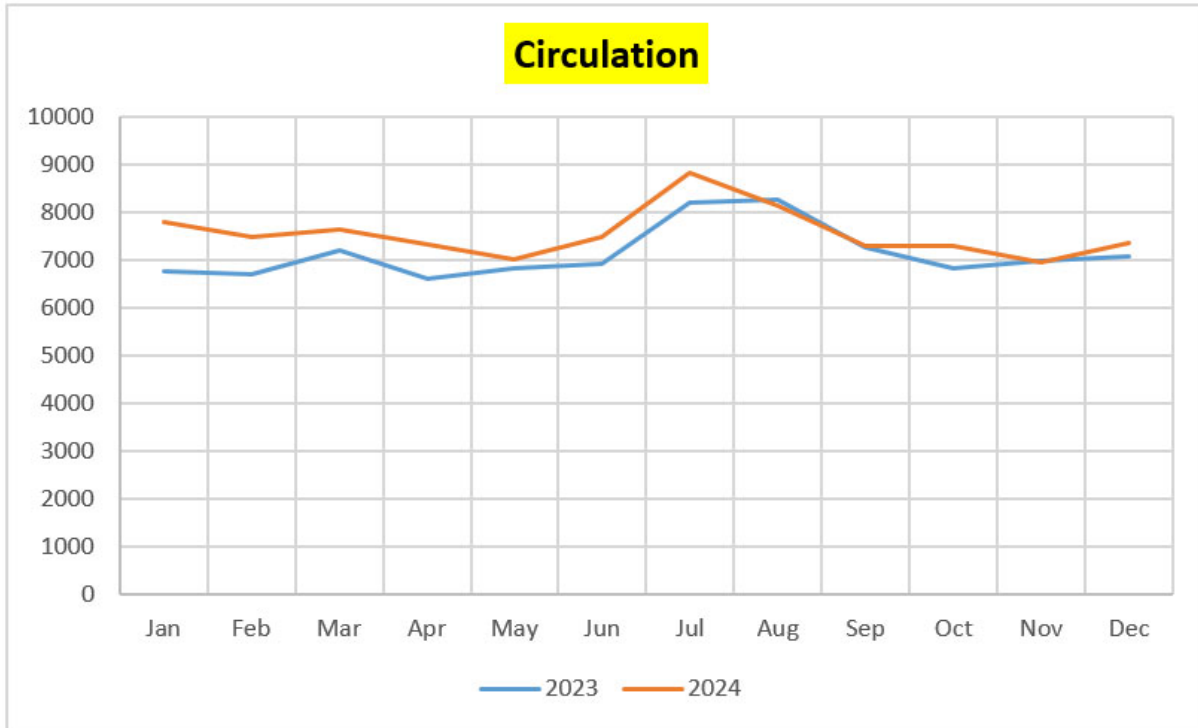
Website

The past work done on our current website was a significant improvement over the previous version (which, from what I've heard, was in need of some serious TLC). However, we're now focused on reimagining the website to make it even more user-friendly, intuitive, and easy to navigate. With valuable input from staff and patrons gathered through surveys, Brianna is leading this project. She has already built a foundational website, and Shirel, our January Web Development Intern from Williams, will be assisting in bringing this vision to life by the beginning of March. The updated website will feature a Thingdom landing page, a full-screen homepage, improved dropdown menus that better highlight our resources, an accessibility tool, and much more.

****Reminder! 2025 Berkshire Library Legislative Breakfast**

The annual Berkshire Library Legislative Breakfast will be held on Friday, January 31st at 8:00 am at the Taconic High School in Pittsfield. For those who are newer to the Board, this is an annual event where you can learn about the legislative agenda for 2025, express any concerns/ideas with legislators, thank legislators for continued support and increased funding, etc. I'll also bring copies of the invite to the Board meeting.

Milne By the Numbers



	November	December
New Library Card Registrations	27	32
Monthly Door Count	9,902	11,829
Comics Plus checkouts	0	63
Creativebug (sessions)	8	5
Hoopla checkouts	192	213
Kanopy checkouts	214	228
Libby checkouts	2,277	2,418
Mango Language total sessions	25	21
Meeting room usage total	103	112
Newsletter total subscribers	2,607	2,697
Newsletter unique opens	5,179	5,698

New York Times sessions	N/A	N/A
Wall Street Journal active users	5	7
Wall Street Journal page views	45	56
Website unique visitors	1,755	1,655
Website site sessions	2,945	2,951

Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose

Most of this month has been business as usual. I did spend a good amount of time planning for staffing for the holiday break and into the new year.

The artist exhibition in honor of the library's 150th anniversary has been a huge success - we've seen a lot of foot traffic coming in for people admiring the artworks, and the reception was well-attended. Everyone involved seems pleased with the outcomes. The show will be coming down on January 2nd.

I've been doing a little bit of weeding when appropriate (though I have to go slow so as not to overwhelm the freebie cart). The weeding process has also turned up a handful of books that were poorly cataloged in the past, so I've been working to re-catalog them to a better spot on the shelves where they might be more easily found by browsing patrons.

Circulation Manager, Jenna English

I did two webinars this month: Book Bans & Censorship & Quiet Leadership 2.0. The first was a primer on the current wave of book bans & strategies to deal with challenges, particularly public comments. The second was a sequel to a previous webinar I'd done about being an introvert in a management role. I think some of the strategies they discussed will prove useful to me.

Thingdom: Not as much to say here as in previous months, but I've noticed that less cords have gone missing since I started putting tags on them.

I did my 1st display this month! It was a Holiday Baking cookbook display & I had a lot of fun making decorations out of card stock & glitter glue for it. Here's a picture:



I'm looking forward to doing more displays in the future!

*From the Adult Services Department:
Adult Services Librarian, Kira Williams*

December's programs consisted mostly of recurring events, most of which were well-attended. Mahjong has become quite popular, thanks mostly to the energy and enthusiasm of the organizer, Rosie Wallent. To accommodate more players, she has asked to add evening sessions starting in January! Mary Edgerton's yoga classes remain very popular too, and she will resume classes in February.

I am also happy to report that both art workshops were well-attended. I planned and taught the mini-tree making workshop using mostly natural or recyclable materials, including pages from old books. It was more work than I expected, but my first art workshop ever went pretty well and those who came seemed to have fun making their trees. Many adults also enjoyed making bookmarks at the workshops organized by Rocío, myself included!

The Berkshire Gamers would like to continue meeting, but with such low attendance we are considering a variety of ways to attract more gamers. I have decided to not continue our participation in the 50+ Job Seekers virtual meetings due to extremely low attendance since it began in August.

We also celebrated the library volunteers at our annual party. We are lucky to have a very dedicated group of shelveers, holds processors, gardeners, and a book repairer as well, who have put in over 1000 hours this year. Four of the volunteers were recognized for working consistently for over 20 years here at the library: Yumi Farwell, Judy Ensign, Judy Hall, and Judy Madden.

Other endeavours included cataloging new non-fiction books, which have been arriving in spurts; managing and requesting harder-to-find interlibrary loans, and answering an increasing number of reference and tech questions.

Photos from the Mini Holiday Tree Workshop:



Adult Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of attendees
Sign-up Art Workshop: Make a Mini Holiday Tree	10
2 Drop-In Art Workshops: Book Mark Making	19
Massachusetts Dementia Friendly Caregivers monthly group meeting (1 session monthly)	3
Virtual Series: Job Seekers 50+ Networking Group (2 sessions monthly)	0

Friday Film: <i>The Man Who Invented Christmas</i>	6
Berkshire Gamers Board Game Group (1 session monthly) (Starting in the new year, we will soon be changing the day and time for this event in hopes of gaining more traction.)	1
Mahjong at the Milne (weekly) (5 sessions)	40
Gentle Yoga (weekly) (3 sessions)	36
Tech 1:1 times with Intern Douglas Piñeda Guterrez (individual 30 minute sessions)	17
Total attendance	132

Marketing & Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie

Regarding the Marketing and Communication side of the Milne, I have continued analyzing the current marketing and communication that the library is currently using. I was able to draft a document that details my analysis and my recommendations and strategies that are inline with Milne's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. As mentioned during November's report, these initiatives will begin January 2025.

Additionally, I am currently working on a 2024 Annual Report document that details the amazing programming, events, and initiatives that happened throughout the year. This document's anticipated completion date is January 31, 2025. Lastly, I have developed two new brochures using information provided by Jenna and Val regarding experience passes and a community resource guide. These are already on the website as PDF versions and print versions will be in the library soon!

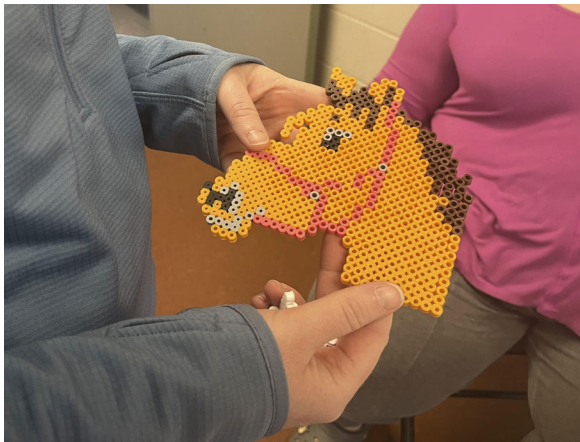
*From the Children's Department:
Children's Librarian, Debbie Baker*

The end of another year! December always starts out kind of slow as we recover from Thanksgiving, but before you know it another school break is upon us. In the first couple of weeks, though, many bookmarks were made -- including the 28 pre-printed ones we left on the coloring table just for fun.

Kicking off the winter break, we shared the new Wild Robot movie with a very enthusiastic crowd of about 15 people. We also brought back the extremely popular Fuse Beads workshop, and had a full house of 10 for each of the three sessions. We had lots of patterns and pegboards to choose from.



Some people made one very large piece:



And others used their time to make multiple smaller creations:



Many folks asked when we were doing it again! (Not right away! But maybe in February?)

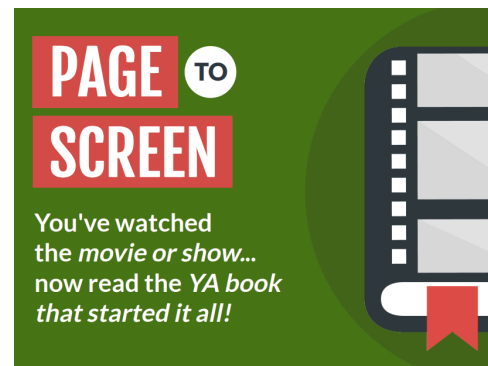
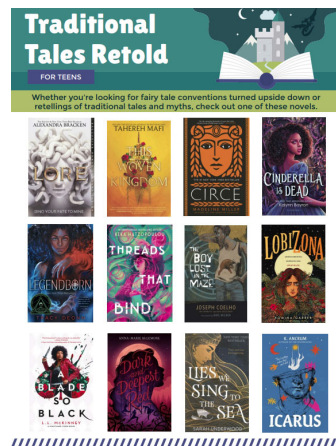
Looking forward to a brand new year!

Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera

Afterschool snacks were a little slower due to winter sports practice starting at MGRS and we also did not supply afterschool snacks for the winter break season which began on Monday, December 23. Regardless, we saw around 60 teens and tweens stop by for afterschool snacks.

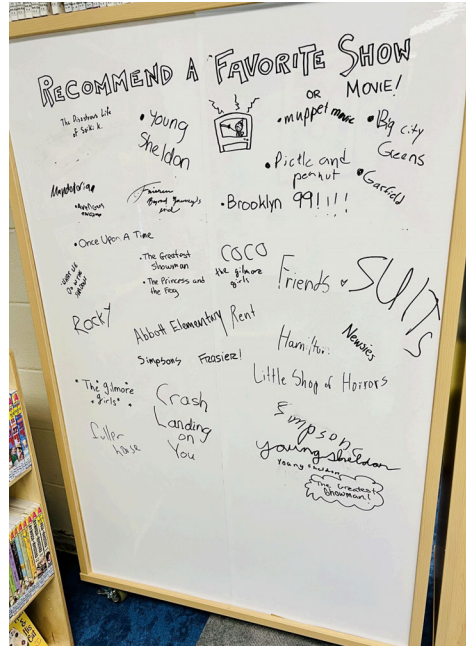
The Library has begun a food waste collection program in collaboration with Second Chance Composting as a start to our Green Initiative programming. In its first month we have 15 members of our community signed up and contributing all food waste items including bones, dairy and any organic matter. Food waste is the largest component in landfills throughout the United States, we are happily diverting this material that our patrons would have to throw away to create useful compost.

December displays were *Traditional Tales Retold* and *Page to Screen*:



The Dry Erase Board prompt for November was:

Recommend a Favorite Show or Movie and we received a whopping 32 responses! The Simpsons was a big winner but Young Sheldon was a close second.

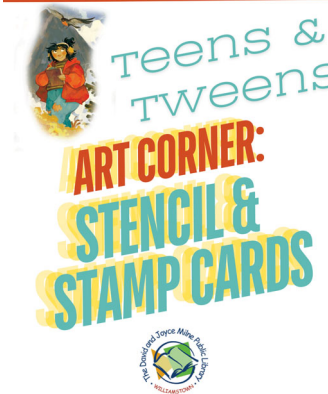


Art Corner (Stencil & Stamp cards) was well visited with a total of 35 cards made.

¡en LA SALA DE ADOLESCENTES!



VISIT THE TEEN ROOM!



Bookmarks for Teens & Adults x 2 Adults: 19; Teens: 13;
Bookmarks made: 74



We celebrated a snowy, winter day with the third and last *Bookmark Making Workshop* for kids and families. 13 Adults, 4 Teens and 20 kids participated in making 108 (!) beautiful gifts for themselves, family and friends!



We hosted two *Explore the Thingdom: STEM kits* events, one specifically for teens and another for families. The Saturday event was especially rousing. A few of the kits were checked out at the end! A mother said this was a perfect way to see what would be age appropriate for her two children. All told in attendance, we had 14 adults, 6 tween/teens, and 18 children. 38 people total.



Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of kids	# of teens	# of families	# of programs
Storytimes	49			8
Passive Bookmarks	28			
Drop-in Bookmarks Teens		13		2
Drop-In Bookmarks	20	4	13	1
Movie - The Wild Robot			15	1
Open House - STEM Kits Teens		3		1
Open House - STEM Kits	18	3	14	1
Workshop - Fuse Beads	23	5	2	1
Total Attendance: 210				

Building & Grounds Supervisor, Alex Charron

- The roof over the bathrooms was completed by Vermont Roofing.
- Ames Builders is currently working on a bid to be entered for the windows and door projects.
- The new Flooring in the A.V. area will begin shortly after the invoice for the material is sent out.
- We've received an estimate from Lee Audio for an upgrade to the alarm system panel which is very outdated.

- Electrical contractors have contacted prospective bids for a redesign and upgrade to the track lighting system in the sorting center.
- Laureyns United has begun the heat exchanger replacement in boiler 1. The heat exchanger has been removed and sent to Lochinvar for testing to determine the cause of the failure, and the repair completed forthwith.
- The 150th banner has been removed
- There has also been a vast improvement made to the server closet thanks to the Town IT department.