

Solomon Wright Public Library
Director's Report
February / March 2023

Total Attendance (February 1st - March 20th):

Feb: 121 / March 1- 20: 103

February 1st, 2023

Summary:

1. Books backlog integrated into collection; 100 new volumes now on shelves
2. New cataloging guide is now in place
3. Meetings: Principal and staff of Pownal Elementary, principal at Monument Elementary, Nat. Honor Society Liaisons at MAUHS, Lynne Fontaneau McCann (dir. Bennington Free Library), Linda Donigan (Children's Librarian, Bennington Free Library) Jennie Rozycki (dir. McCullough Library), and the town of Pownal Selectboard
4. Three new volunteers recruited
5. One grant applied for, more researched
6. One new group using the Lucy Wright Reading Room, plus the Book Club is back
7. Also attended the town of Pownal floor meeting and made a pitch for the increased funding, plus increase for director's pay, as described in our ballot initiative; the increase was approved

To the esteemed Board of Trustees of the Solomon Wright Public Library –

Since we last gathered on February 1st, I've taken some significant steps toward improving the delivery of services to our patrons. I've also reached out and forged new connections with our community partners in Pownal and in neighboring libraries, applied for a grant and researched application processes for others.

The most important and immediately impactful task I completed was researching and learning the Library's cataloging system, implementing that system, training volunteers on it, and clearing our backlog of unintegrated volumes that had been sitting in the office, still wrapped for shipping, or stacked with donations. Over the past three weeks, with the help of our volunteers, we added about 100 volumes to our collection*.

In addition to requiring a great deal of work, tackling the cataloging backlog marks a milestone because it creates a template for the timely integration of new volumes into our collection. I also created a cataloging guide, which will allow volunteers to do cataloging on their own, and establishes a standard template for how the SWPL assigns metadata and processes new items into our collection.

We welcomed three new volunteers to our indispensable crew, and trained them on circulation desk and cataloging procedures, which helps greatly with shift coverage.

I have also been traveling.

On February 2nd, over at the Bennington Free Library, I met with Lynne Fonteneau McCann, the BFL's director, and had a great talk about how she does things there, Vermont library culture, and about some of the initiatives we want to undertake here. McCann shared some key insights, introduced me to several other staff members, and I know she is eager to help us out in any way she can.

Equally helpful is that, through my job at the Bennington Museum, I am in regular touch with Linda Donigan, the BFL's outstanding children's librarian. We have been in regular contact, and she has been very helpful in re: selecting children's books for the SWPL.

Earlier that week I met with Jennie Rozycki, director of the McCullough library in North Bennington, and we had a similarly helpful discussion. And earlier this month I had a long call with former SWPL director Linda Hall, which was great as well.

At the invitation of principal Bethany Lorge, I attended a staff meeting at Pownal Elementary school on February 8th, a meeting that Board member Kaitlyn Hunt attended as well. There I discussed my wish to work with teachers there in supporting their curriculum and learning goals for their students.

Afterward, I met with a couple of teachers who offered some specific items they hope to see more of in the SWPL's collection, and I've had follow-up discussions with them about meeting those targets.

Principal Lorge and I discussed ways we might be able to arrange for students to come to the SWPL after school, and the particular need parents have on Wednesdays, when school lets out early and students are on their own until their parents get home.

Kaitlyn, Board member Mary Natalizia, Pownal Elementary's art teacher Marissa, volunteer Anne Marie Jarvis, and myself will be meeting soon to discuss children's programming we can do here in the Library.

I attended the Pownal Selectboard meeting the following evening, February 9th, mostly to introduce myself to the Selectboard members prior to the town vote on our ballot initiative for funding. I also mentioned our upcoming initiatives, where we'll be seeking funding to accomplish those initiatives, and how none of those places are Pownal taxpayers' pockets. Also that the Library is gorgeous and they all ought to come visit. It was generally cordial and low-key, but everyone there had great things to say about the Library, and I made some good relationships.

Then on February 15th, I visited Mount Anthony Union High School to meet with Brooke Remington and Katie Contrada, National Honor Society Liaisons, to discuss ways that the students they support might use the Library and, I am hopeful, choose to volunteer here.

Later that day I met with Monument Elementary school principal Donna Cauley to introduce myself and pitch the Library as a place for students to gather after school. As with Principal Lorge, we also discussed the issues parents face on half-day Wednesdays.

On Saturday February 25th, we welcomed a new group to the Lucy Wright Reading Room, the Pownal Parks & Rec Town Hall Garden Volunteers, led by Margaret Coady. They also met here on March 11th. And Linda Hall held a meeting of the long-running Book Club on Thursday March 16th, their first meeting in quite some time.

On Monday, March 5th, Board member Julius Rosenwald and I attended the town of Pownal's floor meeting. We made the case for the SWPL's continued funding, and for increased funding needed to pay the director. The next day, we learned that the article passed.

On Friday, February 17th, at the request of Board Chair Jim Boutin, I transferred ownership of our QuickBooks account over to him and Board member Richard Williams. I will no longer be involved in financial management of the SWPL.

With the cataloging backlog cleared, I can devote myself to re-starting our Interlibrary Loan program, and selecting about 100 more books from the CLiF grant we benefit from via Pownal Elementary school.

Respectfully submitted,

damien

*The remaining titles are bilingual childrens' books and a few that are missing bibliographic information.

