



# 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## **A Message from Library Executive Director, Ike Pulver**

Over the past two years, at the suggestion of a coworker, we at Saratoga Springs Public Library have adopted the practice of kicking off each staff gathering with a moment of gratitude. In these moments, staff members take the opportunity to publicly express their appreciation for the people, places, and things that have made their work and home lives a little better and brighter. Invariably, these are moments of thanksgiving for coworkers who have been helpful and supportive, or whose work helps keep the library operating smoothly.

Following that example, it gives me great pleasure to publicly express my thanks to all of YOU, who provide support in ways both large and small. From the incredible work of the many Book Shop volunteers, to the dedicated decision-making by Friends board members, to the simple act of joining a membership organization that supports our programming and staff development, your service to the library helps us be of service to the community.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, support from the Friends has been invaluable. Enhancing literary and literacy programming, supporting staff training, and purchasing safety equipment for our meeting spaces are among the Friends-supported projects that have helped to make our work possible in these most uncertain times. For helping us continue to live our mission of *delivering resources and experiences that engage, entertain, educate, and empower our entire community* while working to achieve our vision of *a resilient community empowered by collaboration, engagement and learning*, we are grateful to you.

# 2021-2022 President's Report

Klare Ingram, President, Board of Directors, FSSPL

The past 'year' for the Friends has been exciting, transformative, and by all measures full – so much so that it was 14 months long! After navigating, surviving and reflecting on the prior, fully COVID year, we began the past year with fresh eyes and new goals.

My overarching priority for my first year as Friends president was to (re)build a solid foundation that would set up our organization for enduring success, while honoring the organization's long history and past traditions. These efforts manifested in nearly every facet of the organization:

## Governance

- Financially, the Friends has been able to weather the storm that was COVID quite well, all things considered, and we have taken this opportunity to reinvest in the organization, as is evident in our planned deficit for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- The Friends board invested significant time and effort into drafting and enacting policies to ensure our compliance as a 501(c)3 designated organization.
- We also sought to recruit diverse and skilled new members to fill board vacancies and we reinstated the tradition of having student board members. We are thrilled to have two non-voting high school student board members amongst our midst and intend to continue this practice as a means to ensure the perspectives of this group are represented in our decisions and work.
- At the annual meeting, we will be presenting for affirmation by Friends membership the following board members:
  - Filling vacated positions part way through the past fiscal year:
    - Vincent Asaro
    - Floria Huizinga
    - Ashley Richardson
  - Renewing for a second term
    - Klare Ingram
  - Student Board Member (Non-voting, September 2022-June 2023 term)
    - Ava Kuruzovich
    - Madeline Siebeneck

## Operations

- By adopting a 'gap' fiscal year inclusive of May and June 2022, the Friends shifted its fiscal year so that it now aligns with that of the Library.
- The Friends also implemented a data conversion to shift its electronic communications and data storage from multiple providers to a single location.
- Many other efforts have been made to increase efficiencies of our operations, including financial and administrative policies.

## Fundraising Efforts

- The pandemic revealed the risks of relying almost exclusively on a single revenue source. As a result, the Friends have – and continue to – work to diversify our revenue streams, which include retail (in-person and online), memberships, gifts/grants and special events.

- In the Book Shop, our priorities in the past year have been two-pronged. We have worked to attract new and returning customers through targeted sales, such as the Back to School and Community sales open to members and non-members alike. At the same time, we have worked to direct additional resources to support the growth opportunities presented by online sales.
- Efforts to increase and retain membership lead to a high of nearly 300 members during the past year. This figure marks a return to pre-COVID membership and nearly doubles the number of members at the end of the prior fiscal year. Past and future modifications to the membership structure and user experience are aimed at perpetuating this growth.
- After serving as the 501(c)3-designated fiscal sponsor for the inaugural Saratoga Book Festival, the Friends and the Festival organizers agreed to formally adopt the Festival as the Friends' flagship event. This presents numerous opportunities to engage with new audiences, to collaborate with local businesses, and to expand our impact and fulfillment of our mission.

### Looking Ahead

- The 2022-2023 fiscal year is already off to an impressive start. Most noteworthy of all developments is that the Friends hired its first executive director: Jennifer Allen. Jen joined the Friends part-time this past winter and fully stepped into her role in July 2022. Taking the step to have a full-time executive staff position ensures the Friends are able to achieve its fullest potential in serving the Library and our community.
- The current fiscal year also began with a rebranding. We have updated all print signage and collateral, and are working to update electronic materials.
- Additional goals for the coming year include:
  - Increasing Friends membership, including improving the electronic membership experience;
  - Further aligning our efforts and support with the strategic priorities of the Library's leadership and Board of Trustees;
  - Making strides to increase and diversify our revenue sources—a major focus and responsibility of the executive director position; and
  - Updating and standardizing our bylaws in line with current best practices.
- Efforts to achieve these goals are already underway as the Friends was selected as a project partner for the current Leadership Saratoga class!

The Friends is privileged to have an enviable level of support from our volunteers, members, customers, and donors; a steadfast commitment from our staff and my fellow board and committee members; and - perhaps most importantly - incredible partners in the staff of the Saratoga Springs Public Library.

Reflecting on my first term as president and looking to my second, it is my privilege to serve as steward of the Friends. Together, we are bound for great things and I couldn't be more excited for what lies ahead!

## **Finance Report**

**Tim Maguire, Treasurer**

The Friends and Book Festival budgeted for a loss for fiscal year May 2021 to April 2022 of (\$53,943), however, with COVID pandemic easing slightly the actual loss was (\$20,113). This deficit reflects the concerted effort of the board to invest in the organization's resources and infrastructure.

The Friends Annual Income was budgeted for \$79,567 with the actual income from online and Book Shop sales totaling \$108,131 or \$28,564 above budget. Expenses were budgeted for \$133,510 with the actual Expenditures at \$128,244.

## **Book Shop Report**

**Vinnie Asaro, Book Shop Committee Chair**

Since taking over as Book Shop Committee Chair I can report the following - COVID was a difficult time for Book Shop Operations but last year we saw a trend towards recovery. Thanks to the hard work of our Book Shop Manager, Jeff Budge, and his team of dedicated volunteers, we have seen a recovery in revenue toward reaching our pre-COVID numbers. That is primarily due to the development of a successful online program (Amazon and EBay) where sales have been robust. Foot traffic in the bookstore is coming back slowly through the implementation of community and member sales.

**Jeff Budge, Book Shop Manager**

The current fiscal year represented a nice recovery from the post-COVID year. Excluding the post-COVID year, the shop exceeded gross revenue of \$100,000 from in-person and on-line sales for the sixth year in a row. The additional two months of operations from the adjustment to align the Friends' fiscal year to that of the Library, \$16,579, brought total revenue to \$117,364.

## **Membership Report**

**Ashley Richardson, Membership Committee Chair**

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year we held a membership campaign to drive awareness and increase memberships. Memberships provide supporters of the Friends various benefits such as discounts in the book shop, special membership events, etc. Although membership numbers dropped during Covid, the Friends attracted lapsed and new members reaching a high of 282 in June of 2021.

For this current fiscal year, we are making strides in providing online membership enrollment options that streamline the process and help with retention. We will also be focusing on more enrollment through campaigns and member outreach.

## **Public Relations Report**

**Amanda Martini-Hughes, Public Relations Committee Chair**

We have settled into a good routine when promoting sales for the book shop. This has been helped by additional signage in the library. Our Facebook page continues to see steady growth and interaction. The community loves our posts about sales and of course about our volunteers. The Facebook page currently has 808 followers.

The Instagram page also continues to grow and interaction is slower than Facebook, but growing with time. We have a number of prominent businesses following us on both platforms that interact with us. Instagram currently has 247 followers. A cool, recent win: author Meg Wolitzer, one of the keynotes for the SBF shared our post announcing her attendance to her 16k followers which gets so many more eyes on the event.

The event listings on the website continue to gain traction and have a good amount of traffic directed towards them, which means people are visiting the site. This could be stronger, but will depend on the direction we want to take with the site as we move forward.

## **Saratoga Book Festival Report**

**Ellen Beal, Vice President and Saratoga Book Festival Chair**

In the fiscal year 2021-2022, The Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library acted as fiscal sponsor for the inaugural Saratoga Springs Book Festival (SBF). In October 2021, the first SBF was held in the Saratoga Springs Public Library, which also served as the Festival headquarters and popup book store. Additional venues were the Saratoga City Center, the Inn at Saratoga, Saratoga Arts Dee Sarno Theater, Caffe Lena, and the Walt and Whitman Brewing Company. More than 500 people attended. In early 2022, the FSSPL Friends Board of Directors and the Saratoga Book Festival's volunteer management team, led by President Ellen Beal, Operations Chair Steve Rosenblum, and Program Chair CJ Purdy, began to explore the possibility of adding the festival to the SSPL portfolio of programs. A vote to operate the festival as a Friends fundraising event was held at the June 2022 Board meeting and was unanimously approved. Plans for the October 21-23, 2022 festival began in early January using transitional branding linking both organizations to the project.

## 2021 Marie Madden Volunteer Award

The Marie Madden Volunteer Award is presented annually by the Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library to recognize those who support reading, learning, and a literate society by offering their volunteer services to the public library.

This award is given in memory of Marie Madden, a dedicated and tireless library volunteer whose good humor, high spirits, and hard work were an inspiration to library workers, library users, library trustees and all true FRIENDS of the Saratoga Springs Public Library and libraries everywhere.

As Program Chair of the Saratoga Book Festival, this year's first honoree, **CJ Purdy**, has worked tirelessly over the past many months to bring an incredible array of authors, poets, illustrators, and interlocutors together in celebration of the written word.

As Operations Chair of the Saratoga Book Festival, the year's second honoree, **Steven Rosenblum**, has deployed his amazing organizational and logistical prowess to secure multiple venues, schedule a vast array of events, and work with multiple partners and contractors to make the festival a resounding success.

We are pleased to honor **Christian "CJ" Purdy** and **Steven Rosenblum** for their dedication to connecting readers and writers together, at the library, and in the entire community.

## 2021 H. Dunham Hunt Award

The H. Dunham Hunt Award is presented annually by the Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library to recognize outstanding service to the community through support of the public library. It is the highest honor for service to the library.

This award is given in memory of Dr. H. Dunham Hunt who throughout his life was a dedicated and tireless supporter of public library service, and who gave endlessly of his time and talent to create and nurture the Saratoga Springs Public Library from its inception in 1945 to his death in 1982.

As the driving force behind the creation of the Saratoga Book Festival, this year's recipient has helped to enrich the programmatic offerings of the library and of the Friends by tenaciously working to unite a community of people around a celebration of reading and literacy.

**Ellen Beal's** enthusiasm for the work of the library and for a community project to celebrate literacy is contagious. Her perseverance in creating a festival under the most unlikely circumstances, uniting and leading an ad hoc team through multiple challenges to see the inaugural event to fruition, and helping to find the festival a home with the Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library with the aim of ensuring its sustainability are extraordinary. We can think of no better person to be honored with this year's H. Dunham Hunt Award.



## Book Shop Volunteers

*\*As of September 1, 2022*

Lisa Aronson	Lauren Hatch	Patty Millins
Ev Bedard	Ryan Healy	Linda Morzillo
George Bergmann	Pat Hennessy	Mary Perez
Amanda Blodgett	Jesse Hunter	Marilyn Phillips
Christienne Budge	Penny Jolly	Kathy Pike
Shelley Carter	Debbie Kemp	Shelley Riley
Janice Christiano	Carolyn Lansberry	Kathlyn Rooney
Jessica Connors	Erin Lindsay	Betty Ruger
Joan Crean	Diane Lloyd	Linda Schneider
Mary Beth Delarm	Garth Lloyd	Bonnie Smith
Marilyn Devine	Penny Lockwood	Janet St. Clair
Laura Doolin	Peter Luczak	Ana Ukhtinskaya
Barbara Egerman	Sharon Maidment	Bonnie Wasson
Henry Fernau	Staci Mannian	Roland Wright
Mitchell Frost	Melanie Mason	Dee Wright
Denise Gordon	Mary Jo McKeon	Alice Zeiger
Hillary Grieves	Mary Jo Michaud	
Karen Haller	Diana Miller	

## 2021 Book Shop Volunteers of the Year

**Denise Gordon** joined the Friends as a volunteer in 2018. Her overall knowledge of shop and on-line operations is second to none. She has graciously offered her time 3 days a week, allowing the shop and the Friends to achieve many levels of success, not the least of which is allowing the Manager more time to accomplish his goals.

**Mary Jo Michaud** also joined the Friends as a volunteer in 2018. She has a strong volunteer background, and luckily for the Friends, has devoted two days a week to doing the Book Shop accounting and record keeping. Her consistency and accuracy in what she does has meant a lot to the Manager and Friends organization.

Both of our award winners should also be recognized as post-COVID heroes, devoting their time as soon as the Library re-opened after having shut down when COVID hit.

## Sustaining Ex Libris and Ex Libris Members

*\*As of September 1, 2022*

Phyllis & Alexander Aldrich	James Gold*	Karen Patton
Kathleen Anspach	George Grigorovitch	Kevin Philbin
Sheelagh Baily	Henry Hamelin	Jay Portnoy
Ellen Beal	Anita Harris	Ike Pulver
John Beisher	Lauren Hatch	Carol Reynolds
John Beisler	Klare Ingram	Almeda Riley
Leslie Bell	Karen Kolanowski	Mary Rocco
Susan & George Bergmann	Bea Krauss	Margaret Roohan
Thomas Bickelhaupt	Joan Lambert	Bill Rooper
Frank Brady	Deirdre Leland	Steve Rosenblum
Elsie & Laurence Cagle*	Marian Lewis	Kathleen Royka
Christine Charoensook	Jan & John Lillibridge*	Bridget Scanlan-Languth
Dorothy Christiansen	Janet & Ed Lindner	Joanna Schneider Zangrando
Jennifer Coffey	Joann Long	Kathryn Segretto
Ann Crowell	Nancy Luther	Lindsay Shippee
Ellen Cuddy	Marilyn Mammola	Dr. Robert & Barbara Sponzo
Katherine Currie	Gloria Marceau	Judy Staubo
Matthew D'Abate	Melanie Mason	Julia Stokes
Marilyn & Michael Devine	Roseann Maurantonio	Ian Townsend
Marji Dickinson	Christine McDonald	Richard Vaccaro
Jean Dugan	Genia Meinhold	Marilyn Vanden-Handel
Robert Finkle	Barbara Morris	Mary Beth Winn
Karen Flewelling	Margarita Muinelo*	Kathleen Young
Ben Ford	Jean Murphy	Judith Zanella
Becky Ford	Joseph Nathan	Jeannette Zehr
Grace Frisone	Kris Neddo	Alice & Don Zeiger
Olga Geoffrion	Carol Newhouse	
Leo Geoffrion	Ruth-Ann Parent	

*\*Sustaining Ex Libris Member*

## 2022-2023 Officers & Board Members

Vincent Asaro, *Book Shop Committee Chair*  
Ellen Beal, *Vice President, Nominating Chair, Book Festival Chair*  
Jennifer Coffey  
Floria Huizinga  
Klare Ingram, *President*  
Ava Kuruzovich, *Student Board Member*  
Bridget Languth  
Tim Maguire, *Treasurer*  
Amanda Martini-Hughes, *Marketing Committee Chair*  
Ashley Richardson, *Membership Committee Chair*  
Madeline Siebeneck, *Student Board Member*

*We wish to convey our immense gratitude to Ian Townsend, David Lombardo, and Lyn Vanden-Handel, whose Friends board service concluded in 2022.*