



Friends *of the*
SARATOGA SPRINGS
PUBLIC LIBRARY

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

A Message from Library Executive Director, Ike Pulver

At Saratoga Springs Public Library, we're closing in on one year of fully-reopened library service following pandemic-related closures, and it's been a year of reimagining how we meet the changing needs of our community, reorganizing to plan for succession, and realigning to address the ever-evolving landscape of publishing by redirecting more resources to e-books and streaming media. With the help of our Friends, we were delighted to bring staff together last September for our first fully in-person Staff Development Day following two years of virtual or small group meetings. Our focus for that day was reconnecting with one another, and rediscovering and recognizing the joy we find in our work serving the public. Friends support also allowed us to host an amazing array of authors here inside the library during the second annual Saratoga Book Festival; expand our outreach efforts by getting our mobile library service back on the road to reach some of the more remote areas of the district; and offer dozens of programs related to our SaratogaREADS! shared community reading and discussion initiative, and our Summer Reading program which engaged hundreds of children and teens in literacy activities. We're thrilled that the Friends have permanently adopted the Saratoga Book Festival, and taken on the challenge of reopening the coffee shop space inside the library, to enhance the library-going experience. In the coming months, we will continue to examine the way library spaces are used, expanding our growing "library of things" which currently includes museum passes, lawn games, and story and activity kits, among other items, continue a review of library policies to remove unintended barriers to service, and continue to expand our outreach efforts. Your steadfast support in these endeavors is immeasurably appreciated. Thank you!

2021-2022 President's Report

Klare Ingram, President, Board of Directors, FSSPL

The past year has been transformative and pivotal for the Friends of Saratoga Springs Public Library. We are delighted to celebrate Jennifer Allen on her one year anniversary as the inaugural Executive Director of the Friends! This approach and structure - a carefully considered investment - has allowed the Friends board to focus on governance, strategy, and growth like never before. Together with Jen, we have worked to reinforce and build on the success of both in-person and online Book Shop efforts, to expand the reach and impact of the Saratoga Book Festival, and to launch an entirely new (to us) venture - the Friends Coffee Shop - to meet the call from our community. Meanwhile we have also worked to elevate operations at the governance level and cultivate a stronger and more modern foundation on which to build even greater success in the future. As our organization continues to evolve and grow, I remain immensely grateful for the partnership, support, and faith of my fellow board members, our invaluable volunteers, and supporters both within the library and beyond its walls that have helped us thrive and fulfill our mission.

Executive Director's Report

Jennifer Allen, Executive Director, FSSPL

My past year at the helm of the Friends has been incredible and by all measures very full! We have achieved remarkable milestones and experienced significant growth.

Key Accomplishments from the 2022-2023 fiscal year include:

- **Brand Revitalization:** We embarked on a brand revitalization journey, unveiling a fresh and modern Friends logo. The updated logo ingeniously incorporates the colors of the Saratoga Springs Public Library (SSPL) logo, ensuring seamless continuity between our organizations.
- **Expanding Community Engagement:** Our efforts to engage the community were amplified through a strengthened social media presence. By leveraging various platforms, we fostered greater interaction between the community and the Friends, facilitating valuable connections.
- **Marquee Event Acquisition:** We are proud to have added the esteemed Saratoga Book Festival (SBF) to our portfolio as our marquee event. This strategic inclusion enhances our cultural impact and reinforces our commitment to literary appreciation.
- **Cohesive Branding:** Complementing the inclusion of SBF, we also updated its logo to harmonize with the Friends' branding. This visual cohesion reinforces our unified mission and elevates our collective identity.

- **Streamlining Marketing Efforts:** Recognizing the power of synergy, we merged the social media pages of SBF and the Friends. This integration streamlined our marketing endeavors, enabling more efficient outreach to our audience.
- **Empowering Development and Fundraising:** A new board committee was formed to focus on development and fundraising initiatives. This strategic step empowers us to secure vital resources to support the library and its diverse programs.
- **Enhanced Membership Experience:** In response to evolving needs, we restructured our membership levels and benefits, ensuring that each membership tier offers valuable and meaningful experiences. As a result, our membership base grew by over 100 members during the past year.
- **Library Enrichment:** Recognizing the importance of a welcoming space for library patrons, we opened the Friends Coffee Shop within the library premises. This thoughtful addition offers library-goers a place to savor coffee and quick snacks while enriching their reading experiences.
- **Operational Strengthening:** To ensure the smooth functioning of the Coffee Shop, we hired a dedicated part-time manager. This strategic decision bolsters service quality and ensures a delightful experience for all visitors.
- **Record-Breaking Book Shop Sales:** Our commitment to promoting literacy and fostering a love for reading resulted in a record-breaking year of Book Shop sales. These sales encompassed both in-shop purchases and successful online sales through Amazon and eBay.

Looking Ahead:

With great anticipation, we set our sights on the forthcoming year, eager to embrace new growth opportunities and fulfill our mission to support the Saratoga Springs Public Library in the most exemplary manner possible. As we move forward, we express our heartfelt gratitude to all our members, patrons, volunteers, and partners for their unwavering support on this transformative journey. Together, we envision an even brighter future for the Friends and the community we serve.

Finance Report

Tim Maguire, Treasurer, FSSPL

With the addition of the Executive Director Position in July 2022, the FSSPL Board of Directors adopted a budget for 2022-2023 projecting a loss of \$36,330 with an actual loss of \$53,742.

Total Revenue for July 2022-June 2023 was \$168,689, \$20,336 less than projection

Total Expense for July 2022-June 2023 was \$222,431, \$2,924 better than projection

Financial Report July 2022-June 2023

Revenue and Expense Summary July 2022-June 2023

Income:		Actual	Budget	Variance	
	Book Shop	\$ 115,436	110,000	(4,955)	
	Donations	\$ 19,653	6,500	13,153	
	Grant Income	\$ 1,000	3,500	(2,500)	
	Interest	\$ 1	75	(74)	
	Membership Dues	\$ 16,133	15,000	1,133	
	Coffee Shop - June opening	\$ 431	-	431	
	Book Festival Income	\$ 26,426	53,950	(27,524)	
		\$ -	-	-	
Total Income:		<u>\$ 168,689</u>	<u>189,025</u>	<u>(20,336)</u>	
Expenses:					
	Administrative	\$ 22,019	12,019	(10,000)	
	Book Festival Expenses	\$ 38,628	46,320	7,692	
	Book Shop	\$ 27,179	21,925	(5,254)	
	Community/Library Support	\$ 8,341	16,250	7,909	
	Payroll Expense	\$ 119,681	126,441	6,760	
	Membership	\$ -		-	
	Public Relations	\$ 4,668	2,400	(2,268)	
	Coffee Shop	\$ 1,915	-	(1,915)	
		\$ -	-	-	
Total Expenses		<u>\$ 222,431</u>	<u>\$ 225,355</u>	<u>\$ 2,924</u>	Below budget
Net Income (Loss)		<u>\$ (53,742)</u>	<u>\$ (36,330)</u>	<u>(17,412)</u>	(17,412)

Book Shop Report

Vinnie Asaro, Book Shop Committee Chair, FSSPL

The Friends Book Shop has had a record breaking year. Revenue surpassed a record that was set 6 years ago. The increase has been fueled by robust sales from our Amazon and E-Bay programs. At present there are 55 volunteers dedicated to these programs. Foot traffic is steadily increasing at the book shop, even though we are still below our pre-COVID numbers. Scheduled sales have also helped to contribute to a great year, and through these sales the Friends have been able to substantially increase membership. Many thanks to Jeff Budge and his dedicated corps of volunteers who have made all of this possible, despite some challenges along the way. Space is still tight in the bookshop and there is a constant need to figure out how to increase or use the space more efficiently. New bins have been ordered and more Google computers are being used to accelerate the online programs. These signs are quite encouraging and we look forward to another great year.

Jeff Budge, Book Shop Manager, FSSPL

It's been my pleasure to serve as the Book Shop Manager for over 11 years now. I had the honor this year of giving a presentation to NYLA (New York Library Association) with 22 attendees from all over New York State entitled "How To Successfully Manage An In-Library Friends Book Shop". In addition, a milestone was reached this year: we eclipsed \$1,000,000 of gross revenue in the Shop during my tenure- a large percentage of which was due to my founding of the On-line Sales programs. One last note is my gratitude to our volunteer corps, whose average tenure with me is over 7 years. We have one of the largest volunteer corps in Saratoga County.

Membership Report

Ashley Richardson, Membership Committee Chair, FSSPL

During this fiscal year, the Friends membership structure saw some changes. Membership levels were adjusted to streamline our membership offerings and allow for opportunities to offer more benefits to higher tier patrons. Most notably, the two top tiers of the new membership structure, Publisher and Editor, now offer tickets to Saratoga Book Festival. This tie into benefits not only rewards our more generous members, but also provides more exposure for the festival. This new structure took effect on July 1st and current members will be prompted to choose their tier in the new structure at their next renewal cycle.

Public Relations Report

Amanda Martini-Hughes, Public Relations Committee Chair, FSSPL

Promotions on our social channels continue to help drive sales and awareness. The addition of the Coffee Shop manager has, in the short term, dramatically increased our ability to post about both the book shop and the coffee shop utilizing photos from both locations. The community seems to really like to interact with these posts. Our Facebook page has grown to 1.1k followers, which is an increase of more than 200 from last year. Our Instagram page continues to lag behind when it comes to followers and interaction but is still a viable channel for us to promote ourselves on. It has grown to 736 followers, an increase of more than 500 from last year.

The inclusion of the Saratoga Book Festival marketing on our channels has dramatically shifted the reach of our posts. The first post promoting the SBF has seen a reach of nearly 5k accounts, with subsequent posts all reaching above 1K. These far-reaching posts increase our visibility in the immediate community and the surrounding areas.

The opening of the Coffee Shop garnered us a number of promotions from outside media which included a number of shares on Saratoga community Facebook pages. The coverage from local entities and news organizations is something that we hope to continue in the future.

Saratoga Book Festival Report

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

By providing an institutional home for the Saratoga Book Festival, the Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library has helped streamline the festival's operations, provided continuity in leadership, and expanded its skills in key areas, such as fundraising, marketing, festival production, programming, and finance. The addition of the Executive Director as co-chair has significantly increased SBF's ability to secure high-value sponsorships and partnerships, garner additional publicity and volunteers, acquire highly popular authors, and expand the Literary Marketplace into a highly successful revenue-generating event. As a result of these additional talents, resources, and efficiencies, the festival was able to increase the number of its programs from 30 to more than 40, its number of authors from 46 to more than 60, and its number of sponsors from 25 to 38.

The 2023 book festival added an additional day of programming to be able to host the bestselling author Wally Lamb on Thurs Oct 12 and several top-tier venues as hosts, including Universal Preservation Hall, the Spa Little Theater at SPAC, and Skidmore College. To enhance the festival's ability to connect with teens and young adults, SBF

hosted a stage adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* by the acclaimed performance-based literacy group Literature to Life. Five Upstate New York school districts are sending high school students to this highly engaging way to experience classic books at no cost to the students or schools. Other headline speakers include Simon Winchester, acclaimed author of *The Professor and the Madman*, *The Men Who United the States*, *The Map That Changed the World*, *The Man Who Loved China*, *A Crack in the Edge of the World*, and *Krakatoa*, all of which were New York Times bestsellers and appeared on numerous best and notable lists. In 2006, Winchester was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Her Majesty the Queen, a first for an SBF author!

2022 Marie Madden Volunteer Award

The Marie Madden Volunteer Award is presented annually by the Friends of 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.

This year's honoree, **Mark Pingel**, has been a volunteer literacy tutor with the library since 2017. He immediately and enthusiastically embarked on learning all he could about teaching English as a new language through library-offered training and through his own research. He has generously shared his own knowledge of technology interfacing with the literacy librarian, and jumped in to help with teaching a course on preparing for the US Citizenship test.

The time that Mark has devoted to this service has been assuredly 'above and beyond.' In working with new residents from Ukraine, Mark has amassed a glossary of useful terms for his students. His passion for this field has inspired him to undertake an intensive TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Certification course. Even in the middle of these studies, Mark continues to tutor two students, and has stepped forward to accept another tutoring assignment. We celebrate Mark's continuing volunteer work with the library literacy service!

2022 H. Dunham Hunt Award

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

This year's honoree, in memoriam, is **Eric Halberg**. A fixture at the Victoria Pool, easily spotted around town in a ubiquitous orange LL Bean vest, wire rim glasses, and shock of spiky hair, and a daily visitor to the library, with eclectic viewing, listening and reading tastes, Eric kept Saratoga Springs Public librarians on their toes with interesting questions and conversation.

Given his affinity for the library, and his interest in modern art and film, it came as no surprise to library staff to learn that, at his death, he wished for memorial donations to be made to the library to support collections and programs related to those subjects. What did come as a surprise to library officials, was the generosity of Eric's final gift: a trust valued at over \$400,000, which continues to grow, and which remains the largest single financial gift in the institution's history.

2022 Book Shop Volunteers of the Year

Shelley Riley

Shelley has been with us since 2012. She has faithfully, as Department Head, been the steward of our Cook Books section. Her organization and displays have always been a main attraction to the shop, and her knowledge of cooking a special bonus.

Diane Fitzgerald

It's not often we have a volunteer that spans both our worlds: shop cashier and on-line sales lister. Diane has been such a help in both our businesses, as well as building an extensive knowledge of the little details of shop operations that make the Manager's job so much easier.

2023-2024 Officers & Board Members

Maggie Anthes, *Student Board Member*

Vincent Asaro, *Secretary, Book Shop Committee Chair*

Ellen Beal, *Book Festival Chair*

Jennifer Castellani, *Development Committee Chair*

Jennifer Coffey, *Governance Committee Chair*

Floria Huizinga

Klare Ingram, *President*

Tim Maguire

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

Jay Portnoy, *Treasurer*

Ashley Richardson

Carol Wang, *Student Board Member*

Book Shop & Coffee Shop Volunteers

**As of September 18, 2023*

Joan Alexander
Lisa Aronson
Ellen Beale
Ev Bedard
Phyllis Benaman
Suzi Berg
George Bergmann
Amanda Blodgett
Shelley Carter
Janice Christiano
Jessica Connors
Joan Crean
Ann Crowell
Ann Cullen
Mary Beth Delarm
Marilyn Devine
Laura Doolin
Barbara Egerman
Willow Faye
Linda Faye
Michele Feinstein
Diane Fitzgerald
Denise Gordon
Lauren Hatch
Pat Hennessy
Jesse Hunter
Penny Jolly
Mara Kaufmann
Debbie Kemp
Carolyn Lansberry
Erin Lindsay
Diane Lloyd
Garth Lloyd

Penny Lockwood
Peter Luczak
Sharon Maidment
Tara Mainello
Gary Mann
Staci Mannian
Melanie Mason
Mary Jo Michaud
Diana Miller
Patty Millins
Linda Morzillo
Margaret Pearson
Mary Perez
Kathy Pike
Don Proux
Shelley Riley
Kathlyn Rooney
Betty Ruger
Linda Schneider *
Brooke Smith
Janet St. Clair
Mark Taylor
Yuri Vasiuta
Bonnie Wasson
Linda Wilson
Dee, Roland Wright
Dee Wright
Alice Zeiger
Mara

Members at the Ex-Libris+ Levels

- *Ex-Libris, Editor, & Publisher*
- *As of September 18, 2023*

Vincent Asaro*
Jennifer Benaman
Frank Brady
Carol Brown
Elsie & Laurence Cagle
Katie Capelli
Jennifer Castellani*
Ercan Celik
Christine Charoensook
Jennifer Coffey*
Ann Crowell
Marilyn & Michael Devine
Grace Frisone
Jim Gold
Henry Hamelin
Anita Harris
Karen Kolanowski
Diane Lachtrupp
Bridget Languth
Deirdre Leland
Jan & John Lillibridge
Alicia Makenzie
Eric Mumford
Joseph Nathan
Kris Neddo
Jay Portnoy*
Almeda Riley
Steve Rosenblum
Elizabeth Schlegel
Wayne T Senecal
Aaron Siebeneck
Mary Beth Winn
Kathleen Young

* FSSPL Board Members