As the saying goes, “time flies when you’re having fun.” Whenever you stop in our Library, you will see many friends and neighbors having fun - for example, readers and learners of all ages, volunteers working on library tasks and projects, digital tech gurus sharing their expertise, visitors enjoying the current arts exhibit on display, book sorters daily organizing contributions for the important paperback and book sales, and especially, our wonderful staff having fun providing services. Our 175 volunteers provided approximately 3200 impressive hours of service. When you read the enclosed more detailed reports, you will be impressed at the fun year that 2015 was for the Library.

Once again, we were named a “five-star” library. Once again, our tremendous supporters demonstrated the Library’s value to our community by their impressive support for our successful annual appeals and our endowment appeal. Once again, the Town provided its critical support. We thank you all for your “vote of confidence.”

The Library continued its commitment to literacy. Story times for children, afternoon reading activities, and the school library services the Library provided to the Pmetic Elementary School fostered readers and lovers of books and libraries. The Library is happily visited regularly by the popular Reader Dog which has a devoted following. Students being home-schooled found essential resources for their learning needs. The Library expanded its outreach by delivering books and providing story times at home day care centers; by providing books and story time to the Harbor House Community Center’s day care, after-school and summer camp programs; by delivering children’s books to local medical centers; by providing children’s books to the West Side Food Pantry; and by partnering with the Seal Cove Auto Museum on children’s programs. Our commitment to collaboration is strong.

The Library's engaging programs welcomed audiences across the year to hear authors and poets, see films and learn about important issues of local, state and national interest. Several topics were so popular that pre-registration was required or programs were repeated to meet the level of interest. The Library is THE place to be several nights a week all year long; don’t miss our program offerings.

Less visible, but no less important, is our stewardship of the Library and its building. We have devoted volunteers who address the needed maintenance. The newly formed Building Design Committee has already spent many hours meeting to assess the Library’s space needs now and in the future.

A dedicated team of volunteers continues to digitize the Library photographic archive and to make it more publicly accessible. If you haven’t explored their in-depth research delving into the many stories captured in our historic images, take a minute at the workstation on the second floor. It will pique your curiosity to learn more about our past. Watch for more exciting revelations in the days ahead.

The Library partnered with the Barn Arts Collective and film-maker Peter Logue to create an historic event that celebrated our community of young readers in an “Academy Awards” evening. Readers were filmed acting out a favorite story from a favorite book title. The audience overflowed and the paparazzi of parent, grand-parents, neighbors and friends captured the evening in photos. Watch for this summer’s not-to-be missed event.

In a press interview, Peter Logue described a screening of one of his films at the Library as key to his decision to pursue his craft on MDI. He said, “It made me realize the island has a lot to offer to the young artist.”

In turn, I think we all agree that the Library - thanks to our committed staff, our volunteers and friends, our supporters and our board - has a lot to offer all of us, every day, all year long. The Library is YOUR library. You make it the gem we all treasure and are proud of.

Charles V. Stanhope
Chair, Southwest Harbor Public Library

Fellow board members Charles Stanhope and Pepper Cwik

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Charles V. Stanhope
Chair, Southwest Harbor Public Library
Report from the Director

Five stars five years in a row! Library Journal, the industry’s leading periodical, once again awarded Southwest Harbor Public Library a five star rating – the highest they give. Out of 9,225 public libraries in the United States, only 262 receive a star rating, which can range from one star to five. Thank you patrons, volunteers, donors and staff!

Highlights of the year were the success of our children’s programs, our community outreach and our extended technology services.

Our free literacy summer camp for emerging and struggling readers continues to grow. We work with local schools to identify children at risk. The camp combines reading with music, art, science, and storytelling. This past summer we added one-on-one tutoring.

The highlight of summer was Summer Reading Showtime – The Movie! To create this project we partnered with The Barn Arts Collective and documentary film producer, Peter Logue. The movie featured children who participated in the summer reading program, their favorite books and their favorite characters.

Our children’s services staff participated in the Supercharged Storytimes program. This is an IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) funded project. It oriented staff to the story time planning and delivery approach established through Project VIEWS2 to augment the efficacy of current library programs that impact early childhood literacy.

We continue to provide library services to Pemetic Elementary School students and teachers.

We were selected to participate in the Maine State Library’s ILEAD program (Innovative Librarians Explore, Apply and Discover). For this ten-month long professional and collaborative development program, SWHPL assembled a core group of four island librarians who, along with local teachers and community representatives, addressed research needs and skills for grade 4-8 students. The long range goal is to develop an in-depth series of instructional videos and materials that not only work within the existing curriculum, but expand upon and augment what the students are learning in the classroom and using at home.

The Library recently hired a Literacy Coordinator to connect community literacy programs and facilitate expanded literacy services. As a result of this work the following programs have begun:
1. Delivering books and story times to at-home day care centers.
2. Partnering with Harbor House Community Center to provide books and story times to their day care center.
3. Delivering children’s Library books to local medical centers.
4. Providing children’s books to West Side Food Pantry.
5. Partnering with Seal Cove Auto Museum for children’s programs.

We have developed a connection with Wes McNair, Poet Laureate of Maine. He has read several times at the Library and recently launched his new collection of poetry, *The Lost Child: Ozark Poems at the Library*.

An out-growth from a program the Library hosted about the idea of “aging in place” sparked the organization of At Home Mount Desert Island – Support for Aging in Place. The Library is now one of many community organizations and volunteers that help support older residents in their wish to live independently in their own homes as long as they are able.

The library has begun to develop an online database that will eventually make its Digital Archive available on the web. The archive contains photographs, artwork, maps, historic newspapers, magazines and other rare publications, biographies, oral histories, scholarly articles and reference documents, books and journals, historic MDI postcards, guides, and cottage directories. Patrons and researchers will be able to access this virtual reference room of historic and contemporary materials from computers in the library, from home, or from anywhere in the world.

We worked closely with several local organizations in an effort to improve our programming: Acadia National Park Centennial 2016 through the “One Park – One Read” program, Acadia Night Sky Festival, Camden Conference, Foreign Policy Association, Maine Humanities Council, Acadia Senior College, AARP, Kneisel Hall, and Charlotte Rhoades Butterfly Garden.

As you know, we circulate more than books. We were one of the first libraries in Maine to start circulating Kindles; we now circulate iPads, laptops, and a telescope through the Cornerstones of Science program.

We offer free tech/computer help four days a week. For patrons who cannot come to these regularly scheduled times appointments are available. Help ranges from basic to advanced.

Through the Maine State Library, we were an early participant in the State Library’s “Technology Petting Zoo” of devices for librarians and patrons to learn and experience popular and emerging technology. We continue to host hands-on previews for staff and patrons to learn and experience the latest technologies.

And we continue to offer downloadable audio books, eBooks and music, which you keep!

As you can see, it was a very good year. Thank you for all you do for the Library – your support, your commitment, your enthusiasm. Without you we would not be us. You have kept the Library vibrant and relevant.

Candy Emlen, Director
A Star is Dimmed

Meredith (Rich) Hutchins loved her family, her friends, the towns of Southwest Harbor and Tremont, Jane Austen, Henry Lathrop Rand (1862-1945), Rebecca (Whitmore) Lurvey Carroll (1844-1916), music, and Portland’s Kotzschmar Memorial Organ. She adored good writing, good food, good movies, elegance, artisanal jewelry and the Southwest Harbor Public Library. She was an author who wrote in her own distinctive voice, a librarian and historian.

Meredith gave uncounted volunteer hours to the library after she retired on January 1, 1986. She had served as librarian since 1979, but had started work there during the summer of 1951 at the age of twelve, for four hours a week at forty cents an hour. She was always ready to help later librarians who found her instinct for what should and should not be retained in the collection invaluable.

In 2006 Meredith co-founded the library’s digital archive of historic and contemporary photographs, helping to meticulously document and correct the history of every detail that could be seen in each image. She collected years of clippings and wrote down everything she heard about the history of the town. She was the first to understand the historic and artistic value of the photographs the library had been collecting since 1900. She cared for the collection and defended it with the ferocity of a mother tiger.

Generations of Southwest Harborians and historians will be forever in her debt. Her legacy is immense.

Meredith would not have approved of the casual way this tribute was written, but each of us has our own style, and this is the truth. Bravo, Meredith! – Charlotte R. Morrill

Endowment Committee Report

During 2015, the endowment was maintained at close to the 2015 level, despite market conditions. The 12/31/15 balance in the Vanguard account was $2,877,910, a decline of $68,639 from 12/31/14. Elements of this change included the $107,200 draw for the annual operating budget, and $35,306 in contributions. The contributions, an improvement over 2015, resulted largely from the appeal brochure which was mailed to Library donors in April 6, 1939 - February 23, 2016

Meredith (Rich) Hutchins

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Report from the Treasurer

OPERATING FUNDS

We were able not only to meet our 2015 balanced $346,900 budget goal, but, thanks to diligent fund raising efforts, to exceed the goal by almost $24,000. This budget surplus will allow us to fund work that did not make the budget cut; such as deferred building maintenance and enhanced children’s programs.

Our operating fund challenge is ironic. Our highly motivated staff and volunteers have developed and proposed very exciting and effective programs in areas such as children’s literacy, digital archives, and public presentations. These programs have been funded with a combination of grants, donations, and some operating funds. To continue this work long term will require a secure source of operational funding that can only come from increased fund raising efforts and enhanced endowments. It will be up to us to both discern which of these programs meet the highest mission priorities and to find ways to fund them.

INVESTMENTS

The good news was that we received almost $35,000 in new endowment contributions thanks to the efforts of our endowment committee and committed donors and that self-management of our funds resulted in rock bottom low fees. The bad news is that 2015 market returns were flat and did not cover our customary 4% withdrawal of $107,200. The combination of these factors resulted in a decrease of our endowment funds of about $69,000 for a year-end balance of $2,877,910.

FACILITIES

Led by Duane Braun, we continue to fund and accomplish long term scheduled and deferred maintenance work on our buildings and grounds. It is estimated that this work requires about $20-$30,000 per year to keep our facilities in good condition. We have not been able to find funding at that level, but have made good progress nevertheless. We may need to raise funds specifically for this purpose as part of a facilities capital campaign.

NEXT STEPS

To build on an already highly functional and effective program, next steps include:

• Considering additional fundraising programs to increase operating funds.
• Considering priorities for operational funding of existing and new programs through a review of the strategic plan.
• Determining high priority facility needs and raising funds for construction, deferred maintenance, and endowment enhancement to cover increased maintenance costs for any additions.

Jim Vekasi, Treasurer
You Feed the Library

Busy and active, all the Southwest Harbor Public Library programs, activities, salaries, electricity, and heat are funded by YOU! Thank You! While free to the public, the Library is not free to operate and maintain. Total income for 2015 was $364,974 with donations to the various appeals and participation in the Library’s fundraising events contributing 48%. Your support is critical.

Coming in May 2016 will be both the Mother’s Day Sale and the Spring Plant Sale. If you are a gardener and are making divisions in your garden during this early spring, please contact the Library as soon as possible about making plant donations to this year’s Plant Sale. Spread the word among your gardening friends! This is an annual event and we are always looking for interesting plants to share with our friends.

A Library Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction will take place at the Claremont Hotel on Thursday, June 23rd. There will be a cash bar, appetizers and a small silent auction of fun things to do and learn. Contact the Library for reservations.

A Celebration of Art will open July 26th, with all art available for purchase to benefit the Library. In addition to both the Paperback and Giant Book Sales, the kiosk full of books for purchase will again be available this summer on the front lawn. We look forward to seeing you!

Pepper Cwik, Development Chair

A Better Library

In 2015, driven by upcoming major infrastructure needs with large monetary outlays (such as a new roof), as well as increasing awareness of crowding issues, the staff and trustees started to address the need to update our facilities. This process included collecting ideas to make the Library operate better, discussing priorities, and identifying alternate proposals to move forward. We conducted surveys, interviews, and a facilitated stakeholders meeting. Many people emphasized the need to improve staff work space and accommodate the many programs hosted by the Library. In late 2015, we formed a committee to continue the process.

After initially thinking about a large addition, we concluded that we could solve the most urgent problems by using our existing space more creatively. It became clear other venues in town were happy to share their space with us to accommodate large public programs. The current staff space could be re-configured to work more efficiently. Some current open space could be used to better accommodate small groups.

The next steps are to interview staff and program leaders about their needs and to use this information to develop a more detailed architectural program. It will be necessary to have a frank discussion of priorities to make sure we are focusing limited construction and operational funds on the highest mission related needs. Once we have a better understanding, we plan to retain an architect and proceed with schematic design alternatives and estimated costs.

Jim Vekasi
Chair, Building Design Committee
A cup of tea on a cold winter afternoon.

Help getting started with a new cell phone or computer.

Games for the whole family on Saturday mornings.

Books returned to the shelves while the library staff is available to help patrons.

Children listening with rapt attention to a story in the summer.

Thousands of used books available to buy in the library and at the special book sales.

New shelves for storing those used books.

More pictures and documents scanned into the Historical Archive and linked to other related materials.

What do these have in common? They all come from the efforts of the more than 175 volunteers who put in more than 3200 hours in support of the library programs and patrons.

On April 16, 2015, many of these volunteers gathered for breakfast at the Common Good Café, then still on the Seawall Road. It was a beautiful morning with bright sunshine reflecting off the ocean and the pond. The Board of Trustees happily served quiches and popovers as a way of thanking the people who provide so many vital services to the Library. Their work (your work, if you are one of the many) allows thousands of dollars that would otherwise pay staff to do jobs such as shelving, repairing, even staffing the circulation desk, to be spent on materials and programs.

The volunteers help the library serve the community. They are an integral part of our Five Star Team.

We thank them, one and all, from the youngest (age 7) to the oldest (not telling).

Linda Hayward, for the volunteers
Specific accomplishments of the children’s program for 2015 have been mentioned elsewhere in this report, which gives me the opportunity to sing out about people on our team who star in their work of promoting and improving literacy.

We hired Brittany Parker and Andrew Simon, from the Barn Arts Collective, to be our Literacy Coordinators. As Literacy Coordinators, they write grants to secure funding for our Summer Story Camp and other literacy programs through the year. They interact with many families, children, the schools and local non profits to collect programming ideas that serve the library’s goal of improving literacy. As theatre artists at The Barn Arts Collective, they create original works based on books; they play, sing and perform everything from Shakespeare to local author Nan Lincoln’s book Cecily’s Summer. Their innovative interactive performances for the summer family concert series have increased attendance and raised the level of the kids’ engagement at these events. In both capacities, they have broadened the library’s impact and awareness of community needs and programming possibilities. I am so excited about this direction we are taking. We have increased our commitment to improving literacy through the arts and as a result, have had more success than ever.

A shining example is volunteer Bob Myers. Every Wednesday for many years at Toddler Story Time, children and their families have been treated to live music by Bob and his banjo mandolin. Bob plays traditional tunes, funny tunes and made up on the spot tunes that engage kids in the fun of music and language. His irresistible music and gentle manner have provided early language practice at its best. His donation is a gift from his heart that many children will carry forward in their own. Bob is taking a well-deserved rest now, but we thank him for the many years of music and hope we will see him back whenever the spirit moves him. I also hope his example will serve as an invitation to others who have a talent to share with the children of our community. The children’s program welcomes you!

I am delighted to report that Amanda Crafts is serving as our outreach librarian. Several ideas came together this year to create her new role. She tends a collection of library books and materials for each of the two medical centers in town. We hope this collaboration will encourage library use for community members of all ages. She delivers story times and library books to home daycare centers that would otherwise not be able to make use of library services. Watching a baby’s face light up as he turns board pages for the first time, and seeing toddlers mimic reading using their early language sounds as they turn pages are evidence of her impact. She administers the summer reading program to Camp MAX campers at Harbor House. These kids and their families find it hard to get to the library during the busy summer when critical literacy skills suffer if the kids don’t keep reading. Amanda also serves as our Summer Story Camp librarian, choosing the best books to support each of our camp themes. Amanda’s passion for books and serving community children is an outstanding asset to our work.

Last I must mention the enduring contribution of Meredith Hutchins and how one of her accomplishments impacts the children’s room every day. Meredith and Alma Hallenborg were responsible for creating the system we use to shelve picture books face out and by subject in the children’s room, instead of spine out, which is basically meaningless to young children. The system is extremely user friendly, since kids are able to choose a book according to what interests them before they are old enough to read or use the computer to search a topic. It also allows them to be able to shelve books at an early age, as soon as they can read the subject labels. Countless visiting librarians exclaim over it each summer. I catch them taking pictures! I am grateful to have had the beautiful children’s room and Meredith’s brilliant system to work with. May her spirit continue to shine over us and inspire our work.

Susan Plimpton, Childrens Librarian
In the summer of 2015, the SWHPL teamed up with the Barn Arts Collective, a theatre and performance group based in Bass Harbor, to offer Summer Reading Showtime -- a chance for young readers to turn books they’ve read into short films. The pilot run of the program was a huge success, with Wednesday evening filming slots almost always filled and the red carpet film screening packed with enthusiastic audience members. In writing up grants and requesting funding for the program in recent months, I’ve had the opportunity to reflect on the unique and significant impact it had on young people in this community.

As a theatre-maker with the Barn Arts Collective, I consider myself quite lucky to frequently have the opportunity to collaborate with fellow theatre-maker Andrew Simon and filmmaker Peter Logue -- two incredible and highly skilled professional artists. As a Literacy Coordinator for the SWHPL, I consider myself equally as lucky to collaborate with the brilliant children’s librarian, Susan Plimpton, who is never short on innovative ideas for improving literacy in our community. As the project leaders of Summer Reading Showtime, the four of us make a pretty strong team -- but the collaborators who really bring this project to life are the children.

The inciting incident for every Summer Reading Showtime short film is the individual response of a child to a piece of literature. Their impulses and creative decisions lead our team as we guide the young readers to adapt their book into a short film. Along the way, they learn about storytelling in performance, narrative structure, acting technique and filmmaking, all while improving their own literacy skills. The result is a series of films that feature imagination and spontaneity, with artistic proficiency and experience in an equal and complementary partnership.

This year, we aim to increase the impact and reach of the program by adding filming sessions, providing DVD’s of the final film for local schools to share with their students, and creating a short documentary about the program to share with libraries state-wide. Through Summer Reading Showtime I have experienced first-hand the strength of the link between literacy and the performing arts, and I hope that our program inspires literacy improvement in other communities as well.

Summer Reading Showtime filming sessions will take place on Wednesday evenings in July and August, with the culminating red-carpet premiere event in mid August. Exact dates will be available on the SWHPL website. If you would like to learn more about the program or are interested in helping out, please email me at literacycoordinator01@gmail.com.

Brittany Parker
**May 2 - 7, 2016**, Library hours. Buy your Mom something special at the **MOTHER’S DAY SALE**.

**Saturday, May 21, 2016**, 8-noon. Buy all your spring flowers at the **ANNUAL PLANT SALE**.

**Thursday, June 23, 2016 Dinner and Silent Auction** at Claremont Hotel

**Saturday & Sunday, July 16 & 17, 2016**, all day. **PAPERBACK BOOK SALE** of thousands of used paperbacks for your vacationing pleasure on the Library Front Lawn, Main Street, Southwest Harbor.

**Sunday, July 31, 2016**, 5:30-7 pm, **A CELEBRATION OF ART**. Artist Reception and kick off to the month-long silent auction of community art to benefit the Southwest Harbor Public Library. Enjoy the art of our talented community artists during August and plan to bid often or better yet, BUY IT NOW!

**July 31 – August 24, 2016, A CELEBRATION OF ART** month-long silent auction of community art to benefit the Southwest Harbor Public Library. Enjoy the art of our talented community artists during August and plan to bid often or better yet, BUY IT NOW.

**Friday, Saturday & Sunday, August 5, 6 & 7, 2016**, 9 am-5 pm, **GIANT USED BOOK SALE** at the American Legion Hall behind Library in Southwest Harbor. Thousands of books for your reading pleasure.

**For More Information, Contact the Southwest Harbor Public Library**

207-244-7065 • www.swharbor.lib.me.us