

**Librarian's Report**  
**Friends of the Library**  
**November 7, 2020**

We closed the building to patrons on March 17 but immediately began offering contact-free lending which continues to this day. Patrons find it convenient to be able to pick up their materials 24/7 and it is likely we will continue offering this even after COVID. We opened the library to patrons at the end of June with restricted hours, then adjusted the schedule in October to have more variety in the times of day that we are open. We are unsure when we will return to our former schedule.

We have stopped using volunteers for the most part except for special projects. We feel that the more people we are working closely with, the more likely the whole library will have to shut down if one of us gets sick or exposed, plus we don't want to put anyone at risk. Amanda returned to work at the end of the summer and she and Margarete swapped jobs: Amanda has returned to her Library Assistant job and Margarete is Assistant Librarian. We have a lot to do to run the library without volunteers but are managing.

Although we were unable to have in-person programming this summer, we offered almost everything we usually do except the movies. Instead of Fun Fridays and Teen Nights, we provided Take & Make activities for kids in elementary school through high school. We provided the supplies for eight weeks of activities for 41 participants to do at home. I had intended to have separate activities for kids and teens, but my volunteer for the teens fell through at the last minute so I chose projects that would work for both age groups, and that worked.

Cindy Fleming held her six-week Writing Workshop for grades 5-9 on Zoom and she had four loyal and enthusiastic participants. Luane Genest held one book group for grades 4-6 this summer as well.

I have been filming our weekly storytimes and uploading them to YouTube since March. We provided preschool craft supplies to 36 kids this summer and now this fall to 26. I am grateful to Cindy Fleming, Luane Genest and Bonnie Burroughs for getting the crafts together and to Joel Rhymer who films week after week.

The State Library got a grant and purchased a two-year contract with ReadSquared, an online Summer Reading tracking program. It was super stressful because we didn't get it until very late and the learning curve was steep to set it up, but once implemented, I think it went well. Many people seemed to prefer logging their reading online and the program certainly made managing the raffles and drawing winners much easier. We will probably be looking to the Friends of the Library to fund the online tracking program once this contract runs out. Our numbers were down significantly this year, from 199 total participants in 2019 to 133 in 2020. It seemed we had fewer of our summer residents participating.

We decided it wasn't right to solicit donations from local businesses for summer reading prizes (except grocery stores), so we purchased most of the gift certificates that we used in the teen and adult summer reading programs. Fortunately, we applied for and received a \$3000 CARES grant

which allowed us to stretch the Friends of the Library money farther. We used the CARES money to pay for all of the Take & Make supplies, most of the gift certificates, PPE, our Zoom account, and a stipend for our video editor. We have asked for more money from the Friends for 2021 Summer Reading in case we have to provide virtual programming, since another CARES grant is unlikely.

I'd love to offer more virtual programs, but I need a volunteer to help me with this. If anyone is interested, please let me know. In early October, the Friends of the Library sponsored a NH Humanities Council Program on Zoom about the history of racism in the Northeast. Because we collaborated on this with four other libraries, it only cost \$40. Over 70 people signed up and I saw numerous Freedom residents among the registrants. However, only 24 total ended up attending the program. The organizer did not make note of who attended so I don't know how were from Freedom. I am not sure why so few ended up attending. Disappointing.

We really appreciate the Friends of the Library's purchase of Kanopy which allows our patrons to stream movies. This service has been a huge success in Freedom. I recently got a glowing review from a library member of another FOL-sponsored offering, CreativeBug, which provides professional arts and crafts instruction online. Freedom participants have watched over 21 hours of classes since we signed on mid-June. I'm going to do another promotion of this service next week.

So little is the same anymore in this COVID world except for the continuing encouragement and financial support of the Friends of the Library. Thank you so much for being there for me and the library.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Rhymer  
Library Director