Hay Memorial Library
President's Report to the Community 2024

It's been another busy year at Hay Memorial Library! Lots of new programs and projects, with board and staff strengthening seasoned partnerships, building collaborations, and opening new doors of opportunity.

Hay's library staff -- Manager Octavia Walker, Desk Clerk Peggy Cleveland, and Library Assistant Cathy Haug -- have all been busy stocking the shelves with new titles for all patrons to enjoy, plus refreshing the Children's arts and social area with tables and chairs, and creating new programs for adults and kids. And with the help of Hay's summer intern, Nyah Chiodi, Summer Reading and Story Walks were part of the offerings.

Among the library's 2024 creative arts, social, and literacy programs for children were:

- Sewing Club
- Paws2Read
- Storytime
- Lego Club
- Story Walks
- Summer Reading

And for adults…

- Book Club
- NYS Humanities "Reading and Discussion" series
- Great Lakes Poetry & Art, including developing the Sackets Harbor Writers Group
- Jeffersonian Democracy & Climate Change

The Little Library located near the bandstand by the harbor also expanded this year, thanks to the generosity of a local patron, who underwrote the cost of adding a lower-level kids section to the existing structure.

One of the most well-attended programs the library co-hosted was *"Voices & Votes: Democracy in America,"* the Smithsonian Museum's traveling exhibit. The exhibition was held in May and June at the Union Hotel, just the second site across all of New York State to host the exhibit in 2024.

Together with local partner, the Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site, Hay hosted six Saturday afternoon programs during the exhibition period, including:

- *"Hidden Histories: Lesser Known Stories from Fort Drum"*
- *"History in My Backyard," photography program*
- *"Haudenosaunee Storytelling"*
- *"Power of the Local Press"*
- *"Community Conversations"*
- *"Music on the Steps" (live jazz program)*

Plus, volunteers participated in collecting and recording local stories for "Our Story Bridge," an oral history project held in conjunction with the Museum Association of New York (MANY).

In the Fall, Hay Library's "Sackets Harbor Quilt Show" took place over the first weekend of October, with nearly 400 quilt enthusiasts and visitors taking in the exhibits and demos. The quilt show remains one of the popular regional events, bringing in visitors from Syracuse, Lake Placid, Boonville, Rochester, Oswego, and Kingston, CA, (just to name a few). In addition to SHQS's arts and culture aspect, the three-day show supports shoulder-season tourism activities, bringing visitors to the restaurants, shops, and attractions in the village. The library is blessed with a solid core of volunteers who make the quilt show possible…over 30 volunteers dedicate time and effort to make the weekend a success.

While the board is still in the process of raising funds toward "Welcome, All" progress toward this universal accessibility goal has been substantial. The project goal is to remove the old wooden ramp and steps, and replace them with an enclosed, one-story addition with a lift and steps, making a weather-proof, safe access point for all. With support from the Deline Foundation, the Northern New York Community Foundation, and very importantly…from you, our community patrons and supporters we plan to undertake the first phase of this important project in the summer this year.

And speaking of community…among Hay's active community partners are the Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site, Sackets Harbor School, the Chamber of Commerce, the Student Conservation Association stewards, the Thousand Island Art Center, Sackets Harbor Historical Society, Save the River, and the North Country Quilt Guild and River Guild. We thank each and all for their willingness and enthusiasm to *"Explore, Collaborate, Gather, Connect."*

Christine Eggleston,
HML Board President