

Annual Corporators' Meeting 2016

Executive Director's Report

Thank you.

Hello everyone.

It's a pleasure to be here with all of you at our Annual Corporators Meeting. I would just like to take a moment to thank our wonderful staff and amazing volunteers without whom we wouldn't be able to provide such incredible programs and services. They are a true asset to the library and to the Woodstock community.

I would also like to thank the Trustees as well as you, the corporators, for all of your support and guidance over the past year. The Norman Williams Public Library is the hub of our community and an architectural treasure which you have all helped to create and nurture. And, under your leadership it will continue to be a vital part of the community.

Last year our new strategic plan was adopted. With this came an inspirational dream. I'd like to share that dream with you again since it is the foundation for all that we do. The NWPL is to be **the valued community hotspot, enriched by amazing resources, enabling adventures in lifelong learning, championing knowledge and wisdom.**

In order to continue this important mission and to take action on our strategic plan, this past year we have made progress in the following areas:

1. Library Services/Technology:
 - a. In order to increase our connectivity to Woodstock residents as well as those in our surrounding communities and even statewide, we began participating in a courier service which allows us to transfer library materials between our library and other libraries throughout the state. This saves costs both in staff time as well as in savings in postage. It also connects us with other local libraries who are part of the courier system.
 - b. Secondly, we started subscribing to Overdrive Advantage which has allowed us to add more ebooks and audiobooks to our collection. Many of our patrons travel and listen to audiobooks. Being able to download them to their devices from home or when away via our catalog is a great service we are able to provide in an increasingly digital world.
 - c. Our ongoing commitment to technology education and expansion to our community continues to be led by David Sullivan, who along with Leslie Hatch provide valuable training and troubleshooting to an increasing number of our patrons.

2. Space:

- a. Thanks to the efforts of Don Olson and Anne Marinello and our Building Committee, we added benches and shelving to the front foyer. This allows visitors to browse through our booksale books (nearly \$1K/week this time of year), sit while waiting for a ride, or simply enjoy the welcoming atmosphere as they enter our beautiful building.
- b. With input from staff, volunteers and patrons we continue to find the best and highest use of our limited space. We have become quite nimble at setting and resetting various areas of the library to meet our growing needs. Just two weeks ago we hosted a rehearsal dinner for a wedding on the mezzanine and we are meeting here in the Children's Library tonight while 3 other groups hold programs in 2 other rooms.

3. Programming:

- a. The VT Dept of Libraries released their statistics for FY15 and we are at the forefront for libraries in our population group for programming. In fact, we offer more programs with higher attendance than many libraries twice our size with double the staff. This is due in large part to our talented and generous community members who are such willing and able program presenters. All NWPL programs continue to be offered free of charge. Programming is an integral part of being a library in today's society and we are at the forefront.

This brings us to the current fiscal year where we are hoping to continue to build on what we've achieved thus far. The Trustees approved a budget which will bring a new and exciting change to the library services that we offer by focusing on several key areas.

1. Technology:

- i. Switching to a new ILS (Integrated Library System). An ILS is the software which staff and patrons use to check out books, search the catalog, add materials to the collection, collect data on checkouts, etc. We are currently using a standalone system which we have been using for more than 10 years. If we are to be at the forefront of technology, we need to begin with updating our internal systems. This will increase our efficiency and save staff time and money.
- ii. This also entails joining a consortium and switching over to an open source software that many libraries across the country are using called Koha. It is more patron centered and will greatly increase our connectivity to other libraries in VT. We become a part of something bigger, rather than standing on our own. The new system will allow patrons to reserve books from home, to receive emails regarding overdue items, access the library 24/7. Our materials will be merged into an online catalog with the other libraries in the consortia – 15 currently and several more joining soon. A drop down menu will allow patrons to search for

items in our library or to search for them in any of the other libraries as well. Once an item is located it can be sent here via the courier for checkout.

2. Space Utilization:

- i. We are working on a grant to fund a digitization lab for patrons and for our use to digitize our collection. In addition to enabling patrons to search through and research our unique historical documents, it will also enable patrons to digitize their personal media such as movies, slides, music and photos, thereby preserving these valuable documents and making them more accessible in the future. This will also focus on increasing our connectivity to our patrons here in Woodstock along with users across the country.

3. Facilities Improvements:

- i. It has been 16 years since the incredible renovation that transformed our lovely little library into the larger architectural treasure it is today. We average over 36,000 visitors per year. This high usage along with time has taken a toll on our facilities. We are looking at various funding options for resetting our front steps and replacing our aging carpet. Our HVAC system is also reaching the end of its lifespan so that as well will need to be addressed in the near future.
- ii.

Last but not least, since we've just spent some time talking about where we are and where we're going, I'd like to take a moment to circle back to our past. Back to our original benefactor, Edward Williams. He has made a reappearance in our library over the past few months. The portrait of his father, Norman, which hangs above our fireplace, along with several other artifacts which were on loan previously were graciously donated to us by Dr. Mark Kerner. And then just last month, we received Edward Williams' personal collection of ferns and plants from one of his descendants.

Thank you for your warm and thoughtful welcome to this wonderful community. I look forward to getting to know many more of you and working with you as we continue to improve our exceptional library.