

ANNUAL REPORT of the BRUNSWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

June 1, 2023 - July 30, 2024



Murals created at Curtis during the summer of 2023 by some of our youngest library patrons, under the guidance of ArtVan.

Curtis Memorial Library
23 Pleasant Street
Brunswick, Maine 04011

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helpdesk@curtislibrary.com
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From EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Elisabeth Doucett

In October 2023, the **Robert McCloskey: The Art of Wonder** exhibit ended at the Library. The bookmobile was settling into a regular schedule of visits throughout Brunswick and Harpswell. Everyone on the Library staff took a deep breath (*after welcoming over 80,000 visitors to the McCloskey exhibit*), and enjoyed the feeling of a job very well done for our community.

Getting back to a normal routine post-COVID seemed like the right direction for the year. And, that's a lot of what we did. We bought many books to make up for what we didn't buy during COVID; continued training to ever improve our customer service skills; and delivered outstanding programming with our community partners around topics like local housing and sustainability.

But, things are never as calm as you might hope. Because heavy rain and wind storms are happening more often, the Library has been managing leaks and small floods for a number of years. After the last flood we had enough of mopping floors. So, we had a gutter installed over the Library's glass mezzanine. So far, no water. Next unexpected project? Fixing a substantial crack in the 1904 building chimney, which masons fixed so well that you can't even tell where the crack was! All of this work was paid for by the Town of Brunswick, owners of the Library buildings. We are fortunate that they understand, value, and are willing to take care of our historic building, which the community loves and uses heavily. Patrons can rest easy knowing that stewardship of all of the library buildings are an important part of all of our jobs.

Inside the library we've started planning for an update of the lobby with a focus on creating a friendlier, more welcoming environment and outstanding customer service, featuring an accessible lending desk, improved lighting and furniture for meet-ups. Stay tuned for more information as we move into winter.

There are additional building projects being planned for the next 1-5 years...restoration of the windows in the 1904 building; fixing the outside granite steps leading up to the 1904 entrance; and creating an outdoor public space in front of the 1904 building that invites people to sit and enjoy the space.

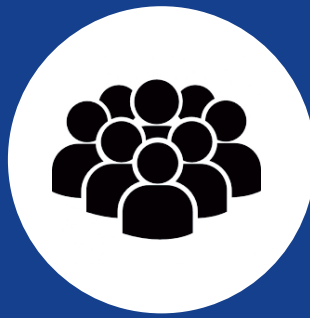
At the end of the day I guess "calm and quiet" just isn't part of the Curtis Library DNA. Our goal is to evolve and change to meet the evolving, changing needs of our community and you just can't do that sitting still. Thank you for recognizing that work and embracing this institution.

Elisabeth Doucett





BY THE NUMBERS . . .



PATRON TRAFFIC

266,850 visits

LIBRARY CARDS
2,266 new this year
12,806 total active cards



BOOKMOBILE FIRST YEAR ON THE ROAD

454 stops
6,468 Visitors
423 New Library Cards Issued
6,542 Items Borrowed

ITEMS BORROWED

375,344 including
Library of Things and
digital downloads



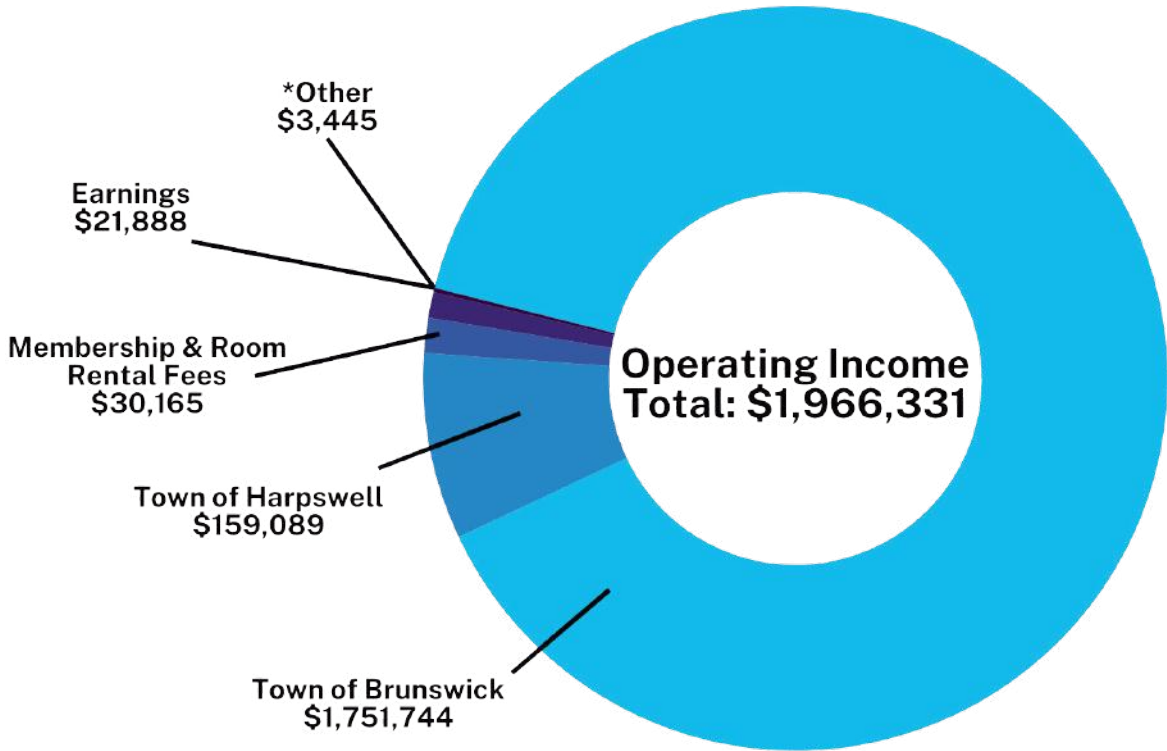
VOLUNTEERS

147 Curtis Library
volunteers donating
6,733 hours

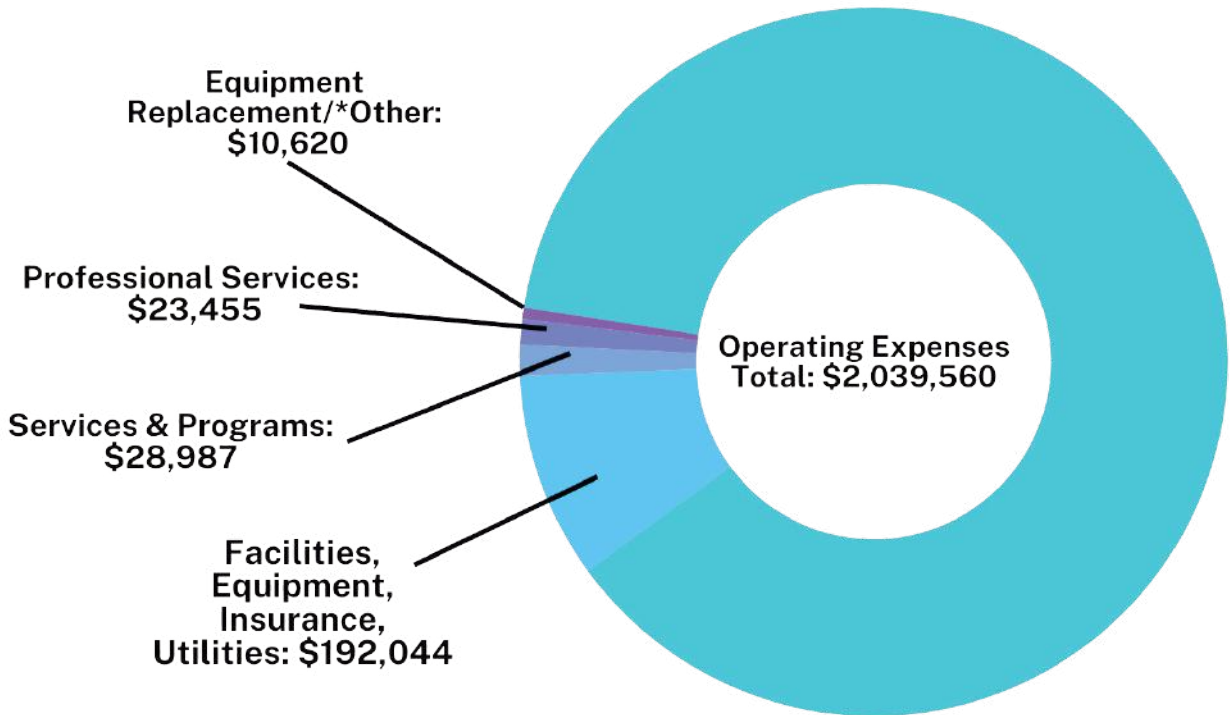
Twice-Told Tales/
Curtis Friends
50+ volunteers donating
over 13,000 hours

FY 2024 - Financial Year in Review

OPERATING INCOME



OPERATING EXPENSES



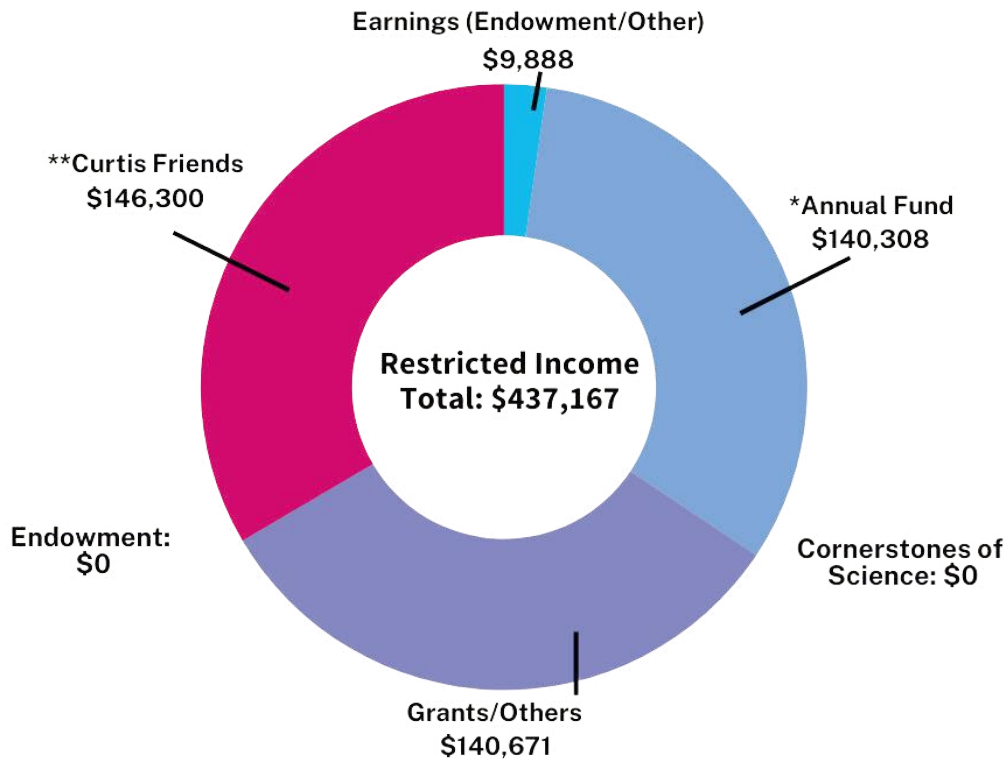
****Net Operations: -\$73,229**

**Includes fundraising software, public copier expenses*

***Positive net operations are restricted by the Library Board of Directors to equipment replacement (technology)*

FY 2024 - Financial Year in Review

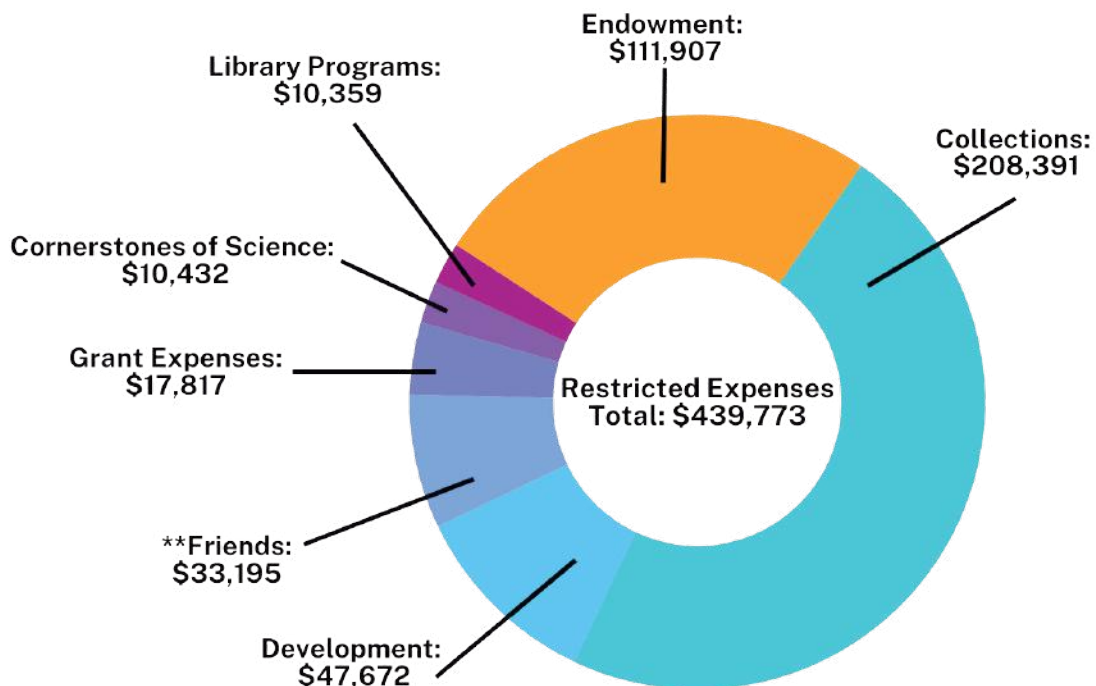
RESTRICTED INCOME



*The Annual Fund purchases the library's print & digital collections.

** Support from Curtis Friends pays for Adult & Youth programming, books, museum passes, library staff development, and special projects such as support for the new Library Bookmobile, furniture, etc.

RESTRICTED EXPENSES



*****Net Restricted: -\$2,606**

*Includes gardens & grounds work, ALA grant expenses, special projects

**Includes collection support, museum passes, programming

**When restricted income is not used in a given year, it is rolled over for the same purpose in the next fiscal year

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS Youth Services - Pam Jenkins

Curtis Teens created gift-able crafts, collaborated on strategic games, and crafted homemade jewelry. Local author Charlotte Agell led a series of creative writing and drawing workshops for tweens, complete with typewriters. Teens also showed their leadership skills and led sustainability programming for the whole community. They educated about single-use plastics and created an Earth Day program that collected pledges on a giant globe suspended in the atrium.

Some seasonal highlights in the children's area include fairy house-building in the summer, a return of the skeletal Dr. Bones exhibit in the fall, crafting snowperson nightlights in winter, and a spring visit from Northern Stars Portable Planetarium in advance of the solar eclipse. To finish the year, one of our favorite author/illustrators, **Kevin Hawkes**, enchanted an audience of children and their caregivers with his humor and imagination.

In June, library patron **Olga Pastuchiv** began painting a 9-panel mural depicting marine life in the Gulf of Maine, commissioned by the Susan S. Dattilo Foundation. Now complete, the delightful mural graces the entry to the children's area and attracts library patrons of all ages.

thank you

NOTE: After serving families at Curtis for 25 years, **Youth Services Manager Pam Jenkins** will retire at the end of January, 2025. The Curtis Community - and a generation of children whose reading, play and exploration was enriched by your work in the Children's Library - **will miss you!**



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Adult Services - Kelly McElligott

Curtis Memorial Library hosted over 35 adult programs in addition to six monthly book groups. The total attendance of these programs was over 2,500 people! Programs ranged from our Repair Cafe, Sustainable Brunswick programs, several environmental programs, bike repair, plant workshops, the Amethyst Chamber Ensemble, and several programs specific to death and dying. Additionally, we hosted several author events including Paul Doiron, **Colin Woodard** and Jennifer Lunden.

In the fall of 2023, Curtis partnered with All Saints Parish, Housing Resources for Youth, and Southern Midcoast Housing Collaborative for a **Community Read** based on "Rough Sleepers: **Dr. Jim O'Connell's** Urgent Mission to Bring Healing to Homeless People" by Tracy Kidder. (*Dr. Jim pictured here with local author and moderator **Maria Padian.***)

Curtis Memorial Library is excited to announce a lineup of engaging author events in the coming months. Join us for a presentation by Lewis Robinson. We will also continue our Local Author Series, where each month, three local authors will present their work at the library in both November and December. Additionally, we're partnering with the Maine Coalition on Aging to host a four-part aging series starting in a few months.

Our **Sustainability Series** has proven to be a great success, and we're pleased to continue offering upcoming programs that focus on sustainability, such as programs on food preservation, DIY workshops and our **Repair Cafe**. Many of these programs are recorded and can be accessed on our Vimeo account at <https://vimeo.com/curtislibrary>.

We hope to see you at the library!



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Customer Experience - Sarah Brown

Lending Services had an amazing and challenging FY2023/24. We started our year hosting the fabulous **Robert McCloskey** exhibit. Over 80,000 people viewed the exhibit June through October, 2023. At the Lending Desk, we experienced a dramatic increase in questions, checkouts, new card applications, and merchandise sales. Our staff adapted to the demands on our time with great attitudes, humor, and collegiality.

We **checked out 252,353 physical items ...** and then checked them back in, totaling 504,706 items flowing through the hands of our fabulous lending desk staff! Additionally, we packed/unpacked 4,530 crates of inter-library loan items.

FY2023/24 also included the **launch of bookmobile outreach services**. The Curtis Outreach Librarian, Jamie Dacyczyn, and our fully electric 2023 Ford Transit van visit locations throughout Brunswick and Harpswell reaching people of all ages - daycare centers, senior living, apartment and mobile home parks, Brunswick Recreation Center, Harpswell Town Office and more.

As part of our continuing education, we had our first all staff in-service training day in January, featuring workshops on DEI and effective workplace communication as well as a presentation by Tedford Housing and Spurwink Behavioral Health.

Finally, with Adult Services' reorganization of the nonfiction collection back to Dewey order, it was all staff and all volunteers on-deck to ensure that materials were properly reshelved in their new locations.



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Technical Services - Carol Lord

Technical Services is the department that brings you everything: books, videos, audiobooks, puzzles, games and all sorts of things!

During the past year **9,344 books and magazine issues were added to the collection**, as well as **183 videos, 86 audiobooks, untold numbers of puzzles and games and 319 "things"** consisting of any and everything from soup (pots) to nuts (crackers)!

You may notice that the numbers of audiobooks and videos has decreased. This is because we are adding more and more e-audiobooks and e-books into our collection. We continue to offer digital material via the **Cloud Library**, which is a shared resource used by most libraries in the state.

In addition we have added **Libby**, a second digital platform for e-books and e-audiobooks that is just for Curtis patrons. Check Libby for the newest and most popular titles - we are working to shorten wait times for these items.

Don't forget about **Kanopy** - our video platform where you can view an ever-changing selection of movies, TV episodes and more.



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Building & Grounds - Melissa Hall

McCloskey in the house! Tending the building with so many additional patrons takes strategy, and a lot of extra janitorial supplies and attention.

The Bookmobile becomes essentially a whole new very successful branch of Curtis Library, with additional parking and charging needs.

The volunteer **Master Gardeners** completed a full restoration of the gardens at the Middle Street entrance, introducing native species and a **variety of Irises from the McKeon Collection of Harpswell**. Similarly, the Master Gardeners introduced new native varieties, blueberry bushes and more that add height and attract bees and butterflies to the Nancy Bouchard Laffely Children's Garden.

For the second year, Curtis Library's gardens were a featured stop on the Oasis Free Clinic's Brunswick in Bloom Garden Tour.

Two **children's size benches were donated and installed in the Children's Garden** in memory of Susan S. Dattilo.

Our **indoor plant care volunteer team** keeps the building green and colorful throughout the year, and has begun offering plant care workshops and "swaps" for our patrons.

Winter storms and increasing power outages have underlined the need for a generator for the library. We hope to provide a warming shelter now and in the future during these weather events.



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Development & Marketing - Joy Fehl

The **McCloskey exhibit and Bookmobile project** were central to our fundraising and promotional efforts again this past year.

Local newspaper, magazine and television stories about the McCloskey exhibit, as well as a feature in *The New York Times*, put Curtis on the national map of libraries to visit in 2023. As such, Curtis received the American Library Association's oldest and most prestigious national award - the **John Cotton Dana Award** for strategic communication - recognizing the work of all staff to host the exhibit from June through October and welcome thousands of visitors throughout the country and the world. Recently, the staff voted to allocate this **\$10,000 award** to support the purchase of maker equipment for the community to use in our new Create Space - coming in 2025.

The **Curtis Contemporaries Committee**, which advocates for and raises funds for the library, celebrated their 10th year, and were able to host their annual fundraiser **BOOKED FOR THE NIGHT** in-person and inside for the first time since COVID. Always a festive and fun sold-out night throughout the library, **the Contemporaries raised \$10,000 to support the purchase of a new accessible, kid-friendly self-checkout machine now in use in the Children's Library.**

We are so grateful for the thousands of donations of all sizes we receive in support of the Annual Fund that keep our book and other collections diverse and robust. Local businesses, foundations and donors generously support our fundraising events and initiatives, and grow our endowment to ensure Curtis Memorial Library is here to enrich the lives of the next generation of readers.

Several new gift initiatives are planned for 2025 in support of some restoration and renovation needs in and around the library.

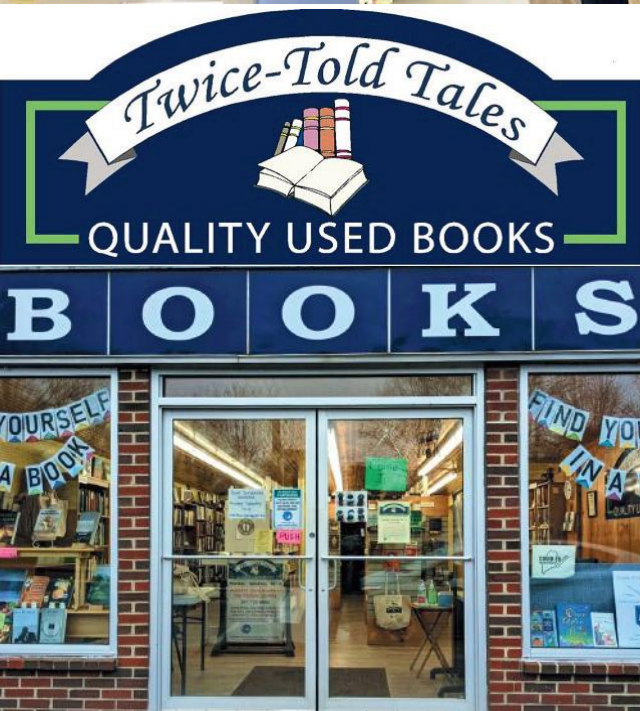


The New York Times

One Morning in Maine, 225 People Went to the Library

Books or beach? In a coastal town, the decision is easy, thanks to artwork by the author of "Blueberries for Sal" and "Make Way for Ducklings."





FRIENDS OF CURTIS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Ron Poulin - President

The Friends of Curtis Memorial Library has been operating Twice-Told Tales since 2015. Run by an all-volunteer staff, our mission is to enhance the library's role as a valued community resource through advocacy, fundraising, and volunteerism.

As we begin our tenth year in business, we continue to receive very strong support from the community through book donations and patronage.

In addition to our continuing support for numerous library programs and projects, we were able to take on the full-funding of all the children's books in the bookmobile.

This means we now fund all the books on the bookmobile. It gives us great satisfaction knowing that we are helping to bring books into the community to people who, for many reasons, are unable to get to the library.

As a result of the hard work and dedication of the 50-plus volunteers, who contributed over 15,000 hours, we were able to donate \$146,000 to the library this fiscal year! This is our largest donation to date. Also, as a result of all this hard work, **Twice-Told Tales was recognized as a finalist in The Times Record Best of the Midcoast 2024** community contest and awarded a Certificate of Excellence in the Book New and Used category. Because this survey is voted on by the community, we are especially thrilled with the recognition.

We are very grateful for the strong and continuing support from the community. Without you, our support to the library would not be possible. So, to the community, I say **THANK YOU!**

***Come see us soon and often at
200 Maine Street!***

CURRENT STAFF of CURTIS MEMORIAL LIBRARY – November, 2024

Elisabeth Doucett, Executive Director

Pam Jenkins, Assistant Director

ADMINISTRATION

Elisabeth Doucett
Executive Director

Joy Fehl
*Development and
Marketing Manager*

Liz Snowdon[^]
Senior Library Assistant

Rachel Kobasa*
Volunteer Coordinator

Melissa Hall
Building Manager

Michael Becker*
Refuse and Recycling

Robyn Wasson*
Cleaning

Dave Delois*
Bookkeeper

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Carol Lord
Manager

YOUTH SERVICES

Pam Jenkins
Youth Services Manager

Joceylyn Kelly
Teen Services Librarian

Robyn Fay-Tringali
Senior Library Assistant

Diana McFarland*
Youth Services Librarian

Teresa Kelly-Gillis*
Library Assistant

Kimberly Madden*[^]
Librarian

ADULT SERVICES

Kelly McElligott
*Adult Services and
Technology Manager*

Pamela Bobker
Librarian

Hazel Onsrud
Librarian

Jon Roy
Technology Librarian

Jonas Bouthot
Senior Library Assistant

Clint McDowell
Senior Library Assistant

Jim Allard*
Librarian

Aurora Cobb*[^]
Librarian

Alida Snow*[^]
Senior Library Assistant

LIBRARY SUBS

Marion Dalton*
Librarian

Caitlin Gutheil*[^]
Senior Library Assistant

Lucy Welles*
Library Assistant

LENDING SERVICES

Sarah Brown
*Customer Experience
Manager*

Tu Biederman[^]
Senior Library Assistant

Megan Hultman
Senior Library Assistant

Jennifer Dolham
Library Assistant

Dave Billings*
Library Assistant

Debbie Burleson*
Library Assistant

Colin Cundy*
Library Assistant

Michael Ferry*[^]
Library Assistant

Vera King*
Library Assistant

Gitte Kornblum*
Library Assistant

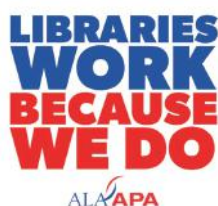
Janet Roberts*
Library Assistant

Sheryl Veilleux*
Library Assistant

Jamie Dacyczyn
*Outreach and Bookmobile
Librarian*

*Indicates Part-Time

[^]Works in Multiple Service Areas



SEEN AROUND CURTIS . . .



Volunteer of the Year Allison Withers (r)
with Customer Experience Manager Sarah and former Volunteer Coordinator Ellis



Senior Library Assistant Jonas and Teen Services Librarian Jocelyn at Brunswick's Pride Day



Teen Volunteer of the Year Beckett (center) with his family and Teen Services Librarian Jocelyn



Executive Director Liz poses with "Mr. and Mrs. Mallard" from the Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine's production of Robert McCloskey's "Make Way for Ducklings"



The Robert McCloskey: The Art of Wonder exhibit welcomed visitors of all ages -- newborn to 99!



Outreach Librarian Jamie and Executive Director Liz celebrate the Bookmobile's first year on the road with a cake for the community.



Librarian Pamela and Senior Library Assistant Clint attended the Public Library Association Conference in Philadelphia. Thanks to Curtis Friends for supporting professional development opportunities for Curtis Staff.



Maine State Representatives Dan Ankeles and Poppy Arford surprised us at an all staff meeting with this commendation recognizing Hazel for her award as a Library Journal Mover & Shaker!



Some of the Lending Services team -- never disappoint with their creative Halloween costumes!



New Curtis Totes and more for sale at the Lending Desk. Great gifts for book/library lovers!



Totes are hand-stitched at family-owned Rogue Life in Lewiston.



Hopeful Pins - Portland-based artist Charlie Hewitt was born in Lewiston and spent his teenage years in Brunswick!



Their 23 Pleasant blend is made just for Curtis Library at their organic certified roastery in Topsham.

2023 - 2024 Board of Directors

Lisa Botshon - Chair
Tahnthawan Coffin - Vice Chair
John Gillespie - Treasurer
Beth Eisman - Secretary

Keith Bisson
Candace Kanen
Kristin Jhamb
Karl Lauenstein
Dave Millar
Shiloh Theberge
Rick Wells
John Wright

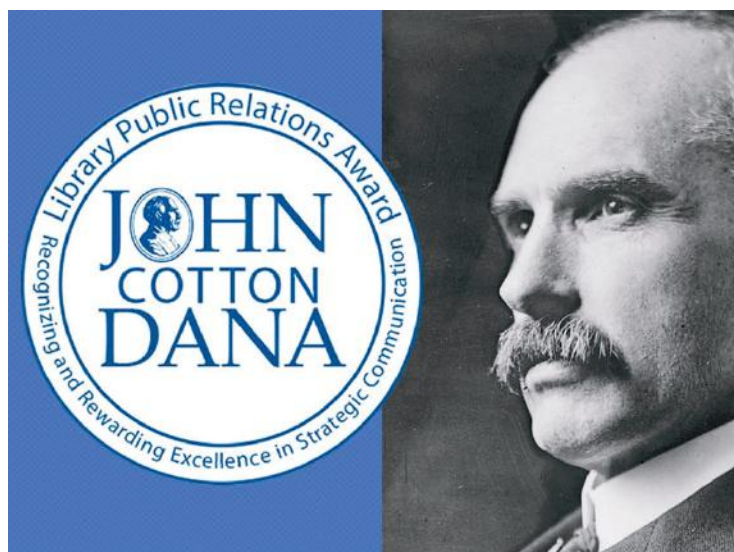
Ex Officio Members -

Elisabeth Doucett, Executive Director
Ronald Poulin, President, Curtis Friends
Julia Henze, Brunswick Town Manager

Curtis Memorial Library receives national recognition.



**HAZEL ONSRUD:
LIBRARY
JOURNAL'S
2024 MOVERS &
SHAKERS AWARD
WINNER**



Librarian **Hazel Onsrud** was recognized by **Library Journal** as a **"Mover & Shaker"** in the Education category for her work with Sustainability and Library of Things initiatives, among others. **TEAMWORK** is Curtis' superpower! **The American Library Association's John Cotton Dana Award** recognized Curtis Memorial Library with a \$10,000 grant for its successful "Make Way for Visitors" strategic communication campaign -- hosting the McCloskey exhibit and doubling the number of visitors and library card holders post-COVID.