

Library Director Report - Toby Mueller

There are many “ordinary moments” that happen in a year of public library service. The core part of our work is to help you, our members, access “culture, learning and enjoyment”. We borrow interlibrary loans from all over the province, we help download and print forms, and answer many questions. Putting a value on some of these moments is hard, but we know we are fulfilling our mandate when we see new mothers meeting each other at story-time, a youth finding a book that makes them realize they like reading, or an elder sighing in relief when they figure out how to use their new phone.

2023 also saw some highlights.

Library of Things – Early in 2023 the Lillooet Public Library developed our Library of Things collection to include many more exciting, functional items. We equipped the REC Centre kitchen with all the tools necessary to cook for a crowd. These items are available to loan in the kitchen. A pressure cooker was added, this item can be taken home; many folks used it to do their canning this summer. There are three complete plate settings of 12, so if you’re having a big dinner party you can “go green” and borrow enough dishes for everyone. There is an air quality monitor, sound meter, Night Sky Kit (includes home planetarium for indoor fun) and more happy lights.

Story walks - The Literacy Outreach Program hosted three story walks on the fence of the Lillooet REC Centre.

Website upgrade - The LALA website received a full overhaul with the support of the B.C. Libraries Co-op. The new format is easier to read and more accessible. There are lots of “quick link” buttons on the front page, so patrons can get straight to what they want. We added a huge amount of information in the subject guides and community information pages. The Community Calendar was moved on to our website. It provides visitors and residents with a complete picture of events happening in the region.

Successful recruitment – after over a year of staff shortage, Taylor Povey was hired as Library Assistant. She started in July of 2023 and has had a very successful start to her role. It is wonderful to have story time back in the Lillooet Public Library!

Facility Improvements—LALA purchased an awning for the south facing windows at the REC Centre. It provides shade during the hottest months of the year and helps the air conditioning keep the rooms comfortable. It also provides great signage, there is no longer any doubt what building this is when looking from Main Street.

Bridge River Public Library received a new electric fireplace insert, through the B.C. Hydro Community Fund. It’s a lovely cozy nook for visiting, reading or just enjoying the view down Seton Lake.



2023 Annual Report

Board Chair Report- Bain Gair

“As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to share with you some of the highlights and successes that have shaped our library community. It has been a year of resilience, growth and unwavering dedication to serving our patrons.”

I didn’t write the sentences above, a computer did. I dictated a few notes into an artificial intelligence program and it instantly generated an entire report.

In 2024, almost anyone can use artificial intelligence (AI) programs to create content. It’s amazing but it’s also somewhat disconcerting and frightening.

As these digital technologies evolve, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine the genuine authors of written or visual material. This, in turn, requires public libraries to be increasingly vigilant in their mission to serve as trusted repositories and purveyors of knowledge in our communities.

There are other challenges. In America, state governments are banning books based on legislators’ views of what are appropriate books, frighteningly reminiscent of authoritarian regimes best consigned to history. Increasingly in the U.S. and Canada, protesters gather outside schools and libraries to voice opposition to books or curriculum they view as promoting lifestyles they disagree with.

All this is part of the global backdrop for the little stage where the 3 branches of the Lillooet Area Library Association faithfully act out their vital role in our communities.

Most of us know the local library as a welcoming place where you can borrow books or movies, access the internet, or where kids gather for story time.

But the libraries are much more. Providing public space for meetings, increasing access to digital resources, hosting myriad programs and events, offering literacy programs, providing assistance with new technologies, partnering with other organizations to provide services, the list goes on.

More than this, the Lillooet Area Library Association is part of a network of public libraries across our country that are important pillars of our democracy, places where all citizens can access information without fear or favour. The principles of intellectual freedom and social justice are not only part of the libraries’ mission statements, they are legal obligations that stem from provincial legislation and the Canadian Constitution.

In 2023, our intrepid library staff dealt with many challenges, not least of which was the impacts of wildfires and evacuations that closed branches for weeks and threatened our communities.

Escalating threats from climate change, evolving artificial intelligence and increasingly polarized world views are just some of the challenges our libraries face.

Rest assured, the staff of the Lillooet Area Library Association, guided by our estimable Library Director Toby Mueller, understand the challenges and the importance of their positions. They are ever mindful of their responsibilities as keepers of knowledge and stewards of public funds. But they will still greet you with a smile when you walk in the door.

New Card Holders - 225

Website Visits - 15,079

In Person Visits - 12,514

2023 IN NUMBERS

Interlibrary Connect

Items Lent -- 738

Items Borrowed - 1,268



Library Director- Toby Mueller

Lillooet Public Library

Community Librarians- Cindy MacDonald, Michelle Smith, Stephanie Witt

Library Assistant- Taylor Povey

Adult Literacy Coordinator- Paddy Weston

Literacy Outreach Coordinator- Lynda Sampson / Taylor Povey

Summer Reading Club- Nyla Devaras, Jack Gair, Ayden Harrison, Owen Harrison,

Gold Bridge Library

Community Librarian- Jean Shaw

Bridge River Library

Community Librarian- Vanessa Blake

Board Members

Paul Beland

Betty Weaver

Bain Gair

Ina Weber

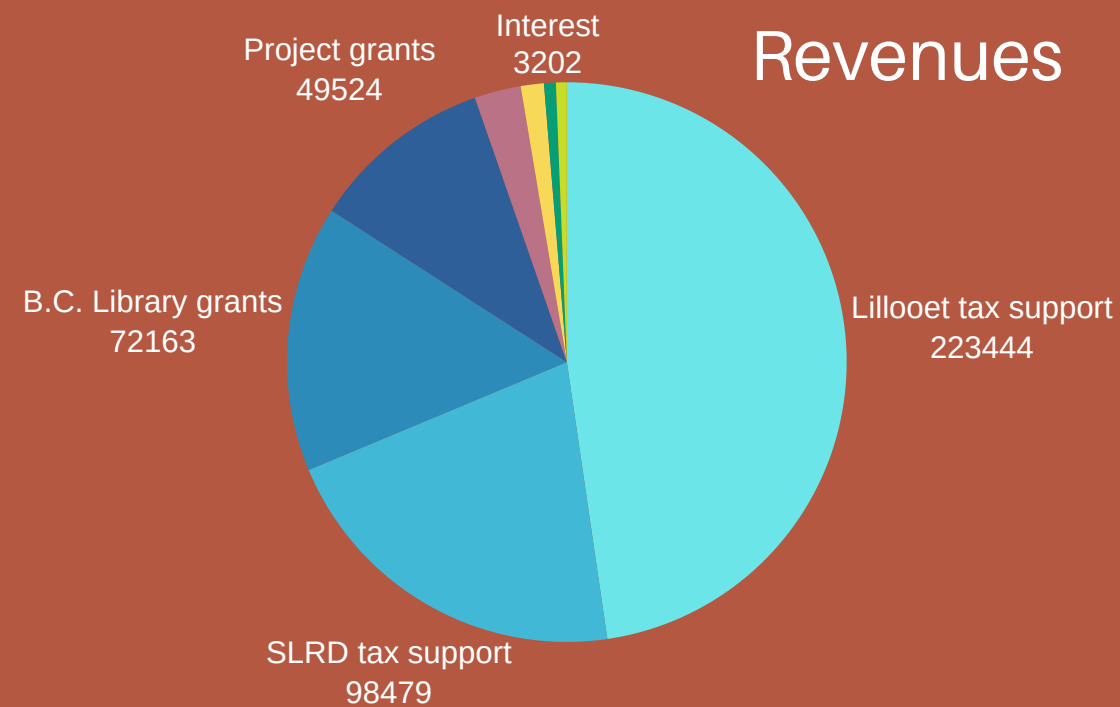
Jessica Johnson

Patti Flann- District of Lillooet

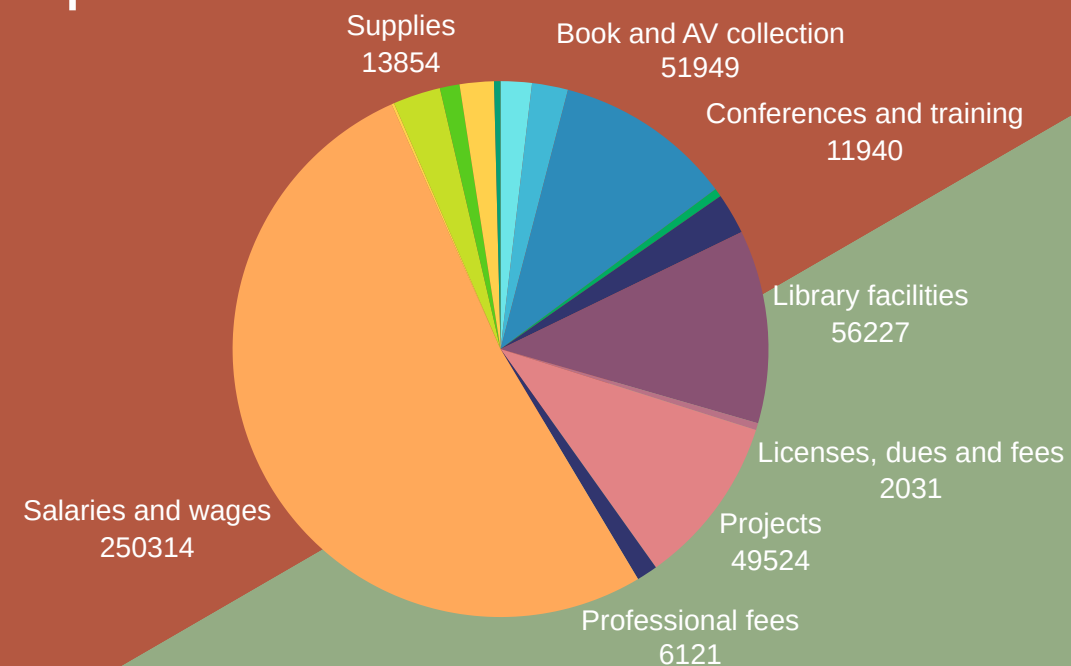
Maggie Lord

Vivian Birch-Jones- SLRD

Revenues



Expenses



Thank-you to our outstanding supporters!!

Taxpayers of the District of Lillooet and the SLRD Area's A and B

Government of B.C., Library Services Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs

BC Ministry of Advanced Education

Decoda Literacy Solutions

Government of Canada- Heritage Canada, Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs

United Way- Digital Learning Initiative

B.C. Hydro – Community Fund

Law Foundation of BC

Full financial report on Library website.