



Altamont Free Library 2017 Annual Report

Mission

The Altamont Free Library is a state, town and village funded association library, which provides for the informational, cultural, educational and recreational needs of patrons living within the stated area of the Library charter. To this end, the Library provides print and non-print materials, interlibrary loan, reference services, and programs to its users.

Trustees

President: Christine Carpenter

Vice President: Dan Capuano

Secretary: Linda Cure

Treasurer: Michelle Stevens

Assistant Treasurer: Melanie Shatynski

Trustees: Sharon Forman (departed the Board in September), Ron Ginsburg, Bob Haggerty, Dick Howie, Rachel Lane, Robin Love (departed the Board in August), Lori McCutcheon, Elizabeth Searing, and Vicki Vattimo

Personnel

Director: Joseph Burke

Library Assistants: Ann Gainer, Erika Peterson

Library Clerks: Ann Cartmell, Jo Ann Mulligan, Albert Rusch, Michael Seinberg

Regular Volunteers: Sarah Killen, Elfie Erickson, Craig Sargent, Kristin Casey, Laura Shore, Peter Brabant, and many others who helped in ways large and small throughout the year.

The Year in Summary

2017 was a year of self-reflection, growth and change for Altamont Free Library.

Following our 2016 Centennial Year and the development of the Centennial Fund, combined with strong fundraising years and high degrees of support from our municipal funders, the Library is in very strong financial shape. Nevertheless, throughout the year we have examined our policies and procedures surrounding our financial stewardship of the Library and have made several important changes to strengthen our organization.

For the first time in recent memory, we have employed a bookkeeper so that we are no longer dependent on our volunteer Treasurer to do the majority of our financial reporting and record keeping. In November, the board selected Nihla Zarook to fill that role and she has already begun to implement positive changes. We also created the position of Assistant Treasurer to assist our Treasurer in the many responsibilities of that office. The Assistant Treasurers role was informally filled by Trustee Sharon Forman until her departure from the Board in September, and then formally by Trustee Melanie Shatynski.

We have also selected Robert Schofield of Whiteman, Osterman & Hannah to be our legal counsel and have put their firm on retainer so that we have access to legal advice when needed.

We have also markedly improved our building over the course of 2017. In May, we completed work on the Spohr Family Centennial Patio, paid for with memorial contributions in honor of Tom Spohr and a \$3,000 Budget Aid appropriation from Sen. George Amedore. The patio was officially dedicated in June. June also saw the installation of a bicycle repair station in the front of the building, paid for in part by a grant from the Stewart's Shops. Bob Haggerty also finally installed a new art display system in the Community Room, which had been purchased with a donation from the Altamont High School Alumni Association. All three improvements have been well utilized.

In June, we added Michael Seinberg to the staff in order to see us through a temporary staffing shortfall. He has remained with us since the staffing crisis abated, working one evening per week and filling in as needed, adding needed flexibility to our staff schedule.

For the second year in a row, we maintained Sunday hours throughout the summer, one of only and small handful of libraries in Upstate New York to do so and only such library in the Upper Hudson Library System.

Throughout the year, the Library leadership team began implementing the 3-year Long Range Plan adopted by the board in November 2015. The Policy Committee has continued its ongoing review of library policies and will soon take up a review of Board by-laws. In February, the Board accepted Director Burke's report on our communications tools and social media presence. That report identified a number of areas for potential improvement, some of which have already been adopted, including the adoption of Instagram as a social media channel and the distribution of social media posting responsibilities to other members of the library staff.

Circulation and Collection

The Altamont Free Library lent out 24,877 physical and 2,894 digital items for a total circulation of 27,771 items circulated in 2017. This is a 4.4% decrease over our 2016 circulation.

Over the course of 2016, Altamont Free Library added 117 new library members, for an overall total of 2,185 patrons. We also added 868 items and withdrew 674 for a total collection of 13,334 items.

Social Media Outreach

In 2017, we expanded our social media reach significantly, with 92 new Facebook followers for a total 677, a 16% increase. We've also gain 114 Instagram followers since we began using that platform in March 2017. We have 452 Mailchimp email subscribers to our monthly newsletter.

Ongoing Programs

Toddler, Pre-School and Juice and Jammies Storytimes, Eat Around the World potlucks, adult book clubs, one-on-one computer tutorials, the annual Summer Concert Series, SongTellers Sessions concerts, presentations for the Altamont Seniors, kids & adult crafts, movies, financial literacy programs, trivia nights and community use of display case and meeting room art displays.

Programming Highlights

In 2016, we had a number of highly successful programs, a small sample of which includes:

- Mindfulness for Parents Workshop with Peter Brabant
- Syrian refugee household goods drive
- Birdfeeder Building
- Patio Ribbon Cutting in June

- Museum in the Streets unveiling in July
- New Art Display system finally installed
- Basket weaving workshops with Karin Kuck
- Easter Egg dying
- SRP Kickoff with Assemblymember Pat Fahy
- Summer Reading Program, July 8 to August 19
- Children's Stop Motion Animation Workshops
- Summer Concerts in the Park, June 30 to August 4
- Wildlife Rehabilitation program with Kelly Martin
- Altamont Fall Festival
- Library Lights
- Gingerbread House Decoration
- Victorian Holiday Celebration & Santa Train

Finances

Primary sources of income were: Town of Guilderland: \$53,000, Village of Altamont: \$55,000, Town of Knox, \$7,500. A full copy of the report is available at the Library.

Major Grants and Donations

The Library received a number of notable grants and program-related donations throughout 2017. Notably, we received a \$5,000 Bullet Aid appropriation from Senator George Amedore which we will use purchase new desktop computers for the patrons and staff, in addition to a more powerful wifi access point. We also received notable contributions from the CM Fox Real Estate Community Fund, the Stewart's Holiday Match Program, the McKesson Foundation, Network for Good (Facebook), the Eli Lilly Foundation, Clare Field, Pat Spohr, Tom Sands and Paul and Barbara Jeffers, among many others.

We were also the recipients of generous memorial donations in honor of a few longtime patrons, including Marica Perlee, Ruth Painter, and Todd Pulliam.

The Year Ahead

2018 promises to be a year of exciting change and transition for Altamont Free Library.

In 2018, we will conduct a thorough review of the library collection, weeding underutilized materials and filling gaps in our coverage. We will begin distributing passes to several local museums paid for with funding from the Todd Fulliam Memorial Fund, and we will seek additional funding to expand that program. We will record, archive and distribute oral histories of many of our community members in honor of Altamont Village Archive Curator Marijo Dougherty. We hope to end 2018 with a newly redesigned website.

Over the course of the year, we anticipate that we will engage in a process of recruitment for new Trustees to fill vacancies on the board. We will examine our foundational documents, including a thorough review of our Board's by-laws. We will push for a final resolution to outstanding issues with our New York State Charter, and we will engage in a leadership summit to craft a new Mission Statement.

In 2018, we will welcome in a new Treasurer, Trustee Elizabeth A.M. Searing, and we will make necessary changes to our financial accounting and reporting practices, supported by Bookkeeper Nihla Zarook.

We will need to transition to new Board leadership in anticipation of Board President Christine Carpenter's 2019 departure from the board, with the goal of making that transition as smooth as possible. We will also look to recruit a new chair of the Building Committee, anticipating Trustee Bob Haggerty's 2019 departure from the board.

Finally, we will endeavor to complete all of the remaining tasks outlined in our 2016-2018 Long Range Plan, and engage in the necessary preparations for the crafting of a new three-year Long Range Plan, to take effect at the beginning of 2019.

We believe that this ambitious agenda for 2018 is well within our power to achieve. In order to accomplish all that we must accomplish, we will continue to call upon the energy and creativity of our Trustees, the dedication of our library staff and the unflagging support of our beloved community.