

Report to West Burlington City Council  
Rebecca Teater, BPL Board Liaison  
June 15, 2023

Although a liaison report is not due this month, there are topics concerning the library that need to be shared without delay. Those include library funding, the July 4 event, the creation of a wheat paste mural at the library, and summer programs.

As members of the West Burlington City Council know, the state legislature has passed bills that affect local governments' funding options. Burlington is no exception. Depending on what the Burlington City Council decides to do with the tax dollars it receives after implementing the property tax reforms, the library could lose some (possibly, a good portion) of its local funding. However, this will not affect what West Burlington pays to have access to Burlington Public Library services. The community has a ten-year agreement, with funds being paid to the library semi-annually. (The library just received West Burlington's second payment for this fiscal year.)

Last year, the Burlington Public Library had a booth at West Burlington's July 4 celebration. That will happen again this year. Library Director Brittany Jacobs will be present from 6:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. to share information about library services available. It would be helpful to her to know prior to July 4 where she is to set up her display.

Under the direction of artist Isaac Campbell and with help from community members, the library plans to have a wheat paste mural made on the retaining wall by the library. The mural will be created using photographs from the old library and pictures showing the move to the new library. Anyone with photos taken at the old library (e.g. pictures of his/her children at a story-time event there) are invited to share those to help create this "vintage" artwork; photos can be sent to the library via email. Preparation of the wall and sorting pictures will be done July 14; the installation will take place July 15, which is during Vintage Market weekend in Burlington.

The mayor and city council members should have received the library's summer 2023 newsletter, which lists and describes the programs being offered at the

library in June and July; it also includes a calendar of the events for easy reference. Events are available for people of all ages, and many require no registration.

June programs specifically for children include Brick Masters, a LEGO building experience; Mindful Mondays, which provides fun evenings of yoga and emotional regulation skills; H2O Yeah!, playing and learning with water; and Sensory Explorers, a program designed for babies and toddlers. For all of these, no registration is required. Tweens can participate in Pokémon Swap, trading Pokémon cards and doing other activities; All Iowa Reads Kids, at which author Niki Smith will read a selection from her book *The Golden Hour* (via Zoom); Colaboratory, a STEM exploration in the Create Space at the library; and What's Your Game, which provides a chance to play old-fashioned card games. A special opportunity for teens is Teen Volunteer Training; after signing up and completing training, teens can earn Silver Cord hours shelving books and helping with summer reading events. Information about these and other summer programs, including programs for adults and people of all ages (e.g. Friday Flicks), is available in the summer newsletter; copies of the newsletter are at the library.

Burlington Public Library is open Mondays through Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library will be closed on July 4.

## ***State of America's Libraries: Special Report (2 April 2022)***

**Stephanie Hlywak**

Director of the Communications and Marketing Office  
American Library Association

Last year, we approached this report through the lens of the global pandemic, and to be honest, we thought the world would be pretty much back to normal by the time this edition of the *State of America's Libraries* was published. Well, here we are again.

As we wrote last year, the most accurate way to tell the stories of America's libraries is through the lens of the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19. That's obviously still true. But what's changed over the last year is equally worthy of our attention.

In 2021, libraries found themselves at the center of a culture war as conservative groups led a historic effort to ban and challenge materials that address racism, gender, politics, and sexual identity. These groups sought to pull books from school and public library shelves that share the stories of people who are gay, trans, Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants, and refugees. But we know that banning books won't make these realities and lived experiences disappear, nor will it erase our nation's struggles to realize true equity, diversity, and inclusion. That's why the work of libraries is more essential than ever. Books reach across boundaries and build connections between readers. Reading—especially books that extend beyond our own experiences—expands our worldview. Censorship, on the other hand, divides us and creates barriers.

Undoubtedly, the most widely read part of this report will be the “Top 10 Most Challenged Books” list. And while those titles tell one story, there is another we hope you'll stick around to read: that of the resilience, determination, and innovation of library workers amid an ongoing pandemic, fraught political divides, and budget challenges that force many to do more with less year after year.

This report is not intended to be comprehensive. It's a history we are writing in real time. Now more than ever, we hope reading it inspires you—to get involved in the fight to protect the freedom to read, to advocate for libraries, and to speak up for the value they bring to our communities.