



BELFAST FREE LIBRARY *www.belfastlibrary.org*
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October 16, 2023

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Dear Friend,

This year, I was honored to be elected President of the Belfast Free Library Board of Trustees. Having already served three years on the Board, I have had the chance to become familiar with the library. Having worked for more than 40 years as a librarian (including a stint at the University Maine in Orono), I also have some context for recognizing how good the Belfast Free Library staff, collections, and services really are. *(See back page for a list of this past year's achievements.)*

Use of library resources and facilities has now returned to or exceeded pre-Covid levels. Circulation of library materials has increased to over 52,000 books a year, and attendance at library programs has reached over 5,200 adults and 4,100 children and young adults.

As for cooperation with local business and community organizations, I cannot think of another library where the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce is a member of the Library Board of Trustees and the Director of the Library is the President of the Rotary Club.

In short, the Belfast Free Library continues to improve in its role of supporting local residents, institutions, and organizations; preserving unique local resources; and providing access to resources for business, employment, education, self-improvement, leisure and entertainment.

As its name implies, the Belfast Free Library provides free access to resources and services for local residents and low cost access to resources for other people.

As always, the library relies heavily on the annual appeal to fund the purchase of library books and other materials. The Board of Trustees therefore respectfully requests that you generously support your library. Your gift ensures that the library will continue to meet and improve local access to library materials and services.

With gratitude,

Dick Swain, *Library Board President*

Your donation can also be made at the library's website www.belfastlibrary.org

The Belfast Free Library is a not for profit organization recognized as tax exempt under Internal Revenue code section 501(c)(3). Contributions to the Belfast Free Library are tax-deductible to the fullest extent established by law.

A BRIEF SAMPLE OF THIS YEAR'S ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDES:

- Improving access to national resources by providing Web access to news articles from the *New York Times*
- Improving access to local materials by digitizing the *Republican Journal* from 1922 to 1979 (soon, up to 2022).
- Responding to the closing of University of Maine's Hutchinson Center by providing space for Belfast Senior College classes.
- Providing meeting space and facilities for local interest groups and organizations, such as knitters, genealogists, and the Belfast Garden Club.
- Reaching out to children and youth by long-standing efforts such as the Summer Reading Program and by new cooperative programs with local public and private schools and home schoolers.
- Collaborating with the Belfast Historical Society to celebrate Belfast's 250th birthday.
- Engaging the entire Belfast community in a significant conversation about climate change. Grant funding for ABCD (All of Belfast Climate Dialogues) has ended and final presentations and a celebration took place at the end of August. The effort of the past three years to engage the community resulted in more than 40 programs attended by at least 2,000 people. Many of these programs are available on YouTube.
- Cooperating with the Belfast City Department of Parks and Recreation to plan the new Story Walk.

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