



# City of Homer

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)

Office of the City Manager

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## Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council  
 FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
 DATE: February 22, 2023  
 SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for February 27, 2023 Council Meeting

### Return to Juneau

At the time of this report, I am attending the Alaska Municipal League's winter legislative conference in Juneau. I am joined by Mayor Castner and Councilmembers Aderhold, Erickson, and Lord. The agenda for the conference includes presentations from numerous elected officials and State agency executives. We are also meeting with legislators in their individual offices to talk about priorities for the City of Homer.

### Sales Tax Update 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of Calendar Year 2022

Complete sales tax numbers for calendar year 2022 have been released by the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of Fiscal Year 2023) saw a 2.6% increase in taxable sales over the previous year and is expected to bring in approximately \$2 million in total sales tax revenue (not including remote sales tax). Year over year, the City's taxable sales increased 7.2% and should amount to approximately \$12.5 million in total sales tax revenue (not including remote sales tax). The chart below (published by the Borough) shows taxable sales for all entities within the borough collecting sales tax.

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Totals
<b>Year 2022</b>					
Seldovia	\$976,951	\$1,744,367	\$2,303,795	\$989,749	\$6,014,862
Homer	\$36,299,758	\$77,827,446	\$101,172,183	\$42,218,086	\$257,517,474
Kenai	\$61,624,319	\$79,967,139	\$88,845,665	\$74,181,082	\$304,618,205
Seward	\$17,369,593	\$62,459,008	\$87,677,358	\$18,794,482	\$186,300,442
Soldotna	\$61,058,785	\$77,209,406	\$109,067,307	\$71,464,092	\$318,799,590
Borough	\$222,280,216	\$402,256,222	\$545,582,919	\$257,832,071	\$1,427,951,428
<b>Year 2021</b>					
Seldovia	\$846,411	\$1,544,322	\$2,043,438	\$963,554	\$5,397,725
Homer	\$34,077,478	\$71,539,394	\$93,480,940	\$41,134,740	\$240,232,551
Kenai	\$60,664,356	\$76,511,978	\$84,681,697	\$72,433,401	\$294,291,432
Seward	\$15,782,733	\$53,738,399	\$81,034,345	\$18,497,772	\$169,053,249
Soldotna	\$59,209,295	\$75,808,900	\$101,951,279	\$71,429,985	\$308,399,458
Borough	\$206,324,193	\$367,279,005	\$502,422,365	\$251,701,471	\$1,327,727,034

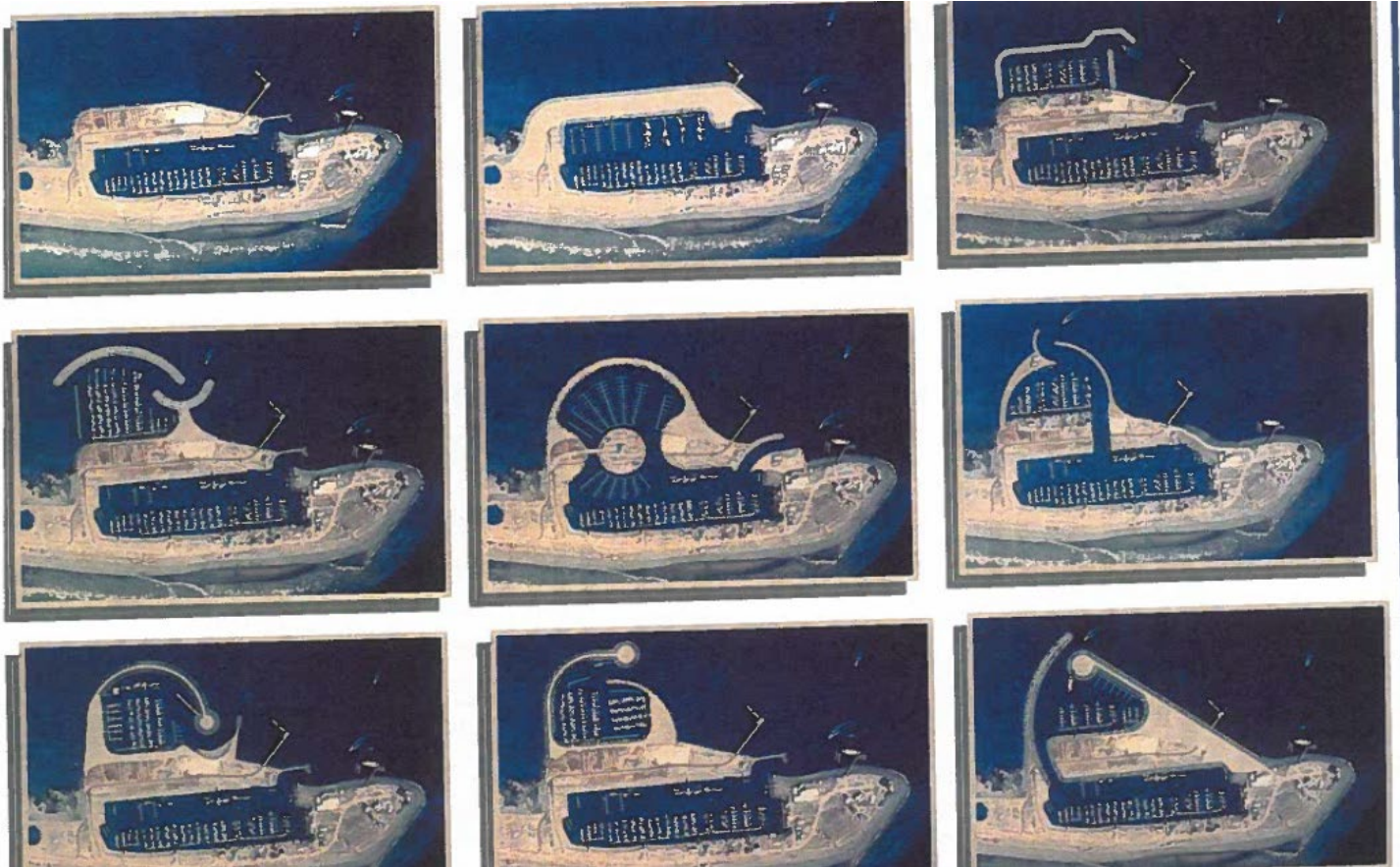
### Budget Prep

Staff has been hard at work putting together draft numbers for the FY24/25 Operating and Capital Budgets. I have gone line by line through the General Fund, Utility Fund, and Enterprise Budgets with department heads and division managers. Moving into March we will be assembling that information, along with the sales tax

forecasting we've been working on to get a complete draft operating budget to begin Council discussions on the next two-year budget.

### **Port Concepts of the Past**

I've mentioned a few times that we should all expect to see a number of different conceptual designs as the Army Corps goes through their process of completing a General Investigation on the Port expansion project. I recently came to be in possession of nine designs that were published back in 2008 when we first started working with the Corps on this project. I don't think any of the below would be remotely adequate for our large vessel needs today, but they at least show the creativity that can be applied in the investigation phase.



### **Library Annual Report for 2022**

Attached to this report is a document prepared by the Homer Public Library outlining the events, challenges, and successes the Library experienced in 2022.

### **Alaska Clean Water Actions Grant**

The City of Homer has been awarded a \$153,308 grant from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) program to design and construct the Beluga Slough Green Infrastructure Project. The total project is expected to cost \$234,620. This project is one of the four green infrastructure storm water management projects introduced in early 2022. It will capture sediment and other contaminants from one of Homer's primary storm drain systems, before the water is discharged into Beluga Slough, which in turn flows into the waters of Kachemak Bay, a designated critical habitat area. The remediation will be accomplished through the use of green infrastructure strategies, including a sediment/pollutant collection device, bio-swales, and wetland vegetation. The City has been collecting data related to water volumes to help with project scoping as well as design of the sediment/pollutant trap and swales. The City will collect water quality data before and after the green infrastructure installation to

document treatment effectiveness. The grant agreement and request for matching funds will be presented to Council soon.

### **Anchorage Boat Show**

I've heard Port Director Hawkins say many times that the Anchorage Boat Show feels more like the Homer Boat Show in Anchorage. I visited this year's iteration and confirmed that Homer is indeed the dominant presence at the show.



### **Tsunami Siren Network Expansion**

The Kenai Peninsula Borough's Office of Emergency Management has been working with Chief Robl and others to determine an appropriate location for a new siren. Working with Northern Enterprises Boatyard management, several potential locations were identified in the boatyard and transmitted to engineers for final planning. It is expected that installation will occur this summer and the new siren will provide coverage to the inundation zone located on Kachemak Drive at the northeast end of the Beluga Lake Drainage.

# Homer Public Library 2022 Annual Report



*Hundreds of people turned out for a memorial service for Duffy Murnane on June 12*

- Jan. 1: All normal library services are available, though masks are still required in the building. The balance in the Library Endowment Fund stands at \$38,740.34. Paintings by Briana Hume are on display in the fireplace lounge through the end of March.
- Jan. 10: The library begins offering wireless hotspots for checkout.
- Jan. 30: AP Literature students at Homer High School contribute the first-ever student submission to *Reading Between the Lines* on KBBI.
- Feb. 4: South Peninsula Amateur Radio Club (SPARC) presents

The year began with COVID finally waning, but things never slowed down in the library. Four major topics dominated 2022.

In the spring, staff and the public discussed reorganizing City offices, including combining the library and IT divisions into a new standalone department. Towards the end of the year, the public debated a petition to remove LGBT-related titles from the children's and young adult collections. The Friends of Homer Library (FHL) moved forward with upgrading the trail and outdoor facilities on the western part of the library lot, holding placemaking workshops in March and May, developing three designs by August, conducting open houses and a survey in October, and narrowing the proposals down to one by early 2023. Finally, the library saw extensive maintenance issues throughout the year, including problems with the roof, sprinkler system, HVAC computer, front-door wheelchair switch, boilers, siding, carpeting and furniture.

The library staff, FHL and LAB put forward enormous effort during this period, much of it unpaid. I wish to extend my personal gratitude for their dedication, professionalism and spirit of giving, without which the institution could not function. Thanks are also due to the many community members who turned out in force to share their opinions, volunteer their time, and participate in the life of their society.

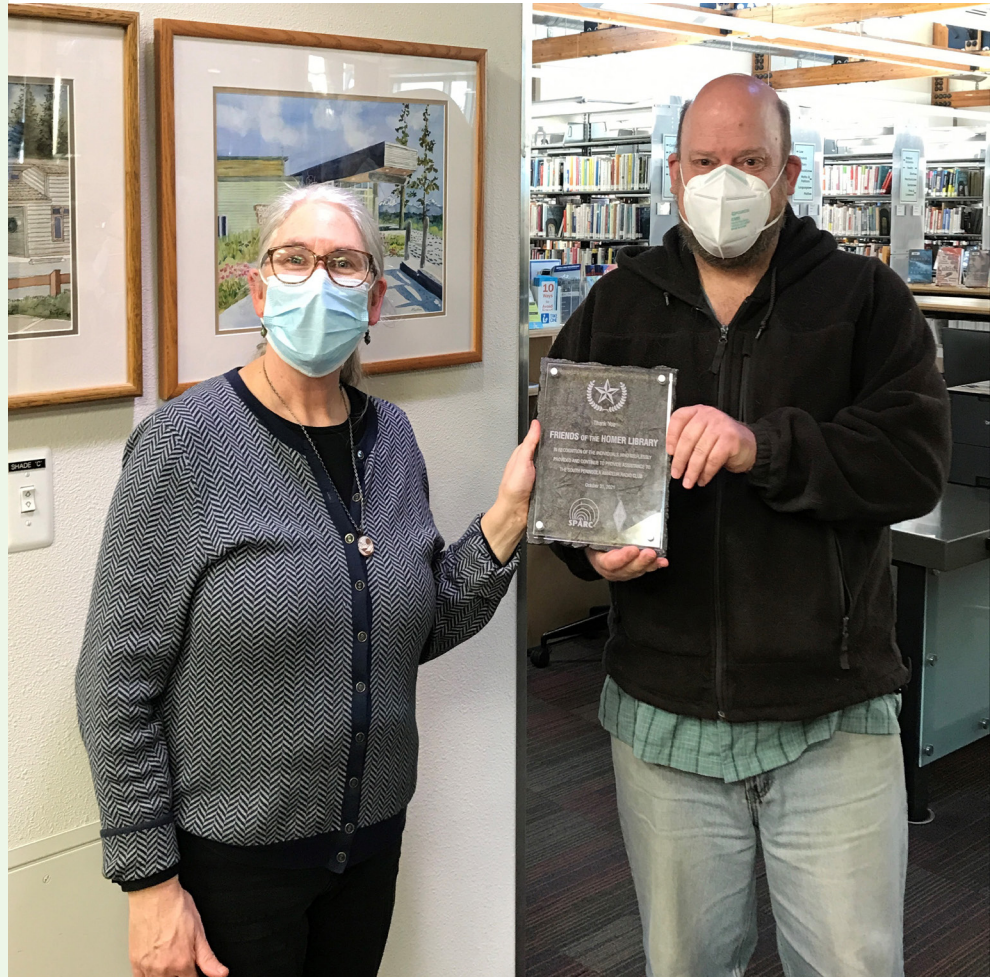
a plaque to FHL and a personal thank-you to Teresa Sundmark.

- Feb. 9: First meeting of the Teen Advisory Board.
- Feb. 14-16: Author Annie Boochever visits Homer, leading workshops and conversations about her book, *Fighter in Velvet Gloves*.
- Feb. 24-26: In collaboration with the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies, the library hosts children building kites for Leap into Science Week. On Saturday, kids try them out at Bishop's Beach, despite the calm weather.
- Feb. 26: Masks become optional in City buildings.
- Mar. 9: Sawyer Lowe, a high-school student, finishes refurbishing the Little Library outside the main building.
- Mar. 10: New chairs are set up in the children's room and the computers in the room are moved to a different corner.
- Mar. 11: Lunch with a Councilmember resumes meeting in person.
- Mar. 14: Spanish-language storytime begins.
- Mar. 16-17: City Council holds a two-day visioning session at the Pratt Museum. One topic of discussion is reorganizing the City's administrative structure, including establishing the Library and

## January

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Thanks to a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the library purchased 10 wireless hotspots for circulation. The hotspots went live on Jan. 10, and nine of them were checked out within the week. The same grant also paid for upgrades to the library's Wi-Fi network, coming in 2023.



*SPARC presents their thanks to Teresa Sundmark and the Friends of Homer Library, February 4*

## February

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The South Peninsula Amateur Radio Club (SPARC) presented a plaque to FHL and their thanks to Teresa Sundmark, recognizing their support during COVID. Susan Jeffres collaborated with Coastal Studies for a three-day kitemaking program called Leap Into Science, culminating in a test flight on Bishop's Beach.

The Friends of the Library brought author Annie Boochever to Homer for three days of events based on her book *Fighter in Velvet Gloves*, a biography of Elizabeth Peratrovich. She led a workshop and community conversation at the library, visited the high school for an author talk, and met virtually with students at FLEX and Ninilchik school.

IT divisions as a separate department.

- Mar. 18: Friday Storytime resumes meeting in-person.
- Mar. 20: Staff from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program meet with FHL and community groups to further develop plans for the trail on the western lot.
- Mar. 25: Teacher Ted Carter presents a program about African-American troops who helped build the Alcan Highway.
- April-June: Art in the Library displays mosaics by Franco Venuti in the fireplace lounge.
- Apr. 6: Wednesday Storytime resumes.
- Apr. 8: The Friends of the Library host their annual Celebration of Lifelong Learning.
- Apr. 19: The LAB discusses the proposed citywide reorganization plan.
- Apr. 19-20: Cartography of Community program, in cooperation with the Pratt Museum.
- Apr. 22: Two paintings by Deland Anderson go on display in the library.
- Apr. 26-May 15: *Going on a Bear Hunt*, by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxbury, kicks off the summer season on the StoryWalk®.



*Youth Services Librarian Cinda Nofziger demonstrates the proper technique for using the new chairs in the Children's Room, March 10*

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## March

Regular in-person programs resumed during March, including Spanish-language Storytime, Friday Storytime and Lunch With a Councilmember. The LAB and City Council voted to adopt new rates for printing and photocopying. February also saw the launch of a new library program, the Teen Advisory Board, which gives adolescents the chance to advise library staff on purchases and programming for the young adult section.

The city manager and department heads met with Council for a two-day retreat to set priorities for the City government, including possibly reorganizing the City's administrative structure. The proposed structure would split the Library and IT Divisions off from Administration and combine them into a standalone department.

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## April

For the first time since before COVID, FHL put on a full-sized book and plant sale, complete with auctioning off an eight-foot by eight-foot ficus tree.

The Celebration of Lifelong Learning featured a number of stellar performances and talks and wrapped up with a trivia contest. There was live music, flowers, poetry and a scene from *The Importance of Being Ernest*. Congratulations to Neviyah Reed, Olivia Glasman, Don McNamara and Donna Rae Faulkner, the awardees for 2022!

- Apr. 29-30: Friends of the Library Spring Book and Plant Sale.
- May 6: Hannah Clipp and Joel Such, the 2022 Schantz Scholars, come to the library to present the results of their bird research in partnership with the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival.
- May 14: The bookmobile visits the Safe and Healthy Kids Fair, launching registration for the summer reading program.
- May 15-Jun. 15: *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?*, by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page, is on display on the StoryWalk®.
- May 17: Jessica Golden begins working as a Temporary Library Aide. The LAB continues discussing the citywide reorganization plan and its impact on the library.
- May 18: FHL/RTCA placemaking workshop to plan improvements to the western lot.
- May 20: The first two Little Libraries open for business at Karen Hornaday Park and Mariner Park.
- May 31: Sam Nofziger describes the experience of climbing Denali.
- Jun. 4-Jul. 30: Summer reading program in the library includes the summer reading challenge, wildlife bingo and the Homer scavenger hunt, among many other programs.

## May

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The Safe and Healthy Kids Fair signed up 95 families for the summer reading program and roughly 150 kids went through the bookmobile, while staff and FHL volunteers provided music and activities. The bookmobile visited a number of schools in May, including Chapman, McNeil Canyon, Little Fireweed, Big Fireweed, West Homer, Voznesenka and Paul Banks.

Council approved a resolution adopting a revised Facility Use Policy. The LAB continued discussing the proposed citywide reorganization; members of the public presented testimony and boardmembers contributed their thoughts in writing.

City Parks staff installed the first two Little Free Libraries, which now stand in five parks and outside the library building. Funded by a grant from the IMLS, the libraries are partly stocked by library donations, partly by donations to the Parks Division, and partly by patrons dropping off materials in the cabinets.



*The first Little Free Libraries in City parks were set up on May 20*

## June

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On June 12 the library hosted a memorial service for Duffy Murnane, including the dedication of a bench in her honor on the library grounds. Two hundred and twenty-five people attended in person, with a further 500 online. Community members raised funds for the bench, made by local artist Brad Hughes.

The summer reading program swung into high gear, with virtual author visits, crafts and games, scavenger hunts and Ruger the Reading Dog.

- Tuesdays, Jun. 7-Aug. 2: Outdoor adventures with the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.
- Jun. 12: Installation of the Duffy Memorial Bench on the south side of the library.
- Jun. 15-Jul. 15: *Chirri and Chirra* and *Chirri and Chirra Under the Sea*, by Kaya Doi, are the StoryWalk® books of the month.
- Jun. 20: Educator Ted Carter leads a workshop on Gullah and Geechee culture with students in grades K-6.
- Jun. 27 and 30: Author Dan Barrel virtually visits the library to talk about his books.
- Jul-Aug.: Art in the Library displays works by Thelma Gower, Audrey Wallace, Scott Ulmer, the Senior Friendship Center and the Brewer Family in the fireplace lounge.
- Jul. 1: The library director receives a petition to remove LGBT-related titles from the children's and young adult collections.
- Jul. 4: The bookmobile participates in the July 4 parade.
- Jul. 12: Authors Dimi Macheras and Casey Silver run a workshop about their graphic novel *Chickaloonies*, including active drawing practice.
- Jul. 15-Aug. 15: *What's Inside a Flower? and Other Questions About Science and Nature*,



*Friends of the Library Sara Reinert and Lyn Maslow march in the Independence Day parade*

## July

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The Alaska State Library granted Homer \$7,000 to purchase books and materials. Two new vending machines arrived, replacing the aging coinboxes at the print stations.

The July 4 parade featured the bookmobile and a procession of Friends of the Library volunteers. The summer reading program carried on with geocaching, coding, LEGO activities, more author visits, s'mores and storytime on the beach, and a blowout end-of-summer party.

The library director received a petition to remove the LGBT materials from the children's and young adult collections, but declined to act on it.

## August

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Equipment failures dominated the agenda in August. The HVAC computer died, leaving the building with no hot water and the ventilation running continuously. An airflow valve in the children's room stuck in the closed position, leaving the room frigid. The wheelchair switch on the front door broke (again). A roofer examined the library but suggested only the original manufacturer could make permanent repairs. Maintenance staff heroically replaced or repaired all kinds of equipment, but the trend towards increasing breakdowns is ominous.



by Rachel Ignatofsky, is on display on the StoryWalk®.

- Jul. 21: Storytime and s'mores at Bishop's Beach.
- Jul. 22: Beginning setup of new vending stations at the photocopier and printer.
- Jul. 29: End of summer reading program party.
- Aug. 15-Sep. 15: *Berry Song*, by Michaela Goade, is on display on the StoryWalk®.
- Aug. 18: David Bernard accepts the newly-created position of Deputy Library Director.
- Aug. 30: Cinda Nofziger and the bookmobile visit Karen Hornaday Park for the KPBSD Back to School Celebration.
- Sep. 1: The library officially joins the Library Speakers Consortium, which offers virtual author talks from across the nation.
- Sep. 9-10: Friends of the Library Book and Plant Sale.
- Sep. 15-Oct. 15: *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything*, by Linda Williams, closes out the StoryWalk® season.
- Sep. 19: Building maintenance staff remove the last plexiglas panels from the library.
- Sep. 21: Rachel "Ray" Ball, Linda Martin, Jeremy Pataky and Marybeth Holleman read their poetry for the Alaska World



*The last plexiglas panels in the library come down on September 19*

## September

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The library received \$8,058 from the Alaska State Library to replace the microform reader. The staff, Friends and LAB debated whether to adopt a formal policy on collaborations between the library and charity groups, but chose to stick with informal guidelines for the moment.

Public events packed the calendar. The fall book and plant sale led to an ongoing summer plant sale to match the permanent, ongoing book sale. The Alaska World Arts Festival provided four poets for a reading. Local authors Richard Chiappone and Tom Kizzia discussed their writing process in a video recorded for Alaska Book Week. FHL partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to host a forum with the candidates for city council.

The library signed up with the Library Speakers Consortium, which offers two or three virtual author talks each month. Patrons can participate in the talks live, as well as viewing the recordings afterwards.

Arts Festival.

- Sep. 23: Local authors Richard Chiappone and Tom Kizzia host a conversation for Alaska Book Week.
- Sep. 28: In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the Friends of the Library, the library hosts a candidate forum for council seats.
- Sep. 30: First beekeeping program.
- Oct.-Dec.: The Art in the Library program displays works of fiber art by Linda Robinson.
- Oct. 1: The library subscribes to the Kanopy streaming video service, which offers access to movies and tv programs online.
- Oct. 4: Paul Graci, author of *Surviving Bear Island*, visits the library.
- Oct. 7 and 8: Open house for the Library Western Lot project.
- Oct. 14: Astronomy presentation by Stephanie Cortes.
- Oct. 20: The Independent Living Center loans a new book magnifier for study room 5.
- Oct. 25: Petition filed with the City Clerks, requesting that certain titles be moved from the children's and young adult sections to the adult collection.
- Oct. 26: Storytime features a visit by Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*, played by the library's



*Belle (aka Regina Johanos) thrills young fans at Storytime on October 26*

## October

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The Kanopy streaming video service went live at the beginning of the month, offering patrons a limited number of monthly video checkouts. The selection includes a range of movies and documentaries, as well as a special section for kids.

The Food for Kids and Teens program ceased distributing through the library and refocused on serving schools. FHL boardmembers facilitated two open houses about the western lot project and received excellent feedback from the general public. The Independent Living Center kindly gave the library a long-term loan on a book magnifier.

On Oct. 25, petitioners formally submitted their request to the city, asking the LAB to reverse the library director's decision and move LGBT titles out of the children's and young adult sections. Three days later, they provided a list of specific titles for reconsideration, which eventually grew to include 55 items.

Two library staffers featured in Pier 1's *Beauty and the Beast*. Regi Johanos (Belle) came to Storytime in character on Oct. 26. Jessica Golden also starred in the production as the bookseller and one of the napkins.

own Regina Johanos.

- Nov.-Jan.: Members of the Library Advisory Board read through the 55 titles being challenged by petition.
- Nov. 9: Jessica Golden's last day as Temporary Library Aide.
- Nov. 15: The LAB hears public testimony on the petition.
- Nov. 28-Dec. 31: Giving Tree in the library entryway.
- Dec. 8: First Teens and Tweens Games Night.
- Dec. 21: Local author Madeline Veldstra reads her book, *A Christmas Parade*, as part of morning storytime.
- Dec. 31: The balance in the Library Endowment Fund stands at \$42,460.95. The year ends with fireworks and optimism for 2023.



*More maintenance issues: on Halloween, the library tilted 45° to starboard*

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## November

Hackers repeatedly attacked the library catalog and knocked it offline several times. Going forward, the catalog will be moved to a third-party hosting service, which will also allow for faster software upgrades and reduce the burden on City IT staff.

The LAB meeting was almost entirely taken up with public testimony regarding the petition. Dozens of people spoke in person and online, and the written comments amounted to nearly 350 pages. The meeting ran five hours, with a 45-minute break in the middle. LAB members postponed a decision until Jan. 17, giving boardmembers two months to read all the material.

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## December

The library, FHL and the Voznesenka school began collaborating on a trial program to deliver books to students. The school designated a coordinator to reserve materials for classes and pick them up from the library, then return them when the checkout period is over. Students will only be able to use the books on school grounds.

Patrons once again demonstrated their generosity to the library. Through the giving tree, patrons donated 46 new books to the library and purchased \$625 worth of gift certificates from the Homer Bookstore. The Library Endowment Fund raised \$1,634.97 from donations during the month, plus matching funds from an anonymous donor.

# Thank you!

Our deepest thanks to all those who supported the library over the past year. Many members of the public contributed their time, energy and money to guarantee the success of the institution. We here recognize those who donated to the library's long-term sustainability:

## **Library Endowment Fund**

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Anonymous (2)

Cynthia Baganov

Doug and Landa Baily

Dave Berry

Donna Brockschmidt

Brenda Dolma

Kate Finn

Marcia Kuszmaul

## **Friends of Homer Public Library Endowment Fund**

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Angie Newby

Ann Oberlitner

Mary Sanders

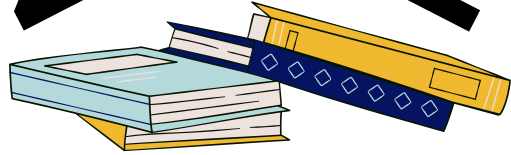
## **Friends of Homer Public Library Stewardship Fund**

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Annie Allman

Nelson Co

# 2022



... by the numbers at  
Homer Public Library

**91,487**

Visits to the library

**136,470**

Items checked out

**685**

New library cards issued

**13,309**

Patrons attended programs

**1,056** attended

Summer Reading events

**2,385** sessions

Study Rooms + Meeting Room

**27,828** sessions

Public computers + library WiFi

**2,413**

Volunteer hours logged

