

THE COMMUNITY  
**LIBRARY**

and Annual Report

# Dispatch

1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025



**BRING MEANS BRING**  
since 1955





## Dear Friends,

Seventy years ago, seventeen women imagined a library to serve the tiny towns of Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Triumph. They cleaned out a rough mining shack, pulling old paper from the log walls and sweeping stubborn dirt from the floor. They put a stack of books in the corner, and they began. It was a humble, scrappy start.

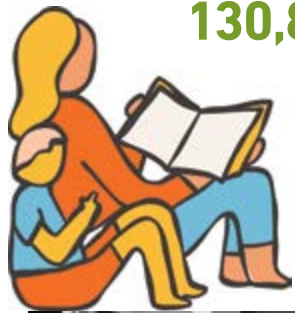
One year later, they smiled in front of a tractor, some holding handbags and one holding a shovel, as they broke ground on a building that would give shape to their dream and give space to the community to come together and read, and think, and talk to each other.

Now, seventy years later, The Community Library Association includes a library, a museum, a bookmobile, the historic Ernest and Mary Hemingway House and Preserve, and – still! – the iconic Gold Mine Thrift Store. The Library sees more than 120,000 visitors each year, and they come from down the street, across the valley, and around the world.

The energy of those seventeen women, their civic-mindedness and perseverance, their commitment to learning, their ability to be both independent and inclusive – their ethos drives the work of The Community Library through today. We might hold more cell phones than handbags, but we still stand next to each other, dedicated to the belief that *community* is a continual exercise in learning and caring.

**Jenny Emery Davidson, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director

**Library Visitors:**  
**130,866**

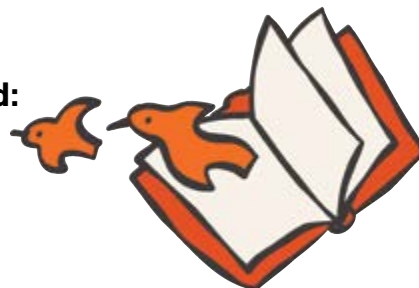


Upon completion of the new Community Library building on Walnut Avenue, Library founders Jeanne Lane and Hester Barlow (left), place the 1957 datestone. This building now houses the Gold Mine Thrift Store.



The Library gave away 450 books at the annual Book around the Block! community celebration.

**Items Circulated:**  
**131,181**



# The Library's mission is to **bring** information, ideas, and individuals together to enhance the cultural life of our community.



## **Bring means bring. Not sit back or wait.**



The Beatty family joined the festivities during the Library's Dog Man Party, celebrating the popular children's book series.





## A Story of Objects

By Ellie Norman

Wood River Museum Collections Specialist

**A**t the Wood River Museum of History and Culture, caring for the collection means more than storing objects on shelves. Because most of our holdings were donated by community members, we hold them in trust for the public. Stewardship involves both protecting artifacts in safe environments and building knowledge about them...

**...so that we can share not just the objects themselves, but also the stories they tell.**

I feel a deep sense of fulfillment knowing this work supports our community today while preserving history for future generations.

Whenever possible, the Jeanne Rodger Lane Center for Regional History brings artifacts into public view so that they can spark new conversations. Earlier this year, I helped curate *Tracks & Traces: Reconstructing Chinese History in Southern Idaho*, an exhibit created alongside The Community Library's 2025 Winter Read selection, *Four Treasures of the Sky* by Jenny Tinghui Zhang. The historical novel follows a young Chinese woman navigating life in the American West under the shadow of the Chinese Exclusion Act, and our exhibit explored the daily lives of Chinese Idahoans in the late 19th century.

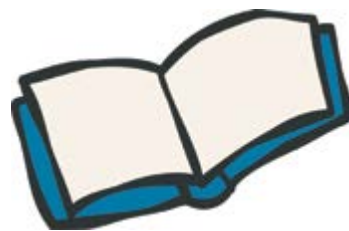
One object I worked with, pictured here, was a ceramic liquor bottle, borrowed from the Blaine County Historical Museum. It was produced by the Wing Lee Wai distillery in Guangdong Province—the same region many Chinese immigrants to Idaho called home—and once contained Ng Ka Pi, a potent herbal baijiu or “white spirit.”

Researching this artifact gave me a chance to trace connections across continents and centuries.

The bottle offers a reminder of the cultural traditions that Chinese migrants carried with them and sustained in the Wood River Valley, even while facing exclusion from the wider community. For me, that is the heart of collections work: finding meaning in objects and helping others see themselves in history.

Artifacts in the  
Regional History  
Collection:

**55,000+**



Check-outs of  
the novel  
*Four Treasures  
of the Sky*:

**413**



Museum Community Engagement Manager Kristine Bretall offers visitors a glimpse into the migration patterns of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

## New and Old Routes

By Mary Tyson

Director of the Jeanne Rodger Lane Center for Regional History

**L**ast spring, the Wood River Museum of History + Culture added a new map to its Tribal Room exhibit, “Central Idaho and Beyond: Shoshone-Bannock Homelands.” Showing the traditional migratory movement of the Shoshone and Bannock peoples, the map tells the story of their once expansive territory that extended across Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and Oregon. Mapped river systems, directional arrows, and illustrated plants, animals, and fish, enliven their deep bond for these abundant lands.

With the invaluable help from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes’ Language and Culture Preservation Department, the Museum is pleased to announce Fort Hall Business Council’s seal of approval for this map and the Tribal Room exhibits.

For the past two summers, the Library has organized a day-long trip to Fort Hall for the Annual Shoshone-Bannock Indian Festival. Our guides were our partners on the map, Bailey Dann and Nolan Brown. The outing was the Library’s first adventurous program off-site. Participants’ feedback was “more field trips, please!” Stay tuned...



National awards won:

**1**

Visitors to the Wood  
River Museum:

**22,350**



Distinct Library  
wi-fi guests:

**28,349**

The Community  
Library

Winner!



In June, The Community Library received the John Cotton Dana Award for Public Relations—the American Library Association’s highest honor.



# Bring means bring ...

# with curiosity and courage



# Nurturing Gardens of Reading



By Lilianna Bridge  
Outreach and Bookmobile Librarian

On any given day you might see our colorful new Bookmobile rolling throughout the Wood River Valley ... and beyond. The Community Library teamed up with The Hunger Coalition eight years ago and created our first mobile library as part of their Bloom Truck. This mobile library flourished beyond our wildest dreams. As the program evolved, we worked hard to acquire our own Bookmobile! The Bookmobile will now be running year-round, bringing books, literacy, and enrichment to kids and families.

The Bookmobile travels throughout Blaine and Lincoln Counties, fostering literacy and an atmosphere of hope and optimism for all who take part.

Being granted the opportunity to be the Outreach and Bookmobile Librarian has truly been a blessing. Seeing firsthand the impact of this mobile library is something that I will forever cherish.

My most joyous takeaway from our first summer program took place on the very last day. As I arrived in the rural town of Carey, I set up the Bookmobile and went outside to interact with the kids. I suddenly felt a small tap on my shoulder. I turned around to see David, one of my dear patrons, holding up a carrot that appeared to have just been pulled out of the ground. The young boy, grinning from ear to ear, let me know that he had brought me a carrot from his very own garden. He added that the carrot was grown especially for me, and he couldn't wait for me to have it.

That carrot serves as a real-life reminder that whether you are nurturing a community, a love of reading, or a garden, it will flourish with the energy you put into it.



Miles the Bookmobile traveled this summer:  
**4,032**



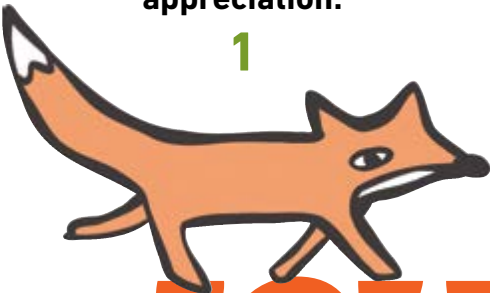
Bookmobile library cards issued:  
**557**

Bring means bring ...



Homegrown carrots given in appreciation:

**1**



with **JOY!**





# Nathan Hale's "Hazardous" Visit

By Martha Williams

Director of Programs and Education

Haley Christianson

Children's Librarian

One March afternoon in The Community Library's lecture hall, writer Nathan Hale spoke to 130 people, aged eight and beyond. The author and illustrator of more than twenty books for young readers, Hale is best known for his *Hazardous Tales*: thrilling stories from American history told in graphic novel form.

He'd come at the invitation of the Library and Wood River Middle School (WRMS) librarian Samantha Mora to spend two weeks as the Writer-in-Residence at the Hemingway House, a program managed by the Library.

Hale ruptured his Achilles tendon just before arriving in Ketchum, so instead of skiing in his free time he gleefully met with hundreds of local students from WRMS to Hemingway and Syringa Elementaries to The Space.

Drawing as he spoke – his live-action sketches projected to the big screen – Hale told the crowd about his newest projects and welcomed young artists to join him at the podium.

Kids came who had read all of Hale's books. Kids came who hadn't yet read any. They asked him their burning questions, such as:

**Q: How long does it take to draw all the pictures for a book?**

**A: Sixty-eight days for the last one!**

**Q: When did you realize you wanted to become an author?**

**A: Long ago at his local library where he read and reread *Where the Wild Things Are*.**

"I wanted to go on that island and have a wild rumpus with the monsters," said Hale. "But I knew it wasn't real and that the only way I could experience something like that was drawing it myself."

**Q: Are you related to the spy Nathan Hale?**

**A: Maybe.**

**Q: How many books have you sold?**

**A: Two million in 12 years!**

Near the end of the program, several teenagers rushed in from their shift at a local coffee shop to meet Hale and get their books signed, too.

"I'm so happy that you guys are interested in history," Hale told the families gathered at the Library. "If you keep reading 'em, I will keep writing 'em."



Graphic novels  
in the collection:  
**1,841**



Hale's presentation engaged readers of all ages.



Program attendees  
of all ages:  
**17,804**



Hale invited his readers to draw with him at the podium.

## Bring means bring ... with creativity and care





Norma Shearer cycles donations to the original Gold Mine in support of The Community Library, 1955.

# Many Hands: The Gold Mine Keeps Growing

When the Gold Mine Thrift Store first opened in 1955 to raise funds to build a library, the film star Norma Shearer was one of the first to donate items to be sold. She was also one of the first customers - buying back a knitted bag she had donated!

Shearer was one of many people who helped to get the Gold Mine started. Many hands scrubbed and hammered, painted and swept to convert the rough cabin into a spry retail location. Sabala Cleaners laundered donated items for free. Local Camp Fire Girls collected used goods to be sold. One of them, Penny, now in her 70s, remembers the excitement as a little girl of stepping on a plywood plank to cross a muddy patch of road to get to the Gold Mine's small wooden porch. Inside, she remembers, the children gathered in a circle to listen to a story while their mothers also tended the store.

The Gold Mine has continued to be a vibrant part of the Sun Valley area, as the line down the block for the annual ski opening attests. It's a lively social hub, a powerful vehicle for recycling tens of thousands of goods each year, and a vital



component of the Library's funding structure. In addition, each year the Gold Mine donates hundreds of items to people in need, through a variety of nonprofit organizations as well as directly.

Over the past two years, The Community Library Association has invested in the Gold Mine's infrastructure to make sure it continues to thrive. The roof has been replaced, the front entrance has been made more accessible, and the drop-off area in the Alpine Way alley has been improved for safety and ease. A few people, as Norma Shearer did, still drop off their used wares by bicycle, but many more come by pick-up trucks and SUVs. Like her, they often smile brightly.

It may seem like a small gesture, dropping off an outgrown jacket or a coffeemaker that is no longer needed, but it can make someone else's day when they "find it at the Gold Mine," and it helps the Library's work to flourish. Many hands continue a great Sun Valley tradition.

Gold Mine and  
Consign shoppers:  
**226,451**



Items purchased to help support books, literacy,  
and programs at The Community Library:  
**234,166**

Bring means bring ...

# Together, We're Writing What's Next

By Carter Hedberg  
Director of Philanthropy

This year, The Community Library is celebrating its 70th anniversary, and I can't help but think back to our extraordinary beginnings. Seventy years ago, seventeen women came together with a bold idea: to create a library for everyone, funded not by dedicated tax dollars, but by the generosity of neighbors and friends.

They believed in the power of books and ideas to change lives, and thanks to them, and to you, that vision is still alive today.

As I look around the Library, I see children discovering the magic of stories, teens gathering in safe and creative spaces, adults diving into lifelong learning, and visitors connecting with our history. Every one of those moments is made possible because of your support. Truly, the Library has always been a partnership between this community and the people who care about it.

And now, here we are, seventy years later, still building on that foundation, still dreaming about what comes next. Together, we're creating new programs, preserving our past, and opening doors to the future. I feel so hopeful knowing that we're writing this next chapter side-by-side, just as our founders did with their friends and neighbors in 1955.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable story. I'm so grateful to walk this journey with you.



<b>Income:</b>	
Donations	\$2,284,267
Gold Mine Net Contribution	\$1,012,927
Endowment Contributions	\$249,564
Library Services	\$19,002
Dedicated Tax Dollars	\$0
Total Income	\$3,565,760

<b>Expenses:</b>	
Library Operations and Programs	\$1,783,128
Outreach and Development	\$290,705
General and Administrative	\$1,247,422
Total Expense	\$3,321,256

<b>Special Project:</b>	
Bookmobile	\$325,000



Years of serving  
the community:  
**70!**



Support the Library's  
mission here!

with community generosity



# THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY



415 Spruce Avenue North  
PO Box 2168 • Ketchum, ID 83340  
[www.comlib.org](http://www.comlib.org)

## The Community Library

PO Box 2168  
415 Spruce Avenue North  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
[bringit@comlib.org](mailto:bringit@comlib.org)  
208.726.3493  
Mon, Fri, Sat: 10am-6pm  
Tu-Th: 10am-8pm

## Wood River Museum of History and Culture

580 Fourth Street East, Suite 130  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
[regionalhistory@comlib.org](mailto:regionalhistory@comlib.org)  
208.726.8118  
Entry to the Museum is FREE  
Tue-Sat: 10am-6pm

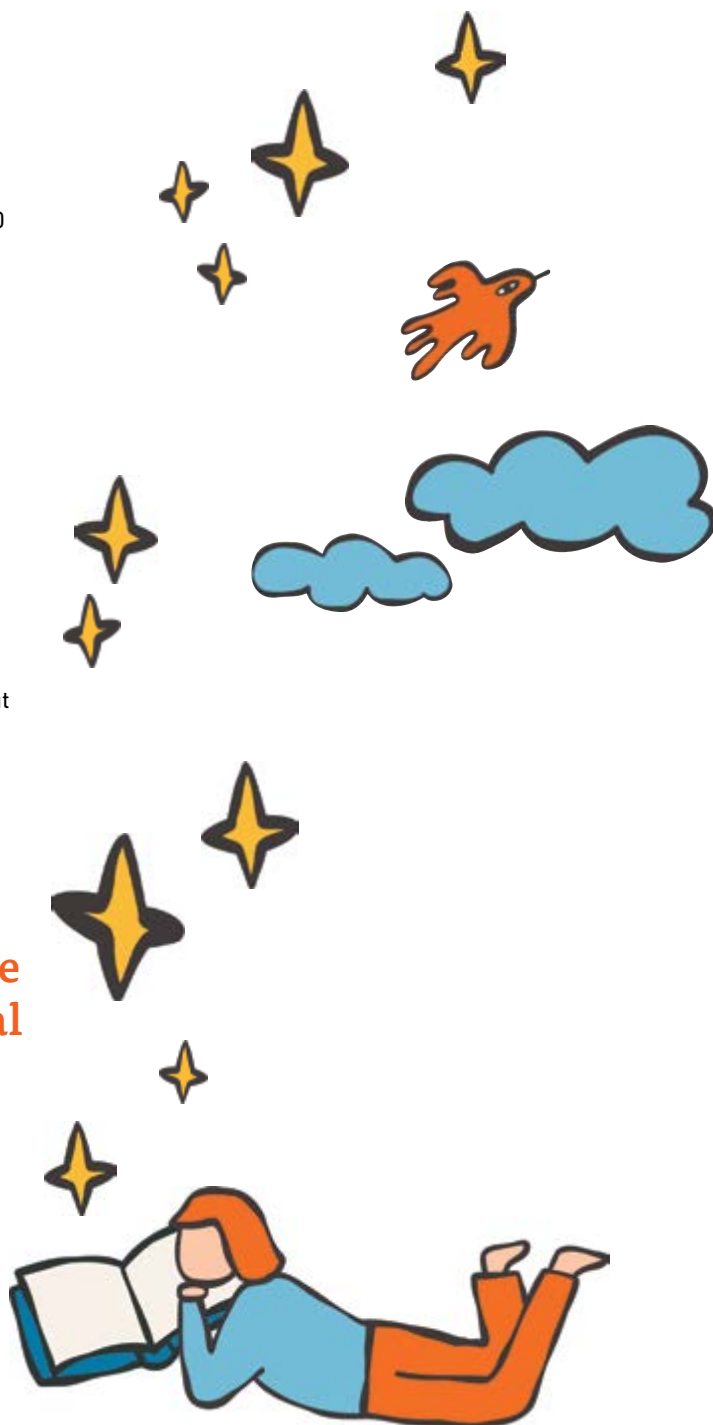
## Gold Mine Thrift

331 Walnut Avenue  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
[goldmine@comlib.org](mailto:goldmine@comlib.org)  
208.726.3465  
Mon-Sat: 10am-6pm

## Gold Mine Consign

Next to Gold Mine Thrift on Walnut  
580 4th Street East, Suite 120  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
[gmconsign@comlib.org](mailto:gmconsign@comlib.org)  
208.726.5544  
Tue-Sat: 10am-5:30pm

Read the complete  
Dispatch + Annual  
Report online.  
Scan here.



### On the Cover:

1956: Eighteen women  
prepare to break ground  
on a "ground-breaking,"  
privately funded library  
that would receive no  
dedicated tax dollars.