

MID-YEAR IN REVIEW

LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Making a great library even better!

Celebrating a Writer's Journey:
Melissa Kwasny

By Virginia Reeves, Foundation Board



Poet, writer, teacher, and 2019-2021 Montana Poet Laureate (along with Mandy Smoker Broaddus), **Melissa Kwasny**, was interviewed by Virginia Reeves at Grandstreet Theatre on January 27, 2020.

Melissa Kwasny is one of my literary heroes. Her ability to conjure the natural world—to translate such indescribable beauty into words—is unparalleled, as is her ability to connect that beauty to humanity. Every time I read (and re-read) her work, I suck in my breath and shake my head in wonder and appreciation.



So, you can imagine my immense joy at being granted the honor of interviewing Melissa for this year's *Writer's Journey*, an honor that began over a cup of coffee at the General Mercantile, where former-board-member Joe Furshong and I sat down with Melissa to talk about the event.

I'd met her only briefly and in passing before that date, and I was overwhelmed (in the best way) by the juxtaposition of her gentle demeanor and soft voice against the vivid language and vicious clarity of her writing. Melissa is kind and gracious and immensely humble. Too often, I've found that talent begets vanity, and Melissa is the most refreshing antithesis to that. She is much more interested in talking about her love of the non-human world, or her work with young writers, or the work of other writers she admires than she is about her own accolades (of which she has too many to list).

For the event itself, sitting in chairs hauled down from my own living room, on the stage of Grandstreet Theatre, Melissa and I simply continued the conversation we'd started at the Merc. She told us about her childhood and her writing mentors; we talked about balance; we talked about divides between cultures, between nature and humanity, between life and death. She read some of her work for us, including (at my request), her poem "Chokecherries," which hangs on my oldest daughter's wall. The audience brought in questions toward the end, and the entire experience felt like an intimate conversation in a larger-than-normal living room.

This was the first year we presented the event through conversation, let alone on a stage, but I doubt it will be the last.

Melissa Kwasny's journey as an admired and acclaimed writer started with poetry. Five remarkable books of prose and poetry were followed by a nonfiction investigation of the animal origins of clothing, *Putting on the Dog*.

On a wintery Monday night, 75 people came to listen to the intimate and engaging conversation between novelist—and Library Foundation board member—Virginia Reeves and Ms. Kwasny, and what a delightful time it was!

We thank Helena Civic Television for recording the presentation so it can be watched online. Visit <http://lclibfoundation.org> to learn more about Melissa Kwasny and to watch this video.

The Lewis & Clark Library Foundation was established in 1978 to support the Lewis & Clark Library system, beyond what tax monies can provide. In these times of increasing demand for information in all formats, private support is critical to maintaining excellent library services. It is the goal of the Foundation Board of Directors, through the caring and generosity of like-minded citizens, to maintain long-term financial support for the public library.

Visit us online at:
www.lclibfoundation.org

The Lewis & Clark Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Tax ID# 81-0419768



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The Library During Closures

By John Finn, Lewis & Clark Library Director

I hope this update finds everyone well and safe. Library staff looks forward to returning to at least limited services soon. As you can imagine, staff has experienced a great deal of upheaval over the last three months, as has the rest of the world. The construction was already causing many headaches and disruptions to our services at the Main Library, who knew what was coming around the corner? Not this library Director, I'll tell you.

Library staff has missed our interactions with patrons. But we have remained safe and hopefully contributed to flattening the curve of COVID-19 spread during our closure. Staff began returning to the Library buildings around Lewis & Clark County on Monday, May 4. They began by getting workplaces set up and cleaned in the now completed First Phase of construction at the Main Library and also setting up the Capitol Branch location for curbside holds pickup.

Holds pickup restarted on May 11 and patrons have been very happy with the limited service that allows. Library staff in Lincoln, Augusta, and East Helena are making telephone arrangements with patrons and holds are being left in those locations' vestibules during scheduled pickup times. In Helena, staff are making arrangements by phone and making holds available at the Capitol Branch at 1609 11th Avenue. The Capitol Branch is in the retail mall with the Dive Bakery, Leslie's Hallmark, and M-T Glass.

The one silver lining of being closed to the public is that Dick Anderson Construction has been able to ramp up their construction schedules. Work is being done at a fast, but safe pace. So far, Phase One is complete and many parts of Phases Two and Three are moving along quickly as well. All of the structural steel used in the seismic upgrades are in place. If you drive by the



The Helena library's new window facing west. Look at all that light!

building you can see the steel brace frames behind brand new windows on the west side of the building on Park Avenue.

I believe that the construction will be done quite a bit earlier than planned, and potentially under budget. The building may be complete before our new furniture arrives. We may have a beautiful, but empty building. We can't wait to welcome you all for a sneak peek as soon as it's safe inside the building and in our new world.

COMING THIS FALL!

2020 Stephen Ambrose Memorial Lecture

SCOTT G. HIBBARD

Beyond the Rio Gila is Hibbard's first historical novel, a coming-of-age, mid-19th century story about a young U.S. dragoon caught up in the Mexican-American War, the Mormon Battalion, a 1900-mile journey, and two pregnant laundresses. Originally scheduled for release this fall, publication was delayed until spring of 2021. Don't miss this sure-to-be engaging preview of a local author's first literary accomplishment. *Stay tuned for this event date and location!*



Have you considered a Planned Gift to the Foundation?

Call Library Director John Finn at (406) 447-6699 to learn how easy it is to make a planned gift. You can help ensure the lasting health and vitality of our county-wide public library for generations to come.

2019-20 Annual Campaign Update

Our donors have generously contributed **\$48,239** this year toward our goal of \$50,000. In addition to the 301 donations that we received since July 1, 2019, the Sarah McCabe Power Charitable Trust became a regular funder and has already given a total of **\$22,604** to benefit Lewis & Clark Library.

Donations are accepted year round and up to 30% of our total annual campaign revenue is invested in the Foundation's Permanent Endowment, currently valued at **\$654,668**.

THANK YOU for your continuing and generous support!



Greater Helena Really Gives

Despite the closures of venues that would normally host on-site giving opportunities, the Helena community really stepped up and showed how generous they can be during this year's 24-hour fundraising event April 30-May 1, 2020.

The Foundation received 20 donations for a total of \$2,050. *We really appreciate it!*

Foundation Gifts in Memoriam

Hugh Ambrose	Hester Duggleby	Shirley Griffin	Frank Kerins	Kayla Morris	Jim Standaert
Stephen Ambrose	Margaret Dunham	Kathy Grinde	Joe Kiely	Nancy Morrison	Joe Streckall
Josephine Green Axlund	Paul Dunham	Ellen Hallburg	LaVern & Franklin Kohl	Jim Nelson	Sheila Sullivan
Barbara Baarson	Norm Eck	Deb Hargraves	Mary Kay Latta	Jan Novy	Cathy Tilzey
Robert Bayuk	Doug Fandrich	Dale A. Harris	Mary Ida LeVasseur	Harry James Olcott	Joan Toole
Gordon Bennett	Mike Franklin	Bob Haugen	Thelma Bingaman Loggins	Maxine Olson	Bea Vogel
Jean Bowman	Lyle Earl Franzen	Arch M. Hewitt	Betty & Bill Lovelady	Jan Peccia	Joseph Walden
Jim Boyer	Maire Gallagher	Emily Stonington Hibbard	Cleve A. Malmstrom	Virginia Pruitt	Mignon Waterman
Katherine "Kathy" Brown	Joe Gans	Gilbert & Anthony Hodges	Isobelle & Philip Manley	Paul T. Ringling	John Wild
Clifford & Helen Cason	Jacque Gibson	Janice Hollow	Paul Douglas McGinnis	Carol Roberts	David K. Wilson
Sue Clarke	Lois Gilleran	Patricia Hunter	Anne McMurray	Amy Rolfe	Jeff & Jean Wilson
Steven Conrady	Maria Goebel	Inge R. Jacobson	Red Menahan	Mike Sebree	Esther Woodard
Beverly Cornish	Col. Joseph & Leila Goldes	Margaret Jean Ireland Jeffries	Kathleen "Kelly" Moore	Rita Ann Sheehy	Alex Worden
Dave Duensing	Karla Gray	Thomas Junkerman	Robert F. Morgan	Pearl W. Sprigg	

Foundation Gifts to Honor

Sam Amsbaugh	Jesse Butler	Terri Dood	Judy Hart	Helen McCaffrey	Maureen Rowe
Joan Bishop	Terry Cohea	Helen Fandrich	Helena High Class of 1960	Leo & Maureen Munson	Susan Russell
The Children's Garden	Lee Crawford	Becky Foster	Jody Everts	Dian Nickman	Julie Saylor
Preschool	Barbara Crosby	Joice Franzen	Rebecca Krantz	Lori Nordstrom	Sarah Sullivan
Chris & Sue Blakeslee	Jonda Crosby	Joe Furshong	Rose & Vic Krueger	Anne Pichette	Dennis Taylor
Library Foundation Board	Donna Davis	Ellen Garrett	Robert Laumeyer	Sid Poole	Judy & James Voorhees
Art Butler	Margaret Davis	Susan Hare	Lewis & Clark Library Librarians	Ardis Rice	Diane & Bud Williams

When you give to the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation, you may name a person, group of people, or organization you wish to honor or be remembered with your gift. If you wish, we will send an acknowledgement of your gift and will also include the honored/memorialized in this annual listing. The Foundation and Library hope to create a permanent place in the library where names of honorees and memorials will be publicly displayed.



We are grateful for the substantial and enduring support of the:

Bernice Boone Trust

Estate of Merlyn Rector

Sarah McCabe Power Trust

Estate of Ronald Schmid

Estate of John Sauer

Dorothy Thayer Trust



Beanstack

Thanks to a generous donation from the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation, the Library is pleased to offer Beanstack, a web-based platform where individuals, families, and groups can track their reading and participate in library reading and activity challenges.

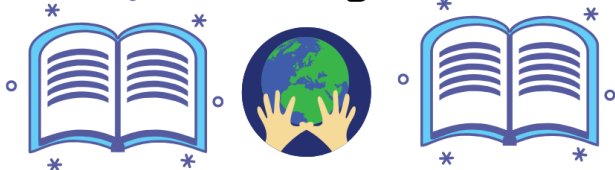
“We are very excited about Beanstack as it is a great way to engage readers of any age and any level in fun reading challenges throughout the year,” explained Lewis & Clark Library Children's Librarian Molly O. Hudson. “We challenge everyone to read 20 minutes each day.” Reading books, ebooks graphic novels, magazines, newspapers, and listening to audiobooks all count.

The first reading challenge began with the 2020 Winter Reading Challenge. Through the Beanstack app Lewis & Clark Library was able to join hundreds of other schools and libraries across the United States as participants in exciting reading challenges.

Participants earn virtual badges for registering and for every 60 minutes they read. Participation has been strong in the four months since the Library began participating in the online program. Since January there have been 179 reader registrations. Library staff have offered 6 different reading challenges/programs to the public and staff. There have been 288 books read, for 131,806 minutes, or 2196.7 hours, or 91.5 days, or 13 weeks. Readers are participating at the Bookmobile, East Helena, Helena, Augusta, and Lincoln locations with readers representing all ages, but with the majority being under 21.

Teen Services Librarian Heather Dickerson explains that “we're looking forward to using Beanstack this summer to offer a reading program across all of our locations; the digital platform is a perfect match for the current physical distancing situation. It will be a great way to motivate folks to get in that 20-30 minutes of reading every day that can really help prevent any further slide.”

Staying in? Join a reading challenge!



The Beanstack app can be downloaded for free in both the Android and iOS platforms. Visit the Library's webpage at <https://www.lclibrary.org/381/Beanstack> for more information.



2020

FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE BOARD
& YEAR-IN-REVIEW EDITOR

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Nikki DesRosier moved to Helena after retiring from a 35-year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She is an active volunteer in the Helena community, serving on many nonprofit boards, working as a docent at the Holter Museum of Art, and as a reading tutor at Kessler School. *Welcome Nikki!*

Pad McCracken has loved libraries since his childhood in Ames, Iowa and roaming the stacks at Rolvaag Library at St. Olaf College. He became Lewis & Clark Library's first Teen Services Librarian after moving to Helena in 2006, a job he held for seven years. He is currently employed at Legislative Services as a research analyst. *Welcome Pad!*

Lorna Milne is a writer, editor, and recently retired professor of writing and literature at Carroll College. She has published essays and short stories and in 2017 published her first book, *Evelyn Cameron: Photographer on the Western Prairie*, which was also the subject of the Ambrose Memorial lecture she gave as the 2019 speaker for this annual literary event. *Welcome Lorna!*

Brooks Robertson is a Strategy Consultant with Communication and Management Services LLC, and is a former Business instructor at Helena College. He is a University of Montana graduate, and went on to complete his education in Australia, and then England, where he earned a doctorate. We look forward to tapping his expertise in strategic planning and executive development. *Welcome Brooks!*