



LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

Making a great library even better!

Photo by Gib Myers, former American Prairie board member.

STEPHEN AMBROSE MEMORIAL LECTURE

Corrie Williamson

Revery Will Do: Imagination and Conservation on Montana's Great Plains

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 ~ 6:30 pm
Lewis & Clark Library, Helena, MT



Corrie Williamson was born on a small farm in southwestern Virginia and currently lives in Lewistown, Montana. She is the author of three books of poetry, most recently *Your Mother's Bear Gun* (2025), from River River Books. Her other books are *The River Where You Forgot My Name*, which was named a 2019 Montana Book Award Honor Book by the Montana Library Association and *Sweet Husk*, which won the 2014 Perugia Press Prize and was a finalist for the 2015 Library of Virginia Poetry Award. She is also co-editor of the eco-poetry anthology *Rocky Mountains Literary Field Guide*, forthcoming from Mountaineers Books in 2027.

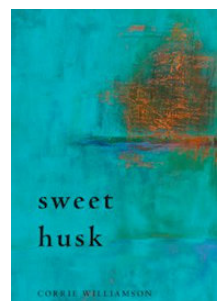
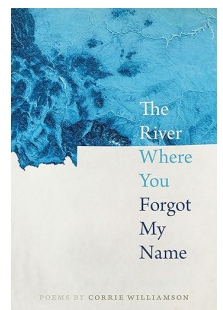
Corrie Williamson—author, teacher, naturalist, and Community Outreach Director at American Prairie—will blend poetry, history, and restoration ecology in a presentation that travels across time, geography, and literature. She will be introduced by Stephenie Ambrose-Tubbs, daughter of the late Stephen E. Ambrose, for whom the lecture is named.

Williamson, who grew up in the same small Virginia town as William Clark's first wife, Julia Hancock, will share her connections to the history and landscape of the Corps of Discovery and how it led her to Montana and to her work connecting storytelling, conservation, and communities. Her lecture will include work from her award-winning collections of poems as well as other important literary touchpoints and perspectives related to the Great Northern Plains' history and habitat.

Williamson will discuss her work at the conservation NGO American Prairie, and its mission to connect, protect, and share 3.2 million acres of Montana's grasslands. She will reflect on how this work extends beyond habitat and wildlife conservation to intertwine with the stories we tell about the past, what we can imagine and hope for the future, and how these together shape our paths forward.

Books will be for sale by the Montana Book Company and a book signing will follow the lecture. We hope you will join us!

For more about Corrie Williamson and the upcoming lecture, please visit
<https://www.lclibfoundation.org/stephen-ambrose-memorial-lecture>





LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY FOUNDATION

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The Lewis & Clark Library Foundation was established in 1978 to support Lewis & Clark Library 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 our county-wide public library system.

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

Tax ID# 81-0419768

It takes a community ...

By Bruce Whittenberg, Board President



We live in interesting and uncertain times. And we have chosen an interesting place. We choose where we live for a variety of reasons. A beautiful landscape. A good job. Warm and welcoming people. A social system that supports everyone. Wherever we live, we rely on each other to sustain, improve, and grow our community.

In Helena, our community recently showed support for our schools by approving bonds for construction and renovation. Helenans generously support the Helena Food Share, Myrna Loy Center, United Way, Florence Crittenton Home, Grandstreet Theatre, and so many more. Yes, our Lewis & Clark Library also relies on that support in Helena, Lincoln, Augusta, and East Helena.

Because of your support, this community will soon have a new bookmobile to serve the entire county. Your support through the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation has made it possible for the Library to provide services and spaces that might not otherwise be available. We open our hearts and our checkbooks to sustain, improve, and grow our community.

In a typical year, the main library, the three branches and the bookmobile welcome 300,000 visitors. We come together to attend readings, lectures, classes, or children's activities, and otherwise utilize the collections and services of the Library. A great library is at the center of a great community.

In the very near future, we will together embark on an effort to provide the community of East Helena with a new library branch that is so needed and deserved. I know that once again we will pull together and answer the call.

I want to express my appreciation to all who support our library and the many local organizations that rely heavily on that support. I would also like to recognize the service of the Lewis & Clark Library Board of Trustees and the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation Board of Directors for their volunteer service to this community.

Together, we take care of each other and are building a healthy, strong, and growing community.

Merging our Brand with a New Logo

Did you notice? Yes, the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation has a new logo! After a decade or two with the familiar black, tan, and brown oval with our iconic bison motif, the Foundation Board decided that something along the lines of the Library's logo would better reflect our purpose, which, plain and simple, is to help make our great Lewis & Clark Library even better.

We are so pleased to share a *version* of the logo that graphic designer Luke Duran created for Lewis & Clark Library several years ago, but with a distinctive difference. We love the logo that he created for the Foundation and we hope you like it, too.

So, during this brand transition, you'll see stickers and labels with the new logo on our envelopes and notecards until we use them up. We are saving the Foundation's funds for better things like the Library's wonderful Wish List (see page 6).

The Lewis & Clark Library Foundation was founded in 1978 and in almost two years we will celebrate 50 years of supporting Lewis & Clark Library. **Our new logo demonstrates that abiding partnership and our commitment to work alongside the Library staff and Board of Trustees to keep our beloved Library going strong.**

2025: A positive year filled with growth and promise ...

By John Finn, Director, Lewis & Clark Library

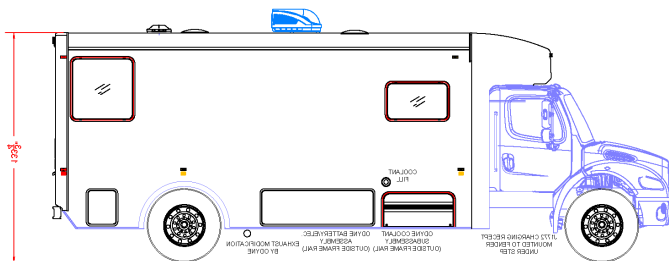


As Library years are concerned, 2025 is a big one. It is shaping up to be a very positive year filled with growth and promise for the future. I would like to use this space to tell you about two big projects: one coming to fruition this year and another just kicking off.

First, a project announced at the annual Donor Appreciation event in April 2024 is coming to an end very soon. **That project is the addition of a new bookmobile to the Library's vehicle fleet.** We started looking at the need to replace our aging bookmobile in 2021, and received a large gift from the estate of Bob Morgan, longtime friend of the Library and former Foundation Board member. That seed money led to an active fundraising campaign for the Foundation that raised \$39,165 from donors and \$5,000 from a Treacy Foundation grant. Combined with the generous Morgan bequest and monies from a Special Projects Fund, the Foundation will cover \$250,000 of the \$550,000 price tag for the new bookmobile.

Working with a consultant, Library staff issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a new bookmobile in early 2025. Staff selected the Indiana-based coachworks company High Level Enterprises to build and outfit a new machine for us to travel the roads of Lewis and Clark County. The bookmobile will sit on a Freightliner 27-foot chassis with a hybrid drivetrain.

The rig is being built as I write this and we expect delivery in the new year. Donors who generously responded to the New Bookmobile Campaign will be invited to a special ribbon-cutting event. And everyone who attends Donor Appreciation Night next April will be treated to a tour. We're all very excited and very appreciative of your support.



FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR THE NEW BOOKMOBILE

- Bob Morgan Estate: **\$172,000**
- Treacy Foundation: **\$5,000**
- Donors: **\$39,165**
- Special Projects Fund: **\$33,835**



The second, even bigger project is unfolding in East Helena.

After a couple of years of meetings and negotiations with the City of East Helena, the Library secured a piece of land on which to build a new library for the quickly growing community of East Helena. Set in JFK Park, between the municipal pool and a beautiful grove of cottonwood trees and walking trails, the site will provide a perfect spot for an 11,000-square-foot branch library building.

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was released on October 11. Responses are due to the Library by November 3. We will then select a team to design the new building and present a budget.

We are projecting a cost of \$6 million to design and build the new East Helena branch facility. With \$2 million in savings and the ability to borrow \$2 million, we are looking at a fundraising lift of the final \$2 million. We have been in discussions with the Foundation Board to help raise the needed funds and plans are to launch a Capital Campaign in the new year. We estimate that the project will be done within three years.

This is all very exciting. While this growth continues to move us forward, the Library continues to provide the citizens of Lewis and Clark County the best possible Library collections, services, and programs. Please let me know if you have questions, concerns, or ideas for improvement.

Launching Soon ... CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2026-2028

East Helena Branch Library



LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY
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Legacy Donors - FY 2021 - 2025

Listed on the next two pages are Lewis & Clark Library Foundation donors who, over the past five years, have contributed one or more gifts. The tiers represent the total of all donations given. We are grateful for the positive impact of our donors' generosity.

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Treacy Foundation

We appreciate the enduring legacy of support from all our donors, grantors, foundations, and community-minded businesses that have grown and sustained nonprofit organizations in the Helena area for decades. Your generous support is essential, invigorating, and really matters!

\$500 to \$999

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Up to \$99:

THANK YOU to the 129 donors who, together, contributed \$5,872 from 2021 to 2025.

And a special thank you to these supporting organizations over the years:

Blackfoot River Brewing Company

Helena Area Community Foundation & Greater Helena Gives

Montana Community Foundation

State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign



We are committed to transparency and accountability.

Visit our Guidestar-Candid profile at [guidestar.org/Profile/81-0419768](https://www.guidestar.org/Profile/81-0419768).

The Foundation funds new additions to the Library of Things

Every year the Foundation receives a Wish List from Library staff that provides wonderful hands-on materials and essential library services that truly enhance patrons' experiences and broadens outreach to a wider segment of our community. See below the full list approved for FY 2026. Thanks to Elizabeth Karr for her article on the Library of Things additions that the Foundation has made possible.

By Elizabeth Karr, Collections & Technical Services Manager

Thanks to the generous support of our Library Foundation, our Library of Things collection grew tremendously over the past year!

One of the most exciting additions was our new **Board Games Collection**, which became an instant hit—so popular that our shelves were nearly empty for months after launch. With that continued enthusiasm, we've requested additional funding this year to expand the collection even further.



We also introduced several accessibility-focused items to help patrons of all abilities enjoy the Library. Among them are **reader smart pens**, which scan and read text aloud in multiple languages—an invaluable resource for users with dyslexia or reading challenges.

Another exciting addition is our **LED Light Therapy Lamps**. For those of us who experience long Montana winters, these lamps mimic natural sunlight to help improve mood, boost energy, and support healthy sleep.



Coming soon, we're thrilled to launch **11 new Early Literacy Kits**. Each kit focuses on a theme—such as farm animals, transportation, or numbers—and includes books, activities, and toys designed to encourage families to learn and play together while developing the five key early literacy skills: Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing, and Playing.



Looking ahead, we're continuing to expand the Library of Things and Board Games collections across both the Helena location and our branches. Staff surveys are helping identify the most-requested items, with priority given to branch recommendations to ensure equitable access for all the communities we serve.

Your support continues to spark creativity, learning, and connection in every corner of our library system—thank you for making these innovative additions possible!

Adult Services	Spring 2026 Author Visit	\$10,000
Teen Services	Summer Library Program field trip and books for Shodair Library	\$6,000
Children's Program	New furniture and subscriptions for premium services: Beanstack, Spotify for Families, Soundtrack Your Brand music service - all branches	\$12,500
Collections	Library of Things and Collections	\$9,000
Collections - Teen	Nintendo Switches, Sony Playstations - all branches	\$4,000
Collections - System-wide	Board games and enhancements	\$4,000
Bookmobile and Outreach	General outreach enhancement funds, Bookmobile visits to branches, Detention Center Library collections	\$7,500
Augusta Branch	Book groups, Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Summer Library Camp	\$1,750
East Helena Branch	Reading Circle books, Program support, 25th Anniversary Celebration.	\$2,000
Lincoln Branch	Open Book Club, Adult/Teen Painting Events, Programming	\$1,500
Administration	Tribal Flag installation and indigenous art purchase, Library 2.0	\$5,500
Programs	Program enhancements - all branches	\$8,000
Staff Wellness	Calm app, snacks, special lunches - all branches	\$8,000
Systems	Audio/Visual upgrades for community rooms and consultant fees	\$2,500
TOTAL FY 2026 WISH LIST ITEMS FOR LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY		\$82,250

Reflections of our outgoing Foundation Board Members



LORNA MILNE: Six years on the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation board has shown me how beloved our county's libraries are. I had a vague sense of this before joining the board, but to visit the libraries in Augusta and Lincoln and East Helena, to hear about the weekly treks the bookmobile makes—this has brought the vitality of our libraries and the services they provide home to me.

Lately I've been bringing our grandchildren to the Library when they visit Helena, hanging with young parents and other grandparents. The Library provides a place for learning and visiting, so important in these northern climes when the cold weather hits. I've loved getting to know staff and fellow board members, as well as delighted in supporting the Library's needs—possible because we live in this generous, thoughtful community. Thank you.

NIKKI DesROSIER: When I started my tenure on the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation Board six years ago, we were still in the middle of the COVID pandemic. The Library was nearing completion of a full renovation—we had a beautiful, reborn library building and the doors were closed. The Foundation Board had Zoom meetings and hoped to someday resume author talks, poetry readings, workshops, and receptions. The Library finally moved from a temporary branch to an April 2021 opening. What a long way we have traveled since then.



Under the leadership of Library Director John Finn, the Foundation Board had the ability to translate other ambitious visions into reality, including ordering a fully funded new bookmobile and starting an East Helena Library branch capital campaign.

It has been an honor to serve on the Library Foundation Board alongside wonderful colleagues, passionate staff, and generous community support and to witness the amazing changes and accomplishments.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation Board and to contribute to the Library's growth during this vital period.

In Memoriam: Joan Bishop



We join with many others who mourned the passing of Joan Bishop in July 2025. Joan and her late husband, Dr. Don Bishop, supported the Library with gifts to the Foundation. Joan also worked to make our library better, and her legacy as a dedicated friend of Lewis & Clark Library lives on throughout the county.

With their permission, we share the remembrances of **Judy Hart**, and **Bruce and Sue Newell**, who honored her memory with a tribute gift and sent us these memories of her:

Please accept this gift in memory of Joan Bishop, a former reference librarian at our beloved Lewis & Clark Library, and simply one of nature's noblewomen. Her death leaves the world a little colder place. Fortunately, the joy she brought to Helena, and all that she met and interacted with, more than counterbalances her passing. She was a force of nature and an all-around delight. She lives in our memories and our hearts. - **Bruce and Sue Newell**

In honor of Joan Bishop, tireless advocate for the Lewis and Clark Library. Her service on the Lewis and Clark Library Board of Trustees contributed to a thriving library system. In addition to her service on the Board, Joan led a book group for many years. When working for the Lewis and Clark Library, Joan was a mentor and I was honored to have worked with her. - **Judy Hart**, former director of Lewis & Clark Library.

The obituary for Joan Bishop chronicles her family, work, and her love for books, birds, traveling, and the outdoors. We knew her as the "strong advocate for public libraries" described so perfectly.

<https://helenafuneralhome.com/obituaries/joan-draper-bishop-age-87-of-helena/>

Foundation Funds in Review

In a nutshell, at the end of **FY 2025** (June 30, 2025) the Foundation's total assets were **\$1,527,797**. Our D.A. Davidson Sustainability Fund held **\$938,560**. Our Special Projects Account held **\$444,420**. At the end of FY 2025, there was a total of **\$145,817** in cash accounts (which contains funds for the new bookmobile that was received from donors and will be expended this year).

We are pleased to report that **\$76,929** was received in unrestricted charitable contributions from generous donors during FY 2025. A total of **\$35,351** was generated from the Sarah McCabe Power Trust and **\$4,635** from the Montana Community Foundation. Together, the Dorothy Thayer Trust and Bernice Boone Trust support the purchase of books and other literary materials every year, and in FY 2025 provided **\$48,810** for this purpose.

Foundation expenditures totaled **\$90,985** in FY 2025, following a budget that allowed up to **\$145,550** in expenditures.



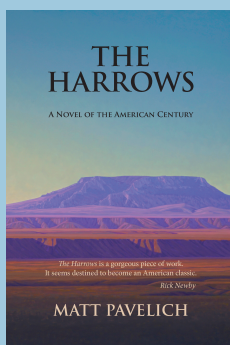
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120 S. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601

Making a great library even better!

Celebrating a Writer's Journey with **Matt Pavelich**

Novelist, Short Story Writer, Ranconteur



*From the moment he first appeared on the literary horizon with his Montana Book Award-winning story collection, **Beasts of the Forest**, **Beasts of the Field** in 1989, Pavelich has distinguished himself as a master of the form, penning story after story (and a few novels along the way) to remind discriminating readers what honest, organic wordsmithing looks like.*

Excerpted from an Aaron Parrett review of Matt Pavelich's 2025 collection of short stories, *Tell all the truth but tell it slant—Fierce Fictions*

Save the Date!

February 12, 2026

6:30 pm

Lewis & Clark Library

IN THIS ISSUE

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- Update from **Library Director John Finn**
- Additions to the **Library of Things & FY 2026 Wish List**
- Acknowledging our generous **Legacy Donors and Funders**
- Reflections from Outgoing Board Members **Nikki DesRosier & Lorna Milne**
- In Memoriam: **Joan Bishop**
- Foundation **Funds in Review**