

# Bennington Free Library

*Spring 2026 Newsletter*

## ***Libraries Create Community Leaders: A New Chapter for BFL Youth Services***

Just shy of twenty years ago, a young, auburn-haired reader eagerly packed her overnight bag for a sleepover in her favorite place in the whole wide world: the library. That little girl was me, Erin Williams, Bennington Free Library's new Head of Youth Services! What a joy and honor it is to introduce myself to the BFL community, and to share a vision for our library that I've been refining since that famous sleepover.



Bennington is home. I grew up in rural Shaftsbury with my parents and younger brother. I currently live in downtown Bennington with my weird, beautiful cat, Rosie. When not in the library, I'm most likely to be found out in the woods or on top of a mountain. Hiking, nature journaling, and collecting rocks are my favorite outdoor activities. Reading is nice, too, I guess! I'm currently reading *Glastenbury: The History of a Vermont Ghost Town* by Tyler Resch.

I have a BA in English and Sustainability. My professional background includes comprehensive employment services, specializing in supporting rural immigrant populations, and community engagement. I am a co-organizer of the Bennington Community Café, Bennington's only pop-up, pay-what-you-choose restaurant.

Readers may have inferred by now that my passion and priority is the Bennington community and surrounding natural



environment that we are so lucky to call home. What better place to do my best to serve the community than our library?

The future of BFL's Youth Services department is not solely up to me, and this transition is one I expect to make alongside all of you. My



goal is to build programs for youth and families with input and leadership from those who will participate in them. Young readers and caregivers are encouraged to share their requests and ideas with me. Teens - you are all emerging leaders with valuable contributions to make in your community, and you are wanted here. Stop by to share your ideas, or send a message. I am so excited to work with all of you!

With gratitude,  
Erin Williams

### ***Director's Letter***

I hope you enjoyed getting to know our new Head of Youth Services, Erin Williams. What a great addition to our staff; her youthful exuberance is just a little infectious.

April 19-25 we celebrate National Library Week and National Volunteer Week. Look at the following pages for a list of those who have volunteered at the Library over the past year. We thank you for all the help you have given. The Library would not be able to offer so many programs and services without you. Have you ever considered volunteering at the Library? We are trying to start a Friends group to help with coordinating our volunteers. If you have a knack for rounding up people and allocating jobs then maybe this will be your big chance.

There are many ways to give to the Library. Some give their time, a very valuable commodity, while others give monetary gifts. Our Annual Fund is almost there; one more push should do it. For those who have already given, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. For those who have yet to give, please consider a donation and know that your funds will go towards all that we offer from great programming to items for checkout.

Our ever-popular Craft Swap is back for the fourth time this year. This is always a fun event and a great opportunity to reenergize those creative juices and reorganize your creative spaces. Once you have created your new project don't forget to share it with the Library so we can applaud your creativity.

The Library is trying something new this year with a yearlong reading challenge. Feel free to join the challenge at any point in the year and keep your eye on the prize. More details can be found on page 4.

Finally, construction at the Library will be starting soon. Currently the plan is to remain open for the entirety of the project but if things change notification will be posted to the website and on social media.

See you at the Library and keep reading!  
Wendy Sharkey

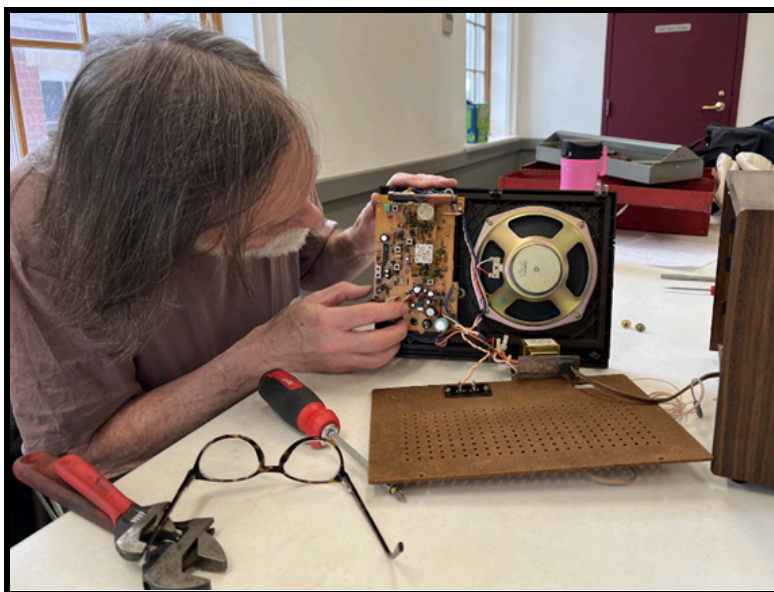
### Fix It Fun in February



The Third Fix It Fun community repair event was held Saturday, Feb. 28 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in partnership with the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance. The event was made possible by a grant from the Association for Rural & Small Libraries through the generosity of the Manton Foundation.

Six fixers, including two from The Bike Hub, donated their time and talents to try to repair twenty-two items, sixteen of which were successfully repaired and two were partially repaired. Four items were broken

beyond repair. Items repaired included a lamp, a stand mixer, a vacuum cleaner, a radio, a sewing machine, a quilt, a few items of clothing, and a cloth bag; additionally, several knives and scissors were sharpened.



Attendees' exit surveys included appreciation for the free community service and the feeling of treasured items restored to usefulness. Community repair events reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill by promoting repair and reuse. Instead of throwing items away, we can appreciate the value in our possessions by reusing them, which saves money and resources, and contributes to a more sustainable society.



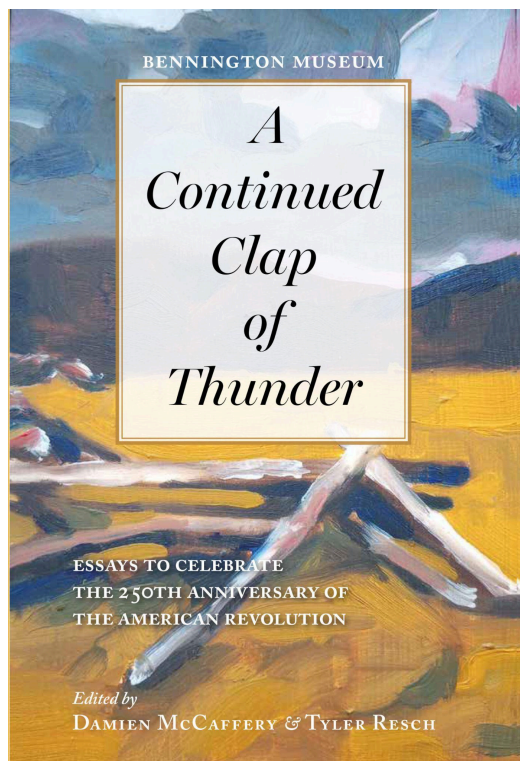
## Turn the Page in 2026: A Call to Read

### ***Bennington Free's Library's yearlong reading challenge!***

Our goal is to encourage readers to read widely, beyond their usual reading habits and share recommendations. Programs focusing on reading and discovery and related activities will take place throughout the year. Join in the reading for a chance to win one of five \$100 Bennington Bookshop gift certificates!

Get Started Today! Visit the library's website to print your Turn the Page in 2026 Reading Log Sheets and Book Review Forms, or pick them up at the library, along with a free wall calendar!

Mark your calendar for Saturday, June 20 when the library will host its second Turn the Page program, a discussion of *Good Dirt* by Charmaine Wilkerson.



### **Reading Challenge begins with *A Continued Clap of Thunder!***

Turn the Page in 2026: A Call to Read, Bennington Free's Library's yearlong reading challenge hosted its first event Sunday, March 22 at 2 pm. Nearly two dozen community members gathered for a discussion of *A Continued Clap of Thunder: Essays to Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution* ©2025 by The Bennington Museum, edited by Damien McCaffrey and Tyler Resch. The informal discussion included McCaffrey, Resch, and Shelton Walker, the book's cover artist, as well as music and light refreshments. The Bennington Museum donated ten copies of *A Continued Clap of Thunder* before the program, eagerly read by

community members. *A Continued Clap of Thunder* is organized in two parts comprising twenty-two essays: Part One, Echoes of the American Revolution and Part Two, Vermontiana, Chapters from Vermont History. Contributors responded to the Museum's

call for submissions, and some contributors had previously written articles for *The Walloomsack Review*.

Attendees noted the essays were thoroughly researched and documented, and several community members shared their surprise and delight in learning more about local and state history. Specific highlights of the discussion include: the exploits of British General John Burgoyne, the consequences of an acoustic shadow, the source of Mt. Anthony's name, young women and early Bennington schools, the founding of *The Bennington Banner* and the first supervisor of Putnam Memorial Hospital, as well as Robert Frost's relationship with Bennington College and the origins of Act 250. McCaffrey shared the editorial process took two years of concentrated work and the serendipitous paths that yielded the book's cover art as well as its detailed index. Will there be a second edition? Read this first edition and share your thoughts! A copy of *A Continued Clap of Thunder* is available to borrow from the library. Copies can also be purchased from The Bennington Museum or at the Bennington Bookshop.

**REGISTER FOR  
BENNINGTON & NORTH BENNINGTON**

**TOWN-WIDE  
TAG SALE DAY**

**Saturday, July 25th**

**9:00 AM-2:00 PM**

Follow the QR code or stop by either library before July 14th to register your sale for free. Information collected will be used to create a Google map so shoppers can find your sale!



Organized and sponsored by:



Reduce - Reuse - Recycle



Bennington  
Free  
Library



JOHN G. McCULLOUGH  
FREE LIBRARY

### **SAVE THE DATE! Town-Wide Tag Sale Day Returns!**

The Bennington Free Library and The John G. McCullough Free Library are teaming up to coordinate the third Town-Wide Tag Sale Day on Saturday, July 25th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., sponsored by the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance.

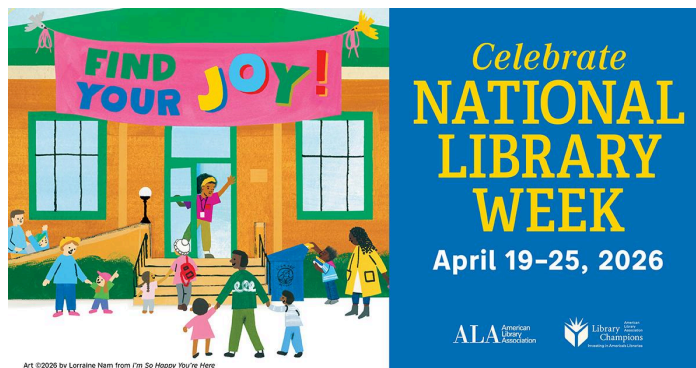
Sale registration is open to sales in Bennington and North Bennington only. Registration opens on Tuesday, May 5th and closes on Tuesday, July

14th. Registration is free and can be completed on an online form or at either library. Registrants are encouraged to pick up yellow Tag Sale signs at either library to promote their sale by July 14th.

Registration information will be used to create a list of sales which will be available at both libraries and a Google Map layer to help shoppers find your sale. A QR code to the Google Map layer will also be in the July 25th edition of *The Bennington Banner*.

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK AND NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

*Thank you for all you do!*



The week of April 19 through 25 was National Library Week and National Volunteer Week! We celebrate our love for libraries and our appreciation for the fantastic volunteers who help libraries serve their communities! “Find Your Joy!” was this year’s theme for National Library Week, which matches the joy our volunteers give us. Library volunteers demonstrate their love for the Library in numerous ways. They help with Book Express and Books on Wheels; book covering, reshelving, and repair; programs and special events; as well as in the Vermont History Room, and more.

Sarah Blizzard*	Richard Jorgensen	Esme Pratt
Stuart Capewell	Kathy Kaiser	Linda Putney
Althea Church	Sharron Kaiser	Michael Rancourt
Danielle Crosier	Sheila Kelly	Barb Raskin
Patty Culp	Patrick Kincaid	Ginny Ray
Brian Cunningham*	Suzanna Kirkpatrick	Paul Roy
Tony Defarlo	Judy Kniffin	Deirdre Ryan*
Karen Denenberg	Ann Kremers	Mary Ryan
Suzy Donavan	Kelley Legacy*	Rebecca Sentner*
Bridget Elder	Rhonda Levine	Helen Sharkey
Joyce Fuller	Dale Maturski	Fronia Simpson
Sandy Garivaltis	MAU Community Based Learning	Bruce Smith*
John Goodrich*	MAU Interact Club	Sharon Stewart
Reed Goossen	Norma McShane	Robin Tarnas
Misti Granger	Mary Ellen Munley	Beth Tegart*
Diana Griffiths	Douglas Munson	Bob Tegart
Julie Haupt	Michael Munson*	PJ Venti*
Rick Havlak	David Newell	Berta Winkler
Ellen Havlak	Robin Outwater	Ursula Woltz
Diane Howard	Meg Outwater	Jane Wright
Mariot Huessy	Dave Pilachowski	Coleen Zimpfer
	John Poggi	

*\*Bennington Free Library Board members*



**Yes, I/WE want to help support the Bennington Free Library**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a **tax deductible contribution** of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to the Bennington Free Library**

Does your company have a matching gift program?

Let us know, your gift will mean even more.

**How your donation helps...**

\$3,000.00 purchases Banner microfilm for one year

\$3,000.00 purchases a new public desktop computer

\$1,500.00 provides access to ConsumerReports.org

\$600.00 sponsors a Children's Program

\$300.00 supports Book Express

\$120.00 provides a magazine subscription for one year

\$60.00 buys new games and puzzles

A \$30.00 gift buys a book

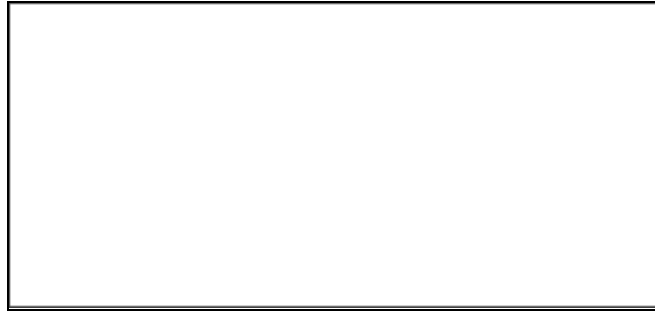
## Bennington Free Library

101 Silver St

Bennington, VT 05201

(802) 442-9051

[benningtonfreelibrary.org](http://benningtonfreelibrary.org)



### Be a part of the Library's "Go-Green Campaign"

Receive your newsletter via email. Sign up at [loans@bfli.org](mailto:loans@bfli.org).

If you change your email address please let us know.

**MEMORY GAMES NIGHT** + ice-cream social!

- Try new dementia-friendly books, games, & puzzles!
- Bring family and friends!
- Eat free ice cream!

Thursday, May 14, 4-6:30pm  
Bennington Free Library  
101 Silver Street  
Ice cream while supplies last!

Dartmouth Health  
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center

Bennington Free Library  
Established 1839

Contact the Bennington Free Library at 802-442-9051 or [reference@bfli.org](mailto:reference@bfli.org)



Stay tuned for summer reading announcements coming soon!