

Green Mountain Library Consortium 2024 Annual Report

After a couple of intense years at GMLC, creating and spending (and precisely accounting for) the over \$200,000 we received from ARPA, IMLS and VTLIB, the Board has spent the last 12 months working on the persistent issues our users all understand. Reducing those pesky “holds,” troubleshooting your questions, adding new libraries and so forth. Last fall two longtime Board members, Kim Peine and Chris Kirby, both retired from our Board. We welcomed longtime Selection Committee Chair, Hannah Peacock, as Secretary, and Mara Siegel as Treasurer. Kim and Chris have been dedicated and invaluable GMLC Board members and advocates for many years. The GMLC Board wishes to acknowledge their incredible work and send them deep felt thanks for all that they have done.

Initiatives we are working on now and into 2024 are providing training for Overdrive Advantage subscribers in how to share their titles with the LUV Collection when their demand locally has been met; updating our website, and adding Biblio+, a new streaming service whose model is simultaneous, unlimited use for library patrons with one yearly fee.

As always, we are proud of our work and appreciate the endless hours of our many volunteers. Our mission is *“To provide Vermont's libraries with access to goods and services otherwise unattainable through the power of partnerships and collective purchasing.* This is summed up in the consortium's tagline: **Vermont Libraries, Working Together.**

Here are the reports on our various projects.

LUV

Our statistics show that from April 30, 2023, to May 1, 2024, LUV patrons checked out 731,032 total digital items consisting of 259,696 eBooks and 460,478 audio books and 10,706 magazines from our collection of 55,174 items. This represents an increase of 14% over last year’s circulation. As of May 2024, there are 30,693 Vermonters who use the LUV digital library, an increase of nearly 2500 users (or 9%) from the previous year. Clearly, Vermonters enjoy their digital library collection more and more each year.

Overdrive Advantage

There are 83 GMLC libraries that subscribe to the Overdrive Advantage service which allows them to buy digital books for their own patrons only. These OA accounts are also the accounts for libraries who offer Kanopy, so can also be used to purchase titles for your patrons. 36 libraries purchased 4280 titles and spent \$151,356 between June 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024. GMLC has asked Overdrive Advantage members to buy extra copies of books when their own patrons holds exceed 4. We appreciate OA libraries for their subscription to this service which provides more access to popular titles for their patrons and for our entire library community.

Mango Languages

There are currently 28 GMLC libraries enrolled in the Mango Languages service. From April 2023 to May 2024, there were 6679 sessions that represents a 40% increase from last year. Of these, 55% were web sessions and 45% were on mobile devices.

This year French, Spanish/Latin American, German, and Italian were the most popular languages, followed by Spanish/Castilian, Russian and Serbian.

VOKAL

We continue to grow! Including branches VOKAL now consists of 66 libraries. We are thrilled to be adding 3-4 additional libraries in the coming year.

With the advent of Aspen we were able to utilize a development we sponsored for local hold groups which allows groups of libraries to set parameters for their patrons to place holds on items at other libraries within the group. This has been very popular with the HomeCard group within Koha.

We look forward to adding new libraries, reports training and more features in the next release of Koha.

GMLC- Listen UP VT spending 2023-2024

Total Budget: \$176,550.00

\$44,137.51 per quarter

Audio \$105,930.00- 60% of budget

eBooks \$70,620.00- 40% of budget

2023-2024 Budget divided up as follows:

	60%	40%	
	AUDIO	EBOOKS	TOTAL
15% Youth- Hannah	\$15,889.50	\$10,593.00	\$26,482.50
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	\$31,779.00	\$21,186.00	\$52,965.00
10% Non-fic- Hannah/Mara	\$10,593.00	\$7,062.00	\$17,655.00
10% Extra copies- Lisa	\$10,593.00	\$7,062.00	\$17,655.00
15% Expired Content- Susanna	\$15,889.50	\$10,593.00	\$26,482.50
20% Patron requests- Hannah	\$21,186.00	\$14,124.00	\$35,310.00
TOTAL	\$105,930.00	\$70,620.00	\$176,550.00

June 2024: All funds for 2023-2024 budget year have been spent.

2023-2024 Budget. Breakdown of purchases:

Selector			AMOUNT		AMOUNT
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	AUDIO	EBOOKS	SPENT	BUDGET	REMAINING
15% Youth- Hannah	\$15,935.25	\$10,550.10	\$26,485.35	\$26,482.50	\$ (2.85)
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	\$31,923.68	\$21,038.78	\$52,962.46	\$52,965.00	\$ 2.54
10% Non-fic- Hannah/Mara	\$10,572.34	\$7,082.07	\$17,654.41	\$17,655.00	\$ 0.59
10% Extra copies- Lisa	\$10,773.29	\$6,881.37	\$17,654.66	\$17,655.00	\$ 0.34
15% Expired Content- Susanna	\$15,887.04	\$10,594.67	\$26,481.71	\$26,482.50	\$ 0.79
20% Patron requests- Hannah	\$21,147.19	\$14,154.64	\$35,301.83	\$35,310.00	\$ 8.17
FINAL NUMBERS	\$106,238.79	\$70,301.63	\$176,540.42	\$176,550.00	\$ 9.85

# OF COPIES PURCHASED			
Budget Allotment	AUDIO	EBOOKS	TOTAL
15% Youth- Hannah	1454	338	1792
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	2459	491	2950
10% Non-fic- Hannah/Mara	154	166	320
10% Extra copies- Lisa	1753	140	1893

15% Expired Content- Susanna	5180	798	5978
20% Patron requests- Hannah	1117	418	1535
TOTAL # OF COPIES	12,117	2351	14,468

These numbers include copies of all lending models, including “Metered Access: 100 concurrent users”. This model allows 100 people to check out at the same time; it counts as 100 copies.

ADDITIONAL MONIES

No additional monies to report on this year.

REPORTS FROM SELECTORS

**Hannah Peacock-
Burnham Memorial Library
MANAGES: YOUTH, REQUESTS, NON-FICTION (3/4 of spending year)**

For a large portion of this spending year, we have seen the benefits of the ARPA money wither away. With no additional funds outside our regular budget this year, the holds ratio has crept up and now stands at close to 60. This ratio does not even reflect the number of titles that still have holds but we cannot afford to purchase. Titles with no copies left (metered access titles) appear in our reports as n/a under holds ratio.

As noted in Susanna’s report, at the present time the magic number is 10- with 10 holds we can repurchase a title. We asked Bywater to batch remove titles for a couple of reasons- very old holds, as well as titles that have holds but that are no longer available to order on our platform.

Those holds remain there (even if we no longer have the rights to repurchase the titles!) until we remove them; we do then delete the title. Preparing this list of titles is time consuming, so we often struggle to keep on top of it. It is also frustrating to have to delete books with any holds, as we would really like to buy everything people ask for!

I do still find that the removal of the requests feature increases the difficulty of our purchasing decisions. Given that the number of “notify me” tags is unlimited, we are never

sure which titles people really want and which titles are simply mildly interesting to the reader and will likely never be checked out!

My approach to purchasing differs for my 2 selection areas.

“Requests”- as we no longer have actual requests from users, I look at holds ratio, notify me tags, expired copies that still have holds, new titles that are popular in my library, popular titles we may have missed, older titles that are having a resurgence (movie tie-in, book club buzz, etc.), and new titles of all genres that I think will work well on our platform. I then consider the various lending models available to us. If a title has anywhere near 100 holds and the model is available, I buy the “100 concurrent users” model. It is expensive but it immediately reduces the holds count.

Youth books- youth books do not receive as many holds or notify tags as adult titles. This is not because children and teens read less, but because they are far less likely to put a book on hold or add a tag to it. For ordering youth books, I do still look at the above factors but I am unlikely to find a juvenile title with 125 holds on it. I therefore use the same tools I use to purchase physical books for my library- reviews, award winners & nominees, “best-of” lists, my best guess about what might be popular, and my favorite- talking to kids about what they want to read.

Because the demand for books for adults continues to be more robust, rarely do I use any extra money for additional copies to purchase content for the youth collection.

It is quite remarkable to see the number of books I purchase that have Advantage copies (with no holds on them!) or have been weeded in the Advantage collection. PLEASE share your Advantage copies rather than weed them! PLEASE also share your copies once your patrons no longer have many holds on them. Your patrons will still have access to them, but we can then use our funds to order other titles for the whole Consortium.

The Board will be offering training(s) on sharing your Advantage titles. Stay tuned!

Mara Siegel joined us as non-fiction selector this Spring. She purchased our non-fiction titles for the April-June purchasing period. She is a welcome addition to the team and brings a breadth of book knowledge and library experience to the position. I look forward to her perspective on purchasing on next year’s report.

With the Requests feature gone, we do try to find ways to be sure we are meeting the demands of our members. If you have any suggestions or notice any gaps in the collection, please do reach out to your selectors. We will do our best to answer your queries.

Hannah Peacock

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Lisa Milchman

Norwich Public Library

MANAGES: ADULT FICTION & EXTRA COPIES OF HIGH DEMAND TITLES

There are three major points which I am reflecting on this year's report: wait times, using the Overdrive platform, and the explosion of requests for specific collections/genres.

Wait times: ARPA funding of last summer allowed us to finally get the "current average wait period" down to the low 50s (from its high in the spring of 2023 in the low to mid 70s!) This shorter waiting period has been remarked on positively by patrons in my library in Norwich, and so I assume noted by patrons elsewhere as well. While it was heartening that post-robust ARPA ordering, the "wait period" was holding fairly steady throughout the fall and winter months (mid 50s), it appears to be creeping up again. At last check (late May 2024) it is standing at 59 days. Summer months appear to have heavy usage, especially of e-audio, and without the additional funding of last summer, I am expecting that it will continue to rise, although hopefully not to levels seen before summer 2023.

Related to this is the establishment of Palace as an adjunctive source of e-materials. While Palace is certainly a boon and some help in providing more material for e-hungry patrons, we are not seeing Palace totally take up the slack of increasing e-appetite. This may be related to Palace's less user-friendly interface, especially for those used to Libby (and for those who have multiple Libby accounts!), but it is hard to know how much longer wait times might be if Palace didn't exist. I have also gratefully noted the increasing number of Advantage holdings. This, of course, is great for those libraries' patrons but also supports the needs of smaller libraries which may not be able to afford Advantage titles. Libraries' usage of Advantage Plus is also helpful and could perhaps use additional promotion by GMLC.

Overdrive ordering: Over the years, the increasing sophistication of the Overdrive ordering platform, especially the move to the "notify me" request function and the myriad available limiters has made my selecting job much easier. As always, there remains the balancing act of giving the people what they want (more on that in the next paragraph) and ordering to responsibly

fulfill collection development criteria – diversity across genres and sub-genres and bringing lesser-known, well-reviewed titles or authors to light, sometimes with consideration to the lending model which provides for the most effective use of (GMLC) dollars. In other words, what we all do to develop our collections - every day!

Genre demand: Many years appear to have a genre-focus and this year “requests” for science fiction, and slightly less so, fantasy, have exploded. Along with this, is the fact that many of these titles are part of a series, so that back catalog is also requested. While I am not a reading stranger to sci-fi/fantasy, I have learned so much about newer authors and sub-genres. I am also curious about what drives these trends – more savvy users of Libby, pandemic-related influx of new residents? I don’t know, but we are also (happily) experiencing that reinvigorated readership at the Norwich Library. Happy to hear and discuss any insights on this.

Thank you as always, for the privilege of being your fiction selector. I am always happy to hear from librarians, local authors, or increasingly, from patrons of LUV. I can be reached at lisa.milchman@norwichlibrary.org

Susanna Kahn

Charlotte Library

Manages: EXPIRED METERED CONTENT/HIGH HOLDS

As in years past, I balanced purchase of expired titles that had holds with purchase of extra copies of popular titles with high holds ratios. Unfortunately, we don’t have the budget to purchase copies of all the expired titles that have holds on them. Generally, there must be at least 10 holds to purchase a copy. Expired titles that remain in the collection can continue to collect holds, which contributes to the average waiting period. To address this issue, I’ve been working on weeding titles with a small number of holds (they are automatically weeded if there aren’t any holds). I hope to clear out more

expired titles soon and come up with a better plan to manage them going forward. Additionally, in March we deleted all holds placed prior to January 2022 to help prioritize purchasing and speed up the holds queue.

This brings me to what has become my annual plea to have libraries participate in Advantage Plus sharing. Thank you to the libraries that already participate, it really does help! With Advantage Plus you share your purchased copies with the consortium, but your patrons still get priority. Your library can determine what titles it shares.

- If you have a One Copy/One User (OC/OU) title and share it through Advantage Plus, your patrons are always at the front of the queue, but it will improve access for other libraries and save the consortium money that can be spent on more titles! You have these titles forever. There is nothing to lose with this option.
- Sharing Metered Access (MA) titles that are time-based isn't taking away borrows from your patrons either.
- If you have MA titles that are checkout-based (i.e. 26 checkouts) it might be worth considering sharing if your copy hasn't gone out for a while.

I hope there will be training about this in the near future.

Please be in touch if you have any questions or suggestions:
susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Annual Report respectfully submitted by:

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