Usually the Friends’ President sends out a beginning of the new year letter, thanking Friends and outlining upcoming events.
But 2020 was quite a year. It’s hard to imagine leaving it without saying a few words of both thanks as well as encouragement for the days ahead.

The Library has done an amazing job during 2020 “pivoting”—the new term for what we as individuals and businesses have had to do in order to keep on going. Pivoting, or adjusting to new circumstances, whether as a parent figuring out school, day-care, or just getting the family through each day—or businesses re-working their business models—think restaurants like those right here in town—using barriers and beautiful flower arrangements to enhance outdoor dining. This so-called pivoting has also been what has kept the library functioning.

Almost first off-the-block for area libraries, MHL put into place the brown bag curbside pick-up of library books.

Staff used technology to offer virtual programs for youngsters and adults and, when deemed safe to do so, opened to patrons under safe protocols—these are only a few ways the library staff have had to pivot in the last year or so.

The Friends’ role of supporting the library with programs and activities using funds from book sales, and memberships and from time to time donations, was also a challenge this year.

We, too, have had to pivot. Book sales, the life-blood of our fundraising, have not happened this year. Our budget has been finely hewn to the essentials and of course support of virtual programming and the like. Membership and new members are more important than ever.

But the message I most want to share is this. It’s been a very tough year. And despite the challenges coming up with holidays and days with less sunlight, it is also important to take care of yourselves—to keep up your stamina for the challenges ahead.

The Danes have an excellent word (we are finished with pivot for now!) and that word is “hygge” and it is pronounced, more or less, as “hoo-ga”. Very simply, it is a way of looking at things to make you feel good. The Danes have to put up with way more darkness in the winter than we do, and to cope they practice allowing as much light and warmth into their lives as possible. Candles in the windows, fireplaces, and cozy blankets, the smell of baking—cookies especially! And taking time to really, just chill out. And be grateful.

We all deserve a bit of hygge in the days coming up. And I hope that each and every one of you finds the light in each day, and finds whatever makes you feel warm and cozy—maybe even a book from your local library—to see the end of the year off and a new beginning in 2021.

Stay healthy and well.

Best,

Susan
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