

Honoree May 14, 2016

## *James Hoover*

Jim Hoover was an experienced librarian when he happened to move near the Stone Ridge Library in the 1990s – and soon after began some of the most difficult challenges of his career, helping to strengthen its finances and prevent it from literally falling down.

With bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Oklahoma and a master's in law librarianship from the University of Washington, he was skilled at using traditional techniques and the latest technology to help library users at the University of Oklahoma, St. Louis University and Columbia University – not to mention a two-and-a-half-year stint running the library at the Navy's huge Da Nang base during the Vietnam War.



The Stone Ridge Library – homey, personal and underfunded – presented far different problems. He joined the library board shortly after Marbletown residents voted in 2000 to change the library from a membership organization, financed by dues and fees and run by a private, self-perpetuating board, to a tax-based special district. He redrafted the bylaws to comply with state law, worked to set up the first public board elections and helped the new board adjust to operating as a public entity.

As vice president and then president, he increasingly had to grapple with the deteriorating condition of the library's 1798 and 1811 buildings. He helped secure a grant that paid for a historic preservation assessment, and the report was dire. Soon after, the board authorized the wooden buttresses that kept the stone walls from collapsing for a decade.

Meanwhile, he handled the intricate state and federal paperwork needed to create the nonprofit Stone Ridge Library Foundation, the library's fundraising arm with partners Shelley Wyant and Kathy Schulz. He helped recruit the foundation board and joined it, as the longtime treasurer and still as a member. The Foundation raised an initial \$300,000 to pay for most of the emergency repairs and has set a second \$300,000 target for other needed work.

As if all this weren't enough, he served on the Mid-Hudson Valley Library System Board and for 14 years has been on the Mohonk Preserve board, the last two as president.

*We are pleased to honor a dedicated and dynamic supporter of the Stone Ridge Library.*

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## *Anita Williams Peck*

Anita Peck couldn't have avoided the Stone Ridge Library if she had wanted to – and she certainly did not. In 1978 she bought a house five doors away, and she already knew so many board members that, she says, it was all but inevitable that she would join the board, as well.

In those days, the library relied upon dues, fees, the book sale and ad hoc fundraising to fund its operations. The book sales were central, and she worked at them year after year. “When it rained on Thursday or Friday, we had agita because we depended on the library fairs to keep going,” she recalls.

For quite a few years at Christmastime, she hosted “Author! Author!” fundraising dinners and auctions at the Williams Lake Hotel, which her family started in 1929 and she owned until 2007. “The library had the whole building for cocktails, dining and entertainment,” she says. One night featured rock and roll radio host Cousin Brucie (Bruce Morrow), others a variety of comedians. “We made money on tickets and an auction.”

She served on the library board until 2000, helping to shepherd it through the referendum that converted it to a special district supported by property taxes.

Now a Rosendale resident, she now runs Hudson River Valley Tours, which provides personalized tours of the area to tourists from elsewhere. She also chairs the SUNY Ulster Foundation Board and serves on the Rosendale Theater board. She served on the Benedictine Health Foundation board in the 1990s and supported the Fern Feldman Anolick Center for Breast Health, which opened in 2011.

She has volunteered with organizations including the Junior League of Kingston, Stone Ridge Nursery School, Ulster County Historical Society, Rondout Valley Board of Education, Ulster County School Boards Association, the Esopus Chamber Orchestra, the Rondout Valley Business Association and Chambers of Commerce in New Paltz, Rosendale and Ulster. In 2007, she received the “Heart of Ulster County Award.”

“Every community is different,” she says, “but the library really is the center of Stone Ridge. I'm very proud of it.”



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