



Reading into the Future



**2019
Annual Report**

**Ch. E. W. Voges Street
Philipsburg, Sint Maarten, Dutch West Indies**

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Table of Contents

Letter from the Board	4
Introduction	5
Organisational Structure	6
Managing Board	6
Staff	6
Education and Training	6
Temporary Location	7
Opening hours	8
Accomplishments	8
Activities and Events	9
Highlights	9
2019 Book Presentations	11
Support & Donations	12
Fight for a new building	13
Finances	14
Major financial concerns going forward	15
Library Year in Pictures	17

Letter from the Board

Reading into the future

This theme is not a story about predicting the future. It is the push by the Philipsburg Jubilee Library's board, management and staff, despite the challenging times, to ensure access to books and knowledge in the traditional physical library, to provide a place for the exchange of ideas and development of projects, as well as by "going digital".

Reading and access to (free or affordable) books are the foundation of a strong, educated, and forward-thinking society. This continues to be the goal of the Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PJL) as it looks beyond its hurdles to its centennial in 2023. This is despite starting 2019 without a home and with its treasures – books and other reference materials – boxed up in storage.

After battling the odds caused by the passing of hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, the library closed its doors to the public on December 10, 2018. This was spurred by the deterioration of the already aged and further hurricane-ravaged building on Ch.E.W. Voges Street in Philipsburg. There was no other easy option and no quick alternative location to house the library and its collection.

The country was without a public library until March 4, 2019, when the library reopened. On that day, the current (temporary) home of the library welcomed members upstairs of the Adolphus Richardson Building on W.J.A. Nisbeth Road. This was the end of a more than a quarter year struggle by the board to secure suitable space to resume limited services.

This new rented location is a mere fraction of the former library building. It encompasses 125 square meters – smaller than the foyer of the now condemned library building. This translated into a limited number of books on the shelves and contracted services. Accommodations for visitors are cramped. This, however, has not deterred planning of smaller-scale activities such as the Pre-St. Maarten Day "St. Maarten Cultural Heritage Week" to keep the public engaged, entertained, and educated.

The library battled for its physical survival in 2019. This brought into sharp focus the need to bring the institution more into the digital age with e-books. Emphasis was placed on making the library viable via an online portal with an ever-expanding catalogue of books. This move should not be seen as a transition from a physical building to individual screens and books in the cloud. Rather, this should be viewed as a parallel process that is necessary for the survivability of a library established in the hurricane belt; a digital component means members will have access to knowledge anywhere at any time.

Like members and their need for access to knowledge, the board is very cognizant of the limitations of its dedicated staff. There is a vacuum in upgrading and training of staff, a deficiency that must be remedied, though not fully tackled in 2019 due to limited funds

and other complications related to moving “house” from one location to another. Training and upgrading of staff will be on the forefront of the library’s activities moving forward while preparing for the challenges of its expanding footprint “reading in the future”

The board kept up its push to get clarity from government about its insurance claims pay-out for its building. The board met with the Department of Culture of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Parliament, to get its outstanding subsidy and the insurance settlement from government. These funds are still very much needed to continue the rebuilding of the library. With this still to be resolved, attention was placed on securing the library’s contents. All still-viable equipment, furniture, materials, and goods were placed in four containers for future use.

The old building is awaiting demolition as was agreed with the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Development, Environment, and Infrastructure VROMI. And, in the interim with no movement on the building front, rent must be paid for the temporary location.

The drive to get a new building is on course with artistic impressions created to suit the needs of a public library with an expanding footprint. That new facility seeks to bring knowledge, heritage, and history under one roof. This has formed a basis for the board to argue its case to access rebuilding funds from the Dutch Government-financed, World Bank-administrated St. Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund. That case was presented to the (then) Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Wycliffe Smith, the Trust Fund Steering Committee, and the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB) on September 24, 2019.

Looking to the future with the course set by 2019, the board is optimistic that the library will be further secured with the right investments and a speedy resolution of its need for a new, modern and multi-functional building at its true home on Ch.E.W. Voges Street.

The Board of the Philipsburg Jubilee Library Foundation

Introduction

Since its founding in 1923, the Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PJL) has been a standard-bearer for reading and literacy. It is committed to spreading a love of reading throughout Sint Maarten —and the world via its digital footprint.

The library is a not-for-profit non-governmental subsidized agency. It is the only public library in Sint Maarten.

The PJL Foundation, that manages the library operations, was formed on September 27, 1974 to establish and keep in existence a library; to promote, encourage and stimulate active reading of books and other legible materials, and to do and promote

everything in connection with its core tasks. The foundation has a managing board peopled by volunteers, a director, and a staff tasked with service to the public.

Organisational Structure

Managing Board

As of January 1, 2019, the managing board comprises:

- Mr. P. Martens, president
- Mrs. S. Pantophlet-Gregoria, secretary and vice president
- Mrs. J. Peterson, treasurer
- Mrs. J. Dupersoy, member
- Mr. X. Blackman, member (until August 6, 2019)

The remaining board members continue in their roles in 2019. One board member post remains vacant.

Staff

(Interim) Director

Based on the Articles of Incorporation, the board appoints one or more librarians to attend to the library's daily management. For 2019, those tasks were filled as follows:

- Mrs. I.N. Hughes, interim director (January 1, 2019 to October 15, 2019)
- Mr. P.D. Lucas, interim director (October 15, 2019 to December 31, 2019).

The (interim) director reports weekly to the board.

Recruitment for the permanent director started in July 2018 with a net cast in Sint Maarten, Curacao, and the Netherlands. This resulted in seven applicants; five, based on suitability, were selected for interviews. Two candidates were selected for a final interview and assessment. This resulted in the appointment of Ms. Glenderlin E. Holiday to the post of director as per January 1, 2020.

Education and Training

The PJL staff members have followed several courses in the past year.

Book fair

The two librarians attended the creative writing master class with Professor Opal Palmer Adisa and the journalism master class with filmmaker and former *Time* journalist Peter Bailey at the Annual St. Martin Book Fair held in the University of St. Martin on June 6-8.

UNESCO Memory of the World

The same two librarians attended the Memory of the World (MOW) workshop organized by the UNESCO Cluster Office and the government of Sint Maarten on June 17-18. The workshop covered an analysis of the MOW National Committee in Sint Maarten, advances of the MOW Regional Committee for Latin America in the Caribbean from 2002 to 2019, and identification of other items/collections from institution that could be inscribed in MOW.

Customer services and project management

The entire staff followed a two-day “Professional Development Customer Service 101” training in September. Presenter Mr. Rolando Tobias, a skilled customer service motivator, covered service interaction, service standards and dialogue skills in the training.

In the latter part of 2019, the principles of project management were introduced to all staff.

SMILE Event

Powell participated in the two-day Sint Maarten Innovation Initiatives Link-up Event (SMILE) organized by Sint Maarten Hospitality Association in October. The seminar was geared mainly to entrepreneurs. The session “Getting your brand out”, was pertinent for the library’s PR officer.

CPR/AED course

As part of the development of the *Safety Procedures Manual*, four staffers participated in a one-day CPR/AED course in November. Windward Island Emergency Medical service (WIEMS) instructed them via video and hands-on practice. The training was done to improve the chances of survival for someone in cardiac arrest. The four staffers are now certified CPR/AED responders. Other staffers are to take the course in 2020. A first aid course was scheduled for 2020.

Temporary Location

After the closure of the library (building) on December 10, 2018, the interim director/project manager sought a suitable building to temporarily house the collection and to provide services to the public. Six buildings were identified, but most were too costly and did not have flexible terms.

In February 2019, the Adolphus Richardson Building on W.J.A. Nisbeth Road was identified as the temporary location for the library even though it is only three per cent of the old building’s surface. It is also on the second floor of the building accessible by a staircase, unlike the ground level closed location. The lease agreement was signed on February 25, 2019.

The soft opening was held on March 1, 2019 with the (then) Minister of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sports (MECYS) Wycliffe Smith, who officially re-opened the library with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The building has two office spaces, a hallway, a kitchenette and one bathroom for eight staff members. The rest of the building facilitates visitors and members with:

- Circulation desk
- Children and juvenile book section
- Information desk
- Adult book section
- A reading section with six seats
- A multimedia lab with eight workstations, internet access and a scanner/printer
- A multi-purpose gallery for limited events (movie night, small gatherings, study space)
- One public bathroom

Numerous activities previously held in the damaged library could not be continued at this location due to space constraints.

Opening hours

As from November 1, 2019, the opening hours were extended into the evening.

The opening hours were:

Mondays & Fridays	9:00am – 5:00pm
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays	9:00am - 8:00pm
Saturdays	10:00am – 1:00pm
Sundays	Closed

In October 2019, the WICSU/PSU, the union representing library staff, addressed concerns about the nightly opening hours (5:00pm to 8:00pm) and the safety risks posed. The board hired a security officer during those hours, adding to the already installed camera surveillance and alarm systems in the building.

Accomplishments

On July 18, 2018, the library presented its activity plan to government as part of its 2019 subsidy request.

Highlights

- New opening hours created about 20 per cent more accessibility for the public to library services.
- Compared to 2018, the number of registered library members exceeded the target of 10,000 by 475.
- The library opened in March 2019 with a limited collection of 4,491 physical reading materials with 2,916 for juvenile and 1,575 for adults. This limited collection saw 7,065 loans for the year.

- The physical book collection was expanded by 649 new books.
- The e-book collection increased from 801 in 2018 to 1,888 in 2019.
- Staff handled 187 requests for various types of information.
- The library started the “Raising Readers” program for playschools in November 2019.
- Local, regional, and international cooperation continued with similar institutions.

Downside

- In 2019, most books were boxed and stored in a container.
- The number of hurricane-related damaged books increased from 6,828 in 2018 to 6,842 in 2019.
- Limited space and services impacted the number of visitors, exposition and special activities.
- National Collection was not accessible to public due to inadequate space.
- Inability to house the baby and toddler “play and learn” room – no space.
- Reduced computer portals and space limited senior citizens programs such as computer learning lab and internet café.

Despite its challenges, the library continues to provide library collection management software services at home for the University of Sint Martin (USM) and Sint Maarten Heritage Foundation’s museum, and within the Dutch Caribbean to Saba and Sint Eustatius.

Activities and Events

The library’s activities and events seek that the community is well informed and equipped for the world of academics and work. This goal was severely impacted with the move to the smaller temporary location.

Activities and events were amended attract more people to the temporary location and the usage of the digital library. The “Power of Knowledge” series for adults, “Readers are Leaders” (for teens), and the media lab sessions had to be put on hold.

Highlights

March – Easter Egg Hunt & Story Time

A story time and Easter Egg Hunt brought together 30 children (ages 0-3). The temporary location was the site of a scavenger hunt with hundreds of eggs hidden throughout the library. This project sought to promote the location.

May – Signs & Banners

Traditional and social media platforms in combination with outdoor signage at the old and new temporary locations were used to inform the public that the library was back in operation. Print Express Graphics Designs and Banners donated outdoor directional and information signs to the library.

June – Tooby goes to St. Maarten

The Library partnered with the Netherlands-based Tooby Foundation to improve services to the community by inspiring children (ages 4-8) with subtle messages about the importance of norms and values, cleanliness, honesty, and responsibility. These messages were delivered via books centered on a monkey named “Tooby” and copies of the books were distributed in Sint Maarten.

The Tooby Project comprised sorting and distributing the six-in-a-series books to 21 primary schools on Sint Maarten, and to those on Sint Eustatius and Saba. A total of 3,000 dual language (Dutch and English) books were distributed.

This project, which will run into 2020, was sponsored by the Windward Island Bank, Landsloterij, Tooby Foundation, and the library.

September – Digital Library Promotion + Cyber-Seniors

The Digital Library School Promotion covered 18 primary schools and ran from September to November 2019. Its focus was to inform schools and pupils about the library’s large e-book collection and its portal the “Libby” app.

The popular senior internet classes, titled “Cyber-Seniors”, were relaunched due to high demand and amended to fit the location. The classes encourage seniors to use technology, harness their creativity and stay connected with their peers and family. The beginners and advance classes were held weekly on Fridays.

October – AUC Community Action Day + Halloween Party

The American University of the Caribbean (AUC) Medical School via its Community Action Day collaborated with the library for “Body Smart”, a program on October 19. The program engaged children in health-conscious activities.

A Halloween Party was held in the library for young library members. The activities in a spooky atmosphere were held throughout the day, including the screening of scary, but fun movies and face-painting.

November – Packed Month

Read to me

The “Read to me” Babies and Toddlers Campaign presents: Raising Readers as part of the ongoing “Book-start Sint Maarten Campaign” launched in 2010. “Read to me” promotes early childhood development for babies and toddlers by motivating parents and caregivers to read to their children (age 2-3). As in the initial campaign, parents are encouraged to visit and register themselves and their children as library members.

Sint Maarten Heritage Week In celebration of Sint Maarten Day, Sint Maarten’s Heritage Week, themed “T’iz we own ting” was hosted November 4-9. This served as a precursor to island-wide celebration on November 11. The activities kicked off with the library honoring Sint Maarten cultural Icons.

The heritage week featured cultural wear, dances, spoken and written word, a carousel of digital photography exhibitions, music, traditional beverages, and foods. A special collection of books, archaeological information and artifacts, and historic information were on display.

CPR Course

The library collaborated with WIEMS for a free Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) course for library members. The course was themed “Family and Friends Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation”. The one-day courses were held biweekly throughout the month. As result, an automated external defibrillator (AED), a professional first aid kit, and several fire extinguishers were placed around the library.

Customer Appreciation Week

In celebrating the library’s 96th anniversary, a Customer Appreciation Week was held leading up to the actual date of establishment of the library (November 1923). The week included a breakfast award ceremony, where members who downloaded and read the most books, received a tablet as a prize.

2020 Activities Schedule

The “2020 Activities Schedule” was launched on all the library’s social media platforms. This calendar highlighted all planned library activities. This was the first time such a calendar was available in advance to the public.

December – Christmas Market + Grace Period

The library hosted its annual Christmas Market themed “Celebrating Traditions”. This brought together 29 booth vendors who offered items in five categories: craft, food, traditional beverages and liqueurs, cakes and tarts, and plants.

The library granted four grace periods in 2019 for no-fault return of books. Patrons were also given additional grace periods during the Customer Appreciation Week and the Christmas Market. As in previous years, no penalties were issued, no questions asked. These grace periods sought to encourage members to return overdue books and use the library while securing books missing from the collection.

2019 Book Presentations

Sint Maarten and regional authors presented copies of their books to the library in 2019.

Books donated

- A variety of titles published by the House of Nehesi Publishers were presented by HNP President Ms. Jacqueline Sample.
- “Doubt concerned family right report” written in the Chinese language was presented by Mr. Chengshi Yu.
- “Love is Forever” by Dr. Francis Cotton.

- “Da’Manual- Sint Maarten Legislative Process: The making of a law ‘simplified” presented by Mr. Julio R. Romney
- “La Sangre Llama” and “Chella and the weird woman” by Ms. Loekie Morales, and “Bin, Bin Sigui Mi” by Denise De Jongh-Rekwest were presented by Morales.
- “Beneath the Surface: A collection of heartfelt poems” was presented by Mrs. Jocelyn R. Hanley.
- “Screeem & Riot”, “The Silent Stones”, “Here’s a Hundred Dollar Buy yourself a life!”, and “Are mirrors cleaner in Paradise?” were presented by Mrs. Judith Fallon-Reid.
- “After the storm” presented by Ms. Tamara Groeneveldt

Support & Donations

Various organizations, local and internationally, continued to show their support for the library. All (financial) donations were used to purchase e-Books for the digital library collection.

Alice and Lionel Romney: Memorial African Diaspora

Mrs. Mary Romney-Schaab, a supporter of the “Alice and Lionel Romney: Memorial African Diaspora” collection visited the Library in January. Romney donates books annually to the African Diaspora Collection. The Alice & Lionel Romney Memorial African Diaspora collection was launched on February 27, 2014, by Romney-Schaab and her husband Mr. Philip Schaab.

Interact Club of St. Dominic High School

The Interact Club of St. Dominic High School donated NAf 1,350 to the library. The funds were raised via the Interacts annual “Gift Wrapping for a Cause” project. The library was chosen as the recipient due to its well-known financial and physical challenges.

Fire Fighters Foundation

The Sint Maarten Fire Department held a “Help Save Our Library” fundraiser as part of Firemen’s Week, raising US \$5,769. The fundraiser was a combination of a food and “Save Our Library” wristband sale, and a car wash on the old library premises. The fundraiser received support from the Motorworld Group and NV GEBE.

Island Gems Charity Foundation

Island Gems Charity Foundation purchased a few hundred digital titles to boost the digital catalogue in March. The foundation wanted to help the library gain more of a foothold in the digital world by making its titles more hurricane resistant. On a working visit to the library, several Island Gems renewed their library membership.

Happy Bookers

In celebration of its tenth anniversary, the Happy Bookers reading club hosted a fundraising breakfast and shared the proceeds of US \$1,324.72 equally between the Library and the French side's Le Médiatheque.

The fight for a new building

The PJJ board presented its business case for a new building, titled “*Building our new community, knowledge, heritage and resource center in Sint Maarten*”, on September 24, 2019, to Minister Smith and the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB). This was the result of several meetings between the PJJ board, the minister, and Culture Department of the ECYS Ministry. Sint Maarten representative in the Trust Fund Steering Committee, Mr. M. Gumbs, received a copy of the presentation.

Parliament was updated by the PJJ board about the plans for a new building and other innovations related to the business case on November 4, 2019.

Both presentations paved the way for the business case to be included on MECYS's priority list to be financed by the Trust Fund. This path is still being followed.

Prior to the 2017 hurricanes, LIBRARY has been looking to create a comprehensive, state-of-the-art building to permanently house the library's collection together with the museum and an archaeological center. This was the basis for a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on May 17, 2018, by Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation, Sint Maarten Archaeological Center Foundation and the library.

A taskforce was established based on the MoU with two representatives per foundation. That taskforce met eight times in 2019, resulting in the selection of three architects who were invited to present artistic impressions for a new building. The artistic impressions were used to substantiate the business case.

Finances

The library had its 2019 financials audit by the firm BDO Sint Maarten. The following charts show the financial state of the library.

Balance sheet

(After profit appropriation)

Assets	31 december 2019 In ANG	31 december 2018 In ANG
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	151,514	113,136
	151,514	113,136
Current assets		
Receivables and prepaid expenses	128,792	615,543
Cash and bank in hand	309,267	364,304
	438,059	979,847
Total assets	589,573	1,092,983

Liabilities & equity	31 december 2019 In ANG	31 december 2018 In ANG
Equity		
Equity	100	100
Statutory and legal reserves	190,007	253,340
General reserves	110,026	503,219
	300,133	756,659
Current liabilities		
Credit facilities	8,095	6,680
Accounts payable	24,718	5,783
Taxes and social premiums	24,179	61,528
Other current liabilities	232,448	262,333
	289,440	336,324
Total liabilities & equity	589,573	1,092,983

**Income statement
by nature of expense**

Income Statement	2019 In ANG	2018 In ANG
Income		
Subsidy	1,253,900	1,219,362
Other revenue	19,313	36,242
	1,273,213	1,255,604
Expenses		
Employee expenses	606,537	870,363
Depreciation	30,464	20,749
Housing expenses	168,918	118,294
Administrative expenses	307,381	184,497
Activity expenses	15,770	38,601
	1,129,070	1,232,504
Earnings before taxes	144,143	23,100
Financial income and expenses	8,831	6,560
Net result	152,974	29,660

Major financial concerns going forward

From a financial perspective, the library has four major concerns: pending subsidy settlements, no structural increase in subsidy, unresolved insurance claim dating to the 2017 hurricanes, and no firm commitment of financial support to rebuild the library.

Government allots an annual subsidy to the library of NAf 1.2 million in its national budget. However, only 90 per cent of this registered subsidy is transferred to the library annually. This leaves 10 per cent of the annual subsidy unpaid. That amounts to NAf 731,400 in delayed subsidies settlement from government for five years covering 2014 to 2018 and a subsidy settlement of NAf 35,000 dating from 2006. These outstanding amounts leave the library without much needed funds and no clear indication of when this will be resolved by government.

The library, despite repeated requests to government, has been unable to obtain a subsidy increase in spite of its growing expenses (i.e. rent and cost of living

adjustments) and its pending subsidies settlements. Compounding this need for urgent funds is the rental of the current temporary library space.

Two years after Hurricanes Irma and Maria, there is still a complete lack of clarity from government about the library's insurance claim. The library building is covered under government's general insurance. The library's insurance premiums were deducted by government from its annual subsidy.

The absence of a firm commitment from government to assist with the rebuilding the library with, at the least, co-financing via the Sint Maarten Trust Fund, keeps the further development of this cultural, heritage and knowledge center in limbo.



Library Year in Pictures



