

# **The Ayer Library**

## Director's Report for October 2020

### **October Updates to Library Operations**

- **Reminder: Ayer Library curbside service now available Wednesday evenings.** As of September 23, library staff members are working in the building from noon to 7 PM on Wednesdays to provide curbside pickup into the evening hours.
- The Library's **first email newsletter using our new Constant Contact account** was sent Oct 13<sup>th</sup>. To sign up for email updates, visit the Library's website (ayerlibrary.org) and look for the large orange "Sign Up for Updates" button near the bottom of the home page.
- **Curbside bags delivered to patrons in October: 475**
- Assistant Director Samantha Benoit attended **the Friends of the Ayer Library's October 15th Annual Meeting**. Sam and the Friends Board members discussed the potential impact to the Friends if the Library made permanent its current pandemic policy of not charging late fees on overdue items. Fees for overdue items, printing, faxing, copying are turned over to the Friends and then come back to the library as support for programming.
- **Guest readers for Story Time this month:** Groton Fire Department's Deputy Fire Chief Art Cheeks and Library Clerk Eben Goldman, who did a special spooky read for Halloween.
- **The Kids Play Page on our website received a "refresh",** and now has more educational/reading oriented links for families to play/learn/entertain.
- **Youth Services rolled out "Book Bundles": a collection of picture books based on a monthly theme put into bundles of 4-5 books.** Parents can simply ask for this month's theme and receive books all about predetermined topics. October's theme is Family /Folktales & Halloween.
- **The Adult Creative Craft** for October was a paper quilling initials project -all supplies included.
- Youth Services created **a children's Story Walk featuring the book *5 Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed***. By following a path around the Library's garden area, families can read the story in a socially distanced fashion.
- **Kids and Teens Curbside Crafts for October:**
  - Kids - Origami bats, Eric Carle "Very Busy Spider" weaving, table top Cat Halloween decoration, Fall Leaves Hedgehog, Pumpkin garlands
  - Teens - Jeweled elastic bracelets, origami bunnies, pipe cleaner parachuters, glass bead magnets, mini-book keychain dangles, pipe cleaner superheroes, magnetic buggles.
- **Halloween Trick or Treat bags for families** – As a safer replacement for the canceled Halloween festivities in downtown Ayer, we provided brown paper bag- wrapped books to give kids a fun free gift and small toy --leftovers from Summer Reading packaged by age appropriateness.
- Head of Youth Services Amy Leonard worked on an **Ayer Cultural Council grant application for fun and educational virtual programming in partnership with Through Me To You Puppetry.**

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- **The Friends of the Ayer Library Outdoor Book Sale** was postponed to October 24<sup>th</sup> due to rainy weather on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The event took in over \$1,500 in four hours, all of which will benefit the Library's public programming. Heartfelt Library thanks to event organizer Laurie Sabol, the rest of the Friends Board members and the dozens of volunteers that helped make the event a success in spite of the pandemic.
- We received approval for our **WiFi Hotspot Lending program** from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, which is overseeing the COVID Impact Community Development Block Grant that is paying for the program. This means that we can now officially spend the grant money awarded to the Town back in August! We are now working to prep the hotspots for circulation by purchasing cases for them, getting them labeled and entered into the library catalog.

#### **"Normal" COVID-19 Operations at the Library**

- Library staff are working at the Ayer Library Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 AM to 5 PM, Wednesday from noon to 7 PM, and Saturday from 10 AM to 2 PM. The library building remains closed to the public but, since June 9<sup>th</sup>, curbside pickup of books, DVDs, and other physical items is available by appointment.
- Faxing, photocopying, and document printing are also available at curbside. More details are available on the Library's website ([ayerlibrary.org](http://ayerlibrary.org)) and on our Facebook page.
- Book drops are open to accept returns. No late fees will be charged on overdue items.
- All in-person Library programs scheduled through the fall months have been canceled or postponed, but video Story Times and other online programs continue, and more are in the works for the fall and winter months.
- Even though the building is closed, library staff members are available to fill requests for books and DVDs to be picked up curbside, to help answer questions, or assist you with online library materials, etc.
- To request assistance from one of our staff members
  - By telephone: Please call 978-772-8250.
  - By email: Send your message to [ayerlibrary@cwmar.org](mailto:ayerlibrary@cwmar.org) and someone will be in touch with you as soon as possible.
  - On Facebook: Message us or post a question to [www.facebook.com/AyerLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/AyerLibrary) and someone will respond as soon as possible.
- The Library's WIFI network remains on and available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The signal extends far enough to cover the library parking lot.
- The staff of the Ayer Library continue to work hard to restore library services while also working safely:
  - The staff is divided into two teams of five, with the teams working alternating days to maintain separation.
  - Returned items are being quarantined on tables in the historic Reading Room for 72 hours before being re-shelved or checked out to another patron.

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- Workstations and desk surfaces are being cleaned by staff at the end of each day, if not more frequently, in addition to the disinfecting provided by our cleaning contractor on a daily basis.
- Staff members do their best to remain physically distant from each other while working, and wear face masks inside the building when they can't do so.

#### **Library Director's Activities:**

- With assistance from Samantha, Amy, and Head of Adult Services Barbara Cheeks, I completed and submitted the Library's Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The complementary Financial Report was submitted on October 16<sup>th</sup>. Each year, we are required to submit the ARIS and the Financial Report in order to qualify for State Aid to Public Libraries and to meet the Minimum Standards of Public Library Service as established by Mass. General Law Chapter 78 and overseen by the MBLC.
- IT Infrastructure projects
  - I attended a Zoom meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup> for CWMARS libraries that use the fiber optic internet connection provided by the network. CWMARS is working to encourage and incentivize more libraries to upgrade the speed of their internet connection. Ayer Library currently has a 30 MBPS connection, which is relatively slow by today's standards.
  - Renaud Electrical Service finished the wiring work on the Main Circulation Desk. I have ordered a network switch from CWMARS which, once installed, will enable us to install the second PC workstation.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met via Zoom on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The meeting recording is available on the Ayer Public Access Corporation (APAC) website.
- Samantha and I met with Ayer Facilities Director Chuck Shultz on October 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss how best to continue building operations during the pandemic. We will continue to purchase our own disinfectants and sanitizing supplies, but Chuck will have some in reserve if we have trouble ordering from our usual suppliers. We are going to purchase some indoor air purifiers for the offices and the study room where staff meet and work. According to the CDC, purifiers with HEPA filters may be able to reduce the risk of infection from airborne coronavirus in enclosed spaces.
- With help from Samantha, Circulation & Outreach Librarian Christina Zoller, and volunteer Don Comeau to complete an inventory of our cleaning and sanitizing supplies, I provided the Town's Accounting & Finance Department with an updated estimate of COVID-19 related expenses anticipated between now and the end of the calendar year.
- Chuck Shultz and I also discussed costs and potential timing of several capital projects (\$10,000 or more) for the library's building and grounds. Capital Budget submissions were due at Town Hall at the end of the month. I submitted a Capital Budget request for \$12,000 for FY2022 to repair and/or replace worn out and failed HVAC components that were identified during the installation of the new HVAC control system earlier this year.
- I took part in a CWMARS Library Directors Zoom meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The topics discussed included service challenges during the pandemic and related concerns about

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meeting MBLC requirements for service hours and municipal appropriations for FY2021 and FY2022.

- The Library's administrative STAB (Samantha, Tim, Amy, Barbara) team met virtually on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 14th, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29th.
- I was on vacation from October 5-9.

**Library Maintenance:**

- Keystone Elevator Service checked the operation of the Library's elevator.
- Able Landscapers and Turf Unlimited both visited the Library in October, mowing and fertilizing the lawn, respectively.

My thanks to Amy Leonard, Barbara Cheeks, Samantha Benoit, and the rest of the Ayer Library staff for their contributions to this report.

Respectfully,

Tim Silva  
Library Director