

The Ayer Library

Director's Report for February 2021

February Updates to Library Operations

- Curbside orders picked up: 434
- Adult Creative Crafting: Diamond Valentine's Day Ornament Collage
- Spice of the Month: This new activity for adults kicked off in February with a chili seasoning mix.
- Strega Mama Story Time: *Valensteins* by Ethan Long
- Video Story Time with Library Clerk Eben Goldman: *Rabbit Listened, Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch, Martin's Big Words*
- Kids & Teens Curbside Crafts:
 - Kids - Valentine's monsters, Send a hug, iridescent snow crowns, animal page bookmarks.
 - Teens - blackout bookmarks, freestyle word art, letter bead bracelets
- Young Adult Book of the Month Club: A new program launched by Circulation and Outreach Librarian Christina Zoller. The book for February is *Enchantment of Ravens* by Margaret Rogerson and comes with a with Waldorf window stars paper craft.
- Behind the Scenes:
 - Assistant Director Samantha Benoit continues to direct ongoing weeding of adult fiction and non-fiction collections. The adult biographies were shifted from the Reading Room into the Main stacks at the end of the Non-Fiction section.
 - Head of Youth Services Amy Leonard and I had a conference call February 3rd with Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Thomas and Parks Commission member Sarah Gibbons to discuss a series of Story Walks for the walking path at Pirone Park. Sarah and Jeff set up the first "story" - *Freight Train* by Donald Crews - in time for Ayer's Sesquicentennial on February 14th. The Library helped to publicize the launch of the story walk.
 - Barbara and I met via Zoom with Ayer Conservation Agent Jo-Anne Crystoff on 12th and 26th of February to continue working on a "story walk" project scheduled to launch in April at the Pine Meadow Pond Conservation Area.
 - Library Computer Support Project
 - Chris Hancock of CWMARS visited the Library on February 5th to complete the installation of the remote maintenance software on 27 of the Library's PCs.
 - I placed an order with CWMARS to purchase and install the Envisionware PC and printing management software on our public PCs. This software will make it much easier (and safer as long as COVID is an issue) to manage the use of our public PCs once we are able to reopen the library building.
 - Ayer Facilities Director Chuck Shultz also visited the Library on February 5th in the company of a group of technicians from RISE, an energy efficiency consulting company. The group looked at the library's lighting fixtures, HVAC components, and the windows and insulation (or lack thereof) in the 1894 section of the building.
 - On February 26th, Lisa Castoldi from the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center visited the Library to pick up several boxes of recently-weeded or donated books and DVDs to bolster to the prison's library collection. More Than Words, our regular

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- used book pick-up service, suspended its services in March of 2020, so Samantha has been searching for other places to send our discards. She made the connection with Lisa, who is a regular patron of the Ayer Library. We're hoping to continue this relationship with Lisa and the library service at the prison. Popular fiction, sports, dogs, and non-fiction "how to" and DIY subjects are always in demand. We were also able to provide some juvenile materials for the inmates that have difficulty reading.
- The Library was closed February 2nd, February 16th, and closed at 2 PM on February 9th due to winter storms. The Library was closed February 13th in observance of the Presidents Day holiday.

"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 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) 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 have been canceled or postponed, but video Story Times and other online programs continue.
- 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 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 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.
 - 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.

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- 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:

- On Monday, February 8th, Assistant Director Samantha Benoit, Head of Adult Services Barbara Cheeks, and Head of Youth Services Amy Leonard met to discuss drafts of updated communication policies and practices.
- On Wednesday, February 10th, I attended the Town of Ayer's Department Heads' Meeting via Zoom.
- I attended the February 18th Ayer Select Board Meeting on Zoom to be present while Town Manager Robert Pontbriand requested approval for a 2% cost of living increase for non-union Town employees (includes all library employees) in the FY2022 omnibus budget. The 2% rate was approved, and that increase in staff wages will ensure that the Library's FY2022 operating budget will exceed the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) as determined by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Meeting the MAR means that the Library will continue to qualify for State Aid to Public Libraries payments, statewide resource sharing, and many other benefits.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met via Zoom on February 25th. The meeting recording is available on the Ayer Public Access Corporation (APAC) website.
- The Library's administrative STAB (Samantha, Tim, Amy, Barbara) team met on February 4th, 12th, 18th, and 24th to discuss ongoing operations and future plans.

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