

The Ayer Library

Director's Report for March 2021

March Updates to Library Operations

- Curbside orders picked up: 520
- Adult Creative Crafting: Embroidery hoops
- Spice of the Month: Flavored hot chocolate
- Strega Mama Story Time: "You Are a Lion" Yoga
- Video Story Time with Library Clerk Eben Goldman: *Shannon the World's Tallest Leprechaun*, *The Lorax*
- Kids & Teens Curbside Crafts:
 - Kids – Dr. Seuss magnets, Lion/Lamb masks, St Patrick's Day rainbow craft. Superhero fun, Puppet peeps.
 - Teens - Paper gnomes, fluffy turtles, pipe cleaner chameleons.
- Young Adult Book of the Month Club: The book for March is *All Your Twisted Secrets* by Diana Urban and comes with an origami whale paper craft.
- Behind the Scenes:
 - We have reduced the quarantine time of returned materials to 24 hours in keeping with the current understanding of the (low) risk of coronavirus infection due to contact with infected surfaces and new recommendations from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
 - Assistant Director Samantha Benoit oversaw a quarterly survey of the number of reference questions received by the library and the annual CWMARS delivery survey in consecutive weeks. Under her direction, staff completed weeding efforts in the adult non-fiction collection.
 - Head of Youth Services Amy Leonard learned that the Library was awarded \$1000 by the Ayer Cultural Council. The funds will support Summer Reading programming from Through Me to You Puppetry (6 shows) and Jungle Jim Manning. Both performers will provide virtual/ Zoom programming.
 - Head of Adult Services Barbara Cheeks continued to meet via Zoom with Ayer Conservation Agent Jo-Anne Crystoff to work on a "story walk" project scheduled to launch in April at the Pine Meadow Pond Conservation Area.
 - Library Computer Support Project
 - Mike Landry & Ronel Olivar from CWMARS visited the Library on Monday, March 15th to install the Envisionware client software on our public PCs and the management software on the service desk PCs. Over the next few days I tested the system and requested adjustments on some of the settings. 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.
 - Once the Envisionware installation was complete, I began assisting Anne Savoie of CWMARS with the installation and configuration of Deep Freeze software on the Library's public PCs. Deep Freeze provides security for both the library and to patrons using public computers by preventing any changes made during a public computer session from becoming permanent. Any files downloaded (including malware) during a public session will be deleted as

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soon as the computer is restarted at the end of the session, and the computer will be returned to its original configuration.

- Keane Fire & Safety sent a technician to the Library on March 19th to perform the annual safety inspection on the fire extinguishers in the building.
- Keystone Elevator performed a routine maintenance check on the Library's elevator on March 26th.

"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@cwmars.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 24 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.
 - 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.

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Library Director's Activities:

- On March 8th, after numerous delays, I was finally able to take delivery of the acrylic desk shields we had ordered for our service desks early in the fall of 2020. Ron Clark of F.W. Webb delivered the nine pieces to the Library personally.
- On Monday, March 8th, I joined other Town Department Heads on Zoom at a second public information session on the FY2022 Town Budget. The session went smoothly and ended without any questions about the library's budget.
- On Tuesday, March 16th I attended the quarterly meeting of the CWMARS Users' Council. Of particular note, the Council members voted to approve an agreement with Quipu, a company that will provide an e-card option for all CWMARS libraries. It will take some time to work out the details, but in essence the card can be applied for and approved without the need to visit the library in person. The e-card would allow the holder access to the combined digital collection of ebooks and online resources held by the network and the home library. In order to borrow physical materials, the e-card holder would just need to show a picture ID at a library.
- On Wednesday, March 17th, I attended the Town of Ayer's Department Heads' Meeting via Zoom.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met via Zoom on March 18th. The meeting recording is available on the Ayer Public Access Corporation (APAC) website.
- On Wednesday, March 31st, I met via phone call with Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services to lay out a rough schedule for the work that we will undertake to develop a new strategic plan for the Ayer Library.
 - This will be the first significant planning effort for the Library in more than 20 years.
 - Information gathered from the community will be used to identify and prioritize local needs and desires and then to set goals for library services over the next 3-5 years.
 - Between April and August we will be conducting a series of meetings and focus groups with library staff, library trustees, Friends, and members of the public. All of these meetings will be taking place on Zoom – not ideal, but it's a current fact of life. A community survey will be distributed in both digital and paper form in mid-May as well.
- Assistant Director Samantha Benoit and I met on March 3rd, 11th, 17th, and 25th.
- The Library's administrative STAB (Samantha, Tim, Amy, Barbara) team met on March 4th, 12th, 18th, and 26th 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