

The Ayer Library
Director's Report for April 2021

April Updates to Library Operations

- Curbside orders picked up: 417
- Adult Creative Crafting: Beeswax wrappers
- Spice of the Month: Italian seasonings
- Strega Mama Story Time: *Where Is Green Sheep?*
- Video Story Time with Library Clerk Eben Goldman: *The Seed of Compassion* in recognition of Earth Day.
- Bonus Video Story Time with Library Trustee Becky Campaner: *The Earth Book & 10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*
- Kids & Teens Curbside Crafts:
 - Kids – tissue paper flowers, animal puppets, Very Hungry Caterpillar crowns
 - Teens - pipe cleaner rose, paper umbrellas, clothespin airplane, origami bunny.
- Young Adult Book of the Month Club: The book for April is *For Everyone*, with Blackout poetry bookmarks paper craft.
- Adult Brain Bundles (Brain games): 34 copies taken
- Ayer's 150th Anniversary Historical Photo Display: *Do you know where?* Received a number of comments on Facebook. One patron identified their home in a picture – we provided them with a copy!
- Rachel Benson's Felting Class took place via Zoom on April 30th. The class filled to capacity as soon as it was advertised and nearly everyone came away with a recognizable felted creature.
- Poetry Path at Pine Meadow Conservation Area: Now available April 12- May 31! This self-guided trail contains 10 poems about nature by a variety of poets, all of which have been printed onto wooden boards and temporarily mounted to trees along the trails. Maps of the trail and information about the poems are available on the Library's web site or at the "Curbside Shed." This joint project between the Library and the Ayer Conservation Commission celebrates both National Poetry Month (April) and the arrival of spring, and we hope that it inspires people to get outdoors after an especially difficult winter under pandemic conditions.
- East Main Street Construction Project: Work restarted on April 2nd on this MassDOT-funded and managed project to excavate and replace buried utilities and rebuild East Main Street's travel lanes and sidewalks between East Street and the bridge. This will be a tremendous improvement once finished, however:
 - This work is expected to continue on and off through the remainder of the calendar year and will likely make accessing the Library difficult or impossible at times.
 - The Library has asked to be notified in advance of such work in future weeks and months. We will pass along any information that we receive.
 - Library patrons may park at the Ayer District Courthouse if the Library's parking lot is inaccessible. No parking pass or notification is required.
- Portable "Comfort Station" deployed in the Library's parking lot. With warmer weather bringing more people outdoors for longer periods of time, we wanted to be able to provide

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some restroom services to patrons using the Library's WiFi from the grounds or the parking lot. The comfort station arrived on April 22nd.

- Surprise snowstorm of April 16! The Library remained open despite receiving at least 4" of heavy wet snow over the course of the morning. Thanks to the Ayer DPW for coming over to plow out our parking lot!
- Behind the Scenes:
 - Collection Management Projects
 - Searching for long-missing items
 - taking an inventory of adult book series to identify missing titles
 - Working with our primary book supplier to streamline ordering and better track our spending within our collection.
 - Contacting patrons who signed up for OverDrive Instant Digital Library Cards at the beginning of the pandemic. The IDCs are expiring now and we're making sure that patrons know that they can check out OverDrive ebooks and eaudiobooks with a traditional library card instead.
 - Outreach
 - We met with the expanded Ayer Family Partnership community, which now encompasses 7 towns and includes education specialists, social services, teachers, and school leaders.
 - We're working with Ayer Public Access Corporation (APAC) to make Eben's Story Time videos and any other video content we produce more accessible (so it's not just on Facebook). APAC is going to help with edits and promotion and will host the videos on their site. We will have links to share on our Facebook page, website, etc.
 - We are preparing to begin the annual performance assessment process for all library staff in order to complete the reviews by the end of the fiscal year on June 30th.
 - The Library's website was down for a couple of days April 11-12 thanks to a mishandled transfer between domain hosting companies.
 - Library Computer Support Project
 - Deep Freeze security software has been installed in all public PCs.
 - Next steps: Training library staff on the Envisionware PC management and printing software & setting up the remote printing for patrons.
 - Hallmark Copier fixed a jamming problem with the Library's photocopier on April 2nd. Bruce from Hallmark Copier spoke with Samantha and Tim on April 22nd about options for a new photocopier.
 - The Ayer Water Department replaced the Library's faulty water meter on April 26th.
 - Cindy Knox, the Town of Ayer's IT Director, visited the library on April 21st to set up a MUNIS connection on a staff PC.
 - Muirfield Mechanical sent two technicians to service the Library's A/C system on April 26th but cold temperatures forced a postponement.
 - Able Landscapers arrived on April 30th to do the spring cleanup of the Library grounds and mow the lawns for the first time this season.

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"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@cwmmars.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.

Library Director's Activities:

- On Thursday April 1st, I attended a meeting of Town Department Heads and Town Manager Robert Pontbriand to discuss conditions required for re-opening public buildings. Tamara Bedard of Nashoba Associated Boards of Health provided an update on local conditions and answered questions. With coronavirus vaccine availability still limited such that most Library staff won't be eligible until April 19th, the Library will continue to provide curbside service only until further notice.

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- On Wednesday, April 16th, I attended the Town of Ayer's Department Heads' Meeting via Zoom.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met via Zoom on April 15th. The meeting recording is available on the Ayer Public Access Corporation (APAC) website.
- I participated in a Gateway to College Career Day event hosted on Zoom by Mount Wachusett Community College on April 21st. Most of the student participants were high school seniors who also take classes at the Mount. I was one of about 20 professionals – including lawyers, police officers, teachers, nurses, social workers, and more – asked to talk briefly about my job, the path I took to get where I am, and things I learned along the way.
- On April 19th, my wife and I enjoyed a lovely early spring day on the Poetry Path at the Pine Meadow conservation area.
- On April 19th, I met Scott Kurland of APAC at the Library to discuss filming one or more Library service-related Public Service Announcements to run on APAC. Scott brought a video camera and shot some footage of the Library's current "curbside service" setup.
- I attended the Friends of the Ayer Library quarterly Board meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, April 21st.
- I attended the Annual Town Meeting at the Ayer-Shirley Regional High School on Monday, April 26th. The Library's FY2022 operating budget was approved that evening as part of the Town's omnibus budget.
- Strategic Planning:
 - Barbara Alevras and I met via telephone on April 12th and April 26th to go over dates for various planning sessions and the launch of the community survey.
 - The Library staff participated in a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results visioning exercise facilitated by Barbara Alevras on April 29th.
- Assistant Director Samantha Benoit and I met on April 6th, 14th, 21st, and 28th.
- The Library's administrative STAB (Samantha, Tim, Amy, Barbara) team met on April 1st, 7th, 22nd, and 27th 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