

The Ayer Library
Director's Report for May 2021

May Updates to Library Operations

- Curbside orders picked up: 430
- Adult Creative Crafting: Felt birds
- Spice of the Month: Taco seasoning
- Ayer's 150th Anniversary Historical Photo Display: Highlighted the business that helped build and shape the town.
- Poetry Path at Pine Meadow Conservation Area: The closing date for the Poetry Path has been extended through June 19th due to continued interest! 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 continues 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.
- Friends of the Ayer Library:
 - Friends Board member Laurie Sabol returned to volunteering on Mondays on May 3rd to begin re-organizing the Book Sale Room. She also put together a cart-full of used books to be displayed and sold curbside, weather permitting. The Curbside cart rolled into service on May 19th.
- Behind the Scenes:
 - Plans for Re-Opening the Library building to the public
 - The increased availability of coronavirus vaccinations after April 19th meant that library staff would be able to be fully vaccinated by the beginning of June. With this in mind, the Library's Management STAB (Samantha, Tim, Amy, Barbara) team began working on plans for bringing the staff back together into one team on June 1st and then re-opening the building to the public on June 15th.
 - Personnel
 - Library staff members were asked to complete self-assessment forms as part of the library's annual performance evaluation process. The STAB team met to review and finalize overall assessments in mid-May and then began to

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meet with staff to discuss the assessments the last week in May. These meetings will conclude the first week of June.

- Circulation Librarian Thomas Tagliavento gave notice that he will be leaving the Ayer Library after almost four years in order to take a new position at the Tyngsboro Public Library. His last day in Ayer is June 9th.
- Outreach
 - On May 3rd, I recorded a brief public service announcement to air on APAC about the Library's current services and our tentative plans for re-opening. The spot aired on APAC on May 20th.
- Maintenance & Repair
 - On May 1st, Shultz Painting visited the Library to stain the exterior of the Curbside Shed and the three picnic tables on the Library grounds.
 - One of the library boiler's two circulator pumps is leaking water. This pump was rebuilt two years ago but it now appears that it will need to be replaced.
 - Muirfield Mechanical sent two technicians on May 17th to change filters and belts on Library's A/C system in preparation for the summer season.
 - Able Landscapers
 - At approximately 12:30 PM on May 26th, library staff heard a loud crash from the front of the building. We discovered that a large (10-15 square feet) piece of plaster had detached from the ceiling of the Reading Room in the historic section of the building and crashed to the floor. Fortunately, no one was in the room at the time, and nothing appears to have been damaged by the falling plaster. Facilities Maintenance Director Chuck Shultz and Building Inspector Charlie Shultz arrived within 20 minutes to inspect and document the damage. We were able to remove the cleaning and disinfecting supplies, quarantined books and DVDs recently returned, and computer equipment from the room shortly thereafter. Chuck Shultz and Carly Antonellis contacted the Town's insurance agent to begin the claims process, then Chuck sent a team from Service Master to clean up the fallen plaster and stabilize the damaged area of the ceiling the following day. Chuck will be coordinating visits by contractors to determine how best to address the repairs and how much the work may cost. The room will remain closed until repairs can be completed.
 - Bruce Cramer of Hallmark Copier met with Samantha and me on May 28th to present several options for purchasing or leasing a new or refurbished photocopier for the library.

"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.

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- 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.
- A portable comfort station is located on 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 Wednesday, May 12th, I attended the Town of Ayer's Department Heads' Meeting via Zoom.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met via Zoom on May 20th. The meeting recording is available on the Ayer Public Access Corporation (APAC) website.
- Strategic Planning:
 - Planning consultant Barbara Alevras and I met via telephone on May 10th and 24th to prepare for the first meeting of the volunteer Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, develop a Community Survey, and finalize plans for SOAR exercises and focus groups.
 - The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee – a select group of community members – met for the first time on May 10th. Following a general overview of

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the planning process, the group brainstormed ways to get the word out about the upcoming Community Survey and then revised a draft of a new mission statement for the Library.

- We launched the Community Survey on Saturday, May 22nd, with an online version on Survey Monkey and paper copies available at the Library's Curbside Shed, at Union Coffee Roaster, and at Ayer Shop & Save. The survey will be open through June 12th. The initial response was very positive – more than 120 people filled out the survey over the first five days!
- The Library's Board of Trustees participated in a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results visioning exercise facilitated by Barbara Alevras on May 26th.
- The Board and several members of the Friends of the Ayer Library participated in a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results visioning exercise facilitated by Barbara Alevras on May 27th.
- The Library's administrative STAB (Samantha, Tim, Amy, Barbara) team met on May 5th, May 13th, May 21st and May 25th to discuss and plan ongoing operations and to review the self-assessment forms completed by the library staff as part of the annual performance assessment process.

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