

# **The Ayer Library**

## **Director's Report for September 2021**

### Current operations:

- The Library building is OPEN and we have returned to our pre-pandemic operating schedule as follows:
  - Tuesday- Thursday 10 AM – 8 PM, Friday 10 AM- 5 PM, Saturday 10 AM – 2 PM
- We are asking that all patrons (and staff) continue to wear masks when inside the building in order to protect the health of our patrons who may be immuno-compromised and for those under 12 who cannot yet be vaccinated.
- We continue to offer curbside pickup service via the Curbside Shed. The default pickup location for requested items is the Main Desk once again. Please call us to have your requested items placed in the shed.
- The Friends' Book Sale Room on the Ground Floor is open once again.
- The Reading Room in the historic wing of the building remains closed to the public while we wait for the resolution of our insurance claim and the repair of the plaster ceiling that partially collapsed in May.
- Public programs remain virtual at least through the end of the calendar year.

### **September Updates**

- Kids Crafts: Ayer Police Station collaboration, Jacket from the Captain with Ayer library patch, badge stickers, uniform dress cap - Thank you to Chief Brian Gill! Internal kids scavenger hunt for Police picture art, Llama puppet craft, Dragon craft.
- Teen Crafts: Tulle Butterfly, Clothespin birds, Throw a Fit monster, Elastic Bead Bracelets, Paper pumpkins
- Adult Creative Crafting: Recycled magazine coasters
- Spice of the Month: Apple Pie Spice Mix (the most popular yet!)
- Adult Book Displays: Banned books, Hispanic Heritage Month, Dear Diary, 9-11 Anniversary
- "9-11: The Day That Changed the World" photo display was awarded to the Ayer Library. The exhibit was placed in the Main Floor entrance lobby to be displayed in observation of the 20th anniversary of 9-11.
- Teens: Banned Books, with crossword and maze interactives from the American Library Association.
- Adult brain bundles continue to be popular a year after they were introduced: 20 taken in September
- Book a Story: In the absence of our formal Story Time programming, Amy Leonard has been offering to read stories to some of our regular young patrons when they visit the Library with their caregivers. In September she read to a total of 35 children.
- 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.

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- 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.
- Behind the Scenes:
  - Lisa Castoldi from the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center returned to the Library to select from our recently-weeded or donated books and DVDs to bolster to the prison's library collection.
  - Personnel
    - Circulation Librarian Justine Paulson gave notice that she intends to leave her position at the Library on October 14<sup>th</sup>
    - The Library closed at 3 PM on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> for a quarterly All-Staff meeting. At this meeting we discussed ongoing operations under the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the status of various planned service improvements and other initiatives. We reviewed safety procedures by touring the building and pointing out the locations of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits, etc.
  - Maintenance & Repair
    - Historic Reading Room Ceiling Repair: No progress on this project to report.
    - Muirfield Mechanical visited the Library on September 2<sup>nd</sup> to clean and service the hard-to-reach air conditioning unit in the Main Lobby ceiling.
    - Library Security system upgrade: Lookout Security installed the new sensors in the building on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The work is almost complete. Lookout will return to connect the new system to the library's internet network.
    - Able Landscapers visited the Library weekly to mow the lawn. They also applied Round-Up to the poison ivy growing through the chain link fence near the picnic tables.
    - Window Cleaning: All Pro Cleaning Service sent a crew to clean the exterior glass inside and outside of the Library building on September 20<sup>th</sup>. The job was a bit harder than usual as two years had passed since we'd last cleaned the glass.
    - On September 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Shultz & Sons Painting repainted the stair railings and the ironwork at the Library's main entrance, along with the light poles in the parking lot and on the walkway to the Children's entrance. They also painted the curbside shed doors to match. Ayer's Director of Facilities Maintenance Chuck Shultz visited the Library on August 24<sup>th</sup>. He and I discussed moving forward on a few small maintenance projects, including repainting the iron work on the main stairs and the light poles in the parking area, repainting the lines in the parking lot, and addressing some minor plumbing issues (slow draining sinks, leaking flush valves.)
    - The Ayer Fire Department responded to a call from the Library's alarm panel early in the morning of September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The culprit was a drinking water

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cooler that had begun to smoke. Thankfully there was no fire and no damage to any part of the building, and it's good to know that our alarm system works well. Crystal Rock delivered a new water cooler and took away the slightly-singed one the following day.

- A crew of roofers from Specialized Roofing visited the Library on September 27<sup>th</sup> to address areas of the roof where we'd been experiencing leaks during heavy rain this summer. They replaced all of the missing shingles (matched them the best they could), repaired all of the damage under the shingles as well. They also repaired or replaced flashing and rubber roofing, and sealed holes around suspected leaks as best they could.

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

- I attended the Town Department Heads meeting at Town Hall on September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- I attended the quarterly CWMARS Users' Council Meeting held via Zoom on September 21.
- Samantha Benoit and I completed the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' FY21 Financial Report and FY22 Library State Aid application. The report was submitted to the MBLC on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Strategic Planning:
  - Planning Consultant Barbara Alevras and I met via Zoom on September 8th to review the work schedule and assign the writing of the final parts and the assembly of the final draft.
  - The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met in person at the Library on Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. The Board voted to approve the Library's FY2023-2027 Strategic Plan and to submit it to the MBLC.
  - Following the Library Trustees meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup>, I made a few minor corrections to the Plan's supporting appendices and to the proposed Work Plan for FY2023. Barbara Alevras incorporated the changes into a final draft version of the Strategic Plan and I submitted it to the MBLC for approval on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

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