

The Ayer Library

Director's Report for October 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 until we can repair the plaster ceiling that partially collapsed in May.
- Public programs remain virtual at least through the end of the calendar year.

October Updates

- Curbside Pick-ups: 41
- Kids Crafts: Ayer Fire Department Educational packets, Erasers.
- Teen Crafts: paper witch hat craft, mosaic word bookmarks
- Adult Creative Crafting: Fabric pumpkins – 19 craft kits picked up
- Spice of the Month: Chai Spice – 20 spice kits picked up
- Adult Book Displays: Thrillers & Chillers, Fall is in the air, breast cancer awareness month
- Teens: Banned Books, with crossword and maze interactives from the American Library Association.
- Adult brain bundles: 27 bundles picked up.
- Ayer's 150th Anniversary Posts: Oct 13 - Schools, Oct. 27 - Fort Devens
- 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 October she read to a total of 17 children.
- Other Children's Room activities: Fire Fighter "scavenger hunt" (about 40 participants), "Wear your costume" with pumpkin hat prizes.
- On October 28th, the Library hosted a sign-up only program with balloon animal magician and Library favorite Jungle Jim. This program was funded by the Ayer Cultural Council and was originally scheduled for the summer of 2020. 28 people attended.
- Circulation and Outreach Librarian Christina Zoller, Assistant Director Samantha Benoit and I all spent time at the Friends of the Ayer Library's book sale tent at the Heart of Hometown festival on Saturday, October 2nd.
- 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:

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- This work is expected to continue on and off through the remainder of the calendar year and may 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.
- Behind the Scenes:
 - Bob Hallett is a new volunteer at the Library. He is working to identify the homes and buildings that appears in photographs in the Library's local history collection and to pull together any other information we may have about the structures. His research will help local residents who are curious about how old their homes are or about who may have lived in them in the past
 - Another new volunteer named Mike Joy started helping out on the Library grounds on October 7th. He helps keep the Library looking good in between visits by Able Landscapers by picking up any trash or fallen branches, weeding the planting beds, and sweeping the steps and walkways into the building.
 - Samantha Benoit and I attended the Friends of the Ayer Library's quarterly meeting via Zoom on October 20th.
 - Head of Adult Services Barbara Cheeks and I visited the Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church on October 26th to meet with Pastor Susan Gaeta. Pastor Gaeta is interested in having the church serve community needs and we are investigating other spaces in town where we might hold in-person programs while our Reading Room is not available for use.
 - Personnel
 - Library Clerk Sumedha Chandra Sekhar gave notice that she intends to leave her position at the Library on November 4th.
 - I'm pleased to announce that Sue Hauk of Groton has joined the Library team as a part-time Library Clerk. Sue's first day on the job was October 19th.
 - After posting an ad and interviewing three candidates, we decided not to fill the Circulation Librarian position left open by Justine Paulson's departure until after the holidays.
 - Maintenance & Repair
 - Joe from Moore Enterprises repaired the phone connection to the Library elevator's emergency call box on October 8th.
 - Historic Reading Room Ceiling Repair: The Library is submitting a request to the Capital Budget Committee for \$48,500 in funding to repair the Reading Room ceiling.
 - A small team of plumbers from G & L Plumbing spent a couple of days in the Library working on the heating system. This work was paid for by the Town's Capital Budget, from an FY22 request made by the Library. G & L installed a new circulator pump, repaired several leaking pipes, and installed a new actuator to control the heat in the Local History Room.

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- On Monday, October 18th, a contractor repainted the lines in the Library's parking lot.

Library Director's Activities:

- I attended a Town Department Heads meeting via Zoom on October 13th.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees met via Zoom on Wednesday, October 13th.
- Director of Facilities Maintenance Chuck Shultz and I met on October 18th to talk about capital projects for the Library and outline the Library's FY2023 Capital Budget request.
- I met with TSNE-Missionworks on Zoom on October 20th to discuss training options for improving communication and teamwork between library staff.
- Amy Leonard, Barbara Cheeks and I met on October 22nd to discuss programming ideas and potential timing for bringing in-person programming back for the Library.
- I met with HR Consultant Mary Livingston on Zoom on October 28th to continue work on new personnel policies for the Ayer Library.

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