

The Ayer Library

Director's Report for November 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 who have not yet been able to 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 – now officially renamed the Friends' Book Cellar - 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.

November Updates

- Curbside Pick-ups: 38
- Kids Craft Kits: Turkey Tailfeathers (24 kits taken), family tree posters (30), Thankful packets (50)
- Teen Craft Kits: Mayflower boats (24)
- Adult Creative Crafting Kits: "Thankful" wooden beads (24)
- Spice of the Month Kits: Poultry (25)
- Adult Book Displays: No Shave November (books with mustaches on the cover), Black Friday Deals (black covers), Baking, and Family relationships.
- Teens Display: Minions of Reasons to Read
- Kids Displays: Family Tree ancestry, Thankful Tree: patron response tree leaves.
- Adult Brain Bundle Puzzle Kits: Fall theme (47)
- Ayer's 150th Anniversary Posts: Our favorite photos
- Programs:
 - Facebook Storytime with Eben: *Change Sings* and *Thank You, Sarah*
 - November 4 – Spark Joy, The Art of Organizing and Tidying Up via Zoom with Shannon Honeycutt. Co-sponsored by Pepperell's Lawrence Library, Townsend Public Library, Ayer, Boxborough's Sargent Memorial Library, and the Dunstable Public Library. 11 attendees from Ayer
 - November 6 – Dandelions Adult Watercolor Painting Workshop via Zoom with Greg Maichack. Co-sponsored by the Ayer Cultural Council. 10 attendees.
 - The Ayer Library has joined the Tewksbury Public Library (TPL) and other area libraries in a collaborative effort to market TPL's Author Talks program series on Zoom. We advertise the program and handle registration for our patrons so that we know how many of our patrons attend each program.

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- November 3 - Five Nominees For The 2021 Agatha Award For Best First Mystery Novel – 3 attendees
- November 16 - Is Rape a Crime?: A Memoir Investigation and a Manifesto by Michelle Bowdler – 1 attendee
- November 27 - Finding Sanctuary: An Artist Explores the Nature of Mass Audubon by Barry Van Dusen – 4 attendees
- Other Children's Room activities/displays: Tunnel play, individualized story reading, Scavenger Hunts (2) Hanukkah, Thanksgiving
- Schedule:
 - The Library closed on Thursday, November 11th in observance of Veterans' Day.
 - The Library was forced to close just after 1 PM on Friday, November 12th due to a power failure that affected the east side of town. Power was restored to the Library at 3:15 PM and the Library was able to open on schedule on Saturday.
- East Main Street Construction Project:
 - On November 8th, the sidewalk contractor poured a new section of concrete walkway to connect the Library's historic entrance to the new sidewalk along East Main Street. The surface of the new sidewalks poured earlier this year were 4" higher than the surface of the Library's walkway where the two met. The contractor removed about 12' of the Library's walkway and poured a new section that slopes upward to meet the grade of the new sidewalk.
 - Work has mostly wrapped up for the season on this MassDOT-funded and managed project. Next season should see the final layer of asphalt and road markings applied, as well as some new trees planted along East Main Street.
- Behind the Scenes:
 - Head of Adult Services Barbara Cheeks attended an Adult Programming round Table discussion hosted by Central Mass. Library Advocates via Zoom on November 9th.
 - New Library Volunteers: Caleb and Lloyd Dupont started November 18th. They will assist with re-shelving books and materials, prepping craft kits, and other tasks.
 - Volunteer Mike Joy wrapped up his seasonal grounds keeping work at the Library grounds on November 16th. He plans to return in the spring to help 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.
 - Personnel
 - Circulation and Outreach Librarian Christina Zoller gave notice on November 19th that she would be leaving the Library to accept the position of Assistant Town Clerk in the Ayer Town Hall. Her last day of work in the Library will be Saturday, December 4th.
 - With Christina's pending departure, we reopened the search for a Circulation Librarian to work primarily in the Youth Services Department.
 - Maintenance & Repair

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- Chris from Muirfield Mechanical came to the Library on November 5th to diagnose and fix the main air handling unit. Said unit had stopped functioning earlier in the week, leading to cooler than normal temperatures in the Children's Room and the Main Floor stacks.
- Historic Reading Room Ceiling Repair: The Library's request to the Capital Budget Committee for \$48,500 in funding to repair the Reading Room ceiling received positive reviews at the Committee's first meeting on November 10th.
- A crew of workers from RISE Engineering converted the Library's interior lighting from fluorescent to LED fixtures on November 22nd and 23rd. Most of the actual fixtures remain unchanged, with only the illuminating components converted to more efficient and longer-lasting LEDs. The new lights have made a big difference, brightening the Children's Room, the Main Floor and the hallway leading to the Historical Room considerably. This work was funded in large part by a Green Communities grant received by the Town of Ayer for FY2022. The cost of the Library light conversion came to just under \$35,000. After incentives from National Grid, the Green Communities grant, and contributions from the Town's Capital Budget, the Library was responsible for only \$1,365 of the cost. According to RISE Engineering's calculations, savings from lower electric bills and reduced maintenance costs (thanks to fewer bulb replacements over time) will cover the cost of the project in less than 5 years. Reduced energy usage has the additional benefit of reducing the amount of pollution and greenhouse gases generated in order to keep the Library's lights, computers, and other systems running.
- Able Landscapers visited the Library on November 9th to pick up leaves and mow the lawn for the final time this season. They returned on November 29th to clean up the perennials in the mulched planting beds and the remainder of the fallen leaves from the grounds.
- R. M. Ratta picked up the seasonal portable toilet unit from the Library's parking lot on November 30th.

Library Director's Activities:

- Meetings:
 - Massachusetts Library System's Annual Meeting via Zoom on Monday, November 1st.
 - Town Department Heads meeting via Zoom on November 10th.
 - Quarterly C/WMARS Users' Council meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, November 14th where member libraries voted to approve the organization's FY2023 Operating Budget. Our FY2023 member assessment will be \$16,957, down from \$19,735 in FY2022. Part of the reduction is the result of my request in September of 2020 to increase our internet connection speed (from 30 MBPS to 100 MBPS) for the current fiscal year. The early notice enabled C/WMARS to

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apply for a higher eRate subsidy from the federal government. Changes in C/WMARS' formula for distributing eRate funds and additional federal and state funding for the support of libraries and library networks also contributed to our reduced assessment.

- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees monthly meeting via Zoom on Monday, November 15th.
- Board of Trustees President Sharon Slarsky and I participated as volunteer story readers in the Ayer Treasure Trove event at Town Hall on Saturday, November 6th. The event was co-hosted by the Friends of the Ayer Library and the Ayer Cultural Council and appeared to be a great success. The Friends' raised more than \$1,300 at the event.
- I spent time gathering expense information and working on a draft of the Library's FY2023 Operating Budget request.
- Library Trustees Sharon Slarsky and Debra Faust-Clancy and I met twice to finalize the terms of my FY22-FY24 contract as Library Director. We signed the contract on November 12th.
- I was on vacation from November 22nd- 29th.

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