

The Ayer Library

Director's Report for December 2021

Current operations:

- As of December 20, 2021, the Library is following the Town of Ayer's mask mandate. All library visitors must wear masks within the building. If you are unable to wear a mask, please contact us for assistance or to request curbside service.
- 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 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.

December Updates

- Curbside Pick-ups: 35
- Kids Craft Kits: Hanukkah Dreidel sun catchers (50 kits taken), Tree Advent calendar (24), Llama sticker pages (50), Fuzzy ties (24), Christmas coloring bookmarks (20), 12 Days of Christmas coloring books (25)
- Teen Craft Kits: Grinch door hangers (24), Dinosaur ornaments (12)
- Adult Creative Crafting Kits: Yarn hat ornaments (28)
- Spice of the Month Kits: Gingerbread (21)
- Adult Book Displays: Hallmark Movie reads, Get the ball rolling (large books), "Library" themed books, National Bartender day Dec 3rd display
- Teens Display: "Allidays"
- Kids Displays: Light a Candle for Family Traditions: patron response, Snow Monster display, Hanukkah lights display, Kwanzaa candle craft (50), New Year's Hats (24), New Year's clocks (12), New Year packets (30)
- Adult Brain Bundle Puzzle Kits: Holiday theme (67). Lisa Castoldi, Librarian at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center, informed us that she made and distributed another 75 copies of our holiday Brain Bundle Puzzle Kit to inmates.
- Ayer's 150th Anniversary Posts: More favorite photos
- Programs:
 - Facebook Storytime with Eben: *When Santa Was a Baby* and *The Magic Dreidels*
 - Zoom Felting Class with Barbara Cheeks: 16 attendees created felted gnomes on December 7th.
 - 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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- December 9 – Author David Baldacci on his latest book *Mercy*. 5 attendees.
- Schedule:
 - The Library closed at 5 PM on Thursday, December 23rd, for the Christmas holiday. We re-opened on Tuesday, December 28th.
 - The Library closed at 2 PM on Friday, December 31st, for the New Year holiday. We re-opened on Tuesday, January 4th.
- Behind the Scenes:
 - Head of Adult Services Barbara Cheeks is working with Assabet Interactive to set up a new event calendar, museum pass, and room reservation system for the Library. The new system will work seamlessly with the Library's current website and will offer staff and patrons several advantages.
 - The events calendar is easier to manage than our current calendar and offers better integration for automatic postings to Facebook.
 - The museum pass module will enable staff and patrons to quickly see the passes available for each day and to reserve them from a computer. This is a vast improvement on our current practice of having staff thumb through binders full of passes and a paper calendar while a patron waits at the desk or on the phone.
 - The room reservation module will let us more easily schedule and track the use of the Library's Study Room and Local History Room.

We hope to begin training the staff on the new system in early January and officially launch it mid-month.

 - We received word from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in early December that the Library has once again met the qualifications for the State Aid to Public Libraries program for FY2022. Our continued participation in this voluntary program means that the Ayer Library remains a member of the Massachusetts Library System, and thus our patrons will continue to benefit from interlibrary loan services and access to free e-content and database products paid for by the MBLC. Shortly after we received word of qualification, the Town Treasurer's office received the first of two State Aid payments for FY2022 on our behalf. The first payment of \$6,845.60 will be followed by a final payment of a similar amount in the springtime. Libraries may use State Aid funds for almost any purpose; Since 2018 we have been using State Aid funds to pay for things such as upgrades to the Library's WiFi network and the purchase of new PCs for staff, the construction and installation of new circulation desks, unexpected repairs to the HVAC system, as well as training and continuing education for Library staff.

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- Personnel

- Anna Leonard joined the Library staff in December as a Part-time Library Clerk on December 14th. She will be assisting in the Children's Room for the duration of her winter break from university.
- New Library Volunteer: Annika Farley started volunteering on December 4th.
- The search for a Circulation Librarian to work primarily in the Youth Services Department was put on hold in mid-December due to staff illness, scheduled time off, and the holiday season. We will re-post the position in early January.

- Maintenance & Repair

- Easton Electronics sent a pair of technicians to the Library on December 4th to conduct the annual inspection and testing of the building's fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Both systems passed inspection with no problems.
- Our annual elevator safety inspection was conducted on Tuesday, December 14th with the state inspector and technicians from Keystone Elevator and Easton Electronics. Although our elevator has been deemed safe to operate, it failed the inspection. According to Keystone, this is the result of a recent change in Department of Public Safety requirements that is causing many functional elevators to fail inspection. We've received a 90-day temporary certificate that, according to Keystone, will likely need to be extended another 90 days at least before the necessary parts can be installed in order to meet the new requirements.
- Historic Reading Room Ceiling Repair: Although it is likely that the Town's Capital Committee will approve the Library's request for \$48,500 to make the necessary repairs, I have asked the Town Manager if it would be possible to go ahead with the repairs before the Town Meeting vote approving the capital budget for FY2023. The Town Manager and the Finance Director agreed that it would be possible to fund the repairs from the Town's Reserve Fund; this money could be available well before Town Meeting. Before the Reserve Fund is tapped, however, the Assistant Town Manager will make a final attempt to get funding from the Town's insurance carrier.

Library Director's Activities:

- Meetings:

- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees monthly meeting via Zoom on Thursday, December 9th. At this meeting, the Board approved a preliminary operating budget request for FY 2023, which I submitted to the Town Manager on December 11th.
- Massachusetts Library System New Director's Meeting on Thursday, December 16th.
- Town Department Heads meeting via Zoom for December was canceled.

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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