

The Ayer Library

Director's Report for November 2019

Adult Programs & Activities:

Program/Presenter	Attendance	Date
Book Club – Reading <i>Molly's Game</i> by Molly Bloom	4	November 7
Genealogy Club	3	November 12
Bingo!	9	November 13
Family Board Game Night	12	November 14
Cross-stitch stockings with Samantha Benoit	10	November 16
Bingo!	11	November 20
Family Board Game Night	10	November 21
<i>Crochet Crafting: Pumpkins</i> with Justine Paulson	1	November 23

- All of our November programs were hosted or led by Library staff members Autumn Dore, Christina Zoller, Justine Paulson, and Samantha Benoit.

Library Director's Activities:

- I continued to work with technicians from our library network - Central/Western Mass. Automated Resource Sharing (C/WMARS) - to determine the cause of slower-than-expected download speeds on the 30 MBPS fiber-optic line that connects our staff PCs to C/WMARS' network and provides the internet connection for our new public WiFi network. Speeds appear to be particularly slow on smartphones (~6 MBPS) connected to the WiFi.
- I contacted two consultants that specialize in strategic planning for libraries to find out more about their services and to get a sense of their process and their fees. Ayer Library has not had a formal strategic plan in place since the years leading up to the library's renovation and expansion in the mid-1990s. The process of developing a plan is a great way to learn more about the community and the ways that the Library might serve Ayer's needs in the next 3-5 years. Once the plan is complete and approved by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), Ayer Library will be eligible for a variety of grants from the MBLC that could help us reach the service goals set out in the plan.
- The Library will be launching a new website at the end of the calendar year. The new site will be much more user-friendly for patrons with smartphones or tablets and much more user-friendly for the staff members that will be updating content regularly. Circulation Librarian Thomas Tagliavento, who does most of the web content updates now, and I have attended online demos with our current site host Piper Mountain Webs and Library Influx, a competitor with a good reputation, and we've decided to relaunch the site using Library Influx's platform because we think it will give us more flexibility to make changes and will be easier to use.

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Library Director's Meetings:

- On November 7th I traveled to Lowell for a “get-to-know-you” meeting with the Director and Program Manager of the Greater Lowell Community Foundation. The Foundation provides support to organizations like the Ayer Library both in terms of awarding grants to support programs and in providing services to help organizations effectively raise money for programs from other sources.
- As a voting member of the network, I attended the C/WMARS Users' Council Meeting at the Charlton Public Library on November 19th. Member library representatives approved the network's FY21 budget and the assessments that will be charged to member libraries. C/WMARS consists of 146 member libraries and will operate with a \$3.15 million budget for FY21. Ayer's portion of the membership assessment is \$16,903. C/WMARS operates and maintains the hardware and software that keeps our online library catalog running, maintains a collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks that's available to all C/WMARS library patrons, provides cataloging and technology support and training to member libraries, internet connections, and many other necessary services that facilitate resource sharing among the 146 libraries in the network and beyond.
- The Ayer Library Board of Trustees held their regular meeting on November 19th. Two new Library Trustees – Sharon Slarsky and Sue Kennedy - were appointed to open seats on the board. One of the nine seats on the board remains unfilled.
- On November 20th, I attended the Mass. Library System's open house event for their new office space in Marlborough, MA. I met Terry McQuown, MLS' new Director of Consulting and Training Services and received a tour of the space from MLS Consultant and Ayer resident and library patron Michelle Eberle.
- On November 27th, I met with Shawn Hehir of CTS Services, an IT provider based in Bellingham, MA, to discuss the Library's needs for hardware and software support for both staff and patron networks. Our needs include robust file sharing and backup for staff PCs, printer networking, software upgrades, network security, and general help-desk support for both staff & patron computers.

Library Operations:

- We are very pleased to welcome Barbara Cheeks as our new Head of Adult Services! Barbara comes to us from Groton, where she worked for a number of years at the Groton School in a variety of student service positions, including the school library. She will be taking over program planning and collection development tasks from Nancy Askin, who retired from the Library at the end of September. Barbara started working at the Library on November 26th and is getting to know our patrons and systems.

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- Our plans to improve both our patron service infrastructure and staff workspace will take a big step forward early in 2020 when we expect to install two new circulation desks. The desk on the Main Floor will have two workstations instead of one, and the desk in the Children's Room will be sized appropriately for smaller patrons yet will provide more efficient workspace for the librarians. It will also have a closeable gate to keep wandering youngsters out of the staff workspace and the office area behind the desk. We've agreed on the basic design and cost of this new furniture, which will be custom-built for us by MassCor Industries. Assistant Director Samantha Benoit and I have a meeting scheduled to finalize the contract in mid-December, with the fabrication expected to take 8-10 weeks.
- Samantha Benoit, Christina Zoller and Friends of the Ayer Library board member Carol Horgan are finalizing the details for Books on Wheels, a program to bring library materials to people that have trouble getting to the Library. After months of development, the program is going live in December. We are in the process of recruiting program participants who would like to have books, DVDs, or other library materials delivered to their homes and, soon, a few more volunteers to make deliveries to program participants. For more information about signing up, see the Library's website or call us at 978-772-8250.
- Johnson Controls repaired a faulty temperature sensor and combustion damper on November 11th. The technician also bled the air out of the radiator in the staff kitchen. That room has now warmed up considerably while the overly-warm Historical Room has now cooled off to a more appropriate temperature.
- Unfortunately, one of the new lights on the granite 'Ayer Library' sign on East Main Street has been broken. Something struck the light and caused the top of the metal box supporting it to crack. Renaud Electrical Service has been notified and will repair the light asap.
- Prescott Landscaping sent a crew out to do a "fall clean-up" on the Library grounds, picking up leaves and other end-of season debris.

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Youth Services Programs & Activities:

Children's Programs	Attendance	Date
Homeschool Group Meeting	28	November 1
Story Ninja (Elections)	15	November 5
Ayer Family Partnership Music & Movement	38	November 6
Storytime (Toto the Tornado Kitten)	35	November 7
Story Ninja (Bangarang Yoga)	15	November 12
Storytime (Strega Mama)	41	November 14
Homeschool Group Meeting	21	November 16
Story Ninja (Baking Bread)	20	November 19
Ayer Family Partnership Music & Movement	42	November 20
Storytime (Turkeys)	17	November 21
Story Ninja (We are grateful)	12	November 26

- **Young Adult (YA)/Teen Programs & Activities:**

- In November, the Makerspace crafts were tassel earrings, origami pumpkins, and fall trees (made with a brown paper bag and scraps of paper).

I would like to thank the following Ayer Library staff members for their contributions to this report: Samantha Benoit, Autumn Dore, Amy Leonard, Justine Paulson, Thomas Tagliavento, and Christina Zoller.

Respectfully,

Tim Silva
Library Director