

Lawrence Library 2020 Town Report

Two thousand twenty (2020) was a challenging and tumultuous year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Lawrence Library, as well as other Town of Pepperell buildings, closed to the public on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 in response to Governor Baker's State of Emergency declaration.

Library staff were on site Tuesday through Saturday to assist patrons by phone or email and to provide pre-arranged curbside pickup. Staff quickly adapted and moved into fully remote programming and services for the community from March 18th until building access restrictions were lifted at the end of May. Curbside no-contact service was implemented in May and has remained very popular. In effort to accommodate patrons, our service hours moved to a 6 day, 43 hours a week model (Monday-Saturday). Using state COVID funding, a permanent locker system was installed by the entryway making curbside pickup available 24/7.

In the late spring, the library budget passed at Town Meeting, ensuring that the library met the state minimum funding requirements for the fifth year, eliminating the need to apply for a state waiver.

In addition to curbside pickup and virtual programming, on July 1st the library became the first library in the CWMARS network to open to the public, offering appointments for browsing, computer, fax, and copier services, plus study areas for individuals.

When curbside service was implemented, a quarantine protocol and procedures were established. In December, the library began a disinfectant fogging procedure for all returned materials, thereby decreasing the quarantine time from 4 days to 1 day. This was another first in the CWMARS library network.

COVID related restrictions presented an unique opportunity for our patrons to explore the eBook and digital audiobook collections (usage is up 38%), and the rest of our virtual collection, including streaming movies, TV, and music. The library WiFi remained available 24/7 outside the building. With COVID earmark funding for the Lawrence Library (one of five local communities), we added five new T-Mobile hotspots to the collection to help provide internet connectivity for patrons/students.

We added three new online children's resources – Tumble Books, Scholastics Teachables, Mometrix. Additional online services that the library offers are: AcornTV, IndieFlix, Qello, UniversalClass, NuWav Legal Documents, Global Road Warrior, and three genealogy resources: Ancestry, American Ancestors, and FamilySearch. All online services can be accessed 24/7. The website is optimized for both computers and mobile devices. The monthly library newsletter is emailed to over 2,000 people, with open rates significantly higher than industry average. Library website usage remained strong in 2020 with over one million visits



It was a busy year for adult, teen, and children's programming. The library offered 118 in-person programs January 1 through March 17th and 882 virtual online programs, browsing, computer, and study appointments March 18th to December 31st, 2020. The library provided meeting room space for 129 non-library meetings.



All Pepperell *Cultural Council* grants were placed on hold with exception of the Nissitissit String Quartet 'Cool Classics' concert on January 18th. Watch for more details on upcoming Cultural Grant programs in 2021.

A few positive outcomes from the numerous challenges:

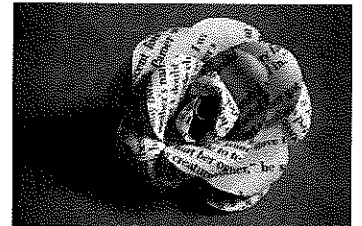
- personal and professional growth by staff in their remote skills, both in social media and programming
- curbside pickup services, with its many nuances resolved, has made this a successful permanent service
- modifying our event calendar to accommodate appointment bookings
- Art Gallery shows now have 'virtual visit' videos, allowing anyone to see exhibits online
- our own YouTube and Zoom accounts for easier program recording/viewing

Other event/program highlights for the year:

□ For children - Ms. Shannon and Ms. Jennifer offered many programs geared towards our younger patrons including (before the shut down): Storytimes, Fairy House Building program, Winter Carnival, Family Book Club, Sensational Scribblers (art program for toddlers), Saturday Movie Morning, Saturday Winter Painting, and Chess Club. As we moved to virtual and curbside: Summer Reading with a Drive Thru Bubble Blast, weekly Library Trail Scavenger Hunt, Art-to-Go, Ms. Jennifer's Online Storytimes with Book Bundles, virtual Family Book Club, Not so Spooky Trail, Fleece Pillow Craft, and more.

□ For teens - bimonthly LGBTQ+ Youth Group (virtual after March), Tie-Dye Party (socially distanced), virtually: Dungeons & Dragons, and Nintendo Switch gaming programs with a main focus on the popular game Animal Crossing and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Tournaments.

□ For adults - monthly: Adult Fiction and Non-fiction Book Clubs; weekly: Meditation Classes; bi-monthly: Chess Club. All programs were moved to a virtual platform after March. Other programming included: Adult To-Go Crafting kits, Digital Photography workshops, Yoga, instructional and fun videos with Devon, and much more.



□ The library also partnered with local organizations and businesses to offer: Books to Keep (PACH) and the US Census promotion.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Library ~ Year round art/photography exhibits in the Art Gallery. Thanks to the funding provided by Friends of the Lawrence Library, we continued to offer two free monthly music events through March 2020: *Live @ Lawrence Library* and *Open Mic* night. All performances are aired live and recorded thanks to our *Pepperell Community Media* partnership.

The abbreviated musician lineup included: the Nissitissit String Quartet 'Cool Classics' (co-sponsored with the Pepperell Cultural Council) and singer-songwriter Karen Grenier. The Art Gallery shows: Wendy Prest, Sharon Correnty (Always Gloria), Squanicook Colonial Quilt Guild, and Mark Lotterhand. Virtual art shows: Jacqui Hawk, Sam Guay, and Nick Pasquale. To enjoy these and all future Art Gallery 'virtual tours' bookmark the In the Gallery web page

The Friends' first, and very successful, Great American Pies Fundraiser was held at the end of February. The Annual Book Sale was postponed until October, and in December, the annual Holiday Tree Lighting with Santa was held virtually. The Toy Yard Sale and the Wine & Cider Tasting were both canceled due to COVID.

These two fundraising events, plus membership, made possible the funding for our library programs, the museum passes, the monthly electronic newsletter (sign up today!), Take and Make craft programs, and this year's virtual annual Holiday Tree Lighting. Their dedication, contributions, and support are much needed and always greatly appreciated!

The Lawrence Library stays in touch by participating in social media, with a presence on Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Instagram and, new this year, YouTube.



At this time, the library remains open by appointment and compliant with the state's 40 % building capacity regulations. In 2021, we hope to eventually fully open without restrictions. We are working towards in-person outdoor summer programming and in-library programming this fall. Watch for the new 'Trail Tales' story boards this spring on the Greens Brook handicap accessible trail located behind the library.

In the coming year, the library will continue to work to engage the community and to meet the state minimum funding and the state certification in FY22.

On behalf of the staff, the Library Board of Trustees, and the Friends of the Library, thank you, Pepperell, for your support. If you don't have a library card, book an appointment to stop by for one – it's FREE and a great way to help stretch your budget! We hope to see you soon.

Did you know? The library offers free WiFi 24/7, plus faxing, color and black and white copying/printing, and document scanning for a nominal fee (currently by appointment).

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Spratt, Director

On Behalf of the Library Board of Trustees

What's your library worth to you? Massachusetts Library Association has an online Library Service Calculator (<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/what-libraries-do/calculator>), which lets you determine the value of services/savings your library provides to you. Try this calculator and see what you'll save in just one month.

The Library Board of Trustees meet monthly, generally on the first Wednesday at 7 PM. The Friends of the Lawrence Library meet September through June on the second Wednesday at 10:30 AM. Open to the public – all are welcome to attend. Currently these meetings are being held virtually.

2020 Statistic Snapshot:

- **\$1,483,939.90** - the value of all services provided (materials borrowed, programs, computer and WiFi usage, museum passes, online databases, and reference assistance)
- Over **40,470 items** were borrowed/loaned; **13,404** Inter Library Loans; **18,234** ebooks
- **7,005** patrons with active library cards
- Open **1,886** hours (The library was closed to the public March 18th – May 31st, 2020)
- Building usage: 118 in-person programs January 1st -March 17th, 2020. 882 online programs, browsing, computer, and study appointments offered March 18th - December 31st, 2020
- Meeting Room use: 129 non-library meetings
- Total of **11** library staff (plus one 10 hour/week custodian) FTE: **6.96**
- 1,125,259 web site visits

Service Hours:	Curbside Pickup	Browsing Appointments	
Monday	9-5	Monday	10-1
Tuesday	12-7	Tuesday	3-6
Wednesday	9-5	Wednesday	10-1
Thursday	12-7	Thursday	3-6
Friday	9-5	Friday	10-1
Saturday	9-2	Saturday	10-1