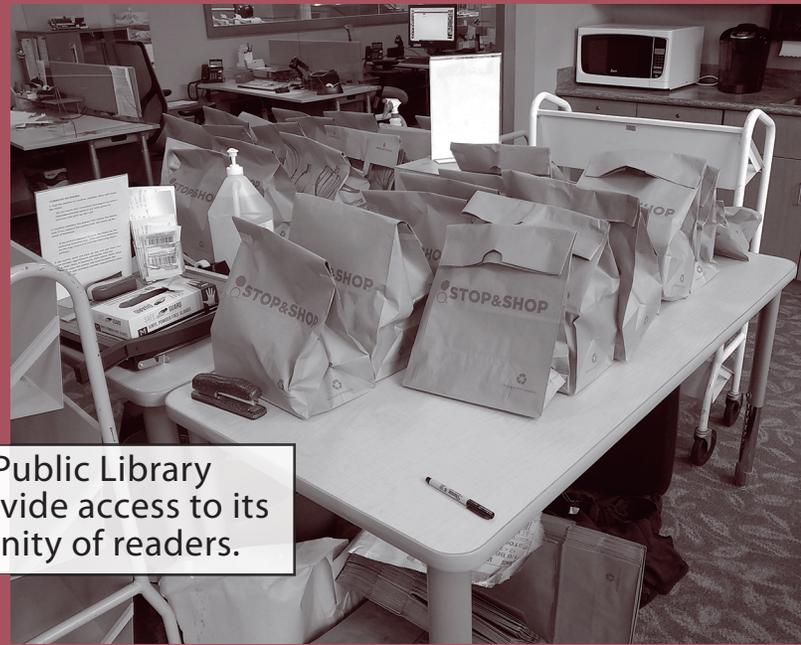


CHAPTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHREWSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY - FALL 2020



Shrewsbury Public Library continues to provide access to its strong community of readers.

A letter from Library Director Priya Rathnam:

As I write this editorial in mid-August, my heart is filled with gratitude for my staff, who have displayed immense creativity, flexibility, and resourcefulness when we had to pivot and redefine library services starting in mid-March. The children's and youth services librarians put their thinking caps on in April and reinvented themselves as storytellers, teachers, and role models for children. What is especially commendable is that they have been doing all of this in a virtual environment! The adult services team has become adept at promoting digital resources and using every online tool and social media platform. Grateful community residents have expressed their appreciation for the patience of reference staff who provided remote technology help.

I am happy to report that since June, we have restored partial services and provided access to print materials to a community eager to return to a semblance of normalcy. Circulation staff have been dealing with staggering volumes of books and other materials requested by patrons. Cataloging staff have been busy processing new materials and the outreach librarian has resumed delivering materials to homebound patrons. You can read their stories of growth, resilience, and an overwhelming desire to continue to serve Shrewsbury residents by any means possible.

I am grateful to the town management and other municipal department heads who extended their support and guidance during this difficult time. We have strengthened our partnerships with the schools, the Council on Aging, and the Parks and Recreation department. One example of a successful collaborative project that we embarked upon this summer is the StoryWalk® project with the Parks and Recreation Department. It has been gratifying to see families enjoying the stories on display at Lake Street Park.

I also appreciate the support of the Board of Library Trustees, who have stood by me, a new Library Director, and trusted that I made the right decisions.

As a librarian, I am overjoyed that our community loves to read and support the library! Residents have continued to renew their membership to the Friends of the Library, thereby supporting the wonderful work done by the Friends Board.

Another section of the newsletter lists the names of generous donors who sponsored Sundays during the 2019-2020 season and have pledged support for the coming year.

I thank everyone in the community for your patience and understanding as we continue to evaluate the services that we can provide while being mindful of the safety and wellbeing of staff and patrons.

FALL SERVICES UPDATES

We are excited to announce the services that you can look forward to in the Fall!

- *Request books, audiobooks, DVDs & video games from CWMARS libraries to pick up at the library.*
- *Make an appointment to use public computers, printers and copiers.*
- *Access e-books and other electronic resources remotely.*
- *Enjoy virtual programs planned for children, teens and adults.*
- *Ask questions & receive virtual assistance via our Ask Us chat conveniently located on our website.*

For details about these services, call: 508-841-8609 x2 or x3. Or, email: spreference@cwmar.org

Before the library closed to the public, as the Reference Librarian, I worked at the Reference Desk, primarily helping patrons with their research questions, the public computers, and assisting them with our databases (OverDrive, Hoopla, etc.). Like everyone else, I've had to stretch my limits. In the last few months, I've become a switchboard operator (as all the calls were being forwarded to the Reference phone), planned a week-long Comic Con (for families, teens, and adults), ran the Teen Summer Reading Program, and most importantly, answered your hundreds of calls and emails.

I feel a bit like a magician revealing the secrets of a magic trick, but as of right now, there is only one person answering the 8533 telephone number and reference email. I appreciate all of your patience as I help you with our databases, services, or commiserate with you that the building is closed.

Suzanne, Reference Librarian, Adult Services



To use a literary reference, it felt like a bit of a Monkey's Paw situation when I was offered the job of Assistant Director during a global pandemic. On the one hand, it was deeply affecting to have my colleagues and friends of the past seven years tell me that I was the one they trusted to take on this important leadership role during a time of crisis. I've come to care about the Shrewsbury Public Library and its staff a great deal since first starting here in 2013, and being asked to step into a position of greater responsibility was incredibly moving and humbling. On the other hand, as the pandemic grew in scope, it became increasingly clear that whatever ideas I had about what being Assistant Director would be like were completely out the window. As the entire staff was forced to shift to remote work, all of our daily tasks and workflows - in fact the entire structure of our organization - was completely upended. Suddenly we were forced to redesign every little aspect of our jobs totally from scratch. I'll admit, at first, I found it very overwhelming. I was taking on an extremely demanding position during a literally unprecedented time, when there was no real point of reference for what a successful library leader should do. But what helped me to keep striving forward, and what continues to help me with every new challenge I face, is remembering why I originally applied for the Assistant Director position. The Shrewsbury Public Library is a truly special place with staff who sincerely care about each other and believe the work they're doing is genuinely improving the community. And for the last seven years I've found working in this place, around these people, to be a powerfully inspiring experience that has compelled me to want to be a better librarian.

I'd be lying if I said in recent months there haven't been mornings I prepared to face the day with a sense of anxiety or apprehension, worried about what new problems or unpleasant surprises I might be confronted with. I think we've all been in that headspace these days. But when I start to feel that sense of worry clouding my perception, I remind myself how lucky I am to get to spend my days around friends in a place that I care about.

Mike, Assistant Director, Adult Services

In this time of overwhelming upheaval, Shrewsbury Public Library has been my constant, keeping me focused, motivated, connected, and grounded. Prior to the pandemic, I worked primarily in Circulation and occasionally in Reference; since our mid-March closure, I've had the opportunity to split my time between Circulation and Adult Services, using my creativity, passion for writing, and love of books and reading as a means of engaging patrons virtually and assisting them remotely. I've enjoyed adapting to new technology, thinking creatively, brainstorming and problem-solving, developing engaging social media and e-newsletter content, writing our library's pandemic story, and more. These months have been an exercise in patience, understanding, adaptability, and — above all — an opportunity to learn, grow, and improve as we all navigate uncharted waters.

Amanda, Senior Library Assistant, Circulation



ADULT SERVICES VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Art Activities

Tile Art Coaster Workshop

In this workshop, led by Bindu Gupta, participants will make their own tile art coasters. Join us on Thursday, September 10th from 6:00 PM-8:00 PM.

Book Clubs

Shrewsbury Readers Book Club

Shrewsbury Readers Book Club meets on the first Thursday of the month from 6:30-7:30 PM. Selections are made from various genres and the writings of a diverse array of authors. Newcomers are welcome. Please check the online calendar for more information.

Reading Glasses

SPL's book club for adults in their 20s and 30s that meets on the third or fourth Thursday of the month from 7:00 PM-8:30 PM. Members choose and vote which books to read each month!

Find us on Facebook or email asorenson@cwmar.org to join us!

English Conversation Circle

English Conversation Circle classes for adults will be 10:30 - 11:30 AM Saturdays and 4:00 -5:00 PM Tuesdays.

The Tuesday class begins September 8th & the Saturday session starts on September 12th.

Conversation Circles are a great way to practice speaking English in an informal, relaxed setting. To register, send an email to splreference@cwmar.org and let us know if you're interested in the Tuesday or Saturday class.

Genealogy

Genealogy Club Goes Zooming Ahead!

Anyone interested in genealogy (or family history) can now join the Shrewsbury Genealogy Club from the comfort of their home! The club will meet on the fourth Monday of every month starting at 7:00 PM.

Register online via SPL's calendar or email the Genealogy Club's clubmaster at: geobrown1940@gmail.com.

Health & Fitness

Intermittent Fasting

On Wednesday, September 9th from 7:00-8:00 PM, Dr. Donald Peltó will introduce the topic of intermittent fasting and detail its effectiveness and health benefits. Register via SPL's online calendar.

Yoga

Hatha yoga brings a physical, emotional and spiritual awareness to one's body and mind. In this class, we use yoga poses and breathing techniques to strengthen the body and mind.

Meeting weekly on Tuesdays this Fall, Bindu Gupta will begin offering this class on Zoom on Tuesday, September 8th from 9:00 AM-10:00 AM.

Send an email to doyogawithbindu@gmail.com for a waiver form to sign and you will receive the Zoom link to join.

Memory Café

The Memory Café that provides socialization opportunities for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia and their care partners has been meeting in a virtual setting since June.

Meetings are on the first and third Friday of the month from 2:00-3:00 PM. Musical performances are offered for entertainment of visitors. All are welcome! If you wish to receive a Zoom invite, please send an email to Charlotte at cbudge@shrewsburyma.gov.

Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring some of the programs. Thanks also to the Greater Worcester Community Foundation for providing funding for the English Conversation Circle and the Memory Café.

During these unexpected times, I took a leap and made the decision to change jobs and join the team at Shrewsbury Public Library as its Electronics Resources Librarian. Changing work locations during the pre-COVID era presented its own challenges and risks such as developing new relationships, learning an organization and its workflow, learning and meeting a community, all of which would be very different during this time of significant upheaval and change. While the experience of changing employers can be a bit overwhelming, I have found in SPL a supportive, kind environment filled with people who care tremendously about each other, this library and their community. As I take over the reigns of my new position, I am excited about virtually connecting with our community until we can safely meet at the library.

Andrea, Electronic Resources Librarian, Adult Services

I've been able to catalog from home to keep a steady flow of new children's books ready for patrons. Focusing on work while being at home was a personal challenge in the beginning, but as time went on it became much easier to get into "work mode" and complete projects. A new task I've taken on since the pandemic started is facilitating the Zoom meetings for the Memory Café. It has been a blessing to work with the caring staff involved as well as meeting the wonderful guests who attend virtually. I hope to continue working with the group once we are able to meet in person again.

Charlotte, Senior Library Assistant, Cataloging



Working from home for me meant trying to carve out a quiet work space in an old farmhouse to store and catalog the hundreds of books I had brought home from SPL while simultaneously vying for WiFi with a household of six. Everyone is now working, attending virtual school classes, and constantly "Zooming" from home. We did our best to be productive and get work done. To be supportive of one another while mourning the loss of life as we knew it: two senior years robbed of live schooling, live friendships, and live, fun memories in the making, the cancellation of spring sports seasons and spring breaks, art shows, concerts and graduation ceremonies. Yet for all the transition and loss, the silver linings were many. Family dinners interactive because no one had anyplace to go. Working from home in comfortable clothing

- no need to iron. A new standing desk designed for a quiet work space on the front porch - fresh air, birds singing, Wifi stretched to maximum... Everyone healthy and safe at home.

Noël, Senior Library Assistant, Cataloging

As the Outreach Librarian, I am very involved with keeping in contact with homebound patrons. Since many do not have internet access, it is important to keep in touch by phone and help in any way that I can with our e-resources such as Overdrive and Hoopla. Maintaining this connection and checking on their well-being is appreciated by all.

Through webinars and virtual meetings with outreach services across the country, I gained new ideas and insight as we adjust services following COVID-19.

Deb, Outreach Librarian, Cataloging

About a year ago, my spouse and I adopted a rescue pup, Theodore, a 6-year-old hound mix from the south. Our last dog was a 15-year-old couch potato of a pitbull, and we were wholly unprepared for a dog that was energetic and had working back legs (we lost so much food off the counter that first week). It has been a bit of a challenge to work with him to make sure he is engaged and to bond with him, but this time working from home has been so helpful! He's finally settled in and has decided that yes, this is his home and we are his people. I've loved seeing him go from a very anxious and busy dog to one that relaxes enough to sprawl on the couch when we're not in eyesight and tells us when we are late for bedtime snuggles!

Arielle, Technology Specialist, Adult Services

In a time of tremendous challenge, upheaval, and uncertainty, the Circulation team found itself at the helm of a foreign ship, one where we were forced to halt in-person services, establish virtual programs and contact-free services, and reevaluate and restructure formerly routine, refined processes. As we moved outside of our comfort zones, adapted to new technology, and brainstormed and implemented new procedures, our world quickly became a sea of numbers: over 1,000 returns every Friday; more than 700 hold requests per week; hundreds of inter-library loan bins containing at least 10–20 items each; hundreds of phone calls, emails, and library card applications; over 1,000 curbside pickup appointments; in excess of 7,500 items circulated between June and July alone; and much more — all underscored by 72 hours of quarantine time per item, strict social distancing guidelines, and special COVID-19 protocols.



All of this was shared, shouldered, handled, and welcomed by two full-time and eight part-time Circulation staff members and five pages working remotely and within the library in staggered, socially distanced shifts. Under these circumstances, fewer staff than normal navigated — and continue to navigate — greater volumes and exponentially larger challenges, setting aside personal pandemic fears, worries, and stresses and banding together to think creatively, act proactively, and work more intensely than ever before, all with the ultimate goal of serving patrons and furthering the library's mission.

Circulation Department

These past few months have had its challenges and opportunities. In cataloging one of the challenges has been how to catalog all of the new materials that were in the library when we suddenly closed. The best solution was to bring them home and invent a work space. Each staff member had to discover what would work for them. For me, the kitchen turned into my work office. After some rearranging and negotiations with my other half, I now had a space I could use. Once the materials were in the catalog, they were boxed up and a new set was brought home. A challenge, but it was a new routine and it worked. Through the weeks it was an evening walk that gave me a chance to wave to the neighbors, clear my brain, and reset for another day. Remote work also brought about some great opportunities: a chance to improve my online skills and learn some new technology. Becoming familiar with virtual programming and hosting Zoom programs was a great learning experience. Through online meetings, I was able to finally see the faces that belonged to so many that I knew throughout the library world. A virtual meeting with library staff in Germany and Denmark reinforced the knowledge that we were all in this together and it is indeed a small world. We are all glad to be back working in the library and receiving deliveries of many wonderful new books. We are doing our best to enter all of the materials in the catalog and ready them for our patrons to enjoy. Since March the Cataloging Department has added over 3,000 items for our patrons to enjoy!



Pat, Tech Services Supervisor, Cataloging

Children's Room

For many of us the pandemic arrived with unfamiliar stressors and anxieties. For me, it also coincided with my first pregnancy, so we can safely say I was already a bit stressed and anxious. I credit my library work a great deal for keeping me grounded and calm throughout these past months, allowing me to continue critically thinking, connecting with the community, and learning new skills. I've grown in many ways over the past few months (beyond just my belly). I've learned that accepting help is an act of strength and not weakness, that being adaptable is vital to get through unsettling times, and how to be a more supportive community member. I've enjoyed learning how to reach library patrons through different platforms, reinventing summer reading with the strong support of my team, and connecting to members of the community who graciously shared their strengths and talents. We live and work in a very special community, one that I am grateful to be part of.

Sonja, Head of Children's Library Department

While the library has been closed, we've been ordering lots of new books and getting them ready for you. We're placing new genre stickers like space, realistic fiction, emotions on books to help you find them more easily. I had fun coming up with activities for the sci-fi and space and the fairy tale weeks of the Summer Reading Program. While not a fan of being in front of the camera, after watching various webinars, I felt more comfortable creating some videos for our library's YouTube channel. I've discovered that Novelist, one of the literature resources available on our website, is a great source to find books of interest.

Cindy, Children's Librarian

Like so many other parents, I found myself virtually schooling my children and working from home this spring. Working virtually allowed me to focus on many webinars and training, to make our services even better! I braved the world of YouTube and Facebook Live to continue my weekly baby program, as well as branched out to gardening and story programs (even if it meant my kids making fun of me as I recorded them!). COVID required creativity, and it was fun stepping up to the task!

Diana, Children's Librarian

A few weeks ago while riding my bike at a rail trail, I bumped into one of our library families. When the girl saw me, her face brightened and she said something to her parents, who both looked over at me as I pedaled by. "From the library...we're open...well...we're closed...but you can still get library books...we have curbside!" I called out quickly, looking back, dangerously close to falling off my bike. They smiled even though I suspect they didn't really hear me. I always love seeing patrons outside of the library, but am especially happy when this happens now. And while I am grateful for the new skills I am acquiring while adapting traditional library services for the virtual world we are now working in, I really miss interacting with children and their grownups. I know for sure there are a few missing front teeth to talk about, or a new baby brother to meet, or a recently published book series to recommend, and I look forward to the day when we can safely open the doors to the children's room and welcome everyone back.

Roxanne, Children's Librarian



CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Ongoing Fall Virtual Early Literacy Storytimes

Book Beats: *Bi-weekly on Tuesdays*

Babies, Books, & Bubbles: *Wednesdays*

Wiggle Words: *Bi-weekly on Thursdays*

Watch these fun programs at 10:00 AM
on Facebook Live at:

<https://bit.ly/3ahhGB5>

Need more storytimes? Check out the
Shrewsbury Public Library's YouTube
channel and subscribe today:

<https://bit.ly/2XQTe4o>

Seasonal Virtual Programming

Talk Like a Pirate Day: *Saturday,
September 19th*

Banned Books Week: *Sunday,
September 27th - Saturday, October 3rd*

Fire Safety Week: *Sunday, October 4th-
Saturday, October 10th*

Massachusetts STEM Week: *Monday,
October 19th-Friday, October 23rd*

Trick or Treat Storywalk at Lake Street
Park: *Saturday, October 24th at 10 AM*
Rain date Saturday, October 31

Diwali: *Saturday, November 14th*

Pajama Storytime: *Tuesday, November
24th*

Family Literacy/National Picture
Book Month: *throughout the month
of November*

For more programming information

Sign up for our children's services
e-newsletter: <https://bit.ly/3gQ5edS>

Check out our online events calendar:
<https://bit.ly/3iz89YT>

Follow us on Facebook:
[https://www.facebook.com/
ShrewsburyPublicLibrary/](https://www.facebook.com/ShrewsburyPublicLibrary/)

Like so many others, this pandemic has allowed us to discover new and creative ways to do our jobs. Whether it be working remotely or in an empty library, we have been continuously innovating ways to provide service and support to our community. Personally, I have learned so much these past few months by finding new ways to connect with others using technology. I have made and posted Hindi-English Bilingual Storytime videos along with other children's videos. I have bolstered our social media presence on a variety of platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube, and became proficient in creating Padlets and Zoom meetings. By attending webinars, I educated myself on a variety of literary works and important social issues. Most important of all, I am learning every day to be positive and hopeful in this difficult time.

Rashmi, Teen and Children's Librarian

MEMBERS WANTED FOR NEWLY FORMED DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION TASK FORCE

The Board of Selectmen is seeking individuals to serve on a task force to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community. The task force, composed of no more than 30 members, will be selected to reflect diverse backgrounds, experiences, and thinking across our community.

The deadline to apply is Tuesday, September 15th, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

For more information visit:

[https://shrewsburyma.gov/956/Diversity-Equity-and-
Inclusion-Task-Force](https://shrewsburyma.gov/956/Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-Task-Force)

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CHAPTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHREWSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY - FALL 2020

Contact Information

Phone: 508-841-8609

Fax: 508-841-8524

www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/library

ECRWSS

Resident Customer
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

THANK YOU TO OUR SUNDAY SPONSORS

Thank you to our generous Sunday sponsors who provided funds to keep the library open on Sunday afternoons the entire 2019/2020 Sunday season from October 6th, 2019 through March 15th, 2020. On March 15th we had to abruptly close the library due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the stay-at-home order issued by Governor Baker.

We plan to offer library services on Sundays starting in October. If you are interested in sponsoring a Sunday for the next season, October 4, 2020 through May 23, 2021, please contact the Library Director at (508) 841-8537 or email prathnam@shrewsburyma.gov.

The cost for sponsoring one Sunday is \$750.
The form to become a Sunday sponsor may be found:
tinyurl.com/SPLibrarySundaySponsorForm

Providing Five Sundays:

- Dr. B. Dale and Mrs. Melanie Magee

Providing Three Sundays:

- Daniels Insurance Agency

Providing Two Sundays Each:

- Olivia, Peg, and Don Harbert
- The Olive I. and Anthony A. Borgatti, Jr. Donor-Advised Fund of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation

Providing One Sunday Each:

- The Rotary Club of Shrewsbury
- St. Mary's School
- Harold (Bill) and Jean Stuart
- The Shrewsbury Education Foundation
- In memory of James Heedles
- In loving memory of Buckie Somers
- Central One Federal Credit Union
- Maureen Fujimori in honor of Eileen Mooney Evans
- Pam Osborn in memory of Harry Der Harootunian
- Selectman Beth Casavant
- The Del Dotto grandchildren: Drea, Dylan, and Devin
- The Matthews family
- The Bachini family
- Dean Park Grill & Pizza
- David & Kathleen Rocheleau
- Jeffrey & Priscilla Billingham
- In memory of Dr. John P. Collins from the Collins Family
- In memory of Dr. John P. Collins from John P. Collins & Nancy Hughes
- Pat Silvestri in memory of Elizabeth Woodring
- The Wensky family
- One anonymous donor