



Winter 2021

NEW CASTLE LIBRARY DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE by Sandra Collins

With almost a year under our belts, district libraries are still providing service to our communities in ways that make sense for our individual communities and local conditions, always mindful of the health and welfare of those we work with and those we serve.

Some highlights:

- We have experimented and adapted well-established programming methods to new technology.
- Several District libraries (Leechburg and FD Campbell) moved to new sites that provide better conditions and flexibility.
- Cranberry Public Library inaugurated a new Makerspace
- New Castle is in the beginning stages of a pilot program with a local school district to use student ID cards as library cards, ensuring all students will have access to the public library.
- All libraries have adapted their physical spaces to protect our staffs and our customers.

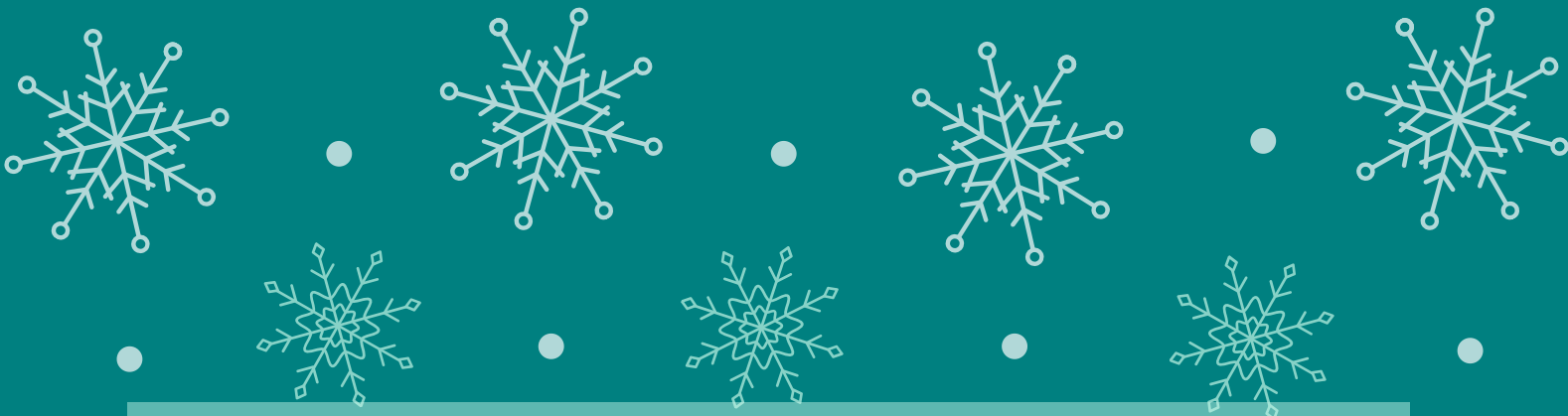
Our libraries will continue to adapt and learn and assist our communities to do the same. We will be there to provide aid - whether it is assistance through the process of registering for vaccines, assisting lifelong learning or introducing a new reader to the wonders of a good book. We should not be shy about tooting our own horn. Communicate regularly with your communities, your legislators, and other elected officials about library programs and services using multiple methods - Facebook, Twitter, local news outlets, word of mouth. You will be laying a foundation that people will remember when it counts - when questions about continued funding might arise.

LITERACY CORNER by Neva Lilla

We all have a deep passion for the public library. After all, each and every one of us comes to work every day to serve our community to the best of our ability. A part of our job is to look at our communities and see what is lacking, and then find ways for the public library to fill those gaps. Here in New Castle, the school system is struggling with low test scores, and a significant number of children are reading at a lower grade level, providing evidence that there is more the library can be doing. After all, literacy and the library should go hand in hand.

As I have struggled with a reading disability throughout my childhood and adolescent years and now also have a child who struggles with reading, the same question has been running through my mind over and over again: In what ways can a public library increase literacy besides providing books? It is true that Youth Services (YS) departments provide many wonderful assets to families: storytimes, book clubs, science programs, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) programs, summer reading program, summer lunch programs, along with an abundance of books, toys, and learning materials for children of all ages. Still, in what ways are we helping to increase literacy? Storytime and other pre-K programs are an excellent way for the pre-reader to be exposed to important early literacy components. To reach elementary age children we can also provide literacy-enriched programming. Offering reading incentives is another way to promote literacy because the reader is rewarded for reading. After all, every educator I talk to says the number one way to help a child become a better reader is by encouraging them to read more. Yet, for the struggling reader claiming they do not like to read, how are we able to help them? The tools we have just been discussing may not be enough.

The first additional program we offered to directly impact the struggling reader is our Paws to Read program, (this, of course was offered pre-pandemic, and will hopefully be a tool to use in the future). A very successful program in which a child gets 15 minutes in a quiet space to read to a therapy dog and their handler. This allows for less distraction and a stress free environment for the reader because no one is judging them. The reader gains confidence and becomes less apprehensive about reading. With the success of Paws to Read we talked about other ways to reach those children.



LITERACY CORNER continued...

Within my first week as the Youth Services Manager here in New Castle, I was asked by three different caregivers' very similar questions about what our department has to help their struggling reader. It became clear that the community was looking for more than what we had to offer. Partnering with reading specialists and teachers, we were able to come up with ideas and tools to provide to the public. What resulted was a plan to create a new area devoted to providing literacy tools. This new area is going to be called the Literacy Corner. There, one will be able to find special picture books accompanied by audio CDs, reinforcing the words children see on the page by what they hear. Materials provided by educators enabled us to laminate many different one-time-use handouts for reuse. For example, we will provide reading tic tac toe games that can be used over and over again. Also, memory word games, reading cards, and word creation cards are now much more durable. Sentences can be broken up to focus on specific sounds through repetition. Easy reader books that have note cards highlighting more difficult words reinforce the word multiple times. This abundant amount of materials will show what children and their caregivers find useful. However, the Literacy Corner is still in development. There are a lot of components, and before its debut, we want to make sure that this section of the library is effective and user-friendly.

The Literacy Corner may come with a bit of controversy. There are many schools of thought about the public library's role in promoting literacy. Some say that this type of effort within the public library could create too much of a school environment. Others believe that having educational immersive play is the best way to help the child learn, thereby not requiring other learning opportunities. Looking at all the different views, we still believe that offering more resources is a positive thing. It is our hope to be able to reach each child, meet them at their level and do what we can to help them thrive!

IT NEWS by Ron Davis

Hello Everyone. I hope you are all doing well and staying healthy. It's that time of year again to get District Technology orders ready. In an effort to streamline things this year, please include a link to whatever technology you wish to have purchased. If applicable, please include size and color of any items. I am still traveling to District Libraries even with the Pandemic. If you request that I come to your Library please let me know of any restrictions or special instructions I should be aware of. Looking forward to seeing you all soon.



Zelienople Area Public Library Celebrated its Centennial in 2020

by Amy McKeever

With the conviction that “a library is the memory of the human race...[and] is essential to a democracy”, the Zelienople Woman’s Community Club formed a library committee in late 1919, with the goal of establishing a library in Zelienople. In 1920, that dream was realized, and library services began—with 74 books, a table and a bookcase on a stairwell landing in the Zelienople High School. The Traveler’s Club of Zelienople donated the first books – 13 volumes of A History of the United States. In 1930 Mrs. Beighley became the first librarian. In the early years, it was called Zelienople Library Association, and individuals paid a membership to use the Library. Housed by the high school, and the municipal building in turns through the early years, in 1975 the library moved to its own dedicated building (the current location). In 1976 the service area was expanded to include Harmony, Jackson, and Lancaster. The Butler County Federated Library System was formed in 1987, providing funds from the county and a library network. The Jennifer Adham Children’s Library was added on the lower level in 1996, which was also the year the name changed to Zelienople Area Public Library. The years have seen repairs and renovations, new record keeping and services brought about by computers, and changing staff and programs. But through all 100 years, the Library has been a resource to pursue information, education, and possibilities, and we look forward to 100 more.

With a Centennial in a pandemic year – we got creative in how to celebrate! Community members joined the 100 Book Reading Challenge to read 25 to 100 books (or more!) in 10 months. We partnered with a local brewery which created a special edition Reader’s Relief beer in honor of the Centennial, and they donated \$1 per pint to the Library. We hosted an outdoor puppet show with birthday cupcakes for the kids to enjoy.

Our big event was a Centennial Procession through the local residential streets, which was enjoyed by over 300 spectators. We thanked the four municipalities we serve with decorated and bannered pickup trucks, and enjoyed our history with a vehicle from every decade between 1920 and 2020. Costumed singers regaled us with 1920’s classics. Daniel Tiger, a kid’s cartoon star, made a special guest appearance. With help from over 50 volunteers, including the local Rotary and fire company, we thanked our communities and celebrated with them.





The 100th birthday party for the Library with a puppet show and cupcakes was a fun way for kids to enjoy the celebration



Brewing the Reader's Relief beer. ShuBrew partnered with the library to brew a special anniversary beer, and donated \$1 per pint sold to the library.



The 100 Book Reading Challenge encouraged community members to read 25-100 books (or more!). Here, girls show off their favorites during the Centennial Procession.



Cars through the decades share a glimpse of the library's history, during the Centennial Procession. (PC: Seb Foltz, Butler Eagle, 10/12/20)



Daniel Tiger waves to spectators during the Centennial Procession.



Celebrating the Centennial with a Procession through town, and classic songs from the 1920s.

HISTORY HUB by Morgan Smith

Preserving Your Community

Hello fellow history buffs!

Whether you get excited about history (like me), have a slight interest and want to learn more, or it's simply your job to try to create order out of chaos, I have a great resource for you to check out. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has been offering webinars under the heading "Community History Dialog" since September 2020. So far there are a total of 6 installments for this dialog with the titles Capturing Black History through the Lens of Black Art, Organizing a Community to Preserve its History, What if Your History is not Written, Resources: Where to Find Money and Assistance, Caring for Artifacts and Objects, and Collaborating with Curators and Archivists to Preserve Community History. All of these dialogs have guest speakers that delve into the inner workings of how to make/preserve community history with examples from their own experiences.

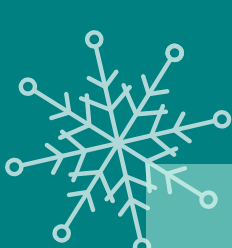
Many libraries don't have professional archivists or museum personnel that can sift through the artifacts and documents that we normally get from donations, so these videos are especially helpful to those who are assigned that task in the library. From beginners to those just needing a refresher on some things, these recorded webinars provide a ton of relevant information to anyone who needs to organize a collection. It has been personally helpful to me while trying to reorganize our History Room and I plan to revisit some of the dialogs when I get into more of the artifacts that we have collected over the years that are pertinent to our community's history.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission are doing their part for virtual programming with these dialog webinars. They not only produce them live with Q & A's afterwards, but they record them as well and post them for those who were unable to attend. With everything going on today, virtual programming is trying to make huge strides to keep up with the information needs of the country. The PHMC has a YouTube page as well that they use to put up videos related not only to preservation, but to Pennsylvania history. With over 200 videos on their page, the PHMC is a great resource to explore.

Link to ["Community History Dialog"](#)

Link to [PHMC's YouTube Page](#)

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at msmith@ncdlc.org.



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Kristi King - *Zelienople Children's Services Librarian*



I'm excited to be working as the Children's Services Librarian at Zelienople Area Public Library after completing my MLIS at the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to earning my degree, I spent time working as support staff with the library at Brigham Young University and San Jose Public Library as well as volunteering at Sewickley Public Library. I enjoy the varied tasks that are encountered by information professionals. It guarantees that there will never be a dull day. This has been an interesting time to begin as a librarian, and I look forward to seeing children and parents in the library!

Morgan Smith - *New Castle Reference Librarian*

Hi everyone! My name is Morgan Smith and I am the new Reference Librarian at New Castle Public Library. I am happy to be kicking off my library career with this community and I am excited to learn a lot during my time here. This is my first library job (outside of being a student worker during my bachelor's program), but I have interned at both Mercer County Historical Society and Lawrence County Historical Society where I gained experience with genealogies and local history collections. I hope to use this knowledge to continue working on the History Room at the library where Emilee left off. I do have a Bachelor's in history from Westminster College, a Master's in history from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and my MLIS is from Kent State University.

Whenever I am not at work, I enjoy reading from all genres, walking the park, and spending time with my boyfriend, family, and my two cats!



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Mary Mego - *Leechburg Clerk*



Mary is a new clerk at Leechburg Public Library. Mary joined the team in October of 2020 after deciding to make a career change. Mary has always loved books and libraries: especially Leechburg's library. She learned many library duties during study halls while attending high school at Leechburg Area School District. The same library, which until the recent move, also served as the public library in the evenings. Mary attended Empire Beauty School for cosmetology and works part-time in the field. While working as a cosmetologist, Mary earned a degree in Psychology from the University of Phoenix. Mary worked in the recovery and dual diagnosis. Mary is married and has two sons and six grandchildren. When not working, Mary loves spending time with her family and three dogs, most especially grandchildren. Mary likes reading, swimming, gardening, crafts, and repurposing items.

Megan Buzzelli - *Leechburg Clerk*

Megan is the new clerk at Leechburg Public Library. She started in September 2020, and helped the library make their big move into their new location, with their grand opening in late October. Originally from Greensburg, PA, Megan attended West Virginia University and received a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture. From there, she moved to New Jersey and practiced Landscape Architecture on the Jersey shore (it's not all like the show). After nearly ten years in NJ, she and her (now) husband...also a Landscape Architect... moved back to western PA. Megan then got married, changed career path in a financial broker/dealer's office, and bought a home with her husband. Then COVID happened. After being laid off, Megan decided once again to change her career path and do something that had meaning and purpose. That's when she found Leechburg Public Library. When not at the library, Megan enjoys gardening, cooking, fishing, and watching independent films and ridiculous B-grade horror flicks with her husband and three cats.



HELPING OUR COMMUNITY



Kittanning Public Library

The Kittanning Public Library collected items for the Mechling-Shakely Veterans Center; mostly food, some cleaning items, and of course, books! This is the fourth year the library has sponsored this project.

Library staff, Chrstina Adams (left) and Linda Cunningham (right), prepare items for delivery to the Veterans Center.

CHILDREN'S CHAT by Sharon Savage

The Great Outdoors – enjoying the sunshine, breathing fresh air, the crunch of leaves underfoot - I long to spend more hours outdoors. I know my teens always needed (Naomi still does) extra encouragement to move from the comforts of indoors – “It’s too hot/cold!” “Gardening is hard work!” “I’m in the middle of this book/this game/this show!” We need to stress the benefits of being outside; the advantages gained from “Sunshine on My Shoulders” isn’t just a mental health booster. Vitamin D is widely called the “Sunshine Vitamin”.

The balm of sunshine to our emotional, as well as to our physical well-being is well-documented. [Healthline](#) shares the following benefits: Vitamin D fights disease, Vitamin D reduces depression, and Vitamin D boosts weight loss (sign me up for more sunshine)! The site shares additional information about nutritional sources, signs of Vitamin D deficiency in adults and indications of getting too much of a good thing.



CHILDREN'S CHAT continued...

I attended an excellent webinar, *Go Outside and Play! How Movement Impacts Attention, Anxiety, and Sensory Processing in Children*, on Saturday, January 16th. The presenter, Angela Hanscom, MOT, OTR/L is a pediatric occupational therapist and founder of [TimberNook](#)—an award-winning developmental and nature-based program. She is also the author of *Balanced and Barefoot: How Unrestricted Outdoor Play Makes for Strong, Confident, and Capable Children*.

She shares information gleaned from her practice and her experiences while working with young clients – fascinating. She directly links the less time our children play outdoors to the rise of sensory and motor challenges:

- Decreased attention
- Fidgeting
- Decreased strength
- Poor posture
- Decreased stamina
- Frail
- Falling
- Endless colds
- Increased aggression
- Trouble reading
- Emotional
- Rise in anxiety
- Children not playing

Ms. Hanscom has interviewed teachers who shared that children are having more balance issues; they are falling out of their chairs in PreK! She stressed that children must and NEED to do the things that make adults “GASP”! Children require the push and pull of heavy work, flipping upside down, rolling down hills, climbing trees, walking barefoot in the mud. Children need the engagement of all their senses that nature can provide. Nature is therapeutic, being outdoors fosters and sharpens their listening skills. Just think for a moment about the calming effect of listening to birdsong or watching birds at the feeder. Natural activities improve visual skills and enhances their sense of touch. Indoor sensory experiences can not duplicate the benefits of our natural world. I could continue on - more information is shared on [ContinuEd](#).

Our libraries can help get our young patrons outside by providing remote programs at our local parks and natural areas. During these challenging times, we need to share our ideas and to think “outside our library walls” to provide opportunities for our youngest patrons (and even our teens) to share, to play, to learn and to grow into their best selves. I believe our libraries are uniquely positioned and filled with creative librarians to explore these new opportunities for interactive, but safe and socially distanced interactions.

Interested in more information?

[Taking the Library Outdoors](#)

[Be Outside! Programming Ideas for Idaho Libraries](#)

[7 Outdoor Program Tips for Libraries](#)

[Let's Move in Libraries!](#) This is brilliant!

Here's to an excellent remains of winter and to wonderfully, positive spring!



JUST FOR LAUGHS



Why are libraries the tallest buildings in the world?
Because they have so many stories!

Libraries make shhh happen.

The library banned drinks after someone poured milk on the serials.

Once I got kicked out of a library for being a mime because actions speak louder than words.

Librarians love a good joke; they always get the reference.

Why did the librarian get fired?
Because she was always checked out.

The book about anti-gravity is impossible to put down.

