

Annual Report July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

Thriving in Difficult Times

Topsham Public Library Staff

Susan M. Preece,
Director

Cyndi Burne,
Assistant Director
and Teen Services

Emma J. Gibbon,
Adult Services
Librarian

Mariah Sewall,
Children’s Librarian

Tami Santos,
Bookkeeper

Dale Morgan,
Tech Support

Monique Marchilli-Barker,
Gallery Coordinator/
Library Aide

Annette Uschmann,
Custodian

Library Aides:
Lindsey Andelman
Jennifer Balser
Julie McDuff
Linda Meadows
Emily Muttel

Topsham Public Library Hours

Monday
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Tuesday
9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Wednesday
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.


Thursday,
9 a.m. – 8 p.m.


Friday,
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.


Saturday,
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sunday – Closed

Topsham Public Library
 25 Foreside Road
 Topsham, ME 04086
 (207) 725-1727
topshamlibrary.org


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by Susan M. Preece,
Director, Topsham Public Library

The American poet, Maya Angelou, is quoted as saying, “My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

This statement speaks to our goal here at the Topsham Public Library. It feels like we have all been taking a crash course in what has been called “creative disruption.” While the term has been used in the worlds of advertising, business, and politics, we have been thinking about it as a way to really look at how we serve the public.

How can we support parents and caregivers when we cannot be in the same space together? How can we provide important resources to patrons who are unable to get to the library? How can we keep up with the new and innovative without abandoning the tried and true?

This year, our staff has been reaching out both virtually and physically. Children’s Librarian, Mariah Sewall, has created a wonderful set of book talks, storytimes, and programs in prerecorded and real-time Zoom. She has been able to offer “grab and go” kits with the help of dedicated volunteers and organizations like CREA

(Cathance River Education Alliance). She invited kids and families to drop by her office window to chat, wave, or ask a question without coming in to the library!

We expanded the number of eResources and book lists. We provided links to online author talks and book discussions. We have conscientiously cleaned, distanced, and put in place safety protocols that have allowed us to be together when we can and stay connected when we can’t. We realized that focusing on what can’t be done limits us and finding a “workaround” leads to innovation.

One of the most important things we have seen this year has been the re-appreciation of traditional pastimes, including crafting, sewing, woodworking, outdoor exploration, and rereading/rewatching old favorite books and movies. There seems to have been more interest in games, puzzles, and brain-teasers. People have been focusing their attention on and sharing their thoughts about the things that matter most to them.

This is our passion—YOU! Our interest is to ensure that you find what you are looking for at the time you need it, and conversely, offer you ideas, resources, and

experiences that you might not even know were there. We want to respect what has been and what will be. We want to find a way to make ‘it’ work—whatever ‘it’ is for YOU.

Compassion at the library means that we understand your need and want to help fulfill it. Perhaps your need is a recipe to make a birthday cake or how to find a good lawyer. Perhaps it is how to know if your child needs speech therapy or how to welcome a new baby to the family. Your quest is our quest—we are in this together!

Humor and style are likely a matter of opinion, but we believe in doing our best, preparing for the worst, and embracing the absurdities of everyday life. We make lemonade with the lemons we find. We try to create a little oasis to share with you, even if all we can do is listen, offer our support, or laugh at life’s ironies together.

As you read our report and learn about our work this year, think about the many creatively disruptive moments you have had in your own life this year. Congratulate yourself for making it through so far. We thank you for allowing us to work with you in creating a resilient community that can thrive in difficult times!



Mystery Readers Roundtable held the first ever outdoor book discussion at Topsham Public Library



Our staff was ready and eager to serve you in July 2020

Mission Statement

Topsham Public Library’s mission is to connect resources, programs, and services to the community and to stimulate personal growth and enrichment.

From the Board President

by Diane Hender,
President, TPL Board of Trustees

For the Topsham Public Library staff and trustees, FY21 (7/1/20-6/30/21) played out more smoothly than anticipated. One might say we “Zoomed” through the year, offering the option of either in-person or virtual meetings and presentations. The FY21 annual meeting took place on June 21, during which the slate of officers for FY22 was confirmed and retiring trustee Joe Trafton and student representative Owen Yabsira were recognized and thanked for their valued service. In addition, Board candidates Philip Dostie and James Doyle were formally elected, as was student member Nick Picard.

Undoubtedly, the Covid 19 pandemic provided difficult challenges for all. Fortunately for our community, the TPL staff are flexible, dedicated, and creative. This enabled them to develop effective means of providing the many services our patrons have come to expect while adhering to CDC and other guidelines to ensure the safety of all. Two of the new options, curbside pickup and Zoom meetings, are continuing for those who find them more convenient.

Our most anticipated annual events, The Joy of Art and The Joy of the Lens, were presented virtually with the guidance of Monique Marchilli-Barker. Also, many Topsham children were thrilled with the electronic version of Miss Mariah’s very popular story times. Sadly, we were not able to suitably recognize last year’s Whitten Society honoree, Jennifer Ecker, but will do so this fall.

From a financial perspective, FY21 was a more productive year than initially expected. The response to our fall and spring appeals was encouraging, and TPL also was the fortunate recipient of a

generous bequest from a longtime patron. In addition, we applied for and received a PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan from the Small Business Administration, which subsequently was forgiven.

Finally, a personal note of thanks to our staff, my fellow trustees, and the residents of Topsham for their support of the amazing community resource which is the Topsham Public Library. It has been a privilege to serve these past two years as president of the Board of Trustees. Thank you!

Topsham Public Library Board of Trustees, FY21 Members:

Diane Hender, President
Deborah O’Neil, Vice-President
Irene Martin, Treasurer
Anne Macri, Secretary
Anne Eustis, Emeritus
Kelley Glidden
Helen Kincaid
Hahna Patterson
Barbara Swiderski
Joe Trafton
Patricia Vaughn
Owen Yabsira, Student Member

Joining 2022

Phil Dostie
Jim Doyle
Nick Picard, Student Member

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Diane Hender



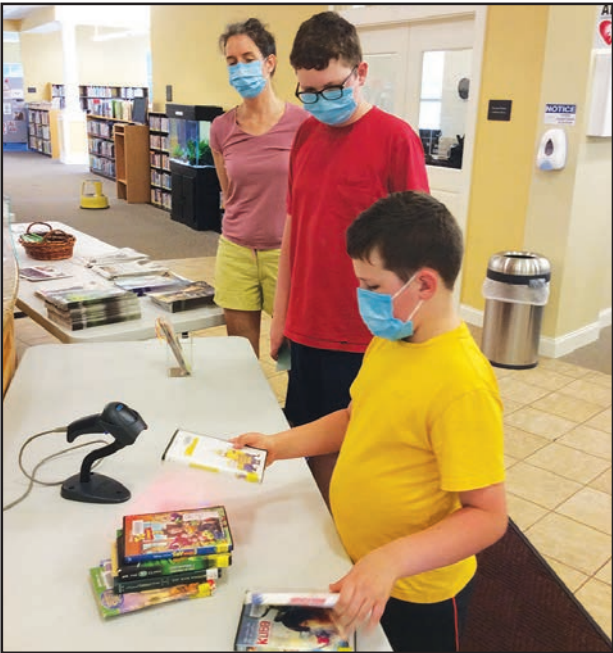
Our computers for kids came back in June

We Were Glad To Be Back!

Let’s face it. 2020 was a difficult year for all of us. For the staff at the library, it meant shutting our doors to the best part of our job; YOU, our patrons. We always look forward to seeing you and helping meet your library needs, whether it’s entertainment, education, or enrichment. We did our best to serve you from home but it wasn’t the same as being together in person. As a staff we met via Zoom on a regular basis, but we are a team, and not being with our team was also hard. So we were thrilled to be able to return to the building in June of 2020, even if it was only for Parking Lot Pickup and limited computer use. At least we were able to do something concrete and see your faces (well, sort of) through your car windows. We also began preparing the building; measuring, taping, putting up signs, making daily cleaning schedules, and setting up self-checkout.

Then the best day finally came! On July 6, 2020, we opened our doors to the public once again. We were all masked so you couldn’t see our smiles, but they were there. You were back and that made us happy. We began having programs outside and carried on our annual Summer Reading Programs for all. Winter sent us back inside and back to Zoom, but we were here every week, doors open, ready to serve. Time passed and restrictions loosened, spring came and with it the masks came off, and we could actually see each other smile again. Oh Happy Day!

We’re not out of the woods yet, but we’re working on it. We have learned a lot about how to adapt library services to changing circumstances and how to connect when we can’t be face-to-face. Through it all you were right there with us, continuing to support us in every way. We encourage you to think about things you wish the library would do and share those thoughts with us. While we can’t solve every problem or see what’s around the corner, together we have proven that not only can we survive, but we can thrive working TOGETHER.



Masks, distancing, and self checkout provided protection

Reopened for
Parking Lot
Pick Up
June 2, 2020

Reopened to
the Public
July 6, 2020