

BETWEEN THE PAGES

Huntsville Public Library Monthly Newsletter

KEEPING UP WITH THE LIBRARY!

BY RACHEL MCPHAIL, CITY LIBRARIAN

Following the guidance of state and city officials, the library has been closed for half of March and all of April. We have certainly missed helping patrons, leading programs, and interacting with the community during this time, and it has been a surreal experience working in an empty library. The library staff figured that the community may be curious to hear what we have been working on while we were closed. Each department dedicated their article space to writing a short statement about the projects that were worked on or how they made lemonade out of lemons.

The State of Texas requires public libraries to seek and update accreditation status on a yearly basis by filling out a document known as the Annual Report. In addition to the questions required for accreditation, the Annual Report collects data that is useful to libraries and policymakers across the state. There are significant benefits to libraries that hold an accreditation status, such as participation in the Interlibrary Loan program, discounted access to the Texshare database, and free or discounted training opportunities for staff.



The deadline for submitting the Annual Report was April 30. I was able to focus on this project and the additional time enabled me to complete the Annual Report three weeks early.

On a more engaging level than crunching circulation numbers and reporting the number of books in the library, I also spent time mapping out options for the Texas Summer Reading Program and other summer activities for the community by contacting various educational performers. The closure also provided the library with the rare opportunity to hold several staff meetings in which all or almost all library staff were able to attend and share ideas on improving our service to the community and projects to work on while closed.

1219 13th Street
Huntsville, TX 77340
(936) 291-5472

Monday-Friday Saturday
10am-7pm 12pm-4pm

 myhuntsvillelibrary.com

 @huntsvillelib

 HuntsvillePublicLibrary

 Huntsville_Public_Library

BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

BY MARY KOKOT, ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES

Despite the library closing its doors to the public since March 17, staff reported to work each day and carried on as normally as possible. After adjusting to the weirdness of no patrons coming in and out during the day, we washed our hands and got down to business. Several major projects were undertaken while the library was closed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

- Shelf-shifting (Young adult graphic novels changed places with the adult books on CD).
- Shelf-reading (all sections) which means putting all books in order.
- “Last Chance” bookshelf was created in the adult area.
- Newspapers and magazines relocated on shelf behind “Last Chance” books.

One service that had to be put on hold was interlibrary loans. Since most libraries in Texas were closed per Governor Abbott’s order to minimize social gatherings and avoid in-person contact with people outside their homes unless taking part in essential activities, the courier service used by Huntsville Public Library also suspended service. No fees or penalties will be incurred by patrons as a result of returning books late.



The library was also given a thorough cleaning and employees helped by daily wiping down surfaces with a diluted Clorox solution. Staff was diligent in their use of soap and water along with bottles of hand sanitizer. Even the returned books went through their own quarantine of sorts - three days of isolation in the Board Room before being put back on the shelves.

Library staff hopes the small but important changes made will make it easier to find what you’re looking for and improve your overall library experience.

The library has a system of assigning new books a number according to the month it gets catalogued and placed on the “New” bookshelf (1=January; 2=February; 3=March, etc.). “Last Chance” books refer to our older new books that are to go into the stacks.

HERE ARE SOME GOOD IDEAS TO BREAK THE MONOTONY AND OCCUPY YOUR TIME.

Tackle your "To Be Read" pile (books that you have been meaning to read). You can download books for free with your library card using [Libby](#) or [OverDrive](#).



Learn a new language using the library's free access to [Pronunciator](#).



Enjoy live streaming of symphony performances courtesy of the [Metropolitan Opera](#) and other organizations.

Watch recordings of [Broadway productions](#).



Try a digital learning hub from Scholastic for elementary through high school students.

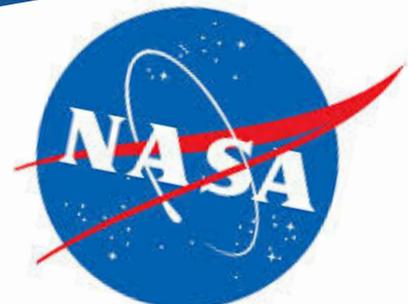
Learn to [code](#) with your kids.

Take drawing lessons from popular authors such as [Mo Willems](#) & [Dave Pilkey](#).



Explore the galaxy with [NASA!](#)

Audit a [college course](#) from a university such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale (no college credit--just learning)





A NEW BEGINNING

BY KRISTIN SION, CIRCULATION

Though the library staff were saddened when we had to close down, staff members attempted to find the positives of the situation. We wanted to turn this into a way to overcome challenges, adapt to changes from the past year, and look for ways to improve. For example, staff noted that many collection areas had items that were out of order. Despite the best attempts of our regular staff and dedicated volunteers, we also had a backlog of items that needed to be shelved due to the decreased number of student workers who usually assist in shelving, researching programs, preparing crafts, and organizing books.

Additionally, the library had several staffing changes as City Librarian Linda Dodson retired after many years of service, and Rachel McPhail was promoted from the Children's Coordinator position to the role of the library's new City Librarian. Another staff member filled in as the Children's Coordinator from December to March on a temporary basis.

Another change in the library was learning the new Integrated Library System (ILS) at the library. Our new system Apollo offers several exciting new features that brought with them a learning curve for staff. Then came Covid-19. Well, what can you say? We, as a community, depend on the library for so many things, but safety is a priority, and we were directed to be closed to the public by City officials who have closely monitored the situation.

This isn't like anything we have dealt with before. This has been a very difficult time for not only our community, but our nation and the world as a whole. But we want you to know that while our doors have been closed, we have not been idle. We have taken this time to hit the reset button. Not only have we finally been able to completely organize the entire library, especially the children's room, but we have rearranged the furniture, moved some of the collection to better suit the public, and had weekly meetings to brainstorm on how we can better serve you when we finally are able to reopen our doors.

One unique project we came up with is called "Last Chance." We have always had a new book shelf where recently acquired books are kept for three months before they are removed and placed on the shelves with the rest of our collection. While on the new book shelf, the books are checked out more frequently. Once they go into general shelving, the circulation of that item goes down. We decided that we wanted to create a special area in each part of the library (Children's, Young Adult, and Adult) to allow extra time for the public to easily access these newer books. As we moved some of the collection, we created special places for the "Last Chance" books.

Then came the Walker County order for all non-essential employees to stay home, and we were told we would be working from home. You may ask, "How can library employees work from home?" Well, let me tell you. We were assigned a variety of tasks each day, such as online training modules and writing newsletter articles, like this one. We will continue to meet regularly online from home. We are also coming up with new future projects in order to reach more people in the community.

We want you to know that though we never wanted to have to close our doors to you, we have been working incredibly hard to utilize this time, so when the day comes to welcome you back, you will be walking into the new and improved Huntsville Public Library.

This will be a new beginning for us all.