



## Reading in the Time of a Pandemic

*An experienced team keeps the library operating and much more*



Library staff Alison Towles, Cate Land and Andrea Ullrich at the front desk, which now has a plexiglass screen installed to protect staff and patrons during the pandemic.

Wow, never in a million years did I think the phrase “they don’t teach you this in library school” could be truer.

I would be remiss if I did not give a huge shout out to the staff and volunteers who have made it possible to continue to serve our patrons during this unprecedented time.

When I first got to Northumberland Public Library I never thought I would have time for the huge list of tasks I hoped to accomplish. But the pandemic has given us the opportunity to work through the entire collection, updating and repairing, learning what we have to offer and just plain making our shelves shine.

Every item has been wiped down with Clorox wipes. We have sanitized, digitized and itemized.

### *A new look*

Thanks to another generous grant from Barbe Pike through the Otis Pike Trust, we were able to replace the carpeting, and purchased 12 new computers equipped with a full suite of Microsoft Office Products for patron use.

We also have new study tables, two sets of café tables and chairs and four regular sets of tables and chairs. All can easily be wiped down, a really important feature right now! There is also new furniture for the reading lounge.

And the childrens area got a new look. That collection has been rearranged, we painted, and we even got a new table

for our iPads thanks to library staff Cate Land and Arthur Newman, whose carpentry and painting skills are amazing. Before the library had to close, we had begun the arduous task of updating the children’s collection. During the quarantine when our doors closed, that project moved ahead much faster. We removed unused books from the collection, and cleaned, mended or replaced others. *(Cont’d page 2)*



T.T. Haynie, our Mobile Library driver-technician, lends a hand behind the scene, as books are cleaned and rearranged at the library.



(From Page 1)

We removed the carpeted steps, painted, put in new carpeting, moved shelving, built a new table for the children's tablets, and put up some new and old artwork. Our new space feels bigger, lighter, and more welcoming.

We are now working on the teen area, which has been relocated to the front corner of the library opposite the children's area. Along with the rest of the library it will get new carpeting. On the wish list is to install a large television and gaming system.

You'll also notice we have rearranged our fiction and non-fiction stacks, so now you can see down each aisle. We are so happy to finally be open with normal hours, as is Ye Olde Book Shoppe. Come in and check out the changes we have made. If



Library Director Jane Blue and Library Customer Service Supervisor Cate Land pose among the weeds before beginning work on the outside of the library after months of renovating the inside. Yes, Jane changed clothes.

you happen to see the Mobile Library at the next Heathsville Farmer's Market, check out how clean and shiny it is inside.

I thought I would share some pictures of our improvements but more importantly I hope you will come in to see for yourself the

wonderful things we've accomplished. Until then, stay healthy, wear your mask and stop by.

~ Jane Blue

“Come in and check out the changes we have made.”



Clockwise: Along with new tables and fresh paint, the raised floor was removed in the children's area. A dozen new computers were purchased along with tables and chairs that are easily cleaned and disinfected. Work areas are more open to allow for physical distancing. A young patron works quietly in the children's area.





# Ingenuity and Technology Come to the Rescue of the Library's Summer Reading Program of Imagination

“Imagine Your Story” was our Summer Reading Program theme for 2020, and who could have imagined what this summer would be like.

Planning for all of our programs was almost complete, then everything changed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. So, working with our partners, the Northumberland Elementary School and the Northumberland Family YMCA, we made a new plan.

Since school ended early, we were not able to have our usual kick-off assembly and distribute reading logs and programs at NES. Our school partners came to the rescue and mailed both to all elementary and middle school students. We didn't set a specific reading goal this year to avoid adding stress to our students. We're encouraging students to keep reading and log what they read as we plan to collect logs and do a reading count this fall.

Meanwhile, the performers for our summer program events usually held at the YMCA were all scheduled and ready to go. It didn't take long to make the tough decision to go virtual with our summer programs. Several events

were canceled and two were changed to virtual events. The great news about going virtual - all are still available. ScienceTellers presented an interactive science and storytelling program in their show “Dragons: Return of the

of you, but I learned and became more comfortable as the weeks went on. We also have a new “Once Upon a Wednesday” virtual Story Time each week featuring fairy tales.

In addition, our Take & Make Bags are available for pickup at the library. Each bag contains up to five crafts plus other activities such as coloring pages, scavenger hunts and MadLibs to do at home.

One version follows Story Time themes, so children can watch on-line, then make their crafts as they would if they were here in person. We made a second version for elementary age children.

As with our reading events, all Story Times were recorded and remain available through the end of August on the library website and Facebook page.

Also new this summer is BOOK BINGO for teens and adults. You can pick up a BINGO card at NPL or download it from the website (news tab) or Facebook. When you complete a BINGO card, bring it in to be entered into our drawing scheduled for August 15, for a prize basket with a gift card and other surprises.

Past summers, YMCA campers came to the library to listen to stories and to check out books. While this was not possible this summer, I was able to go to the YMCA once a week to read. In addition, I read to and made a craft with Northumberland Elementary School students three times during summer school.

As the summer comes to an end, I am grateful to have been able to work with so many dedicated people who helped make this all happen and had fun doing it!

~ Marilyn Smith



Arthur Newman uses an iPad to tape Childrens Program Coordinator Marilyn Smith for the weekly Story Time that has been moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ice Sorceress.” Bright Star Theatre’s “Once Upon a Time” show brought the stories of Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk to life, recorded by actors Mabel and Lenny in their own home during the quarantine.

We also scheduled two events from Page Turner Adventures, the Emmy Award winning team whose theme is “When you read, every day is an adventure!” These were 5-day events and included comedy story theater shows, crafts, recipes, author interviews, guest performers and games.

For the regular library program, we formed a reading team. By the end of March we were recording Story Times and posting them on the website and our Facebook page. I planned, Arthur Newman recorded and edited, and Karen Whelan posted them online.

Presenting a virtual Story Time is different in several ways from doing it with a group of children sitting in front



Reading Bingo continues until August 15. Here's a look at some of the goodies included in the prize baskets.

# Friends of the Library Board Remain Steadfast in Commitment to Aiding NPL Budget

*Fall/Winter Fundraisers slated to support children's programs, technology resources*

Summer greetings from the Friends of the Northumberland Public Library. The Friends Board hopes all of our members are safe and well during this challenging time in our world, and that as our lives embark upon a "New Normal" we can once again cautiously continue our gathering together for fund raising in support of programs at the library. We are excited to announce a new fundraising adventure we are able to go forward with - 2020 pewter Christmas ornaments in the shape of an oyster that will be available for purchase at the library later this summer. Keep an eye on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/friendsnplva](http://www.facebook.com/friendsnplva) and the library website for an announcement of their arrival! At our most recent Friends



Friends of the Library support the Summer Reading Program as well as receptions for monthly art shows as part of the library's participation in the Virginia Artisan Trail, including artwork by the Northern Neck Home School.

Board meeting in June at the library's community room we wore masks and applied social distancing. We also broadcast via Zoom.

We are cautiously approaching our other fundraising opportunities within the community, and have decided to respect our social distancing measures for large gatherings until September when we will reconsider our fundraising direction.

The Friends Board hopes to be able to re-implement the traditional English Tea and a Fashion Show with the new boutique Fin and Pearl from Burgess. Also planned is an evening in October with author John Warley, whose most recent novel is Home Guard. Other fundraisers include an evening at the Rappahannock Art League with Dessert First, and the possibility of a 50/50 Draw-

ing. We will definitely keep all of our supporting friends posted as to the upcoming fundraising events!

With these changing times in our community, I encourage all of you to continue your support of the Friends of the Northumberland Public Library through your generous donations. These funds are so important as they support additional services for the library beyond what is covered in the Library's operating budget. The Friends help to support additional children's programs over the course of the year, most especially during the summer. We also help fund additional technology resources, and outdoor seating for our patrons.

The Friends want to offer a personal thanks and a shout out to Jane Blue, our head librarian and all of her staff

and volunteers for affording our community library access during the closure of so many public institutions! The Friends Board thanks all of you for not only your continued support but also your encouragement to our Northumberland community that our library is a safe and respected place for all of our patrons.

Best,  
Diana Russell  
President  
Board of Friends of the Northumberland Public Library





# Dedicated Volunteers Reopen Ye Olde Book Shoppe

As with most rural communities in the Chesapeake Bay region - volunteers are key. And, as with our Fire Departments, EMS and Smith Point Sea Rescue, among the many others, the Library would be unrecognizable without its volunteers. The same is true for the library used book store - Ye Olde Book Shoppe.

When COVID-19 shut down the state, it also closed access to the trove of books for sale there. When the state began its slow reopening, it was the dedicated group of volunteers who stepped up to reopen the store (*see back page*).

Not everyone could return as the pandemic continues, including the YOBS Manager Bob Taylor, who decided it was time to retire. Bob, who took over in 2017, left his mark on the store and on the customers who return each week, as well as the many out-of-town visitors who have found the tiny used book store a delight.

Now, YOBS has a new manager, Arthur S. Newman. You will likely recognize his smiling face from the Mobile Li-

brary, where he was key to its success. Or you may have read one of his books - yup, Arthur is an author. You can meet him in the column below. But do stop in and welcome him and don't be shy, he's open to suggestions for the store.

Getting back to our volunteers, the library wants to give a special shout out to all of them. Normally, we have a big dinner in the library, but as with everyone else, we are doing the "Pandemic Pirouette."

To keep the tradition of thanking our volunteers, the staff will be operating a **Drive-thru Volunteer Appreciation Dinner Celebration Thursday, August 20, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

If you are one of our library or YOBS volunteers, please **RSVP by August 10** so we can put together your dinner and a special gift. On August 20, just drive up and we will put it in your back seat or your trunk. **To RSVP call 580-5051.**

And thank you so much for going the extra mile in service to your community.

From left: Volunteers Keese Williams, Rives Hardy, Store Manager Arthur S. Newman and volunteer Judith Burgess.

Please come in and shop our latest collection of books, DVDs, and CDs. Help keep our volunteers safe by wearing your mask.

**Book Store Hours:**  
**Thursday - Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**  
**Saturdays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**



## *A familiar face takes on his latest endeavor for the Library*

I am excited to be the new manager of Ye Olde Book Shoppe and consider it a privilege to be a part of this reader's paradise in Heathsville. I'm looking forward to serving the reading needs of our patrons. I'm amazed when I consider the history that has been developing between me and Ye Olde Book Shoppe, as this was the store where I held my first book-signing as an author. I started my career in business and retail management

over 30 years ago. I also bring to the table a career in information and computer technology. I'm looking forward to this new challenge and hope to follow in my predecessor's footsteps in keeping it voted as Virginia Living Magazine's "best little book shop in Virginia." When I was hired to coordinate the activities of the Mobile Library for the Northumberland Public Library two years ago, I was given goals and vision for that en-

deavor. It gives me great joy to look back and see that I played an important role in a project that brought library services and the internet to places in the community that needed it the most. At YOBS, I want to bring an added sparkle to a store that is already a gem. I could use your help. Please come by if you have any ideas, as I'd love to hear from you. I am in the midst of inventory management - trying to get the used collection dig-

itized. It's a challenge, but with the fantastic staff and volunteers I know this endeavor will be successful. This will make the shopping and searching experience easier, while keeping the joy of finding that hidden treasure moment alive. As my wife said to me when I broke the news to her, "I love that little book shop, it is my most favorite place in Heathsville."

~ Arthur S. Newman

# Philosophical Society Keeps Friday Tradition Alive on Zoom While Tending to Ye Olde Book Shoppe

Like everyone else during these extraordinary times, the Philosophical Society of Heathsville has had to make some adjustments because of COVID-19.

We usually meet at Ye Olde Book Shoppe on Friday afternoons. It certainly threw a wrench into our planning when the shop was closed for nine weeks.

Although the shop has cautiously reopened recently, most of the Society's regular philosophical discussions have been conducted online via Zoom. These are indeed awkward times, but we are making our best effort under the circumstances.

We consider our group to be the de facto marketing arm of the bookshop, so a central tenet of our charter is to promote it wherever there are interested bibliophiles. The Philosophical Society carefully attended the Heathsville Farmers' Markets in June and July – face masks securely in place.

The store has now returned to its full operating schedule but we have been hesitant about receiving book donations. We must be careful – the virus

We know many folks have been sorting and consolidating their libraries during the lockdown. Hence, we look forward to “recycling” your discards to our customers and passing along the not-inconsiderable monetary rewards to the library.

What is next for the Bookshop and the Philosophical Society? We certainly hope things calm down a bit, and we can return to something like a “new normal.”

We cannot end this little essay without leaving at least one philosophical “bon mot.” See if this does not hold true in your experience: “No matter when in April or May you plant your tomato seedlings, you won't get any properly

vine-ripened fruit until after the Fourth of July.”

We hope to see you soon at the shop or a Farmers' Market!

~ Rives Hardy & Richard Becker



Richard Becker and Rives Hardy are an engaging duo at the July Farmer's Market in Heathsville. They'll return August 15.

demands it. So, with the goal of setting safe and reasonable protocols, we are refusing any dirty, buggy, or water damaged books. And we ask that your donations be brought directly to the store during our regular business hours.

We are celebrating you and all that you do!

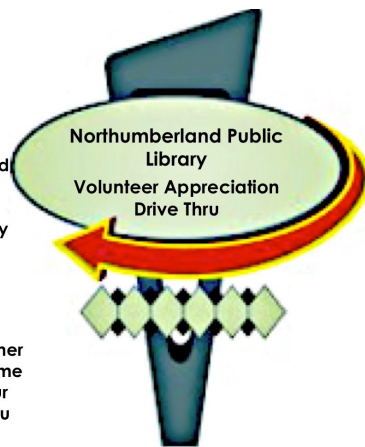
Come by the Library August 20th 5-7 PM

We will have two salads, dressing, fruit cocktail, bread and a special gift.

Kindly RSVP to Cate Land by August 10, 2020

580-5051 or cland@nplibraryva.org

We will put together your dinner and special gift with your name on it and will place it in your trunk or back seat when you come by.



## LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY

Please go to our website to answer just 10 questions to help direct our resources for the next five years.



Library Director: Jane Blue

Children's Program Coordinator: Marilyn Smith  
 Librarian: Alison Towles  
 Customer Service Supervisor: Cate Land  
 Bookkeeper: Joanne Adams  
 Publicist: Pamela Hagy

Library Clerks: Kara Goodrow, Gay Posey, Andrea Ullrich  
 Community Outreach Supervisor: Arthur Newman  
 IT Coordinator: Karen Whelan  
 Tech Mobile: T.T. Haynie

Library telephone: 804-580-5051

Website: [nplibraryva.org](http://nplibraryva.org)

email: [library@nplibraryva.org](mailto:library@nplibraryva.org)