

## Locked in the Library



*Public computers have been rearranged for social distancing.*

### **What does a library do when its doors are locked?**

For weeks library staff have not been able to welcome visitors into the library. Once the shock of this dramatic change passed, we had to put our grief on a shelf and shift gears. All library staff have been busy with a variety of activities preparing for when we can re-open to visitors, making the most of this “quiet” time. Staff are working on virtual outreach to our community, youth services online resources, technical services, and local history services, while also preparing for the move to the new regional library. While the doors are locked, the library is still in business providing online services

and preparing the library for visitors to return.

## Youth Services

Janice Felker, our Youth Services Librarian, is planning the **2020 Summer Reading Program**. To respond to the flexibility needed this summer, we will bring back an online Summer Reading Program. This program will provide many fun features and incentives to reading.

The Youth Services section of the library's website and Facebook page are frequently updated with new learning resources and fun activities. ESPL provides access to eBooks for children through its website, [espl.org](http://espl.org). We encourage you to like [Eastern Shore Public Library Youth Services](#) on Facebook, where online story times hosted by publishers and celebrity readers are being posted frequently.

Census activity bags with *We Count* picture books are being distributed to Shore schools' meal distribution sites, while supplies last.

## Technical Services

Behind the scenes of every book, DVD, magazine, archive, and database are Technical Service (TS) staff, historically known as catalogers. Fortunately, ESPL had just migrated to a new online catalog, [ShoreCat](#), which provides searching of eBooks in RBDigital. Also, while the libraries offered curbside pick-up of reserved items, library users could easily place books and DVDs on hold using ShoreCat or its companion app, **Librista**. We encourage everyone to learn how to place holds, because, when we phase in our re-opening, we will likely start with curbside pick-up.

New bestselling eBooks have been purchased because it may be a while until our readers can hold a library print book. Our Facebook posts help keep our readers updated with reading news and resources, too. We encourage you to like [Eastern Shore Public Library](#) on Facebook.

With ShoreCat, TS staff can now create wonderful **reports to help us manage collections**. For instance, a "missing" items report was created and staff have been checking the bookshelves for these missing items. This helps ensure our online catalog is accurate. We next plan to inventory our collections, which also improves the accuracy of our catalog. This also helps with our move to the regional library in Parksley as we will have a better book "census" count to know how many book shelves we need!

ShoreCat also allows us to **email all library card holders** important messages about their library services. This is particularly important as we plan to re-open and communicate news. If you are unsure whether you are receiving these emails, please call the library to ask them to check your record. ShoreCat can notify you by either email or text of upcoming due dates and when holds are ready for pick-up.

## Local History

The [digitization project for the Frances Bibbins Latimer Collection](#) has been accelerated as public service staff have been assigned to cataloging scanned images. The public can already search some items online in the [espl.org](http://espl.org) website's Genealogy section. More items will be uploaded soon.

The Kirk Mariner Collection's book inventory is being indexed. These books

will be compared to what the Eastern Shore Room Collection currently has in its open stacks. Rare books not currently available to the public will be integrated into the Eastern Shore Room Collection, further establishing it as one of the finest Eastern Shore of Virginia collections in the world.

The [Genealogy section](#) of the ESPL website has been updated with new resources, such as GPS coordinates for Eastern Shore cemeteries and fifty-two genealogy reports. We encourage you to like [Eastern Shore Room at Eastern Shore Public Library](#) on Facebook.

### **Preparing for Re-Opening**

Libraries across Virginia are discussing the best strategy for re-opening public libraries to ensure staff and patrons are safe and can return to using the library resources they need and cherish. Just as the ESPL libraries took a phased approach to closing to visitation, we will re-open in phases based on the recommendations of local government and the Eastern Shore Health District.

Social distancing accommodations are being made, such as locating public computers six feet apart. Surfaces and returned books have been sanitized. Other measures are being considered as the library community decides the best practices for safety.

To help us help you, please:

- **Ensure we have your email address in your library account** so that you can receive important announcements. Call the library staff Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at (757) 787-3400 to ask if your library account is up to date.
- **Do not worry about overdue fines.** The earliest that items will be due is June 12, 2020. You can return items now in the book returns or bring them when our doors are open to visitors again.
- **Learn to use the holds system in [ShoreCat](#) to reserve items now,** so they will be ready when we can loan print books to you again.
- **Check our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages** for library news and information about online resources.
- **Look at our live webcam of construction** of the new regional library and Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center. What a bright spot these days to watch it grow! [Check it out here!](#)
- **Practice well-being.** This includes following recommended health guidelines, exercise, avoiding misinformation in social media and the news, and reading.

We look forward to seeing you soon! The Library is lonely--and awfully quiet--without you.

Sincerely,  
Cara Burton



*Construction is underway on the interior of the new regional library!*

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