

Library System Report

Cara Burton, System Director

Director's Update:

While everyone is disappointed ESPL is not in the new regional library and Heritage Center yet, library staff press on to ensure the Accomac library remains functional, despite its limitations. Over the past year, new equipment and the relocation of the Foundation's office required furniture and devices to be stored in the front area of the Accomac library. After all, it was only for a few months. After recent construction change news, the decision was made to reorganize the Accomac library for improved appearance, safety, and access.

Bates Moving, the Salisbury, Maryland company ESPL plans to use for moving to Parksley, was contacted for the reorganization project. The plan was to clear out a large "alcove" near the bathrooms that could easily be blocked off. This area would store the equipment and furniture not being used at this time. This required relocating books on wall shelves and five large nonfiction 92 inch shelving ranges. The Bates representative reviewed our plan and recommended a faster, more efficient, and less expensive way to accomplish what we wanted. He could

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LIBRARY INTEGRATION OF NEW LEARNING TOOL

The Eastern Shore Public Library system has partnered with Niche Academy to bring a new learning tool to patrons. Through the use of Niche Academy, learning about the libraries eResources will be easier than ever. Niche Academy utilizes different mediums to bring to the public more information about resources offered by the library system. These mediums include instructional videos and written guides.

Our eResources are there to help patrons' access information online 24/7. These resources include genealogy resources such as Ancestry and FamilySearch, as well as resources

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move the ranges without removing the books!

The added benefit of the internal move was to provide the moving experience to ESPL staff to better prepare them for “the big move” to Parksley. None of the staff, except for me, have participated in a professional library move, much less one of this size. It requires a lot of planning to ensure the moving day goes smoothly and so that additional work is not required to reorganize after the move, realizing a previous decision just didn't work out as expected. Such situations happen, but you try to prevent them.

When the big day arrived, Bates decided to double-up his staff due complete the project in one day due to a big snow storm then day after. The library was closed to allow for this increased, expedited activity to ensure the safety of our patrons and so that staff could focus on the moving. Staff had a fun time both working and learning together as a team and watching the amazing work of the movers. Videos of the move are available to watch on our Facebook page.

Peninsula Floor Service was then hired to give the floors a good cleaning. This not only helps appearance but also the health of staff, patrons, *and* the books. Books on low shelves deteriorate quicker with the dust and grime that kicks up.

The irony of the situation is that our new, red children's shelving is now being used for the Large Print collection. It just goes to show that equipment, planning, and spaces need to be flexible!

BEFORE



AFTER



Special wheeled racks can move shelving with books remaining on shelves, saving time and moving expense. This method is only for internal relocations.

Technical Services

Charle Ricci, TS Manager

Audiobooks: How Library Patrons Listen

Evaluating circulation statistics over time can aid in identifying long-term trends in patron interests, behaviors, and information needs. As the world approaches the two-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, assessing library patron's borrowing activity, and how it may have changed because of restricted or reduced daily activities, is worthwhile.

Recently, Collection Management Librarian, Charle Ricci, conducted an analysis of the ESPL's audiobook circulation, with a goal of determining if the pandemic had significantly impacted patron borrowing of physical audiobooks. If circulation data revealed a large decrease in physical audiobook circulation that corresponded with a large increase in eAudiobook (digital audiobooks on the Libby/Overdrive) usage, then a shift in amounts budgeted for these two material types would be advisable.

Using circulation reports from the library's software, Atrium, and from Overdrive, Ricci collected monthly physical and electronic audiobook circulation figures for a nearly two year period: February 2020 through December 2021. This data was then converted into a bar

graph to create a visual representation of the listening patterns of ESPL library patrons. (*see next page*).

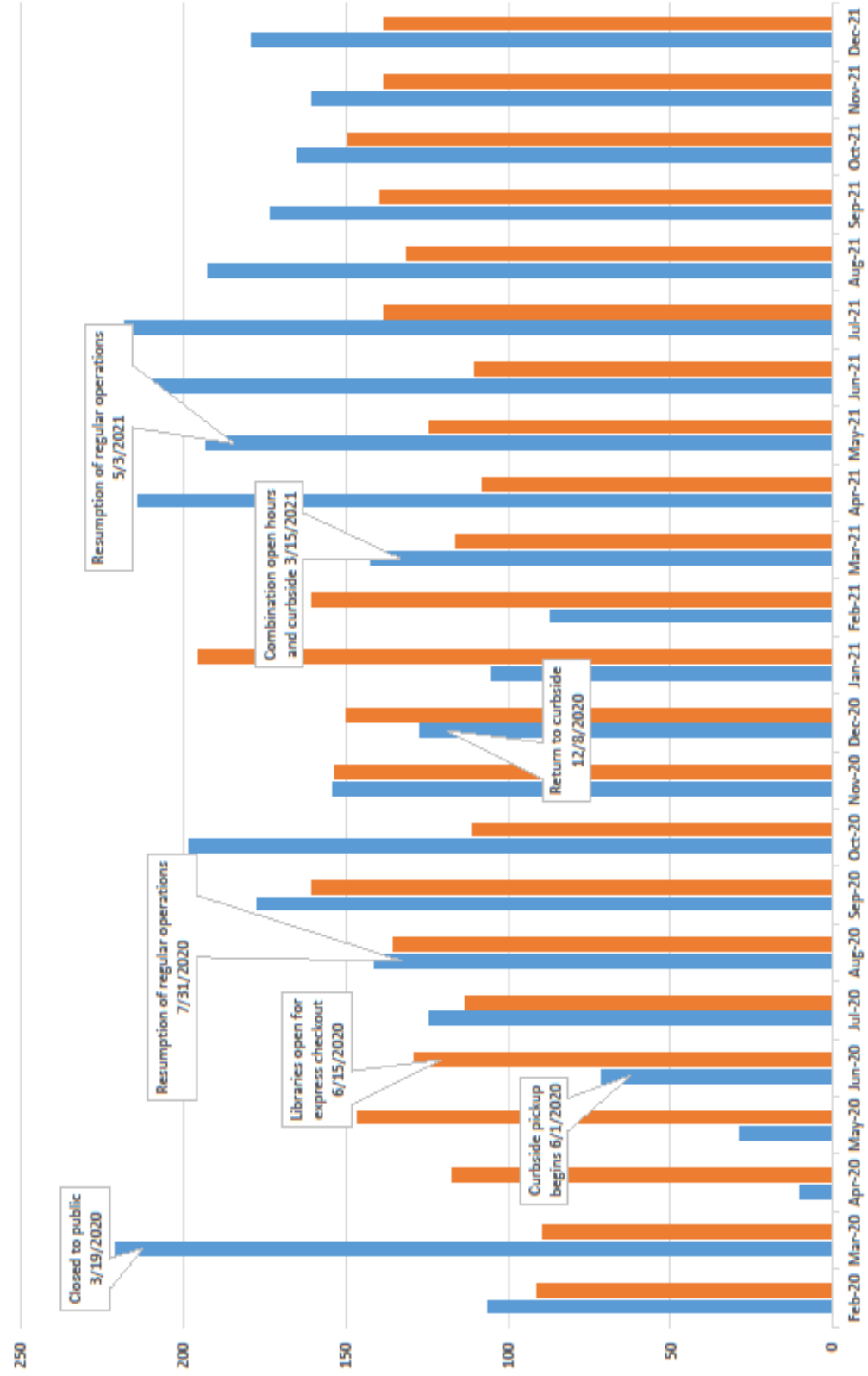
Data points were added to the bar graph to identify periods of pandemic-related library closures or reductions in normal operations, such as operating under curbside service only. With this additional layer of information, it immediately became clear that eAudiobook circulation increased whenever the Eastern Shore was experiencing a spike in COVID case numbers, which brought about restricted access to visiting the library in person.

The bar graph also revealed that whenever Shore libraries returned to regular operations, the circulation of physical audiobooks not only rebounded, but surpassed pre-pandemic rates of circulation. eAudiobooks have also circulated at higher rates than before the pandemic, even when the ESPL is operating without restrictions or reductions in service.

Ricci concluded that while eAudiobook usage increased greatly during COVID waves, and has continued to remain higher than pre-pandemic levels, the long-term trend of significant increases in physical audiobook circulation negates any need to reallocate budgeted amounts for the two types of audiobooks. As ESPL patrons continue to enjoy listening to audiobooks, the library will strive to provide materials in their preferred formats, guided by circulation activity and data analysis.

Audiobook Circulation

■ Physical Audio ■ eAudio



Youth Services

Tiffany Flores, Youth Services Librarian

Throughout December and until January 15th, Youth Services ran a 'Holidays around the World' Challenge on Beanstack. This challenge featured a drawing for various prizes. Youth were able to earn tickets which were used to enter a drawing for each specific prize. This challenge saw some success. We had a total of 11 kids participate and 5 winners were selected out of those winners. After doing various challenges, it seems that raffle or drawing challenges see less participation than regular prize challenges. Notably, this is still high participation for this type of challenge compared to previous ones.



Throughout January, Youth Services Librarian Tiffany Flores continued working extensively on the Summer Reading Program. This year's theme is 'Oceans of Possibilities' which is a fitting theme for the shore. As part of this month's planning, Tiffany worked predominantly on promotional items and developing programming for the tween/teen age groups to provide better services to the community. In addition to summer planning, she also got together all the craft takeaway kits for spring. Many exciting things are still in the works for this year.

ESPL still lacks a dedicated Adult Services Librarian, who would work with book clubs and develop programs for the majority of our service population. Instead, it is done piecemeal. Staff creatively take advantage of low-time investment activities, like the "Together We Read" community virtual reading activity.





Cape Charles Memorial Library

Ann Rutledge Library Manager

Although January was very cold our attendance was up! Sharon has been working on the 2022 Summer Library Reading Program. She was also able to get a free Paper Bag Princess event kit from Annick Press and an Inclusive Financial Education Programming Kit sponsored by the American Library Association and the Financial Industry Regularity Investor Education Foundation. This information will allow us to provide additional free programs in the future. I put together a Wish List for the friends of the library for the upcoming year.

Cape Charles Memorial Library happily presents

Paper Bag Princess Day

Saturday, March 5 11:00 am



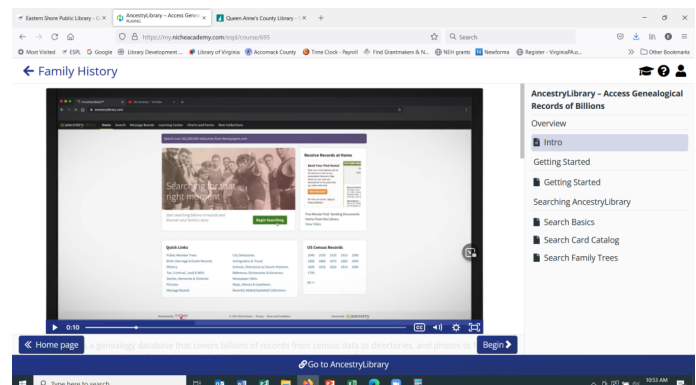
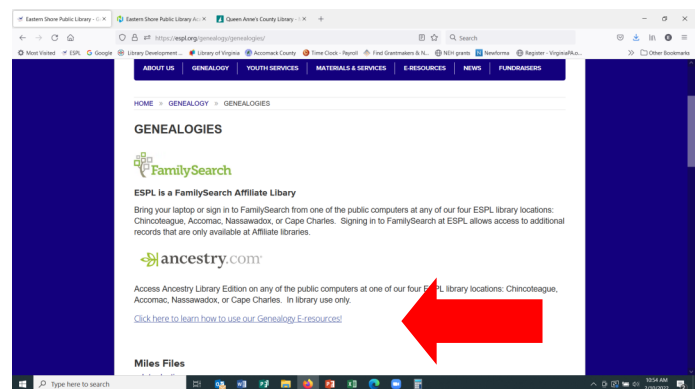
When the fiercest dragon in the world smashes Princess Elizabeth's castle, burns all her clothes, and captures Prince Ronald, Elizabeth takes matters into her own hands (wearing only a paper bag!) Join us for a story time, creative crafts, and fun giveaways!

Register today by calling 757-331-1300 (limited seating)

Niche Academy, Continued from page 1

for family and children such as Novelist Plus and Prep guides for information about careers. There are many more eResources that can be accessed. All that is needed is a library card and a PIN number, which is set up when patrons sign up for a library card. Niche Academy informs users why and how to use these valuable free eResources.

Niche Academy is free to access on the espl.org website at any time, just look for "Click here to learn about this resource" throughout the website to access the informational videos. For questions and additional details, please email Librarian Hannah Swimley at nfl@espl.org or call 757-414-0010.





Chincoteague Island Library

Karen Sharp, Library Manager

The Chincoteague Island Library has been busy despite the cold and snow. As CIL began the New Year, our patrons have been using the library more and more. From the checkout of materials, reserving materials, to questions about e-resources and about ShoreCat catalog, helping them achieve resources available to them such as job searches and the printing out of important information needed.

As COVID cases began to soar, The CIL Board made the decision to return to Curbside Pick-Up Only on January 10th. We continue to assist patrons with their library needs. Many of the afore-mentioned needs have increased and are very encouraging. Take-away bags with craft supplies were created for the young ones, in which they could decorate a picture of mittens, and given out.

Beginning February 7th, CIL will re-open to the public! Due to COVID cases easing up now, The CIL Board has decided that it is safe to re-open.



February is National Library Lover's Month. It is dedicated to those who love and are devoted to reading, finding, studying and otherwise loving books. And to those who seek out libraries that house, gather, collect, organize, and categorize books and materials to fulfill that love of reading. CIL has created a display to express the mutual love of books and reading. We have placed hearts for our patrons to write a "love note" and receive Hershey Kisses. A favorite book/author, a thank you for help given, a request, what they love about our library/libraries are just some of the suggestions given. A huge thank you to Nancy Cunningham and Linda Ryan, CIL's Board members, who helped with the creation of our display.



On Friday, February 11th, The CIL Board will hold their monthly meeting. They will be finalizing the plans for CIL's Baskets Fundraiser. Tickets have been made and the baskets are ready. There will be two baskets: one for Adults and one for Children that contain items Chincoteague-related. Now the final planning stages to finish. Stay tuned...

Northampton Free Library

Hannah Swimley, Branch Manager



Clarke and Sons Inc. came to the library and re-wired the inside and outside accessibility door buttons. There had been a problem since installation with these two buttons working properly. According to the company, they were wired incorrectly upon installation, as the factory had not explained the different wiring system that was being used. This was causing the buttons to be constantly 'on' and draining the power, instead of only using power when the buttons were pushed. The buttons should now be working properly, which will allow for easier accessibility for our patrons.

Northampton Free Library introduced curbside pickup from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm Monday through Friday, for three weeks during the month of January. Patrons were allowed inside the building from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. This was a direct result from the rise in COVID-19 numbers on the shore, and was decided upon to help prevent staff and patrons from possibly catching the virus while utilizing the space.

The library is also undergoing some exciting renovation projects. To begin, the meeting room in the library will be painted a calming shade of light green to help promote creativity. The external trim will also be re-painted white in order to refresh the outside of the

building. Everyone here at the library is ready for this change, and are hopeful that patrons will enjoy it as well.

There are also many external projects in the works around the NFL building. These projects range from removing the dead and/or dying plants and bushes from around the building, and removing the juniper plants and stones from the front walkway of the building, as well as replacing the aforementioned section cement blocks to assist with accessibility. The lighting around the building will also be replaced, and a new seating



A gutter and flashing was installed to mitigate water damage to the siding.

area in front of the building will be introduced. These are not all of the projects that are currently in the works here at NFL. These projects are to assist those who may need an easier time accessing the building, as well as refreshing the overall look of the building.

Making the Most of Genealogical Databases

As the new surge in the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by winter weather, limits travel and access to the library's *physical* resources, *online* genealogical resources are always available. Time at home can be well spent by taking a look at the Ancestry and Family Search genealogical databases. Whether delving into ancestral research for the first time, revisiting an old hobby, or wanting to supplement continual research, both Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org offer access to vital records, census information, military records and more.

Ancestry.com has over 11 billion searchable name records. Many of those records are free to view and save to family trees, however, some require paid subscription or can be accessed using Ancestry Library Edition on one of the public computers at any branch of the Eastern Shore Public Library system. During most of the pandemic, Ancestry allowed library patrons to remote access to Ancestry Library Edition at home, however, this pandemic accommodation ended in December of 2021.

The FamilySearch database allows users to access from any location with a free account. While FamilySearch has less searchable records, the site has a collection of un-indexed digital images that can be browsed. Some search results may contain attached images that can only be viewed at a FamilySearch affiliate library, such as ESPL. A helpful aspect of FamilySearch is the shared family tree. When users build a family tree, each relative that is entered is given a profile, where details are shown and can be edited and sources can be attached. With the shared family tree, other people who identify that individual as an ancestor can also contribute to the ancestor's profile. By clicking on the person who contributed to the profile, Family Search gives the option of viewing the relationship, allowing users to connect with unknown relatives. Some may dislike the potential of any user viewing and editing profiles, however, only relatives who have been listed as deceased are made public. Living relatives on a user's family tree are private.

As of January 2022, new Virginia County Marriage Records, 1771-1989, have been added to FamilySearch. Nearly all features of FamilySearch.org are also available on the FamilyTree mobile app. Users that are interested in preserving family history will find the Memories feature espe-

cially useful. Using the Memories feature, as well as the Memories mobile app, users can organize new and old family photos with Topic Tags, create slide-shows with audio which can be shared on social media apps, create albums, and Bookmark important memories from shared albums. The Memories feature is an excellent for storing family photos, documents, and audio recordings in one place, and easily share with family and friends. FamilySearch Memories app is also a platform for creating oral histories from any location.

Another Family Search free feature is RootsTech, a virtual family history conference and year-long learning platform. RootsTech offers hundreds of video sessions from each year's conference from notable historians and genealogists covering topics such as DNA testing; tips for searching records; connecting with family; website tools and apps; and activities for getting the entire family involved in learning family history. Sessions can be saved to the user's playlist for easy access all year. RootsTech also offers an ExpoHall, where users can see new products and updates for new features from a variety of exhibitors and sponsors, including Ancestry, MyHeritage, National Genealogical Society, Library of Virginia, and dozens of other companies, genealogical societies and institutions. RootsTech 2022, scheduled for March 3-5. Registration is still open and is completely virtual and completely free. RootsTech 2022 will share a different set of keynote speakers each day, discovery content, and sponsor content. Attendees can join anytime and watch what is playing on the main stage, watch one of over 900 sessions, visit the virtual Expo Hall, connect with other attendees, or get research help. Creating a schedule is as easy as adding the class to the playlist. The 2022 schedule will be added a few days before the conference. Each session will have chatrooms for questions answered by the presenters or moderators or for making connections with other attendees. FamilySearch's Relatives near me feature will also connect with Relatives at RootsTech platform, where attendees will be able to initiate connections with family members in attendance. Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask questions get research help from FamilySearch researcher helpers virtually during the conference, either at the virtual Expo Hall FamilySearch booth or the Ask Me Anything Button. While session videos will remain accessible year-long, session and research chatrooms, as well as Relatives at RootsTech are only available during the length of the conference. FamilySearch users can still check out video sessions from RootsTech2021, which will remain up until just before the 2022 conference begins.

While the Eastern Shore Public Library encourages patrons to visit the Eastern Shore Room, and validating online source information is always wise, the online genealogical databases may prove helpful. New source material, research guidance, and hints provided by these services may help streamline new users' genealogical research or provide previously missing connections, or at the very least, another platform for interaction with others of shared interest.

ESPL Grant Update - February 2022

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) – This ARPA money is distributed to the Library of Virginia. \$28,709 based on the state aid formula. Original budget: RFID installation (due to construction delay) - \$10,000; security system - \$1,950; Video monitoring - \$9,186; HC website - \$6,000, phase 2; tech consultant - \$1,573. Due to construction delays and the timing of the grant deadline, a revised budget is being developed of actions that can be completed now, such as the purchase of Niche Academy and the reorganization of shelving. **Therefore, new funds will need to be secured for: RFID installation (due to construction delay) - \$10,000; security system - \$1,950; Video monitoring - \$9,186.

NEH Challenge Grant – The expenditure budget of remaining funds needs to be updated and approved.

Virginia Humanities (VH) – 2 grants (1) Continue to work with US250 consultant, paid for with VH grant. Consultant, John Verrill, has interviewed a couple more members and will present a final copy by the February 2022 meeting. (2) SHARP grant for the purpose of a Heritage Center planning consultant was awarded and the consultant has been retained. Bryan & Jordan Consulting, LLC, www.bryanandjordan.com, has been retained to provide consulting services for this project. The B&J consultants will be at ESPL in late February interviewing preselected focus groups. The visit was delayed due to spikes in COVID-19.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) – Emergency Connectivity Fund. Application submitted that will support technology for area nonprofits, namely wifi hotspots, ipads, and ChromeBooks. No word yet on approval.

United Way of ESVA – ESPL Foundation applied for the FY22 grant for an outside information kiosk. (around \$2,000)

USDA Rural Development Communities Assistance Grant – We do not receive the USDA money until all equipment has arrived and all matching funds expended. Accomac grant (children's shelving and Digitization Lab): All reimbursement funds have been received from USDA. The grant is complete and closed out. There is an issue with the ESPL Foundation's SBA loan confusing the Treasury Department's database which says ESPL has a Federal debt. The Foundation is working to resolve.

Parksley (compact shelving for Heritage Center): Total project \$140,000. 99% of application submitted for \$21,000. Match will be \$100,000 from Northampton County FY22 capital funds and \$19,000 from ESPL Foundation. Hope to hear in April 2022 if grant is awarded. Equipment order on hold until new schedule is made for the construction. It is hoped the timing for all works together.