



Library Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, February 20th
Admiral Room, Blasco Library
12:00 pm

Allen
Lohitai
Pearson

Bowers
Tempestini
Knuth

Boam
Conway
DeHaven

AGENDA

1. ***Call to Order***
2. ***Approval of Minutes –January 16, 2020***
3. ***Library Reports***
 - a. **Introduce new board member James DeHaven**
 - b. **Report of Director**
 - c. **Review of Financial Report**
 - d. **Statistical and Other Reports**
 - i. **Statistical Report**
 - ii. **Staff Reports**
 - e. **Report of District Consultant**
 - f. **Report of Friends and ERLF**
4. ***Board and Committee Reports***
5. ***Adjournment***
6. ***Appendix***
 - a. **News Articles**

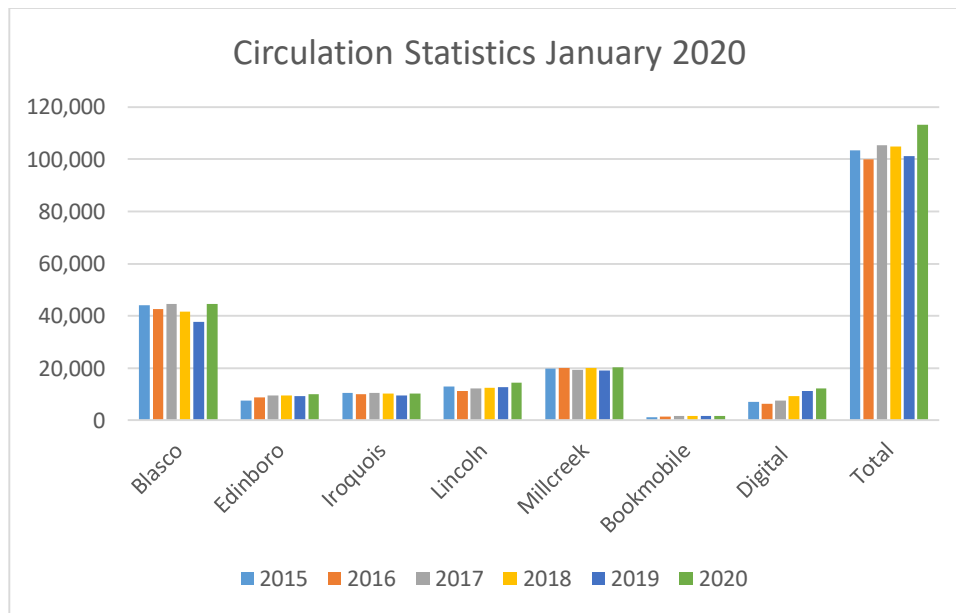
1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes –January 16, 2020
Sent electronically
3. Library Reports
 - a. Introduce new board member James DeHaven
 - b. Report of Director
 - c. Review of Financial Report
 - d. Statistical and Other Reports
 - i. Statistical Report

January 2020 Statistics

Numbers Snapshot

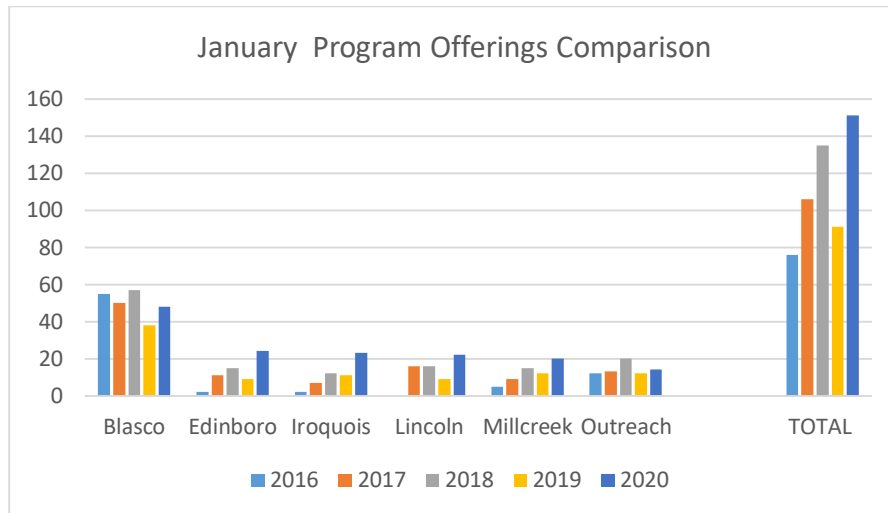
- **16,501** Wi-Fi sessions, up **6%**
- **6,109** PC logins, up **14%**
- **4,099** ILL items loaned, up **13%**
- **113,184** check outs, up **12%**
- **47,653** visits, up **4%**

Circulation

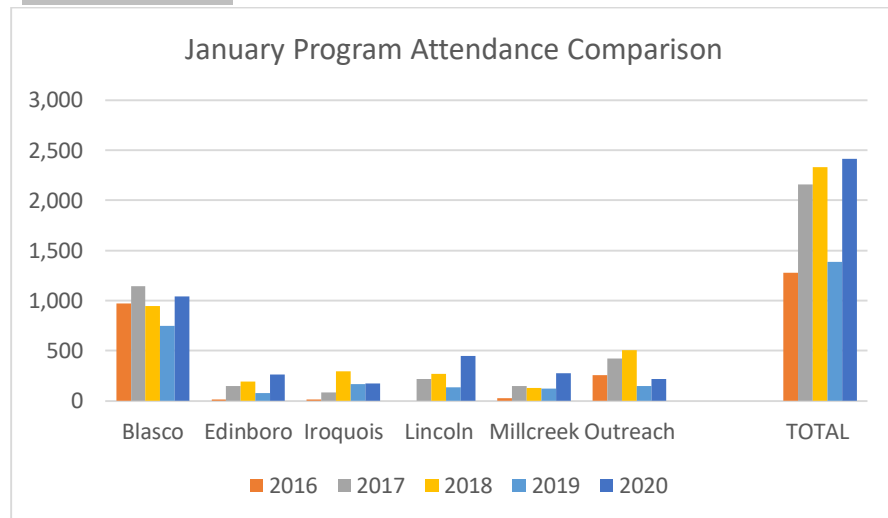


	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Blasco	44,131	42,512	44,687	41,536	37,585	44,550
Edinboro	7,466	8,661	9,593	9,600	9,311	9,905
Iroquois	10,539	10,025	10,492	10,208	9,597	10,340
Lincoln	13,002	11,151	12,164	12,525	12,766	14,411
Millcreek	19,826	19,999	19,345	20,130	19,132	20,200
Bookmobile	1,264	1,445	1,683	1,627	1,595	1,571
Digital	7,101	6,278	7,482	9,209	11,113	12,207
Total	103,329	100,071	105,446	104,835	101,099	113,184

Programming



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Blasco	55	50	57	38	48
Edinboro	2	11	15	9	24
Iroquois	2	7	12	11	23
Lincoln	0	16	16	9	22
Millcreek	5	9	15	12	20
Outreach	12	13	20	12	14
TOTAL	76	106	135	91	151



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Blasco	969	1,142	945	750	1,042
Edinboro	15	149	189	75	260
Iroquois	12	83	293	164	171
Lincoln	0	220	267	132	447
Millcreek	27	146	129	122	275
Outreach	255	420	506	145	218
TOTAL	1,278	2,160	2,329	1,388	2,413

ii. Staff Reports

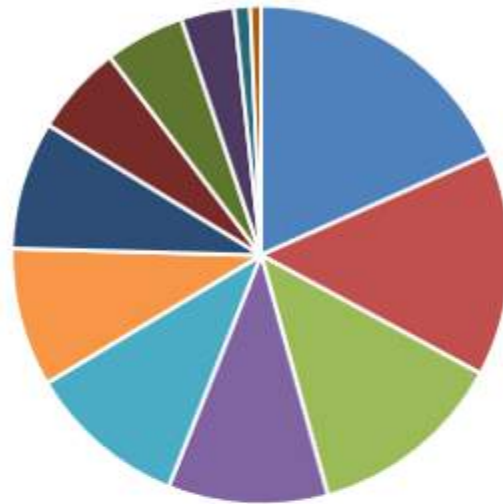
- Shane Donaldson—Putting together Sensory Friendly Kits
- Rachel Stevenson—Adult Programming



Erie County Public Library

2019 Programs : Survey Responses

Patrons Suggestions on How to Improve Programs



- Add New Classes
- More Advertising
- Have Staff Available for Assistance
- Upgrades to the Space
- Frequency
- Better Presentation
- Information to Take Away from Class
- Hold Classes at Branches
- More Resources
- Advanced Classes
- More Hands-On
- Changes to Website

Answer	Total
Add New Classes	53
Frequency	42
More Resources	37
More Advertising	30
Better Presentation	30
Advanced Classes	26
Have Staff Available for Assistance	24
Information to Take Away from Class	17
More Hands-On	15
Upgrades to the Space	10
Hold Classes at Branches	3
Changes to Website	2
TOTAL:	289

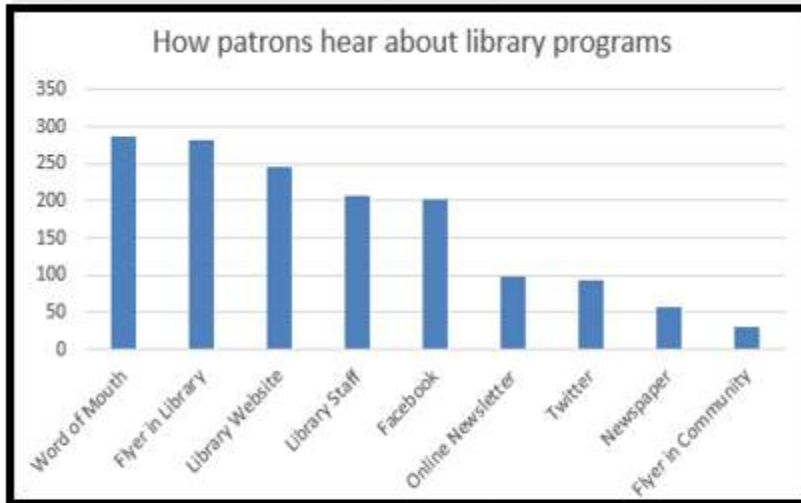
Thirty patrons wish we would better advertise programs.

33% would like to receive an email about programs only.



Of those:

- 37% want more variety of classes including grant, computer, and local history programs
- 24% want more 3D printing design classes
- 9% want more sewing classes



Adult Programs: 390
Adult Attendance: 4800

Variety of Classes Offered

1. 30 Makerspace Programs – including thematic programming around 3D Printing, Photography, and Media Lab Usage
2. 10 Career Based Programs – with partners CareerLink and the BBB
3. Over 40 Monday Maker Programs – where new instructors and library staff present a variety of hands-on experiences for all ages
4. Collaborated with over 20 community partners for 2019

TERC Database Writing

Avoiding the Common Errors
Effective Style in Essays
Essay Writing
Essay Writing Method
Essay Writing: Putting It All Together
Essay Writing: The Five-Step Method
Organizing and Developing Your Ideas
Persuasive Writing
Writing Skills

Reading Comprehension

Analyzing Arguments
Author Point of View
Comparing and Contrasting
Conflict
Finding Supporting Details
Historical Context
Identifying Cause and Effect
Identifying Literary Elements
Identifying Main Idea
Identifying Organization and Transition
Identifying Relevant and Supporting Details
Identifying Unfamiliar Words and Word Meanings
Inferring and Drawing Conclusions
Literary Language
Literary Terms
Main Ideas and Supporting Material
Making Inferences

Arithmetic and Elementary Algebra

Absolute Values
Adding and Subtracting Fractions
Adding and Subtracting Polynomials
Averages
Binomial Factorization
Characteristics of Quadratics
Combining Terms
Comparing Numbers
Conversions
Converting Decimals and Fractions
Counting and Combinations
Data Interpretation
Decimals and Fractions
Domain and Range of Functions
Equivalent Forms of Numbers
Estimating
Evaluating Expressions and Formulas
Evaluating Functions
Exponents
Exponents and Scientific Notation
Factoring
Factoring Expressions
FOIL
Fractions and Decimals
Fractions: Add - Subtract
Fractions: Multiply - Divide
Functions
Graphing Linear Equations
Graphing Lines in Slope-Intercept Form

Reading Comprehension con't

Plot
Point of View
Quantitative Information
Reading Actively
Reading Comprehension Strategies
Sentence Relationships
Setting
Signal Words
Strategies for Reading and Understanding Passages
Text-Based Conclusions
Understanding Difficult Text
Understanding the Author's Tone
Understanding the Author's Viewpoint
Using Elements of Text
Visual Media
Words in Context

Arithmetic and Elementary Algebra con't

Hard Arithmetic
Hard Elementary Algebra
Hard Pre-Algebra
Improper Fractions
Independent and Dependent Quantities
Indirect Measurement
Inequalities
Interpreting Data
Inverse Relationships
Linear Equations
Linear Functions
Math Vocabulary
Mean, Median, and Mode
Modeling and Predicting with Data
Multiple Figures
Multiplying and Dividing Decimals
Nonlinear Relationships
Number Properties
Operations with Fractions
Operations with Positive and Negative Integers
Order of Operations
Percent Increase and Decrease
Percents
Polynomials
Positive and Negative Integers
Powers
Probability
Proportional Relationships
Proportions and Rates
Quadratics
Rates
Rational Exponents
Ratios and Proportions
Reducing Fractions
Roots
Scientific Notation
Setting Up Equations
Setting Up Systems of Equations
Simplifying Rational Expressions
Solving Equations
Square Roots
Translating English into Math
Types of Numbers
Understanding Algebraic Language
Understanding Inverse Relationships
Unit Conversions
Using Expressions and Equations
Word Problems Strategies
Working with Literal Equations
Working with Money
Working with Variables

College Level Mathematics

Advanced Trigonometry
Analyzing Statistical Data
Combinations and Permutations
Complex Numbers
Determinants
Distance and Midpoint Formulas
Domain and Range
Expanding Expressions
Exponential and Log Functions
Exponential Functions
Factor to Simplify Rational Expressions
Factorials
Factoring Polynomials
Function Notation
Graphs of Other Functions
Hard Algebra
Hard Intermediate Algebra
Hard Trigonometry
Independent and Dependent Variables
Interpreting Graphs
Matrix Review
Modeling
Number Factors and Multiples
Parabolas
Patterns
Quadratic Formula
Quadratic Systems
Rational Expressions
Right Triangle Review
Right Triangle Trigonometry
Roots of Quadratic Equations
Solving Equalities and Inequalities
Solving Quadratic Equations
Systems of Equations
The Coordinate Grid
The Quadratic Formula
Transformations
Trigonometry
Trigonometry Functions
Word Problem Strategies
Working with Exponents
Working with Radicals
Writing Linear Equations

Geometry

3D Objects
Advanced Coordinate Geometry
Angles
Areas of Composite Figures
Circles
Congruent and Similar Figures
Coordinate Geometry
Hard Coordinate Geometry
Hard Geometry
Hard Plane Geometry
Intercepts of a Line
Interpreting with Graphs of Functions
Lines and Angles
Parallel and Perpendicular Lines
Perimeter and Area of Planar Objects
Points and Distance
Properties of Triangles
Quadrilaterals
Radian Measures
Regular Polygons
Right Triangles
Sectors of Circles
Slope of a Line
Solid Geometry
Solids
Squares, Rectangles and Parallelograms
Surface Area and Volume of Solids
Triangle Properties
Triangles

Sentence Skills

Adjectives and Adverbs
Agreement
Ambiguous Pronouns
Analyzing Structure
Apostrophes
Avoiding Common Errors of Spelling, Grammar, and Usage
Building Your Vocabulary
Clauses: Independent, Dependent
Common Sentence Mistakes
Comparisons
Connection Words
Correcting Run-on Sentences
Effective Style
Frequently Confused Words
Modifiers
Noun Agreement
Organization
Parallelism
Prefixes and suffixes
Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement
Pronouns
Pronouns, Nouns, and Verbs
Punctuation
Reconstructing Sentences
Sentence Enders
Sentence Fragments
Sentence Improvements
Sentence Types
Spelling and Capitalization
Style
Subject-Verb Agreement
The Parts of a Sentence
Using Modifiers
Verb Tenses

Word Roots

Math Videos

Adding and Subtracting Fractions Video
Advanced Average Problems Video
Advanced Coordinate Geometry Video
Advanced Math Vocabulary Video
Advanced Rate Problems Video
Averages Video
Circles Video
Conversions Video
Converting Decimals and Fractions Video
Coordinate Geometry Video
Counting and Combinations Video
Estimating Video
Factorials Video
Factoring Video
Factors and Multiples Video
FOIL Video
Inequalities Video
Lines and Angles Video
Making Calculations Video
Math Vocabulary Video
Median and Mode Video
Multiplying and Dividing Decimals Video
Multiplying and Dividing Fractions Video
Order of Operations Video
Percent Increase and Decrease Video
Percents Video
Plugging in Numbers Video
Positive and Negative Numbers Video
Powers Video
Probability Video
Rate Problems Video
Ratios and Proportions Video
Right Triangles Video
Scientific Notation Video
Setting Up Equations Video
Solid Geometry Video
Solving Equations Video
Square Roots Video
Squares, Rectangles and Parallelograms Video
Translating English into Math Video
Triangles Video
Word Problems Video
Working Backward Video
Working with Money Video
Working with Variables Video

BLASCO PROGRAMS

20th and 21st Century Art Theft	Concert Series
3D modeling Basics Tinkercad	Creating Grant Budgets
3D Modeling Basics: Blender	<i>Creating Infographics</i>
3D Modeling Basics: Sculptris	<i>Creating Infographics</i>
3D Modeling Basics: Tinkercad	Creative Cover Letters
3D modeling with Blender	Creative Nonfiction
3D Print Open Lab	Creative Writing
A to Z Databases	Cricut Basics: Create and Apply an Iron On Decal
Advertising: Small Budget, Big Impact	Cricut Basics: Make a Vinyl Sticker
African American Heritage Trail	Cricut Basics: Making Vinyl Stencils
<i>Antiques</i>	Cricut Create and Apply an Iron On Decal
Apollo 11	Cricut Make a Paper Banner or Garland
<i>Applied Digital Skills (Adults and Job Seekers)</i>	Cricut Make a Vinyl Decal
<i>Applied Digital Skills (Adults and Job Seekers)</i>	Cricut Make Paper Lanterns
<i>Archaeology</i>	Cricut Make Party Photo Props
<i>Are You Ready for a Grant?</i>	Cricut Making Vinyl Stencils for Glass
Artwork Poetry Workshop	<i>Cut the Cable Cord</i>
Ask Me Anything IP	<i>Cybersecurity in Business</i>
Ask Me Anything: Intellectual Property	<i>Dealing with Family Stress During the Holidays</i>
Astronomy	<i>Dealing with Grief During the Holidays</i>
<i>Astronomy</i>	<i>Dealing with Loneliness During the Holidays</i>
Author Fair	<i>Dealing with Loss During the Holidays</i>
Basic Video Editing with Premier Pro	Demystifying Insurance
Basics of Audio Recording	<i>Design Thinking for Entrepreneurs</i>
<i>BBB Military Line</i>	<i>Design Your Own Business Card</i>
Be a YouTuber	Designing Grant Evaluation Plans
Beginner Soldering	<i>Digital Skills for Everyday Tasks</i>
<i>Big Foot</i>	<i>Discover & Prepare Flexible Career with Google Tools</i>
Bike Maintenance	ECHS Curators: What We Do
Bike Workshop	Economic Development in Erie
<i>Bird Watching</i>	Electronics for Beginners Part 1
Blasco Writers' Group	Electronics for Beginners Part 2
<i>Book Theft</i>	<i>Elevator Pitches</i>
Budget 101	Erie County Women of Note
Budgeting 101	Erie Hack
Bulla Making	Erie's Ellis Island
Business Plan Basics	<i>Essential Oils</i>
<i>Buying a House</i>	<i>Ethics in Business</i>
<i>Canva & Piktochart</i>	<i>Fairy Tales Can Be Grimm</i>
<i>Canva & Piktochart</i>	<i>Fandoms</i>
Changing Careers	<i>Fashion</i>
Changing Change Workshop	<i>Fertility</i>
Changing Change Workshop	<i>Fiber Arts Meet Up</i>
Changing Job Market	<i>Film Series</i>
<i>Charitable Tax Laws for Over 75</i>	<i>Film Studies</i>
<i>Children's Literature</i>	<i>Finding Grants</i>
<i>Classical Literature</i>	<i>Folklore and Legends in America</i>
<i>Classical Music</i>	<i>Food Truck Basics</i>
<i>Classical Music</i>	<i>Fundraising Planning</i>
Clean Slate Law	<i>Gardening</i>
<i>Coach Your Team to Success</i>	<i>Genealogy</i>

Communication & Conflict
Genealogy DNA Painter to Print Colorful Fan Charts
Genealogy DNA to Breakdown Brick Walls
Genealogy Genetic Affairs
Genealogy Where to Start
Get that Grant
Get that Grant Boot Camp
Get Your Business Online
Ghosts of Erie County
Giving Wisely to Charity
Goal Setting
Government Grants
Grammar
Grants for Education
Grants for Individuals
Green Screen for Video Projects
Grieving
Ham Radio
Health & Wellness Apps
Herbal Maritime Medicine
Herbal Maritime Medicine
Hiring a Home Contractor
History of Macy's Thanksgiving Parade
History Trivia Night
Hitchcock & Art
Hitler's Cultural War Crimes
How to Be a Copywriter
How to Learn a Language on Your Own
How to Outline a Novel
ID Theft
Improv
Interior Design
Internet Job Search
Internet Privacy
Interview Skills
Interview Skills
Intro to Access
Intro to Access
Intro to Computers & the Internet I

Intro to Computers & the Internet I
Intro to Computers & the Internet II
Intro to Computers & the Internet II
Intro to Corporate Giving
Intro to Excel I
Intro to Excel I
Intro to Excel II
Intro to Excel II
Intro to Inkscape: Designing Files for Cricut and 3D Printing
Intro to Laptops

Genealogy DNA

Intro to Publisher
Intro to Publisher
Intro to Python
Intro to Vinyl Cutter & Cricut
Intro to Word I
Intro to Word I
Intro to Word II
Intro to Word II
Investment Fraud
Jewelry Making
John Boyd
Ladies of the Great Lakes
Latin Camp
Learn to 3D Print
Light Therapy
LinkedIn
Medicare
Mendacious Propaganda
Mending for Beginners
Mental Wellness
Mindfulness
Morse Code
Music Industry 101
NaNoWriMo
Networking
New Skills with Universal Class
Nonprofit Accounting
Our Rail History
Our Rail History
Our Tram History
Paying for College
Personal Archiving
Personal Archiving: Digitization
Photo Editing with Photoshop Light Room
Photography Basics All About Composition
Photography Basics: Editing Basics
Photography Basics: All About Composition
Photography Basics: All About Lighting
Photography Basics: Getting the Most of Your Camera
Phone
Photography Basics: Shooting in Manual
Photography for Beginner's: Basics
Pinterest
Planet Opposition
Podcasting Basics
Poetry Workshop
Poetry Workshop

Power Your Job Search with Google Tools
Prepping Your Board Members for Service

Intro to Laptops

Presentation Basics

Presentation Software

Public Speaking

Public Speaking

Quick Check Bike Workshop

QuickBooks

Reach Customers Online with Google

Resume Rescue

Saving Files and Folder

Saving Files and Folder

Saving for Retirement

Scams & Frauds

Scams Targeting Business

Self-Publishing

Senior Scoop

Sewing for Beginners

Six Steps to Plot Structure

Skype: Author Kate Quinn

Social Media & Your Job Search

Social Media for Business

Social Security

Soft Skills

Soft Skills

Solar Eclipses

SS Disability

Stand Up

Star Myths

Starting a Nonprofit

Story Telling

Stress Management

Stress Management

The Creation of Yellowstone

The Rise of Breweries in Erie

Therapy Dogs

Tools to Help with the Writing Process

Toys and games of Yesterday

Traditional Publishing

Travel Apps

UFOs

UFOs

Using Data to Drive Your Business

Using Mail Merge

Using Mail Merge

Using Windows 10 I

Using Windows 10 I

Presentation Basics

Using YouTube to Grow Your Business

Video Editing with Adobe Premier Pro

Vinyl Cutter Open Lab

What is BBB?

What's It Worth: Book Values

Who Needs a Will

Word Press

Work at Home & Job Seeker Scams

Writers' Associations

Writers' Workshop

Writing a Query Letter

Writing Grants

Yoga

Your GuideStar Profile

MM Cosplay and Costumes

MM Erie Arts & Culture CHROMA Guild Open House

MM intro to Looms

MM Make a Button

MM Make a Cola Lithograph

MM Make a Duct Tape wallet

MM Make a Metal Earth Model

MM Make a Metal Earth Model

MM Make a Metal Earth Model

MM Make a T-shirt Bag

MM Make an Encouragement Journal

MM Making a Cardboard Robotic Arm

MM Meal Prep

MM Open Drawing

MM Seed Starters

MM Sew your own pillow

MM Soldering 101

MM Turkish Calligraphy

MM Seed Starters

MM Sew your own pillow

MM Soldering 101

MM Turkish Calligraphy

Edinboro	Iroquois
<p>Basic Car Maintenance</p> <p>Beginning Genealogy</p> <p>Bluebird Box Workshop</p> <p>Book Page Wreaths</p> <p>Breath Awareness for Inner Calm</p> <p>Budgeting 101</p> <p>Card Making with Cricut</p> <p>Cat Café</p> <p>Choosing Poems</p> <p>Composting 101</p> <p>Cooking from Your Garden</p> <p>Eat Better for Less</p> <p>Fall Prevention</p> <p>Financial Aid Program</p> <p>First Tuesday Book Club</p> <p>Food Preservation</p> <p>Hatha Yoga</p> <p>Healing with Light Therapy</p> <p>Heated Neck Wraps</p> <p>Hunting Preparation</p> <p>Identity Theft & Fraud Awareness</p> <p>Introduction to Fasting for Health</p> <p>Juuling, Vaping, and Marijuana</p> <p>Leather Wrist Bands</p> <p>Marble Tea Light Holders</p> <p>Movie: Selma</p> <p>Novel and Short Story Writing for Adults</p> <p>Pendant Making</p> <p>Pinterest for Beginners</p> <p>Preserving 101 (Food)</p> <p>Raising Chickens</p> <p>Resume Writing</p> <p>Seed Preparation</p> <p>Self-Publishing</p> <p>Services for Veterans</p> <p>Social Media and Internet Safety</p> <p>Square Foot Gardening</p> <p>Using CBD Oil to Promote Healing</p> <p>Winter Solstice Meditation</p> <p>Wizardsing Escape Room</p> <p>Wood Burning 101</p>	<p>Autism Awareness</p> <p>Backyard Composting 101</p> <p>Basic Writing Skills Workshop</p> <p>Being Kidney Smart</p> <p>Caring for Yourself</p> <p>Cat Café</p> <p>Choosing Poems</p> <p>Coloring for Grown-Ups</p> <p>Cooking 101</p> <p>Cozy Mystery Book Club</p> <p>DIY Holiday Greeting Cards</p> <p>Exploring the Paranormal: Eerie Voices</p> <p>Fiber Arts: Craft Corner</p> <p>Food Fermentation 101</p> <p>Free Association Writing</p> <p>Game Day</p> <p>Gentle Yoga and Meditation</p> <p>Gifts in a Jar</p> <p>Go Fish! Learn to Fish</p> <p>Hazardous Drugs in Our Community</p> <p>How to Save for Retirement</p> <p>How to Write a Will</p> <p>Intellectual Property: Ask Me Anything</p> <p>Iroquois Book Club</p> <p>Learn to Download Library eBooks</p> <p>Modified Martial Arts</p> <p>Recycling 101</p> <p>Resume and Interview Skills</p> <p>Scrapbooking</p> <p>Senior Scams and Fraud Prevention</p> <p>Stress Management and Workplace Conflict</p>

Lincoln	Millcreek
Alzheimer's Support Group Ancestry and Family Search Assuring Accuracy in Your Research Beginner Genealogy on the Internet Book Club Bully Prevention Seminar Census Clues More than You Think Choosing Poems Creative Card Making DNA for Genealogy Escape the Haunted Mansion Family Photos: Finding, Identifying, Dating Family STEM Program: Jelly Bean Structures Finding and Using Death Records Finding Female Ancestors Game Afternoon Genealogical Searches with Better Results Genealogy Family Tree Genealogy on a Shoe String Genealogy with Susan Mueller Gentle Yoga and Meditation JES: 2020 Census JES: Erie Extension Canal Memory Café Misery Bay Dulcimer Monday Makers: Apollo to the Moon Monday Makers: Boxfort Library Monday Makers: Constellations Monday Makers: Drawing and Illustrations Monday Makers: New Sheriff in Town New Book Club Origami Paperfolding Ornaments Paper Quilting Pennwriters Remembering Apollo 11 Snowflake Ornaments Wellness Classes: Gentle Yoga Wellness Classes: Qi Gong Window Stars Work for Yourself@50+ Writing and Self-Publishing	Basic Backyard Gardening Book Club Bully Prevention Seminar Buying & Selling a Home Choosing Poems Coloring for Grown-Ups Fall Prevention for Older Adults Gentle Yoga and Meditation Hands Only CPR Hook and Needle Club Identity Theft 101 Medicare Basics Pennwriters Understanding How to Manage Your Debt Vision and Hearing Screening

- Marcus Yuille—Service to Hospitals

e. Report of District Consultant

District News:

- Our 2020 Summer Library Challenge workshop was held on February 14th. It was well attended and reviews received so far have been positive. Thank you to Children’s Dept. staff Libby and Amberlee for presenting on their Booktalks and Nerdling programs. To the Business office staff, particularly Emlynn, for helping get the room and food set-up. And to the Adult services staff Andrew and Deb for presenting on Genealogy.
- The 2020 Census begins on April 1st and since many state agencies funding, including library state funding, have a population component, we have submitted for a district wide Census Grant. [if successful] All public libraries in the district to receive a “census kit.”
 - These kits will contain: a free iPad and locking stand/case, and other census resources. There will be publicity for all participating locations in the newspapers, radio etc.
 - The requirements are to have the iPad available for patrons to complete the census questions until July 31st and to schedule some type of outreach with the iPad & frame between April 1 - July 31
 - We applied for this grant The 2020 Census is unique since it is the first to have an online completion window.

State

- State Reports are due the end of February this year. We’ve watched the date due creep a little bit soon over the past 2 years. Some of you may have been slightly bombarded with my emails regarding the report. With 7 new directors, and a many seasoned directors who are still slightly intimidated by the report, we wanted to give everyone as much help as possible. Of the 17 reports that need filed in the Erie/Crawford District 7 are already completed.

Training Opportunities

- Office of Commonwealth Libraries is planning 6-8 months of training opportunities across the state. We do not have a schedule yet, and currently no district trainings are planned while we await this schedule. We don’t know exact topics or dates yet, and don’t want to duplicate or double schedule. Hopefully, we will have this information by end of March.

f. Report of Friends and ERLF

4. Board and Committee Reports

5. Adjournment

6. Appendix

a. News Articles

Upstart business gets help from the hive- By Ed Palattella

Newspaper February 16, 2020 | Erie Times-News (PA)

Author: Erie Times-News | Page: 4 | Section: PA News

1313 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1480, grade level(s): >12

Read News Document Listen with webReader Focus

Hunter Klobucar and Tyler Waltenbaugh, students at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, became friends over a shared passion for steelhead fishing.

Their connection has become so tight that the two have launched a **business** to promote environmental conservation among freshwater anglers, whether they are casting lines on the streams and creeks of northwestern Pennsylvania or the raging rivers of the American West.

“We want to be that company in the outdoors industry that is making the change,” Klobucar said. “It has the potential to make the change in the industry, the potential to change the world.”

He and Waltenbaugh are partners in Fish Gods, a company that has developed a reusable collapsible mesh bag for anglers to pick up trash. Fish Gods has a logo and other promotional materials and is ready to court investors for the production of the inexpensive bag.

“We want to target the angling community first and branch out into other outdoor activities such as camping, hiking and biking,” Waltenbaugh said.

He and Klobucar got hooked on their idea in the summer of 2018. The swift trajectory from concept to company is due largely to the help Fish Gods has received from the Northwest Pennsylvania Innovation Beehive Network, created in 2014 and expanded in the following years as a grant-funded collaboration for entrepreneurs between Edinboro University, Penn State Behrend, Gannon University, Mercyhurst University and the Erie County Public Library.

“We can give them all our ideas and they can make this happen,” Waltenbaugh said. “It is irreplaceable.”

Idea bubbles up

Waltenbaugh, 23, a senior strategic communications major, is from Leechburg, northeast of Pittsburgh. Klobucar, 21, a junior majoring in environmental geology, is from Jeannette, southeast of Pittsburgh.

The two, who now share an apartment, got to know each other at Edinboro through

fishing. They founded the campus fly-fishing club and got it chartered through the 5 Rivers program of Trout Unlimited, the fishing advocacy nonprofit.

In the summer of 2018, Waltenbaugh and Klobucar were among four college students selected to participate in Trout Unlimited's Pennsylvania Brook Trout Odyssey, meant to increase understanding of the popular game fish. During the fishing trip, which followed Route 6 in Pennsylvania, Waltenbaugh and Klobucar noticed how plastic items — bottles, milk jugs, forks, spoons — and other trash littered streams throughout the state.

“It was unbelievable,” Waltenbaugh said.

The two also came to realize that picking up and collecting the trash could be difficult for anglers because they are already carrying rods and other gear. Waltenbaugh and Klobucar came up with a solution: a mesh bag, clipped to an angler's clothing, into which garbage could be placed.

“Our bag is the answer to turning a blind eye on trash,” Waltenbaugh said. “Where do you put a dirty water bottle that has been sitting in mud for three weeks?”

He and Klobucar also aimed to make their product environmentally friendly. They came up with a bag that would be made of mesh, with a flexible lid, and that could be used again and again,

“The idea,” Klobucar, “is to have a bag that you don't throw away.”

Catching a wave

Klobucar and Waltenbaugh kept developing their idea when they started along the path that would eventually get them involved with the Beehive Network. In the spring of 2019, they named their company Fish Gods, after an ancient phrase in which anglers pray for a good catch.

If you are kind to the fish gods and respect the environment, Klobucar said, “the fish gods will bless you with good fortune, a good day on the water.”

Fish God's fortunes improved during Waltenbaugh's class on introduction to public relations at Edinboro. His professor, Tony Peyronel, told the students about the Ben Franklin Partnership's Big Idea Startup Contest. The competition, run locally through Penn State Behrend, carries a top prize of \$50,000 for a new company.

Waltenbaugh and Klobucar entered the Big Idea contest in the spring of 2019 and did not win for Fish Gods.

But they got encouragement through the contest to enroll in a 10-week **business** camp for startups at Behrend called the Ben Franklin TechCelerator@Erie. At the end of the camp, they won \$5,000 for their pitch for Fish Gods and the reusable bag, which will have an

“earth-friendly name” and be about a foot long, Klobucar said.

Waltenbaugh and Klobucar used the \$5,000 as capital to build up their **business**.

Meanwhile, they tapped into a trove of resources that cost them nothing. They became clients of Edinboro’s Beehive, in which students and faculty in marketing and other fields assist nonprofits and **business** enterprises, most of them startups such as Fish Gods.

“We are here to give them as much help as we can,” said Peyronel, executive director for entrepreneurial development at Edinboro University. “We run it like an agency that does not bill clients.”

Peyronel’s job includes oversight of Edinboro’s Center for Branding & Strategic Communications, part of the Northwest Pennsylvania Innovation Beehive Network. He said the Edinboro Beehive has taken on more than 50 clients, with Waltenbaugh and Klobucar as the only student clients.

They are also the first clients to use the Edinboro Beehive’s Student Start-up Hub, in the university’s Baron-Forness Library. The hub provides space so student entrepreneurs do not have to work out of their dorm rooms or apartments.

“They are really on the move here,” Peyronel said of the two. “They are on their way. They are looking for investors. We are continuing to work with them this semester as they prepare to publicly launch the product.”

The Edinboro Beehive students and faculty helped Fish Gods develop a logo — it incorporates the trident, symbol of the ultimate fish god, Neptune — and helped them craft their branding, promotional materials and marketing plan. The Edinboro faculty and staff also helped in designing the company’s website, which is to go live soon.

The Beehive Network at Gannon provided legal assistance and Penn State in University Park provided legal guidance as Waltenbaugh and Klobucar created a limited liability company, in September. And the Beehive Network at Penn State Behrend, with its program on plastics engineering and its Innovation Commons for entrepreneurs, helped them design a prototype bag.

The pooling of resources, which has benefited other startups in the area, is what makes the Beehive Network so valuable for entrepreneurs, many of whom have little funding or expertise to tackle all the **business**-related details on their own, said Amy Bridger, senior director of corporate strategy and external engagement at Penn State Behrend.

Bridger helps coordinate the Beehive Network, which she said is designed to “create an entrepreneurial ecosystem for the entrepreneur.”

“The credibility of the network makes a difference,” she said.

Dream floats on

Waltenbaugh and Klobucar stand out among the other startup founders in that they are college students juggling schoolwork and social lives with the demands of launching a **business**. The Beehive Network proved an asset to them in that regard as well.

Without the Beehive Network, “I really don’t think we would be where we are in our lives right now,” Waltenbaugh said. A student entrepreneur needs such a support system, he said, “Unless you have a rich uncle.”

The Beehive Network’s assistance, Klobucar said, “made us legitimate and professional.”

The Beehive also helped the two students dream. They dream about making their signature product. But they also dream about bigger ideas. The fish gods, after all, are watching.

“We have plans much further than a bag,” Waltenbaugh said. “We have bigger plans for Fish Gods and environmental issues.”

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Caption:

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania students Hunter Klobucar, 21, left, and Tyler Waltenbaugh, 23, are shown at Edinboro’s Student Start-up Hub for entrepreneurs. The two friends and avid fishermen formed the company Fish Gods and have developed a collapsible bag for anglers to pick up trash. [photos by JACK HANRAHAN/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]

Tyler Waltenbaugh looks over promotional materials for the company he started with Hunter Klobucar. They have developed a collapsible bag for fishermen to pick up trash.



Maggie Ignasiak, youth services librarian at the Blasco Memorial Library leads the Preschool Plus Storytime on Jan. 30, 2020. [JACK HANRAHAN/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]



Maggie Ignasiak, youth services librarian at the Blasco Memorial Library reads “Little Cloud” by author Eric Carle during Preschool Plus Storytime on Jan. 30, 2020. [JACK HANRAHAN/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]

Twenty preschoolers listened intently as Maggie Ignasiak, 27, youth services librarian at **Blasco Memorial Library**, led the Preschool Plus Storytime on Jan. 30 in the Mead Children’s Room at the **library**.

Ignasiak does not refer to the preschoolers as kids. She calls them friends.

“They form a relationship with us,” said Ignasiak. “The families that bring their children really trust us and that is gratifying.”

Rachel Still, of Harborcreek Township, brought her daughter Ava, 2, for story time. She helped her daughter make a cloud out of shaving cream after Ignasiak read the book “Little Cloud“ by Eric Carle.

“She loves to sing and make crafts, and she loves Maggie,” said Still. “She thinks all the books in the **library** belong to Maggie.”

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Caption:

Maggie Ignasiak, youth services librarian at **Blasco Memorial Library**, leads the Preschool Plus Storytime on Jan. 30. [JACK HANRAHAN photos/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]

Brooke Truitt, 4, left, and Madison Baird, 4, right, both of Erie, attend the Preschool Plus Storytime.

Rachel Still of Harborcreek Township reads to her daughter, Ava Still, 2.

Art work by students of Collegiate Academy on display at Blasco Library

Posted: Jan 29, 2020 / 04:59 PM EST / Updated: Jan 29, 2020 / 06:20 PM EST

https://www.yourerie.com/news/local-news/art-work-by-students-of-collegiate-academy-on-display-at-blasco-library/?fbclid=IwAR2TqcPOHucmJw-hWrf0ExYF00RMHTfB3THxnzwx_j2laoJfloQZ_6N6390

A trip to the Erie County Library could also mean a trip inside the minds of some of Erie's best young artists. The art show is made up of works submitted by students of Collegiate Academy. The art work is intended to support and encourage the arts in Erie and showcase young talent. It is the latest exhibit in the library's art showcase. If you want to see the works, you may want to hurry. The exhibit at the Blasco Library is set to change in early February.

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DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE: Libraries are more popular than movie theaters

by: Emma Lewis

Posted: Jan 29, 2020 / 05:15 PM EST / Updated: Jan 29, 2020 / 05:18 PM EST

<https://www.yourerie.com/digital-exclusive/digital-exclusive-libraries-are-more-popular-than-movie-theaters/>

Believe it or not, libraries are more popular than movie theaters.

In a [Gallup](#) article published recently, researchers found that people visited libraries more in 2019 than the movies.

“If you think about it, the library's kind of like your one-stop-shop for so many different things. We have internet access, computer access; basic things like tax filings, we offer that. We offer a lot of classes. And a lot of ways for people to skill up and learn new things. I think that's kind of the one big selling point of a library is that we are place where you can learn and improve yourself at very little cost or no cost,” said Jude Shingle, emerging technologies librarian at Blasco Library.

Programming at the library draws in patrons of all ages through the doors. Some of the most popular programs are found in the children's library.

“Our most popular programs are our story times. We offer story times for different age ranges. We have one that’s just for babies– birth to 18 months. We have another that’s just for toddlers. We have one that’s for preschool and older, however old. And then we offer just an all-ages family story time at our branches. So we don’t just do programming here at Blasco, in the main children’s library. We do programming at all of our branches as well,” said Libby Martin, children’s librarian.

Libraries are also enhancing the experience for patrons, adding new technology services like the Blasco’s Idea Lab. It has 3-D printers and the entire Adobe Creative Suite. In addition, there is more media for all to enjoy like graphic novels and movies. All library services can be accessed for free or a small fee.

Instead of spending upwards of \$30 at the movies, you can check out a movie and have a movie night at home for free.

[Gallup](#) reported that people made an average of 10.5 trips to the library in 2019 and only 5.3 trips to the movie theater. The Blasco Library reports 580,000 in-person visits in 2019. The entire [Erie County Public Library system](#) reports well over a million item checked out.

“We come to the library because my kids love the library. They love to come here. They’d be here everyday... And they play with the toys, they get books. We usually come home with a mountain of books, and they both love to read,” said Emily Harvey, a library patron.

When children start going to the library young, they often continue to go as adults and pass it down to their own children.

“A big selling point for a lot of people I think is the community that’s here. So you can come in and you can actually meet with and talk with and interact with folks that you would typically not see,” said Shingle.

Going to the library can lead to adventures and endless fun, even the aardvark [Arthur](#) thinks so.

“So yeah , there is an episode of Arthur and Neil Gaymon, a really popular author the special guest on that episode. It’s about Arthur going to the library and learning about what there is to do at the library. And at the very end, they sing a song and are like all walking down the street and they’ve got their new library cards with them. And the chorus of the song is ‘having fun isn’t hard when you’ve got a library card,’” said Martin.

With programs for all, nearly endless resources and books to satiate anyone’s interest, it’s no wonder people are diving and heading to the libraries.

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On Jan. 14, lecturer Nancy Agustine spoke on campus about the importance of the census.

Jefferson lecture series discusses census in the 'Boro

By Shayma Musa
News Editor

Every 10 years the U.S. Constitution mandates that the federal government must take a count of Americans that live in the country. Nancy Agustine, a partnership specialist with the Philadelphia Regional Census Center, spoke about why the census is significant in the first installment of the Jefferson Educational Society's spring lecture series, which took place on Jan. 14 at Edinboro's Alexander Music Center. "This is not about parties. It is about a united country," she said.

at the start of her presentation. "The census data determines our representation in the House of Representatives. The census number is responsible for redistricting at the federal, state and local levels, and the distribution of \$675 billion of federal money according to census numbers." In Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Wolf established the Pennsylvania Redistricting Commission early last year to gather input from state residents about how to best avoid partisan gerrymandering. District lines will be redrawn in Pennsylvania after information is collected from the 2020 census. Gerrymandering has been a hot button issue in Pennsylvania of late. In 2017, the League of Women

Voters sued the state, arguing that the district map punished Democrats in state elections. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled with the League and ordered that district maps be redrawn to equally favor Democrats and Republicans. After 2020 census data is collected, this is the first time that the maps will be redrawn. Agustine's presentation at Edinboro adds to additional local action being taken to ensure census success. Borough of Edinboro Manager Kevin Opple and Edinboro Library Director Randolph Gross are working to more accurately represent the

See Census, Page 3



Borough Council talks new Thompson Park playground items, appoints 2020-22 spots

By Samantha Mannion
Voters Editor

The Borough of Edinboro Council held meetings Dec. 9 and Jan. 6. At the December meeting, Borough Manager Kevin Opple gave a monthly report, which included updating the status of census planning. According to the meeting minutes, Opple has worked with the Edinboro branch of the Erie County Public Library, scheduling times where computers will be available for the public to fill out the census. This will be held March 24 from 1-4 p.m., and April 9 from 2-5 p.m., at the borough council building. Other business included the borough's application for a grant of \$25,000 that would go toward new playground equipment at Thompson Park. According to the minutes, this

new equipment would be part of an area revitalization planned for this upcoming summer. "If awarded, we would still need to pay approximately \$4,000, but would get a nice playground set including a swing, slide and a couple of climbing items for the money," Opple said in his management report. At the Jan. 6 meeting, the following individuals were appointed to borough positions: Mayor: Nancy Gust Deputy Mayor: James L. Kiley Solicitor: Timothy Wachter Borough Manager: Kevin Opple They filled these spots for the 2020-2022 term. The next borough council meeting will take place Monday, Feb. 10 at 8 p.m. at the borough building. The meeting is open to the public.

News

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Thursday, January 23, 2020



Nancy Agostino's presentation at the Alexander Music Center aided local efforts to increase census participation in Edinboro.

Census

From A1

Demographics of the local community.

"Edinboro has been historically undercounted in the census," Cypke said. "As one of these strategies is census information covering a woman needs a really good point. She said her son was 9 years old this year, meaning that this is most likely the only time that he will be counted as a part of her household. That puts this in perspective. Covering that one kid matters for federal services like WIC, grants for educational programs and so much more."

"When taking the census, individuals should be reminded at the residences that they spend more than half the year at. That means that any college students who live on campus, or in nearby off-campus housing, are counted in the state and Edinboro through population — along with any associates that they have. This means that if you live with a roommate or roommate, you only have to complete one census form at one household."

According to Agostino's presentation, the census will be available online for the first time in 2020, as well as through telephone and in paper form. It will also be offered in 15 different languages for those who participated in among historically undercounted

minority populations.

The online nature of the census has been met with some apprehension, according to Cypke. "Some people are nervous about inputting their information online, but that's not really a concern here. The job is to create information out when you're sleeping and/or at work."

Cypke added, "If anyone is apprehensive about using technology, or how to take the census, we can help explain it to them."

In her presentation, Agostino talked about this topic. "All information given to the census is encrypted and protected by law. It cannot be shared with anyone. It can't be shared with your household, local police office, support office, ECU, or even the president."

Agostino further emphasized that only data, not personal information, is collected. "When responses are sent to the census bureau, immediately personal identification information is separated from the data. I am so happy Nancy Agostino who lives on Curtis Road, I've just become a 50-year-old white female from forward Township."

The Constitution mandates that personal information and data collected must be put together for 72 years. The 72-year mark will hit again in April of 2022 when the 1950 census information is released.

By April 1, 2020, every household in America

should receive an invitation to participate in the census, with information on how to complete it online. The online census will be available through July 31. If respondents don't reply online, they will receive up to one in-person visit from a census official. These in-person visits will begin at the end of April.

The Erie County Public Library's Edinboro branch will host their census day activities on March 23, from 2-4 p.m., and on April 6, from 1-3 p.m. The Edinboro branch building will also have laptops and computers available for community members to use on March 24, from 2-3 p.m., and April 6, from 3-4 p.m. Residents with questions or concerns can attend these events to have their questions answered and to complete their census.

"We're trying to make it easy for people to complete the census, we want to offer a variety of times and dates, so that regardless of a work schedule people can come in and complete it. We're trying to have activities and fun things for the kids so that parents with younger kids can complete the census while their kids enjoy an activity," Cypke said.

Any questions or concerns can be directed toward Agostino at (610) 784-0901, or nancy.agostino@blithemc.com.

Hayes Mize | @edubrowns

Hillary

By M

Hillary Clinton's speech last September in "Hillary" at the annual premiere of the Film Festival, the candidate expressed her independence from the track record as a "woman" of her own. "Honestly, she says early on in Congress for support from the likes of her. Not too long. He got into politics. He did it, and then he said it was all just that people get used to. Though Clinton public office. She returns to the D primary, with the census, set for with another big the Hilda doctrine again plans to when the House all yet decided."

Clinton runs on the back of a between Sanders of Massachusetts coverage. The question whether Sanders could win the state to a head by a last minute Democratic pro Motion.

The final results of Clinton's campaign to

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OFF
EDINBORO
AND

Book clubs a popular, positive pastime

Newspaper January 19, 2020 | Erie Times-News (PA)

Page: 7 | Section: PA Features

825 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1370, grade level(s): >12

Read News Document Listen with webReader Focus

‘Read’ — That statement on an SUV’s bumper sticker caught my eye and sparked curiosity. A search of the internet revealed a survey that concluded that reading books has positive effects that can be felt at any age. Benefits of reading include making you smarter, kinder and more relaxed.

The Erie County Public Library’s assistant director, Sheryl Thomas, is thrilled with the current “book club boom,” which she said is due in part to the Book Club in a Bag kits project at Blasco Library and the various branches.

“Book clubs are perfect for people of all ages — they transcend politics, social status and economics and allow anyone to join in to discuss a good book,” Thomas said in an email. “Book clubs are places where people can come together to socialize and share a hobby that’s fun and beneficial.”

Blasco’s book club kits are a good starting point. Any individual interested in starting a book club or any established group can check out a kit to start reading.

“The kits can be put on hold and picked up at any library (branch) in Erie County, though they are housed at Blasco,” said Thomas, who holds a master’s degree in library information science. “They are loaned out for 60 days. Each bag includes 10 copies of a title, discussion questions and an informational guide.”

There are more than 70 titles available, including Paulo Coelho’s “The Alchemist,” Suzanne Fisher Staples’ “Shabanu,” J.D. Vance’s “Hillbilly Elegy” and Ruth Ware’s “The Woman in Cabin 10.”

While the majority are for adults, new children’s kits are in the works.

In addition to Blasco Library, located on Erie’s bayfront, facilities include four branches: Edinboro and Millcreek, Lincoln Community Center in Fairview Township, and Iroquois Avenue in Lawrence Park Township.

At Blasco Library, 160 E. Front St., there are several library-sponsored book clubs, though currently only for children and teens. Teens are invited to join an interactive book club program called Teen Reading Lounge. This program is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and is facilitated by teen services librarian Tammy Blount. Participants receive a free copy of the chosen book and plan activities around themes from the book. Blount runs several sessions of Teen Reading Lounge at Blasco each year, thanks to grant funding from the PHC.

The children's services area runs several different children's **book clubs** throughout the year. Some are seasonal, such as Spinechillers, where school-aged children read scary books and participate in activities around the **book's** themes. This is run by youth services librarian Amberlee McGaughey.

She also runs Off the Shelf, **a book** club for children ages 8-12, which includes fun activities and **a** scavenger hunt. Call 451-6936 for more information on any of the children's programs.

The Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum St., Edinboro, has **a book** club for adults of all ages that meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 1 to 2 p.m. The club is hosted by Jean Fera and Cynthia Legin-Bucell, both of Edinboro. The group chooses **a book** from one of the **Book Club in a Bag** collections.

Additionally, while not hosted by the library, there is the Edinboro Area Senior Group **book** club, which meets the third Thursday of the month in Edinboro University's Intergenerational Room. The club reads all genres and attendees do not have to be seniors or members to attend. This group is led by Pat Ptasick, also from Edinboro. Call 451-7081 for more information.

Kim Lane is facilitator for the **book** club at the Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Road, Millcreek. Call her at 746-0855. The club started in April 2014 and averages about 10 attendees. This group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 5 to 8 p.m. and welcomes adults of all ages. The group uses the library's **Book Club in a Bag** to choose **a** monthly title.

Marcia Allshouse has been **a** member of the Ladies Literary Club of Erie, **a** group of 10, which has been meeting every month for more than 30 years. Allshouse described it as "just **a** group of women who didn't all know one another but loved the written word, got together one January, 1986, resulting in **a** life-long friendship based on books." To learn more, contact her at 456-1924.

Ever since television host Oprah Winfrey launched the Oprah's **Book Club** segment of her show in 1996, the popularization of **book clubs** for intellectual development and self-improvement through reading has been on the grow.

Erie County can boast more than **a** dozen organization and business-related **book** groups.

Not only can reading boost intelligence, but it also helps increase empathy, lower stress, and may change your brain as it boosts neural function, according to internet survey results. Consider snuggling up with **a good book** at bedtime instead of scrolling through your phone. Moreover, reading **a book** out loud can help families bond. It's an effective way of teaching reading skills to children and can encourage lifelong reading habits.

'It saved the library': Officials discuss county library tax increase a year later

- By Mike Crowley Meadville Tribune
- Jan 8, 2020



Paula Brown, director of Saegertown Area Library, looks at the new shipment of children's books filling the shelves at the library.

SHANNON ROAE/Meadville Tribune

1

Outdated stereotypical depictions would have people believe that librarians want nothing more than to enforce silence within the walls that surround their shelves and shelves of books. Library officials in Crawford County, however, are ready to crow about — of all things — a tax increase.

“It saved the library,” Lynne Bargar, president of the board that oversees the Saegertown Area Library, said of the increase to the county library tax last year. “We were running out of money to continue. If the tax increase had not gone through, we would have been looking at shutting the doors in 2022.”

The situation was less dire in Cochranton, where Nadena Kramer has been director of the Cochranton Area Public Library since 2012, but the effect was still substantial.

“There’s an increased feeling of well being,” Kramer said. “We’re very grateful — the difference is huge.”

Crawford County Federated Library System

The Crawford County Federated Library System was established in 1978, unifying all county libraries under one organization, according to ccfls.org.

The system's nine libraries are:

- Benson Memorial Library, 213 N. Franklin St., Titusville
- Cambridge Springs Public Library, 158 McClellan St.
- Cochranton Public Library, 107 Pine St.
- Linesville Public Library, 111 Penn St.
- Meadville Public Library, 848 N. Main St.
- Saegertown Area Library, 325 Broad St.
- Margaret Shontz Memorial Library, 145 S. 2nd St., Conneaut Lake
- Springboro Public Library, 110 S. Main St.
- Stone Memorial Library, 1101 Main St., Conneautville

At first glance the difference might not seem huge: in late 2018, Crawford County commissioners approved a 0.1 mill increase to the county’s library tax for 2019, raising it to 0.7 mills as part of an overall 14.4 percent increase of 2.75 mills. For the average taxpayer with a home assessed at the median county value of \$25,000, the increase added \$2.50 each year, bringing the total library tax to \$17.50 per year for each property owner.

With the increase, the library tax generated revenue of \$732,000 in 2019, which was about \$117,000 more than the previous year, according to county budget documents.

Keeping the doors open

One year after the increase took effect, the average patron who walks into one of the nine branches of the Crawford County Federated Library System might notice some of the modest improvements that have since resulted: new keyboards, computers, printers and other technological improvements, for instance, and some new books on the shelves and other materials for patrons to use.

Visitors might notice such upgrades, but there’s a good chance they might not. Either way, they are even less likely to see the most significant impacts that library officials attribute to the tax increase.

On the “big picture” end of the shelf, next to Kramer’s “increased feeling of well being,” it would be easy for the average patron to miss what officials describe as a major boost to the long-term sustainability of the system. And in terms of day-to-day operations, the average patron might walk right past the fact that the doors of their local branch are still open and, in many cases, they’re open for longer hours.

Keeping those doors open was a challenge for branches like the Saegertown Area Library prior to the increase.

“The library board was amazing through the years. They did all kinds of fundraising,” said Paula Brown, who has worked at the Saegertown branch for nearly 20 years and became director last month. “They kept the doors open when money was tight, and now they feel like there’s a little less pressure.”

Kramer described a similar situation at Cochranon's library.

“I don’t know how we did it, frankly,” Kramer said of attempts to balance the branch’s budget before the tax increase. “We ran this place on a really tight budget of about \$58,000. There were a couple of tight years in there where we were in the black by only a couple of hundred dollars.”

As a result of an uptick in state support and the increase in the county library tax, the Cochranon branch’s budget increased by about \$4,300 to about \$63,500 for 2020, according to Kramer. It may not sound like much, but the impact will be significant, she said.

“It makes all the difference in the world when you’re trying to plan how you’re going to pay for, say, repainting a room,” Kramer said. “There’s room for mistakes now, whereas it was pretty scary before. I never wanted to finish in the red.”

Slicing up the pie

About 55 percent of the funding for the county-wide system’s \$1.4 million budget for 2020 comes from the county’s library tax, according to Susan Slote, president of the board that oversees the system. Most of the remaining funds come from the state. Individual branches also generate their own income from fundraising activities as well as through charges for copies, overdue fines and other fees and may receive revenue from local municipalities as well.

Before the county library tax was raised to 0.7 mills, the tax had remained at 0.6 mills since being introduced through public referendum in 1986.

Because the tax went unchanged for four decades, the formula for dividing it among the nine member branches also remained the same, according to Slote. Over time, inequities in how the metaphorical pie was portioned out grew as the county’s population shifted.

Last year’s increase spurred representatives of the nine branches to reassess the distribution formula, Slote said. As a result, two branches that had not been receiving their fair share are now getting a larger slice of the pie: Saegertown Area Library and Springboro Public Library.

Nearly 80 percent of the increased revenue will be split between the various branches, including technology upgrades. Almost half of the computer equipment used by patrons has been replaced, according to Slote. The remaining funds will be used to address the funding inequities of recent years in Saegertown and Springboro.

“Everyone was on board” with the reworked distribution formula, Slote said. “It passed unanimously — that was exciting.”

Checking out the returns

Despite effects that are already evident, assessing impact of the tax increase at this point may be premature. While the increase was approved just over a year ago, the library system only began seeing the actual revenue increase in the fall, Slote said. Library officials don't expect the full results of the increase to be evident for about another two years, she said.

Nonetheless, it's tempting to judge the increase a success, particularly for those in Saegertown and Springboro.

"It has had a dramatically positive effect for us," Bargar said. "The future looks much brighter and in Saegertown we're really excited."

In Springboro, Director Joy Post said the increased tax revenue allowed the library to open for an additional six hours each week including, for the first time, opening for four hours on Fridays.

"There's no way we could have managed that before," Post said.

Lynda Proctor, president of the board that oversees the Springboro branch, said that over the long-term, the increased revenue will ensure the library remains inviting to the public.

"I think our little town library is the gem of our community here in Springboro," she said. "We just want to keep it that way."

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