

Staff stays busy while city stays at home

BIBLIOFILES

Dana Hendrix

Most of the time, you could read the *Williamson County Sun* just about anywhere — in the library, on a plane, at your office, in a coffee shop. But now, you are almost certainly reading it at home because of the Stay Home Stay Safe order in Williamson County. Wherever you



Dana Hendrix, fine arts librarian, writes a BiblioPHiles column while telecommuting.

are, I hope you are weathering the COVID-19 challenge with the help of friends, family and what Fred Rogers called “the helpers” — those people who help out in a crisis.

Mr. Rogers said, “There was something ... my mother did that I’ve always remembered: ‘Always look for the helpers,’ she’d tell me. ‘There’s always someone who is trying to help.’ I did, and I came to see that the world is full of doctors and nurses, police officers and firemen, volunteers, neighbors and friends who are ready to jump in to help when things go wrong.”

The helpers are still working now, most notably those in health care, including City of George-



Eric Lashley, library director, works inside the WOWmobile doing curbside pickup last week.



Elisabeth Aulwurm, library assistant, pulls reserved books last week for curbside pickup.

town firefighters and EMS, but also the rest of the City of Georgetown staff. The Stay Home Stay Safe order allows municipal governments to find ways to keep working so in addition to firefighters and police officers the Georgetown Public Library staff are still at work, either in the building observing very careful physical distancing and other safety measures, or

telecommuting from home. (You can see some library staff and other City workers in the “We’re all here for you, Georgetown” video noted in the sidebar.)

The library building is closed to the public at least through May 11 so we are working differently, of course. Sometimes people have trouble imagining what library staff do when we are not sitting at a service desk, but there is always a lot to be done. Now we are completing projects we have trouble getting to when the building is busy, reimagining what we do and planning for the ways things may be different when we reopen.

We are also adapting some of what we did before, such as children’s storytimes, by setting up and recording them, then making them available through social media for families at home.

When we closed to the public March 17, we overnight began offering curbside pickup, which involved many staff making changes

to our circulation system and procedures, calling patrons individually, physically moving books out of the building and into the bookmobile, publicizing the effort, staffing it and keeping it going.

We have now had to discontinue curbside pickup because of the Stay Home Stay Safe order. We still have more than 5,000 items on hold waiting in the library for people. Until we can reopen curbside pickup, we’ve turned off the reserve function in our online catalog so that number does not get any more out of hand.

We’ll turn it back on as soon as we can but in the meantime, you might try the “Bookmark” function in the online catalog. Just go to library.georgetown.org, click the green “Log into your account” button, and log in using the barcode number on the back of your library card and your 10-digit phone number as your user ID and password. When you find an item that you want to check out, click



Robert Barber, library assistant, answers a patron question about using e-books.



Jaime Gould, library assistant, eats lunch at her desk to promote social distancing.

on the title and click “Bookmark this item.” Then anytime you are logged in, you can click “My account” in the top right corner and go to the Bookmarks tab to see or print the items you had bookmarked. When our reserve function is operational again, we’ll help you get those titles on reserve.

Another thing we are working to keep improving is our e-library offerings. Both resident and non-resident cardholders can go to library.georgetown.org, click on the colorful graphic that says, “Our e-library is always open!” and you’ll be on your way to finding e-books, e-audiobooks and databases you can use from home right away.

This month, thanks to funding from the Friends of the Georgetown Public Library, we’ve purchased

many new titles in our Overdrive/Libby service especially because we knew our cardholders would have an increased need to find e-books and e-audiobooks to read during this difficult time.

We’ve also rolled out a new e-book service called SimplyE that uses a wonderfully simple to use app developed by the New York Public Library.


We’ve got staff working on bringing you more digital content all the time, so keep an eye on our website over the coming days and call the library if you need assistance with using what you find there.

We’ll see you in the e-library and on social media!

Dana Hendrix is the Fine Arts Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.



Patrick Lloyd, community resource coordinator, keeps information about social services available in Georgetown updated while telecommuting.



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