

## Executive Director's Report

February 2022

### What's New @ AHML

#### **New Language Learning App: Bluebird**



The library debuted the pronunciation product Bluebird.

Bluebird is a language learning app that allows for easy audio lessons in 163 different languages. These lessons are targeted to users who prefer audio-based learning. Bluebird is another helpful database for ESL students.

#### **Apple TV+ and Paramount+ Added to Library Streaming Devices**

Based on customer suggestions, the library added two new streaming services, AppleTV+ and Paramount+. Paramount+ was added to the six circulating Roku Stick Blues. Apple TV+ was added to the Roku Stick Blues and two Apple TV devices in the Library of Things.

#### **New Gale Databases Added**

Eligible through RAILS, the library entered into a package deal for Gale products. The RAILS package allowed the library to add seven new databases at no charge:

- **Gale in Context: Elementary:** Articles from magazines, newspapers and reference sources to help students with projects and exploring their own interests.
- **Gale Literature Resource Center:** Biographies, bibliographies, and critical analysis of authors and their works from every age and literary discipline.
- **ChiltonLibrary.com:** The online edition of Chilton's auto repair manuals, with at-home access.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Collection (Gale Archives Unbound):** A collection of primary source archives supporting African American, LGBTQ, Women's Studies and Civil Rights research.
- **Gale Literature--Something About the Author:** Examines the lives and works of authors and illustrators for children and young adults and is the preeminent source on authors and literature for young people.
- **Gale Literature Criticism:** Literary commentary providing a range of modern and historical views on authors and their works across regions, eras and genres.
- **Gale Dictionary of Literary Biography:** Biographical and critical essays on the lives, works, and careers of the world's most influential literary figures from all eras and genres.

### ***The Wall Street Journal via WSJ.com***

The library procured access to *The Wall Street Journal* online directly through its website at WSJ.com. The American business-focused daily newspaper compliments the other digital periodical offerings available through the newsstand web page. The library now offers the online editions of the nation's three most popular newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

### **Creator Spotlight Debuts!**



Digital Media Specialist Chris Smith worked with the Communications and Marketing team to launch the Creator Spotlight project.

Using the form located at [www.ahml.info/creator\\_spotlight](http://www.ahml.info/creator_spotlight), customers can submit creations made in the Makerplace, the Studio or with Library of Things materials. Submissions will be reviewed by staff and selected creators may be featured in the library's newsletter, website or social media.

### **Serving Our Community**

#### **Winter Reading Challenge**



Four hundred and forty-eight kids and tweens participated in the Winter Reading Challenge. With the library open to in-person service, the program once again included hands-on activities. Children in grades K-3 had the opportunity to spin a wheel which determined the take-home activity while

tweens in grades 4-6 earned tokens to receive their activity from the Winter Reading Contraption. Options included both STEM projects and crafts.

## **Preschool and Childcare Information Night**

On January 12, representatives from 16 preschool and childcare facilities presented at the library's annual event to share with caregivers about the services they provide. Over the course of four limited-capacity sessions, 82 customers gathered information to help make decisions regarding their preschool and childcare needs.

## **Program Resources for Lutheran Home**



Staff at Lutheran Home requested materials to support programming for residents that included sensory stimulation around seasonal themes. Senior and Accessibility Staff developed themes using visual, auditory and tactile materials from collections throughout the library for Martin Luther King Jr., the Rose Parade and gardens, Elvis Presley (January birthday), XXIV Winter Olympics and Disney films with

sing-alongs. Staff at Lutheran Home were appreciative for the detailed programming materials and themes.

## **Seventh Annual Readers Party**



Forty-eight attendees joined the library's seventh annual Readers Party which was held virtually this year. During the event, Info Services Readers Advisors shared top picks from 2021 and what books they are most excited about for 2022. Booktuber Rincey Abraham joined the event to share her insights and expertise.

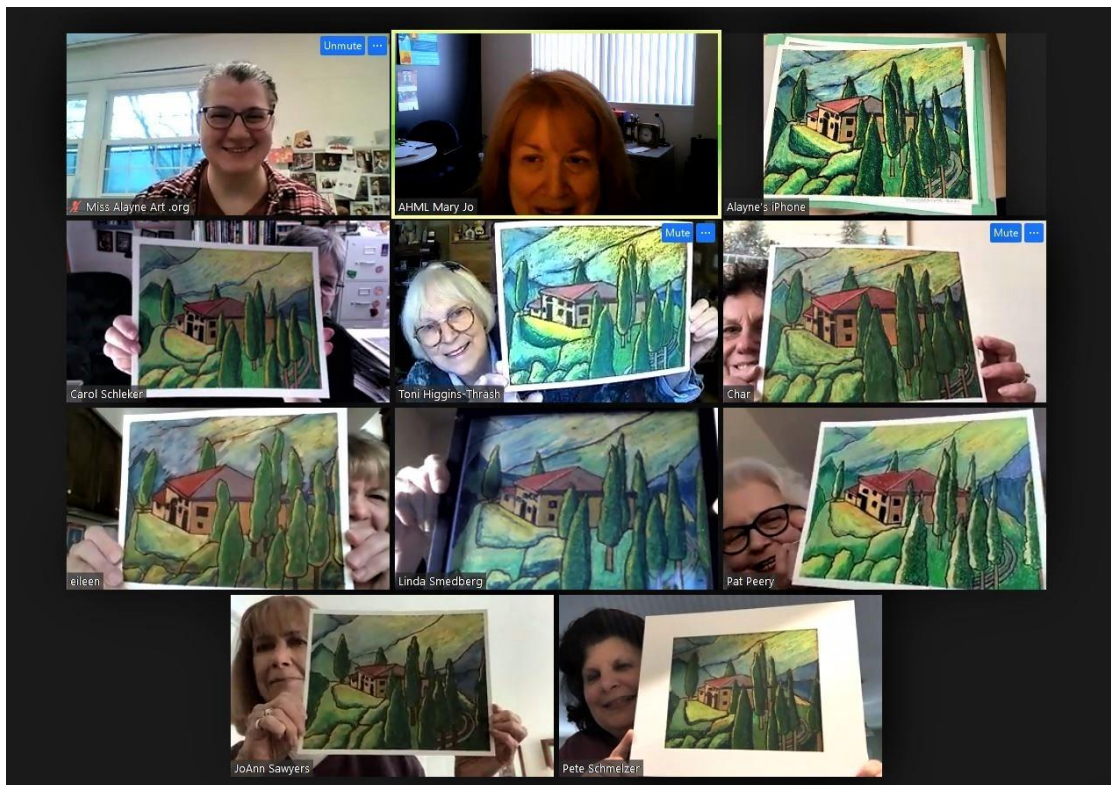
## Genealogy Volunteers Return

On January 24, after a nearly two-year absence, the Shackley Room volunteers have returned to the library! Genealogy and Local History Librarian Nikki Camp invited returning volunteers for a refresher course on genealogy duties and current library guidelines and best practices. Genealogy volunteers have already contributed 19.5 hours of service.

## Inspiration from the Tuscan Countryside

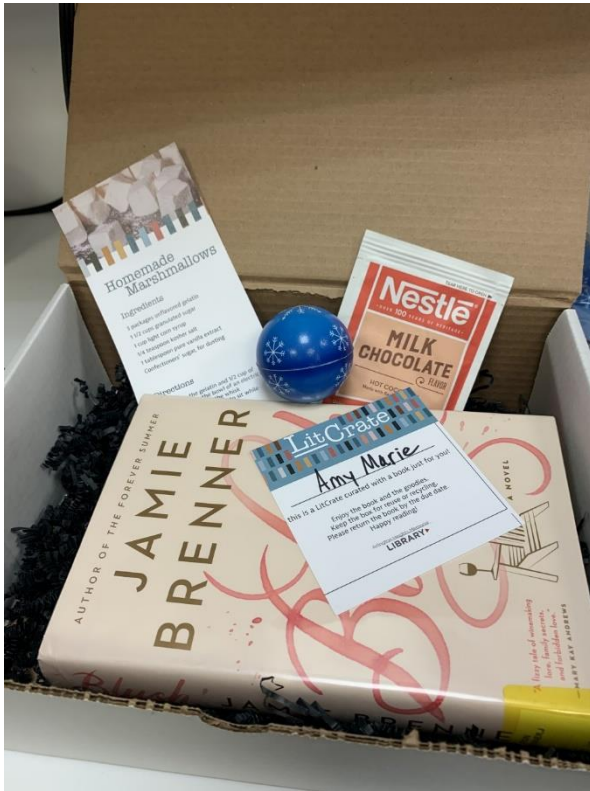
Art with Alayne students were excited to try their hand at doing a landscape in oil pastels with a watercolor wash. Many of the students in the meetups had traveled to Italy, and the art project brought back memories of pleasant times. One student shared that her husband loved her work so much that he had it framed. Several students said how pleased they were that their children or other family members have asked for some of their work.

The creative aging series Art with Alayne was initially developed in 2017 with the goal of drawing on the arts to enhance healthy aging. Since that time the program has exploded in popularity for all audiences and is always a sellout crowd. Especially during a time of isolation, the monthly meetups have become an important shared experience for the participants.



## LitCrate

The capacity for LitCrate was increased and advisors curated 44 boxes in January. Each LitCrate box included a hand selected book, hot chocolate, stress ball and recipe for homemade marshmallows.



## The 1950s US Census: Are You Ready?

On January 19, Programs and Exhibits Specialist Neal Parker and Genealogy and Local History Librarian Nikki Camp welcomed back presenter Thomas MacEntee and an audience of 64 attendees. The release of US Census data every ten years is a milestone moment in the genealogy world, so the release of the 1950s Census in April is highly anticipated. To prepare for it, Thomas led a deep dive into how to use and organize the information contained in the census. He also discussed opportunities that are available for volunteers to help index the census following its release.

## Chicago Bakeries Remembered!

Programs and Exhibits Specialist Neal Parker hosted Cheryl Brown's return with a new presentation on the history of beloved Chicago bakeries. One hundred and twenty-four attendees enjoyed Cheryl's nostalgic look at bakeries throughout Chicagoland with fabulous photos of storefronts, old and new, and mouth-watering baked goods. Attendees thanked Cheryl and the library for the program. The best comment of the night was *"thanks for this program, I'm so hungry I could eat my screen."*

## International Holocaust Remembrance Day

To honor International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27), two events were offered.



On January 11, Programs and Exhibits staff joined Holocaust survivor Steen Metz as he shared *A Survivor's Story* -- the story of his time as a young boy in a Nazi work camp, sharing family photos, historic pictures and maps. Addressing Holocaust deniers within the first few minutes, Metz reminded the audience of 76 attendees of the importance to remember the Holocaust, to keep telling the stories and to say “I’ve met someone” who was there during this terrible time in the not-so-distant history. He revealed the starvation, hostility and death suffered by those in the camps, while specifically illuminating the experiences of the children. As a Holocaust educator Steen welcomed attendee questions, generating thought-provoking discussion. This program was recorded and is available on [YouTube](#), where it has been viewed 44 times. Since the event, Megan Young was interviewed by Elise Delvin for [a Chicago Tribune story about Metz](#).



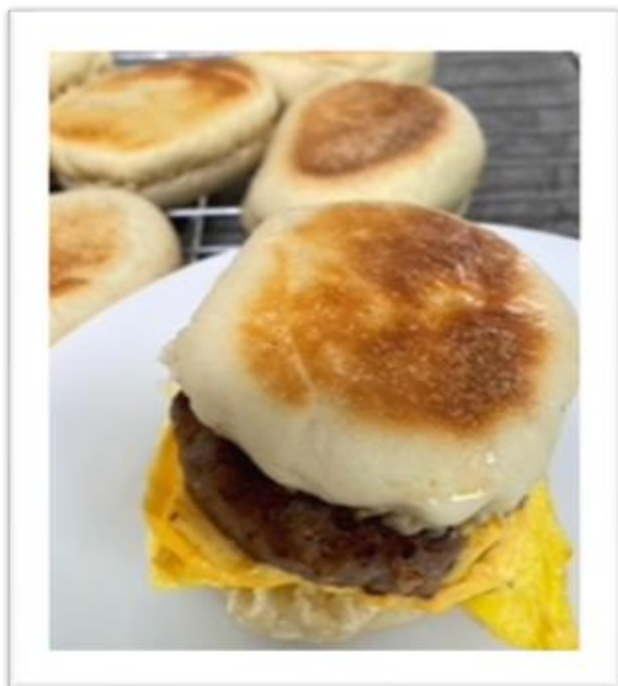
On January 25, in partnership with the Schaumburg Township District Library, Programs and Exhibits Supervisor Megan Young co-presented *Hitler's Courts* to an audience of 135 (70 attending from Arlington Heights). This event featured a viewing of the documentary *Hitler's Courts* followed by a Q&A session with director Joshua M. Greene. Attendees across communities learned about and discussed how the legal system upheld the actions of Hitler and Nazi Germany. The film is available to view on hoopla.

## English Muffins virtual “Bake-Along”

On Saturday, January 8, Chef Andrea Pracht returned to teach homemade English Muffins. While originally scheduled to take place in the kitchen, Andrea effortlessly adapted the class to be conducted as a virtual bake-along. Twenty-two customers joined her on Zoom, ready to knead and bake using an ingredient pack provided by the library. Andrea’s experience with virtual instruction and clear camera angles made it very easy for attendees to follow along. Some had cameras on, mixers and ingredients laid out and ready, and asked questions as they worked along with Andrea. Others tried their recipe at a later date. Several sent us pictures of the muffins they made from home, thanking us for making this virtual class so interactive and easy to follow. Positive feedback includes:

*“She made me feel less intimidated by yeast doughs! She also gave some helpful hints about testing for the proper gluten development during the kneading process.”*

*“Thought you might like to see the results from our recent class on making English muffins. We made ours into breakfast egg, cheese, and sausage sandwiches!”*



## Snoopy and the Red Baron

January 20 marked the final day of the *Snoopy and the Red Baron* exhibit at the library, generously funded in part by the Friends of the Library. During its nine weeks stay in Arlington Heights, approximately 9,037 customers of varying ages enjoyed the beautifully presented *Peanuts* comic strips, ephemera and Snoopy's iconic doghouse.

Volunteer docents were trained to lead exhibit tours on Thursday mornings and afternoons. A total of 152 customers toured the exhibit during these drop-in tours.



Programs and Exhibits and Youth Services staff hosted two Snoopy pop-up comic studios in December. A total of 188 customers stopped by to enjoy hands-on Snoopy-themed activities and, a special treat, cartooning with Eisner award-winner Art Baltazar at the final pop-up. As a passive addition to the exhibit, teen volunteers from our Teen Advisory Board (TAB) created two scavenger hunts for younger and older children.

A *Snoopy and the Red Baron* themed book display, curated by Info Services Advisor Sherri Tader, offered books and movies related to Charles Schulz, *The Peanuts* and WWI. A total of 201 items were checked out from the display.





## **Librarians Assist with Classroom Outreach**

Info Services Librarian Lev Kalmens and Info Services Supervisor Elizabeth Ludemann accompanied Teen Services Supervisor Alice Son and other staff to virtually visit St. Viator High School English classes. During these outreach sessions, the librarians concentrated on teaching information literacy and research skills—introducing select library databases and the CRAAP (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose) test to evaluate resources to high school juniors. Ten classes were presented to a total of 219 students. As students embark on their first large research projects, library staff highlighted essential resources and core research concepts to support them.

## **Hispanic Outreach for Library Access**

Community Engagement Liaison Catalina Shin attended the library group Hispanic Outreach for Library Access (H.O.L.A) meeting on January 11. Catalina was part of a discussion about post-pandemic challenges to continue engaging Spanish speakers in different library services and what outreach strategies participant libraries are working on. The guest speaker for the meeting was Cathy Gladdis, Executive Director of Study Circles Illinois/Aurora/Elgin, a nonprofit organization that facilitates community dialogue and intentional conversations towards engagement, inclusion and equity.

## **Strategic Partnerships**

Community Engagement Liaison Catalina Shin met with staff members of local elected official offices within the library's district to discuss the details of strategic partnerships for community events and resource hour visits to the library. With the leadership and support of Director of Communications and Marketing Mary Hastings, Catalina finalized details of what these partnerships and sponsored series of events will look like in 2022. The new series of County, State and Federal Resource Services will begin in May and repeat in August and November. The library will also sponsor larger events such as Secretary of State Mobile Driver Services Facility and Utility Bill Workshops with the Citizen's Utility Board.

## **District 25 In-service**

Youth Services Assistant Manager Maria Papanastassiou and Youth Outreach Specialists Laura Dakas and Kim McGuire hosted a workshop for fifteen Greenbrier Early Childhood teachers and therapists on January 3. Attendees received a tour of the department, highlighting the Accessibility Collection as well as information about school services and an overview of the library's website.

Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger hosted a tour for twelve District 25 elementary and middle school art teachers. Art teachers networked and brainstormed potential opportunities for future collaboration with the Makerplace.

## **Staff Highlights**

### **LACONI POP President Lev Kalmens**

Info Services Librarian Lev Kalmens began his tenure as president of the [LACONI POP \(Programs, Outreach, and Promotion\)](#) section. This local group “provides information, inspiration, and connection for library staff who deliver adult services, programs, outreach, and library marketing and communications. LACONI POP brings timely and relevant content to members through four professional development events each year.” Lev looks forward to leading the group and helping shape its strategy.