

READS

REFERENCE AND ADULT SERVICES SECTION

February/March 2021 Newsletter

Spring Roundtable - Save the Date!



Join us on **Thursday, April 8th**, for a virtual roundtable via Go-To-Meeting to discuss new or altered services offered during the Pandemic. Stay tuned for more information!

Renewal Reminder!



There's still time to renew your NHLA and READS memberships!

You won't want to miss out on these great benefits of being a READS member:

- Bi-Monthly newsletter featuring news, programming ideas, reference resources, editorials, and event reminders!
- Member-discounted rates for BOTH the READS Spring Roundtable and Fall Conference!
- Networking opportunities to serve on READS Committees and the Executive Board!
- Specially curated event reminder and announcement emails!

- A dedicated and knowledgeable group of librarians and library staff who are ready to share ideas!

For just \$5, you'll get another fun year of adult services related news, highlights, and events. Renew both your NHLA and READS memberships [HERE!](#)

Thank you for continuing to be a part of our READS family!

READS Repository: Cooking & Crafts!

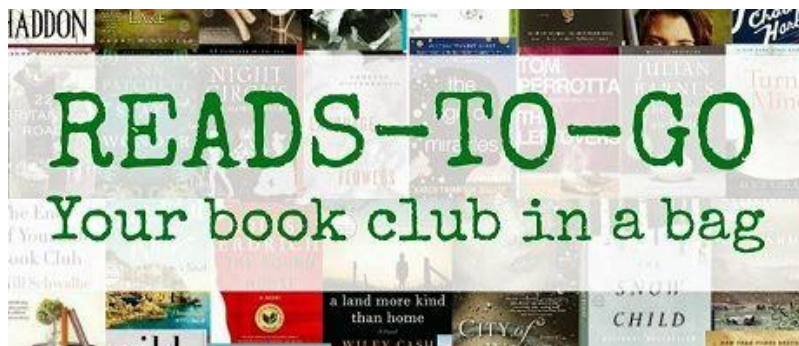


Have you checked out the READS Repository yet? The READS Repository is a publicly accessible Google Drive featuring Programming, Social media, and Technical Training resources, plus SO MUCH MORE, submitted from libraries across the state!

Get started exploring the Repository with our latest [craft and cooking program](#) submissions! Whether you need a recipe or two for an upcoming virtual cooking program or are looking for some fun take-and-make crafts for curbside pickup, there are lots of creative ideas to browse through.

Do you have a program idea to share? Submit your own Adult Services related content and learn more about the READS Repository [HERE!](#)

NEW READS-To-Go Kits!



Looking for some new book club titles? Look no further than some of our newest kits!

- *The Book of Essie* by Jackson Public Library
- *The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek* by Fuller Public Library
- *Before We Were Yours* by Hampton Falls Free Library
- *Nomadland* by Rochester Public Library

For more information about Kit Keeper, or Reads-To-Go, click [here!](#)

Reaching Readers!

While the Pandemic has brought many challenges to libraries, one of those challenges has been meeting the needs of our readers. Closed stacks and grab-and-go pickup has left many patrons yearning to browse our stacks. With a little ingenuity, libraries have been able to reinvent browsing and get materials into the hands of their readers. Get inspired by these creative ways that NH libraries have been reaching out this past year!

Custom-Lit at the Amherst Town Library



- by Alexa Moore, *Circulation and Reader Services Librarian*, Amherst Town Library

In September 2020 the Amherst Town Library launched Custom-Lit, a personalized book recommendation service.

This is a service for ATL patrons to receive personalized book recommendations from real-life library staff. Patrons simply fill out the form and ATL staff compile a list of authors and book titles based on the information provided. Patrons then receive their personalized lists via email within a week.

Since September, we have had 20 submissions on our Custom-Lit form. The service is always available, but we have found that when promoted through our library wide newsletter there is a guarantee we will receive between 5-7 submissions. We have only promoted this 3 times in our newsletters as we try to time it with staff availability to research and answer questions. Out of the

responses we have, 100% would recommend this service to others.

We rely heavily on Novelist's Appeal terms to help match each reader with a myriad of titles and authors both new and old. In combination with LibraryAware we are able to create the custom lists for each patron easily. It has been a fun way to provide patrons with new recommendations and can be a great way to help keep staff on their Reader's Advisory toes. Right now only one staff member is providing these custom-lists. The goal for the future is to have more staff involvement, which will hopefully lead to more promotion of the service and more submissions.

Book Recommendations at the Peterborough Town Library



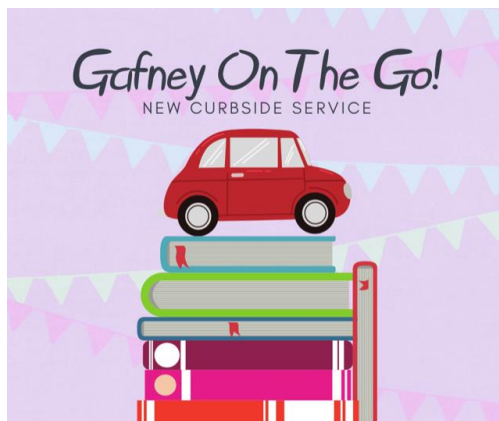
- by Corinne Chronopoulos, *Library Director*, Peterborough Town Library

The Peterborough Town Library started two new initiatives to reach readers in 2020. We created a newsletter just for our adult readers. The newsletter, called **Now Read This**, features 5 fiction, 5 nonfiction, and 1 large print book. We use Library Aware as a tool – so this is relatively quick to create and is sent out twice per month. Check out our latest issue here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5mzdqd3>. We link back to full lists of new items within our catalog so patrons can place holds directly. We also link to this special newsletter within our general monthly newsletter to cross-promote and gain new subscribers.

Our Public Services Librarian, Aimee LaRue, started doing #bookrecwednesday on facebook. She asks patrons to leave a comment with the last book they enjoyed and then she replies with a suggestion. She uses Novelist to find Read-Alikes. This engages readers and at the same time, promotes our reader's advisory services. She does this as often as she can but doesn't feel stressed out if she misses a Wednesday, we all only have so much time!

The success of both of these initiatives was taking the time to brainstorm at staff meetings on specific ideas to help patrons find titles while the stacks are closed. We wanted to try and replicate the satisfaction of browsing. Secondly, we encourage staff to think about ideas not just in their department.

“Gafney on the Go” at The Gafney Library



- by Beryl Donovan, *Library Director*, Gafney Library

Our staff person (Peter Abate, Administrative Assistant) who is in charge of our curbside service, “Gafney on the Go” takes the time to speak with everyone as he makes their pickup appointment. He makes our members aware of books that are similar to those they have checked out, talks about new books coming in and leads them to our virtual options as well. He’s even connected members with genres they may not be as comfortable with, such as biographies or nonfiction for those who are hard core fiction readers. Feedback indicates our patrons are loving this personal service, and in fact word of mouth has led to quite a few new members over the past year. In the Gafney On The Go bags he includes info about local events and organizations, a word search created by another staff member, poems related to various holidays and much more. We all miss interacting with our members, but I am confident that Peter has played a major role in keeping our community well connected.

Personalized Recommendations at the Hampstead Library

A screenshot of a web interface. On the left is a "Tailored For You" questionnaire titled "Personalized Book Request Questionnaire" with a red asterisk and "Required" label. It has fields for "Name: *", "Email: *", and "Library card #: *", each with a "Your answer" input line. Below is a section "About Your Reading Preferences" with a note: "Fill in as much of the form below as you wish, sharing your interests and reading preferences. There are no required answers. The more you tell us, the better we can serve you by making recommendations". A black arrow points from the questionnaire to the right. On the right is a list of book recommendations under the heading "This List of Book Recommendations has been Tailored-for-You by librarians." Below this is a note: "NOTE: all books are 'clickable' and go to the Library's catalog, where you can place a reserve if you wish. There may also be availability of these books as a download from Libby and/or Hoopla." Three books are listed: "One by one" by Ruth Ware, "The boy from the woods" by Harlan Coben, and "The golden cage" by Camilla Läckberg. Each entry includes a small book cover image and a short synopsis.

- by Merrily Samuels and Janet Arden, *Assistant Director and Communications and Adult Programming Manager*, Hampstead Public Library

In Spring 2020 while the building was closed to the public, the Hampstead Public Library debuted **Tailored for You**, a personalized book match service.

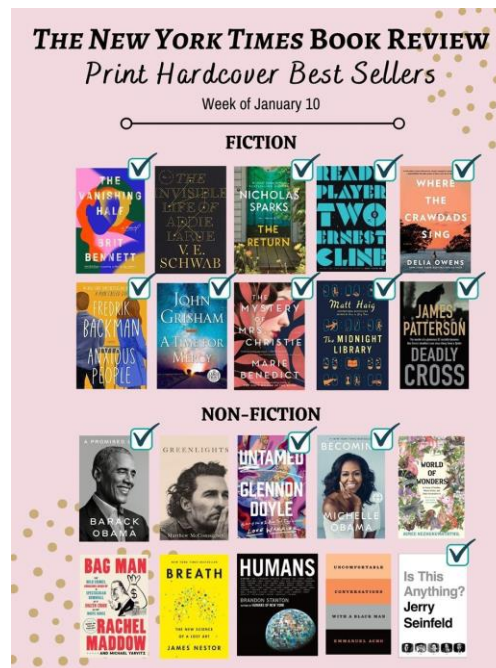
The **Tailored for You** questionnaire asks for patron preferences of preferred format, genres, age group, tone, and more. Using the library catalog, NoveList, and especially the readers' advisory

knowledge of the entire Hampstead Public Library staff, a recommendations list is generated in response.

Recently, the library has begun incorporating recommendation lists into a LibraryAware email. This provides patrons with a picture of the book jacket, a description, and most importantly, a direct link to the book in the library's catalog. Armed with the list and on their own schedule, the patron can choose which books they wish to reserve and borrow.

The **Tailored for You** service has been well received by patrons and interest in the program continues to grow.

Read-Alikes and More at the Newbury Public Library



- by Laura Pezone, *Assitant Director*, Newbury Public Library

At the Newbury Public Library, I've been trying to think of new ways to let our patrons know about items in our collection. We are closed to the public at the moment, so being able to browse items isn't feasible. The design program Canva has really been my best friend during all this. It makes creating flashy posters and other items a cinch!

Items I have designed include featured collection posters, read-alike bookmarks for 50 different popular authors, a "20 days of '20 faves" daily posting, which included our staff, trustee and friends' favorite reads of this past year, and a weekly best-seller list. We post them in our newsletter and on social media, and people are really appreciating them!

In a pinch, we also have been taking pictures of new items and themed collections for our patrons to place on reserve.

It's been a lot of fun, and we've found it helps us get to know our collection better too by finding those hidden gems we all forgot were on the shelf!

BookBox at the Wadleigh Memorial Library



- by Jane Martina, *Reference and Adult Services Librarian*, Wadleigh Memorial Library

Who doesn't love a FREE subscription box? This past month the Wadleigh Memorial Library launched a new service, BookBox! The Adult BookBox gives our readers another method to receive personalized recommendations along with some "bookish" surprises. All the reader has to do is fill out a brief questionnaire about their reading preferences, and library staff will hand select two titles for them to try. To curate each box, staff primarily use Novelist to select titles for each request. In addition to their recommendations, each box comes with a craft, a "bookish" surprise, chocolate and tea, and a personalized note with additional reading suggestions.

Curating these boxes has allowed our staff to connect with our readers, while at the same time learning more about their interests and reading preferences. Putting together personalized recommendations for each box has also helped staff become more familiar with our collection. We are really enjoying this service, and our readers are too, with many requesting a second or third box!

If you're interested in creating a similar service at your library, please feel free to contact me at jmartina@wadleighlibrary.org or 603-249-0645.

"Fresh Picks for You!" at the Hooksett Public Library

- by Anne Meyers, *Adult and Information Services Librarian*, Hooksett Public Library

Many of us feel like old pros at offering reader's advisory services in person, but offering remote reader's advisory services got pushed up to the top of the priority list this year. At Hooksett Library, we launched a new "Fresh Picks for You!" service using Library Aware eblasts, in conjunction with the NextReads newsletters they also offer. Although the learning curve has been steep (as those who have worked with Library Aware may know) the results and the integration with the PAC makes all the work worth it, especially in current circumstances without patrons browsing in the building.

Patrons place their request using a [Google form on our website](#), and within a week, they receive a personalized email with 8-10 titles, some new, some old, some coming soon. Library Aware works similarly to Constant Contact for eblasts, but with different editing tools and far more "bookish"

capabilities. We use a template; then staff are assigned and edit, swapping out book titles/cover art/and PAC links. This is satisfying work for staff, because with a little information on the reader's tastes, we can use our wits and Novelist to make effective suggestions from afar.

We do have a disclaimer in our Fresh Picks eblast that states roughly "sometimes we get it right, sometimes we don't, but let us know! Give us more to go on and we'll keep trying!" However, not one of the twenty or so we've completed so far has replied with negative feedback, and several have replied "I've read a couple of these, but I put holds on several others you suggested." We hope this helps patrons who miss browsing feel like they know more of their options without needing to browse in the online catalog, which can be an obstacle for some.

In our template, we also invite them to sign up for [NextReads newsletters](#), which is another part of Library Aware that we've worked hard to get a handle on over the last few months. Although it takes work on the back end, we've been very pleased at how these highlight both our existing and backlist collections, and give patrons easy access to genre specific reading recommendations. We expect this service to continue when we return to in-person library services.

Here's an example of a recent [Fresh Picks Response](#). We welcome questions from other libraries, and have thrown around the idea of a virtual meet up for other libraries using Library Aware. Please contact Anne Meyers (ameyers@hooksetlibrary.org) or Mark Glisson (mglisson@hooksetlibrary.org) if you'd be interested in sharing ideas, troubleshooting problems, or discussing strategies!

"Help Me Find Your Next Book" at the Manchester City Library

- by Becky White, *Librarian / Information and Technology*, Manchester City Library

Do you miss browsing the shelves? Looking at a book in the catalog does not have the same feel as looking at it on the shelf. Well fix those browsing woes with Manchester City Library's "Help Me Find My Next Book." Our online reader's advisory service allows patrons to tell us what they are looking for, then we come up with a list of recommendations. Pick up to 3 topics/genres from our list, what books/authors you like and do not like, as well as what you find important to the story (i.e. Plot, Characters, Setting). While it is not quite the same as personally looking through the shelves, it comes close and gives them a more personalized library experience during these challenging times.

Our process for answering the requests is pretty simple. Each topic/genre has a designated staff member assigned to it. The completed forms are sent to those designated staff members and they come up with list of recommendations. The lists themselves vary in length based on how many items you want to check out at a time. We don't want the lists to be too long for patrons who take out 1 or 2 books, or too short for patrons who take out 5-10 plus, so the length is customizable based on your input. If the patron requests e-books or e-audiobooks, we make sure to include which of our three platforms the books are available on, either Overdrive, cloudLibrary, or Hoopla. We will send you the list of recommendations with direct catalog links. Look through the list and decide which books you would like to check out. This has been a great success so far. [Try it out!](#) If you have any questions please contact Becky White at rwhite3@manchesternh.gov.