

Haston Highlights

2021: Year in Review

As we begin a new year writing 2022 on our checks and letters (assuming that some people still write those things!), it's nice to look back at the year that has just finished. Here are some highlights from 2021:

In February the exterior repairs to the library were completed by Raymond James Restorations, and the library won a state grant for our "Preserving our Memories" project.

In March we offered the virtual program, "Attracting Birds, Butterflies and other Beneficials." April was a busy month with the opening of our seed library and the good-bye parade for Miss Rosemary—truly a highlight of our year!

May marked the library's return to full operating hours, following COVID protocols. In June Rick Stromoski taught us how to draw cartoon animals, and Dan Steininger entertained families with LEGO challenges.

Summer reading, with the theme "Tails and Tales" began in July with special programs offered by Ed the Wizard and Henry the Juggler. August was exciting due to the promotion of Brianna Lamb to Youth Services Librarian and Gabrielle Holmes to Assistant Librarian, and the resumption of childrens' programming in the library. We hosted Rainforest Reptile Shows and their tortoise, tegu lizard, alligator and boa constrictor! August ended with the wonderfully successful Friends of the Library book sale.

September featured Julie Stepanek, who returned to Haston to teach more people how to play the ukulele. In October the library began circulating hotspots, which allow users to connect

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LIBRARY HOURS

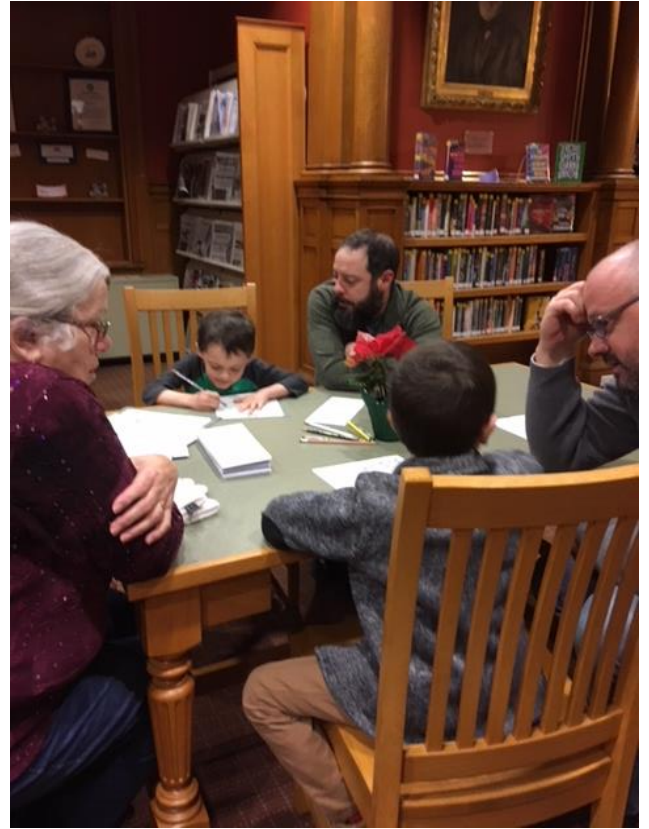
Monday:	1 PM—7 PM
Tuesday:	10 AM—5 PM
Wednesday:	9 AM—7 PM
Thursday:	1 PM—6 PM
Saturday:	9 AM—12 PM

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Dawn Thistle, Editor

Happy Holidays at Haston!

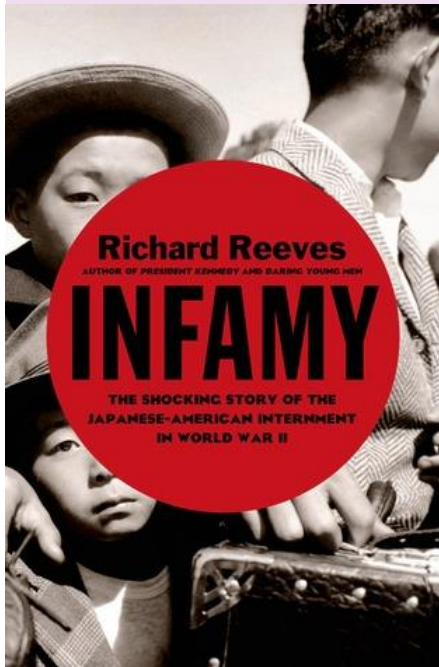
Families enjoyed writing letters to Santa and making ornaments on December 4. Then they helped Princess Sally save Santa's Christmas cookies with the Puppet Playhouse Theatre on December 18.



JANUARY BOOK GROUP SELECTION

The January selection for the Haston Library Book Group is *Infamy: The Shocking Story of the Japanese American Internment in World War II* by Richard Reeves.

“Less than three months after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and inflamed the nation, President Roosevelt signed an executive order declaring parts of four western states to be a war zone operating under military rule. The U.S. Army immediately began rounding up thousands of Japanese-Americans, sometimes giving them less than 24 hours to vacate their houses and farms. For the rest of the war, these victims of war hysteria were imprisoned in primitive camps. In *Infamy*, the story of this appalling chapter in American history is told more powerfully than ever before. Acclaimed historian Richard Reeves has interviewed survivors, read numerous private letters and memoirs, and combed through archives to deliver a sweeping narrative of this atrocity. ...By recovering the past, *Infamy* has given voice to those who ultimately helped the nation better understand the true meaning of patriotism.” —*GoodReads*



We'll be discussing the book on January 25 at 7:00 in the library and via ZOOM. Copies are available in the library. Call (508-867-0208) for more information and/or the ZOOM link.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Florine Martel

Florine Martel has been a volunteer at our library for the past 20 years! Hers is a very special job: processing all the new books. She stamps them with our library stamp, affixes date due slips, creates call number spine labels and covers book jackets as needed, among other tasks.

“I love going to the library. I always have. When I was young, I had read every book in the young people's room, except the books for boys, which was sort of discouraged.” Of course, her brother read all those books! The librarian was at a loss as to finding new books for young Florine to read.

Florine continues to be a big reader and is very active with the North Brookfield Senior Center. There she coordinates the Senior Center Book Club, selecting the monthly books and distributing them to the members.

Thank you, Florine, for all your years of dedication to the Haston Library and your love of books and reading!

THANK YOU

For continuing to wear your facemasks in the library!





WRAPPING PAPER WRAP-UP

The Haston Art Club met on December 13 to make holiday stamps and wrapping paper using recycled newspapers. We cut designs out of foam sheets then affixed them to wood blocks to make the stamps. After coating the stamps with paint, we pressed our designs into the newspaper. At left, Trish Miller stamps Christmas trees on her wrapping paper.

Stay tuned for information on the next Haston Art Club meeting! If you have any ideas of art or craft projects to try or to teach, email Dawn at dthistle@cwmars.org. See you soon!

LEARN ABOUT LUNAR NEW YEAR!

A one-of-a-kind storytelling event is coming to the children's library on Saturday, January 22 from 10am-12pm. Award winning Japanese storyteller Motoko Dworkin will enchant her audience with her program titled "Happy Lunar New Year!: Stories from Asia." Using traditional song, origami, and some humor, she weaves together multicultural Asian folktales, centered around Lunar New Year. Dworkin is the recipient of the National Storytelling Network's 2017 Circle of Excellence Award and has captivated audiences of every age since 1993. Her repertoire includes Asian folktales, Rakugo and Zen tales, ghost stories, mime vignettes, as well as oral memoirs of her childhood in Osaka and her life as a U.S. immigrant. She has appeared on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood and has been featured in festivals and theaters across the U.S. For more information on



Motoko Dworkin, visit her website at motoko.folktales.net. To register for this event, call the library at 508-867-0208 or talk to Miss Bri in the children's library. We are so excited to have her perform!



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

Have you been to one of our children's programs and would like to know when the next one is? Interested in what's new in the children's library? Interested in storytime days? Miss Bri, our Youth Services librarian, will be starting up an email list in January to keep you up to date on all the newest events and happenings in the Children's Library and Young Adult area. This may include upcoming programming, storytime and play group updates, new and exciting materials in the collection, and even interesting links for kids and teens.

To sign up for the email list, call the library at 508-867-0208, email Miss Bri at blamb@cwmars.org, or talk to Miss Bri in the Children's Library.

LIBBY ANNOUNCES ACCESSIBILITY ENHANCEMENTS

To support libraries in their mission to serve every reader, Overdrive has been working to improve the accessibility of the Libby app. Recent updates make Libby more accessible for all readers, including users with a diverse range of visual, motor, and cognitive needs.

Based on the feedback received so far and informed by industry standards, like the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#), Libby has made several improvements, including:

- **Screen reader support:** Low-vision and blind users can use screen readers to browse, borrow, read ebooks and magazines, and listen to audiobooks in Libby.
- **Read From Here:** When using a screen reader, low-vision and blind users can enter "Read From Here" mode to have the text of an ebook or magazine read aloud.
- **Navigation Bar labels:** There's an option in the in-app menu to add labels beneath each of the navigation bar icons. *Note: This setting is currently only available in the English language.*
- **Adjustable text size:** Libby uses the text size setting of the user's device and scales the text in the app accordingly. Users can increase the text size in ebooks manually.
- **Adjustable playback speed for audiobooks:** Users can choose from 48 speed settings



to find the speed that best suits their needs.

- **Keyboard shortcuts:** Shortcuts in Libby's ebook reader and audiobook player supplement the keyboard navigation.
- **Lighting options:** Libby uses the device's built-in lighting setting and displays the app in light or dark mode accordingly. Users can also choose a lighting option (light, dark, or sepia) in the ebook reader manually.

Additional accessibility updates coming this month:


- **Screen reader and voice control improvements:** We are refining the labels and descriptions of all interactive elements, making it easier for users of assistive technologies to understand and interact with the app.
- **Keyboard focus indicators:** We are making improvements to help users navigate Libby with a keyboard or any other assistive technology that does not have a pointing device, like a mouse or touch controls.

New accessibility features (under *Settings > Accessibility Features*):

- **Reduce Color Variation:** By default, Libby adapts to the colors of book covers and the user's active library. A new toggle will allow users to reduce such adaptive changes, favoring neutral colors with good contrast.
- **Reduce Text Variation:** The app uses a variety of font styles to convey meaning, such as

italics for important actions. Users will be able to adjust this setting to simplify text styles.

- **Reduce Motion:** This setting will reduce most of the transitional motion in the interface. Users can also set this preference in their operating system or browser preferences, and Libby will apply it automatically.
- **Reduce Haptics:** On devices that support subtle vibrations (called haptics), Libby uses these to provide feedback on certain touch interactions. Users can either turn it off at the operating system level or in the new "Accessibility Features" menu.
- **Orientation Locking:** By default, Libby uses a "smart orientation" setting that chooses the device orientation that best suits the content. WCAG guidelines recommend that users should be able to override the default orientation of the app, which will be adjustable in the "Accessibility Features" menu.
- **Full screen menus:** The in-app menu will no longer open from the side of the app. Instead, it will open full screen. This makes keyboard and screen reader navigation more consistent and helps all users concentrate on the task they are trying to perform in the menu.
- **Updated menu icon:** The in-app menu button

(currently ) will be changed to a familiar icon, providing a more intuitive navigation experience for all users.

For more information about accessibility in Libby, visit [Libby Help](#) or [OverDrive's accessibility statement](#).

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wirelessly to the internet. The library received the hotspots as part of a grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.

An informative lecture by Dr. Andrew Budson on managing memory and Alzheimer's disease kicked off the month of November. In December we invited local children to come to the library to write their letters to Santa, and Dawn Sedlier and the Puppet Playhouse Theatre presented "Saving Santa's Christmas Cookies."

Even though the pandemic continued, we had a busy and productive year! Thank you to our staff: Bri, Gabby and Roger; all our volunteers: Judy, Roan, Florine, Laura, Emily, Helen, Deb, Peter, and Ellen; the Friends of the Library; the Board of Library Trustees, and especially all our library users for your support and efforts on behalf of the Haston Free Public Library!



One of two Dungeons & Dragons groups currently meeting at the library, led by Keith Marshall, center.