What’s happening at Alpine Public Library?

Well here we are, finishing off 2021, another year we probably are glad to see come to a close. As we look forward to the holiday season and the start of 2022, all of us at the library anticipate being able to begin in-library programming for kids and adults starting in January.

Library Lizards will start on Wednesday, January 12. This program for kids in grades 1 and 2 will feature reading, storytelling, and STEM projects. We have more STEM programs in the works thanks to a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The purpose of the grant is to assist the library in enhancing our digital platforms and online services and upgrading the library’s digital literacy programs in order to help improve childhood development and overcome setbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. We’ll be adding an interactive whiteboard and a new makerspace. We will revitalize and expand our robotics program with more programmable robots, and add 3D printers to the makerspace. Some equipment is already ordered, and we hope it will arrive without any serious delays.

Adult offerings are starting up with a new series of Travel Talks. Also, more movies are planned. We’ll use our outdoor movie equipment in the AEP room for a more comfortable, controlled environment. Moreover, movies can start earlier in the day rather than at sunset. More information on programming will be available as we start the New Year. We’ll post updates on social media, the library website, weekly calendar, local newspapers, and radio.

We are still promoting the mobile hotspots. So far the reviews have been very positive. If you don’t have Internet at home, check out a hotspot and get your own free Wi-Fi. If you need a computer, then check out a Chromebook to go with the hotspot and you’re set to connect to the world.

Now, as we approach the holiday season, a plug for Re-Reads. Re-Reads is a great place to get gifts for everyone at great prices. In addition to books, we have Bookworm Blend coffee from Big Bend Coffee Roasters, APL mugs and T-shirts, and again this year, jumbo half pecans, from Surratt Farms in Fabens, Texas.

—Don Wetterauer, MLS, PhD, Executive Director
Special Donations

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—Kathy Donnell and Linda Bryant

CAKE PANS!
Decorative shapes Available soon for check out

VOTE FOR US!
Vote for Alpine Public Library in the "Community Contribution & Leadership" category hourly (once an hour per email address!) at www.city.bank/communityrewards/permian-basin

Shop Re-Reads For Holiday Gifts

Items in the Re-Reads display case would make delightful holiday gifts. Re-Reads gift certificates may be purchased in five-dollar increments and may be used to buy anything sold in Re-Reads. APL logo T-shirts and mugs make great gifts. T-shirts are $15.00, and mugs are $8.50 plus tax. If you buy our delicious Big Bend Coffee Roasters Bookworm Blend and a mug, the total price, including tax, is $21.66.

We have a number of titles not usually for sale in Re-Reads due to a very large local donation and donations from nonlocal sources. We hope to be able to continue to offer this type of expanded selection. Additionally, we have some books for sale on Amazon.

All income generated by Re-Reads Bookstore goes to support the operations of our non-profit public library serving Alpine and Brewster County. Shopping at Re-Reads will solve your gift-giving problems and support your library!

—Jo Barnett, Bookkeeper

APL Sunday Matinee

Movies at Alpine Public Library are coming back in 2022. Beginning in January, APL will be featuring a monthly movie indoors in the AEP Room. The APL Sunday Matinee will be featured at 2 p.m. on the first Sunday of every month. Although the outdoor movies are fun, the weather can be too fickle. That’s not to say that we will never have outdoor movies again, but the late sunsets in summer make for late nights. If we show the movies indoors, we don’t have to rely on good weather and early sunsets.

Featured movies will range from independent and foreign films to pop and cult classics. We encourage everyone to bring lawn chairs for comfort; we will provide free popcorn. Recommendations for movies are always welcome.

—Jo Barnett, Bookkeeper
Alpine Public Library: A Short History

Jim Glendinning wrote this essay to commemorate the opening of the new library building in 2012. APL will be 75 in 2022, so it seems fitting to revisit its history now.

By 1947 memories of World War II were fading, and the residents of the Big Bend area were looking forward to a better life. Alpine’s radio station started up, and questions were raised about a public library. In over 12,000 square miles of the tri-county region there was no library to serve the 17,523 inhabitants.

Alpine’s El Progresso Club (a study club for women) took the lead. A dinner meeting was called at the Green Café in June 1947 to discuss the matter and each person was asked to bring a book. The 300 books brought by the club members formed the initial collection of the future library.

The next job was to find space to display the books. The husband of a club member, Mr. Walter Henderson, owner of a radio shop, offered shelf space. Some time later, the Brewster County Commissioners Court authorized the sheriff’s garage, next to the jail, as a one-room library. Bonnie Newell volunteered to act as unpaid librarian. Local interest in the library was high, and often a line of waiting children and townspeople ran around the building.

In May 1949 the Friends of the Alpine Public Library group was formed with the principal task of recruiting volunteers. It soon became obvious that a proper building was needed to house the library. Bill Sohl offered to sell his house on North 7th Street, and a fundraising drive was started to raise $14,000. The drive included bake sales, teas, and sporting events and included raffle tickets for an automobile. El Progresso Club won two civic awards totaling $5,000.

The library was dedicated in August 1950. What the new library meant was enormous. Ray Hendryx tells how Bonnie Newell used to take him to the exact shelf for the right books for his first-grade level, how he seldom left without at least three books and how he rated his library experience equal to learning to ride a bike. “I would not trade that memory for anything,” he says.

The library flourished. In the 1950s an oil delivery truck was adapted as a bookmobile and delivered books as far as Sierra Blanca. By 1970 the book collection had grown to 40,000; the purchase and remodeling of two more buildings at a cost of $25,000 doubled the floor space. In 1975 Alpine Public Library joined the state library system.

At this time 90% of operating expenses came from tax revenues voted by the county commissioners. The Alpine City Council also helped financially with $125 monthly. But what made the Alpine Public Library different then and today is that it is an independent entity governed by a Board of Directors. Also it is staffed by able, caring people, mainly volunteers. Over the years the dedication of volunteers and the support of the community have been the twin reasons for the library’s success. Nowhere is the former better demonstrated than by Mary Beth Garrett’s programs for kids.

In the late 1990s Dick and Jean Zimmer arrived and undertook a substantial cleaning of the property, updating the book collection and adding other library activities: a Ride and Read Program for kids, the establishment of a video and audio tape collection, and monthly book sales (from which the library’s Re-Reads bookshop grew).

Ten years later it was clear that only a completely new, and much larger, library building would satisfy the needs of today’s users. The groundbreaking of the new library took place on December 4, 2008. On February 2, 2012, the doors of the $1.4 million facility were opened to the public. With books, magazines, DVDs and computers, a separate Re-Reads shop adjacent and an expanded kids’ section, all efficiently housed in a large, bright space with a lustrous floor, the Alpine Public Library looks ready for the future.

—Jim Glendinning
The first NASA@ My Library program, Telescopes & Tamales, took place on November 4, with around 150 people enjoying clear skies, a tamale dinner served by library volunteers, a video presentation of the James Webb Space Telescope, and a night sky viewing with a telescope from the McDonald Observatory. Kids took part in a glow-in-the-dark playfoam STEM activity. Event organizer Mary Beth Garrett, APL Children’s Librarian, plans at least three more events for the first half of 2022. Alpine Public Library is one of 60 libraries across the country selected to be a NASA@ My Library grant recipient.
Health care resources in the Big Bend region are limited. Area residents understand this statement on an experiential level. Waiting three weeks to see a primary care physician or three months to see a dental hygienist. Traveling two and half hours one way to consult a specialist. Relying on friends for transportation to a doctor’s appointment in Odessa. Driving to Houston once a month for cancer treatment. Foregoing treatment for lack of transportation. Most people either experience these scenarios or know someone who has. In fact, though, health care resources may not be as limited as people think. What is limited, as the APL-sponsored forum on health care in the Big Bend revealed, is information on available resources.

The forum, which took place on October 16, was the second of the community conversations funded by a grant from the American Library Association. It brought together 20 residents of the Big Bend, four from the health care community, the majority over 55, to share experiences with area health care. Two issues dominated: the shortage of health professionals and the lack of information on resources. The first, acknowledged by the government designation of the Big Bend as a Health Professional Shortage Area, is a focus of Dr. Adrian Billings of Preventative Care Health Services. Dr. Billings works with educational institutions and state and national government officials to make practicing in rural and underserved areas attractive and feasible for new health care workers.

J.D. Newsom, the executive director of the Big Bend Regional Hospital District, wants to tackle the second issue. This endeavor faces several obstacles, including funding the project, making the information accessible, and keeping it accurate and current. Alpine Public Library is in a good position to help. The staff of APL and Big Bend Regional Hospital District along with volunteers, some within the health care community, will work to gather, organize, and distribute information in formats available to those with Internet access and those without it.

Given the age range of the forum attendees, the conversations largely focused on health concerns of older residents. Nonetheless, the health resource clearinghouse, as one discussion group dubbed it, will cover the needs of all Big Bend residents. In addition, the library hopes to host future conversations that focus on the health interests of younger adults, teens, children, and babies.

—Lee Smith

“Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL).”

### TRAVEL TALK IS BACK FROM VACATION!

Actually, Travel Talk is returning from its pandemic hiatus with four intriguing presentations to start off 2022.

- **January 22**: Betsy Evans on Vietnam and Thailand
- **February 25**: Nina Foley on Historic Sperry Chalet in Glacier National Park
- **March 25**: Kathy & Albert Bork on Radical Acceptance: or How We Survived 3 Months in Europe
- **April 29**: Rozolen Stanford & Denis Foley on Chaco Canyon

Talks start at 7 PM in the Alpine Public Library AEP Multipurpose Room. If you have an adventure you’d like to share, contact Lee Smith at leepsmith@yahoo.com or Jim Robertson at jpz1100@yahoo.com.
We have completed our eighth year of co-chairing the library’s Artwalk event. We are continuing to learn as we proceed, but we feel we did well this year. The preliminary number from the Silent Auction and the Buy It Now (BIN) sales is more than $21,000.00. This is the best year “income-earning wise” in the time that we have co-chaired. Of course, the greatness comes from the volunteers and donations. The volunteers were great, the weather was good, and most high bidders were able to pick up Saturday night or Sunday morning.

Pat McCall again scheduled the volunteers who helped with setup, staffing during open hours, and cleanup for both the Silent Auction and the Buy It Now (BIN) section headed by Marilyn Terry. We had some volunteers not contacted by Pat who just volunteered as an act of friendship and generosity. We, of course, gave the names of these wonderful people to Pat for next year!

Thank you to all the generous artists, library patrons, and citizens of Alpine and Brewster County who contributed the items we had in our auction. We also owe untold thanks to Kerri Blackman for generously donating space in the former Kiowa Gallery. The location placed us in the middle of the Artwalk action! Kiowa’s function as an art gallery made hanging the art go smoothly, much to the pleasure of our drafted volunteer display master, David Kowal. The music and bar behind the building increased both traffic and bidding. We had outstanding donations on the walls. Both local artists and visiting artists were extremely generous in giving the library stellar examples of their original work for us to include in our auction.

From the community we had donations ranging from the practical but decorative (a stunning baby quilt, both new and vintage clothing, and cowboy boots) to the less practical and equally decorative (crystal as well as locally handmade pottery.) In the BIN area we had an amazing range of items, from Christmas decorations, to replacements for coffee mugs, to crockpots and serving utensils. There was also a wide range of gift items, like jewelry and decorative pieces. Most people, whether they intended to visit the Silent Auction or simply walk through to the music and bar, found some level of treasure.

We would like to give a resounding thanks to everyone involved. We strive to have the Silent Auction earn about $15,000.00, or about 5 percent of the library’s annual operating expenses, to help ensure another year of great programs and services. We are so pleased that we were able to do this and more thanks to the generosity of the community and the hard work of all the volunteers.

—Linda Bryant and Kathy Donnell
Dear Friends,

In October of 2017 while walking the Camino de Santiago through Portugal, I received a message from Pat McCall asking if I would be willing to run for president of the Friends of the Alpine Public Library. Being on day 12 of a 381-mile pilgrimage, I was feeling both expansive and fatigued, a state that made me particularly prone to say yes. Now at the end of my two terms as president, I can say with certainty that I don’t regret my barely considered decision.

I will admit, though, that the last four years have not been stress free. The most stressful point occurred in the late spring of 2020 when I realized that COVID-19 would curtail most activities for an indeterminate time, that Friends would no longer be able to meet, to fundraise, to actively support the library. I began to fear that I would preside over the demise of the Friends of the Alpine Public Library. Fortunately, that turned out not to be the case. Thanks to Kathy Bork, the FAPL membership chair, the number of Friends actually increased by 38 percent in 2021.

My tenure in office will end this month, but that does not mean that my commitment to APL will end. I will continue to volunteer to help the library “build community, encourage literacy, and promote lifelong learning” because I believe in the mission of APL and the importance of all libraries to the health of our society.

I hope to see you soon at the library.

Your fellow APL patron and volunteer,

Lee

Lee Smith
Join the Friends of the Alpine Public Library!

Your tax-deductible dues may be paid with check or money order (payable to Friends of the Alpine Public Library), credit/debit card or PayPal. Dues directly support the ongoing operations and programs of the library. You may choose to make an ongoing monthly donation to the Friends on the library’s web page at www.alpinenpubliclibrary.org. Your personal information will not be shared with any other organization.

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You may also pay with PayPal at www.alpinepubliclibrary.org.