

# Library Survey Yields Nearly 300 Responses

by Jack Lakowsky

Amy Ordonez, chair of East Hampton’s Library Advisory Board, was nearly moved to tears when she first saw the East Hampton Public Library’s new ceiling tiles.

“The space was really transformed,” Ordonez said. “I have to give so much credit to Ellen [Paul, the library’s director].”

Replacing the library’s 34-year-old ceiling tiles was another of the many efforts to further improve service to patrons and the community at large, according to Paul.

To gauge what further steps the board and the library staff should take, Paul and the board distributed a survey to the public, asking for input on improvements, updates and projects to undertake in the future.

The survey closed on Feb. 10. Paul said that 273 residents, a number largely representing regular patrons, but also a significant amount of irregular library-goers participated in it. The survey was intentionally written with open-ended questions to allow for thoughtful replies describing the wants and needs of patrons, and improvements that can be made to library operations and to the building itself. Paul said she did not want to “proscribe” responses. This method makes analysis a bit more difficult, she said, but far more rewarding.

“That was really our jumping-off point,” Paul

said. “I’m so impressed with the response, and so appreciative.”

Paul said she was amazed at both the depth and breadth of the comments made by the community, and that responses contained both compliments and critique.

“It’s amazing that people took such time to comment,” Paul said.

Paul, Ordonez, library staff, board members, the Friends of the East Hampton Library and the Board of Education will pour through results to determine priorities and future steps.

Paul and Ordonez both described the tremendous growth experienced in recent months by the library, its services and its operations.

“Last summer, the board decided to be forward thinking and proactively plan for the future,” Paul said.

In the year since Paul and the board began their reformations, borrowing at the library has increased 28%, jumping from 72,000 checkouts to more than 90,000. Borrowing continues to grow monthly. Paul said the library’s goal is to reach more than 100,000 borrows by the end of this current fiscal year.

Paul said the library offers 14 after school programs. When registration for these programs went live, she said, these programs were full with waiting lists—within an hour of their an-

nouncement.

“Kids’ attendance is through the roof,” Paul said.

Ordonez said that the success of the afterschool programs is a testament to the library’s growth.

Paul said she and the board will meet with the town council to ensure any plans align with overall town goals. A strategic three-year plan, based on the results of the survey, will be developed with the objective of best serving East Hampton’s residents. She said she hopes to have this document ready in April. It will describe plans stretching from July of this year until July 2023.

All these accomplishments have not quieted Paul’s ambition to help create the best library experience for Belltown.

“This is all really, really positive, but we can’t let this growth stall,” Paul said. “This only works if we’re listening to the community.”

## Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, 17 Haddam Neck Rd., invites all to Sunday worship at 9 a.m., followed by coffee, refreshments and fellowship time. Pastor is the Rev. Tom Cowger.

**Worship:** Cowger’s message series is “God’s Gracious Gateway,” grace-based intentional practices.

**Duffle Bags:** The Care Ministry is collect-

ing new duffle bags for foster children.

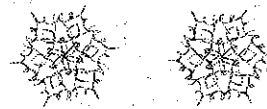
**Education:** Spiritual formation groups for children and adults are held Sunday morning; children’s group meets during worship and adult group meets after fellowship time. The adult group is studying the “Workbook of Living Prayer.”

**Choir Practice:** Wednesdays; Vocal Choir at 6 p.m. and Bell Choir at 7. All welcome.

**General Info:** Office hours are Tuesday, 1-4 p.m.; and Wednesday and Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Call 860-267-2336 for more information, or visit [hncovenantchurch.org](http://hncovenantchurch.org).

Paul said that updates on the library’s efforts will be posted to their Facebook page.

“It’s going to be a very busy spring,” Paul said.



## Upcoming Senior Center Trips

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., has announced the following trips. Register at the senior center. For more information, stop by the center or call 860-267-4426.

**Ogunquit, Maine:** June 1-3. Featuring Kennebunkport City Tour, Foster’s Clambake, and Nubble Lighthouse Cruise. Cost is \$479/double or triple and \$589/single. A \$200 deposit is due March 2.

March 25.

**Lighthouses of Boston Harbor:** Tuesday, Aug. 25. Take a 90-minute narrated cruise of the five Boston lighthouses. Lunch is at The Venezia Restaurant. Cost: \$121; deposit of \$25 is due April 22.

**Plymouth Plantation:** Wednesday, Oct. 7. Visit the newly restored Mayflower II, see “The Rock” where the pilgrims landed, and have a traditional Thanksgiving buffet at Plymouth Plantation. Cost: \$119.

... Sunday, July 19. This