

Library Report

Playaways rekindle love of reading

Barry Crowell has lost much of his vision through age-related macular degeneration (AMD), but he has gained a love of reading through Western Counties Regional Library's Playaways.

No longer able to pursue his art, read, write or drive, Crowell, 83, had friends suggest a visit to his local library in Shelburne.

"They said 'Why don't you go to the library and check out the audiobooks'," Crowell says.

He hadn't been to the library in years, but found the clerks at McKay Memorial Library extremely helpful, guiding him towards the library's Playaways, one of the newer additions to the library's collection.

A Playaway is a pre-loaded audiobook that gives library users the portability and freedom to take audiobooks everywhere.

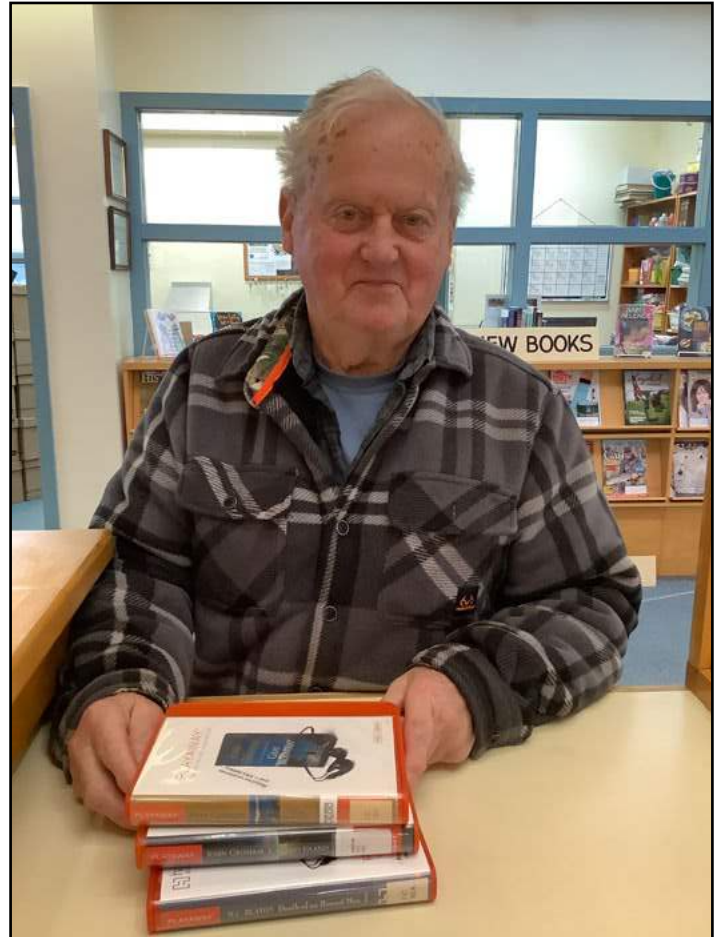
They are similar in size to an iPod and do not need to be connected to the Internet or downloaded. Borrowers require their own headphones and suitable batteries.

"Playaways are very popular," says Lydia Hunsberger, Manager of Collections and Digital Services at the library.

Crowell has been borrowing Playaways for the past several months. Because he needs a drive to the library from his Gunning Cove home, he gets to the library every two weeks.

He says he makes lists of titles he is interested in and the clerks are great at tracking his lists and his interests to avoid repeats.

**"The clerks are very helpful."
— Barry Crowell**



Barry Crowell picks up a stack of Playaways from McKay Memorial Library in Shelburne.

"They (library clerks) picked out books for me," he says. "The clerks are very helpful."

He says overall, the books he has borrowed, he has liked, but sometimes the accents used in the recordings can be challenging.

He would also like to see more of his favourites, older authors such as Louis L'Amour and Farley Mowat. He enjoys James Patterson, but at times, finds his stories can get "quite gruesome."

Regardless, his discovery of the library Playaways has rekindled his love of reading.

Newcomers find comfort at the library

Far from the hustle and bustle of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, the Nguyen family has found a home in Yarmouth and at its library.

The Nguyen family has lived in Yarmouth for just over two years, moving here from Ho Chi Minh City, the capital with a population of 9.3-million people.

“My husband got a job at A.F. Theriault,” says Anh Nguyen. A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. is a boatbuilding operation in Meteghan.

The family began looking to move to Canada, seeking a better quality of education for their two children, Windy, 9, and Mip, 3, moving here in February 2022.

Ho Chi Minh City was very crowded, polluted and filled with traffic, she says.

She says it was hard to access things such as school, libraries and recreational facilities. Windy had to get up very early to get to school, eating breakfast in the car.

Throughout the interview, Windy flipped through the pages of various books while keeping an ear to the conversation.

Windy enjoys the library because she can “read the books and get entertained.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Vietnam, Windy had to study online. She attended a Canadian school that followed the Vietnamese curriculum. Studying was very difficult because Windy was learning to read, and the classes had written instruction. This meant Windy’s father had to sit with her during her studies.



Anh and Windy Nguyen, left, enjoy the craft program library clerk Carol Wing, right, organizes every second Friday.

Windy loves reading, but the school’s strict focus on grammar and composition “killed the love for reading,” Anh says.

The family wanted their children to enjoy activities beyond school work, which was not possible.

Ho Chi Minh City has a wonderful library and some recreational activities, but they were in areas that were hard for the family to reach, Anh says.

They learned that their new home had many activities within walking distance from their place in Yarmouth.

Anh commends YREACH-Yarmouth for providing them with information and guidance once they arrived in the community. YREACH staff showed them how to access places such as the Yarmouth library and Mariners on Main,

a facility offering a wide range of activities such as a pool, gym, fitness centre and other programming.

“We usually walk to the library,” she says.

The library is important to the family because it is a comfortable, safe environment for reading and meeting other children.

Windy also looks forward to the craft program with library clerk Carol Wing every second Friday.

“We have somewhere to read what we want,” Anh says. She adds that Windy learns about respecting others at the library and putting books back in their proper place.

She would love to see more activities for children.

“This age they really want to explore,” she says.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Headquarters



Headquarters inter-library loan and SamePage clerk Karen Comeau, right, received her 25-year work anniversary certificate on Feb. 3 from Collections Manager Lydia Hunsberger.

Barrington



Potential future carpenters work on building mini-cabins during a program at the Barrington library on Jan. 23. The kits were provided by Skills Nova Scotia as part of a partnership.

Clare



People look for new-to-them craft supplies on Jan. 26 at the Clare library. The second craft supply swap in January was very popular, allowing people to drop off unused craft supplies and pick up others during the week-long event. Any leftovers were given to local organizations.

Clark's Harbour



Clark's Harbour library's makerspace is ready for St. Patrick's Day and Easter with craft supplies to entertain library visitors.

Digby



People have their tax returns done by volunteers at the Digby library in early March. In partnership with the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth library branches have volunteers available to help with tax returns by appointment in March and April.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Lockeport



Our library branches marked Freedom to Read Week in February with displays and booklists highlighting challenged and banned books. Pictured above is the Lockeport library's display.

Pubnico

Pubnico library has set up two open all-day drop-in programs allowing library users to work on arts and crafts or play a variety of board games and games on Wednesdays and Thursdays each week.

Shelburne



Participants in the Jan. 31 Science of Snow and Slime program at the Shelburne library learned how snowflakes are formed and created their own fake snow and fluffy slime.

Weymouth



Artists regularly exhibit their work at the Weymouth library. Such free opportunities for local artists are available at some of our libraries, including the Digby library.

Yarmouth



Adele Plaizer spins the disk during a game of Galentine's Spin the Polish on Feb. 13 at Yarmouth library. Participants took turns spinning the disk to find out what colour of polish they would be using to paint one of their nails or someone else's. The event was a partnership with Aidaen's Place Youth Wellness Centre which provided the nail polish, nail decals and sugar cookies as well as Kait, one of the program hosts.