

Croton Free Library

SHELF LIFE

Annual Newsletter, Spring 2025

Volunteer’s vigor drives community togetherness

In small towns and villages, it’s often volunteers who help to keep community life alive. These volunteers themselves can be remarkable personalities, whose outsized contributions inspire those around them. One such local luminary is Croton-on-Hudson resident Art Almeida, who volunteers nearly every day at the Croton Free Library.



Almeida, an energetic 81-year-old, sorts book donations given by our bibliophilic community to the library. He selects the books that are suitable for the semi-annual library Book & Bake Sale (This Spring’s event date is May 17-18, 2025), works with the librarians to choose donated books that fill gaps in the library’s collection and sets aside certain titles to pass along to teachers or those who work with children. He estimates that he processes at least 10,000 books per year, and has done this for 23 years. Having previously worked as a bookseller for five years, Almeida is able to quickly assess potential pricing for books headed for the sale, especially those of special interest – “hidden gems,” according to Jesse Bourdon, the library’s director. It was during his days running a bookstore that Almeida realized the broad variety of people who shop

Croton’s library has had book sales for over 50 years, which were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Almeida points out that while many other libraries have not resumed post-pandemic book sales, the Croton Free Library restarted its sale in November 2021. Since then, the library has continued to host sales twice a year. These popular events always draw crowds. He says, “All of this creates something in the library that wouldn’t be here, and it draws people in. It’s the whole community that comes, so everybody sees everybody else. For people with kids, they plop down and read together. It’s something that brings Croton together.”

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2024 ANNUAL STATISTICS

Circulation

Adult Book Circulation	41,626
Children’s Book Circulation	57,597
Adult Audiovisual & Other	9,468
Children’s Audiovisual & Other	1,326
Digital Materials	48,404
Items Loaned to Other Libraries	15,908
Total Items:	174,329

Programming

Adult Program Attendance	2,860
YA Program Attendance	1,770
Children’s Program Attendance	9,656
General Interest Program Attendance	3,115
Total Attendees:	17,401

Services

Visitors	200,806
Reference Transactions	11,035
Registered Cardholders	5,205
Public Computer Sessions	3,367

Volunteer’s vigor drives... (continued)

When asked why he continues to volunteer at the library after so many years, Almeida says, “I believe in their mission. I was in the military for a while, and you believe in the mission and do it. The sale raises money, and it also brings interesting books out to people who wouldn’t find them. There’s some amazing people here, interesting people who bring things to the community, which is what makes Croton Croton.”

Bourdon concurs. “For decades, Art has been at the heart of our library’s Book & Bake Sales. His efforts not only enhance our collection but also provide the foundation for one of our most cherished events. Art’s contributions are truly priceless, and we are endlessly grateful for his dedication.” It’s obvious that valued volunteers like Art Almeida are the linchpin holding together our communities.

To enjoy this community experience, the Croton Free Library’s Spring Book & Bake Sale is on May 17-18, from 10 am-3 pm, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson. Early birds are welcome at 8 am on May 17 for an entrance fee of \$10.

LIBRARY BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 20

6:00am–9:00pm

at Croton-Harmon High School

Library Board of Trustees

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SPRING
BOOK & BAKE
SALE

SAT AND SUN
MAY 17 & 18
10 AM - 3 PM

SATURDAY EARLY BIRD
ADMISSION \$10 (8-10 AM)

SUNDAY SPECIAL
FILL A LIBRARY TOTE BAG
FOR \$20



To volunteer at the sale or bring baked goods, visit crotonfreelibrary.org

Library Staff and Volunteers

Jesse Bourdon	
Library Director	
Gwen Glazer	
Head of Collection Development and User Engagement	
Lori Phillips	
Head of Technical Services	
Megan Fenton	
Head of Reference Services	
Dianna Solano	
Head of Circulation Services	
Joan Arnold (v)	Chloe Guedalia
Art Almeida (v)	Carol Hirsh (v)
Pat Bane	Amy Kendel
Sarah Bannan	Christina Mariani
Fernando Bernal	Matt Mendelsohn
Mary Bernal	Christina Moore
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