

Patrons are still amazed at the fact that we're no longer collecting fines, and they love hearing the rationale behind it even if at first, they're confused as to why we're doing it. Even months later, they see the sign on the donation box that says we're fine free, and ask about it. I had one patron come in to return a book two or three days late, which would have been a \$.45 fine before; even after we told her she didn't owe anything, she put a \$5 bill in the donation box. Patrons still call to renew their items with regularity, even when those items are only a day or two overdue.

Overall, the amount of overdue or billed books we have has stayed the same, if not lessened from what it had been before. Some of this may be due to the fact that our circulation numbers are still a little lower than what they had been pre-COVID, but generally I have not seen an increase in the number of overdue or billed notices we send out daily. I keep track of how many books have gone to billed status (meaning 21 days overdue), and while on a day-to-day basis they may increase, once those patrons get the bill in their email, for the most part the books come right back. When items that patrons requested from other libraries hit that billed status, the lending libraries' librarians contact me to let me know; I have not seen an uptick in those billed items either. If anything, there are even fewer of those than before, even though we are still requesting a high volume of items through interlibrary loan. As the person who's responsible for making calls to patrons whose items have reached that billed status, being able to include the fact that their account will be clear in those conversations has made for much more pleasant encounters.

Following national trends, we have seen an increase in long-overdue books coming back to the library. In just June, we had materials returned that had been originally due in February 2019 and August 2020. We continue to get long-overdue books returned. We've also gotten books back that were so overdue they were no longer in the catalog or hadn't gotten new barcodes when we joined the Minerva consortium in June 2014.

As a whole, our circulation numbers continued to increase back to our pre-COVID levels. Most of this is probably due to the fact that we still have patrons who are coming back for the first time since we closed, but feedback suggests that going fine-free and the announcements surrounding it have had a positive impact as well.

We continue to have an unprecedented number of patrons come in to renew their library cards who haven't been to the library in many years. Many of these patrons haven't used the library since 2015 or 2016! While we can't attribute this to going fine-free alone, there are families who have come in after not using the library for a long time who have talked about how they're excited that they won't have to worry about running up huge amounts of fines.

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