

# Keeping the community engaged

BY JAHDAI JONES

Since 1982, the historical Copper Queen Library in Bisbee has been checking out books. It was established before Arizona became a state by executives from the East Coast as a mine library for residents of Bisbee.

“The folklore goes that when they arrived, they saw so much chaos and debauchery, and thought that Bisbee and its citizens needed more cultural diversion. So that’s supposedly how the library started,” Copper Queen Library Manager Jason Macoviak says.

When the mines closed in 1976, the mines were deeded to the city. Inevitably, a lot’s changed since then. The library isn’t your normal library where you can hear the sound of a needle drop, it’s actually quite lively.

For the staff at Copper Queen Library, patrons and residents always come first. They’re always looking for ways to improve and make the library more engaging and community centered for families. A few activities they’ve recently added are Giant Jenga, horseshoes and metal detectors. The metal detectors and horseshoes are available to take to a park or your backyard to see what’s hidden underneath.

“Someone can come in and check out a backpack. It’s got binoculars, it’s got a burden guide, it’s got local sites in it, and it’s got like, a community logbook, so people can see where other people have gone,” he said.

To add to the fun, their seed library has been a hit since 2016. Patrons can check out seeds, harvest them, and bring them back to the library.

“They harvest their seeds from their most successful plants and bring them back, eventually we’re going to get a really hearty stock of seed, and that’s what we’re kind of looking for,” he explained.

However, that’s not the case for most people. Many times, people end up with free seeds to plant.

In 2021, they opened a tool library making it easier for residents to have access to essential tools for home projects. Their most popular tool by far is the manual push lawn mower, especially in the summers.

All the above activities support the library’s mission to not only be a place to check out a good book, but a community resource where people can share and explore their historic town.

“It keeps our community active and engaged, and it keeps them wondering, like, what’s coming next,” Macoviak shared.



Of course, it’s not a library without books. The Copper Queen Library offers a wide selection of many genres, and always make sure to bring in the newest hits with their budget. Being a taxpayer funded program allows them to continually upgrade their book selection and library offerings. If they don’t have a book in the library, they are a part of an interlibrary loan program where they can borrow books from other libraries.

“Bisbee is a reading town and we have a lot, including kids all the way through adults, coming in and checking out books and recommending books.”

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed. In July, they received the 2024 National Medal for libraries in 2024. The National Medal is the nation’s highest honor given to museums and libraries that demonstrate excellence in service to their communities.

“We felt completely honored to be selected, and then to go to Washington, DC, and be among these other, you know, amazing libraries and museums. We felt celebrated and honored and humbled, and all those things. And now we have the national medal here that’s framed with a certificate,” he said.

In addition to the Copper Queen Library, Bisbee opened the Annex in San José, a neighborhood closest to Naco. What started out as a classroom is now a full service library serving a whole different community.

Make sure to visit the Copper Queen Library and the Annex in Bisbee. Check out their hours at right.

## Hours:

Monday & Tuesday  
Noon - 7 PM  
Wednesday - Friday  
10 AM - 5 PM  
Saturday  
10 AM - 2 PM  
Sunday  
Closed

## CQL ANNEX - San Jose

Wednesday - Thursday  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Friday  
Noon - 5 PM

