

PUBLIC LIBRARY

TRUSTEES

Nancy Federspiel, Chair.2006
Barbara Carvalho2005
Christine Sterling2004

STAFF

Kelly Collins, MLS, Director	Cheryl Labonte, Assistant Director
Karen DeMartino	Ruth-ann MacLeod
Joan Marchese	Philip Whalen
Przemek Kawka	Verity Sayles

In 1903, at what is now 738 Main Street, the cornerstone of the town's first and only public library building was placed. In her dedication speech, philanthropist Anna Whitney predicted, "The enterprise which you have all entered into with such heartiness will grow beyond your expectations." She hoped that the library "might be as perfect a public benefit as possible." The cornerstone's centennial in June 2003 provided us an opportunity to reflect on the past and plan for the future. Even as we celebrated this event in library history, we reached several other milestones quite unexpectedly.

Efforts over the past few years to improve library services and facilities reached an exciting peak this year with the completion of a design for the expansion of the building. Appointed by the Board of Library Trustees, the Library Building Planning Committee (Roland Ochsenbein, Chair; Hank Amabile; Bill White; Leigh Shanny; Ann S. Hurd; Jim Flaherty; and Kelly Collins, *ex officio*) met twice monthly. The Committee's major activities this year included

- meetings with various town boards and committees,
- developing and releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design services
- reviewing proposals
- interviewing architectural firms.

In July the Trustees hired Richmond, French Design of Winchester, MA to design a historically sensitive addition that will house a full range of services, programs, and materials for the town's growing population. By the end of 2003, the architects were finishing the preliminary design. A scale model has been commissioned and will be available after the design is finalized.

The library reached several other milestones in terms of services, materials, and public recognition:

- In March the MA Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) released its 2002 Rankings Report in which the state's public libraries are rated using data such as operating income, materials expenditures, library usage, circulation, open hours, and director's education level. In its population group of 55 libraries, Bolton Public Library rose to #11 (up from #13 last year and #26 the year before).
- In June, FY03 ended with another record for items borrowed: 44,458. Circulation has doubled in the last three years.
- In September we learned that according to state statistics, Bolton Public was for the first time in its history a net lender; that is, we loaned more items to other libraries than we borrowed from them.

- In December, *The Boston Globe* reported that ours was the most improved public library in Massachusetts. Citing the Hennen's American Public Library Ratings (HAPLR) Index, the only national ranking of public libraries, the article noted that Bolton Public jumped 62 points over the previous year: "This leap was enough to catapult the town from the state's bottom tier to the middle of the pack." HAPLR is based on 15 factors such as circulation, staffing, and funding.

Milestones aside, the FY04 budget cycle was difficult. The 4% increase we received over the FY03 budget was just enough to cover customary salary and wage increases and a corresponding increase in the book budget. It was neither enough to replace several staff hours lost to retirements, nor to fund open hours on Saturdays in July and August.

During the first half of FY04, we reviewed all services, procedures, and operations to determine if there were any areas where further economies could be taken without affecting service. Having done this, we can confidently state that public dollars invested in the library return significantly more than their face value in terms of materials, programs, and services. We present these figures as proof that the library is fulfilling Anna Whitney's hope for "as perfect a public benefit as possible:"

- During FY03, the library's entire budget was \$144,074. The retail value of just the children's books checked out from the library was \$10,000 more than that—and the value of the videos and DVDs borrowed was more than twice that amount.
- The retail value of all the items checked out of the library in FY03 was over \$1 million.
- Last year every resident paid \$28.93 for his or her share of the library's total operating costs. Unlike other common expenses—a DVD or CD, an item of clothing, a tank of gasoline, a magazine or newspaper subscription, a month of cell phone service—the public library can be used again and again for enrichment, information, and entertainment.

The Library Board of Trustees met monthly to oversee operations and review policies. In May Christine Sterling was elected to replace Peggy Harvey on the Board. The Trustees have paid particular attention this year to improving and strengthening relations with other boards and committees, including the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Friends of the Library. Major areas of cooperation with the DPW include the lighting upgrade and a grant application (unfortunately denied) to replace the century-old roof and windows.

We welcomed two new staff members this year. Verity Sayles is our newest shelver. In August, Philip Whalen became Senior Library Technician for Youth Services. "Mr. Phil" quickly established a following among the under-5 set with music, stories, and crafts twice a week. He is planning many activities for youth of all ages. Director Kelly Collins served the first year of a two-year term on the Executive Board of the Central MA Regional Library System. She also accepted a nomination to the Central and Western MA Automated Resource Sharing (C/W MARS) Finance Committee. Every staff member kept a full schedule of professional activities, conferences, and workshops.

Under the energetic direction of Mary Jo White, the Friends of the Library had a busy and successful year. They continued their popular Library Layette program, delivering board books, a custom-designed bib, and library information to welcome over 50 new "editions" (babies) in town. The Friends organized a gala concert for the cornerstone's centennial in June. Over 150 people turned out

to hear the Concord Band and enjoy refreshments on the library lawn. The Friends also held two very successful book sales, raising over \$2,000 to support library programs. The year ended with a program on hand-feeding backyard birds. Once again the Friends funded the library's museum passes. The annual membership drive netted over \$5,300 from 119 households, businesses, and matching contributions from employers.

As always, volunteer contributions are a valuable part of our success. The Trustees and staff offer special thanks to Suzy Becker for her expertise in grant writing; Shirley Sefton; Bruce Slater/Great Brook Farms for the gift of flowerpots and seeds in the fall; the Bolton Garden Club for its generous gift of gardening books and for decorating the building for the winter holidays; Clinton Savings Bank and Eileen Fitzpatrick for sponsoring bookmarks and library card sleeves; and all the local businesses who sponsored our centennial concert. Special thanks to the Crocker family/Silvester's Restaurant for donating their proceeds from concert concessions back to the Friends, and to Sharon Johns for the exquisite birthday cake!

**Financial Statement
July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003**

Salary

Appropriated	\$49,473.12
Expended	\$49,473.12

Wages

Appropriated	\$51,893.94
Expended	<u>\$50,127.04</u>
Unexpended amount returned to general fund	\$ 1,766.90

Expenses

Appropriated	\$45,469.83
Heating	2,036.04
Electric	1,996.39
Repairs	545.50
Telephone	657.16
Supplies	3,189.66
Books/Materials	30,356.31
Misc./Programs	4,938.91
Unexpended amount returned to general fund	<u>\$43,719.90</u> \$ 1,749.93