

PUBLIC LIBRARY

2006 was an eventful year for the Hampden Public Library. The first half of the year found the trustees and the Friends of the Library working to find funding to reopen the library in July. The trustees worked on a barebones budget while the Friends Group continued to raise awareness of the importance of libraries and monies for many programs the library would need once reopened. Two successful events sponsored by the Friends were held in the spring; the Golden Ticket Raffle and the April Gala.

As the Town Meeting approached, the trustees submitted the budget to the Advisory Board, attended meetings and planned for the library reopening in anticipation of a budget passing at Town Meeting.

After the budget passed at Town Meeting, the trustees were busy hiring staff and readying the library for reopening on July 1, 2006. We were fortunate that two of our former staff members, Christina Fairman and Cynthia Rowley, were available to be rehired. However, both positions were changed due to our limited budget. We now have a Youth Services Librarian who is responsible for both the Children and Young Adults. The Technical Services Librarian is now responsible for circulation as well as technical services including our new C/W MARS library system. Our search for a Library Director led us to Carol Scheier, a branch supervisor in the Springfield Library System. Carol's knowledge of library services, her love of libraries, and her gentle manner, made her a perfect choice for the Director's position. We also hired Marissa Garbecki as a Library Page. In the fall of 2006, James Nietupski was hired as a Library Page.

As the reopening date approached, the Friends Group moved into full gear. Cleaning the library from top to bottom, refurbishing the library with plants and colorful hangings and planning for a "Grand Reopening Celebration" were just some of the group was busy doing. The library staff and trustees were busy setting up and receiving training of our new C/W MARS library system, weeding through library materials, assessing what would be needed to reopen, and working with the Friends Group to insure the library would be ready for the public on July 1st. Some of those books were packed in boxes and donated to schools and libraries affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The library reopened on July 1, 2006 under sunny skies in a grand manner. State Representatives Gale Candaras and Mary Rogeness attended along with John Arnold from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and John Ramsay from the Western Mass Regional Library System. The Friends Group planned a terrific day that included an historic tour of Hampden on the Peter Pan double decker bus, games for the children, music from the Highlanders Bagpipe Group, the Melha Shriners, and an old fashioned hotdog roast.

Since July 1, 2006, the library has been a busy place. We have signed up 605 patrons with their new C/W MARS cards. Over 18,650 library items have been circulated. The library staff has cataloged 2,000 library materials, and has purchased 700 new library items. Our magazine collection is growing thanks to an "Adopt-A-Magazine" drive sponsored by the Friends of the Library. As a result of this drive, 60 new magazine subscriptions were ordered for the library.

The library had a \$70,000 budget appropriated at the Annual Town Meeting with an additional \$5,000 appropriated at the Special Town Meeting in the fall. In order to meet state guidelines for recertification, the library was required to be open for 25 hours a week and spend 19% of their budget on library materials. In order to meet these guidelines and to provide access to inter-library loans for its patrons, the library needed additional funding. The library received money and materials from the Friends of the Library and individual donations of an additional \$9,000. In addition, \$3,500 was spent from Trust Funds, as appropriate, for library materials, and \$7,000 from MEG (State money received in past years) was used for computer hardware and software upgrades and for our C/W MARS membership. This brings the total budget for the library for FY 2007 to \$95,000.

The trustees and library staff would like to thank everyone who helped open the doors to our library. We would like to thank our current library volunteers and members of the Friends of the Library for their ongoing support and advocacy for the Hampden Public Library.

In 2006 was said goodbye to longtime trustee, Elaine Kingsbury. Elaine served the library as a trustee since 1989. We sincerely thank her for her time, dedication and commitment to our library.

We also welcomed our newest trustee, Cynthia Bailey. We thank her for interest in the library and her many hours of work on behalf of the library both as a Friend and a trustee.

Kathleen Hutchison, Trustee Chair
Beth Burger, Trustee
Cynthia Bailey, Trustee