

HOLMES PUBLIC LIBRARY

2009 was a year of change as the Library said goodbye to two members of the Staff—Library Director Betsy Randall, who has been with the Library, in many capacities for at least 20 years, and to Pat Kileen, our Reference Librarian who has left to work in a Boston Law firm library. Betsy devoted herself to making sure library patrons were able to enjoy the latest and most interesting in adult non-fiction. It was under Betsy's direction that the audiobook collection expanded considerably to meet patron demand.

The Library Trustees accepted the resignation of Trustee Kelli Canniff who resigned for personal reasons and welcomed Diane Wilmarth, a devoted library patron, who, because of quorum issues, was appointed at a joint meeting of the Board of Library Trustees and Selectmen in December. Because the public library belongs to the citizens of Halifax, this summer, the Trustees voted to publish the Trustees agenda, minutes and Director's Report online via the library's web-site <http://holmespubliclibrary.org/Trustees.html>

The Staff and I are most proud of our friendly & responsive service to library patrons and of our programming for children and adults. This year, 53,258 items circulated, and program attendance was 4,381. Adult Services Librarian Jean Gallant made sure that each and every one of these items found its way into the hands of our awaiting patrons.

This summer, Library Staff and children marched in the Town's 275th Anniversary parade. The float, modeled on the theme of the Summer Reading program, was of a space ship. Staff, appropriately dressed as astronauts, marched next to it. 211 individual children participated in 48 Summer Reading programs including the Silver Lake Reads Summer 2009, a reading adventure that had students and residents immersed in the shared reading experience of Nathaniel Philbrick's *In the Heart of the Sea* and *Revenge of the Whale*.

Children's Librarian Marie Coady offered children and families a series of diverse programming including a hands on "Master Builders" lego workshop, a weekly Holmes Homework Help club, and children's book discussions for both individual children and for children with their parents. On average, the Children's Room offered six children's programs per week for various age groups including weekly infant lapsit as well as age-specific programming for toddlers, pre-schoolers, pre-kindergarteners, and regular Saturday storyhour.

For adults, the Library offered monthly evening Book Discussion groups. Perhaps the highlight of this series was when Adult Services Librarian Jean Gallant welcomed author Hallie Ephron during a surprise appearance; Hallie provided a very stimulating discussion indeed. The Library welcomed Reference Librarian Susan Scott to the Staff. Susan has a Masters in Library Science Degree and has worked both as a reference and children's librarian. Susan is currently working with the Council on Aging (COA) offering a new monthly book discussion series, and is helping Library Technician Paula Walker and the COA with the Senior Book Delivery Service.

The Friends of the Library fund so many of the Library programs, and through their generosity in

sponsoring refreshments and supplies, Library Director Betsy Randall expanded adult programming using Halifax volunteers by offering a workshops on soap making, bag making from recyclables, a hands-on greens workshop, and a four-week resume-writing workshop.

The Friends are currently working with the Carpentry Class at Silver Lake Regional High School to create a "book sale nook" in the Library lobby to supplement the monies they receive from membership and their annual June Book Sale. The "nook" will enable the Friends to do even more for the Library; although it might be difficult to improve on serving more than 800 cookies at the Library's Holidays in Halifax event in December! This year, the Friends also purchased two Flip Video Cameras which are placed in the hands of our roving Young Adult reporters who work with Children's Librarian Marie Coady to load them on the Library's Facebook site.

Technical Services Librarian Rose Ruel attended an Acquisitions training presented by the SAILS Library network. As a result, Library patrons can find out whether our Library has ordered a book, CD or DVD and immediately place a reserve on that item. Because the Library catalog can be searched from home, patrons are rewarded with added convenience, and the Library Staff are rewarded by seeing its collection more fully utilized. Besides the traditional services offered, Library patrons can download both adult audio books, music and children's picture books from home using the Overdrive and Tumblebooks software available through the SAILS catalog and the Library web-site.

This fall, the Trustees, working with a local neighborhood association, planted a tree in memory of Royce Whitaker. The tree is located next to the Library's Reading Garden and is a beautiful example of the Tamukeyama variety of the Japanese Red Maple.

Two state specialists visited the library to offer their services and support. In November, Rosemary Waltos, Small Library Consultant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners performed a site visit to help the library with space planning and to begin a conversation about writing a building program so that the Town is in the best possible position to pursue state funding for building construction and green technology.

In December, Courtney Croteau, School Outreach Coordinator for MassRIDES made a brief presentation about the Safe Routes to School Program to the Town's Crosswalk Committee, the Elementary School Principal and Library Staff and Trustees. Courtney described the services that are immediately available when Halifax becomes a Safe Routes program partner. These no-cost services include free pedestrian and bicycle education, incentives including pedometers and educational materials, and the availability of a team of engineers who will perform a site assessment. With that assessment, the Town will be eligible to apply for 100% federal funding for the recommended infrastructure changes, such as sidewalk improvements.

Looking towards 2010, the Library, with other Town Departments, are facing not only a challenge of a 3% budget reduction but a threat to the Library's certification. The Staff and Trustees though are not daunted and are looking at innovative ways to improve and increase library services through fundraising, grantwriting and even a bit of revenue producing merchandising using traditional Revolving Accounts.

In terms of the economy, the Library's internet computers, printer and broadband wireless access are continually being used by library patrons to write resumes, apply for jobs online and to improve general computer skills. This year, staff recorded 2,191 individual uses. Technology Coordinator Amy Tull maintains the Library's twelve public computers, the Library's highly interactive Internet 2.0, web-site, and the beautiful signs, posters, calendars, displays, bookmarks and other graphics available at the Library.

It is a pleasure working with the Trustees, the Library Staff, and the Town Hall Staff who have been particularly helpful to me during my first six months as Library Director, and, while our building is beginning to show signs of wear and tear, the Staff of the Building & Grounds Department keep the library sparkling and our quirky mechanical systems operational.

I cannot submit this report without expressing my sincere gratitude to Adult Services Librarian Jean Gallant who has patiently answered the thousands of questions I have asked of her. Her professionalism and dedication are exemplary, and the Town of Halifax and the Holmes Public Library are indeed fortunate to have her expertise and welcoming smile at the Circulation Desk—or as Jean puts it, her “Corner Office.”

In the next year, the Library will expand adult programming through grant opportunities including bringing the Massachusetts Memories Road Show to the Library; working with the community on a new Five-Year Plan and by investigating the possibilities of State Library Construction funding.

Finally, the Library Trustees and Staff are sincerely appreciative for the support and encouragement the library patrons give us each day. It is our pleasure to serve the citizens of Halifax.

Debra DeJonker-Berry, Director

For the Library Trustees
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Kim Cicone
Carol Julian
Diane Wilmarth

For the Library Staff
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