

Biblio File

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVID & JOYCE MILNE PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Children's Room Offers Wide Variety of Activities

by Mindy Hackner

According to one young patron, the Children's Room at the public library is "totally cool." And one excited teen was overheard saying to another, "Hey, I didn't realize they had so many great books here. I want to read this one... And look at this!" Staff efforts to reach children and to present them with a variety of materials, borrowed or used in-house, are beginning to bring rich rewards.

In recent months we have added a children's computer with Internet access, conducted a series of informative classes on Internet research, held two classes on safe biking techniques, and reformatted the story hour to include stories with activities.

Enhanced story hour

I'm very pleased to have Gisela Lehovec back for story hour after a win-

ter absence. We are very fortunate to have her years of expertise and story reading skills for younger children. Gisela will be the guest reader on Wednesdays, and I will read and hold an accompanying activity on Tuesdays, effectively doubling our program.

Physical Changes

We took advantage of the Easter break to paint the book bins in the picture book area. The children are excited about the "new" bins and large alphabet letters. Less visible changes in the larger area of the children's room include a new location for videos and a more open appearance. Parenting materials are now in the main room against the east wall, and home-schooling information is grouped on the entire top shelf of parenting next to a bulletin board dedicated to home-school use. We hope to encourage parents, whether they school at home formally or as an adjunct to traditional schooling, to use this area for information about all aspects of education.



Fern Sann began work as the reference librarian on March 1. She has extensive experience in cataloging, circulation, reference, and public services. Most recently she served three years at the Adams Free Library, where she was responsible for automating the collection.

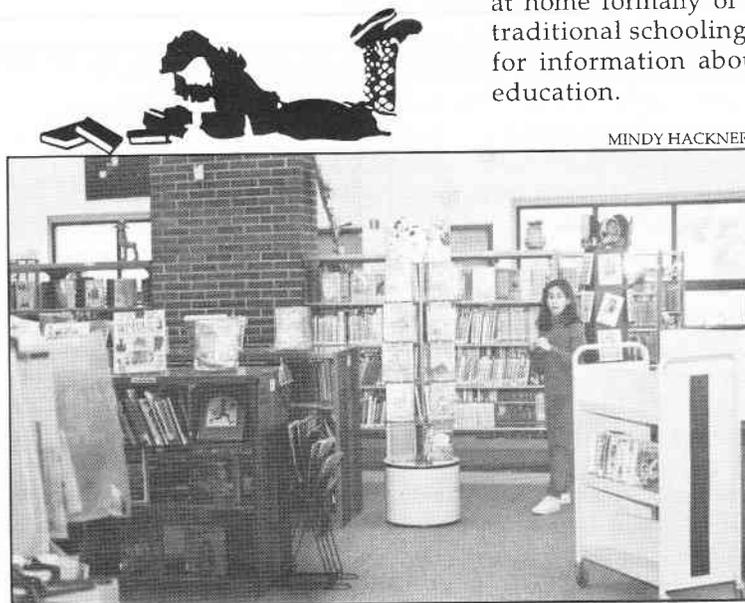
Preparation for conversion

Under Pat McLeod's guidance we have begun preparing the collection for conversion to the CWMARs system (an online circulation system). Several volunteers have been steadily working to remove cards from the card file and shelf list, at the same time looking over the collection for seriously worn items that need replacement. Many of our toy lending materials are in this category, because pieces have been lost over the course of time. I will be seeking grants or donations for these items in the future.

"Tom Thumb"

One of our biggest events this spring was the recent presentation of Boston's City Stage players and their production of "The History and Adventures of Tom Thumb." The 45-minute interactive play was a wild success with our audience. Over 75 people came to the April 20

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MINDY HACKNER

A surprised junior librarian is caught without a stack of books to shelve. Junior librarians help patrons in the children's room and work to keep the library orderly and attractive.





The ABC's of Libraries



by Pat McLeod

Editor's note: In this issue we begin "The ABC's of Libraries," a continuing series for BiblioFile written by Director Pat McLeod. Each issue will present a service or function of the Milne Public Library. It is only fitting that the topic of the first article is automation, which is already in progress and will become even more visible in months to come.

A is for Automation

au•to•ma•tion (ô'tô-mâ'shôn) n. 1. Automatic operation or control of a process or a system. This definition from Webster's II University Dictionary does not explain what the library is in the process of doing, so let me elaborate.

The Milne Library will be automated this fall. Much of the library will remain the same, but a few things will be changing. The first difference you will notice will be a computer near the card catalog. This computer, called a PAC (Public Access Computer), will have our collections within a database, and it will be very easy to search. Beyond just author, title, and subject, you will be able to search subject keyword, illustrator, series, call number, media type such as video, book, or audio, and many other

search terms. We will keep the card catalog for quite awhile, but will not add new cards to it. So if you are looking for new books they will be in the computer. As always, we will be available for help and instruction.

The second change will be your library card. We will issue new cards with a barcode, similar to the code that you see on products in the grocery store. Your new card will be plastic with a 12-digit barcode, and your old library card number will not be used any longer. All items in our library collections will also have a barcode. In books they will be on the first page (they look like a zebra stripe).

When you check books out, your new card will be scanned into a computer, bringing up your library record on the computer screen. The items you are checking out will be scanned and added to your record with their due date. When you return these items we will scan them in, and they will be wiped from your record.

The computer system will maintain

records for all our library materials and all our patrons, and the result will be beneficial to both staff and patrons. The need for paper and catalog cards will diminish. You will be able to search our collection in more depth. And your privacy will be protected, because after an item is returned to the library it is erased from your record forever.

Of course no computer system is perfect. If the system goes down we will be able to return to a paper system to capture all transactions. In such a case you will temporarily be unable to search the computer for library holdings, but our trained staff is always here to help you find the materials you are looking for.

The target date for public access to the computer catalog is the second week in September. By late September or early October we hope that circulation will be fully computerized.

In the next issue of BiblioFile I will discuss "B Is for Bookmarks: From Saving Your Place in a Book, to Saving Your Place on the Internet." ❧

Children's Room

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event held comfortably in the back lobby area of the library. Originally the play was planned as a kickoff for a vacation mini-camp on play production, using favorite children's stories. Since the week was shortened by the Patriots' Day holiday at one end and the annual book sale at the other end, we are reserving the play mini-camp idea as a summer reading program event.

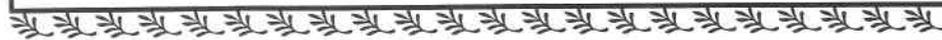
Summer reading program

Any other news from the Children's Room would have to include mention of this year's summer reading program, "Funny Things Happen when You Read." Planning has already begun on an eight-week program which will begin with children ages four to sixteen registering to "set a goal for fun reading" for the summer. Weekly activities are being scheduled for Tuesdays at the library, including arts and crafts, book talks, and some incentives for finishing



Annual Fund Update

You may have already received this year's Annual Fund appeal; if not, it will soon be on its way to you. In it, you will read about the upcoming needs of the library. Last year's Annual Fund Drive brought in over \$22,000, allowing the library to meet critical needs not covered by the operating budget. We hope you will consider supporting this drive... every gift counts!



books toward an eventual goal. I hope to have at least two nighttime guest readers or story tellers, since children love things that happen at the library out of the usual operating hours. Participating children will receive a calendar of events and a logbook at the beginning of the program. In addition, several reading lists are being developed for different age groups. Decorating will begin at the end of May. Heavy emphasis will be placed on funny things, palindromes, knock-knock jokes, amusing poetry, and some hilarious new fiction written by authors like Louis Sachar and Daniel Pinkwater. We welcome any ideas or

suggestions you might have to help encourage kids to read for the fun of it during the summer months.

I'm very grateful for the continuing support of the staff, the Friends, and patrons of the Williamstown Public Library. The Children's Room reflects this community's serious commitment to developing a love of literature in all children. Together we can create a welcoming environment where books and ideas are shared and valued and thereby create many lifelong memories. ❧



1999 Book Sale – the Biggest and Best Yet!

This year's book sale on April 23 and 24 netted \$16,247, exceeding last year's record by \$2,178. Lower expenses helped account for the higher net. Co-chairs Judy Smith and Patricia Siskind deserve thanks from us all for the months they have devoted to this effort.

Committee chairs Bud Riley (cashiers); Josie Eusden, with the help of Nan Goodell and Jinx Tong (food sale); and

Jeanne Blake (silent auction) also contributed substantially. Others also deserve special mention. Nancy Sheridan helped with publicity and saw that the dealer mailing was done on time. Larry Weber's crew of guards staffed the entrance and exit for both days. Beth Nesbitt provided the clean up crew with much welcomed refreshments. Willinet

helped publicize the sale. Williams College provided tables, chairs, pinnies, and student volunteers. Where'd You Get That? delivered balloons on both days of the sale.

"The sale went very smoothly," Judy Smith reported. "As usual, it was a community effort, with many people helping. We had an especially large number of people - about 30 - helping with the packing up of leftover books, dismantling the tables, and general clean up, which enabled us to finish the job in record time. Many thanks to all." ❧



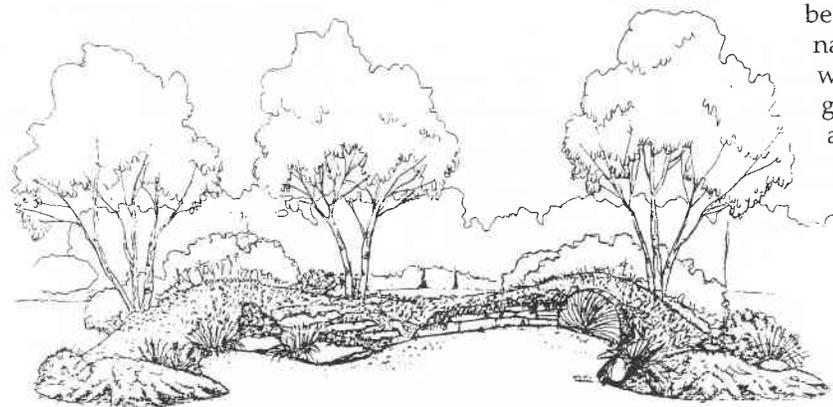
PHOTOS BY NANCY VAN ARSDALE

Clockwise from left: Judy and Larry Weber; Patricia Siskind; Nan Goodell, Josie Eusden, Jinx Tong; Judy Smith.

❧ ❧ ❧ Landscape News ❧ ❧ ❧

Stone Walkway to Sally Tenney Osborne Garden

On the master landscape plan for the library grounds, a pathway extending around the garden has always been indicated, allowing access to the garden named for former librarian Sally Tenney Osborne. Through the generosity of a Williamstown family, the walkway from the sidewalk to the garden will be constructed this summer. In keeping with the original intent of using native materials for the garden, the walkway will be built with Goshen stone and will gently curve. This generous gift will provide easy access to the garden, which was always intended as a place for rest and reflection. Completion will be no later than September 1, 1999.



VIEW FROM READING ROOM ~ NO SCALE ~

Spring Plantings

The smaller garden reflecting the larger S. T. Osborne garden will be planted this spring through a generous donation from Sally Tenney Osborne's relatives. In addition, six trees are to be planted on library grounds, all donated as memorials or honorariums. ❧



Happy Birthday, Friends!



by Judy Weber, president

The organization now known as the Friends of the David and Joyce Milne Public Library is about to celebrate its tenth anniversary. A plaque in the back lobby of the library lists the first executive board in 1989:

- Glenn Andrews, *President*
- Helen Renzi, *Vice President*
- Sam Cherubin, *Treasurer*
- Norma Fox, *Secretary*
- Margaret Chang, *Publicity Chairperson*

But this small plaque doesn't tell the story of how the Friends began ten years ago with a dozen people and grew to a membership of 552 households.

The name of the person behind the organizing of the Friends does not appear on the plaque. The late Jurgen Thomas, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Williamstown Public Library, had been president of the Friends of the Athenaeum in Pittsfield. He understood the importance of an active support

group for a public library. During the 1980s, financial support for all libraries was being reduced. The town was beginning to feel the effects of Proposition 2½ and Jurgen wanted support for the library. The Trustees were also looking for ways to expand the library.

Jurgen approached the librarian, Annette Jenks, about creating a "Friends for the Williamstown Library." Annette placed a notice in the Advocate announcing a meeting to discuss organizing the group. Margaret Chang recalls the first nominating committee meeting. "Someone suggested for president a local cookbook writer, Glenn Andrews," she remembers. "I didn't know her, but I called and she said she'd be honored to be the first president of the Friends."

The first meeting was held on January 31, 1989, at 7:30 p.m. The agenda included creating bylaws and discussing expansion of the library by purchasing the house next door.

Ten years have passed and many, many people have served on our boards and committees. Our volunteer program has expanded into many areas. Our financial support has been outstandingly generous. And, we have moved to space that our founders never imagined!

This fall we'll celebrate our tenth birthday. If you would like to help us plan our party, please call me at 458-9400. Happy tenth birthday to all our Friends! ❧

Library Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday - 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.,
Wednesday - 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturday - 10 a.m.-1 p.m.



Library Staff

Pat McLeod - *Director*

Fern Sann - *Adult Services/Reference/Interlibrary Loan*

Mindy Hackner - *Children's Librarian*

Deb Felix - *Business Manager*

Nancy Morin, Patt Patterson, and Priscilla Coulter - *Circulation*

Check the library's website at www.bcn.net/~willieb



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- Judy Smith
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Friends of the David & Joyce Milne Public Library

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