

**1997 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MORRILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

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CENTENNIAL

As 1997 comes to a close, the Morrill Memorial Library is completing its 100th year of service to the town. A committee of volunteers, trustees and library staff members has been planning a centennial celebration for the building. The committee will stage a variety of events, beginning with an open house on Sunday February 1st 1998, the anniversary of the building's dedication.

In preparation for the centennial we have been reminiscing. Old pictures have been pulled from the files including some which inspired the architects planning the renovation. (More about that below.) A video, which will feature Norwood residents sharing their memories of the library, is in the works. A commemorative brochure is being prepared that will allow the reader to glimpse the library of the past, present and future. Do you remember the library before the 1965 addition? Do you remember Edna Phillips? What community group gave money for the library to start its collection of records? Who is Mr. Popjoy? What will the library look like in 2010?

The Norwood Art Association challenged local artists to create a picture of the building and the Friends of the Library will award prizes to the first and second place paintings. One interesting characteristic of the library is the array of famous names on the exterior walls. Who are they? Why are they on the building? Should we add some new names? There are 89 names on the walls now. To celebrate 100 years in the building we hope to select 11 additional names to add in 1998. 100 names for 100 years!

The Norwood Historical Society owns Norwood's first library: a blue bookcase and small collection of books belonging to 18th century pastor, Jabez Chickering. The Historical Society also has old photographs and other library memorabilia. The Doll Collection that used to be in the Children's Library is at the Day house. That collection and other items relating to library history will be displayed there this summer. Watch for the opening in June.

Watch for the long awaited library cookbook, Novel Dishes, in late winter. Other programs are being planned for 1998 focusing on Norwood and its library. Before the year is out we hope most town residents young and old will be involved in some event.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1997

1997 has been a transitional year at the library. While collecting memories and ideas for the centennial, plans for the renovation have been delayed until the legislature passes a bill funding library construction and renovation. So while

remembering the past and waiting for the future renovation, library staff members continue to provide excellent library service under difficult circumstances.

Children's Department programs have increased in number and popularity. Story time sessions for preschoolers were offered several times a week year around. The summer reading club had 649 members. Each child set a personal goal of books to read during the summer. 497 children reached their goal. On average each child read 23.77 books! Children's librarian, Hope Anderson, visited the children in their schools and presented library certificates of achievement and gift certificates from Friendly's, Papa Gino's and McDonald's to the successful young readers.

Norwood's 125th Anniversary was celebrated through a book discussion series, YANKEES & STRANGERS, funded by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. The series highlighted local history through four books. Discussion of these books encouraged participants to examine what a New England town, such as Norwood, may have been like. Visiting scholars led the discussions and provided unique insights on the historical view of our New England town.

A variety of programs attracted capacity crowds to the library during the year. They included:

- ◆ A slide show and lecture by local scholar and Library Trustee Patricia Fanning on the Flu epidemic of 1918
- ◆ A dramatic presentation of the play A Perfect Ganesh by Terrence McNally featuring Outreach Librarian and actress Beth Goldman and Edith Honeth
- ◆ An evening with Louise Kehoe, author of In This Dark House (a former Literacy Volunteer).
- ◆ Chinese cooking with Norma Chang (40 people had a great lunch!)
- ◆ Margot Sullivan's First Thursday Book Group (morning and evening sessions)
- ◆ A "unique" African safari travelogue presented by Henry Foley
- ◆ Irish Tinkers - history and music by Tom O'Carroll
- ◆ Summerfare views of Olmsted parks, Norwood postcards and Icelandic geysers

The Literacy Volunteers continued their successful, but unending mission of teaching adults to read. 35 new tutors were trained in 1997. Along with over 150 veteran tutors, they provide individual confidential tutoring to adults in Basic English or English as a Second Language (ESL). The demand for ESL classes is so great that group classes were organized this year. Special support groups are provided for students in both programs as well as a family program for adults and their children.

In 1997 the 179 active students received 7200 hours of free instruction. Many passed GED tests or were granted citizenship

as the result of their work. For all students an incalculable benefit was increased self-esteem and confidence.

In November at the annual Harvest Dinner over 100 students and tutors were honored for their success and hard work over the year. The Eleanor Monahan award for special achievement was presented to Walter Murray who has been a tutor in the program for over 12 years. The achievements of these dedicated students and tutors are inspiring. If you would like to find out more about the Literacy Volunteers call 781-769-4599.

The Outreach Department provided delivery service to those unable to come to the library. Deposit collections are available in the housing complexes, at the Senior Center, in nursing homes and to individuals. If you or someone you know could benefit from this service call the library and ask for Outreach Librarian, Beth Goldman.

For seniors who are leery of the Internet a special class was offered in December and will be repeated in 1998 due to high demand.

Thanks to the organizations that supported library services and collections:

- ◆ Friends of the Library provided funds for assistive listening and seeing aids, the spoken word cassette collection, and programs for adults and children. They also have been preparing for the Centennial and are doing a fantastic job with book sales in May and October.
- ◆ The Women's Community Committee is the primary sponsor of the library museum pass program. They added the Roger William Zoo to their list that includes Massachusetts Audubon, JFK Library, Museum of Fine Arts and New England Aquarium.
- ◆ Norwood Community Television Corporation contributed funds to purchase video and spoken word cassettes.
- ◆ The Guild of St. Timothy provided an additional Museum of Fine Arts membership.

TECHNOLOGY

New technology continues to change the way information is delivered at the library. Through the Minuteman Library Network and the Massachusetts Library and Information Network, people have access to an increasing array of databases as well as a text-based Internet interface on all library terminals.

Among the databases available are Books in Print, The Boston Globe, Pro CD Phone and several periodical indices including General Reference Center and Health Reference Center. Many of the articles in the periodical databases are available on-line and may be printed with full text from the terminal. One result of these changes is better service for library users. Another is less reliance on the library's collection of fragile old periodicals.

RENOVATION

In November the Massachusetts Senate approved a bill which provides 160 million dollars for library renovation and construction across the state. We are confident the House will pass the bill in early 1998. Once that happens the final piece will be approval of the project by Norwood's Town Meeting. The Morrill Memorial Library is a wonderful building that we are looking forward to honoring in 1998. It also is a building in great need of repair and renewal. Library services are changing quickly and the building needs work in order to be able to provide those services. We thank Senator Marian Walsh and Representative John Rogers for their support of this exciting and overdue project - an ambitious way to begin the library's second century!

IN RETIREMENT

Priscilla J. Way

Priscilla Way retired on August 1, 1997. Priscilla served the town and the library for over 17 years as the Administrative Assistant at the Morrill Memorial Library. During that time Priscilla's conscientious attention to detail resulted in the library's financial affairs being handled accurately and with a constant view toward the best interest of the town. She also excelled as library receptionist and chief purveyor of good will.

Everyone who met Priscilla was impressed with her genuine love of people. In her years at the library she befriended and in turn became friends with not only library employees but also people in other town departments, vendors, repairmen, literacy volunteers and many library patrons. Her interest and enthusiasm was infectious and people responded in kind. Priscilla communicated her sincere caring interest to whomever she encountered.

Priscilla's many friends miss her. We wish her a long, healthy and happy retirement. She will not be forgotten!