

2002 MORRILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

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It was a busy year at the Morrill Memorial Library.

- 250,861 items were borrowed – up 21% in the second half of the year alone.
- 2,273 new library cards were issued – up 15%
- 20,198 questions were answered – up 28%
- 4205 children participated in library programs – up 175%

Although some increase in library usage is attributable to excitement generated by the renovation of the building, it is evident that there is an overall increased demand for a variety of library services including audio visual material, large print material, public computers and programs. Demand for library services comes from people of all ages from toddlers' story times to senior citizens requesting home delivery.

The Children's Department offered more programs than ever to meet the growing demands year round. A story time for young children with a parent was very popular, as were sessions for preschoolers and evening pajama story times. During the summer a record 702 Norwood children participated in the statewide reading program *A Star Spangled Summer*. 518 children received certificates at the end of summer for meeting their reading goal.

Public librarians and school librarians are working together in new ways to help Norwood children. Most fourth grade classes make a trip to the public library where they are taught to do research using the library computers. The librarians help with school projects by using a Homework Alert Form so that public and school library resources are available when the children need them. The effort at cooperation extends from elementary grades through high school.

Literary Lunch, the fourth annual reading and discussion program for 6th graders and Senior Citizens was successful again. It was run by Outreach Librarian Beth Goldman, Junior High Librarian Mary Ann McGowan and classroom teacher, Margaret Ransom. All participants, young and old, enjoyed the conversation and a delicious lunch provided by the Junior High cafeteria staff.

The Literacy Volunteers provide free and confidential tutoring in Basic English and English as a Second Language. This program continues to grow both in number of volunteer tutors and in people seeking tutoring services. Several groups of new tutors were trained during the year and are now working with students. Conversation groups for ESL students met several times a week throughout the year.

The Literacy program, affiliated with Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts and Literacy Volunteers of America, was reviewed and received accreditation from the national organization during the spring of 2002. The Literacy program receives additional funding from the United Way and the Department of Education. This year an additional donation was received from the Simoni Foundation.

On a Sunday night in November more than 100 people gathered to share a multicultural dinner at the library. The Literacy program brings together people of different cultures and different abilities to share language skills, create understanding and celebrate diversity. To join them as a tutor or a student call Literacy Volunteers at the library 781-769-4599

The Outreach Department provides services to people unable to visit the library or unable to use its resources without assistance. The Outreach Librarian delivered 5500 items to people in their homes, in nursing homes, at the Senior Center and at Senior housing facilities during 2002, a 15% increase over the previous year. In addition programs were presented at several locations around town. A flourishing book group meets on the second Friday of the month at the Senior Center. The group made a trip the National Historic Park in Lowell to supplement their reading of *Call the Darkness Light* by Nancy Zaroulis.

Serving People With Disabilities is the goal which prompted Outreach Librarian Beth Goldman and Literacy Volunteer Coordinator Bettina Blood to apply for and receive a two-year \$20,000 Library Services and Technology Grant administered by the Board of Library Commissioners. Their focus is improving library services for people, regardless of their age or disability, through the purchase of equipment and software including two adaptive computer workstations running Kurzweil 3000 software to assist learning disabled and visually impaired patrons. In addition the grant provides for staff and public training in use of the equipment. Programs were offered to increase awareness of and sensitivity to people with disabilities.

Have you read a good book lately? This year there is a new emphasis on an old library service – Reader's Advisory. We noticed that one of the most popular places at the library was the circulation desk. Not just for checking out books but for chatting with the staff about what books people liked. The staff decided to focus on sharing our love of books. More books are out on display all over the building. At the new Fiction shelving there is a place to write your suggestions. Librarians Margot Sullivan and Beth Goldman have had programs just to give people an opportunity to talk about what they have read. It is fun, inexpensive, the supply of good books is endless and they never crash or freeze.

Morrill Musings, a monthly newsletter about library activities and book recommendations, was started by Adult Services Librarian, Margot Sullivan. It includes books being discussed around the library from the circulation desk, to the staff lounge and even at Trustees' meetings. **Morrill Musings** welcomes suggestions from everyone. Let us know what you have enjoyed recently!

Programs for adults:

- **John Steinbeck's centennial** was celebrated with a program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In April students from Norwood High School presented a scene from Steinbeck's **Of Mice and Men** to an appreciative audience. Wheaton College Professor Samuel Coale then led a discussion about Steinbeck's writing.
- **Walt Whitman's** poetry and life were interpreted by Steven Collins in a program partially funded by the Norwood Cultural Council.
- **Wonderful Wednesday** during the summer highlighted a tour of Italian mosaic, a history of dolls and, of course, more chat about good books.

The Friends of the Library were busy with several events. Two successful book sales raised much-needed funds and also pleased many bargain hunting, book lovers. In May a scavenger hunt was held to help people learn more about the library. Cash prizes were awarded and a good time had by all. The Friends also sponsored a program on the impact of the Influenza Epidemic of 1918 in Norwood by Library Trustee and sociologist Patricia Fanning and a program about **Images of Norwood** by John Grove. Financial support from the Friends enriched many other aspects of library service during the year.

Meeting at the library? The Simoni Meeting Room and the Trustees' room are available for non-profit organizations at no charge. Groups meeting in the library include the Norwood Art Association, Norfolk County Railroad Club, Norwood Youth Soccer, Norwood SEPAC, Norwood Historical Commission, Norwood Cultural Council, Patriot Trail Girl Scout Council, Red Thread Adoption Agency, Morse House Restoration Committee, Democratic Town Committee, Riverside Community Care and Norwood Woman's Club. Scheduling all of these groups along with library programs is difficult. Anyone wishing to use the room should call the library at 781-769-0200 EXT 100. All meetings at the library must be open to the public at no charge.

Library Planning - In November the library began a new planning process to examine existing library programs and design new strategies for the years ahead. The last planning process was completed in 1992. Although the goals and objectives that were part of the plan were revised and updated several times in the last decade, it was decided by the Library Trustees and Staff that it was time to start fresh and examine how library programs are meeting community expectations and needs. A community committee, consisting of a cross section of Norwood residents along with representatives of general government and the public schools, met in late November. Their discussion of a vision for Norwood along with strengths and weaknesses in library service led to the selection of primary service goals for the library. During 2003 this work will be expanded into a new plan for library service.

Building renovation issues continue to be addressed. A new burner, salvaged from the old Police Department, was installed on the boiler. Two main pumps circulating water for heating were replaced. Additional light fixtures in several areas of the building have been ordered. Throughout the building air handling systems need to be balanced to optimize use of the new systems.

Changes at Minuteman! Minuteman was formed in 1983 by a group of public libraries west of Boston to provide automated library service. Its' membership expanded over the years. Norwood joined in 1990. At the end of 2002 the

network has 41 members including 6 colleges. While each library operates autonomously one computer system serves them all providing a catalog of books and other material owned (six million items), a database of card holders (650,000) and a record of annual circulation (13 million+). Member libraries run Minuteman, administer its staff, determine budget and dues and set policy. Library directors constitute its Board and serve as officers. During 2002 Minuteman member libraries and staff went through a search for a new software and hardware system, the first such change since 1991. In September after months of interviews and demonstrations Innovative Interfaces' Millennium system was selected. This will be an exciting change that will bring many new features to library users. We look forward to the new system starting in July 2003.

Thanks to the organizations that supported library services and collections:

- ◆ The Women's Community Committee is the primary sponsor of the library museum pass program. They provided memberships for the Children's Museum, Museum of Science, Roger Williams Zoo, Plimouth Plantation, JFK Library, Museum of Fine Arts and Easton Children's Museum. They also contributed to refinishing some library furniture and made a generous donation to help the library provide a computer training center.
- ◆ The Norwood Lions Club made a kind donation to provide materials and equipment to help people with limited vision use the library.
- ◆ The Norwood Cable Television Corporation gave funds to purchase video recordings, CDs, DVDs and recorded books.

A change in the Board of Trustees

After serving the Morrill Memorial Library and the people of Norwood for more than 20 years, Trustee, Eileen Sullivan stepped down from the Board. During her years as a Trustee she served as Chair for several years and was involved in many aspects of library operation. She headed the drive for a special library room for small children. She supported the Literacy Volunteers and became a tutor. She served on the 1992 Library Planning Committee and the Renovation Committee. Arthur W. Gearty joined the Board in April 2002.

Norwood: A History by Library Trustee Patricia Fanning was published in November. The first history of the town published in many years, it contains unique photos and provides an insightful slant on what makes our town so unique. Some of the photos came from the library's archives. The reference librarians enjoyed working with Ms. Fanning on some of the research.

A personal thanks from the Director to both Library Staff and Trustees. The town is fortunate to have so many dedicated people overseeing the public library.