

The Holmes Public Library

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Directors Report

September 2009

Summer is almost over, and school is starting. The Library will resume winter hours (Saturdays) beginning the week of September 7. My first months were spent observing the Summer Reading Team. This was very enjoyable and educational. Our Staff produces a creative, cooperative, inclusive and professional Summer Reading Program. This summer, 211 children participated.

Attached to your packet is a list of possible national/world programs that we could work on for adult programs. Please read through it and help guide us in selecting a few to pursue over the next year. I am particularly excited about the possibility of applying for a grant to bring the Mass. Memories Road Show to Halifax. The Road Show is a state-wide digital history project documenting Massachusetts history through family photographs and stories. Located at UMass Boston, the Road Show works with community volunteers to host a "scanning event." UMass Boston staff provide organizational support, technical expertise, experienced staff and equipment for the Road Show. I am hoping that we can begin planning to host this event in the Community Room and that the Historical Museum will partner with us.

Also attached is a working draft of a new Floor Plan. The goals of this exercise are to make the library more comfortable for staff and patrons, to increase space for new purchases and to allow circulation to increase without placing an excessive burden on staff. Two proven ways are to weed and shift collections so that the better titles are not hidden by older, less-useful works. Shifting a collection always brings previously hidden titles to light. We have already made a significant dent: Jean is working on adult fiction; Marie on Juvenile non-fiction and reference, and I am working on adult non-fiction and reference. Another way to increase usage is to respond to patron suggestions and requests. There is a strong call for increasing the size of the DVD collection. Once this happens, circulation will dramatically increase. And, when that happens, the Staff will be ready if we no longer store the individual DVD discs behind the Circulation Desk.

Attached is a planning document that I would like the Board to approve. It explains the changes, collection by collection, and includes a Floor Plan. Decisions points are:

- move the storage of the DVDs from behind the desk: DVDs will be stored in their cases. The video collection will move so that they are in a sightline from the circulation desk. Over time, the VHS collection will shrink and the DVD collection will expand.

- weed 40% of the Reference Collection. Integrate a substantial percentage of the remainder into the adult circulating collection. The Juvenile Reference collection will be combined with the Adult

- weed back issues of magazines so that only the current year is kept. This will allow us to remove a stack section from the work room behind the Circulation Desk creating more space for Staff.

Part of the Floor Plan document includes a Wish List that the Staff and I have been working on. The prices next to the items represent a true cost (from a catalog or quote). I am requesting that the Trustees approve the use of the Trust funds to purchase 6 lounge chairs for the patrons' reading area. The price listed on the Wish List (\$4590) is based on well-built upholstered chairs from a Library supply catalog. These are not necessarily the chairs we will purchase because Staff need more time making a

selection, and then, I will work with the company's bid department on the price. Often, several library supply companies can provide a quote on the same item which will also reduce the price (if they know they are in competition). I have also bolded several other items that I would like to acquire as a priority. The flat panel monitors will use less electricity than the CRTs and will provide more desktop space for the public pcs. I am hoping that the Friends will help us purchase the other items that are listed as priority. Finally, included is a draft memo to the Selectmen asking for some library property to be declared surplus so that we can clean out clutter from our Storage Room.

The Town has hired the Cambridge engineering firm of Thompson & Lichtner to draft the plans and monitor the reconstruction of the roof. The project is about to go out to bid, and the construction contract will be awarded by September 21. Construction will begin about October 1st and last about a month. We will have to monitor their progress in terms of service interruptions and safety.

Last month, I prepared a summary of Library Construction History from the 1990s. At the time, Patience Jackson, Library Building Consultant at the MBLC, stated that the new building "will have about 55% of the space that a library for a town the size of Halifax needs. It is a good interim step..." In 1991, the then new library was built at 6400 gross square feet with a projected space need in 2011 of 11,400 gsf and a collection size of 33,372 volumes for adults and 4,446 for children. The collection now contains adult 27,860 adult volumes and **12,662** children's volumes. At the time, the library was not designed for any of the technology that we rely on today.

I have been speaking with several individuals including Mark Sylvia, Division Director, Green Communities of the State Department of Energy Resources about the possibilities of solar power for our site. It is possible that there is funding available—perhaps even stimulus money. The first step is having a site feasibility study done. There may also be grant money available for that. I will continue this investigation.

I have submitted the Annual Report to the State (ARIS). This year, our circulation was 51,823. The statistics mentioned above are from that report. Jean and I have also prepared a draft of the Net Lender report. We are again a Net Lender. This month, Jean and I will work on the last one, the Financial and Compliance report.

Pat Killeen, our Reference Librarian's, last day was Wednesday, August 27. Pat is now working as a Serials Librarian at a Boston law firm, a previous employer. Pat is interested in pursuing a MLS degree, and the firm will help her in this endeavor; so while the Staff and I miss Pat very much, it is the right decision for her. In my brief two months working with Pat, I was very impressed with her reference skills, and more importantly, with her patron skills. When she was working with a patron, she was able to devote all her attention to him/her until the patron left with the information needed. This is a rare skill. I have updated the Job Description, and the position has been advertised. The closing date is September 10.

Amy and I are working with the SAILS staff to upgrade/replace several computers. I am also interested in developing a three-year plan so that each machine's software is upgraded and every pc runs the same on startup; updating and shut-down and can be controlled centrally. As part of that process, I'd like the Trustees and Staff to review the input we received from the SEMLS survey on public computers (attached) as we plan which patron type (adult, children, etc) has access to various machines. Over the next few months, I will bring recommendations regarding pc access to the Trustees.

Lisa Gilbert and I have been researching other community's Master Plans, and Lisa will give a brief report to the Trustees about her meeting with the Committee. The following are some suggestions for the Trustees to consider suggesting to the Master Plan Committee:

- Expand physical library space by 2013 using local, State or private funding in order to offer more space for use of community groups and library patrons

- Expand the library's computer resources available to library patrons and community groups. Expand the use of the library's meeting space by these groups. Continue support for development and maintenance of the equipment

- Work with the Historical Society and Museum to expand access to local historical resources and to help preserve these resources for future generations

- Investigate Halifax residents' library needs in terms of library services and hours of operation

Finally, I have been working on trying to reincarnate our answering machine so that patrons who call at night or over the weekend receive our hours. It is an Avaya Partner messaging system. I have programmed the night service button on the phone and recorded the message BUT I have not been able to make the Night Service turn on. I have read the manual and looked online. A service call can cost several hundred dollars, and I am very reluctant to schedule that service. If anyone knows someone with a background in programming these systems, please let me know.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra DeJonker-Berry,
Library Director