

## BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

The Belmont Public Library had another exciting and active year. Some of the highlights: the 2005 Library Construction Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) was increased by 15% making the award \$5.3 million. The Belmont Library Foundation completed their feasibility study. A few new services from the "library of the future" were introduced this year. New databases were added to the electronic collection including Rosetta Stone and Ancestry Library Edition.

### Staffing

The library experienced several personnel changes in 2006. Elisabeth Strachan, the beloved branch librarian for both the Waverley and Benton branches, resigned after twenty nine years of service to the Library. Elisabeth was known for her personalized approach to public service. She clearly demonstrated an enthusiasm for her work and a great ability to interact with children and patrons of all ages, and teachers and staff. Elisabeth not only worked at the branches, she also worked at the main library in the reference department and the Children's department. She also managed the volunteers. Elisabeth did an outstanding job in all areas. She was an excellent librarian and a team player who was always willing to offer suggestions and pitch in for the good of the library. She was very well liked and respected by her colleagues and others. Elisabeth was truly an asset to the Belmont Public Library system. She is now the Children's Librarian in Braintree, her home town. The Library was searching for a successor when this report was submitted.

The following is a list of the new staff who joined the library team and staff who were promoted:

Meg O'Brien is now the full time library assistant in the Technical Services Department. Meg replaced Anna Pearce who retired after 34 years of service. Meg is not new to the library system. Meg worked for two years as a part-time library assistant in the circulation department. She was looking for an opportunity to explore other areas of library work when the position in technical services became vacant. Meg is also the staff person who works at the Benton Library on Wednesday afternoons. Meg is a Town meeting member and a member of the Vision Twenty One Implementation committee.

Judy McSwain is a part-time library assistant in the Circulation Department. Judy has worked at the library for the past year as a call-in and was hired to fill Meg's position. Judy has over fifteen years of library experience, including one year at the Belmont High School Library as a library assistant. Judy is also a Town meeting member and a past PTO president.

AnnMarie Zocchi is a full-time library assistant in the Technical Services Department. AnnMarie replaced Joan O'Brien who resigned to relocate with her family to Illinois. AnnMarie was a library assistant in the Arlington School System for the past five years. She also has experience as an assistant office manager and data entry operator. AnnMarie will also provide assistance in the circulation department.

Caron Guigli became the Young Adult Librarian in July, replacing Kristen Maultsby who resigned in June to fulfill family obligations. A graduate of the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Caron made herself indispensable in Belmont by helping out in the Children's, Young Adult, and Reference departments before being appointed to the permanent post. The parent of two teenagers, Caron brings extensive experience in graphic design and management as well as a great rapport with young adults. Her background includes 14 years as a graphic designer at PricewaterhouseCoopers and as supervisor for IBM's Creative Design Center, responsible for the production of all proposals, reports, and multimedia presentations prepared by the company.

Naomi Wilson is the new children's librarian in the Jane Gray Dustan Children's Room. Naomi replaced Debbie Leopold who went out on maternity leave and decided not to return in order to stay home with her new baby girl. Naomi is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore where she majored in German. She received her Masters of Library and Information Studies from the University of Rhode Island in December of 2004. Naomi comes to us from the Windsor Locks Public Library in Connecticut where she worked as a children's librarian since receiving her degree. Previous to that, she interned in the Children's Room of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library also in Connecticut. Naomi is eager to share her passion for reading with the Belmont Community.

The Board Library of Trustees also underwent changes. Vera Dryer, after dedicating twelve years of service to the library, decided to not run for re-election and Elaine Alligood was elected to fill that seat. Lawrence McCormick was appointed an Associate Justice on the Boston Municipal Court and had to resign in

December, after eighteen years of dedicated service. Vera and Larry were both instrumental in the library's participation in the Minuteman Library Network and both shared in the vision for a new library.

In the area of professional development, members of the reference staff and the library director attended a wide variety of workshops during the year. Topics included planning a community read program (sometimes called "One Town, One Book"), reader's advisory, creating Web pages in Dreamweaver, creating online tutorials, young adult programming, providing health information to patrons, blogging, copyright in the digital age, and useful reference Web sites.

Seven staff members, including the director, attended the national conference of the Public Library Association, which was held in Boston in March. Staff enjoyed the opportunity to see demonstrations of new databases, such as Books in Print Fiction Connection, and software for museum pass reservations, room reservations, and other services. They also listened to experts and colleagues from around the country discuss such topics as the role of the Library Web site; new technologies that are driving change in libraries; developing a technology plan; outcome measurement for demonstrating results; summer reading programs; successful school-library partnerships; customer service; early literacy; and library services for those whose first language is not English.

### **Library Building Grant**

The library moved from 13<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> on the Massachusetts Board of Commissioners (MBLC) wait list for Library Construction Grant Funding.

In late December, the MBLC adjusted their legislative agenda to make adjustments for inflationary costs creating a new request for a library construction bond bill. In January Rep. Eric Turkington filed the new library construction bond bill for \$100 million to reflect inflationary costs. This bill includes 15% more funding for the projects that are currently on the MBLC's 2005 Library Construction Grant list. This means Belmont would receive \$5.3 million dollars (instead of \$4.6) for the proposed library project. Representative Brownsberger co-sponsored the bill.

The Belmont Library Foundation (BLF) completed their fundraising feasibility study with Jaques & Company. They are now following the recommendations of the study to prepare for a Capital Campaign.

### **Building Matters (woes)**

The elevator, which is original to the building, was out of service for a total of four weeks while work was done to complete the installation of a new hydraulic lift. The lift had to be replaced do to a change in the regulation codes.

The Children's department had their share of maintenance issues. The condenser fan motor and two blower wheels of the HVAC unit needed to be replaced. Because of the age of the unit (original to the building) the part wasn't readily available and had to be special ordered. The staff managed to keep their cool in spite of having to wait six weeks for the repair to take place. A leak in the water pipe of the heating system beneath the storage counters in the back of the children's room created a small pond in the work area but luckily there was very little damage. The water cooler seemed to run dry and had to be replaced because it could not be repaired.

After more than a ten year wait, the exterior of the library was finally painted in the summer.

### **Library Use Remains High**

On a typical afternoon, the library feels busy, with patrons filling all the seats in the computer cluster, working together in the Young Adult room, meeting a tutor, attending a children's program, huddling over a laptop, or reading in the periodical room. It's not just an impression – the statistics for both print and electronic resources show library use is higher than ever. Over 354,000 visits were made to the Library in 2006, an average of over 1100 daily. At the Memorial Library, adult and children's circulation totaled 529,507 items, an increase of 14,267 items over the previous year. Circulation for Benton dropped by 950 items compared to 2005, for a total of 7,265 items, because its hours were cut back in July. Circulation for the Memorial Library and the Benton Branch together was 537,178 items, an increase of 13,008 items over last year, making Belmont the third busiest library in its population group of 54 Massachusetts communities. Circulation is only one of fifteen criteria, along with collection turnover, visits per capita, funding, staffing levels, and more, that are used for Hennen's American Public Library Ratings, published annually in the ALA journal *American Libraries*. Belmont's position remained strong, tying for 6<sup>th</sup> place in its population group and tying for 16<sup>th</sup> place among 546 libraries in the state.

Because the growth in resource sharing among the MLN libraries alone increased from 400,000 items in FY03 to 1,246,000 in FY05, it was decided that all parties involved (Metrowest, MLN and the State) needed to work very hard to resolve the situation. Network-wide efforts to curb the vast number of books traveling among libraries and overwhelming the delivery system appear to have had some effect. The number of items requested in FY06 by Belmont patrons from other Minuteman libraries, and sent by Belmont to patrons at other libraries, totaled 79,817 – a decrease of 16%.

#### **Increased Access to Internet and Other Electronic Resources**

The library installed time-management software on the 13 Internet computers in the Reference Room to allow patrons to sit right down at a computer, enter their library card number, and begin to work, without having to check in at the Reference Desk. If all the computers are occupied, patrons can sign in at a “queue station” that assigns the first person on the list to the first available computer. The software, called CybraryN, automatically terminates an Internet session when a patron’s allotted time has expired, making room for a patron who has not yet had access to the Internet that day. Patrons are allotted two one-hour sessions a day, but may extend their time in 15-minute increments as long as no one is waiting for a computer. Use of the library’s Internet computers continues to increase, rising to 29,948 sessions from 26,500 sessions the previous year, but because of CybraryN, patrons are spending less time waiting for a seat. (Not included in these figures are patrons who bring their own laptops to the library and use the wireless connection provided by Comcast.)

The installation of two new copiers, a new printer/copier, and a color printer/copier ensures that patrons are receiving crisp, high quality copies of their documents. The new printing system is “self-serve,” allowing patrons to pay for their copies right at the print release station, and is saving resources by cutting down the number of pages printed by mistake.

In order to run the print and time management software on all the public Internet computers, the Library needed to acquire its own server. The server and technology upgrades all were installed by technology librarian Christine Hunnefeld. In 2006 Christine also upgraded staff PCs and converted the old staff PCs to Catalog and Database PCs for the public. This completed phasing out the last of the Windows 98 PCs.

#### **Downloadable Audiobooks and other Electronic Resources**

Two major goals of 2006 were staying on the cutting edge and expanding the electronic resources available to patrons 24/7, on and off site, through the Library Web site. One of the most exciting services the Library instituted was downloadable audiobooks from Recorded Books – books that can be downloaded from the Library’s Web site onto a patron’s computer, and then onto an MP3 player. These audiobooks can be checked out by an unlimited number of patrons at the same time, so that individuals who use the service never have to wait for a title on the list, no matter how new and popular it is. More than 1200 titles are offered by Recorded Books, including bestsellers, children’s books, and the award-winning Pimsleur language recordings, which offer instruction in 38 different languages. At this time, however, the audiobooks are not compatible with Macs or iPods, which do not support the required Digital Rights Management protection. Between June 1, when the service was introduced, and the end of December, 229 individuals created accounts with 512 checkouts and renewals.

In the last two weeks of the year, the Library began offering another new electronic service called BookNews. Patrons can sign up through the library Web site for Online Book Clubs that send them book excerpts by email every weekday. Subscribers receive the first few pages of a new book on Monday, and a few more pages of the book each day through the end of the week – plenty of time to tell whether they like a book enough to check it out of the library. Clicking on the BookNews link on the Library Web site also takes visitors to a reader’s advisory page, filled with links to book reviews, author biographies, bestseller lists, and other sources of book-related information. Included are a set of newsletters that will provide new book recommendations each month on a variety of topics (Home and Garden, Science and Nature) and genres (Science Fiction, Mystery), including teen and children’s books.

The Library added two new databases to its collection in June, bringing to 39 the number of databases available through the Web site (21 provided to all the MLN libraries, and 18 purchased by Belmont). One of Belmont’s new databases is Rosetta Stone, which offers a structured sequence of language instruction in French, Spanish (Latin America and Spain), Italian, German, Russian, and English as a Second Language). During the first six months that Rosetta Stone was available, 123 patrons tried out the lessons, logging in a total of 768 times. The other new database is Ancestry Library Edition, a tool for genealogy research with millions of U.S. census, birth, marriage, and death records; World War I draft registration information; Social Security death records; immigration lists; English and Welsh census records; and probate records dating

back to the 1500s from the U.K., Scotland, and Wales. Unlike most of the other databases, Ancestry.com is available only at the Library, but patrons have been using it with great enthusiasm to track down relatives and print out images of draft registration cards, census records, and other original documents. Patrons logged 94 different sessions and viewed 1809 pages between June and December, the first six months the database was available.

Patron use of the databases was strong across the board, as more Belmont residents learned of the resources available to them. Patrons logged in for 273 sessions using Mergent Online, a business databases offering company information and investment advice; read the Wall Street Journal Online 826 times; and together with library staff, logged in to Books In Print 739 times, up from 286 logins the previous year. For students, the Library was able to secure remote access for the three ABC-Clio history databases: American History, Ancient World History, and Modern World History, which are very popular with middle- and high-school students working on history papers and projects (398 logins). Patron use of the InfoTrac family of periodical databases provided by Metrowest and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners continued to soar, increasing from 35,486 searches in 2005 to 63,853 searches in 2006. About four-fifths of these searches were conducted outside of the library, showing that many patrons are using the databases without any prompting by a librarian. Reference librarians still are busy teaching the public how to use these resources and helping them find information, handling about 41,000 inquiries last year in person, by phone, and by email.

### **Collection Development**

To better understand the ways that patrons' research habits are changing as they master electronic resources, the reference department began monitoring in-library use of reference books in May. Patrons are asked to leave their books on the tables rather than return them to the shelves, so that usage can be recorded to help staff make decisions about the purchase and retention of reference books. To help patrons find literature reference books more easily, literary criticism series (which are heavily used by high school seniors working on their senior project) were pulled together from different parts of the library and consolidated near the shelving for back issues of periodicals.

Reference staff used a \$5,000 literacy grant from Verizon to update English-as-a-second-language and other literacy materials, with special attention to audio and video formats that can help with pronunciation. Branch Librarian Elisabeth Strachan and reference librarian Dorothy Martin re-organized the Literacy Center to accommodate the new materials and make items easier to find. The Library would like to thank Verizon for awarding another \$5,000 literacy grant, which will be used to purchase more ESL materials for adults and children, as well as books and DVDs in Chinese, Japanese

### **Computer Instruction for Adults**

Technology Librarian Christine Hunnefeld offered two sessions of the Library's Advanced Google workshop with 32 people in attendance. She also offered a seminar entitled Career Resources @ Your Library and Online, which was a collaboration with local career counselor Anna Whitcomb of Your Career Choices. This workshop highlighted materials from the Library's Career Resource Center, Library subscription databases, and websites to guide job hunters.

The CyberTeens program was offered for a third year under a new name, CyberTeen Guides, to make it clear that all patrons, not just senior citizens, could participate. Teens volunteered to help adults use a computer for the first time, send email, search the Library catalog, search the Internet, use Microsoft Word and as a new service, teens provided training on Power Point. The adults appreciated the one-on-one attention which allowed them to focus on what they were most interested in learning. The ten teens that participated clearly enjoyed the opportunity to share their technology skills as a way to give back to the community.

### **Library Programs for Adults**

Books and Bites, a monthly book review program, featuring presentations by Belmont residents and Belmont Public Library staff, continues to popular. The programs were coordinated by librarians Elisabeth Strachan and Miriam MacNair. The programs usually attract between 15 -25 people. The following are some of the reviewers who helped make the program a success: Gillian Aguilar reviewed - *Being Perfect* by Anna Quindlan, *The Sea, the Sea* by Iris Murdoch, *Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafron; Margaret Meyer reviewed - biographies of John James Audubon; Elizabeth Atkins discussed - *The City of Falling Angels* by John Berendt, *The Woman at the Washington Zoo* by Marjorie Williams; Martin Cohen reviewed- *Man Without a Country* by Kurt Vonnegut; Emily Reardon reviewed - *The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion, *Teacher Man* by Frank McCourt; Christine Hunnefeld reviewed- *All the Fishes Come Home to Roost: An American Misfit in India* by Rachel Manija Brown; Denise Shaver discussed - *Zen Shorts* by Jon J. Muth,

*A Family of Poems: My Favorite Poetry for Children* - selected by Caroline Kennedy and illustrated by Jon J. Muth.

"See the Movie, Read the Book" series featured film showings and discussions of the books that the films were based on. The film showings and book discussions were coordinated and led by librarians Elisabeth Strachan and Miriam MacNair. Some of the titles featured were: *The House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus III, *Under the Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes, *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen, and *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy.

The book discussion group at the Belmont Senior Center, led by librarian Miriam MacNair, met every month in 2006. The group had interesting and enjoyable discussions, with valuable insights from the different members of the group. Among the books discussed in 2006 were *Emma* by Jane Austen, *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell, *Love for Lydia* by H.E. Bates, and *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis.

Audiences were large and very enthusiastic for the four concerts that completed the 2005-6 Music on Sunday concerts series. The concerts, funded by the Friends of the Library and organized by Emily Reardon, Coordinator of Public Services, were held the first Sunday of the month from February through May. A total of more than 400 people attended concerts by the Synergy Brass Quintet, with a program ranging from classical favorites to folk and jazz; the Really Eclectic String Quartet, playing music that few string quartets have dared to play before: reggae, jazz, folk, blues, and rock; pianist Levon Hovsepian, a faculty member at Powers Music School, performing classical and contemporary compositions with cellist Arkady Beletsky; and classical guitar soloist Kevin Hubbard performing pieces by composers from Europe and the Americas.

The reference department launched a new lecture series, called Live and Learn that also attracted large audiences totaling 250 people. The lectures, which turned out to be entertaining as well as informative, were sponsored by the Friends of the Library in collaboration with other groups. The talk "Adolescent Psychology: The Parent Version" by Joani Geltman, LICSW, was co-sponsored by the Belmont Public Schools Parent Education Series. Photographer Carol Padden provided an introduction to digital photography courtesy of Zeff Photo Supply of Belmont. The other speakers were Debby Fenn, presenting "Organize Your Home: Create Time and Order in Your Life," and Cliff McGann, sharing tips on eBay buying and selling.

Adine Storer, a member of the Friends of the Library, designed eye-catching posters and flyers, as well as sandwich boards displayed on Concord Ave., that were crucial to raising public awareness of these programs.

### **Young Adult Programs**

Belmont Public Library's commitment to the young adult population was again evidenced in 2006 by the wide variety of programs and classes available to students in grades 7 through 12. From bibliographic instruction to concert hosting, the library partnered with Belmont youth to provide enrichment both during and after school hours, with a total number of approximately 1400 students attending 86 programs or classes.

January began with the second installment of a workshop for middle school students called "*Let's Get it Write*," a six-session creative writing class that ran on Saturdays through March. The program, which averaged 16 students per session, was led by Adele Wilson, a Chenery Middle School instructor.

February brought school vacation and time for entertainment at the library. Students had the opportunity to attend a movie screening of the anime classic *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* or learn beading from the expert staff at Belmont's *Life's a Bead*. More than 50 students attended these offerings.

March found 16 students visiting to attend a babysitting certification class.

Bibliographic instruction heated up in April and May when eight 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes (184 students) visited the library to acquaint them with the resources available to aid them with their Current and Controversial Issues project. Nine 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes (206 students) also made the trip to the library to be introduced to the YA room and the print and web offerings obtainable for the Ancient Civilization projects.

Music was the theme in June for Belmont's teens. The Belmont Public Library and the Belmont Youth Commission teamed up twice to sponsor YA events—a concert of *Harry and the Potters* and the Summer Reading Program kickoff of the yearly Band Bash. Over 275 attended these programs with approximately 120 students signing up to participate in the summer reading program at the library.

Cyberteens, a popular summer offering at the library, continued in June through August of 2006 in the Young Adult room. 10 teen volunteers held about 80 instruction sessions over the summer, and a total of 40 adults learned the secrets of the internet, word processing programs and email. The Summer Reading Program came to a conclusion in August with 28 teens attending the Dance Dance Revolution and Guitar Hero party and raffle drawing. The YA Trivia Contest drew about 75 participants over the summer, and the option of submitting entries via the Teen Center web site proved popular. With the start of school, 18 students tried Cooking with Katie, a hands- (and mouth-) on cooking program in September.

As in other years, autumn proved to be a busy time for library staff and Belmont students. National History Day began in October. Because of budget cuts, the library was unable to offer students the one-on-one instruction half hour sessions with a librarian. Instead, we conducted 12 workshops, using laptops, so one librarian could work with a group of students at the same time. The workshops were held after school to aid 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in locating both print and on-line resources. About 70 students attended these workshops with 35 others coming to the library for individual help. Librarians also helped judge projects on History Day. Four 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes also attended sessions in the YA room for instruction in finding and using materials for the literary criticism projects.

Throughout the year, teens have continued to help their community by volunteering their time and expertise at the library by offering book, music and periodical suggestions, participating in the Cyberteens program and shelf-reading.

### **Children's Programming**

2006 was a wonderful year for the Jane Gray Dustan Children's Room. A total of 186 programs were offered and 7550 children attended. This year's summer reading program, "What's Buzzin' @ Your Library," was the highlight of the year, followed closely by the addition of two pet turtles!

Summer reading participation swelled to 807 as Belmont residents turned out in droves to discover what was "buzzin'" at their library! The children's room looked extremely festive with 10 giant inflatable insects hanging from the ceiling and a caterpillar made of multi-colored circles decorating the walls. The circles contained the name of each summer reading participant and much to everyone's delight the caterpillar crept on to the ceiling and out into the hall in order to accommodate all 800 plus names. Long time staff members all commented that this was the busiest summer they could remember!

Summer Reading began on June 19 and ran for 8 weeks. Participants ranged in ages from 3-12. Movies for preschoolers were shown every Tuesday at 12, while performers of all types visited on Wednesdays at 2:00 and on Thursdays at 10:30. The Wednesday programs were geared toward older children, while the Thursday programs were for younger participants. We also offered 3 evening programs. The consistent programming day and time was new this year, and seemed to result in a greater turnout. Total attendance at the summer programs was 2165 (an increase of 285 over last year).

The Summer Reading programs were funded by the Jane Gray Dustan Trust and included the following: Book'em!: Comedy, Juggling and Unicycling with Bill Ross; Origami; Up, Up, and Away with Mad Science; Musical Fun with Greg Cooney; Dancing, Karaoke, and Games with Mr. D.J.; Books, Bugs, and Belly Laughs! with Magician Mike Bent; Sing-alongs with Liz Buchanan; Folktales East and West, A Participatory Play with City Stage; Singing, Dancing, and Storytelling with Elaine Kessler; Magician Debbie O'Carroll as Whoops the Wizard; Family Yoga; Reptiles with the Museum of Science; and finally the corn ball humor of the Toe-Jam Puppet Band and their interactive variety show.

The Friends of the Library generously supported the summer reading program by providing raffle prizes and the very popular library card holders that were given out to each child upon registration.

Librarians offered the following weekly story programs for young children: Book Babies, for 24 month and under; Stories for 2's and 3's; and a Story-Craft for children ages 4 and 5. These Storytimes ran for a total of 29 weeks. Total attendance at these popular programs increased to 2795 from 2345 children, due in part to extra two weeks in May. This year, due to overwhelming demand, we began offering two consecutive storytime sessions for the 2- and 3- year olds: 9:30 and 10:30 am. This change began in November with the intention of making the sessions more enjoyable by decreasing the amount of people in the room at one time. We hope this will be popular with our patrons in the new year. The weekly Friday Playtimes first begun in 2003 continued. This informal toddler and preschooler program allows both children and adults to meet new friends while becoming familiar with our resources. The Jane Gray Dustan Trust continues to fund the

always popular Sing Alongs of Julie Goetze and Liz Buchanan, who each perform monthly at the Main Library.

School age offerings were expanded this year to meet patron requests. The new program "Stories and More!," a storytime for children in kindergarten through grade 2, ran from January through June. The programs were thematic and included Chinese New Year, Dr. Seuss's Birthday, and Cinco de Mayo. The average attendance was 15 children. Since this program was requested by patrons, we will continue to run "Stories and More!" in the winter of 2007 with the hopes of attracting more children...

The Book Discussion for children in grades 4-6, which began in 2002, remains popular. May 2006 saw the "graduation" of a core group of sixth grade participants, but with the new school year came fresh faces and more boys! A very nice change. Also offered is an Online Library Catalog Class that targets this age group. Two sessions were held in 2006 with a total attendance of 13. The Children's Room remains a place where sixth graders can complete 5 hours of their Community Service requirement.

During the school year, the Jane Gray Dustan Trust made possible the following programs: Mad Science with "Eggbert and Ice" during Winter Recess (February 23), Family Yoga in support of Belmont Unplugged on March 8, Story Fun with Carolyn Martino in honor of National Library Week, Comedy and Movement with mime Robert Rivest during Spring Recess (March 21), Su Eaton's Halloween Fun on October 31, and Books Are a Celebration with Mary Jo Maichack for Children's Book Week.

We also commemorated National Library Week by holding a contest to guess how many books are in the Jan Gray Dustan Children's room. Three children guessed 30,000 coming closest with out going over. The actual amount was 34,930. The friends generously provided three gift certificates to Charlesbank Bookstore.

On Friday, October 13, at 3:13 p.m. forty school-age children came to commemorate *The End*-- the long-awaited conclusion of Lemony Snicket's *Series of Unfortunate Events* at our "Very Unfortunate Trivia Contest." This was a wildly successful program with one parent commenting "you have inspired my son to read!"

The Jane Gray Dustan Children's Room also had two new inhabitants who quickly became the stars of the library: two beautiful red-eared slider turtles. A naming contest was held and after all the votes were in, "Renewed" and "Overdue" won hands down.

### **Technical Services**

During 2006 several thousand items (books, periodicals, audiovisuals, etc.) were added to and withdrawn from the Library's collections. There were 9,669 books added and 10,322 withdrawn.

Technical Services staff continued the reclassification and re-labeling of various sections of the Library's book collection. A special project was to re-catalog and re-package all the TV series DVDs. These projects are designed to enhance the patron's ability to locate items by making the collection more accessible.

### **Meetings and Volunteers**

Maureen Conners, library director, was appointed to the executive board of the Minuteman Library Network. The board meets twice a month and makes recommendations to the membership in areas such as policies, budgets, proposals and long range planning.

The library director and Trustees attended Meet Belmont and registered new residents for library cards and distributed "Libraries Build Community" bags filled with informational brochures, program flyers and bookmarks. The new proposed library plans were also on display. The evening was held at the high school and was very well attended.

The tenth annual staff day was held in May and led to several new endeavors that were implemented immediately. A workshop presented by Rita Gavelis of Metrowest led to an overhaul of the Library's volunteer program. Librarians from different departments agreed to work together to set up a more structured program of screening, training, and supervising both young adult and adult volunteers, to the benefit of staff members and volunteers alike. Emily Reardon, Coordinator of Public Service, and Elisabeth Strachan, then Branch Librarian, built on their experience at the ALA annual meeting to give a presentation on reading maps -- pathfinders that cross such boundaries as fiction and nonfiction, print and nonprint media -- for readers' advisory. Staff members from different departments worked together in small groups to put together thematic displays, on topics ranging from the Red Sox-Yankee rivalry to dogs to travels in France.

Lisa Cassidy in the circulation department has continued to work with other librarians to ensure that there are book displays in front of the circulation desk. Also at staff day, Belmont resident and professional organizer Debby Fenn presented suggestions for organizing time and work spaces. Staff members worked in small groups to “de-clutter” and organize selected public and office areas.

The library’s meeting rooms were heavily booked in 2006. The Library hosted 757 programs and meetings with 19,032 people in attendance. Of these events, 327 programs were sponsored by the Library, with 10,188 people attending.

The trustees would like to thank all the dedicated volunteers who have given their time and energy to the Library, recording a total of 2,014 hours this year. Volunteers helped with specific projects, like re-organizing and re-labeling materials in the Literacy section and career center, as well as ongoing duties such as processing magazines, sorting the bins of material delivered from other MLN libraries, preparing art projects for story times, shelving and organizing books, delivering books to the homebound, and giving book reviews at the monthly “Books and Bites” presentation. These contributions are very important in providing services to the public.

The library is fortunate to have the support of many community groups, most notably the Friends of the Library, the Rotary Club, the Garden Club and the Historical Society.

The Friends of the Library held their three day annual book sale in October and once again it was extremely successful. The Friends are also having great success with the every day book sale which is in the main corridor of the library. The money raised supports adult and young adult programming; helps purchase reading incentives for the Children’s Department and funds the museum pass program. The museum pass program consists of passes to seventeen institutions - The Aquarium, Audubon Society, Children’s Museum, Boston by Foot, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Discovery Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Gardner Museum, Harvard Art Museum, Harvard Natural History Museum, John F. Kennedy Museum, Plimoth Plantation, Science Museum, Zoo New England (Franklin Park and Stone Zoos) and the Gore Place Mansion. These museum passes are available to all residents of Belmont who have a current Minuteman Library Network card. The passes circulated 1,843 times.

The Friends of the Library continue to fund the “Belmont Bugle”, the library newsletter designed by Deitra Barnes, Administrative Assistant, with the staff and library director as contributing writers.

The Friends of the Library once again sponsored the luncheon for the tenth annual staff day.

The Friends continued to sponsor the ever-popular Author Series in 2006. The programs were coordinated by Jennifer Altshuler and Robin Ohringer. The programs were well attended (over 300 attendees) and enthusiastically received. Programs in the series included discussions and book signings by the following authors:

- Justin Locke discussing his book *Real Men Don’t Rehearse: Adventures in the Secret World of Professional Orchestras* on February 7th
- Jan Cannon discussing her book *Now What Do I Do?: The Woman’s Guide to a New Career* on March 7<sup>th</sup>
- Children’s author Matt Tavares discussing his books on May 9<sup>th</sup> (*this program was an Eliese C. Creane Memorial program*)
- Jane Lancaster discussing her book *Making Time: Lillian Moller Gilbreth—A Life Beyond “Cheaper by the Dozen”* on May 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Frances Moore Lappe, author of *Diet for a Small Planet*, *Hope’s Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet*, and *Democracy’s Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life*, discussing her books on October 10<sup>th</sup>
- Daniel Golden discussing his book *The Price of Admission: How America’s Ruling Class Buys its Way into Elite Colleges—and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates* on November 1<sup>st</sup>
- A panel of authors and editors—Kate Flora, Leslie Wheeler, Ruth McCarty, and Cathy Cairns—discussing “The Art of Writing Mysteries” on December 12<sup>th</sup>
- Photographer Paula Lerner discussing her book *Why We Walk: The Inspirational Journey Toward a Cure for Breast Cancer* on December 13<sup>th</sup>

For the second year, the Friends held a special evening at the Charles Bank Bookstore to say thank you to the organization’s “Superfriends”. “Superfriends” members were able to shop on a Sunday evening when

the store would normally be closed and receive a 20% discount too. Wine, cheese, and lots of conversation and shopping made for a lovely event.

The Wildflower Garden Committee, Nanny Almquist, Susan Marsh, and Mark Saidnawey continue beautifying the garden.

The Belmont Historical Society continues to staff the Claflin Room with a volunteer several times a week, to help individuals locate documents, maps, and other items of historical significance that are stored there.

### **Benton Branch**

New hours started at the Benton Branch on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Because of budget cuts, the library hours were reduced to five hours per week and the branch staff were transferred to the Main library. The Benton is now open on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 6:00. Even though the hours and staffing changed, programs continued on a smaller basis. The Benton still provided lively storytimes, (conducted by volunteer Amy Wagenfeld) sing-alongs and playtimes. The adult book discussions at Benton, which are now led by members of the group, included "Atonement" by Ian McEwan, and "The Lost Upland" by M.S. Merwin. A series of "See the Movie, Read the Book" featured "The Quiet American" by Graham Greene and "Cider House Rules" by John Irving. Meg O'Brien, Technical Services Library Assistant, has been doing a wonderful job covering at the branch during this time. She has been helped by Judy Mohnkern, who has been volunteering at the Branch since July. Reference librarian, Ellen Girouard, has also been covering a few hours a week.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hal Shubin, Chairman