

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

The Belmont Public Library had another exciting and active year. Some of the highlights: the library is now number eight on the waiting list for the 2005 Library Construction Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), the Library began planning for its first community-wide reading program (One Book One Belmont), new software was installed which allows patrons to reserve museum passes themselves, and new databases were added to the electronic collection including: *Historical New York Times* (taken over after Metrowest dropped its subscription); *Science Reference Center*, *CQ Global Researcher*, and *World Geography*.

Staffing

In August of 2007 the library hired Corinne Chan to fill the newly created Generalist position. This position replaced the Branch Librarian position. Corinne received her Master's degree in Library Science from the University of Hawaii and is no stranger to Belmont. When Corinne moved to this area from Hawaii, her first job in New England was working for the Belmont Public Library. She was the Branch librarian from 1985 – 1987. After a maternity leave, Corinne worked as a reference librarian part-time until 1995 when she became the reference Librarian for the Newton Public Library. As a Generalist, Corinne has professional responsibilities in all departments, including the branch library; she also coordinates and supervises the Volunteer Program, and helps plan programs for the Adult department. In her spare time, Corinne is an accomplished Cellist and plays with the New Philharmonic Orchestra.

Members of the staff and the library director attended a number of workshops during the year. Topics included planning a community read program, reader's advisory and useful reference Web sites. In addition to these, the reference staff attended a variety of workshops. Topics included E-journal finder, a database acquired by MLN to help locate journal articles; digital cameras; Web 2.0; reaching patrons online; introduction to VLANs, a type of computer networking; and graphic novels for young adults. In addition, representatives from the companies providing three of the library's database subscriptions – Mergent, Books in Print, and Science Reference Center – visited the library to train the reference staff in using these products. Staff also attended a training session to learn the Library Insight software for making museum pass reservations. Technology librarian Christine Hunnefeld set up the library's new laptops as a mobile training lab, so that the workshops could be hands-on.

Board of Trustees

In December, Jil Westcott moved from Belmont, resigning from the Board of Library Trustees. The remaining Trustees and the Library Director thank her for many years of service to Belmont.

Jil joined the Board in 1998, and served as Chair from 2004 to 2006. During that time, the library submitted an application to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for a grant to help pay for a new library building. The application was approved and Belmont is number eight on the state's list, waiting for an appropriation of funds. We are looking forward to a new building that can provide better services to all citizens from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. In 2002, Jil served as the Trustees' representative to the Cluster Planning Task Force. This group studied uses of town land in the Concord Ave/Cottage St area. They recommended building a new library across Concord Ave. and keeping the current library building for another town use. The town's Capitol Projects Overview Committee developed that plan further in its October 2007 report to the Selectmen. They found "significant synergies" in reusing the existing library building, possibly for a new police headquarters, and constructing a new library and a new athletic field house across the street. We look forward to continuing this conversation.

Library Building Grant

The library moved from 10th to 8th on the Massachusetts Board of Commissioners (MBLC) wait list for Library Construction Grant Funding.

In late December 2006, the MBLC adjusted their legislative agenda to make adjustments for inflationary costs creating a new request for a library construction bond bill for \$100,000,000. 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 bill has yet to be approved.

Building Matters (woes)

The elevator, which is original to the building, continues to experience mechanical difficulties and was out of service periodically. The HVAC unit in the Flett Room (original to the building) caught fire and had to be replaced. The condenser fan motor and coil had to be replaced in the HVAC unit in the attic which cools the circulation department. This happened during a heat wave, forcing the library to rent an air conditioning spot cooler for one week. The HVAC unit in the Children's department was also replaced because of the age of the unit (original to the building).

Library Use Remains High

The statistics for materials remain steady and usage of electronic resources is on the rise. At the Memorial Library, the annual circulation for adult and children's totaled 531,065 items, a slight increase of 1,558 items over the previous year. Circulation for Benton decreased, partly due to the reduced hours. Due to this decrease, the combined annual circulation for the Memorial Library and the Benton Branch was 535,693 items, a decrease of 1,485 items over last year, a first in almost a decade. The FY 2007 MBLC library circulation data report shows Belmont as the busiest library in its population group of 54 Massachusetts communities.

Improved Internet Access and new Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)

Many people continue to use the computers at the Library for Internet access. The time management software installed in 2006 helps to insure equitable access to the Internet computers. There were 31,503 Internet sessions in 2007 up from 29,948 sessions in 2006 and 26,500 sessions in 2005. (Not included in these rising figures are the growing numbers of people who bring their laptops to connect to the Library's wireless connection.)

The Minuteman Library Network added several new features to the Library's catalog. The most visually striking aspect of the enhanced catalog is the addition of book jackets images. The book jackets link to further information about the book such as book summaries, reviews, and table of contents.

Searching the catalog is now easier with the addition of a spell check feature. If search terms are mistyped or misspelled the catalog will offer "Did you mean" suggestions so patrons can select the correct spelling. Search results are improved with a new relevancy ranking to put the items that people are most likely to be looking for at the top of the hit list.

Patrons who have provided their email address now receive reminder notices two days before their items are due to help them avoid overdue fines. If overdue fines or other fees are incurred, these may be paid online with any major credit card through the "My Account" feature. This is the first time that the library has been able to accept credit card payments. Patrons also appreciate the ability to clear up their library account when the Library is closed, so that they may place online requests for books, movies, etc.

Museum Pass Software, Book News, and Downloadable Audio

This summer, the library expanded its self-serve offerings by acquiring Library Insight, a program that allows patrons to make their own museum pass reservations. The software also sends out email reminders to patrons about their reservations; keeps usage statistics; and can be programmed to keep track of museum closings, school vacations, and library restrictions such as one pass per family per day. Staff began using the system in August and patrons began making their own reservations online after Labor Day. Patrons still must interact with staff in order to register to use the system and to change or cancel a reservation. From September through December 15 percent of all reservations were made by patrons, a percentage that is expected to grow once more patrons have registered.

The addition of BookNews, an electronic reader's advisory service launched last December, has proven popular with patrons and staff alike. A total of 425 patrons have signed up for the Online Book Clubs, which send members book excerpts by email every weekday. Subscribers receive the first few pages of a new book on Monday, and the next few pages each day through Friday. BookNews also offers an eResource Center with newsletters that provide recommendations in different genres, such as science fiction, nonfiction, business, home and garden, etc. More than 250 patrons have signed up to receive these newsletters – which include book jackets, a short review, and a link to the catalog – by email, and even more patrons view the newsletters online. Best of all, staff members are using the BookNews software to generate their own attractive and colorful book lists and newsletters. Childrens' book lists have been especially popular, including pirates (173 hits), dinosaurs (175 hits), and new baby (96 hits); for adults, book lists about Central Asia (tying in with the theme of the community-wide read) have received 522 hits, and the online version of the Bugle, the library's quarterly newsletter, received 655 hits. For all these services together, patrons and staff have clicked from a book jacket to a catalog entry 55,717 times. "Your numbers are fantastic!" wrote Brian Beecher of BookNews in an email. "With all the tools you have created your patrons are really using the service. I think you would be our top performer for your size library."

The library also completed its first full year of offering 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. During the year 156 new accounts were established and 803 audiobooks were checked out and renewed. However, the audiobooks still are incompatible with Macs and iPods, which do not support the required Digital Rights Management protection.

More Electronic Resources (Online Databases)

The Library continued to expand its roster of online databases with the addition of the *Science Reference Center*. Requested by the children's department for help in answering homework questions, this database contains newspaper, magazine, and reference articles appropriate through the college level. We also added *CQ Global Researcher*, supplementing the US-oriented *CQ Researcher* already owned by the library, and *ABC-Clio's World Geography*, the most up-to-date and comprehensive source of country information the staff could find. The library already subscribed to *ABC-Clio's American History*, *Ancient World History*, and *Modern World History*, all useful to middle and high school students working on social studies papers and projects. Students logged in to the four *ABC-Clio* databases 471 times, up from 378 times last year (a 25% increase).

During the summer the library subscribed once again to the *Historic New York Times*, after Metrowest dropped its network-wide subscription after only a few years. Offering full text and graphics of the newspaper back to 1851, the *Historic New York Times* is invaluable for students, book club members, and historians; Belmont patrons conducted 2895 searches in 2007. Use of other online databases continued strong: the number of searches in the *Wall Street Journal* rose from 826 to 1108 (a 34% increase); 124 patrons created accounts to learn a foreign language through *Rosetta Stone*, bringing the total number of accounts to 248; and patrons conducted 40,581 searches with *Infotrac*, a collection of databases offering journal, newspaper, magazine, and encyclopedia articles on a wide range of topics and provided by Metrowest and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Reference librarians continued to teach patrons how to use the databases, both in classes and on an individual basis, and handled more than 38,000 reference questions in 2007 in person, by phone, and by email.

One Book One Belmont

For the reference department, a major focus of the year was laying the groundwork for the Library's first town-wide reading program. The idea of a community-wide read, introduced in 1998 in Seattle, has grown to include hundreds of libraries around the country, and was part of the library's long range plan. To build support for implementing this program in Belmont, in March the library invited representatives of town departments and commissions - as well as library staff, trustees, Friends, and Foundation - to join a planning committee.

The committee, which was chaired by the Coordinator of the community read and reference department head, Emily Reardon, included Martha Reagan and Denis Fitzpatrick, Belmont Public Schools; Nava Niv-Vogel, Council on Aging; Fran Yuan and Laurie Graham, Human Rights Commission; Lauren Becker, Youth Commission; Mary Keenan and Heli Tomford, Library Trustees; Linda Atkinson,

Belmont Library Foundation; Roma Kelley and Jenny Altshuler, succeeded by Louise Halstead, Friends of the Library; and from the staff, Maureen Conners, director, and Corinne Chan, Caron Guigli, Christine Hunnefeld, Miriam MacNair, and Denise Shaver.

The committee wrote a mission statement; agreed on a name for the program, One Book One Belmont; and, after carefully reviewing a list of books prepared by library staff, selected the book *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time*, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. The book tells the story of Greg Mortenson, a former mountain climber who has devoted himself to build schools, especially for girls, in the remote mountains of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was chosen because of its broad appeal to men and women alike and its inspiring message that a single individual really can make a difference.

Emily invited Greg Mortenson to speak in Belmont; at the same time, Belmont Day School invited him to speak with its students. Mortenson agreed to visit Belmont on Tuesday, February 26, 2008, practically a year later, speaking at the Day School in the morning and at the Library at 7 PM. Over time interest in Mortenson grew more intense, so that his talk, scheduled first at the Chenery Middle School Auditorium, was later moved to the larger auditorium at Belmont High School.

The planning committee met throughout the year, building support for the program on many different fronts. A total of 70 paperback copies of the book were purchased, most to add to the collection and a smaller number to circulate informally among staff, program participants, and the community. A fundraising letter was sent to about 100 local businesses, which resulted in cash and in-kind donations to supplement contributions from Belmont Against Racism, the Youth Commission, the Rotary Club, and very generous support from the primary sponsor, the Friends of the Library. The Library also applied for and received a \$500 grant from the Belmont Cultural Council.

Adine Storer, a graphic designer and publicity chair for the Friends of the Library, volunteered to design the One Book One Belmont logo, which was printed on banners to be hung in Belmont Center in January and February, 2008. She also designed eleven "READ" posters, modeled after the American Library Association posters, showing local celebrities reading *Three Cups of Tea*. These eye-catching posters featured government officials, including the Selectmen and the police and fire chiefs; local business people, including the owners of Belmont Wheelworks and Chocolate Dream; and news anchor Mary Richardson and author Tom Perrotta. The posters were displayed at the Library, the schools, and businesses throughout town beginning in November. Library staff also prepared a reading guide that included book discussion questions, a calendar of events, and recommendations of other books, CDs, and DVDs about Central Asia.

With suggestions from the planning committee, library staff planned a series of book discussions and programs for January and February 2008, designed to represent different aspects of the culture of Central Asia. To expand community involvement, collaborations were developed with different community groups. The calendar of events included a photography exhibit and presentation held at the Belmont Gallery of Art; a movie presented by Belmont World Film; two lectures cosponsored by Belmont Against Racism; a concert; a crafts workshop for school-age children cosponsored by the Youth Commission; and a kite-making workshop for teens. The first event, a training session for book discussion leaders, was held on November 19, 2007. Community response to these activities will be reported next year.

Collection Development

The Library continued its efforts to keep up with patrons' requests for new formats. Ten reference sets, including *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* and *American Decades Primary Sources*, were purchased in electronic rather than print form. With remote access, they are available to patrons at home, at any hour of the day and night. As additions to the *Gale Virtual Library* provided by Metrowest and the MBLC, they can be searched separately or with any Infotrac database.

The Library is phasing out its purchase of VHS videos in favor of DVDs, and is buying most audiobooks on CD rather than cassette.

In response to patron requests, the library created a separate foreign film collection, composed of DVDs pulled from the regular collection as well as new purchases. This collection includes about 120 DVDs, but most are in circulation rather than on the shelf. A \$5000 Verizon grant was used to purchase DVDs in Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Korean; to purchase contemporary and classic books in Greek and Russian; and purchase English as a Second Language material, including kits of books and CDs, pronunciation guides, and dictionaries. The Library thanks Verizon for enabling the growth of the ESL collection. As part of its review of the Reference Collection, the library updated its foreign language dictionaries, including Russian, Hebrew, Japanese, and Armenian.

More Adult Programs

The Music on Sunday concert series, organized by Emily Reardon, entered its third year with large and enthusiastic audiences who enjoyed the roster of high quality musicians performing a wide variety of styles. Concerts ran monthly from January, when the library reopened for Sunday service, through May, with a total of 500 people in attendance. Performers were the Cantabrigia Brass Quintet, with a repertoire of classical through jazz; the Jem Jazz Trio + 1, featuring Belmont clarinet player Mort Speck; Two Old Friends, performing Irish and American folk music for St. Patrick's Day; Calypso Hurricane, with a rousing program of island songs; and Trio Des Jardins, featuring Belmont resident Kenneth Stahlberg performing baroque and classical selections. In December, jazz vocalist Rebecca Kilgore and her band, BED, visiting from the West Coast, presented a "Jazz for the Holidays" program of Big Band songs to a large (80 people) and appreciative audience.

The Library offered workshops on Ancestry Library Edition, Career Resources @ Your Library and Online, and Cool Tools: Free, fun, and helpful tools at the Belmont Public Library website.

The Ancestry Library workshop was hands-on using the Library's mobile training lab. It was a great way for patrons to become more familiar with this Library provided database.

Two sessions of the Career Resources @ Your Library and Online workshop were held. This workshop was a collaboration with Anna Whitcomb of Your Career Choices. Participants learned about career resources online; with a focus on what is available through the Library's website and print materials in our Career Center.

The Cool Tools workshop was an overview of the many things patrons can do through our website such as sign-up for chapters of books in their email, download e-audiobooks, learn a new language with Rosetta Stone, prepare for the SAT and other standardized tests, access their Library account online, research their ancestors with Ancestry, read newspaper and magazine articles for free, and research companies.

Books and Bites is a monthly book review program featuring presentations by Belmont residents, Belmont Public Library staff, and local authors. In 2007, programs were enthusiastically received, with an average of fifteen to twenty-five people attending each program. The Books and Bites programs were coordinated by librarian Miriam MacNair. The following are some of the reviewers who helped make the program a success: Harriet Barnett reviewed *March* by Geraldine Brooks and *The March* by E.L. Doctorow; Sarah Ellison reviewed *Fig Eater* by Jody Shields, *In My Mother's House* by Margaret McMullan, *Beethoven's Hair* by Russell Martin, and *Mozart and Vienna* by H.C. Robbins; Marcia Lynch reviewed *Pomegranate Soup* by Marsha Mehran and *Lily's Ghost* by Cheryl Drake Harris; staff members Emily Reardon and Christine Hunnefeld did a presentation on readers' advisory tools; Elizabeth Atkins reviewed *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai, *String Too Short to Be Saved* by Donald Hall, and *Seasons at Eagle Pond* by Donald Hall; staff member Naomi Wilson reviewed *The Runaway Princess* by Kate Coombs, *Belinda and the Glass Slipper* by Amy Young, and *The Love for Three Oranges* by Sergei Prokofiev; Martin Cohen reviewed *A Short History of Myth* by Karen Armstrong; Christine O'Neill reviewed *The Inferno* by Dante (translated by Robert Pinsky), *Dante in Love* by Harriet Rubin, *The Dante Club* by Matthew Pearl, and *The Dante Game* by Jane Langton; staff member Miriam MacNair reviewed *My Antonia* by Willa Cather; Natalie Pascoe reviewed *The Great Influenza* by John M. Barry; Ethel Twichell reviewed *Suite Francaise* by Irene Nemirovsky.

The book discussion group at the Belmont Senior Center, led by librarian Miriam MacNair, continued to meet in 2007, with stimulating discussions. Among the books discussed were *A Hope in the Unseen* by Ron Suskind, *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte* by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Marble Faun* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo, and *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

The book discussion group at the Main Library, led by librarians Miriam MacNair and Corinne Chan, had excellent discussions. Among the books discussed were *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen, *A Hope in the Unseen* by Ron Suskind, *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton, *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot, and *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See.

Young Adult Programs

Belmont Public Library's commitment to the young adult population was again evidenced in 2007 by the wide variety of programs and classes held for students in grades 7 through 12. From bibliographic instruction to concert hosting, the library provided enrichment for Belmont youth both during and after school hours, with a total number of approximately 1100 students attending 55 programs or classes.

The Library Director and Children's Coordinator, Denise Shaver, joined Young Adult Librarian, Caron Guigli in presenting "Click with your Kids" to the Chenery Middle School PTO parents. The program showed parents the wealth of materials available via the library website including homework help, book recommendations, encyclopedias, and community information; all are accessible from home or at the library. More than 50 adults present viewed the Library's website and received instruction in database and other on-line offerings.

The library held its first professional development day for the Chenery 7th and 8th grade teachers. Caron Guigli and Emily Reardon, Coordinator of Public Services, highlighted resources that would be helpful for the seventh grade country project and the eighth graders History Day Project.

As in other years, the Childcare & Babysitting Workshops proved to be very popular, so popular, in fact, that three different classes were held with Nurse/educator Janice Nolan Henry, including, for the first time, a session held entirely for boys, called Babysitting for Boys. A total of 49 teens attended these fun and informative workshops.

In February, the YA Librarian teamed with the Chenery 7th grade English classes to booktalk adventure/survival fiction. A discussion of classic and new fiction stimulated the imagination of about 100 students, and many were seen visiting the library in following days to check out an interesting title to fulfill their unit assignment.

Bibliographic instruction began again in April and May when twelve 10th grade classes (275 students) visited the library to become familiar with the resources available to aid them with their Current and Controversial Issues project. Eight 6th grade classes (165 students) also made the trip to the library to be introduced to the YA room and the print and web offerings available for their Ancient Civilization projects. Twenty-nine Belmont Day School 8th graders also visited in March to learn about the library and use its resources for their Holocaust project.

Inclement weather forced the annual Band Bash indoors again this year, but nothing stopped the fun or music. 125 students and six bands participated in the event, which was co-sponsored by the Library and the Youth Commission. The Band Bash was again the kick-off of Belmont's Summer Reading Program, with approximately 100 students signing up for the first program which was held entirely on-line with E'vanced System software. In addition to the on-line SRP, our YA Trivia Contest attracted 89 participants, with weekly prizes of gift certificates to Barnes and Noble bookstores. Summer concluded with 16 teens attending the YA Ice Cream Sundae Party and raffle drawing.

As in other years, the beginning of another school year proved to be a busy time for library staff and Belmont students. National History Day began in October, and 16 workshops were held after school to aid 8th grade students in locating both print and on-line resources for their History Day projects. About 80 students attended these workshops with 40 others coming to the library for individual help. Six 12th grade classes (110 students) also attended sessions in the YA room for instruction in finding and using materials for their literary criticism thesis projects.

The Cyberteens program continues to be popular. The program was held during the months of July and August in the Young Adult room. This year the teen volunteers held 123 instructions sessions over the summer, and a total of 44 adults learned the secrets of the Internet, word processing programs and email.

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

2007 was a busy year for the Jane Gray Dustan Children's Room. A total of 206 programs were offered and attendance totaled 7820 children -- a 3.6% increase over last year!

As always, our summer reading program was a big draw. The children's room had a party-like atmosphere as we promoted the "Catch the Beat" theme with records, CDs, and disco balls hanging from the ceiling. At the kick-off event, "bubbleologist" Casey Carle put a lucky reader in a five foot bubble! This feat kept scores of kids busy for weeks, as they researched the ultimate soap bubble recipe.

Summer reading participation capped at 646 children, a noticeable decrease over last year. This may be attributed to that fact that, in 2006, nearby Watertown did not hold a Summer Reading program; as they transitioned into their new building some of their patrons were directed to Belmont's program. Despite this drop, attendance at weekly programs remained high.

The program began on June 18 and ran for 9 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 our older children, while the Thursday programs were for our younger participants. We also offered 4 evening programs. The consistency of our programming day and time continued to be popular. Total attendance at our 25 summer programs was 1928.

Our Summer Reading performances were funded by Jane Gray Dustan Trust and included the following: Bubblemania, science programs with both Mad Science and the Museum of Science; Square Dancing, Storytelling, Sing Alongs, and finally, a Karaoke Party to celebrate the hard work of "Catch the Beat" participants.

The Friends of the Library generously supported the summer reading program by providing raffle prizes and the "Beat it I'm Reading" door knob hangers that were given out to each child upon registration. This year's prizes were purchased locally at Belmont Toys, which provided generous discounts.

Librarians offered the following weekly story programs for young children: Book Babies, for children 24 months 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 3405 children from 2795. This can be attributed in part to the fact that storytime sessions for the 2- and 3- year olds were offered at both 9:30 and 10:30 am. Although this change began in 2006, the impact was minimal since November 2006 was the first month. The two sessions allow us to reach more people and keep the Flett room from becoming overcrowded. As predicted last year, this has been a popular change. 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.

We again offered a monthly storytime for children in kindergarten through grade 2, running from January through May. Total attendance was 51. As with last year, we hoped for a higher turn out since this program was often requested by our patrons. We will however continue to try this program in the winter of 2008, but change the day to later in the month, with the hopes of increasing turnout.

The Book Discussion for children in grades 4-6, which began in 2002, remains popular with a nice mix of girls and boys. In addition to the two Library Catalog Classes we offered for this age group, this year we introduced a workshop on Searching the Web, which we presented twice. Also, 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 special programs: Birds of Prey with Wingmasters during Winter Recess (February 22), The Magic of Reading with Steve Rudolph in honor of National Library Week (April 19), A Howling Halloween Sing Along with Hugh Hanley on October 31, Big Joe the Storyteller for Children's Book Week (November 14), and The Magic of Bonaparte on December 27th.

The Belmont children's librarians presented two unique programs this year. In response to the popularity of the "Rainbow Magic" series of books, a "Fairy Extravaganza" was offered on February 28th. By completing seven craft and trivia activities, 110 children and parents earned feathers to save fairyland, just like their favorite characters in the book! The second unique program was a Family Scavenger Hunt on March 20, organized in conjunction with *Belmont Unplugged*. Fifty participants scoured the entire Library to answer a series of questions that pointed out many of our library's unique features—from the stained glass windows in the children's room to the

relief map on the third floor. Each child who completed the hunt received a book of their choice. Both of these highly successful programs were made possible with funding from the Friends of the Library.

This year the children's room focused on purchasing more foreign language materials and graphic novels. The foreign language collection expanded to include books in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, especially those that are bilingual. A multi-volume Sesame Street DVD series to teach ESL was also purchased. Funding was provided by the Verizon Grant. The "graphic novel" is a genre that is becoming increasingly popular with younger readers. To meet demand, multiple copies of well reviewed titles were added, as were library bound editions of popular Marvel comics.

The children's room staff continued to weed old and unused materials from all areas of the collection, to help keep the collection fresh and make room for new arrivals.

Permanent staffing in the children's room in 2007 consisted of Children's Coordinator Denise Shaver, children's librarian Naomi Wilson, and library assistants Judy Kennedy and Mary Woods.

Technical Services

During 2007 several thousand items (books, periodicals, audiovisuals, etc.) were processed. 10,254 items were added and 14,589 items were withdrawn.

Technical Services staff continued the reclassification and re-labeling of various sections of the Library's book collection. A special project was to pull and re-catalog the foreign films to create a separate foreign film collection. The project was implemented in response to patrons' requests.

Meetings and Volunteers

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

The eleventh annual staff day was held in June and once again provided stimulating concepts and an opportunity for staff to exchange ideas with different departments. Amy Benson, representing NELINET, led a workshop on Library 2.0, exploring ways that libraries can provide an interactive, personalized online experience for patrons. A few examples are blogs that invite reader comment; methods that enable patrons to tag or rate books and other content; instant messaging for reference questions; podcasting; and RSS feeds. Donna Behr of Massachusetts General Hospital Physical Therapy Services discussed ergonomics. She visited the library in advance to observe staff at work, and made suggestions about healthier ways to set up computer stations, sit or stand at a computer, lift and carry bins of books, and conduct repetitive tasks. Staff also practiced various exercises that would be useful for their daily activities. The focus for the latter part of the day was planning and conducting a community-wide reading program. Carole Withrow, Coordinator of the Cambridge Public Library Community Read Program and Maryellen Loud, Director of Arlington Library discussed their experiences with town-wide reading programs, and gave much valuable advice. Staff members then met in groups to begin work on Belmont's town-wide reading program: writing book discussion questions, recommending books for further reading, and brainstorming ideas for related events and activities for the library's first community read program entitled One Book One Belmont.

The library's meeting rooms were heavily booked in 2007. The library hosted 836 programs and meetings with 17,549 people in attendance. Of these events, 436 programs were sponsored by the library, with 10,365 people attending.

Library Volunteers worked a total of 1280 hours. The Trustees would like to thank all the dedicated volunteers who have given their time and energy to the Library with a total of 1280 hours this year. Volunteers helped with specific projects, like translating Korean language materials for cataloguing, 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 it was again extremely successful. The Friends are also having great success with their every day book sale in the main corridor of the library. The Friends financially support adult and young adult programming, and fund the museum pass program (except for the Massachusetts Parks Pass, which is provided free by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation). The museum pass program consists of passes to sixteen institutions—The New England Aquarium, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Boston by Foot, Boston Children's Museum, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Discovery Museums, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Harvard Museum of Natural History, Harvard University Art Museums, John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, Massachusetts Parks Pass, Museum of Fine Arts, Peabody Essex Museum, Plimoth Plantation, Museum of Science, and Zoo New England (Franklin Park and Stone Zoos). These museum passes are available to all residents of Belmont who have a current Minuteman Library Network card. The passes circulated 1,797 times, a 3.5% increase. The software that patrons are using to make museum pass reservations for themselves, Library Insight, was purchased by the Friends.

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 funded the luncheon for the eleventh annual staff day, as well as the holiday luncheon in December for library staff and volunteers.

The Friends continued to sponsor the ever-popular Author Series in 2007. The programs were coordinated by Jennifer Altshuler. The programs were well attended (over 300 attendees) and enthusiastically received. Programs in the series included discussions and book signings by the following authors:

- Philip Orbanes discussing his book *Monopoly: The World's Most Famous Game—and How it Got That Way* on January 9th.
- Barry Blesser discussing his book *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?: Experiencing Aural Architecture* on January 24th.
- Maeve Medwed discussing her book *How Elizabeth Barrett Browning Saved My Life* on March 8th.
- Marian Christy discussing her book *Letters from Legends and the Incredible Interviews that Inspired Them* on May 10th.
- Sebastian Junger discussing his book *A Death in Belmont* on May 31st.
- Leah Hager Cohen discussing her book *House Lights* on October 25th.
- Elizabeth Campbell discussing the book *To the Last Salute: Memories of an Austrian U-boat Commander* by Georg von Trapp and translated by Elizabeth Campbell on November 15th.

The Wildflower Garden Committee, Nanny Almquist, Susan Marsh, and Mark Saidnaway continue beautifying the garden. A few of their projects this year were labeling all the trees and removing some of the weed trees allowing the sun to shine onto the garden beds.

The Belmont Historical Society continues to staff the Clafin 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

In the interim between Elisabeth Strachan's departure in October, 2006 and the hire of the new library generalist, Corinne Chan, in April, 2007, committed members of the Benton Book Discussion group met on their own every other month. The Group began meeting in November 1997 and has been going strong for ten years. Books discussed in 2007 were: *The Ha Ha* by Dave King, *Heir to the Glimmering World* by Cynthia Ozick, *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith, *Conjurer's Bird* by Martin Davies, *Intuition* by Allegra Goodman, *The Seven Sisters* by Margaret Drabble.

Benton recorded a total of 260 reference and administrative questions. Thirteen programs, consisting of book discussions, sing-a-longs, and children's story hours were given in the early part of the year, with a total of 118 people attending the programs. Julie Goetz gave two children's sing-a-longs and volunteer, Amy Wagonfeld led children's story hours.

Meg O'Brien, Technical Services Library Assistant at the Memorial Library, continues to staff the desk at Benton on Wednesdays from 1 to 4 p.m., and Corinne Chan, Generalist, from 4 to 6 p.m. Dedicated branch volunteer, Judy Mohnkern, continues to help at Benton. She has been volunteering at the branch since 1982.

Respectfully submitted,
Hal Shubin, Chairman