

**Athol Public Library  
2011-2012 Annual Report**

*To: The Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Athol*

*"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."*

*Andrew Carnegie*

This year was a rollercoaster of planning, unplanning, revising and meetings as we prepared to get our new library built! It will all be worth it in the end when the public will be invited to come in and start using the new facility.

In July, Construction Committee chair Carol Ambrozy noticed a For Sale sign on adjacent property on Marble Street. After investigative work, she determined that the building was a bank foreclosure and that non profit groups had 15 days to submit a bid prior to the general public. After months of negotiation, the bank accepted the Friends of the Library bid of \$23,000 and the property closed in October. A warrant article was submitted at the Fall Town meeting to accept this property.

The Trustees signed a construction contract with BHA, the owner's project manager firm and Tappe Associates, the architects for the construction phase. The Trustees approved additional funds for the architects to design to the Platinum LEED level. In October an RFQ was issued for Building Energy Commissioning Agents and seven applications were received. After interviews of the top 3, the Trustees accepted the recommendation of the Construction Committee to hire the firm of WSP Flack + Kurtz. In November, the Committee issued an RFQ for Envelope Commissioning and four applications were received. After interviews, Simpson, Gumpertz and Hager were engaged by the Trustees based on the Committee's recommendation.

Meetings were held with the Council on Aging staff and Board to get the Senior Center prepared to accommodate a move into the facility for July 2012. The two Boards formally met and came to an agreement that the library would make available funds, in lieu of rent, to renovate and upgrade the Senior Center for habitation by both departments.

During December, Andy Sudjak formerly in the Planning Department, was of great assistance in bidding out the asbestos removal in both the Engel and 182 Marble properties. Abide Asbestos from East Longmeadow was the winning bidder and did an excellent job with removal. Mr. Sudjak was also instrumental in coordinating our bidding for demolition of both properties and Richardson out of Wendell was awarded the contract. The materials from the buildings were recycled at the Fort Devens center.

Throughout the spring, many meetings were attended to secure permitting. We successfully obtained all approvals from the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (to retain the historic front entrance to the library), the National Grid Easement, and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

We were required to request a waiver for the parking requirement which was approved by the ZBA.

The project went out to filed sub-bidders in June and the bids came back over budget despite two independent cost estimates. The Construction Committee reduced the scope of work by reducing the size of the building by 2,000 square feet and removing the light monitors on the roof among other things. The three highest trades, HVAC, Windows and Masonry were put out to bid again and a placeholder was placed in the general contractor bid as they would not be back in time for the GC bid opening which will take place in September and part of next year's report.

The staff has long wanted the library to be a member of the Regional Consortium called CWMARS. The price has been prohibitive but a change was made this year that moved the software platform to Evergreen which made it more affordable. Library staff attended a Trustee's meeting to convince them to switch and with the announcement that in 2014 that there will no longer be an affiliate membership (which we are), the Trustees voted to join the network. Patrons are thrilled by this development and we joined in December. Unfortunately the switch over was delayed until July due to glitches in moving all the current member libraries over. We plan to re-open in August at the Senior Center with the new platform.

### **Young Adult Department – from Anne Cutler-Russo, YA Librarian**

The teen advisory group at the library has been meeting monthly. Members created scarecrows in October for display in the library, went to Barnes and Noble in Leominster to purchase books for the teen collection, and helped with a Stuffed Animal Sleepover by reading to younger children and assisting them with the planned activities. They conducted a Teens for Jeans campaign during which 151 pairs of jeans were collected, brought to Aeropostale, and distributed to homeless teens. Some members helped with a children's celebration of Amelia Bedelia's birthday. They helped prepare the prizes for Patron Appreciation in February, and created a raffle basket which will benefit the building fund. At every meeting the Friends of the Library provide pizza and drinks.

The French Club for students in grades 6 through 12 has been meeting weekly to learn the language and discuss the elements of French culture.

A Readathon was held during the month of February to raise money for the building program. Staff members would like to do the project again in the summer to engage more patrons in this fundraising effort.

The Knit-wits continue to meet on Wednesdays with the ever enthusiastic Jean White. The group appreciates donations of yarn and supplies.

Crazy Craft Thursdays were held in January and March. A lively group of middle school students has created seed mosaics, rubber band jewelry, cloth covered books, door knob hangers, duct tape wallets, items with old CDs, and has transformed old t-shirts into pillows, shopping bags, and belts. Supplies for these programs are provided by the Friends of the Library.

### **Community Reading Day**

Community Reading Days were held in November in the elementary schools and at the middle school. This is a great deal of work, but once again we have received some wonderful feedback from the schools. The books this year featured the theme of bats. This is the International Year of the Bat, 2011-2012, making our choice of books even more timely. "Bat Scientists" was the book read in grades 5-8, "Going Batty", from the Ready, Freddy series, was the choice for grades 3 & 4, and "Bats at the Library" was read in Pre-K to grades 2. One exciting fact about this year's Community Reading Day is that we had 100% of our readers show up! Orientation with activity ideas was held at the library on Tuesday, November 8 and at the high school in their guidance office for the National Honor Society students who volunteered to read on November 9 during their homeroom period.

### **Children's Room – from Jean Shaughnessy, Children's Librarian**

As part of the library's grant from the Bruins organization, Blades, the Bruin's mascot, Casey, an Ice Girl, a photographer, and two event coordinators, Jen and Cam, visited the library on Tuesday, August 30. They brought a hockey book to read, played a game of match the player to his country of origin, and held a trivia contest with gift bag prizes. They also provided hockey themed coloring sheets for children to keep them busy while waiting for autographs and photos. About 75 children and adults, many in Bruins shirts, enjoyed their visit.

The 2011 Summer Reading Program ran for eight weeks with 168 children signed up in the registration book. Log books kept here at the library numbered 87 and 109 streamers hung from the lights. In addition to the daily lunches, we offered 49 programs with 608 people attending. Children read 3,955 books or 79,100 pages to earn chances on the 181 prizes that were given away.

The highlight of the month of October is the Preschool Halloween Stroll. This year, because of the snowstorm and power outages, there was no school, so the preschoolers were joined by some older children. We gave out over 320 treats. There were four Story Times on Wednesdays and on Fridays plus the YMCA Nursery School came on three Mondays and one Friday. Some of the themes for the month included apples, squirrels, leaves, fire safety, and pumpkins.

April Vacation Week was busy despite the beautiful, warm weather. The Friends Book Sale, held Friday until Tuesday, brought in quite a bit of money for the Friends and emptied the book sale shelves. "The Muppet Movie", held on the Wednesday afternoon during vacation week entertained 50 children and 10 adults. Other vacation week activities included Candy Bingo, Game Night, and "Mud and Worms" Story Time. Movies, "HOP" and "Happy Feet Two", shown on the two half days of school were attended by 48 and 40 people.

June was spent getting ready for the big move and encouraging children to sign up for the "Dream Big – Read!" Summer Reading program. Jean visited the elementary schools to promote summer reading. Mary Grutchfield's special needs class, Jenn Ames students, and Julie Fairman's students from Riverbend School walked to the library for tours, a story time, and to check out books.

We managed to fit in one week of Summer Reading activities between the last day of school and the day we closed our doors to move. On Tuesday morning, June 25,

the craft was making hot/cold packs. Twenty-four children and adults made cracked corn filled packs to either heat in the microwave to warm hands and feet and soothe aches or freeze to use on bumps. The Wednesday morning Story Time featured moon and nighttime stories, the film "Goodnight Moon", and a moon sand craft, enjoyed by 14 children. John McDonough and his Pumppernickel Puppets entertained 120 children and adults with "Sir George and the Dragon" on Thursday morning. This program was sponsored by the Athol Cultural Council. On Friday, 35 children painted rock owls. By June 30, 132 children had signed up to participate in the Summer Reading Program.

### **MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

Materials were purchased in memory of: Joseph Baublis, Brenda Lee Marg (Maliska) Boudreau, Gordon and Pauline Briggs, Archie Gilliatt, Walter & Urania Grey, David Hayes, Marie "Bernie" Litchfield, Margaret "Maggie" Masure, Anthony "Tony" Netishen, Miriam Zoe Rosenheim, Linda F. Smith, Agatha Sukols, Muriel Watkevich, Phillis White, Ann F. Williams.

### ***YOUR LIBRARY STAFF***

#### **ADULT DEPARTMENT**

Debra A. Blanchard, *Director*

Robin Shtulman, *Assistant Director*

Marie Lehmann, Anne Cutler-Russo, Kelsey Matthews, *Senior Library Technicians*

Robin Brzozowski, Gosia Spooner, *Part Time Library Technician*

Tom Deam, *Computer Aide*

William Adams, *Part Time Custodian*

Rheba Gagne, *Brouillet Intern*

Brenda Buck, Carol Ann Fisk, Sharman Prouty, *Substitutes*

#### **CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT**

Jean Shaughnessy, *Children's Librarian*

Karen McNiff, *Children's Assistant*

Samantha Skinner, Jonathan Skinner, *Pages*

#### **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

A special thanks to our faithful treasurer Lillian Bachelder and secretary Jean White both of who do such a splendid job. Thanks for all the many events they sponsor and the support they give the library!

#### **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD**

Treasurer: Lil Bachelder

Secretary: Jean White

Trustee Rep: Margaret Young

Directors: Nancy Griffin, Rita Grimes, Julianne Matthews, Patricia Ray, Barbara Robichaud, and Jean White.

*Join the Friends Today!*

### **LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE**

Chairman: Carol Ambrozy Recording Member: Debra Blanchard  
Voting Members: Bonnie Benjamin, Sharon Brighenti, Tony Brighenti, Eric DeHays, Susie Feldman, Joe Hawkins, Linda Oldach, George Roix, Jean Shaughnessy, Ken Vaidulas, Charlie Winters, Margaret Young. Non Voting Members: David Ames, Hal Gillam.

### **SENIOR TAX ABATEMENT VOLUNTEERS**

Brenda Buck, Michael Cygan, Jeanne Forand, George Roix, Jean White.

### **Lastly from the Director's Desk**

There are just too many people to thank for all tremendous effort being put forth to get the new library built for our community. I appreciate all of you from staff to Trustees to Building Committee members to volunteers to Friends of the APL to customers to the citizens of Athol. Everyone has played a part and I know everyone is anxious to set foot in our spacious and functional beautiful new facility.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Debra A. Blanchard, Library Director*

### **LIBRARY CIRCULATION STATISTICS FY12**

#### **ADULT**

Books	48,991
Periodicals, newspapers	2,201
CDs, cassettes, LP	3,688
Videos, DVDs	32,432
eBooks	554
Electronic formats	13,345
Miscellaneous	<u>661</u>
TOTAL	101,872

#### **CHILDREN**

Books	32,960
Periodicals, newspapers	185
CDs, cassettes, LP	570
Videos, DVDs	5,889
Electronic formats	1,085
Miscellaneous	<u>596</u>
TOTAL	41,285

### **EQUIPMENT USE AND ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Equipment (projectors, cameras typewriters, screens, etc.)	123
Computers (In-house Use)	14,257
Archives Room Use	349
Museum Passes	164

Reference	733
Program attendance	9,542
Children: 6,928	
Young Adult: 1,534	
Adult: 1,080	
Number of Programs	548
Children: 339	
Young Adult: 147	
Adult: 62	
School loans	7,339
Rest Home Deposits	<u>161</u>
Total Equipment, etc	. 33,486
Interlibrary Loans to Other Libraries	3,877
Interlibrary Loans from Other Libraries	4,858
<b><u>Total Library Circulation</u></b>	<b><u>185,378</u></b>
Library website hits	38,337
Materials Purchased	4,186
Materials Lent to Out-of-Town Residents	
<b><u>Total Non-Resident Borrowing</u></b>	<b>16,248</b>
Number of registered borrowers	13,984
Project Bread	
Lunches served	667
Program attendance	684