

2003 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
OF THE THAYER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Chair: Emily J. Rose
Vice-Chair: Cathleen LLanso*
Secretary: Frank Streeter
Member: Frank MacGrory
Member: Kathy Dugan*
Member: Susan Polansky
Member: Jacqueline Cashin**
Member: John Schumacher-Hardy**

DIRECTOR: Joseph J. Mulé
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/ADULTS SERVICES LIBRARIAN: Anne White
CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN: Nancy Bassett (Resigned 05-08-03)
CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN: Susan Mello-Conroy (Hired 07-01-03)
SENIOR LIBRARY TECHNICIAN: Linda Ledoux
LIBRARY TECHNICIAN: Charlotte Follansbee
LIBRARY PAGE: Janet Baylis
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT: Marcia L. Jakubowicz
CUSTODIAN: Nancy Record

Hours:

Monday: 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Wednesday & Thursday: 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM
Saturday: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (closed on Saturdays in June - August)

In its 141st year of service to the patrons of Lancaster, the Thayer Memorial Library continued to focus its resources on improving programs and services and stabilizing staff turnover.

Budget

The budget woes which threatened to devastate the FY2004 operating budget still impacted the staff in advance in FY2003. Many wondered if they would even have a job in July (the beginning of the next fiscal year). Children's Librarian Nancy Bassett was so concerned about her job stability that she resigned her post in May for a position elsewhere. In June, the FY2004 budget – lower than the budget for FY2003 – was approved with the passage of the override. The Library was very fortunate to hire its next Children's Librarian, Susan Mello-Conroy, who assumed her duties in July. The Library also continued to be without the services of a second custodian (lost in September of 2002) for all of 2003 due to a hiring freeze enacted for all Town departments. The

FY2004 budget did not include provisions to rehire a second custodian or provide step increases or a cost of living adjustment.

Over the course of any calendar year, the Library operates using two different budgets. From January to June, the Library is working on the final 6 months of FY2003's municipal appropriation. Likewise, from July to December, the Library is operating in the first six months of FY2004's municipal appropriation. The following table illustrates the Library's operating municipal appropriations for *each* fiscal year, affecting the *calendar* year 2003.

Fiscal Year	Months Utilized in Calendar 2003	Municipal Appropriation	Δ% from Previous Fiscal Year	Actual Appropriation Used	Δ% from Previous Fiscal Year
FY2003	Jan. to June	204,624	4.50%	201,646	2.98%
FY2004	July to Dec.	200,624	-1.95%		

The rise in FY2003's appropriation was due primarily to increased demand in energy consumption as well as step increases for eligible staff. However, because of the departure of the Children's Librarian and a hiring freeze prohibiting the Library from replacing its lost custodian, the Library actually returned \$2,979 in wages back to the Town. The Library's net appropriation for FY2003 was really \$201,646, which was only a 2.98 % increase over the prior fiscal year. The Library was appropriated a less-than-level budget for FY2004, which still did not provide for a replacement custodian. In spite of these budgetary challenges, the Library was able to maintain all services hours throughout the calendar year 2003 (34 hours between June and August and 38 hours from September through May). Furthermore, the Library was able to meet its Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR), necessitated to receive State Aid to Public Libraries in FY2003.

The Library would not be able to exist with the collections and services it provided in the calendar year 2003 without the good fortune of having many non-appropriated sources of income, which augment the municipal appropriation. Over calendar 2003, the Library spent \$30,051 in non-appropriated funds provided by income earned in trusts, revenue generated in revolving accounts, State Aid to public libraries provided by the Commonwealth, and gifts donated by individuals and foundations. Although unused in 2003, The Library was also awarded in December a \$20,000 bequest from the George K. Progin estate, which will be expended over calendar years 2004 and 2005.

The Library expended a total of \$10,697 of *Trust* fund income used to purchase books and materials (\$7,521), supplement maintenance expenses (\$65), purchase staff related services such as association dues (\$698) and paid the wages of our Special Collection Assistant (\$2,413). The Library manages three revolving accounts used to collect revenue and make targeted purchases. Over calendar 2003, the Library expended \$4,967 from its *revolving accounts* to purchase books and materials (\$4,147), maintain and supply its public copy machine (\$578) and replace damaged or lost books and materials (\$242). The Library maintains several *gift accounts* established to accept donations from individuals and organizations. Over the course of the

calendar 2003, the Library expended \$4,209 in gift expenditures. Purchases made with gift income are almost equally split between books and materials (\$2,294) and programs (\$1,915). Finally, the Library spent \$10,178 of its *State Aid* income in calendar 2003. Almost two-thirds of the State Aid money spent in the calendar year 2003 went towards building maintenance related services (\$6,519). Other notable State Aid expenses included acquiring two computers (\$1,900), purchasing replacement light bulbs (\$808), processing supplies (\$606), and other miscellaneous items and services (\$346).

The Library is also the beneficiary of capital gifts on occasion from the Library Building Fund, an independent not-for-profit organization. The Library Building Fund, established during the recent renovation and expansion project, continues to fundraise for the benefit of the Library building. In 2003 the Library Building Fund provided funds to install tops and end panels on the Reference Room shelving. These panels were a part of the original building design but were omitted during the building project in order to reduce the project budget. The Library Building Fund also purchased a new book drop for the Library and provided funds to protect the building exterior through the purchase of pigeon netting. The Library also receives gifts from the Friends of the Lancaster Library, a not-for-profit organization. The Friends provided the Library with funds to purchase museum passes and pay for programming events.

The Library met all State requirements for public libraries serving populations between 5,000 – 10,000, including spending at least 19% of its total operating budget on materials (books, periodicals, etc.). For the fiscal year 2003 that ended in June, the Library's total operating budget, including appropriated and non-appropriated funding sources, was \$229,700, of which \$45,902, or 19.98%, was expended on materials. The Town's appropriation covered about 65% of the required material expense with the balance coming from the Library's non-appropriated sources (trusts, revolving accounts, etc.) As a result of meeting all of the Commonwealth's requirements for public library service, the Library received its FY2003 State Award of \$9,042, a 2.89% drop in funds from FY2002's \$9,311 award.

Building and Materials

The Library was struck with building maintenance issues, particularly with regards to its HVAC system. In January, fan coil unit #3 (FCU #3), which provides heat primarily to the rotunda/main circulation area of the Library, failed. When examined further, FCU #3 was observed, releasing a stream of water that flooded a section of the Library's basement. Although the situation has been stabilized, at this time, FCU #3 is no longer in operation and does not provide any heat to Memorial Hall. That said, this area seems to be maintaining a comfortable temperature using the residual heat from adjacent rooms.

In March, The Library replaced two area heating fans in the boiler room. The Library had a double shot of bad news over the summer with the failure of two air conditioning compressors. This left the new Children's quarters and the Director's office without air conditioning for over a month. The good news was that both units were under warranty and thus the Library only paid for the labor and auxiliary components not covered by any warranty. Over 85% of this work was covered by non-appropriated funds provided by the Library's State Aid award.

Progress was made throughout the year to improve the condition of the Library's grounds. In May, led by Library Trustee Susan Polansky, the Friends of the Lancaster Town Library beautified the Libraries grounds by planting small shrubs and completing other essential landscaping duties. Also, using Prison Project Mitigation funds authorized by the Selectmen, the Library contracted with F. W. Gorham Landscaping (Leominster) in the fall to address issues with the Library's grounds that were beyond the expertise of the custodial staff or volunteers. In general, the job included establishing new and maintaining old pine mulch beds surrounding the Library (including a massive bed surrounding the pine trees in the area behind the children's room), weeding, installing a drip edge in the area behind the children's room, applying a "winterize" for the lawn, cleaning up the parking lot, mulching the parking islands and fixing the parking island curbs.

Also, the Library is very grateful to the Board of the Library Building Fund, which provided funding to install protective bird netting over the front balcony and its corresponding portico in April. The Library contracted with Birdmaster (Woburn), which specialized in installing protective netting on buildings and structures of historical significance. Prior to its installation, the Library was not equipped to properly handle or dispose of the vast quantity of guano regularly left by over 20 roosting pigeons. The Board of the Building Fund is also credited for purchasing the Library's new stainless steel book/media drop located by the main entrance in September 2003.

Other notable changes occurred inside the Library. In March, William S. Patten, a descendant to the late Nathaniel Thayer Dexter, requested the Board relinquishes to his possession two portraits, one of the Reverend Nathaniel Thayer and the other of his wife which were on loan and displayed in the Memorial Hall. The Board honored Mr. Patten's request and were grateful to be granted by him a right of first refusal should he or his family wish to donate the portraits.

Again, much gratitude goes to the Board of the Library's Building Fund, which provided substantial funding to install the beautiful mahogany end panels (Tucker Library Interiors Manchester, NH) found in the reference room. In June, Lancaster Historical Commission permanently loaned three Barber prints to the Library, including the Town Green (hung in the Nathaniel Thayer Dexter Meeting Room), Elm Tree on Old Common, and the Covered Bridge (each hung in the Trustees Meeting Room). Finally, in December, State Aid funds were allocated to purchase two computers, which upgraded workstations in the Director's and Technical Assistant's offices.

As of the end of December 2003, the Library had a collection of 62,917 materials, up 3.32% from 60,894 at the end of 2002. Although many of these items were immediately available to the public, almost all of the materials in the Constance V. R. Thayer Dexter Special Collections Room were only accessible for a minimal time when staff were available or by appointment. The Library had 12 more print serial subscriptions in 2003 than in 2002 for a total of 56 and subscribed to two fewer attraction passes for a total of four.

Circulation and Activities

As of the end of December 2003, the Library had registered 4,787 borrowers down almost 11% since the end of 2002. Discussions with the Central and Western Massachusetts Automated Regional System (C/WMARS) revealed that patron records that had been inactive over at least that last two years were purged. Regardless of this decline, circulation is still steadily rising. According to C/WMARS data (users are now able to access calendar year circulation statistics) calendar, the year 2003's circulation was up 2.2% to 62,207 from 2002's count and was up over 20% when compared with the Library's ten-year average circulation.

	Circulation			
10-year Average	Calendar 2002	Calendar 2003	Δ% from Calendar 2002	Δ% from 10-Year Average
51,537	60,862	62,207	2.21%	20.7%

The Library was busy throughout the calendar year 2003 with staff and Town sponsored programs and events. The Book discussion group reinstated one year ago is still going strong and met 12 times to discuss 11 titles (Brother Karamazov by Dostoyevsky required two months to complete). For a brief time, the Library experimented with holding two children's story hours during the week in the first half of the year. However, with limited staff resources and an ever-increasing demand to provide a variety of program choices, the Library switched back to a single story hour for the second half of the year.

The Library started the year with a Scrap Booking Workshop in January. In March, with money awarded by the Lancaster Cultural Council, the Library hosted an evening with author Michael Tougias who discussed the place King Phillip's War holds in Lancaster history.

Again, the Library had the good fortune of being the recipient of a grant from the Rosemary Davis Fund of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. The award paid for seven programs which kicked off in April each having an environmental or ecological theme associated with them including: "Garbage is My Bag," A Trip to the Vernal Pool, Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts: The Human Impact, Animal Adventures: Reptiles and Wingmasters: Birds of Prey.

In May, the Library and the Nashoba Regional High School sponsored a field trip for students of a Civil War Era course. Students were provided with a tour of the Library, which included a visit to the Library's Civil War Special Collection and the use of materials for research. In June, the 350th Historic Sites & Exhibition Committee and Lancaster Historical Society sponsored the rededication of the Library's Civil War Memorial. Along with the Director, Trustee Chair Emily Rose, Jeanne Rose, Trustee Jacqueline Cashin, Thomas Cashin, Tommy Cashin, Jimmy Cashin, and Trustee John Schumacher-Hardy marched in the Town's 350th Anniversary Parade dressed as popular Library media. While the Library was between children's librarians (and with the assistance from the staff), the Director conducted most story hours. In July, newly hired children's librarian, Susan Mello-Conroy, had very little time to develop and administer a summer reading program. She did, however, provide an abridged version of the annual event and quickly picked up all of her job duties.

In September, Special Collections Assistant Marcia Jakubowicz and Board Vice-Chair Frank MacGrory led a tour of the Library's artifacts and Special Collections for the Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society. Also in September, Lancaster resident Alex Kachan discussed the Lancaster's Grow Biointensive Community Garden Project. In October, Beverly Fine organized the 4th annual Quilt Show, which benefited the Building Fund. The week-long art quilt display included a professionally judged quilt contest, access to quilt vendors, and raffles for one art quilt. Children's Librarian Susan Mello-Conroy planned and instituted the Library's Young Adult Book Talk as well as conducted a Halloween parade around the Library in October. Also, in October, the Library published its first edition of TML Digest: The Newsletter of the Thayer Memorial Library. The 2nd annual "Food for Fines" program was held to assist families in Lancaster who had fallen on tough times. Patrons who donated non-perishable food to the cause had all of their late fees waived. The program commenced around Thanksgiving and ran until December 24. All food donations collected were distributed through the Lancaster Police Department. Assistant Library Director Anne White hosted the 3rd annual Musical Evening with the German Family. Lastly, Susan Mello-Conroy ended the year with a playwriting workshop that included a well-attended performance. In total, the Library had 1,157 people attend all Library related programs.

Even when not active with Library sponsored events, the Library building likely was still being utilized but some governmental or private agency. The Library has provided to most of the public access to its two meeting rooms located on the building's ground floor. This is the first annual report to give an indication of how useful this service has been to Lancaster. In the calendar year 2003, all of the Library's meeting rooms were used 260 times, up almost 26% from the calendar 2002's 207 uses. With fewer custodial hours to maintain these rooms, the Board considered the necessity of possibly charging a modest user fee to *all* users to cover the cost of providing more resources to maintain the integrity of these rooms.

Donations and Volunteers

Money and gifts in kind were received from many of the Library's benefactors including the Fred Anderson, Jane A. Anderson, Clifford Baggott, Sara Barss, Board of the Building Fund, Kathleen Clancy-Irr, Paula Castner, David Dunn, Charlotte S. Follansbee, Beverly Fine, James F. Foster, Anne Fredrickson, the Friends of the Lancaster Town Library, Christiann Gibeau, Paul L'Ecuyer, The Rosemary Davis Fund of the Greater Worcester County Foundation, Leonard Kelley, Michael J. Lukaszewicz, Frank MacGrory, Michelle McKinney, Frank Merlino, Annette Morris, Florence R. Munter, Alan Nichols, Valorie R. Parent, Anne Parrow, Susan Polansky, Emily Rose, Jeanne Rose, John Schumacher-Hardy, Larry Shoer, Leah Shoer, Kathy Suits, Cathleen Their, Peter Their and Constance White. A warm thanks go out to all of the residents of Lancaster who generously donated their books and videocassettes to the Library. These materials were either added directly to the circulating collection or sold by the Friends of the Lancaster Town Library to benefit Library programming.

The Library's loyal corps of volunteers continued to play an invaluable role in assisting the staff in delivering quality service to patrons. In total, volunteers donated 576.5 hours of service, saving

the Town approximately \$4,554 in wages (based on the wages of an entry-level page). Thanks to Janet Baylis, Jacqueline Cashin, James Cashin, Thomas Cashin, Tommie Cashin, Helen Dorval, Shelby Doyle, Beth Drugge, Kayla Ducharme, Thomas Ducharme, Leah Girma, Madison Hawkins, William Kilbourn, Cele Kirby, Aliana Linenkemper, Norma McCarty, Thomas Minko, Kaitlyn Medeiros, Martha Moore, Margaret MacLaughlin, Alison Murphy, Katie Murtland, Mary Murtland, the residents of the New River Academy, Jill Perreira, Erin Sadler, Layne Sadler, Emily Schwarzkopf, Martha Schwarzkopf, Philippa Schwarzkopf, Jackie Sorenson, Daniel Warner, Nikki Warner.

Respectfully submitted

Joseph J. Mulé, Director