

To successfully meet the needs of some of our students, we must create alternative programs that enable them to be successful. Last year the *Twilight* alternative education program began operation at the high school. Intended to prevent at-risk students from dropping out of school, the program only served 1-2 students. We learned from this experience that the program needs to be open to students as early as 9th grade and that it should operate during the normal school hours. Using ARRA Stimulus funds we are redesigning this program, so that it will serve 6-10 students next fall.

In 2008-09 the high school increased support for students who are not strong readers by offering 8 sections of a new Reading course. The expanded number of sections should enable more students to have successful high school academic careers. Summer School programs at the Middle and High School have grown in their second year and we continue to support a summer school reading program at Mosier School.

Foster a positive school culture that respects differences and values achievement

All four schools have discussed bullying and cyber-bullying and updated their bullying policies. To continue this work we have invited national expert, Barbara Coloroso, to give an all-day workshop for teachers and an evening workshop for parents in September.

We conducted a summer workshop for a dozen teachers on the topic of Anti-Racist Education. The workshop group proposed that this program be expanded to include all teachers. We will continue to look for ways to support this important initiative in the coming years.

The middle school will offer an elective course in Chinese to sixth grade students in the fall and we also hope to offer an after-school Chinese program at Mosier School.

Construction

Spring town meeting approved plans to construct a second parking lot at the Middle School. This will allow the schools to create a safe drop-off lane in the current parking lot for parents who drive their children to school. The new parking lot will be ready for the start of school in September.

Officials from the Massachusetts School Building Administration made two visits to our schools in response to our proposal to replace Plains School with a new school building. However, they still have not prioritized the South Hadley district for the State support that would be necessary to carry out the project. We remain hopeful that MSBA will either decide to support a new school project or to assist in helping our district carry out the extensive renovations of the school that would be necessary, if we were to remain in the building for a prolonged period of time.

Communication

South Hadley will have a new website in operation by September. The new website will enable us to provide a great deal of updated information to parents, staff and the community. Technology has also allowed us to establish phone links with the families of all our students. Using the automated message system, all families can be sent messages by phone in just 20 minutes!

Respectfully submitted

Dr. Gus A. Sayer
Superintendent of Schools

Sealer of Weights and Measures

The Sealer of Weights and Measures inspected, tested and sealed 67 scales of various capacities and 104 gasoline and diesel fuel dispensing devices. In addition, I tested all School Department scales as well as Board of Health Scales and responded to 13 inquiries of various natures.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas J. Kelleher
Sealer of Weights and Measures

South Hadley Public Library

<http://www.shadleylib.org>

Imagine if we had to invent a local place that offered our community the opportunity for self-improvement at different ages and stages of their lives. There would be programs and services that developed toddlers' early literacy skills for lifelong learning and also summer programs that continued and encouraged recreational reading during vacation. Computer access and wireless Internet would be freely available. Young professionals could find tools to advance their career while the unemployed could apply online for jobs. Families would find a full schedule of quality events throughout the year that entertained and educated. Teens would have a safe and structured environment to gather with their friends. Seniors on fixed incomes could take advantage of no-cost large print books, books on CD, movies, and more. Many resources would be available online for convenient 24/7 access from home or work.

Thank goodness we don't need to reinvent the South Hadley Public Library, because all of those services – and more – are currently available to our community. Our schedule is year-round six days per week, open three nights until 8:00 p.m. and a half-day on Saturday. Many online databases, the library catalog, events calendar, and other resources can be found at <www.shadleylib.org>. There is no cost to obtain a library card, but the benefits are enormous and can be enjoyed from toddler to senior years.

The library's resources were heavily used this past year, as demand for popular materials and attendance at public programs soared. Our Fiscal Year 2009 statistics include:

- ❖ **17,704 items delivered to our library by the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System.** Inter-library loan is among the oldest examples of regional cooperation and municipal resource sharing. This vital service, powered by our C/WMARS library network, expands library resources beyond South Hadley to include the combined collection of over 150 libraries. In FY2005, this figure was 7,516 – a five-year increase of 136%!
- ❖ **12,275 hours of public computer time,** where the community was able to use our high-speed broadband connection for job searching, research, homework, Email, and online recreation. This averages almost 43 hours of public computer use for each day the library was open! On average, there were 324 individual computer sessions each week – an increase of 29% over FY2008.
- ❖ **3,707 people attended a library program or performance in the past year, an increase of 33% over the previous year.** All programs were offered at no charge to the public, thanks to generous support from the Friends of the Library.
- ❖ **179,803 items were checked out at our Circulation Desk, up 6% from last year.** If residents had to purchase those items, assuming an average discounted price of \$10 per item, the library saved the community almost \$1.8 million dollars versus purchasing those same materials for their personal use!

Technology improvements were introduced through the library's membership in the C/WMARS network. Online credit card payment of fines and lost book fees was launched in February, allowing convenient payment of fines above \$5. This service also allows for online donations to support library programs and services. A new KidsOnline catalog was introduced that allows graphical searching of the library catalog through a guided picture search – greatly expanding the ability of young children and early readers to fully search the online catalog.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded the library a 2-year Opportunity Online Hardware Grant to upgrade access to public computers and the Internet. In this first year of the grant, four new Windows Vista computers replaced the oldest machines on our network. At least three additional computers will be added in FY2010.

Focusing on local history, the library's archival collection of Know Your Town historical materials received preservation treatment and organization. KYT was organized in 1947 by Margaret Saunders and continues as

a voice of civic involvement. The library's historical collection includes KYT meeting minutes from 1947 - 1965 and the KYT scrapbook of newspaper clippings from 1949 - 1954. Digital copies of some materials will soon be available on the library's website.

The youth Summer Reading Program once again set an attendance record. The 2008 summer theme was "Wild Reads At Your Library". Children and teens enjoyed programs such as "Out of Africa" that featured native African animals, a monarch butterfly release, the Boston Museum of Science's traveling "Reptiles" program, and shows from the Williston Summer Youth Theater. Other youth programs included an after-school Chess Club, April vacation magic show, wintertime beach party and Mardi Gras celebrations, a visit from author Michelle Kwasny, and weekly storytime for preschoolers (Thursday mornings at 10:30). Special thanks go out to the staff at WGBY, public television for Western Massachusetts, for collaborating with the library on a very successful "Sid the Science Kid" series of programs that introduced basic science concepts to preschoolers.



'Out of Africa' Program

Programs for adults included an international summer film series, monthly personal finance workshops with Dollar Scholar Sue Nimchick, monthly book discussions by the SHPL Book Club (new members always welcome!), a concert of Greek bouzouki music by Savas Hadzisavidis, a lecture on the geology of the Connecticut River Valley, several author visits including Kris Holloway, an evening exploring "Spirits, Hauntings & Messages from the Other Side" with Lisa Marie Lanno, a slideshow/lecture on the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir, and an 8-week "Inspiring Careers" series for job seekers by Angela Lussier. Weekly programs include Tuesday evening and Thursday afternoon knitting groups.

Most programs were funded by the Friends of the South Hadley Public Library, a private nonprofit that contributes essential funding and volunteers. Special thanks go out to President Cathy Allen and Vice-President Nancy Reale for their time and efforts.



Lisa Lanno’s Paranormal “Other Side” Presentation

The South Hadley Cultural Council supported a “Bytes to Books” program that linked computer gaming and literacy. Using popular computer programs aimed at ages 10-16, gaming strategies were linked to the Massachusetts Competencies in English Language Arts Standards. Participants were awarded prizes for their play – and also discovered that history can be fun and relevant!

The library is governed by a publicly-elected nine-member Board of Trustees. In FY09 the Trustees welcomed Shane Robitaille to the Board and bid farewell to Doris Newman. The Trustees spent much time planning for the future. In September the Board approved a new five-year Strategic Plan that outlines a vision of services through FY 2015. This vision of services fueled the development of a Library Building Program, approved by the Trustees on June 1, 2009. This Building Program outlines the services the library hopes to provide in the next twenty years and the spaces needed to provide those services. The Trustees will appoint a Library Design Study Committee to work with an architect in moving the Building Program from a series of spreadsheets to the schematic design of the next generation South Hadley Public Library. This project is funded by a Planning & Design Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners with matching support from the Friends of the Library and the citizens of South Hadley.

Finally, all this activity took place under the professional guidance of our dedicated library staff: Meg Clancy, Jennifer Comeau, Lorraine Ensor, Liz Frosch-Dratfield, Jeanne Hebert, Jeff Lachowetz, Linda Manijak, Desiree Smelcer, Rena Stromgren, and Bob Williford. The many accomplishments and progress of the past year would not have happened without their continued efforts and commitment to the Town of South Hadley.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Rodio, Library Director

Tax Collector

Statement of outstanding balances for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2009:

Description	Outstanding Balances
Real Estate Taxes	
2009	381,612
2008	42,662
2007	3,067
Prior Years 1999-2006	4,500
Personal Property	
2009	7,389
2008	3,562
2007	1,372
2006	1,368
Prior Years	4,500
Motor Vehicle Excise	
2009	96,773
2008	28,880
2007	16,290
2006	11,261
Prior Years 1998 – 2005	17,763
Boat Excise	
All Years	31,030
Rollback Taxes	
	22,507
Sewer Use Charges	
	141,865
Curbside Rubbish	
	29,824

The Collector’s Office issues over 53,000 real estate, personal property, curbside pick-up, sewer use fee, motor vehicle and boat excise bills each year. As part of the collector’s function, this office pursues the timely collection of all bills and maintains a collection rate of over 98 percent for all real estate and personal property tax bills. The Collector’s Office is continually working to collect past due taxes and fees and over the past fiscal year has been very successful in collecting a large portion of previous year real estate taxes. One parcel, which for legal reasons could not be taken into tax title, had past due real estate taxes dating back to FY2003. All of the taxes on this parcel, totaling approximately \$30,000, have been collected and have remained current. The prior year balance on real estate bills which covers the FY99 through FY06 is entirely made up of balances on parcels where the owner is unknown. One of the goals for the coming year is to determine the best method of clearing these balances. I take this opportunity to thank my staff, Joan Germain and Claudia Frappier, for all of their hard work and dedication over the past year. Without them this office would not run nearly as efficiently as it does.

Respectfully submitted,