

## PUBLIC LIBRARY

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Edgartown:

**T**HIS HAS BEEN a year of setbacks and challenges for the Edgartown Free Public Library, but also a year of accomplishments and progress.

Disasters involving our aging, undersized and increasingly decrepit library building on North Water Street were the disheartening bookends to a busy year. We began calendar 2007 by reopening the downstairs Children's Department, which had been closed in March 2006 after it was discovered, in preparing for a painting project, that the walls were infested with mold and that critical beams were lacking in the grid of supports holding up the main floor. We ended the year with our entire building closed after a furnace "puff-back" event on the night of Dec. 2 filled the library building with aerosolized heating fuel. Through December and into January, our staff has labored heroically to provide a full range of services from temporary quarters in the selectmen's meeting room of the Edgartown Town Hall.

### THE DATA: DRILLING DOWN

Overall, our circulation figures for the fiscal year are down slightly, which should come as no surprise considering that half the building was closed for half the year and that our parking lot was frequently blocked off by the North Water Street Beautification Project. But looking closer, library records show that the summer of 2007 saw new records set in several usage categories. Our July visitor traffic was up from 10,152 in 2006 to 10,305 in 2007. Materials circulated in July and August jumped to 20,582 in 2007, an increase of 15 percent from the year before.

Perhaps most dramatically, the number of interlibrary loans requested by our patrons rose from 2,126 in July and August 2006 to 2,664 for the same period in 2007, an increase of more than 25 percent. This is attributable largely to the launch of the library's new website in the spring of 2007, and to our summer campaign to educate patrons about the services available to them online through the

library's membership in CLAMS, the Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing network. CLAMS connects our patrons to the collections of some 30 member libraries, enabling them to request from nearly 1.5 million books, videos, music CDs and other resources. "Cheat-sheet" handouts on how to use the CLAMS network were posted in the library, and our staff held dozens of impromptu training sessions with



*This model, on display in the library entryway, shows the design for the new Edgartown Public Library, which received the last of its needed permits from the town in 2007.*

patrons. Another tool we used this year to familiarize patrons with this powerful service is a two-minute YouTube video tutorial on our website.

### MILESTONES IN 2007

On the personnel front, the library saw significant milestones in 2007, welcoming new staff, celebrating years of service and saying goodbye to stalwarts.

The library honored Deborah MacInnis, children's librarian and assistant director, in April for her 30 years of dedicated service. In September, the library staff and community sadly said goodbye to Cathie Belcher, whose 17 years here set a standard for professionalism and public service that are unmatched in the recent annals of this institution. We also said goodbye to Virginia Munro, who happily remains on-Island and volunteers at the library frequently, and in November we welcomed Lisa Sherman, who has tackled with spirit the unenviable task of filling Cathie Belcher's role.

In other transitions, 2007 saw the departure of Nancy Ambrose from the library board of trustees, and the addition of Liz Cosgrove.

*The Edgartown Library's new website, launched in the spring, is updated regularly with library and community news. The site has been used to post minutes of selectmen's meetings and results of town elections. It has links to reference services and a portal to the CLAMS catalog, a page devoted to children's room programs and services, and an easy-to-use "contact us" form. Other features of the site include a browsable page of new library acquisitions, designed so patrons can order materials with a click, and a virtual gallery page devoted to one of Edgartown's treasures, the Charles Simpson art collection, which is in the library's care.*

In December, library director Felicia Cheney reached a personal and professional milestone. In commencement ceremonies held Dec. 15 at Clarion University in Pennsylvania, she was awarded her master's degree in library science. This completed a course of study she began soon after she first took the post of library director in July of 2005.

In a public ceremony on the library lawn this summer, a lamppost plaque was dedicated to the memory of Robert D. Hathaway, a faithful library trustee from 1997 to 2004. Former library director Ann Tyra spoke to the crowd of more than 50 people, remembering Mr. Hathaway as a great friend to the library.

### A YEAR OF PROGRAMS

Despite the constraints of our building, the Edgartown Library presented an ambitious schedule of public programs in 2007. These ranged from a reading by mystery writer Cynthia Riggs to a dramatic recitation from *Paradise Lost* by the professional actor John Basinger; from a live (and very scary) Halloween drama by Aaron DuClos and John Ortman to a lively November discussion by the Island's Sustainable Book Club; from an ice cream social and a Teddy Bear Picnic for the children to AARP tax programs and SHINE classes offered in conjunction with the Edgartown Council on Aging.

Individual tutorials on computer use and eBay shopping were offered through the year; children's programs were held regularly on Mondays and Thursdays; Donna Blackburn led a fall art class, and Nancy Gardella taught conversational English classes at the library.

Attendance at library programs was gratifying. In

July and August, the number of attendees at our public programs jumped from to 644 in 2007, up from 380 the summer before.

### NEW BUILDING PLANS

Looking ahead to the new building – and after the last year and a half, it would be hard to overstate how eagerly we are looking ahead – 2007 was the year that saw the construction plan receive the last of its needed approvals from the town of Edgartown. This year also saw the formation of a capital campaign committee under the umbrella of the Edgartown Library Foundation. Chaired by Robert Hughes, the committee has prepared informative materials – a video and brochure – about the building project, and is positioning itself for a big push in 2008, beginning in earnest the \$8 million campaign for the new library.

Meanwhile in 2007, the Friends of the Edgartown Library also made important progress, formalizing its status as a 501(c)(3) organization and strengthening its ability to support the library. This group continues to explore ways to raise funds for programs and to provide much-needed library volunteers.

Looking back, 2007 will be remembered as a tumultuous year for the Edgartown Library. At year's end, our director and trustees were locked in negotiations with the town's insurance company over the scope of cleanup operations after the December furnace accident. Contractors have been ready since early December to step in and begin the cleanup work. But the library trustees and director believe it would be irresponsible to proceed until the insurers commit to a plan for making the library building healthy and safe once more.

One point of resistance from the insurers has

been the argument that the library is a “nonessential service.” We disagree. Our position is that the library represents a service the people of Edgartown have paid for with their tax dollars, and therefore a service to which they are rightfully entitled.

At the Edgartown Free Public Library, our mission of public service speaks to the dream of our American democracy, which is built on the foundation of an informed and engaged citizenry. The services this library provides to the people of Edgartown are as essential today as they have ever been. Ladybird Johnson put it well when she said: “Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.”

As always, we are grateful to the taxpayers of Edgartown and to our patrons. Your continued support inspires our efforts to provide the excellent service that this community deserves.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Edgartown Free Public Library  
 Board of Trustees  
 David Blackburn, Chair  
 Diane Bongiorno, Asst. Chair  
 Patricia Rose, Clerk  
 Liz Cosgrove  
 Herb Foster  
 Ann Tyra



**EDGARTOWN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
 58 NORTH WATER STREET  
 PO BOX 5249  
 EDGARTOWN, MA 02539  
 (508) 627-4221

**SCHEDULE**

Monday/Thursday	10:00 to 5:00
Tuesday/Wednesday	Noon to 8:00
Friday/Saturday	Noon to 5:00

**CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES**

Toddler Time	Monday 10:30
Story Hour	Thursday 10:30 & 1:30

Children’s Librarian  
 Deborah MacInnis, MLS  
 (508) 627-4221  
 debmacinnis@clamsnet.org

**ADULT PROGRAMS**

Beginner’s Internet	Tuesday	10:00
(by appointment)	Friday	10:00
eBay Class	Tuesday	10:00
(by appointment)	Friday	10:00

ESL Classes (call library for schedule)

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

Second Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m.

Reference Services

Nis Kildegaard

nkildegaard@clamsnet.org

General Information/Renewals

(508) 627-4221

Library Director

Felicia Cheney, MSLS

fcheney@clamsnet.org

**WWW.EDGARTOWNLIBRARY.ORG**

**FACTS AT A GLANCE,  
 FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/07**

(Please bear in mind that these figures represent a year of operation in which the downstairs room, almost half the library, was closed for half the year.)

Visitors .....	62,288
Collection size .....	39,488
Books .....	31,892
Subscriptions.....	140
Audio Tape/CD/MP3 .....	3,535
Video DVD/VHS .....	3,323
Other .....	227
Circulation .....	64,624

Edgartown Residents with  
 Library cards .....
 2,188 |

Volunteers.....	28
Volunteer Hours.....	592

Materials borrowed  
 from other libraries.....
 10,173 |

Public Computers  
 Adult.....
 8 |

Children.....	6
Catalog/reference .....	3

**Operational Information:**

Number of staff.....	10
Total staff hours/week .....	253
Hours open/week .....	40
Days open/week.....	6
Avg. number of materials processed per staff hour .....	51
New items cataloged .....	3,824