

PUBLIC LIBRARY

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

THE EDGARTOWN Free Public Library spent the first five months of 2008 squeezed into 900 square feet at Town Hall, using the selectmen's meeting room as its emergency quarters after a furnace "puff-back" closed the main library building in December 2007. At first, all that was available to patrons were books and videos that had been out in circulation on the day of the event – everything else was contaminated with petroleum fumes.

The Library team met this emergency with high energy and good spirits. Because we didn't need a full staff in one room at one time, we spread our schedules so the little space was open more hours each week. Making the best of our cozy quarters, we began a tradition of serving coffee and home-baked goods every morning – and Town Hall staff contributed the comfy chairs from their lounge so patrons would have places to read. Faced with a sharply depleted collection, we guided patrons to the resources available from the CLAMS network, and soon large shipments were arriving daily from the 30 member libraries of this regional consortium. We also front-loaded the ordering of new materials, until by May, as time neared for our move back to North Water Street, the selectmen's room was bursting with books and videos.

Difficult though it was, we did learn several lessons from our months at Town Hall. We learned that patrons enjoy a library that works on a more personal than institutional scale. We learned that the quality of a library's collection is more important than the number of books on the shelves. And we were reminded that the Edgartown Library, although it normally operates apart from Town Hall, is very much a department of the Town of Edgartown, part of a larger team that takes great pride in its service to townspeople.

After thorough cleaning and three rounds of environmental testing, the Library was declared safe for reopening the week of Memorial Day. At year's end, we were still in negotiations with our insurers, but expected to spend a total of \$218,000 in insurance money on work related to the cleanup. Thanks to support from the voters at three town meetings, the delays in reimbursements from the insurance company never seriously held up the work of getting the Library cleaned and running again.

THE BUSY SUMMER OF 2008

Almost immediately after the reopening of our building, summer was upon us. A highlight of the season was an eight-week series of children's programs on Vineyard nature themes, many of them held on the Library's front lawn. Children learned about snakes and owls with Gus Ben David, about undersea life with Maggie Rioux of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and about life at the shoreline with Robert and Wendy Culbert.

The Library reopened with a full new set of Dell computers for the staff and the public – our seven public terminals upstairs and eight downstairs have been in constant use, and we could have used even more from June through September.

Some of the Library's most significant new services launched in 2008 are computer-related. In the summer,



Young patrons were delighted with the artistry of librarian Donna Blackburn at Halloween.

CLAMS launched its new Overdrive audiobook service, which allows patrons to download books and music for free to their computers and portable players. In the fall, for the first time, CLAMS added free home access for patrons to all the print resources of Consumer Reports magazine. The Edgartown Library

purchased subscriptions to a professional online automotive repair database and to a service called Global Road Warrior, which is rich with information about countries around the world.

One of the most promising developments of the summer was the re-emergence of the Friends of the Edgartown Library as a revitalized organization, with a membership expanded to more than two dozen and an ambitious series of programs presented in July and August. The Friends organization continues to welcome new members.

Membership forms are available at the Library front desk.

BUILDING CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

In August came news that the Massachusetts legislature had passed a capital programs bill that sets aside \$4.6 million in funding for construction of the new Edgartown Public Library.

For the expansion project, this means that a major hurdle has been cleared. The state Board of Library Commissioners has released this money as part of its current round of funding for public libraries, available immediately. Thirty percent of the \$4.6 million will come to Edgartown before construction even begins, as soon as the selectmen execute a grant agreement with the state. The state will release another 30 percent when a contract is signed with the general contractor; 30 percent more when the project is three-quarters completed, and the final 10 percent when the new building is ready to open.

However, this news also means the clock is ticking now for the Edgartown Library building project. Announcing the current grant cycle, the state library board declared: "All communities will have until Dec. 31, 2009 to confirm local funding and accept their award."

With this good news in hand, the Edgartown Library Foundation this summer redoubled its efforts in the initial, quiet phase of its campaign to raise \$8.1 million in public support for the library. (The Town of Edgartown has contributed \$3.5 million to purchase the Warren House property next door to the Library, which makes the expansion possible.)

Why is this project so costly? The short answer has three points: This project involves the preservation of



This plan for the new Edgartown Public Library received \$4.6 million in state funding this summer.

a historic treasure, the 1904 Carnegie building. The new library is being built, as voters have repeatedly said it should be, in the heart of Edgartown's historic district. And it is conceived not as a stopgap approach to the town's needs, but as a "build-out" plan. The new design uses its property envelope fully and is intended to be the last public library on this site.

RESTORATION PROJECT APPROVED

In November, the Edgartown Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously in support of the Edgartown Library's \$195,000 proposal to restore and renovate the Carnegie library building. The 1904 Carnegie building is one of more than 1,600 public library buildings given to communities across the United States by the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie.

In its application, the Library outlined a scope of work that is much needed, regardless of how efforts to expand the facility may progress. The work would begin after Labor Day 2009, spanning about a year and including repairs and renovations to interior fixtures and trim, replacement of lighting fixtures which date to the 1970s, improvements to the original windows (now single-paned energy hogs), restoration of the original oak floors, and work on the interior doors and entryway to the circulation desk. This project must be approved by voters at annual town meeting this spring.

LOOKING AHEAD

Working with the finance committee in the fall round of planning for the year ahead, the Edgartown Library crafted a level-funded budget for voters to approve at their 2009 town meeting. At year's end, the local and national economic outlooks were grim – and

public libraries everywhere face a double challenge, because demand for our free services traditionally rises during times of economic hardship.

Our services become more important than ever when patrons turn to us as a way to control household expenses. Here at the Library, high-speed Internet access is free, and our collection of nearly 2,000 DVDs circulates at no charge. We offer the latest editions of more than 100 magazines as well as local and regional newspapers, and our free online services include training for the GED degree, for civil service tests and for many careers including health care, law enforcement and the military. The Library even has free online assistance for resume preparation.

This winter and in the year ahead, you'll no doubt hear plenty of references to the national lending crunch. We hope you'll bear in mind that the term applies to money, not to the books and many services that libraries provide. The Edgartown Free Public Library is here, in good times and in bad, to enrich your lives.

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

Library Director
 Felicia Cheney, MSLS
 fcheney@clamsnet.org

SCHEDULE

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

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Toddler Time Wednesday 10:30
 Story Hour Thursday 10:30

ADULT PROGRAMS

Computer instruction by appointment
 ESL Classes (call library for schedule)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

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

LIBRARY STAFF

Deborah MacInnis, Children's Librarian/
 Asst. Director
 Lisa Sherman, Circulation Librarian
 Nis Kildegaard, Reference Librarian
 Janet Sigler, Technical Services Librarian
 Donna Blackburn, Library Assistant II
 Alison Leslie, Library Assistant II
 Kathleen Malmquist, Library Assistant II
 Virginia Munro, Library Assistant II
 Neuseth Cleary, Custodian

WWW.EDGARTOWNLIBRARY.ORG

**FACTS AT A GLANCE,
 FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/08**

Visitors 42,018*
 Collection size 37,474
 Books 31,132
 Subscriptions 169
 Audio Tape/CD/MP3 1,720
 Video DVD/VHS 3,711
 Other 36
 Downloadable 493
 Circulation 49,535*

Edgartown Residents with
 Library cards 2,280
 Edgartown library
 cards total 7,273
 Volunteers 35
 Volunteer Hours 670
 Materials borrowed
 from other libraries 9,627
 Public Computers
 Adult 8
 Children 6
 Catalog/reference 3

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Hours open per week 41
 New items catalogued 4,573

* Please note that these figures represent a year of operation during which the main library building was closed for six months.