

BROWNELL LIBRARY REPORT

by Penelope D. Pillsbury, Library Director

We've migrated! Brownell Library was first to go on the VOKAL system in September 2010 with web-based Koha Open Source Library System, part of the Green Mountain Library Consortium, which we expect will grow into a statewide system in the years ahead. The online catalog can be found by following the "Library Catalog" link on the Library's website www.brownelllibrary.org or brownell.kohavt.org. As an Essex Junction patron, you can renew your own books, place holds, make suggestions and create lists. **VOKAL saved the Village over \$75,000. I give the staff huge kudos for ingenuity and patience with the steep learning curve. Asst. Director Wendy Hysko is serving this statewide effort as part of the Implementation Team.**

In August 2010 - Brownell Library checked out its 2 millionth item since automation in 1997.

An average of 2,613 of our patrons entered Brownell every week in FY10 or 135,876 annually, a .6% increase over last year. We had **7,794 registered borrowers** at the end of FY10. Many patrons are spending entire days at the library. They asked us 171 reference questions per week or 8892 during the year, which is a .2% increase over last year. Books and media circulated briskly 184,432 items. Our DVD collection flies off the shelves especially during cold winter weekends.

Technological Advances = Education For the Public and Staff. In 2010, staff trained 2,667 people about using our computers. In a week, 333 persons use the library's public computer to access the internet or create documents. Many patrons are visible all over the building using our wireless internet access. New this year - two laptops for use by those who need several hours to apply for jobs or social service benefits.

Grants = Huge Boost to Our Offerings: Library Science graduate school intern Lara Keenan wrote a successful grant from the **Oakland Foundation to purchase three new computers to replace some decade old computers** not supported by web-browsers any more. Brownell was one of ten Vt. Libraries chosen by **Echo Science Center "Voices for the Lake" program from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences**, to offer a program on digital storytelling to raise awareness of Lake Champlain. **Mary Graf and Erna Deutsch** earned an **Early Literacy Initiative Grant** from Vt. Dept of Libraries to train them in sharing new research on pre-literacy skills with parents at Story Times, and an evening series on picture books for new parents. Vt. Dept of Libraries awarded us a **Winnie Belle Learned Grant** of \$2500, to allow **YA Librarian Kat Redniss** to provide programming to attract more boys to the library. Brownell was chosen as a key library for the **National Endowment for the Arts "The Big Read"** project, to host a lecture and discussion of *The Things They Carried*, a novel on the Vietnam War by Tim O'Brien. **Martha Penzer** spearheaded our winning one of thirty grants offered by the American Library Association and the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2011-12 programming on **Louisa May Alcott: The Woman Behind Little Women.**

Community Hub for Downtown Revitalization - On dark and stormy December 1st, the **Train Hop and Tree Lighting ceremony** attracted an estimated 400 attendees who enjoyed a variety of model trains, a Harry Potter Lego train exhibit and a huge cardboard "Library Localmotive." The RR Ave. Recess sponsored layouts in several Essex Junction businesses. Penny, the Staff and the Teen Advisory Board have worked with the Railroad Ave Recess Committee for the past two years in support of rebirth in Downtown.

Brownell sponsored 112 programs for adults in 2010, a high proportion were co-sponsored by the Friends of Brownell, the Vermont Council on the Humanities, the Vermont Astronomical Society plus many generous people who are willing to share their expertise for free. **1,795 patrons joined us** to learn about Opera, Essex Junction RR history, Russian poets, the Irish in Vermont, The HHS Titanic, a naturalist's kayak tour of Shelburne Pond, the woods along the Winooski, sustainability of food supply. Capt Richard Philips, kidnapped by Somali pirates, told his story to a full Reading Room. We offered twelve months of Kolvoord Room Art Displays and Glass Case Exhibits by many local artists and collectors.

Youth Programming – In FY10, **248 Children’s Programs and 76 Teen Programs drew 4714 kids and 1384 teens to the library: 4.6% more kids and 24% more teens than last year.** Popular programs include our Toddler and Preschool Story Times, Red Clover and DCF Book Programs for Home Schoolers, Family and Teen Movies (hosted by our Teen Advisory Board), Read to Sara (Therapy Dog), and Songs and Stories with Matthew. After-School Programs bring students in for Wii Games and Fitness, Middle School Planners & Helpers, Teen Advisory Board, and Book Lovers/Book Lust for Middle/High Schoolers.

263 Kids registered for our 8-week Summer Reading Program: “Make a Splash, Read!” Together they read **3297 books**, an activity that prevented brain drain over the summer. **81 different programs attracted 3425 visits from kids and parents.** Highlights included “Make a Splash” Crafts, “Booked for Lunch” Stories, Chess for Kids, Water Bug Sampling with Lake Champlain Fish & Wildlife, “The Ugly Duckling” Puppet Show, Wet & Wild Water Play, Cold-Blooded Critters from V.I.N.S, Ocean Creatures from Steve Amos, a Pirate Play, Water Art, “Wonders of Water” Experiments, Watermelon Fun, and our Final Party with No Strings Marionette Company.

80 Teens registered for “Make Waves @ Your Library” Summer Reading Program and read 736 books. A wide variety of **29 teen programs brought in 391 participants**, who enjoyed Live Action Role-Play, Theatre, Water Gun Painting, Water Balloon Launching, Tie-Dye, Recycled Sculptured Art, Writing Workshop, Just-Add-Water Cooking, Debates, Make Your Own PSA, and Book Discussions. Many teens also helped out volunteering at many programs for younger kids or serving as Reading Buddies.

A team of retired teachers is helping out as After-School Volunteers in the Youth Library, an idea proposed by Library Trustee Linda Costello. She is joined by Jan Abbott, Becky Blanchard, Fran Lewis and Bill Adams, who each come one afternoon a week to offer homework help and a friendly adult presence to the many students who come to the library after school.

Friends of Brownell continued holding bimonthly week long book sales, turning donations and discards into funding for programming, best sellers and purchased us expanded Large Print shelving and renovated outdoor signage to mention a few. The FOBL are ably led by **Cindy Chadurjian.**

Library Trustees - Christine Packard, Chairperson, Nick Lemon, Vice Chair, Sheila Porter, Secretary and Dottie Bergendahl, Treasurer are our board leaders. New teen trustee is **Sarah Sturm.** We said goodbye to long time faithful trustee Chair Angie Chapple-Sokol. Nikki Yandow left the board; interim new members of board are Mark Weston and Jackie Hooker .

Brownell Library Foundation led by **Elaine Sopchak** said goodbye to treasurer **Joe Feltz** but have added Jean Palmer and Thomas Helmstutler to their board of nine. The Foundation held a Literary Basket Silent Auction on Train Hop night. The Foundation supports the library’s future.

Interlibrary Loan - Asst. Librarian **Susan Pierce** borrowed 457 items for Essex Junction patrons this year. We lent 904 to other libraries. We’ll never have it all.

Brownell Library Trustees

(Left to Right)

Front Row: Sarah Sturm and Christina Yu

Second Row: Todd Logan, Nikki Yandow, Sheila Porter, Christine Packard, Nick Lemon

Third Row: Becky Arnold, Jackie Hooker, Dottie Bergendahl, Linda Costello, Genevieve Melle

