

# Brownell Library Report

By Penelope D. Pillsbury, Library Director

**Lots of Library People:** In FY08 Brownell Library had 8426 registered borrowers who show up in amazing quantities every week – approximately 2445 each week or 127,131 in the course of the year, which is 7,687 more than last year.

**Circulation Upsurge:** 181,915 books, DVDs, CDs, Videos, magazines, cassettes left the library in FY08, which is an approximate 10% increase over FY07. Hard times mean more people remember they have a library to enjoy.

**What We Don't Have...:** We borrow from other libraries nationally and internationally. In FY08 we requested **42 items from other libraries and lent 107 items. ??????**

**Critical Computers:** The staff has noticed many patrons applying for work online at Brownell and many need the staff's assistance-**approximately 2249 times**. Internet computers were access 10,088 times throughout FY08 this represents a 15% increase. Our Wireless access attracted 500 sessions weekly by citizens can use the library as a base for working outside the home. This takes the pressure from the hard wired library computers.

**Programming for Grownups:** 1291 patrons attended the 65 “mostly” adult events sponsored by the library this year – a 17% increase over FY07. The adult summer reading program “Catch the Reading Bug” attracted beekeepers. Encouraged by Vt. Civil War author Howard Coffin, I gathered a fledgling Essex Civil War Sites Committee to study our Civil War veterans. With the rest of Vermont, we read *Counting On Grace* and celebrated French Canadian culture. Mark Twain packed the room in the person of actor **Bern Budd**. Brownell was the winner one of the 50 Love & Forgiveness Grants due to the passionate labors of Library Assistant Martha Penzer. Programming has begun. We celebrated the centennial of *Anne of Green Gables*, 65 people of several generations attended. Trustee **Linda Costello** was our Lucy Maud Montgomery. Between Big Read book discussions, we also sponsored an antique dolls road-show, and a female motorcyclist talk on her solo ride to Alaska.

**Youth Programming:** In FY08, **280 programs for children and teens attracted 5670 attendees!** Among the popular offerings were Story Times for Preschoolers, Red Clover and DCF Book Programs for Homeschoolers, Family Movies and Teen Movies (hosted by our Teen Advisory Board), Book Discussions for Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers, NECI's Tasty Reads series, Read to Clyde & Sara (Therapy Dogs), and Songs & Stories with Matthew.

We attracted six classes from Fleming School to participate in **Scavenger Hunts**, designed by Erna Deutsch to support school curriculum. Rubber bracelet prizes for the students were funded by the Friends of Brownell Library. Inspired by Young Adult Librarian Kat Redniss, a **Fundraiser Spelling Bee Challenge** pitted 2 teams of Teens against teams of Librarians and Library Trustees. The event raised \$1100 for after-school programming.

“**Catch the Reading Bug**” attracted 357 children who registered to participate in some of the 60 free programs offered during our 2008 Summer Reading Program. Nature, art, drama, music, crafts, puppetry and of course, reading, kept the Youth Staff busy during seven weeks of events. For Teens, a “**Metamorphosis**” theme highlighted personal discovery, and 57 teens chose from 21 programs, including book discussions, sculpture, yoga, films, and a makeover at the Red Clover Salon.

**Library Trustees: Todd Logan**, new trustee was voted onto the board to fill an unfilled term. He created the 9' purple and orange literate dragonfly “Paige” for the parade. Christine and Penny were invited to present how Brownell excels at building community at the Town Officers Training. Nicole

Yandow was elected to the board and was an instant hit as Brownella in a yellow polka dot bikini at the Block Party. Angie Chapple-Sokol and Christine Packard were active members of the Policy Committee. Genevieve Melle and Christine serve on the Technology Committee. Dylan Renca, our first ever teen trustee, handed his seat over to two passionate library teens: Charlotte Ross and Ariel Hamlin. Trustees worked hard to finish the library's five year plan. Trustees ran the Memorial Day book sale.

**Friends of Brownell Library:** Cindy Chadurjian stepped up as Chair of the Friends. The loyal Friends opened the book room for several week-long successful book sales, turning generous donations into funding some of the extras: for example our institutional membership to the American Library Association, Matthew Witten's music for the children and reupholstering the reading room sofas.

**Brownell Library Foundation:** Like other endowments, our Foundation's resources took a hit when the stock market declined. New chairperson, Elaine Sopchak, is hoping that the Foundation can meet more regularly and come up with some fresh ideas for fund raising. All patrons are urged to remember Brownell's future in their estate planning or with larger memorial/honorary gifts.

**Vital Volunteers:** In FY08 our volunteers worked approximately 45 per week or 2,340 hours annually, 15% more hours than in FY07. They water plants, read shelves, cut out bulletin board displays, distribute magazines, sort donations, work behind the scenes. For over 15 years one volunteer specializes in emptying our outside book drop when we're closed for a national holiday. There can't be a more loyal group in any library anywhere. Brownell Library would not be the same without them.

**Staff Transitions:** Our excellent Assistant Director Kent has decided to finish his Phd when his wife took a new position in Nebraska. We will miss his tech savvy and zany wit. Shelves came and went in FY08 – Stephanie Schmidt and Stefan Deutsch worked with us briefly. We hired Lauren Proctor to shelve for a while and then when she had a chance to go to England, we hired Carol Boucher and Ariel Engel to get all those books etc put back where they belong. We hope to keep them busy for a long time.