

FORBES LIBRARY
2009 Annual Report 2009
Year Ending December 31, 2009

2009 was a difficult financial year for Forbes Library with 1.6% cut in the city appropriation. This necessitated cutting intermittent part time staff and closing the library for twelve Saturdays. The Forbes Library Employees Association agreed to take no wage increase in order to avoid laying off salaried employees. Overall, Forbes Library's usage is mirroring what is seen in libraries across the country. The down economy has people relying more on various library services, while at the same time library budgets are being reduced.

Budget

- Operating Budget FY10 -- \$1,088,027
- Book Budget FY10 – \$139,195
- City Appropriation FY10-- \$1,070,733
- State Aid FY10-- \$37,769
- Clarke & Earle -- \$13,000

The voters of Northampton passed a 2.5% override in June which gave an added \$52,000 to the Forbes FY10 appropriation of \$1,018,733 for a total of \$1,070,733. That was \$17,266 less than the FY09 appropriation, a 1.6% cut. However, Forbes also lost income from non-city sources. Clarke & Earle and State Aid to Public Libraries gave Forbes \$2,101 less than budgeted in FY09. The CWMars fee, over which Forbes has no control, went up by \$1,458. To make up for the approximately \$20,000 loss of income from these combined sources, the employees' bargaining association agreed to a wage freeze for all library employees and the Ordinary Maintenance budget was reduced by \$9,233. The remaining cuts came from reducing intermittent part time staff. About \$12,000 was saved by closing the ten Saturdays from July 4th through September 5th and the Saturdays after Christmas and New Years.

Grants

The library received a Community Block Grant of \$31,000 to design a permanent all-weather handicap accessible entrance at the west side of the building into the Children's Room. The ramped entrance is intended to make the building reliably and safely accessible for all. The library's handicap lift has proved inadequate as reliable access to the library for the handicapped patrons. Neither the original lift installed in 1986, nor the updated replacement lift installed in 2005, has proved capable of handling the amount of use associated with a busy public library. It has needed repairs eight times in three years with an average of five days out of service per repair.

Rick Hart and Jennifer Ditkoff obtained two grants related to health information and community healthfulness. The grants totaled \$11,000 (EqualAccess \$5000; Health Access 09, \$6000) and greatly increased the library's capability to provide health information. A consumer health information center was created to be a resource for the larger community. A dedicated computer was purchased and a health area on the Forbes website was expanded.

Operations

P&P General Contractors was chosen as the contractor for phase III of the building envelope construction project which included roof repairs, structural wall repairs and repointing of the front and west elevations, and refurbishing of the entrance portico. P&P used Monaco Masonry as their subcontractor for the masonry work. Monaco did an excellent job on Phases I and II. P&P's base bid for the project was \$670,000 with \$248,000 for the alternate which is the repair and repointing of the west elevation. The total bid was \$918,000. That number included \$200,000 for the roof subcontractor. The Community Preservation Committee has awarded Forbes Library \$1,000,000 for the project. Jason Petcen was the project manager for the project. As part of the renovations, two illuminating sun tubes were installed in the director's office roof.

Sam's Café from the Smith College Art Museum opened Tuesday, March 3rd in the lobby of Forbes Library. Although it was very popular with staff and patrons, it did not make enough money for the café and closed in December.

Fifteen four-hour parking meters were installed in the southwest corner of the library parking lot. Patrons had been requesting to be able to park for longer than the two hours allowed by the standard parking meters.

A Graphic Novel/Graphic Book area was established in the hallway between the Hosmer Gallery and the Arts & Music department as an attractive, browsable location to consolidate this unique collection. A chair was donated by the Friends of Forbes for patrons to sit and read by the shelves.

The Susan Howard Case Poetry Corner, a collection of the works of local poets was established in the Arts & Music Periodical Reading Room. This collection was named in memory of a local poet who contributed to the library's rich poetry community through her volunteer service. The non-circulating collection consists of poetry books and chapbooks by Pioneer Valley poets, and locally published literary journals.

The new Bak Study Room was completed on the Arts & Music floor. New windows were put into the former book repair room and it was re-carpeted and painted. Both walls and carpet were damaged previously by the flood from the HVAC system. With room for up to six people, the Bak Study Room is intended for small group study sessions, tutoring, Special Collection researchers, and small group meetings. It was named the Bak Study Room after John I. Bak whose bequest in 2006 was used in part to renovate and furnish the room.

Two Red Sox Fenway Park seats given to the library by Denny Nolan were installed in the Children's Room with a poster of Fenway Park hanging on the wall above the seats.

Forbes donated 726 pounds of food collected during the Food for Fines program to the Northampton Survival Center.

The Children's Department established a new collection of 250 titles in Braille for children ages birth through age 16. The collection includes titles from mainstream popular literature and the classics ranging from toddler board books to literature for older children.

The library started a collection of circulating video games, which are fast becoming the most popular new item at many libraries. Games were ordered for the most requested platforms: PlayStation, Xbox and Wii.

As an addition to language learning media, two electronic translators that convert 64,000 words and 4,000 phrases into German, Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and

English were added to the collection. They also convert currency and will circulate with the rest of the language media.

The city installed a new internet based phone system in the library building. The system was paid for by the city and has brought many new features including a phone tree, automated messages, voicemail, and cordless phones in the reference areas.

Trustees

The 2009 Trustees Award was given to long-time library volunteers Margaret Bowhill and Ellie Dole. Ms. Bowhill has worked in many departments over the years, most recently in Special Collections. Ms. Dole is the reader for the very popular weekly children's story hour.

The Trustees approved new by-laws for themselves in March and developed a new investment policy as requested by investment advisors from Bartholomew & Company. The principal purpose of this investment policy is to provide long-term direction for the investment of the Forbes Library endowment funds following the concept of "Conservative Growth and Income."

The Trustees publicly declared their support for the Proposition 2.5 override vote because its failure would have a negative impact on the library and its passage would save services to the public. The override vote passed in June 2009.

Gifts

- 1996 Saturn SL1 from Justine Bertram, Northampton, to the Outreach Department
- \$15 from Reed Young, Northampton, to the Children's Book Fund to the Aid Book Fund
- \$1,000 from The DeLaCour Family Foundation, New York, and Edmund DeLaCour, Northampton, to the Stahl Halberstadt Technology Fund
- \$50 from Jonathan Hogan, Ware, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$4,000 from Anonymous half to the Children's Department to the Aid Book Fund and half to the Hampshire Room to the Special Collections Fund
- The Quabbin Chapter of the Association of Traditional Hooking Artists has renewed the library's subscription to Rug Hooking magazine for another year
- \$45 from Edythe Ellin, Leverett, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$75 from Marie Claire Cournand, Ashfield in appreciation of ILL services, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$150 from Dennis Bidwell and Mary Ann Kelly, Northampton, to the Hosmer Gallery Fund
- \$90 from Kristin Holloway-Bidwell, Florence, to the Hosmer Gallery Fund
- \$82.50 from Daniel Barrett and Pamela Elkow, Redding, CT, to the Hosmer Gallery Fund
- \$107 from Ann W. Bissett, Northampton, to the Hosmer Gallery Fund
- \$100 from David and Alice Shearer, Northampton, to the Garvey Book Fund.
- \$20 from Arlene, James, & Heather Carmichael, Pelham, in memory of Emil V. Rennet, to purchase large print books, the Aid Book Fund
- Two tables for the Hampshire Room, made by Bob Gaffney

- \$20 from Elizabeth Giles, East Falmouth, in honor of Mary Harding, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$100 from the Buick Club of America, Central New England Chapter, Hadley, in memory of Marguerite Hayes, to the Aid Book Fund.
- 2,000 from the Friends of Forbes Library for staff development to the Staff Development Fund.
- \$100 from the The Thursday Club, to the Aid Book Fund.
- \$50 from Jayne Conway & Michael Goldrick, Westport, MA, for large print books, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$40 Barnes & Noble gift certificate from Jane Sommer, Northampton, to be used to purchase books for the collection
- \$140 from Jesus Leyva, Northampton, for programming, to the Programming Fund.
- \$50 from Joe Donohue & Judy Wightman, Easthampton, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$50 from Joan Leonard, Northampton, to buy book marks, to the Aid Fund for printing
- \$500 from R. Allison Ryan, Florence, in memory of John H. McCormack, to purchase audio books on CD.
- \$40 from Robin Cox, Ashuelot, NH, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to the Aid Book Fund
- 25 from David Gleason, South Hadley, MA, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to in the Aid Book Fund
- \$100 from Kelly and Charlie DeRose, Florence, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$20 from Edward McColgan & Marcia Burick, Leeds, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$25 from Charles & Carol Olanyk, Whately, MA, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$100 from Susette & Charlie Lyons, Northampton, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$100 from Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury & Murphy, Springfield, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, the Aid Book Fund
- \$50 from United Personnel Services, Springfield, in memory of Mary Ann Cahillane, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$50 from Nicole Clausing, Oakland, CA, with fond memories of Forbes and regret for an overdue book, to the Aid Book Fund
- \$5,000 from the Friends of Forbes Library to the Book Fund
- \$500 from Todd K. Thompson, Northampton, for the Children's Department, to the Aid Book Fund.
- \$500 from Barry Schechter and Kathy Hibshman, Northampton, MA, to the Stahl Halberstadt Technology Fund.
- \$50 from Joe Donohue, Easthampton, to the Bak Fund
- \$500 from anonymous to the Bak Fund.
- 1,000 from Anonymous for the Hampshire Room to the Special Collections Fund\$

Bequests

- 20,000 from the Estate of Nellie M. Bak, this being the final payment of Forbes Library's share of the estate's residuary assets, to be added to the Bak Fund. The original bequest of \$48,204.07 was received in May of 2006. It was designated for projects around the library, including the Bak Study Room which is nearing completion.
- \$809.02 from the Estate of Thelma J. Isaccs, this being the final disbursement of Forbes Library's share of the estate's residuary assets, "to be added to your Endowment Fund and used for such fund's charitable uses and purposes." The bulk of the bequest, \$26,000 was deposited in the Garvey Book Fund.
- \$21,097.97 from the Doris Davis Revocable Trust, deposited in the Stahl/Halberstadt Technology Fund.

Sales

- \$4,125.00 from NEBA for sale of books to Special Collection Fund
- \$1,500 from Hampshire Property Management for the Old School Commons lease to the Stahl-Halberstadt Technology Fund

Annual Fund

The 2009 Annual Fund raised \$8,600 for the Arts & Music department to be spent in part on professionally photographing the library's art collection for insurance and promotional uses, installing informational signs for the ends of the Arts & Music stacks, and building new exhibit cases for the display of art work and special collections.

Awards

Forbes Library received two awards from the Public Library Association. Forbes received a first place award in the News Coverage category for the many articles and pictures in the press about the library's innovative circulating ukuleles. Rick Hart's Readers Advisory brochure "Both Sides Now" won third place in the Booklist category.

Staff

Each month a staff member's name is drawn at random from those names submitted by patrons or other employees for acts of excellent customer service and fellow staff support. In 2009 the most nominated employees were Jason Myers, Jason Petcen, Rick Hart, Katie Krol, Jude McGowan, and Faith Kaufmann.

Popular Circulation Department Assistant Barbara Lewis Retired in March 2009 after nearly a decade with the library.

A team of Forbes Library staff members and associates for a second season served a dinner once a month at the homeless cot shelter at 43 Center Street in Northampton. The meal team provided food as well as serving it. Team members included Jesse Adams, Julie Bartlett, Elise Bernier-Feeley, Jennifer Ditkoff, Lisa Downing, Mary Harding, Rick Hart, Portia Henle, Barbara Lewis, Stephanie Levine, Elizabeth Maguire, Janet Moulding, Jason Myers, Jason Petcen, Brian Tabor, Matt Thorne, David Chura and Sue Curran.

The library continues to have a large number of volunteers with over 300 volunteers giving 5,967 hours during the year.

Special Collections

The number of patrons served by the Hampshire Room and Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum continued to increase in 2009. The loss of Saturdays in the summer for the Hampshire Room saw a large increase in the number of patrons requesting appointments in the afternoons and evenings with Julie Bartlett. The Arts & Music Department's use of the Coolidge Museum for program space saw an increase in traffic to the Museum, especially first time visitors to the space. In the spring of 2009, photocopy and microfilm fees and off site obituary and genealogy question fees were increased. The increased fees did not cause a decline in the number of requests. Fees were continued to be waived for requests from other libraries, local nursing home residents, Northampton residents who were physically unable to come to the library to do their own research (i.e. when the handicap lift was broken or microfilm was difficult for those with poor vision). Approximately 300 pages of photocopies and microfilm print-outs of primary source materials were provided to teachers and students.

Friends of Forbes

Kari Knapp stepped down as president and was replaced by Christine Nolan.

The Friends of Forbes Annual Garden Tour was held June 14th and revenue exceeded \$4,000. The Edible Book Contest, a joint fundraiser by The Friends of Forbes and The Friends of Lilly, was held Sunday, April 5th in the Community Room. Approximately \$500 was raised. The Friends hosted a Wine Tasting at Forbes on September 25th which raised over \$2,000.

Statistics

Forbes Library continued to be a well-used resource with increased usage in several areas. Library visits totaled 222,662 in 2009, the equivalent of 819 people per day or 95 people per open hour. This represents a 36% increase from the previous year. Circulation has also increased. 362,157 items circulated this year (1,331 items per day or 155 items per open hour), which is a 5% increase from the previous year. Circulation to people from out of town decreased by 12% and that is attributed to more people utilizing the interlibrary holds system combined with an increase in gas prices and the library's construction project. Interlibrary loan saw a 4% increase which is a substantially smaller increase than in past years. However, it remains a very popular service with circulation of ILL materials totaling 60,421 items which account for about 17% of total circulation.

Besides circulation, other services also increased. Public internet usage was up 17%. 1,023 people per week (23 people per open hour) used a computer at the library to access the internet. The number of people accessing the library website also grew by 5%. Usage of public meeting rooms increased by 25% which is in part attributable to full utilization of the Friends of Forbes Community Room as well as the new Bak Study Room on the second floor. Reference questions were up 10% with over 41,000 reference questions answered.