

The Librarian's Desk . . .

The Library Trustees addressed Town Meeting in April 2010 for the second time in 40 years. The first time was in March 1969. As I looked at the attentive faces in the audience, it registered with me that a number of voters at Town Meeting and a few of the Trustees were in attendance for both 2010 and 1969 presentations. It doesn't seem so long ago, in the collective memory of the Town, that the 1970 construction of the Sherborn Library caused a great stir of excitement and community involvement.

At Town Meeting 2010, Trustee Chairwoman Stacey Brandon presented a PowerPoint outline in support of Warrant Article 19, "to see if the Town will authorize the Library Trustees to apply for, accept, and expend any state grants that may be available to defray all or part of the cost of the design, construction and equipping of the renovation or expansion of the Sherborn Library." The presentation outlined the timeline of a state grant opportunity that awards communities 50% of the cost of renovating public library facilities. At Town Meeting 1969, Moderator Alvin Tyson presented Warrant Article 22, "to see if the Town will vote to accept the offer of the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation to construct a new public library building to be presented to the Town upon completion of the work." The Town also voted to authorize the use of the parcel of land on which we are situated. Trustee Chairwoman Janet Laverack, Sue Peirce, and others whose names we recognize were on hand to elaborate on the Library plans. Both 2010 and 1969 presentations received unanimous approval from the Town.

Chairwoman Brandon also described the aspects of our facility that are the main focus of the proposed renovation. The Library Trustees are currently exploring the design options and cost of: enlarging the children's area to include dedicated space for preschool age up to young adult; building compliance with the American with Disabilities Act including the installation of an elevator; updating and replacing the 40 year-old heating, venting and air conditioning systems with energy efficient and green equipment; improving space for media collections and technology that did not exist when the building was designed in 1969, updating fire, public safety, and emergency systems to meet current code; and repairing or replacing failing aspects of the structure such as windows, roofing materials, and masonry walkways. Warrant Article 19 is the furtherance of an effort made possible by a previous planning and building design grant from the state, which Town Meeting voted to accept and expend in 2007.

The unanimous approval of Warrant Article 19 enables the Library Trustees to apply for a larger state grant and advance to the potential fulfillment of the building study by actual construction. But prior to advancing to actual construction, the Town shall be asked to vote to accept any such grant award which the Trustees procure, and approve the accompanying preliminary designs for the renovation. The community will have the opportunity to review preliminary schematic designs as they develop over the next 12 months. It is the intention of the Trustees to bring the preliminary design and cost estimates to the voters at Town Meeting 2011. The Town will then be asked to vote to approve the preliminary designs and initial cost estimates.

Should the Town approve the resulting design and preliminary cost estimates in 2011, the Trustees will submit these documents to the state to complete the grant application. If the state awards the construction grant, Sherborn will receive the announcement in June 2011. The state expects to award funds to 10 projects in 2011; remaining library grant requests that the state approves will be placed on the state's ranked waiting list and fulfilled in that order. Looking ahead two years, the voter at 2012 Town Meeting may be asked to accept the awarded grant sum from the state, as well as approve any share of municipal and privately-raised funds to renovate the Library.

The two generations that the Library has served since the Town voted to construct this facility in 1969 have greatly influenced its services and productivity. The 3,090 people

who lived in Sherborn in 1969 matured and gained an appetite for knowledge that is demonstrated in borrowing three times as many items from the Library's collection by the 4,528 residents of 2010. Our Library was constructed on the brink of a technology revolution. The generations that used our resources over the years consisted and continue to consist of many individuals who entered the professions that vastly multiplied the number of books published, converted books to other formats, widened the distribution of information and reading material using technology, or became the consumers of these products. None of the reading formats or distribution channels of information have replaced the other; whether we read for pleasure or research data to target specific facts, we have more layers of choices today to conveniently go about it. Library users are very confident choosing between books, media, or internet to suit their immediate purpose.

I am reminded of a line from Jay Parini's poem *Town Life*, when I think about being in the midst of the complex work ahead of us to agree on the improvements to the Library: "there's so much going on I'll never know but happily assume has its own pattern; I have mine, which fits into the Town's slow ritual so well no doubt you'll wonder if some parts of me were not lopped off to make this fitting."

Our building is ready to adapt to the changes the last two generations have brought about. Its aesthetic is dearly loved and continues to impress visitors and newcomers. It is a great credit to the architect, the Trustees and building committee circa 1969 to have created such a unique structure in a rural town. It is a shining example of the Town's value of itself that a gift of this magnitude was brought forward in 1969, given by a Sherborn family who thought of their home as the entire municipality, not just their own house and property, and of their neighbors as kin.

In 2012, the Library aims to hear the same thunderous round of applause at Town Meeting for the vote of state and local support heard in 1969 for the gift of new construction. The next two generations await their Library privileges and will also rise to show their gratitude to Sherborn in their usage and support.

Your Librarian,

Elizabeth Johnston