

The Librarian's Desk . . .

What do John Glenn and the Sherborn Library have in common? 3.6 million.

For John Glenn, the 3.6 million is in miles. The Sherborn Library's 3.6 million is in dollars.

To John Glenn, 3.6 million miles was 134 orbits around earth on the Discovery in 1998. To the Sherborn Library, \$3.6 million is the state grant award for the building's expansion and renovation circa 2015.

Word of the grant award reached us in May. The grant is administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for the renovation and expansion of the Library. There is a waiting list of 19 libraries and our project is ranked in 18th place.

We achieved this funding award after our first application was returned to us in July 2011 with a "try, try again" status. The state's independent board of grant reviewers requested several revisions to the plans before our project earned waiting list status. Our architectural firm held a joint meeting with the MBLC and Library officials to work on making the grade. The design revisions included installing a fire sprinkler protection system, public access modifications to the existing basement and secondary entrance, and updating staff offices. The MBLC also urged us to join the Minuteman Library Network as soon as possible to fully participate in the state-wide resource sharing of collections.

The Library Trustees considered the grant revisions asked of our project and voted to resubmit the application with the necessary changes. We got back to work. In January 2012, we met the deadline for the grant resubmission and shipped it to Boston with a lucky charm. For a few months, the Library project was in a holding pattern. We used the interval to review our project scope of work and identified short-term renovations to remedy several deficiencies without causing redundancy in the final project plans.

We set our sights on the section in our scope of work that discussed improving access to programs and services by individuals with disabilities. Architect Richard Smith responded quickly to our request and prepared drawings to modify one of our two existing public restrooms for handicapped access. We also researched automatic door openers for our heavy front doors to make access less of a work-out for most visitors. In the effort to remove barriers to access, Library art exhibits are now displayed on the Main Floor thanks to the Friends' generous donation of funds for purchasing and installing a track picture gallery on the brick walls. Library programs are no longer held in the basement Media Theater or upper Mezzanine Conference Room. These adjustments serve as a bridge to accommodate access until the full renovation of the facility takes place.

The Library Trustees submitted their notice of intent to the Town with the request of \$52,000 for the handicapped bathroom and assisted front doors. The Board of Selectmen sponsored Article 8 for Omnibus Capital Expenses which included the Library's request. We are very pleased that the request received the Town's vote of approval.

The Friends of the Library set a goal to raise \$50,000 for the Minuteman start-up costs to help the Library meet the grant prerequisite of Minuteman membership. With the November 2013 expiration of the Library's current software vendor's contract, this intention was expressed in the original grant application. We highlighted our intention in the grant reapplication and filed the paperwork with Minuteman for membership

approval. The Minuteman Board of Directors will vote to approve our membership in June. In spring of 2013, the Library will begin the process of data conversion and we anticipate going live on the Minuteman Network in fall 2013.

So many residents have asked us why we are not part of Minuteman because this Library is one of only a few libraries in Massachusetts that does not participate in a network. We know that the majority of our patrons would prefer this Library to be part of the Minuteman Network rather than continue using our alternative system. It took us several years of economizing to afford the added expense of Minuteman's annual fee. We know that the transition to Minuteman will represent a great enhancement of our existing service to the community and we are pleased to check that off the list of must-haves. Many patrons will be happy.

E-books are now available on the Library's website as a bridge between today and the 18 months that it will take us to be part of Minuteman. We have subscribed to Freading e-books service which is compatible with the Kindle Fire, Nook, iPad, iPhone and the most popular androids and tablets. Freading offers the advantage of allowing multiple users to access the same book and has more than 20,000 titles with new selections added weekly. This is a new e-book provider that is scaled down so our Library can afford it. Patrons are flocking to the site for new content for their readers and mobile devices.

iPads and educational video games are now available in the collection as another interim solution we're offering the community to compensate for the lack of space for children's technology. We acquired two of the new iPads and have loaded them with children's apps. These complement the two Netbooks we offer the children for internet searching. Children and their caregivers are welcome to use these in the Library children's room. Their portability and picture book scale give young patrons the flexibility to find a comfortable spot in the Library to study and use educational programs. Children will no longer have to compete with the adults who occupy our 4 workstations.

We met with 3 young adults who have joined our team of advisors to guide the Library's planned updates to young adult services. We named their group Gen2B. We fully support their suggestions to refurbish the young adult gathering space with warm colors, offer laptops and new technologies for convenient use on the Mezzanine, create inspiring displays and acquire more books. Our young adult collection is small but heavily used.

The Library is an unusual industry that serves all ages and stages. But don't just take my word for it. Visit the Library's website at Library.SherbornMA.org and click on our documentary video to hear Sherborn residents speak for themselves.

We are very absorbed in planning for the Library's future and we are fortunate indeed to have a trajectory of \$3.6 million of Massachusetts' funding for Sherborn to further our mission.

Godspeed, Sherborn Library.

Your Librarian,

Elizabeth Johnston