

## The Librarian's Desk . . .

On July 1, the Library will join the ranks of the Minuteman Library Network, a consortium of 42 libraries in the Greater Boston and MetroWest regions of Massachusetts. The Friends of the Library raised the \$50,000 cost of the Network start-up fees and data migration over several years of fund-raising. This Friends' contribution meets a milestone that has the potential to improve library services for every Sherborn resident. Over the years, Trustees, staff, Friends, and library patrons have discussed Minuteman membership frequently and we are finally making it happen for you, thanks to your donations to the Friends.

In the words of the Minuteman Library Network's governing board "the vision of the Minuteman Library Network is to foster a strong community of libraries providing people with optimal access to resources and information. This vision is realized through the Network's mission to strengthen member libraries through innovative and economical technologies, efficient resource sharing, collaboration and shared expertise."

What this vision presents to you is your personal access to 6.6 million items in the shared online catalog of the Network library collections. In addition, you have the option to request items from Minuteman's impressive collection using your home computer or other devices, and specify that the items be delivered for your pick-up at the Sherborn Library, or any other Minuteman Library on your commute. You also have the option to store your email address in the Minuteman system for contact and notifications. Minuteman's server will then send you an email when your requested item becomes available for you to pick up at your choice of location. When the item you've borrowed is approaching its date to be returned, an email reminder is sent to you. Personally assigned PIN numbers allow you to choose to extend the loan to yourself, if no one else is waiting for the item, and pay any overdue fines online.

The Library has been the only public library other than a few in the Berkshires that hasn't participated in a network. With the imminent expiration of the 5-year fixed price contract we have enjoyed with our current software system, Library officials determined it was time to network with the regional program.

Once we are live in the Minuteman Network on July 1, your Minuteman card will work in our Library. Your Sherborn Library card will also work in other libraries. But you have to choose between cards and use only one card for all of your library usage in the future. As many as 85% of all Sherborn residents have held Sherborn Library cards and about 2,000 Sherborn residents also hold Minuteman Library cards. The Sherborn Library card is unique. Rather than the iconic blue Lexington Minuteman, Sherborn's white library card depicts a sketch of our building created by Rod Smith, a '75 DS graduate.

Our website offers some free database services that are only accessible to Sherborn residents, such as Zinio online magazine subscriptions, Freading e-books, Freegal music, Ancestry.com, and Mango Languages. Only July 1, you'll also be able to access these Sherborn-only databases from a link on Minuteman's database page. Other than this exclusivity, our Library catalog will literally be part of a network neighborhood and we anticipate there will be a much higher level of borrowing from our collection by residents of Minuteman communities.

Most Sherborn residents who use neighboring libraries don't realize that each one of their borrowing transactions is reimbursed to that municipality by the Commonwealth. In turn, now that the Sherborn Library will be sending many more books across the Network on interlibrary loan to non-residents of Sherborn, we expect to see an increase in state revenues for those transactions. When you pay your overdue fine at the Sherborn Library for your Minuteman loans, Sherborn is allowed to keep the fine for the

Town's general fund, just as the other towns will keep your fines owed on Sherborn materials returned to them for their town coffers.

The policies and procedures of the Library will change behind the scenes to adhere to Minuteman standard procedures and policies, and some of these changes will be evident to patrons. For example, Minuteman blocks from borrowing in all 42 libraries any patrons who owe overdue fines of \$5 and above. It will be difficult for us to do this, but if your child approaches our circulation desk with an overdue fine of \$5 associated with our Library or any other Minuteman Library, we will not be able to permit your child to borrow. With our local system, we have forgiven children's fines because they do not carry money or transport themselves to the Library. Conflicts with this change may be overcome by the convenient Minuteman alerts and account access that should give Sherborn parents and patrons a greater awareness of their borrowing status.

Minuteman membership brings another significant change to Sherborn. You must use your Library card to check out materials. Yes, we still recognize you and know your name, but as a Minuteman Library we'll scan the barcode on your card to check out materials to you to avoid a data entry error that may be caused by duplication in the 645,118 names in the Minuteman patron database. We will no longer stamp each book with the due date. We will conform to Minuteman practices and print out a receipt that shows your transactions in that session on a cash register slip. Some patrons prefer the receipt, others want the date stamp, but the receipt is the standard.

In 2012, the Minuteman Library Network managed 16,782,102 circulation transactions to individual borrowers – it's a very busy place. As the smallest point in Minuteman city, the Sherborn Library will keep its boutique appeal that has won us our following. Yet we are proud to become part of the Minuteman effort, placing at your fingertips the estimable intellectual resources that belong to you in the Massachusetts free library system.

Your Librarian,

Elizabeth Johnston