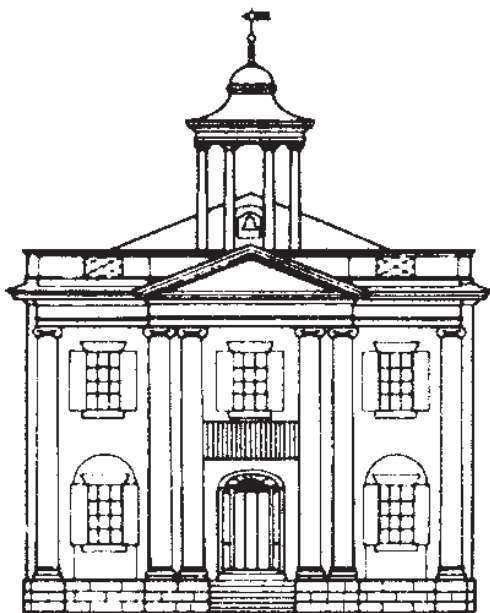


ANNUAL REPORT
2008



The Lenox Library Association
Lenox, Massachusetts

Founded in 1856

Annual Report
of the
Lenox Library Association
for the
year ending June 30
2008



THE USE OF THE LIBRARY IS FREE
AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
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OPEN TUESDAY EVENINGS UNTIL 8:00 P.M.
LABOR DAY THROUGH MEMORIAL DAY

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*denotes our part-time staff positions

Message from:
The President of the Board of Managers
Lenox Library Association

What does it take to run a library? I ask this both as President of the Board of Managers and as an avid library patron.

Just for fun, I looked through six months of my calendar and found that I had been at the Lenox Library 22 times to do something specific — whether it was to enjoy a Library lecture, meet about the Library, represent the Library, be informed at the Library, set goals for the Library, set up committees to raise money for the Library, sign papers for the Library, make phone calls for telethons, or meet with the Board. Add to that all the times I stopped by to pick up a book or tape. Looking at the executive and development reports by Denis and Lisa, I find my experience magnified a thousand fold. There are so many of us - staff and volunteers, town officials, and Library visitors - who live part of our lives in the Library, and we make it the wonderful place that it is. More recent years like fiscal 2008 increase our commitment. And, while years tend to blend into another as 2008 shows, one theme remains constant — we are tough on ourselves at the Library. No matter how successful our latest amazing gala or book party, or how large the audience at a children's event or a lecture, we do not sit still and say, "Wow, we are done. It was wonderful and now we can relax."

As you can tell from all the statistics in this Annual Report, the Lenox Library needs our consistent and constant tending. Our Library has been able to offer so much to all of us who enter it because of this care. 2008 was a building year for us, a year we started our unique status with the Town, and a year we worked to stabilize our funding. We will continue to communicate with you often, and thank you, and ask you for your help. We need all of it to keep us going.

We thank our staff, an amazing group of workers who quietly and competently go about their work creating and maintaining order, cleanliness, and wonderful programs. We thank our many volunteers from the book sale staff to the specialized helpers at our events to the town officers who spend time in meetings with us. We appreciate the foresightedness of our Executive Director and our Development Director as they look around corners to see where libraries are heading. And I, in particular, thank the Board of Managers for their individual talents and financial gifts that support our unique Library. Most of all, we thank all of our supporters. Please continue to spend part of your life with us.

Please keep coming in. As the commercial said about Motel 6, "We'll keep the light on for you."

Lois Lenehan

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Denis Lesieur, Executive Director

October 2008

Where Are Libraries Headed in the Internet Age?

In a conversation this past summer with a frequent library user, I was asked a question that probably resonates with many of us - "What about the future? Where are libraries headed?" - with an unspoken but implied subtext of "Is the Internet pushing libraries toward obsolescence, if not oblivion?"

A study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project provides one answer, finding that Internet use was actually a predictor of library use - some 61% of those who use the Internet have also gone to the public library in the past year compared with only 28% of those who do not frequent the Internet.

The Lenox Library Is a Destination

A more local answer can be found in the assertion by a retired college professor that he settled in Lenox in order to be near our Library, or in a comment made to me by a Boston musician that although Lenox was a small town, he found everything he needed at the Lenox Library and much more. The answer also lies with many of the over 52,000 people who walked through our doors last year. For most, the Lenox Library served not just as another stop on the well-worn tourist trail, but as a destination point for satisfying a variety of needs.

As the second largest and active library in the Berkshires, the Lenox Library offers nearly 78,000 print volumes, 3,122 videos, over 3,500 audio books, and a wide array of other materials. Our total holdings of 102,960 items place us 11th in the state on a per capita basis. In FY2008, we loaned 70,180 of these materials. Our circulation per capita continues to rank in the top

10% statewide and above the 75th percentile nationally.

Media Formats Keep Changing . . .

However, as we continue to try to offer our users the library materials they want and need, we face some strong challenges. Although newer formats such as DVDs and books on CD continue to increase in use and popularity, we are finding a proportional drop in the borrowing of rapidly aging media such as books on tape and VHS. Obsolescence of media formats is a challenge faced by all libraries where collections gradually and expensively developed over decades lose their attractiveness and value in a few short years.

. . . While Our Budget for New Materials Shrinks

At the same time, we face the added challenges of not only maintaining but also updating and upgrading collections with a materials budget that is only 67% of what we devoted in 2000-01. Yet, testifying to the inherent strength and depth of our collections, our holdings per capita place us first among our peer group and 12th within Massachusetts.

Patron Demand for Computers and Internet Service Grows

Answering information requests of all types remains a core component of library services. Reference related transactions totaled nearly 25,000 last year. On a per capita basis, the Lenox Library ranks first in our peer group and third among all libraries in the state. With electronic resources and Internet access accounting for more than half of reference activity, the level of time and skill required from the staff has increased exponentially. It requires signif-

icantly more staff time to assist an unskilled user with a computer task than with a printed source, as well as knowledge of and familiarity with constantly evolving information technology.

Nearly 8,000 people utilized our eight public access computers for such varied tasks as conducting research, creating resumes, or sending e-mail. Our wireless network allowed us to keep pace with the growth in mobile computing, as numerous users were able to gain unfettered and unlimited Internet access using laptops or handheld devices.

We Offer Hundreds of Activities for Everyone

An incredibly wet summer prevented us from utilizing the Roche Reading Park for some outside events such as the classic movie nights and the televised baseball games on the big screen. But inside the Library, we increased both the number of programs and the people attending them. *Over 300 separate activities occurred throughout the year*, ranging from small discussion groups to community wide celebrations such as the 2nd Annual Beatles Day. This past summer, almost no weekend went by without at least one program, if not two. The Welles Gallery also hosted art exhibitions from groups such as the Housatonic Valley Art League and Sculpture Now, bringing both income and exposure to the Library.

As a reflection of the level of effort we are making to meet community needs, the Library ranks 11th among all libraries in the state for the number of people participating in adult programs.

Youth Programs Rank Number One in the State!

An Urban Libraries Council study revealed that the major attraction luring Internet users to libraries was access to children's mate-

rials and services. At the Lenox Library, they enjoyed choices from *one of the most active children's program schedules in the state*, staffed by only one full-time librarian and one part-time assistant. The Library reached 12,500 children and parents through 750 programs in the past 12 months. These numbers can only be found in libraries in communities ten times our size. On a per capita basis, we remain *first in the state*. In addition to a varied menu of on-site programs for a wide age range, our youth department staff provided weekly outreach services to the Morris School classes, as well as visits to day care centers.

Who Makes All of this Possible?

The breadth and depth of the Lenox Library's resources, services, and programs result from a successful blending of diverse funding sources. The FY08 town appropriation of \$241,452 represented a crucial 43% of operating revenue. Investment returns produced another 6%, while the generosity of our many donors and supporters was responsible for over 46% of annual income.

I join our Director of Development, Lisa Berkel, in recognizing our many wonderful donors – large and small – who offer us their ongoing generosity and steadfast friendship. Thank you!

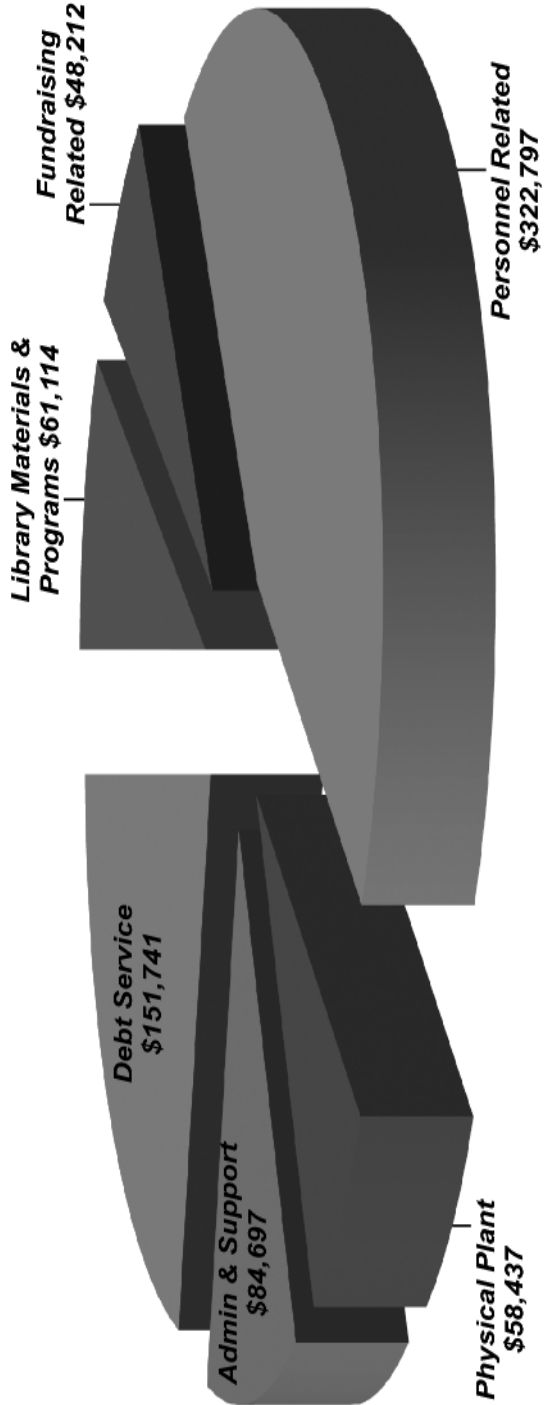
I would be remiss if I didn't also publicly thank the members of our Board of Managers for their willingness to invest time, talent, and treasure in the Library. And a special thanks goes to each of our dedicated staff for their hard work, patience, and perseverance throughout the year.

The accompanying two pie charts summarize the sources of revenue and expenditures for the Lenox Library Association for Fiscal Year 2008. Perhaps the most important point to note is that FY2008 marked the last year that the Library paid *Debt Service* related to the renovations of the historic building. In August 2007, the Town of Lenox and the Library finalized the purchase of the Library property by the Town, the proceeds from which were used to pay off the construction bond and any attendant costs. The Lenox Library has entered into a 20-year lease with the Town, with the Library assuming all utility and maintenance expenses as well as any repair costs below \$5,000. The Town of Lenox is now responsible for major property repairs or improvements costing more than \$5,000.

On the revenue side, *Annual Contributions* include everything from our Annual Appeal to special events receipts. Where the average public library in the state realizes about 2% of its income from contributions, fundraising represents over 44% of the Lenox Library's operating funding. The annual *Town Appropriation* represents our next highest source of revenue at 43% of operating income.

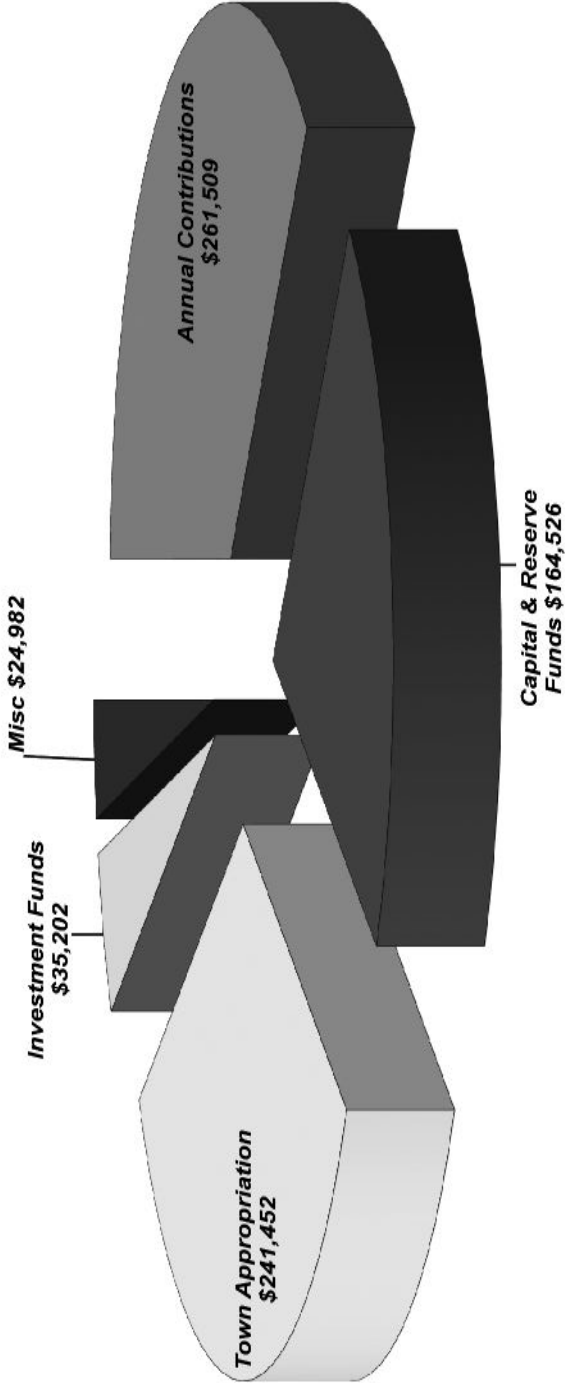
As might be expected for a public service organization, *Personnel* prove our highest expense. However, as a share of the budget, our labor costs are well below comparable libraries. The median statewide for salaries in public libraries is 64% of total operating costs while at the Lenox Library it is 48%. *Administration & Support* is a broad category that covers all of the background costs needed to keep the Library functioning, from office supplies to accounting fees. *Library Materials & Programs* represent our "products": print and audio books, DVD's and CD's and more, as well as year-round children and adult events and activities. Unfortunately, in FY2008 we were able to devote only 69% of the amount we expended in FY2000 on books and other materials. Last year we were able to earn \$5.42 for every dollar spent on *Fundraising Related* costs.

FY08 Expenditures



FY08 Total Expenditures: \$726,998

FY08 Revenue



FY08 Total Revenue: \$727,671

Dear Friends,

Over the course of the year, my goal was to assist in bringing the Lenox Library to the forefront of our community, to be more visible and accessible to everyone, to be a place where the young and old, local residents and tourists alike would look forward to visiting.

We jumped right in while the weather was still warm. Tony Schwartz, along with his crew from SoCo Creamery, set up his big screen every Tuesday evening enabling us to show movies in the Roche Reading Park. Along with John McNinch, the SoCo crew also made it possible for us to broadcast a couple of the Red Sox-Yankees games in the Park where over 300 sports enthusiasts of all ages dined on free hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and soda, and rooted for their favorite baseball team. Through the generosity of our Board of Managers, we were also able to offer youth concerts in the Park with Terry A La Berry every Tuesday afternoon.

Once again, our Annual Book Sale broke its sales records of the past fourteen years. Thanks to Ilse and Irwin Browner and a tightly knit, highly motivated group of volunteers, this continued to be one of our most successful annual fundraising events, netting nearly \$22,000 over the three day sale.

The Welles Gallery enjoyed an extended season this year, hosting monthly art shows throughout the fall season. As winter began to settle in the Berkshires, we were pleased that so many braved the cold and joined us for our Distinguished Lecture Series organized by Professor Jeremy Yudkin. During the Spring, we held our Second Annual Beer Tasting, our Second Annual Lenox Beatles Day, and a very successful Sponsor a Book party at Kimball Farms where residents purchased over \$3,000 of books for our collection making it our most successful Sponsor a Book event ever! Severe thunderstorms and downpours postponed our 14th Annual Lenox Library-Stockbridge Library Golf Tournament until September - but never dampened our spirits.

Somehow we even found the time to put out a newsletter and gave a much needed face-lift to the Gift Shop where we are now selling our new locally-designed and manufactured tee-shirts and tote bags.

This year, 228 volunteers collectively donated over 6,671 hours to the Lenox Library! Their services were invaluable to the staff, and to the patrons who benefited from their generosity. We are extremely grateful for their time and talents.

I would also like to thank those of you who took the time to acknowledge and appreciate our efforts over the year. We value your opinions and your input. As always, it has been my pleasure and privilege to have been a part of this magnificent association for so many years. Thank you for your generous support and for your friendship.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the continuing support of the Library by the townspeople and officials of Lenox. We encourage everyone to explore the varied resources offered by the Library and to join us in our effort to best serve the community.

Regards,

Lisa Berkel

Director of Development

HONOR AND MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Honor and memorial gifts are made to the Lenox Library as a tribute to a loved one or to celebrate a birthday, special event or anniversary. These donations are a fitting way to celebrate a loved one or event while contributing to the life of our community. The following gifts were received during our fiscal year 2008.

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