

DALTON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**Doris Lamica, Library Director**

The planning for an expanded library progressed during 2004 as Hill Engineers, Architects, Planners completed feasibility studies and the Library Trustees and Select Board chose a site for the new library. They decided to construct a new one-story library of approximately 19,000 square feet on the land where the old Dalton High School is located. A small part of the old school will be razed to provide sufficient parking and the rest will be renovated for a senior center and offices for the Historical Commission and a museum. The library will share a common entrance with this other building and will contain sufficient space to meet the library needs of the community for the next twenty years. The facility will have a community meeting room, a children's room, a section for young adults, a periodical reading room and enough space for the collections of books and audio-visual materials, computer stations, study areas, staff offices and storage. A copy of the preliminary design is available to view at the library. Securing funding is a crucial step in the planning and as the year ended the library director and an architect from Hill Engineering were preparing a grant application for construction funds from the state. The application is due in February 2005 and hopefully will be approved in July 2005. A Building Committee will be formed whose tasks will be to select an architect for the final design, contract with a construction company and oversee the project. A special fund raising committee will be organized to raise money for this project.

The library received a Library Services and Technology Act grant of \$10,000 during the year to expand its collections and services for young children and their parents. A story hour in conjunction with the Central Berkshire Community Partnership is now held on Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m. The children listen to stories, watch a short video, enjoy a snack, construct a craft project and receive a book to keep. Katherine Hoag, in her role as Children's Librarian, conducts the program with Wendy Provencher from the Central Berkshire Community Partnership. Kathy also visits kindergarten and pre-school classes on a monthly basis and the children have come for visits to the library. The grant runs out in September 2005, but we hope to continue parts of this program with funds from the town. Grant monies also have been used to add to our collections of picture books, videos and DVDs, puzzles and other educational games. We have also started a parenting collection and will have a series of lectures and workshops for parents and caregivers in the spring of 2005 with the help of this grant.

More than 200 children participated in the summer reading program in 2004 as they were invited to "Explore Other Worlds @ Your Library." The children helped to decorate the library in a multi-cultural theme by creating Chinese lanterns. Craft and video programs also were held during the summer. The children celebrated the end of the program with a pizza party at a local restaurant, made possible by a patron's donation and the Friends of the Library.

The monthly book group for adults continued during the year, meeting on the last Wednesday of the month. Everyone is welcome to attend these informal programs. The book to be discussed each month is available to borrow from the library. In conjunction with the Dalton Historical Commission, the Friends of the Dalton Free Public Library sponsored two lectures on Berkshire history by Dr. Carole Owens during the year.

The Friends of the Dalton Free Public Library were again an important

source of support throughout the year. Besides providing funds for lectures and the children's pizza party, they also purchased prizes for the summer reading club, some of our newspaper subscriptions and museum passes, books for the discussion group, and a new table and chairs for the children's room. The Friends conduct a book sale in the spring and their membership drive is in the fall. With the prospect of a new library looming in the future, their fundraising activities will be especially important. The officers elected for 2004 - 2005 are: President Rosemary Crosier, Vice President - Catherine Rivers, Treasurer - Patricia Nixon, Secretary - Betty-Ann Hamm, Membership Chair - Richard Mullins, and Members-at-large - Mary Kaley, Nancy Gardner and Gail Pinna.

The library received a grant from the Katharine L. W. and Winthrop M. Crane 3d Charitable Foundation for funds to improve the parenting collection. Children's DVDs were added to the library and the collections of DVDs for adults and books on CD increased as patrons indicated a desire for these formats. There are now five computers with Internet access available for public use. They are especially busy in the summer when hikers on the Appalachian Trail stop in to check their e-mail.

Even though the library is not a member of CWMARS, the local automated network, because of fiscal constraints in FY-2005, about 80% of our catalog can be viewed online. You can access it by going to: <http://wmars.cwmars.org> and then clicking on "Other Libraries," then "Public Libraries," and then "Dalton Free Public Library." Because the library is not circulating material using this software, all you can learn is whether we own the material or not. Since our records were downloaded in June of 2004 before our membership ran out, our newer acquisitions are not listed. It is hoped that funding will be received from the town for FY2006 so that the library will be able to join CWMARS. Many of the libraries in Berkshire County, including Pittsfield, Lee, Lenox, Clarksburg, North Adams, Adams, Richmond, Sheffield, Florida, Great Barrington and Williamstown, are members. With membership for our library, our patrons will be able to use the same card in all the member libraries, view their circulation records, and reserve and renew materials online.

I wish to express my appreciation to all the staff who worked at the library during 2004—Katherine Hoag, Lynn Bilotta, Gladys Lofink, Rebecca Foster, Mallory Bessette, Tammi Munn, Patricia Filaault, Jess Winnard, Zachary Pierce, and Clayton Pease, who retired as our janitor after four years of service. Thanks also to the Friends of the Dalton Free Public Library, the Library Trustees, the Designer Selection Committee, the Town Manager and Select Board for their help and support throughout the year.