

## CULTURE AND LEISURE

### REPORT OF THE WESTON CULTURAL COUNCIL

The Weston Cultural Council is charged with distributing money allotted to the Town by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency supporting the Arts, Humanities and Sciences. The MCC received \$7.3 million from the state legislature for the Local Cultural Council Program. Weston's allocation for calendar year 2003 was \$2,000; a distribution based on town population and property values. In addition some grant money from the previous year allowed us to grant an additional \$300 for a total of \$2,300.

Submissions for grant applications were due on October 15, 2003. Grants are made to individuals or groups to support worthy projects that enhance the cultural side of our lives and enhance our appreciation of our cultural environment. Grants are also available to educational institutions (the PASS grant program) for such activities as field trips to concerts, museums, etc.

A public meeting of the Weston Cultural Council was held on November 17, 2003 at which time the submissions were discussed and the grants awarded. The Council received 11 applications requesting a total of \$5,150. Of these, five had local sponsorship. An application is considered "locally sponsored" if a Weston organization (School, Library, Council on Aging, etc.) has agreed to host the program. The council decided to fund five of the programs for a total of \$2,300. All of the grants are subject to approval by the MCC and funds are made available in the spring. Grant recipients are required to publicize their events, which are generally open to the public, and interested residents are urged to take advantage of these cultural opportunities.

The following is a brief listing of the grants approved at the local level this fall which are awaiting state approval:

- Funding for the Spellman Museum for educational programs and exhibit equipment;
- Funding for the Rivers Music School's Seminar on Contemporary Music for the Young;
- Funding for the Metropolitan Wind Symphony for a two concert series to take place in Weston;
- Funding for the musical group Yankee Notions to perform at the Community Center;
- Funding for the Golden Tones Community Multi-Generational Event to take place in April 2004.

The Weston Cultural Council is composed of up to ten residents who have been appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Tenure is limited by statute to two three- year terms. Members are appointed when a vacancy occurs, so interested residents are invited to contact the Selectmen about future openings. For further information please contact chair Deborah Knight

## REPORT OF THE WESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The mission of the Weston Public Library is to provide materials, resources and programs for lifelong learning and enjoyment. The Library serves the entire community by making available collections on a broad array of subjects of interest to its patrons. It is a forum for the community, providing a welcoming and well-maintained facility for meetings, informal gatherings, lectures and other cultural events.

The past year brought many changes to the Weston Public Library. In June of 2003, Minuteman Library Consortium, and Weston Public Library, changed to a new and improved computer system. The new system, called Millennium, was designed to make computer searching and requests easier for patrons at home, and to allow faster delivery of requested items for all patrons. After six months on the new system, the staff is very adept at using it, and patrons seem happy with the service. In addition, Director Elizabeth Drake retired at the end of 2003. The Library was fortunate to have her guidance for five and a half years, and we wish her well in her new endeavors. We welcome Susan Brennan, who took over as the new Director on January 20, 2004. Previously she had been the Director of the Medway Public Library and was President of the MetroWest Massachusetts Regional Library System in 2002 - 2003.

Like the rest of the town departments, the library was hit hard by budget cuts in 2003. The reduction of \$35,000 in our salary line item and \$10,000 in our general expenses required closing the library on Monday evenings and Wednesday mornings. The cutbacks also meant we offered fewer children's programs, fewer new materials, and fewer special programs for the public. This level of service will remain in place for the next fiscal year. Despite the budget impact, and loss of personnel hours, the Library continued to offer a plethora of new materials and services for Weston patrons. Our goal is to work with the town to restore our level of service for Weston residents as soon as it is financially feasible.

### Adult Services

Weston Public Library was a very busy place in 2003. We circulated over 330,000 items to patrons, an increase of 40,000 over the prior year. Books and magazines for adults and children represent 58% of checked out items, while nonprint items (films, videos, DVDs, music CDs etc.) comprise a hefty 42% of overall circulation. Library patrons made an average of 29.3 visits last year or 2.4 visits monthly.

Volunteers are important members of the circulation department, and we are very thankful to have their able assistance. Volunteers Karen Sedat conducted her 11<sup>th</sup> year of pop up book programs for children, while Mary Parker and Ed McKearney helped maintain order in the book stacks. Gene Travers worked to maintain order in the film, spoken word, and music CD shelves. The Friends of Weston Library Book Discussion group meets monthly. All meetings are open to new attendees and there is a wide-ranging list of books selected by participants each June. The Military History Group offers very popular monthly lectures on war and military themes. Attendance in 2003 was so high at these lectures that a repeat lecture was required in the same month. Videos of the lectures are available for checkout.

### Reference

The number of reference questions declined slightly in 2003, to an average of 391 per week. Use of the public computers continued to increase with 13,800 library patrons signing up for computer use, compared to just fewer than 12,000 in FY02. In October, an additional workstation was added offering Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint, but without access to the Internet. We hope it will cut down on waiting time for patrons who need a computer but not the Internet.

### Youth Services

The Summer Reading Program had another successful year with 298 participants – just a few less than in 2002. Children read and recorded 8,626 books and 2,033 hours. Three children read more than 200 books as part of the program! The Vacation Crafts, supported by the Friends of Weston Library, was extremely successful as well, with over 2,000 unique pieces of artwork created over a ten-week period.

Youth Services staff answered 9,065 reference questions, and there were 6,914 records of computer use and interactions between staff and children. The department offered 184 programs over the course of the year, and 2,498 children attended them. We look forward to a busy and rewarding 2004 providing top quality children's services to Weston patrons.



*Entrance to Youth Services area*

### Technical Services

The Technical Services Department added 7,480 new items to our collection in 2003. The complexities of the new Millennium software program added to this challenge, but new items appear on our shelves regularly, and promptly. Millennium also allows patrons to place a request as soon as the catalog shows that the item is on order, so the time in processing has been condensed to meet patron's needs.

### Arts, Exhibits and Music Committees

The library continues to grow as a cultural center in Weston, as the art on loan program flourishes and musical programming expands. This year, in addition to monthly exhibits in the gallery, two outdoor sculptures were installed for a two-year exhibition--Judith Steinberg's bright blue aluminum "On Point" and Bill Harby's "Granite Reflections." In addition, we learned more about our friends and neighbors at a special exhibition of crafts created by Weston residents and organized by the Art and Exhibitions Committee.

Thirteen concerts, representing a wide variety of music, were preformed. They included classical ensembles and solo performances, multi cultural concerts and holiday events. These, as well as, MusicFest, a day of music performed by Weston residents of all ages, were sponsored by the Music Committee.

In June, the Library and Friends once again sponsored the Ice Cream Social to celebrate summer, community, and the Summer Reading Program.

Friends of Weston Library

The Friends of the Weston Library was formally established in September 1965 by seventeen interested townspeople. The organization has since grown to a membership of 580, with an active Board of 21 members, which include the Library Director and a representative of the Trustees as ex-officio members.

The Friends mission is to "encourage the development of a strong and active public library for the town and to help provide, where necessary, resources not otherwise funded." The funding comes from membership dues, the annual book sale, the book cart, and yearly international trip. These monies provide major support for the Children's Summer Program, partial sponsorship of the Military History Group and the Ice Cream Social. The organization delivers books and audio-visual materials to the homebound. It purchases unbudgeted materials for the library such as DVDs, information stands, audio-visual equipment and special memorial gifts. It is currently providing funding for the restoration and cataloging of Weston's historical archives. Other activities include a yearly staff appreciation lunch, monthly programs by local authors and celebrities, as well as sponsorship of local trips of interest, including a Tanglewood concert. The organization's members are constantly working to make the Weston Public Library a very special place for the citizens of the community.

**REPORT OF THE WESTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

As usual, 2003 was an extremely busy one for the Recreation Department. The new Community Center continued to host special events for town residents - from birthday parties to bar- and bat-mitzvahs, from high school reunions to the annual Holiday Luncheon for the town's senior citizens. The Center remains in constant use and is an invaluable asset to the town.

The recreation staff consists of seven full-time employees ably assisted by a revolving staff of part-time help. From program planning to field maintenance to guarding lives at the town's pools, the individuals whom the department employs are as qualified as they are friendly.

The recreation budget for the past three fiscal years is broken out below.

	<b>Actual FY 02</b>	<b>Actual FY 03</b>	<b>Appropriated FY 04</b>
General Fund Fee Revenue	306,268	423,589	
Revolving Fund Fee Revenue	360,476	360,248	
Enterprise Account Revenue			745,500
Total Fee Revenue	666,744	783,837	745,500
Salaries	493,536	544,651	377,690
Operating Expenses of Community Center	40,116	56,987	64,200
Expenses	178,617	191,444	653,436
Revolving Fund Salaries	97,071	110,000	0
Revolving Fund Expenses	216,609	209,000	0
Total Expenses	1,025,949	1,112,082	1,095,326
% from Fees	65%	70%	68%

Once again, the Recreation Department spent the year offering an exceptional variety of programs for people of all ages in the town, many of which were offered in our new Center. In 2003, participants enrolled in the 407 programs we offered during the course of the year. Among our most popular offerings were Elementary After-school Programs, Adult Yoga and fitness programs and the Annual Egg Hunt on the Town Green. Our summer camps were well attended, but the ongoing construction at the schools compromised attendance figures slightly, with some 1440 campers taking advantage our offerings during the seven weeks that our camp programs were in operation.



As it is every summer, the town pool was again a gathering spot for residents who took advantage of the exceptional facility and programs we provide there. While overall attendance was down from previous years, attributable primarily to inconsistent weather and annoying temperature fluctuations, 21,114 patrons still visited us during the summer and made our family nights and theme nights events to remember. In spite of the challenge of coping with the routing and parking complications caused by the construction projects being completed nearby, it still remains a wonderful place for families to go and swim in a safe and clean environment.

As in previous summers, Wednesday night concerts on the Town Green were a big hit, with families bringing picnic dinners and socializing to the sounds of a variety of musical groups during July and August.

During the winter months, open gym, access to the indoor swimming pool, the ever-burgeoning Red Wave Swimming Program for the town's youth as well as adult basketball and volleyball programs continue to complement the arts and crafts offerings that the department provides.

Once again, the diversity of programs the town is able to offer and smoothly run can be directly attributed to Doug MacDougall and his dedicated staff. They continue to deliver top-quality programs at affordable prices - we are indeed fortunate to have such devoted, tireless workers comprising the recreation staff. Please remember to thank them for their efforts the next time that you see them.