

# CULTURE AND LEISURE

## REPORT OF THE WESTON CULTURAL COUNCIL

The Weston Cultural Council is charged with distributing money allotted to Weston by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency supporting the Arts, Humanities and Sciences. The State Legislature appropriated \$12 million to the MCC in 2006, of which \$2.65 million funded the Local Cultural Council Program (LCC). This money allowed 329 LCCs across the state to fund local projects which explore local arts and history, expand education and accessibility, and celebrate diversity. Weston's allocation for 2006 was \$2500, and it will be significantly increased in 2007 to \$4000.

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.

Applications for LCC grants were due at the Town Hall on October 16, 2006. A public meeting of the Weston Cultural Council was held on November 20, 2006 to discuss 23 applications for funding in 2007, totaling \$10,360. The Council voted to extend one grant approved for 2006 (Boston City Band) and approved 11 new applications. Eight were fully funded and three were partially funded for a total of \$4,000 and all had local sponsorship. The council hopes that this collaboration will improve publicity and attendance at the events.

The following is a list of the grants approved for funding in 2007:

**Mary Shaw and Bill Sano** – Songs of World War II (Pearl Harbor Day), sponsored by the Council on Aging

**Golden Tones**---seniors "Sing Together," sponsored by the Council on Aging

**Ruth Harcovitz** – "Songs from the Movies of the Thirties and Forties," sponsored by the Brook School Apartments on Feb. 8, 2007

**Rivers Seminar on Contemporary Music** – at the Rivers School, March 30 – April 1, 2007

**Gregory Maichack** – Workshop: The Art of Pastel, sponsored by the Weston Public Library on May 3, 2007

**Elizabeth Anker** – A vocal concert: "New Songs for Contralto," sponsored by the Music Committee at the Weston Town Library on May 6, 2007

**Edward Cope, Jr.** – "Reading is Magic", sponsored by the Weston Town Library for children and families in July 2007

**Society for Historically Informed Performance** – 6 early music concerts held at St. Peter's Church on Tuesday evenings, June 19--July, 2007

**Boston City Band**-- summer concert on the Town Green, sponsored by the Recreation Department (postponed from 2006 due to rain)

**Yankee Notions** – "A Peddler's Pack of New England Folk Songs," sponsored by Land's Sake

**Davis Bates** – "Celebrating New England: Songs and Stories for Everyone," sponsored by Land's Sake

**Delvena Theatre** – "Creepy New England Legends, Curses and Hauntings," sponsored by the Weston Town Library in Oct. 2007

Members of the Weston Cultural Council are appointed by the Board of Selectmen and the council is allowed to have up to 10 members who may serve two consecutive 3 year terms. In 2006, one new member, Mary Lou Ackley, joined Lynne Weber (Secretary), Beth Schlager (Treasurer), Meredith Eppel, Alison Braunstein, and Lynn Taff (Chair). Residents interested in joining the council are encouraged to contact the Selectmen.

## 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.

We want to thank the residents of Weston for their support during the roof replacement. We are happy to report the project has been signed off on, and we are leak free. It was a trying summer for the public and staff as we dealt with closing on short notice, scaffolds and sealant odors. We are very pleased to be back to full service, and looking forward to an active Summer Reading program again.

We've added several new and exciting services this year. Downloadable audio books are available by clicking on the icon on our home page at [www.westonlibrary.org](http://www.westonlibrary.org) and following the instructions. These electronic titles are available for you to download to your computer or mp3 player. More and more titles are being added each month, and the interface between computer and MP3 player is being improved for easy patron access. We also added a service called Bookletters, which lists our most recently added titles so that you are just a click away from being able to request them. It is the most up to date information about popular titles in all formats. Did you know you can keep a record of the titles you have checked out? Simply sign up for this service in the "My Account" section available at <http://library.minlib.net>. You must sign up for a pin first and then you will be asked if you want this added feature for your account. Don't forget to save your pickup location as "Weston."

Weston Public Library is extremely fortunate to be so supported by its residents and our active Friends of Weston Library organization. This is your library and we look forward to serving you.

### Adult Services

Trying to find our most recent and popular books, movies, audiobooks...? Visit our website at [www.westonlibrary.org](http://www.westonlibrary.org). Go to "Request our latest..." and click on **Fiction Bestsellers**, **Nonfiction Bestsellers**, **Movies** or **Books on CD**. These lists show cover art and a summary for all the hot titles you are looking for. Click on **Check Our Catalog** to see if our copy is available or out and then click the blue request button and enter you card number and pin to reserve a copy.

When you're not online looking for our new items, come visit us in the new book area off the Library rotunda. You'll find a new A-frame displayer, showing many brand new titles in adult fiction and nonfiction. Don't forget to check the SPEED READ bookshelf, full of all the latest in-demand titles in fiction and nonfiction. These copies have bright pink spine labels. They go out for one week, no renewal (\$1.00/day overdue fine). Some of our voracious readers check several speed reads out each week! Note that regular two week copies of these most popular titles are also available.

Increases in Library usage in 2006 were highest in media formats like movies, music, and spoken audio. Circulation of the Library's new DVD's for adults in 2006 increased 30% since 2005, while new juvenile DVD's increased 60% from 2005. Checkouts of new music CDs for adults increased 82% from 2005. Spoken word CD's for adults had 36% more circulations in 2006. Young adult spoken CDs went out 75% more, and juvenile spoken CDs circulated 60% more in 2006.

Nevertheless, books and high demand books for adults comprised the biggest chunk (21%) of the annual circulation at the Weston Library in 2006, while DVDs and New DVD's for adults make up 11% of all items checked out. Juvenile books are 20% of the total, while children's DVD's and new juvenile DVDs show 5% of all items charged out. In addition, music CDs for adults are 7% of total library circulation, while adult spoken word CDs make up 4% of the total.

Weston Library users can establish an online account on the Minuteman Library Network Catalog at <http://library.minlib.net>. Click on My Account and select a PIN to allow access to your Library Card account, showing items checked out and on reserve. Patrons can place reserves and renew their outstanding titles. Another feature is adding your email address to your online account with the Library. Give us your email address, and library notices on requested items ready for pickup, or overdue notices will be generated.

As of July 2006, the Library requires a valid library card to check out materials. Replacement cards can be purchased for \$2.00. Key chain style cards are also available.

Kim Viglas, long time staffer in the Youth Services Department, joined the Circulation Desk Staff this year. Alison Weinstock, formerly a Library Volunteer, also started work as a Circulation Staffer. Gene Travers, also a volunteer, was hired as a Library Page.

#### Reference

This year the library's mission to serve as a center for lifelong learning was augmented with new types of programs for adults. These events were planned as extensions of the library's print and media collections. For example, in response to the increased demand for books on knitting, a local knitting teacher was invited to host workshops at the library. Other hands-on events included a pastel workshop and a gift wrapping demonstration. The year ended with a visit from Eyes on Owls, a live owl program that captivated a full-house one Saturday afternoon. These library events proved to be successful and more are being planned for coming year.

An ESL (English as a Second Language) conversation group called Small Talk was formed this year and has met weekly since October with volunteers Shirley Dolins and Madeleine Mullin as coordinators. It is hoped that Small Talk will continue to serve as a welcoming place for anyone who would like to practice speaking English.

Early in the year, the library began offering free wireless Internet access in addition to free PC use in the computer lab. This year we recorded over 9,000 signups for use of the library's PCs and the staff of the Reference Department answered over 13,000 reference questions during 2006.

#### Youth Services

Construction influenced almost all our numbers this year. It's interesting to see that Reference questions were higher across the board than in previous years, but especially during the summer months when construction was at its peak. Computer use dropped this year, mostly because during construction we put most of our internet computers away in Youth Services. This was partially because we wanted to avoid dust and damage.

Programs offered this year included Library Lapsit for toddlers, Two Year Old Storytime, Preschool Storytime and BookClubs for children in grade one through grade six. We also had

several local preschools and WCCA groups in for special Storytimes. The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and classes from Field School also came in for several research projects.

Our Summer Reading Program was severely curtailed. We did visit all the Weston first grade classrooms to promote the program, and because of that, we had a very large group of first-going-into-second graders participating.

This summer we offered "The Traveling Librarians." Staff set up tables at the Town Green Concerts and at the Town Pool. We handed out reading pages, let kids guess the number of Skittles in the Guessing Jar, and let them decorate their reading markers with glitter glue. The YAs could hand in reviews and make guesses at what was in the Mystery Box. We had quite a bit of interest, especially at the Concerts. Next year, we hope to continue Traveling. It seems like a good way to generate new interest.

We also added "Book Bags;" five books put into a bag for easy access and labeled. The bags were put together by topic, age level and interests. We featured everything from Pirate and Princess picture books for preschoolers to Summer Humor Short Chapter Books for second graders to Stories with Dragons for fifth graders. Non-fiction was not left out either; we tried to put five different non-fiction titles on very different topics in bags for first through fifth grades. The Book Bags proved quite popular, especially on those days when the sealant application was especially aromatic or when jackhammers were pounding from above.

With Kim Viglas moving over this year to Circulation, we have added two wonderful part-time librarians to the Youth Services Staff. Shannon Matathia and Jennie Simopoulos joined Kelly, Beth and Karen in the fall of 2006. Both have proven to be very friendly, competent and hard-working, and work well with parents and kids of all ages. Danielle Lualdi has also joined our staff in a page position. When the books are in order and on the shelves, it's because they've all been hard at work.

#### Young Adult Collection

This fall, the Friends donated over \$1,000 to be spent on media selections for the Young Adult Collection (DVDs and CDs). As a result, a core Young Adult DVD collection was created that now includes over 50 films. Over 20 new CD titles were also purchased for the Young Adult music collection with these funds. Due to the increase in materials available to Young Adults, this section of the library has become busier over the last few months.

In addition to increasing the Young Adult music and DVD collections, we have also been making an effort to purchase more Young Adult books on CD. We have ordered several new titles over the last six months, thereby bringing our collection more up-to-date and extensive.

Finally, the Friends contributed money to start an Anime Young Adult DVD collection. We have purchased 30 titles for this collection and we are hoping to add to it throughout the year.

#### Technical Services

This year, the Technical Services Department (also known as the Cataloging Department) processed 9,844 items, including 6,429 books, 1,616 DVDs, 540 CDs, 153 books on tape, and 682 audio books on CD. Department head Frank Baxter congratulates his assistants, Erika Saunders and Renee Hake, on another record-breaking year.

As the Minuteman Library Network continues to upgrade the Millennium cataloging and acquisitions system, the Technical Services department stays abreast of all changes and communicates this information to the rest of the librarians. For this purpose, librarian Frank Baxter sits on the MLN's Acquisitions and Bibliographic roundtables; this year, he is serving as vice chair of the Acquisitions roundtable.

### Arts and Exhibitions Committee

The Arts and Exhibition Committee enjoyed bringing many exciting shows to the library. With the roof project closing the library for days at a time, we needed to reschedule a couple of artists. Our calendar consisted of January: Dilla Tingley, quilts; February: Anthony Lobosco, paintings; March: Eva Kasell, photographs; April: Anna Thurber, mixed media; May: Eugene Monosson, watercolors. From June through September there were no exhibitions. Denis Daly, a photographer, opened in October. Our year finished out in November/December with artist Darlene DeVita whose photographs are taken with a Holga camera. The community is enjoying for another year the outdoor sculpture Blue Herons by Joe Hallowell from Vermont.

One of our members, Wendy Wrean, resigned after having been on the committee for many years. Her contributions were numerous and we wish her luck in her future endeavors.

### Local History Room

The Local History Room opened in January, 2006 with the joint support and generosity of the Trustees of the Weston Public Library and the Friends of the Weston Public Library. This specialized reference collection which is open to the public on Wednesday afternoons from 1-6 PM, houses a wide variety of materials that pertain to the history and heritage of the town of Weston. Approximately 100 local history and genealogy requests were answered this year using the reference materials in the Local History Room.

Madeleine Mullin, Local History Librarian, and two volunteers, Margaret Young and William Hartmann, have worked on numerous projects: an obituary index to The Weston Town Crier; a vertical file of ephemeral materials relating to the history of Weston; inventories of documents pertaining to the Norumbega Reservoir, the Weston Corporate Center, the Regis College Sewer Connection; and the sorting of a collection of photographs from The Weston Town Crier. Projects for this year include organizing the Oral History Collection and inventorying the materials that relate to the history of the Weston Public Library.

The Weston Public Library has formed liaisons with other historical organizations in Weston. The Weston Historical Society has mounted exhibits pertaining to the Case Estates and to extreme weather conditions in Weston. In addition, the Weston Public Library is working with the Historical Archives Committee of the Weston Historical Commission.

### Friends of Weston Library

The mission statement of the Friends of the Weston Public Library is "...to support a strong and active public library for the town of Weston and to provide, where needed, resources not otherwise funded."

The Friends, organized in 1965, is an organization funded by Weston residents through their membership dues, their financial contributions and their participation in our Annual Book Sale. We count on the community to donate books for the sale and to purchase books at the sale. The Friends board members and their committees work with the library's director and the staff to serve the library needs of our town. We sponsor literary and human-interest programs, as well as a yearly concert series organized by the Music Committee. Several trips each year introduce participants to museums, and to cultural and historical sites. Our service to the homebound delivers books and audio-visual materials to town residents who are unable to travel to the library. This year we provided support for the Weston Military History Group, the Children's Summer Reading Program, summer crafts, the yearly Ice Cream Social, museum passes, and the restoration and cataloging of Weston's Historical Archives. On behalf of the community we treat the library's staff to an annual luncheon to thank them for their tireless service to the town. This year the Friends initiated stipends for staff members to attend professional conferences. The

Friends is an organization of the community for the community. We invite all Weston residents to become members.

## **REPORT OF THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

As in years past, 2006 was again a very busy year for the Recreation Department as we continued to administer an even wider variety of programs for citizens of all ages within the town. The Community Center continued to be a special gathering place for town residents – whether it was hosting the WCCA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary or our annual Holiday Luncheon for the town’s senior citizens, there was a constant flow of happy faces parading through both the Great Room and the classrooms around it. With countless exercise and educational classes running seemingly around the clock every week day and night, recreation-sponsored dances being held for kids of different ages, and still being utilized as a parents’ dream setting for a child’s birthday party on weekends, the Center remains an invaluable asset to the town.

The recreation staff consists of seven full-time employees ably assisted by an ever-evolving staff of part-time help. Whether painting lines on fields or organizing program offerings, planning field trips for citizens of all ages or manning guard stations at the town pool or camp counselor positions at the four camps that are offered during the summer, the many individuals whom the department employs were as friendly as they were qualified.

Once again, the Recreation Department spent the year offering an exceptional variety of programs for people of all ages in the town, most of which were offered in the Community Center. Among the new programs that we offered this year were classes on Youth and Adult Cooking and Stroller exercise, while our traditional offerings of pre- school music and play plus the offering of karate continued to be exceptionally well-attended. Our summer camps were also well attended, with over 400 campers taking advantage our diverse and comprehensive offerings during the six weeks that our camp programs were in operation.



*Skating at the Community Center*

The town pool was once again a gathering spot for residents who took advantage of the exceptional facility and programs we provide there. In an effort to raise additional monies for our budget, this was also the second year that we offered a limited number of pool memberships to individuals and families from surrounding towns as well as to the relatives of people still living in Weston. The pool accommodated this patron expansion seamlessly and the practice will be implemented again this year. The arrival of warmer weather inspired citizens of all ages to take advantage of this remarkable facility, with the dedicated seniors taking laps in the early morning and late evening book ending the campers and family members who populated the pool during the hours in between. By summer's end, an estimated 13,500 patrons had visited us during the pool season and had made our family nights and theme night's events to remember. During the summer, Wednesday night concerts on the Town Green were also a big hit even though Mother Nature wreaked havoc on our musical efforts on a couple of occasions. When she did cooperate, families were able to bring picnic dinners and socialize 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 programs (The Thursday Night Men's Over-40 League had more participants than ever before) continue to complement the arts and crafts, musical and exercise offerings that the department provides.

As usual, the diversity of programs the town is able to offer and smoothly run can be directly attributed to Doug McDougall 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.

Finally, we hope that you understand that the year ahead will bring with it additional budgetary constraints that will challenge the department's ability to provide the same number of programs and high-quality service that it has in the past.

## **REPORT OF THE RECREATION MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee (RMPC) was formed in October, 2005 for the purpose of acting as the advocate for the playing fields and outdoor recreational facilities in the Town.

The RMPC was jointly appointed by and reports to the Town Selectmen and School Committee. The membership of the RMPC is made up of five Weston residents with relevant backgrounds, a representative from Weston Youth Soccer, Little League and Youth Lacrosse, a representative from Team Up For Weston, a non-profit fund raising entity, the Recreation Director, Facilities Director and Athletic Director. The appointed members of RMPC listed on page 13 of this Town Report:

The RMPC presented a 10 year Master Plan for the reparation and improvements of the Town fields and outdoor recreational facilities in October of 2005 to the Selectmen and School Committee which was unanimously adopted. The Master Plan called for an approximate expenditure of \$10 million over 10 years in the form of capital improvements and maintenance of all the Town fields and outdoor recreational facilities (tennis courts, basketball courts). This figure has since been revised upward to \$12 million.

The Master Plan reached the following major conclusions:

1. Over the past three decades the Town has lost 8+ fields to other construction projects.

2. The number of Town residents participating in sports has more than doubled in the past 30 years due to a) Title IX, b) new sports (lacrosse, softball, ice hockey, etc.), c) adult leagues, d) increase in households and e) changing demographics to more youthful families with children.
3. There is a severe shortage of available fields (due to the above two factors) and therefore, the fields are being grossly overused. Fields are not given adequate rest periods and playing during inclement weather - results in further permanent damage to the fields and soil.
4. The playing season has been shorted, resulting in over crowding on fields, significant scheduling conflicts and challenges, missed games, reduced practice time and the need to play more away games in other towns.
5. The above problems could be solved by taking the following steps:
  - a. Assemble all significant users of the fields under a single organization for purposes of coordinating schedules, sharing resources, collaborating on capital improvements and providing a single voice to the Selectmen and School Committee. (Field Steering Committee)
  - b. Create an overall long-range plan to address the near-term and future needs. (Master Plan)
  - c. Attempt to improve the utilization of all existing fields and outdoor recreational facilities in use first, before seeking additional land. (Phase A of the Master Plan).
  - d. Determine the most critical capital improvements necessary to relieve the near-term pressure on the fields and propose a multi-phased implementation schedule (Phases 0-3 of Master Plan).
  - e. Partner with the Selectmen, CPC, School Committee and private fund raising entities to address the cost requirements of implementation of the Master Plan, forming a public/private partnership. (Funding sources - 60% public funds, 40% private).

The RMPC divided the Master Plan into distinct implementation phases based upon the above criteria. Each phase has a budget and timeline, identification of impacted users, identified source(s) of funds, survey/design, construction and wrap-up stage.

In May of 2006, at the Town's Annual Meeting, the Town approved a \$600,000 use of funds from CPC for Phase 0 of the Master Plan, to construct a multi-use playing field located between the Middle and High Schools on a dormant septic field. This project was completed in November, 2006 on-time and on budget. At the same Annual Town Meeting \$425,000 was approved in the School Committee budget to rebuild the High School gymnasium. This project was deferred to the summer of 2007 due to scheduling conflicts. Additionally in Phase 0, the High School varsity baseball field, through private donations, added two major league dugouts, new sod in the infield and numerous other field improvements.

In December, 2006, the RMPC began plans for implementing Phase 1 of the Master Plan which includes the revitalization of over 10 fields in 2007. Those fields include Alphabet (installation of synthetic turf), College Pond (creation of multi-field baseball park), Field #14 at the high school (installation of synthetic turf), irrigation and drainage work on Bogle, Gail Road, Drabbington Way, Cherrybrook and Viles as well as turning these fields into multi-use for baseball, soccer and lacrosse. The budget for Phase 1 is \$4 million. It is anticipated that the majority of the funding for this phase will come from private donations. Depending upon the timing of those donations, it is anticipated that some or all of this phase will be completed in 2007.

Following the completion of Phase 1, The RMPC will begin planning for Phase 2 to be implemented in the 2008-2009 timeframe. This phase will include numerous improvements to over a dozen fields. It is anticipated that this phase will be funded by a mix of public and private funds.