

## JOHN G. MCCULLOUGH FREE LIBRARY

The McCullough Free Library continues to provide services to the residents of North Bennington, Shaftsbury, Bennington and surrounding towns, adding 168 new patrons in the past year. The Library schedule has remained unchanged: Tuesday and Wednesday, 1pm to 8pm; Thursday and Friday, 1pm to 6pm; Saturday, 10am to 2pm.

The Library provides meeting space for non-profit groups at no cost. Once again in 2009 the Library was certified as having met the Minimum Standards for Vermont Libraries (for the year 2008). The certification verifies that the Library is adequately serving its communities in terms of its hours of operation, staffing, levels of staff training, revenue, materials budget, Inter Library Loan, and programming. The McCullough Free Library easily met these standards.

The Library hosted a successful writing workshop, *The Erotics of Place*, taught by local author, Annie Raskin. Ms. Raskin was awarded an Artistic Grant by the Library to pursue a writing project, and the workshop was her contribution to the community as part of that grant. The workshop participants held a well attended public reading of the work they had produced for the workshop

We have qualified for a Gates Foundation Opportunity Grant, which will fund three new public access computers for the Library in 2010 and 2011. The Library must raise \$1300 in matching funds in each of those fiscal years to qualify for the Gates funds.

The Friends of the Library group that was started in 2005 has continued to grow in membership and to add new activities. They have continued the program for Headstart children, which introduces them to the Library. One a week a class comes to the Library, where the volunteers read to them, lead them in activities and help them to select books to take back to their school. The program continues to draw additional volunteers to read to the children, making it possible to accommodate more children.

In January 2007 the Friends initiated a Homebound Readers Program which took library materials to patrons who could not come to the Library on their own. Difficulty with identifying homebound individuals has caused us to shift our emphasis to taking books, magazines, audio-books and DVDs to individuals in area assisted living facilities, rather than to individual homes.

The annual Book and Bake Sale conducted by the Friends in the Fall continues to grow in size and scope, and is becoming an anticipated community event. The sale allows the Library to purchase desired items that it is not possible to accommodate in the regular budget

The Children's Room continues to be a hub of activity. Our children's librarian Bonnie Dundas makes weekly visits to Hiland Hall School and the NBGS kindergarteners come to the Library one day a week for story hour. The Summer Reading Program, "Be Creative at Your Library," successfully drew a regular attendance. The program was augmented by Jay Cook, who performed songs on African instruments and led the audience in various musical activities. The first day of school was celebrated with free ice cream cones for children at the end of the school day.

Respectfully submitted

Susanne Warren, Director