



Spring News for Our Town

Children's Department



Dana Skwirut, newly minted librarian (master's from Rutgers), joins the Children's Department.



DIG INTO READING

This summer's reading program for kids starts June 24th. Don't miss the opening **dinosaur** event!

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

This FREE kids' **musical** workshop has a role for all participants. Rehearsals begin July 9, 1:30-2:30 pm, special performance July 18. Registration begins May 15. The program is part of the summer Drama Workshops, made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment of the Arts through a grant administered by the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs.

TEEN CORNER

Hey, entering grades 6-12? Come break ground for your own **Dig into Reading** June 24th. You'll have the library all to yourselves from 9 to 10 pm.

A Word from Carol Campell, President

JOIN! RENEW!

Our membership drive and book sale are our main fundraisers. Please support us! The FRIENDS work hard to promote the library. **We fund all programs** and extraordinary services like the Museum Pass. We provide seed money for new collections and services, such as the DVD collection and ebook service.

As you consider your membership, please also consider the extra mile the library went during **Hurricane Sandy** when over 5,000 people used the library to not only recharge their devices, but recharge their lives. Some even discovered how valuable the library is in assisting with Internet use and information access, preparing resumes, completing term papers, finding resources, or just finding a book.

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

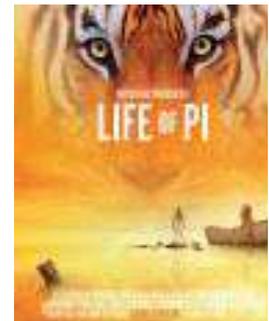
The Friends has always supported the library's improvement efforts. It did so in 2009 when a merger with Scotch

Plains was proposed, and after that failed, it did so again last fall, when the board reviewed the current problems.

As is the case at other libraries nationally, at the Fanwood library **demand is up and funding is down**. Local visitors still enjoy the fellowship of other readers. Readership is still strong and increasing. But, the library is seeing changes in how its **space** is being used.

Small groups gather for tutoring, recreation, book discussions, and meetings. As the library acquires materials in new formats, provides tech access, and seeks to meet other user demands, the space is less flexible and shrinking.

The board's review addressed the above and more in the new Strategic Plan. We believe it provides direction for the library (full plan at fanwoodlibrary.org). The plan, spearheaded by library board member Katherine Balch (also FRIENDS board member),



Movie will be shown at the Fanwood library Monday, May 13, at 6.30 and Tuesday, May 14, at 12.30.

Board President Shelley Ross, and Director Dan Weiss, identifies weaknesses in the library's infrastructure and gaps in services and materials.

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Spring is membership season. Join or renew & make 2013 our best ever!

New Strategic Plan *** FAQs ***

1. WHY NOW?

The Fanwood Library Board of Trustees has developed a new strategic plan because **demand is up and funding is down**.

2. WHAT "DEMAND"?

By "demand," the board means patrons are finding that they need more and better space: Visitors with strollers, walkers, and

wheelchairs need better access to the Children's Department; tutors need a place to coach students; organizations need meeting

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Support Our Supporters!

Scotchwood Florist
Norman's Hallmark
Fanwood Bagel
Double Dipper
Enchantments
Crown Jewelers
Town Bookstore,
Westfield
Oh'Brian's Pourhouse
Print Tech—printer
extraordinaire of this
newsletter

Fall Book Sale

Calling all lightly used books, DVDs, and CDs!!! We begin collecting **September 14th** at Forest Road Park. Sale begins **September 19th** with FRIENDS Night.



Mayor Mahr among refugees recharging at the library during Hurricane Sandy



MuseumPasses now available from our co-sponsor Scotch Plains library for the **Grounds for Sculpture** in Hamilton, NJ, and **Imagine That!!!** in Florham Park, NJ.

A Word From President Campell, continued from p. 1

The plan is the beginning of a detailed proposal for updates and improvements, in part shaped by community input. This is where you come in.

TAKE THE SURVEY!

Whether you are among the **60,000 annual visitors** or not, we need to hear from you because like other municipal services, the library is for everyone now and in the future. A survey is provided in this newsletter, or **take it online** at: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e775e8mwheb99as6/start>, submitting it by April 30th. I hope you keep the following in mind as you fill out the survey:

- The library is the one single public building in the community that is open to all during convenient hours (budget permitting). Because of that, it is often pointed to as a **source of community pride**, contributing to its image.
- The building's infrastructure has not been updated for decades—lighting is so anachronistic, we cannot even find replacement parts.
- The FRIENDS sponsor popular programs arranged by the library staff. But we don't hold them in the basement because it's too **uncomfortable**. Most importantly, too many of our own Fanwood residents can't go down the stairs. Even if they can manage, safety is a huge concern. Mothers with young children, some in strollers, are challenged.
- Even if we do hold programs

on the main level, seating is inadequate, setting up can be a logistical problem, and we are limited in what we can present.

- The Children's Room has been renovated, but space remains tight. Yes, funding is a problem. It's always a problem. That's why it is imperative that we use our resources wisely. In order to do that, we need to hear from you. No one wants taxes to increase. That message is clear. Choices have to be made within real fiscal constraints.

The Library board is mindful of this, but they encourage you to answer this survey without the dollar sign in mind. Financial concerns may crop up later. For now, we need your vision. **What are your priorities?** What do you want and need from your local public library, from both the individual and common-good perspective?

BIG THANK-YOUS

- This year I am very grateful to the many people who help keep the FRIENDS of the Library moving forward.
- Katherine Balch for her relentless pursuit of the best for the community and its library. In addition to her work on FRIENDS publicity, she recently joined the library board and was the driving force behind getting the strategic plan in place.
 - David Richard for his continued interest and creative work as treasurer (despite a busy business traveling schedule)



Grammy-award-winning singer & songwriter **Lisa Gutkin** regaled a standing-room-only crowd at the FRIENDS-sponsored concert March 20th.

- Thena Rosahl for working year-round as chair of the book sale
- Eileen Moritz-Spitler for her creative energy expanding membership initiatives and library promotion. We'll miss you!
- Jane Van Haasteren for doing an excellent job managing and promoting the Museum Pass Program
- Joan Dickason for her creative approaches to promoting the library
- Annette Madarasz for Museum News, timely updates on MuseumPass offerings
- Lori Katz and Marianne Mulligan, who help in countless other ways.
- Library staff—We could not do a lot of our work without your cooperation and support!

We are looking for a new membership chair. Come join us!

The FRIENDS of the Fanwood Memorial Library, like other library FRIENDS groups nationwide, is a collection of volunteers who help our town library be all it can be. This newsletter is mailed every spring to all Fanwood households and emailed every fall to (willing) FRIENDS members. Editor: Katherine Balch

New Strategic Plan, continued from p. 1

space; older adults need adequate seating at popular programs. Patrons are asking for more e-books and bestsellers; better computers; faster Internet connectivity; more tech help. In addition, circulation is **up** 22%; door count is **up** 11%.

3. WHAT "FUNDING"?

State aid is **down** 63% since 2005; municipal funding is **down** 10% since 2009; funds for new materials and programs is **down** 10% since 2009.

4. WHAT IS PROPOSED?

The library board presented the strategic plan at the

January 2013 town council meeting. Board President Shelly Ross asked the council to recognize the library's mission and its current challenges. As a second step, he asked the council to join the library board in **discussing how to go forward**. Mayor Colleen Mahr proposed setting up committees to focus on the main areas (space and safe access, materials and technology, and funding). Each committee would comprise members of both the council and the library board.

5. WHAT CAN I DO?

Take the survey! It's pretty short. It gets right to the point.

And it will definitely help shape the future of the library you already pay for. Our public library is a visible symbol of how we feel about our town. Your library board needs to hear how you feel. The library staff as well as FRIENDS and other volunteers will tally responses. You can also download the survey from the library website, fill it in at the library, or online: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e775e8mwheb99as6/start>. Volunteers will also be going door to door. Deadline: **April 30, 2013**.



Sheldon Ross, library board president, and **Katherine Balch**, library board member and FRIENDS board member, joined Director **Dan Weiss** in developing the library's new **Strategic Plan**. It was presented to town council in January 2013.

Membership form goes here



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Life of Pi screenwriter David Magee, at the Fanwood library May 14. FRIENDS only reception at 7 pm. Annual public meeting at 7.30—join us!

A Very Special Issue

This issue of the FRIENDS of the Fanwood Memorial Library Newsletter offers two great opportunities:

JOIN THE FRIENDS!

Spring is our **only** membership season. The money you give goes directly to purchase materials and equipment that are beyond the library's budget.

TAKE THE SURVEY!

Fill out the attached or the online version. We want to hear from you how to create the library Fanwoodians need.



Cell phones resuscitating at the library during **Hurricane Sandy**. The library also helped residents connect to email, news reports, and each other.

Membership form goes here.