

At present, we aid patrons with Internet searching and perform research for seniors who do not have a computer. We have links on our website to the databases provided by the MBLC and the Central MA Regional Library System as well as a link to *Ask a Librarian*, a 24x7 reference service. In addition, our website provides numerous links to a wide variety of information resources.

GOAL: To provide more materials to help the informational needs of our patrons

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide more newspapers for the patrons
- Encourage staff to take workshops in using databases for information retrieval
- Encourage staff to remain current on what is going on in their town and surrounding areas
- Increase the number of links to information resources on our website
- Provide homework help links on the website
- Provide links to home schooling resources on website

### 3. Lifelong Learning

A library that promotes lifelong learning helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

At present, we provide programming for all age groups. We include programming that teaches about our nation's history as well as other cultures. This past year we had a program on Chinese Cooking for adults and teens and a children's program held at the Berlin Elementary School on Native American Stories and Crafts. We also provide programming that teaches new skills and broadens horizons. We are also utilizing the talents of local people to provide programming in a variety of subjects. We have local people providing knitting, yoga, and chess on a regular basis at no cost to the library. We have recently started to use the library as a place for local artists to display their work.

GOAL: To provide a variety of materials to help our patrons in their personal growth

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide more "how-to" DVDs
- Add a collection of language tapes
- Expand large print collection to include more non-fiction works
- Promote new library cards program for children

## Technology Plan

Over the past few years we have been able to upgrade all the library computers and software and add wireless access. This past year we became part of the Town's computer plan which has benefited us greatly. We have added two new staff computers and can now check out books both upstairs and downstairs in the children's room. In August 2007, we will be adding an additional staff port through C/WMARS which gives us additional capabilities to do work from the children's room computer. We have moved the cataloging function from the director's office to a small area on the main floor of the library.

GOAL: To implement the technologies that provide the staff and patrons with the most efficient and effective tools to help them in their work and information retrieval.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Update the present phone system in the library. We have one line for the entire building and faxes also come in over this line. Our plan is to install a second line with a phone that would allow us to put people on hold and transfer calls to the downstairs.
- Install a third phone line so that we could use the fax capabilities that are part of the photocopier system
- Upgrade patron access computers to 14-inch flat screen computers to provide more space and a more technology savvy look to the library
- Upgrade all printers in library
- Upgrade present photocopier
- Increase the number of computers for patron use
- Adhere to the PC specifications set by C/WMARS



## Priorities

Our priorities over the next several years are guided by the input from the focus groups. Four areas stand out as needing immediate attention.

### Access

The present library is not accessible to all of our patrons. One must navigate six steps to get into the library and those who want to go to the downstairs children's room have to go down steps that are both narrow and steep. The library would be very difficult for someone in a wheelchair to get around if they did manage to get inside. Parents and grandparents with young children have a difficult time with the steps to the children's room. The two bathrooms are tiny and would not accommodate a wheelchair and there is no place for parents to change infant's diapers. Navigating between the stacks and using the computers would be difficult for someone in a wheelchair and parts of the library are not accessible at all.

There is a side entrance to the library for easier access to the children's room but one still needs to go down four steps once they are in the building. Until recently one could not park on the side of the library if it was raining due to huge puddles. In winter the ice buildup prevented someone from even opening the side door.

This past year we began resolving some of these issues. We had an overhang built over the side door. We installed a doorbell that rings both upstairs and downstairs. We had the parking area leveled and covered with gravel. A second handrail was installed on the steps leading from the main level to the downstairs and on the four steps from the side door landing to the downstairs.

We began addressing the larger accessibility issue by bringing in a local architect to design an access ramp. \$30,000.00 was approved at the May Town Meeting for the building of this ramp. We are now requesting quotes for its construction.

GOAL: To provide a library that is accessible to all.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- To build an access ramp that allows easy entry to the first floor of the library
- To make the two library bathrooms accessible
- To provide two handicapped parking spaces
- To provide as much maneuverability in the library as possible for someone in a wheelchair
- To provide staff assistance for those who cannot easily access materials
- To keep the patrons informed of our plans and our progress

## Space

Space has been a major problem for many years. We have been working on creating a feeling of more space by clearing the area that one sees when they first walk into the library. We have rearranged materials and have disposed of unneeded items.

This past year the Friends cleaned out a room downstairs that had been accumulating craft items, donated items, books and furniture for many years and turned it into a room where they now hold their meetings. The Friends financed the painting of the room and cleaned the hardwood floors that were found beneath a mildewed rug. A dehumidifier helps keep the humidity level under control and a ban on food in the library has helped resolve the rodent problems.

The Trustees have been working with a local lawyer to try to get a waiver from the state that would permit us to expand on our present site.

GOAL: To create more usable space in the library

### OBJECTIVES:

- To pursue a state or administrative waiver that would allow us to expand the library on its present site
- To heavily weed an adult non-fiction collection of outdated, low circulation items
- To move part of the adult non-fiction collection to the downstairs
- To provide comfortable seating and side tables for the convenience of our patrons
- To provide a computer area that does not hamper access to areas of the library

## Hours

Many comments from the focus groups came from working people who felt our hours made it difficult for them to get to the library. People also were asking for consistent hours that would be easier for them to remember. We knew we could not increase hours from the 33 we were already open. The answer to our problem actually came from the focus group facilitator. We made a slight adjustment to our hours and patrons are happy and there has been little impact on staffing. At the same time we adjusted our Saturday hours as our patrons were asking us to be open later on Saturday.

Prior Hours	
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday	11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday	10:00 a.m.- 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. - Noon



<b>Present Hours</b>	
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	11:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

### **Building Issues**

Our building was built in 1928 and has all the expected problems associated with an older building. While being an attractive building there were issues that the focus group members would like to see addressed to make the library more appealing.

GOAL: To update the appearance of the library to make it more visually appealing and comfortable for the patrons

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To upgrade the lighting
  - \* Thanks to the Friends this has recently been resolved. At the Friends initiative we were able to update all the lighting in the library to modern efficiency lighting. The work was done by National Grid who picked up 80% of the cost. The Town of Berlin paid a little over \$300 towards this project.
- To replace the 1970's carpeting
- To provide comfortable seating
  - \*The Friends have agreed to buy chairs and tables for the library
- To resolve the dampness problems in the basement
- To paint the two bathrooms and update fixtures and wall hangings
  - \*The Friends will be undertaking this project in the fall of 2007

**The undersigned members of the Berlin Public Library Board of Trustees approve  
this Long Range Plan**

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**Evy Dueck**

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**Date**

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**Marsha Johnston**

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**Date**

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**Stephen Russell**

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**Date**

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**Heather Simpson**

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**Date**

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**Linda Plummer**

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**Date**

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**Bob McTague**

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**Date**