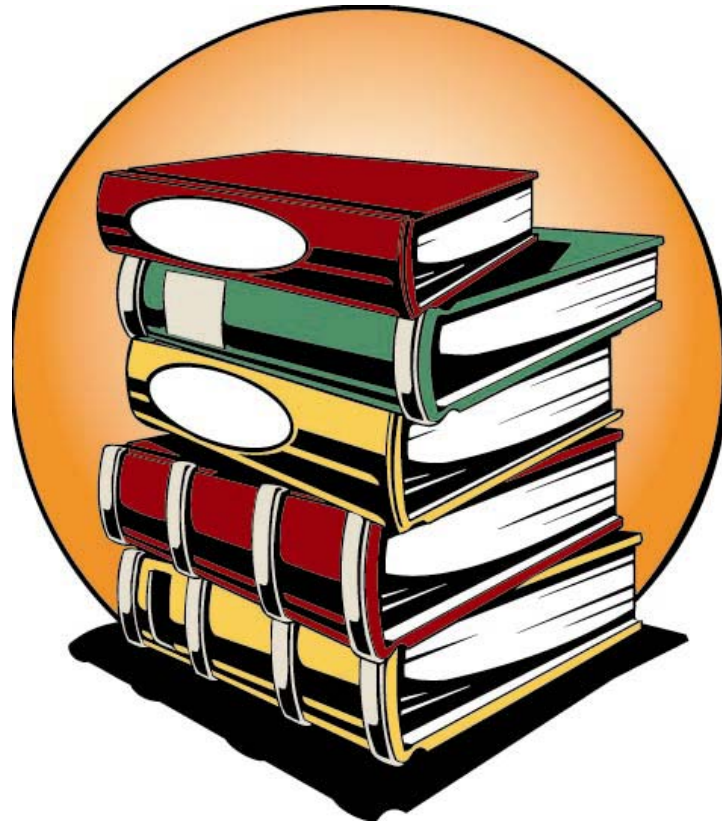


# *Friends of the Schenectady County Public Library*

**43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary  
Annual Report  
2008-2009**



**CHANGE YOUR WORLD  
@ YOUR LIBRARY**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

What an event filled year!

Last spring we received the announcement that IF the County proposed additions to the Central Library were to proceed, our Library would have to close for 12 to 18 months. Of course we did not want to see that. Led by Fred Thompson, and actively promoted by many, many others, hundreds of signatures were collected at the Spring Book Sale and thereafter, objecting to the closure and the plan that included the destruction of the McChesney Room. Letters to the Editor and Editorials further spread the word. Many people appeared before the County Legislature voicing objections.

Results were very positive. First, the elaborate plan was dropped and the Library remained open. Second, replacement of heat, air conditioning and electrical service is proceeding. Third, the Board of Trustees formed Committees to examine the relationship between the County and the Library and to identify an expansion plan to meet the Library's needs. This process is nearing fruition.

In the fall, acting on a suggestion from Karen Bradley, we held our first Literary Tour, taking over 40 members to Concord, Massachusetts. It was so successful that our next tour will be to Hartford, Connecticut on June 6.

In January, we approved funding a suggestion of Rita Moore for a Library Pass program to facilitate patron's visits to the Schenectady Museum and several other venues in the area.

Thanks to the efforts of Ellie Rowland, Ginny Thompson, Leah and Bill Leonard and many, many volunteers on Book Sale days and throughout the year our four Book Sales produced a new record income.

Gail Karl succeeded Rene Federichi and Rich Holt in managing the Whitney Book Corner and, with our hundred plus volunteers, proceeded to set new record income.

Joyce Parry and George Gould continue to exceed expectations with On-Line Sales.

Christine Witkowski succeeded Gene Rowland after his many years as editor of the Newsletter. The editor is vital, but lets also laud the faithful few who gather to prepare the newsletter for the post office.

Gene is taking over as Program Chair from Barbara Grasier who has successfully overseen the efforts of our special program coordinators..

Special recognition goes to our program coordinators: Linda Witkowski, Gioia Ottaviani, John Karl, Joan Ham and Walter Grattidge. It is amazing and wonderful how they put together outstanding programs for us, year after year.

Lisa Holt and Frank Taormina boosted all projects and events with their promotions and publicity.

I have appreciated the support of all members of the Board, but especially the efforts of Anne Yunick and Junice Wusterbarth. Everything they did was timely and accurate. They have patiently gentled me along the straight path. I am grateful.

Finally, never to be forgotten, are Janice Martin, Sandy Andersen and Vicki Yu. Their friendly assistance is exceeded only by the generous contribution of their time. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Bern Allanson

## By-Laws Change Proposed for April 2009

“The elected officers of this organization shall be a President, [President Elect,] First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and such other elected officers as the Board of Directors may from time to time deem necessary as elected by the membership.” [deleted material]

Rationale: With two Vice Presidents, the President Elect position has shown to be unnecessary and in practice, has not fulfilled its original purpose. Therefore, to conform the By-Laws to actual practice, the above change is submitted to the membership at its Annual Meeting.

## Hospitality

Debbie McCambridge and Simon Weinstein have put on the Annual Dinner for the enjoyment of our members. Rather than recite what they have achieved, let's just enjoy all they have provided for us and applaud them with our hearts and hands.

## MONDAY NOON PROGRAMS

The Friends of SCPL have continued to present a series of interesting and thought-provoking programs at the Central Library each Monday from September through May. The Fall 2008 Books Sandwiched In series, coordinated by Linda Witkowski, presented seven book reviews by local writers, scholars and book reviewers. The selections and presenters were as follows: *A Billion Lives: An Eyewitness Report from the Frontlines of Humanity* by Jan Egeland, reviewed by Dr. Clifford Tepper; *The Man Who Loved China* by Simon Winchester, reviewed by Dr. Gregg Millett; *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic...* by Steven Johnson, reviewed by Dr. James Gavin; *Peak Everything: Waking up to the Century of Declines* by Richard Heinberg, reviewed by Dr. John Eisler; *Andrew Carnegie* by David Nasaw, reviewed by Anne Bishop; *Dinner at Mr. Jefferson's: Three Men, Five Great Wines and the Evening that Changed America* by Charles A. Cerami, reviewed by **Dr. Thomas Kelly**; and *Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood* by Mark Harris, reviewed by Chris Bishop. When one of the scheduled reviews had to be postponed, Thurston Sack stepped in and presented an interesting program on the *Edison Exploratorium*.

The Fall Features series, coordinated by Gioia Ottaviano, explored the theme "War is Hell". Speakers were Howard Young, presenting *The American Civil War, 1861-1865* and John Vallely, who presented *World War I, 1914-1918*.

The Winter 2008 season continued with Table Talks, coordinated by John Karl. These programs featured the following speakers and topics: Don Rittner, County and City Historian, talked about the construction of the Dutch ship replica, *Onrust*; Ray Gillen, Director of Metroplex, followed up last year's presentation with a look at *Metroplex* activities outside the downtown area; Mayor Brian U. Stratton spoke on "**The State of the City**"; and James Kunstler, nationally known author, discussed "*The Long Emergency*" and its implications for everyday life in America's future".

The Winter 2009 series of Books Sandwiched In presented the following reviews: *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court* by Jeffrey Toobin, reviewed by Julia Helfman; *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time* by Greg Mortensen, reviewed by Sheelagh Baily; *Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War"* by Pat Buchanan, reviewed by Ernie Tetrault; *Rupert Murdoch's China Adventures – How the World's Most Powerful Media Mogul Lost a Fortune and Found a Wife* by Bruce Dover, reviewed by Greg Millett.; *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the Civil War* by Drew Gilpin Faust, reviewed by Deborah Noyes; and *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* by Thomas L. Friedman, reviewed by Patricia Rush.

The annual Science Series, coordinated by Dr. Walter Grattidge, featured presentations by four local scientists: *From Stem Cells to Regenerative Medicine* by Ricki Lewis, PhD; *Three Million Years Of Climate Change* by T.G. Mihran, PhD; *Can Energy Supply Meet Human Demand?* by Paul Swartz, PhD and *Early Maps of the Americas: Art and/or Science* by Cal Welch.

Two Spring Specials programs, coordinated by Gioia Ottaviano, will be presented in April, 2009. The theme is Shakespeare. Carol King will present *Shakespeare: Inside Out* and Paul Lamar will discuss *Shakespeare's Prose and Poetry*. Both of these presenters are theater reviewers for the Schenectady Gazette.

The Books Sandwiched In series will resume on March 30, when Rich Holt will review the **One County/One Book** selection for 2009, *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen. Book reviews will continue during April and May. On April 20, Gene Rowland will review *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell and, on May 4 or 11, Dr. Walter Grattidge will review *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba and Then Lost It to the Revolution* by T.J. English. Other selections are to be announced.

Gene Rowland, Program Coordinator

## Music Committee

During the 2008-2009 season, the Music Committee sponsored four programs:

- Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> (Election Day), Music for Meditation was presented during the noon hour.
- January 18<sup>th</sup>: Louis Lohraseb, piano, and Leo Brown, violin, gave a concert of classical music.
- February 8<sup>th</sup>: Music for Fun was enjoyed by an enthusiastic, overflow crowd.
- April 26<sup>th</sup>: The Schenectady County Community College Music Department will present a varied program.

For the annual dinner, soprano Ava Wing, and pianist Maxim Khyten, will perform three arias as part of the entertainment for this event.

Respectfully submitted, Joan Ham.

## Poetry Gala

We expect another inspiring afternoon on April 19 for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Gala coordinated by Linda Witkowski. Come to the McChesney Room at 2:00 p.m. for a time of varied poetry readings.

## Publicity

Every activity and sales event is publicized through a wide variety of media: newspaper ads, on-line listing, theater marquee, brochures, fax-email, etc. We continue to identify those that are more effective and seek new means of getting our story across.

## **BOOK SALES**

Amazingly, \$40,512 was raised by four book sales the Friends held in 2008 for the betterment of the Schenectady Public Library. Over 200 enthusiastic, helpful volunteers were needed to stage the spring and fall sales and 75 cheerful persons braved the cold hallway to sell Fiction books in January and the Non-fiction sale in February. Good publicity was the key to good sales. Thank you everyone!

We are continuing to sell the remaining books after the two big book sales to BookProQuo from New Jersey. This gives us a small profit, doesn't burden the library staff, and makes everyone happy that the books aren't going to the dump. This is done after we have exhausted ways to give leftovers to other non-profit agencies.

GE Power University and Global Research Center help greatly by assisting us in the set-up and clean-up the sales. The library staff is unequalled in their assistance technically and, most importantly, their encouragement and toleration of the disruption our activities cause in their professional environment. Sandy Anderson, who does our graphics, Betty Jean Lent and Bob Schumaker, who does the basic set-up, and Randy Lucia, who does our security deserve our special thanks.

A basic ingredient to our success is all the books and records that Schenectady citizens donate to the library as well as library discards. We hope this continues for many years to come.

Ellie Rowland, Book sale Chair

## **BOOKS-ON-LINE**

For the year 2008 the combined efforts of Norlene Gageway, Suzanne Kimura, Judy Dillenbeck, Dick Sills, Joyce Parry and George Gould have sold 856 books for a total (including postage) of \$17,777.17. This seems to be somewhat more than in previous years. The average book yields \$20.76, before Amazon takes their cut.

The monthly sales are leveling off, probably because our inventory is rather constant. and that is so because we have a limited shelf space for our inventory. To maximize our business we need a large dry barn with Internet capabilities. We are learning what seems to sell (nonfiction, cook books, hobby books etc.).

Fiction is just too common with many, many books-on-line for \$.01 (the vendor hopes to make a few cents on the postage). We have established a minimum price of \$5.00 for our books and try very hard to be the lowest posted price.

We have established a five (out of five) star rating based on customer feedback. This may be a deciding factor for a customer.

George Gould

## **WHITNEY BOOK CORNER**

The Whitney Book Corner opened on 4/28/02. We are beginning our ninth year of successful book sales. Our gross sales for the 2008 year was \$35,799, expenses of \$8,750 for net of \$27,049.

To make our store more visible and accessible to the community, we purchased an "OPEN" store flag, and increased our store hours including Sundays.

Over 100 volunteers under the direction of Ellie Rowland man the WBC seven days a week. Many thanks go out to all these volunteers who tirelessly give of their time and talent.

Gail Karl is the manger with associates Chris Witkowski, and Roberta Richardson

## **MEMBERSHIP**

While our membership year does not end until June 30, 2009 we have thus far received donations from our members amounting to \$19,488 and matching funds from GE of \$5,215 for a total of \$24,703. This will be the second best year we have had over the past nine years. The average gift is now \$31.84 compared to \$29.03 last year and \$22.50 in fiscal year 2003.

We have forty nine members who gave \$100. or more, last year we had forty five. One hundred twenty four gave \$35. to \$99. Last year we had one hundred seven. Our GE members continue to give generously having provided \$6783 from one hundred twenty members plus \$5215 in GE matching funds for a total of \$11,998. The minimum gift that GE will match is \$25, Qualifying gifts can be matched by telephone at 800-305-0669 or online at [www.gefoundation.com](http://www.gefoundation.com).

The membership has remained stable with five hundred ninety seven active members last year and six hundred twelve active members this year. We recorded fifty nine new members. Membership renewals for fiscal year 2010 will be mailed later in April and despite the economic downturn we hope you will be able to continue your same level of generosity. As always, we are most grateful to all of our members for their continued and unfailing support.

Finally, I wish to thank Priti Irani for all her help and support during the past year as well as Chris Witkowski and Lisa Holt for their efforts to expand the membership.

Bill Beaulieu

FRIENDS OF THE SCHENECTADY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Committee proposes the following slate for 2009-2010

Officers

President	Bill Leitch
1st Vice President	Gene Rowland
2'd Vice President	Debbie McCambridge
Secretary	Mary Beth Barbagelata
Treasurer	Junice Wusterbarth
Past President	Bern Allanson

Board of Directors — First three year Term

Mary Beth Barbagelata has much and varied experience as information officer, office manager, restaurant manager, and office administrator; she was district office administrator for the Hon. Samuel Stratton for some years. Mary Beth has worked on the book sales in recent years and has been a big supporter of the book sale.

Eugene A. (Gene ) Rowland has been active in the Friends of SCPL for several years, serving as Editor of the Friends newsletter. He is currently on the Governance Committee, volunteers at the Whitney Book Corner, coordinates the Monday Noon programs and works closely with his wife, Ellie, on all the Friends' book sales. Gene is a graduate of Penn State University, with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He is retired from GE after 35 years of service; from 1977 until his retirement in 1994 he was a Project Manager at the Corporate Research and Development Center in Schenectady. His favorite hobbies are skiing and fishing.

Virginia (Ginny) Thompson, a long-time Friend, is a familiar face from the many book sales she has worked; she has also co-chaired several book sales. In addition, she volunteers at the Whitney Book Corner. A music lover as well, she has been on the board of the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra for 25 years. She is retired from teaching in the Niskayuna Schools.

Board of Directors — Standing for a Second three year Term

Valerie Catlin (2/12)  
Sally Magid (2/12)  
Debbie McCambridge (2/12)

Board of Directors — Continuing in office

Includes ex-officio Esther Swanker (chairperson of Library Board of Trustees)

Junice Wusterbarth (indef)

Kathleen August (2/11)

William Beaulieu (2/10)

Phyllis Bornt (2/10)

Rickie Gageway (1/11)

Barbara Grasier (2/11)

Joan Ham (2/10)

Gail Karl (1/11)

Bill Leitch (1/11)

Frank Taormina (2/10)

Simon Weinstein (1/10)

Christine Witkowski (1/11)

Nominating Committee — Bill Leitch, Valerie Catlin, Co-Chairs; Bill Beaulieu, Phyllis Bornt, Walter Grattidge, Gloria Zampini