

EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

Times, completion of the 10th anniversary celebration, and continuing high usage by the public. As in previous years, the public enthusiastically attended library programs and constantly used the computer workstations for access to the Internet and electronic databases. Residents also accessed the library collections and databases from home. Professional librarians at the Reference Desk, Children's Room, and at Fox Branch assisted the public in meeting their informational needs through the library's book and periodical collections and with electronic resources. The library received sufficient funding through the passage of the proposition 2 ½ override in June to maintain existing services, although it was not able to restore any of the seven hours lost in FY2004. This funding also enabled the library to meet state aid requirements for the municipal appropriation so that a waiver was not needed to remain certified by the MA Board of Library Commissioners as was the case in the two previous fiscal years. During fiscal 2005, the Friends of the Fox Branch Library raised sufficient private funds to keep Fox open a third day; with the passage of the override, municipal funds would be available in FY06 for this.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Community Read Program



This was the third year that the library co-sponsored a Community Read with the Diversity Task Force whereby all residents were encouraged to read the same book and share their impressions of it. The library was fortunate to receive grant funding to publicize the program and purchase multiple copies of the book, *Snow in August*, by Pete Hamill. Financial assistance for this special project was made possible with Federal funds from the Institute on Museum and Library Services administered through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. With this funding, the library was able to hire a graphic designer to create a logo design and bright orange, six-foot banners proclaiming "Arlington Reads Together" to hang every year on the light posts in Arlington Center for this annual event. A total of eight programs were enthusiastically attended by the public including a Shirim Klezmer Concert that filled Town Hall; a video of the Big Bands, Irish and Jewish Folktales with Award Winning and Grammy nominated

storyteller, Sharon Kennedy; a Comic Book workshop, Music of the Irish and Jewish Immigrant Experience featuring Robbie O'Connell; and "A Besere Velt" of the Yiddish Community Chorus of the Workmen's Circle. Several book discussions and a showing of the movie were also held. The Board of Library Trustees and the Friends of the Library provided additional funding for the project.



Community Read Event: Shirim Klezmer performance

10th Anniversary Celebration

In May, the library ended a yearlong series of events that began in June 2004 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the completion of the library building project. The final events included a program with Lou Gorman, former general manager of the Boston Red Sox, and a two-evening Arlington Author Series with a panel of fiction and non-fiction writers from the community. A highlight of the celebration was an "Afternoon with Arlington resident Christopher Castellani," who won the Massachusetts Book Award for Fiction for his novel, *A Kiss from Maddalena*. The library also invited residents to submit a list of their ten favorite books from which a master list was created and the books displayed for the public to borrow.

Public Relations Award

The library was awarded second prize by the Massachusetts Library Association for its quarterly newsletter. The library staff wrote and designed the newsletter with the printing financed by library trust funds and the Friends of the Library.

Customer Service Grant

The library successfully applied for a Customer Service Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to offer staff training/workshops in various components of customer service to serve the public even better. Another aspect of the project will be public relations efforts to make citizens aware of the services and collections available at the library and from home. The

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grant will provide funding to create a new borrower brochure and an improved signage/directory to make the library's collections more visible and accessible. This project is being funded through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners with funds from LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act), a Federal source of library funding provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

New York Times Award to Branch Librarian

Page Lindsay, Branch Librarian at the Fox Library, was recognized by the New York Times for her outstanding contributions to the Fox Branch Library. This award honors librarians who have provided outstanding public service and influenced members of the community. She was one of twenty-seven librarians to receive the award chosen from more than 1,200 nominations nationwide.

Usage

Residents continued to make heavy use of library facilities and resources. Circulation rose two percent over the previous fiscal year despite no increase in hours or staffing. The DVD rental collection, funded by the Friends of the Library, continued to prove very popular. Staff also handled an eight percent increase in interlibrary loans to Arlington citizens and other libraries.

Services For Adults And Young Adults

Adults and young adults of middle and high school age utilized the services provided by the librarians in the Adult Services Department for school, work, and personal life. The library continued to staff the Reference Desk whenever the library was open to the public and tried to provide two librarians whenever possible during busy hours. Nineteen online databases were provided through the library's participation in the Minuteman Library Network and the Metrowest Regional Library System with municipal funding for eleven others. With the public workstations in almost constant use, the staff assisted patrons in the use of the Internet and electronic databases and with troubleshooting equipment.

Staff created book and audiovisual displays to highlight the collections and assist citizens in their pursuit of life-long learning and reading enjoyment. A summer reading club for adults entitled "Oh the Places You Go" received an enthusiastic response from the public and funding from the Friends of the Library for a number of raffles. Many local organizations also took advantage of the library's exhibit space in the lobby to publicize their organizations and to present informational displays. The library actively promoted the town's Diversity Month in October through the distribution of booklists and book displays and the sponsorship of the town-wide "Community Read." The library offered a

Literacy Open House at Drake Village to publicize its expanded collection of English as a Second Language materials. Library staff continued to expand the Chinese and Russian language collections to meet public interest. The library participated in the "Business Forward Expo," sponsored by the Town and the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, by staffing an informational table at Town Hall. The table served as a site for workshops and offered a course on using the library's online databases for marketing a business. The library also co-sponsored a program with the Chamber and the U. S. Postal Service on using e-Bay to promote businesses. A revised brochure on the Local History Collection was printed and a catalog created for the Local History Postcard Collection.

Young adults in grades six through twelve continued to make use of the facility and services. The Reference Desk staff assisted students with class assignments and bibliographic instruction. Programs on comic book making and art were again offered because of their popularity the previous year. Author Jack Gantos gave a fantastic presentation to students at the Ottoson Middle School and also visited with students over lunch. Several new booklists were created for young adults including *Too Good to Miss*, *Science Fiction and Fantasy*, and *Outstanding Books for the College Bound*. Artwork from Arlington High School was displayed in the Young Adult area of the library. Teenagers participated in the summer reading program and had the opportunity to win raffle prizes funded by trust funds and local businesses.

The Community Room and Conference Room were used by over 100 local organizations for a total of 658 meetings and programs. The two study rooms continued to be in constant demand by students, tutors, and those using word processing and spreadsheet programs. The Local History Room was used 105 times by researchers with Independent Research Cards.

Services For Children

Children from infancy to fifth grade enjoyed the materials and programs offered by the Children's Department. Materials included books, magazines, books and music on cassette and CD, videocassettes, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. Children and parents participated in 279 activities at the Robbins and Fox Libraries including storytimes, sing-a-longs for infants and toddlers, craft times, toddler programs, Chess Club, and various performances. The library promoted the annual summer reading program for children, with a theme of "Explore Other Worlds." Funding from the trust funds and the Friends of the Library enabled children who participated to choose a free book to keep and to win small prizes. This year, a new program was implemented to promote an appreciation of poetry called "Poems in

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your Pocket” which awarded prizes to children who could read a poem when asked. The children’s librarians offered assistance to children, parents, and teachers in researching homework assignments and for general use of the book collection and the Internet. The public continued to request the very popular graded and subject booklists that are updated annually by library staff. Several new booklists were also prepared this year including Trains, Fairies, Summer Reading, and Community Read. The staff also prepared “quick pick” kits with thematic picture books to assist parents who do not have the time to browse the shelves.

The library is very fortunate to have the Anne A. Russell Children’s Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund which sponsors many special programs for children that could not be afforded through the municipal budget. In 2005, these included a program on Martin Luther King Day, Exploring Music and Movement, puppetry, theatre, Colonial Days, and picnic concerts. The Russell Fund again sponsored the family concert by the Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra and this year the Head of Children’s Services, Marianne Uttam, narrated *Peter and the Wolf* at the concert attended by over 500 people at Town Hall. The fund also finances the very popular infant-toddler sing-a-longs as well as kindergarten packets for children, to introduce them to the library, and baby bundle packets for new parents, with information on library services for infants and toddlers.

The public and school libraries continued their cooperative efforts. The public library maintained collaboration with the schools through letters to teachers, assignment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, library tours, preparation of curriculum kits, and suggestions for the summer reading lists. The children’s librarians at the Robbins and Fox presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes at the library. The Russell Fund continued to sponsor authors chosen by the elementary schools to visit their facilities. This remains a popular program with students and those involved with the town-wide Enrichment Committee. A highlight was the performance at Hardy School by an author/storyteller from the Eastern American Indian Cultural Center. As in previous years, the library considered the needs of the curriculum frameworks when selecting materials for purchase.

Edith Fox Branch Library And Community Center

Children and adults continued to enjoy the services that a branch library provides. The library was open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Funding for two of the three days in Fiscal 2005 was provided by the municipal budget and one day was provided by private donations through a dedicated and energetic group of volunteers who coordinated the fundraising campaign. Children and parents

enjoyed storytimes, lap-sit programs, sing-a-longs, craft programs, and the summer reading club. Elementary and nursery schools brought classes to the library for stories and instruction. All ages enjoyed the monthly book displays that highlighted the collection and exhibits from community groups and the schools.

Behind The Scenes

Library staff worked diligently to offer quality services to the community. The number of items borrowed for library patrons from other libraries and loaned to other libraries for their patrons continued to increase. Despite the fact that the public can request items electronically, the staff must still locate the materials and process them for loan and return. In the summer and fall of 2005, the Minuteman Library Network experienced severe problems with the state funded delivery system of these materials. The delivery vendor could not keep up with the volume, and audiovisual loans had to be suspended for several months. Audiovisual loans were re-instated with the exception of new DVDs and videos. In its role as an education support center, the library continued its efforts to support the curriculum needs of the schools. The Adult Services and Technical Services Departments selected, ordered, cataloged, and processed over 16,572 new items including books, magazines, compact discs, audiocassettes, books on tape, videocassettes, DVDs, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. The Circulation Department checked out and returned 535,653 items to the shelves. The Local History Librarian received sixty-seven requests for research assistance in person, and by phone, letter, and email. The Adult Services Department continued to order various tax forms and serve as a distribution center to assist patrons in filing their state and federal income taxes. The library collected \$66,620 in overdue fines and lost book money that was returned to the general town fund. Library staff wrote a new Collection Development Policy and updated the Internet Policy.

Library staff prepared the monthly children’s newsletter and the quarterly newsletter for adults to keep the public aware of services available to them. Staff also updated the library’s web page to keep it timely and completed the revision of the web page. Other staff activities included selecting, weeding, and updating the collection, updating the periodical list, shifting collections, creating booklists and displays, scheduling the meeting rooms, purchase and processing of the rental book collection, and processing books that need re-binding. All library staff attended an in-house workshop on customer service and visited local libraries for ideas on how to improve signage and access to the collections.

The library continued to attempt to meet patron demands for new audiovisual materials. The Friends

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of the Library's rental DVD collection continues to prove very successful and the proceeds from the rentals will allow for the expansion of the collection.

The library experienced significant turnover in all departments. Stella Shen who was a librarian in the Technical Services and Adult Services Departments retired after over 30 years of service. One of her accomplishments was the creation of the very popular Chinese language collection with funding from a federal LSTA grant, trust funds and Friends of the Library.

Several building and equipment issues proved to be problematic. The microfilm reader printers broke down several times and it was very frustrating to both the public and the staff that the service vendor could not quickly resolve the problem. The air conditioning system experienced significant trouble during the summer months and several costly repairs resulted. Capital funds will allow for the replacement of major parts prior to the 2006 summer season. The elevator also needed repairs several times and became inoperable for safety reasons at the end of December. New parts were immediately ordered for installation the first week in January.



Board of Library Trustees
Standing (l. to r.): Patricia Deal, Katherine Fennelly, Francis Murray, Susan Cronin Ruderman, Barbara Muldoon. Seated: Joyce Radochia, David Castiglione.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees continued its commitment to sponsor an authors program, administer the trust funds for the optimum benefit of the community, raise private funds to augment the municipal budget, and advocate for adequate staffing and delivery of essential library services. The Board approved funding in FY05 for reference books, books on tape, music CDs, videocassettes, multicultural materials, local history preservation, young adult books, children's materials, circulating art prints, programs for children, materials for the Fox Library, author program, Community Read, public relations, volunteer appreciation, and staff development. The Board conducted a mail solicitation of individuals and businesses to raise funds for the collections and took steps to establish a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so that individual donations would qualify for matching funds by employers that offer such a program. Board members also participated in Town Day by staffing a table providing information on library activities and resources. At the town level, one Trustee participated in the Trust Fund Policies Committee representing the library trust funds.

Friends Of The Library

The Friends of the Robbins Library, a citizen support group for the Robbins and Fox Libraries, remained active, with 375 new and renewing members. In April, the Friends presented a program of Irish and Scottish folk songs with the duo of Bruce and Sandy Hedman, otherwise known as Tara's Thistle. The program was enjoyed by a large audience. The great Highland pipes were particularly impressive. The Friends also co-sponsored activities related to the library's Community Read project. The semi-annual book sales, in February and September, were profitable. The Friends' ongoing book sale remains

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popular and, along with the DVD rental collection, provides financial support for the Friends' activities. The group provides supplemental materials and equipment for the Robbins and Fox libraries as well as sponsoring the family museum pass program. The Friends have planned their first fundraiser of the new year for January 2006 with a benefit performance of Agatha Christie's "The Unexpected Guest" by the Arlington Friends of the Drama.

The Friends of Fox continue to remain active and hope to plan future fundraisers to support the branch library.

Volunteers

Several volunteers once again contributed time and expertise to the Robbins and Fox Libraries this year. The following people spent 1,294 hours shelving books and materials, stamping date due cards, and performing a variety of support duties in the Circulation Department: Carolyn Archer, Bill Bradley, Joanne Berstell, Andy Blanchard, Justin and Ryan Connor, Andrea Giuliani, Kim Haase, Marion Kranefuss, Drew Laughland, Michael Passanisi, Nancie Richardson, Steve Scott, Ellen Shearer, and Barbara Wagner. Assisting with the work of the Technical Services Department were: Debbie Minns, Morris Keesan, Tung Liu and Wei Qingrong who processed materials for the increasingly popular Chinese collection. The Fox Branch library benefited from the efforts of Joseph Cook, Michel Jackson, Gert Kovar, and Beth Lanigan. Several members of the Friends of the Robbins Library participated in the group's semi-annual book sales, with Catherine Gryniewicz, Mary Gryniewicz, Wendy Watson, and Helen Krikorian contributing many hours to sort and prepare materials for the sales. Special recognition is given to Susanne Blair who expertly organized these sales in addition to maintaining the ongoing sale on the fourth floor of the library. Alice Seelinger and Beverly Brinkerhoff again brought reading materials and companionship to many residents through the homebound delivery program. The library staff is grateful for the work of all of the volunteers.

Donations

Citizens, businesses, and organizations donated \$23,650 to the library in Fiscal Year 2005. The library acknowledges with appreciation these gifts which allow for the purchase of books and audiovisual materials which could not be afforded through the municipal budget that has been especially restricted in recent years.

The Friends of the Library donated over \$20,000 to the library for membership to five museums, audio books in CD and cassette formats, music CDs, DVDs, reference books, multicultural/ESL materials, young adult books, book and prize giveaways for the

children's department, programs for the Community Read, and books, a book bin, and shelving trucks for the Fox Branch.

The Friends of Fox raised \$20,000 during Fiscal Year 2005 to keep Fox Branch open an additional day per week. Municipal funds will be used for FY2006.

Looking Ahead

The Arlington Library System (Robbins and Fox) is greatly prized by the local citizenry because of high standards of professional service and facility upkeep. However, when a fiscal crisis reduced library funding eight percent in FY 2004, the immediate impact was (1) to reduce total Library hours/availability from sixty-seven to sixty hours per week; (2) to close the Library doors on Sunday year-round, as opposed to only in the summer months; and (3) to reduce significantly municipal funding for materials and other library vitals, thus jeopardizing state aid for lack of municipal support.

In Fiscal Year 2007, the library continues to face the challenge of providing quality library services within the context of limited municipal resources. Despite the successful override, the library could not receive funding to restore the services and seven hours that were cut back due to reductions in the municipal budget in Fiscal Year 2004. It will also become increasingly difficult to meet the state requirement on expenditures for library materials without additional municipal funding.

With limited financial resources, the library will face a challenge to maintain and expand its book and audiovisual collection, keep pace with technology, introduce new media and provide the residents of Arlington with a high-quality contemporary library system. Library administration and the Board of Trustees will endeavor to provide funding for the continued expansion of the very popular audiovisual collection. The library will maintain its commitment to high quality children's services through the financial support of the Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund. Participation in the Minuteman Library Network will continue to provide access to the World Wide Web and electronic databases. The library will continue to replace and upgrade network equipment, PCs, and peripherals connected to the Minuteman Library Network as well as office automation as long as capital funding is maintained.

The library intends to use its Long-Range Plan for FY2006-2008 in formulating its goals and objectives. The plan specifies five service roles to concentrate on: Commons, Current Topics and Titles, General Information, Information Literacy, and Lifelong Learning. Due to the tight budget, it may not be possible to implement all the services planned. However the library is committed to the implementation of wireless technology for the public,

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introduction of a time management system for the public computers, the development of a master plan for shelving the expanding collection, review of the need adaptive technologies and equipment to facilitate access to library resources for citizens with disabilities, enhancements to the library website, and continued efforts to meet the needs of special constituencies including teens, senior citizens, business community, and English as Second Language Learners. The library will also continue to work with the Minuteman Library Network to monitor the delivery system of interlibrary loan materials to ensure that the system is not overloaded.

To raise additional funding, library administration will publicize the availability of the Robbins Library Reading Room for rentals when the library is closed and continue to support the Trustee's annual solicitation of private funds. The Board of Trustees hopes that financial improvements over the next several years will allow the library to return to the level of service offered in FY 2003. Specifically, the community has expressed a desire for the restoration of Sunday hours. With additional funding, the library would be able to move in this direction.

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The children of Arlington once again excelled academically and socially within the Arlington Public Schools.

The 2004/2005 school year was a year of transition in many ways. After serving the town and the children of Arlington with passion and distinction, Superintendent Kathleen Donovan retired. She left a legacy of new schools, higher academic achievement, and financial stability. A number of other dedicated staff joined Mrs. Donovan in retirement, including Assistant Superintendent Joanne Gurry, and Special Education Director Marilyn Bisbicos. A great many teachers also retired, as we see a wave of staff reach retirement age. The district welcomed many new teachers and administrators who will build on the success of their predecessors.

The taxpayers of Arlington generously passed an override, which saved the schools from large-scale layoffs and reduction in services. The override was unique in two ways. First, it should provide for 5 years of financial stability, taking a long-term view of school funding. It also, unfortunately, did not add funding to restore prior cuts. The override only forestalled additional cuts. The children greatly appreciate and benefit from the support and generosity of the citizens of Arlington.

The school year saw the start of construction of the Dallin Elementary School and significant progress on the Peirce Field remediation and new athletic fields. These are great assets for the school and the town.

The Department of Education conducted its regularly scheduled Coordinated Program Review of our Special Education and English Language Learners programs. The report praised our staff's dedication and hard work but faulted many of our systems, which make it difficult to meet deadlines and produce the necessary paperwork. A Comprehensive Action Plan to address these issues has been put in place.

The school year ended with the appointment of Nate Levenson as Superintendent of Schools. As in years past, the staff of the Arlington Public Schools put children first within tight financial constraints.

2005 State of the School **Jeff Thielman, Chairman, Arlington School Committee**

On behalf of my School Committee colleagues Sue Sheffler, Suzanne Owayada, Marty Thrope, Paul Schlichtman, Susan Lovelace and Sean Garballey, I am honored to welcome you to the annual State of the Schools address.

Before I speak about our schools, I want to take a moment to recognize Kay Donovan, who is one of the longest serving superintendents in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During her 11 years as the leader of our schools, Kay transformed our district into one of the finest in the state. She not only led the effort to rebuild our schools and Peirce Field, but Kay rebuilt Arlington's confidence in its public schools. Kay, from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for all you have done for Arlington and our young people.

Next month two other school leaders are retiring, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Dr. Joanne Gurry, and the Director of Special Education, Dr. Marilyn Bisbicos. We thank both of you for your service to our children.

Many people volunteer in our schools as aides, coaches, and tutors. I want to take a moment to recognize one of our volunteers, long-time School Committee member Bill Carey, who volunteers about 40 hours a week in our accounting office. Thank you, Bill. It is volunteers like Bill who help make our public schools work.

Tonight, I want to talk with you about the achievements and challenges we face in the Arlington Public Schools.

Education is the most scrutinized public activity in America. The No Child Left Behind Law and the 1993 Education Reform Act here in Massachusetts made our schools more accountable and more closely watched than ever before in our history.

While mandates in education may come from the state or federal level, the mission of educating America's children is carried out in local communities like ours. It is the taxpayers in Arlington who must support education financially and who must be sure that our town's children receive the finest education possible.

Over the years, the people of Arlington have been extraordinarily generous to the public schools. You have passed debt exclusions to rebuild our schools, and you have donated to support sports and other extracurricular activities. You have always been willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the children of Arlington receive the education they deserve. On behalf of everyone involved in public education in this community, I thank you for your support of our schools and our children.

Our schools are not perfect, but you should know that your tax dollars are well-managed. One way to measure whether a school system is operating efficiently is by looking at what it costs to educate each student. The taxpayers of Arlington will be pleased to know that we spend less per pupil than the state average, but we are able to deliver a superior educational product.

Let me share with you a few highlights of our schools.

While we in Arlington do not judge our students' academic progress by tests alone, we are pleased that our elementary MCAS scores are in the top 10% in the state. And overall our district is in the top 20%.

Our fine arts program is one of the best in the area. The spring musical production at Arlington High School is a highlight for many in the community. I'm always amazed during intermission at the spring performance to see so many people who do not have children in the production. When I strike up a conversation with them, they say they could not resist a great show for a good price.

Arlington's all-day kindergarten program, which is supported in part by your tax dollars and paid for as well by parents, gives children a running start on their educational journey. Participation in all-day kindergarten is very high, and our program is the envy of many in Massachusetts.

Our seven neighborhood elementary schools give children a safe and supportive place to learn and grow. The relatively small size of these schools allows kids to receive more attention than they would in a larger school. The MCAS scores and high academic achievement of our elementary students are proof that having seven schools is the right choice for Arlington.

The Dallin Elementary School is being rebuilt with a combination of state and local funding, and it is expected to be completed by the winter of 2006. Thanks to your generosity and wisdom, the Town of Arlington has rebuilt six of its nine schools, and we remain committed to rebuilding the Thompson and Stratton Elementary Schools. Budget cuts at the state level have slowed us down a bit, but we have not lost sight of our goal of rebuilding every elementary school in town.

The Ottoson Middle School works to maintain the small school feeling of the elementary level by putting students in clusters where they can study and learn together. Throughout their middle school years our students are given the chance to explore trades, learn a foreign language, and take more advanced classes.

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Under our new principal, Charles Arlington Skidmore, the high school is poised for a renaissance. Mr. Skidmore himself is teaching a class and has invited other teachers to observe him so they can learn together how best to teach the young people of the 21st century. Many of Arlington High School's graduates go onto some of the finest colleges and universities in the country, and one recent graduate, Sean Garballey, was just elected to your School Committee.

Many may not know this, but this year the town of Arlington pays for 150 students to attend Minuteman Technical School. The young people of Arlington who study at Minuteman are given a chance to learn trades as well as prepare for post-secondary studies. Without Minuteman, many young people in Arlington would not stay in high school.

What makes education work in Arlington is the strength and talent of our teachers. Mr. Skidmore tells me that in his 30 years in education he has never worked with a faculty as dedicated as the staff of Arlington High School. He is impressed by how much time they put in before and after school and how many of their own resources they use to make their classrooms work. Our elementary principals and our middle school principal, Stavroula Bouris, say the same about their staff.

To show how dedicated our teachers are, last year they settled a contract by increasing their health insurance costs by 50% to reduce the burden on the town. And they agreed to have some of their colleagues increase their teaching class loads by 25%. They reached this agreement because they care about our kids and because they want every child in Arlington to receive the best education possible.

We are lucky to have such dedicated teachers working with our children every day.

Education today is not the same as it was when many of us were growing up. I suspect your educational experience was similar to mine. We had 30 and sometimes 35 kids in a class when we were young. If you remember, about 20% of the kids just didn't learn the lessons. And in those days, that was accepted. A college degree was not so clearly tied to financial security as it is today, and there were no federal mandates telling schools to leave no child behind.

Today we live in a different world. Young people with learning disabilities, those kids who simply would have flunked out or barely gotten by when we were in school, are now mainstreamed and receive the attention they deserve. The smaller class sizes that you the public demand for your children and grandchildren allow all kids to learn better. And they keep our special education costs down because children with diverse needs get the attention they require in a smaller class.

In Arlington 16%, or 750 children, are designated as special education students. By law, the taxpayers of Arlington not only pay for special education children in public schools, but our tax dollars are used for special education students from Arlington who attend private and parochial schools.

I doubt there is a family in Arlington who is not touched by special education. Your child or grandchild or your neighbor's child may be on an individual education plan. We in Arlington support these children not only because the law requires it, but because we are responsible for every child in this town, regardless of their learning ability.

The other day there was a letter from a special education parent in the Arlington Advocate. The parent wrote that her seven year old son with Down Syndrome is finishing his second year of kindergarten. He has an aide most of the day who helps him with speech, language and computer usage. His mother writes: "We see the loving friendships he has made because he attends his neighborhood school. We see his confidence at school and play. We see him thinking more clearly, speaking more clearly, gaining more mastery over his little world."

Years ago this child would have been put in a special room, apart from his classmates, and he would have been forgotten. Today, this boy is part of our community, he cannot be left behind, and with your support he will have the resources he needs to reach his full potential.

The fact is, education in Arlington and across the country is better today than at any time in our history. We respond to students' needs, diagnose learning issues, and provide a better educational product than ever before.

While we are doing better in education, we know we face even greater challenges as we prepare students for the future. Let me explain with a little story.

Last week I spoke to Farid Quraishi, the President of the student council at Arlington High School. He told me about a trip he took to Germany last year with parents and classmates. He and his friends raised money for the trip; no public dollars were spent on it. In a Berlin youth hostel he became friendly with a student from India. The two have maintained contact by email. Last December this young woman was just a few miles from where the tsunami hit, and she was able to give Farid and his friends in Arlington eyewitness updates on the struggles people in another part of the globe faced as a result of that terrible natural disaster.

The kids in our schools are growing up in a world that is much smaller today than it was when we were young. They will compete, get to know and do business with people from all over the world. In the past few years, as Thomas Friedman wrote in his new book, "The World is Flat," the world-wide economic

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playing field has become much more even, and it is no longer driven mainly by U.S. companies.

Educated people all over the world, with access to a computer and the internet, are able to connect to any knowledge pool they want 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. And since 1990, long after most of us were in school, three billion people in China, India, Russia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Central Asia have begun to participate in the global economy.

The jobs that have fled Route 128 in recent years have gone to places with well-educated people. If you have a question about your computer or your telephone, for example, chances are that you'll call an 800 number that will put you in touch with a skilled technician sitting in an office in India, the Philippines or another country.

Yes, economic times are tight, but we will not get out of our current economic challenges without an investment in education.

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, recently gave a speech to the National Governors Association, and he noted that in 2001 India graduated almost a million more students from college than the United States. Every year China graduates twice as many students with bachelor's degrees as we do, and they have six times as many graduates majoring in engineering.

So, what does all of this mean for Arlington, Massachusetts?

Five hundred more students are studying in the Arlington Public Schools today than five years ago. This is a 12% increase in a very short period of time. During that time, due to budget cuts at the local level and a reduction in state aid, our schools have seen a reduction of 9% of our teaching and support staff. If the override is not successful on June 11th, we will have 12% fewer staff than we had in 2001 with 12% more children to educate.

I ask you this. Can we honestly prepare our students well for a world where they will compete with young people in India, China and other countries if we give them fewer resources? Can we get them ready for a world that will not guarantee them lifetime employment if we cut the text book budget, cut back on social workers, eliminate many electives and have kids sitting in study halls when they should be in a classroom learning?

I am convinced that we in Arlington and we in America are a people that do not shrink from challenges. We want our young people prepared for the 21st century, and I believe we are willing to do what it takes to make sure that happens.

To get our students ready for the future, our schools need resources, and we taxpayers can give those resources to our kids and our teachers.

My work takes me to schools in America's cities, where young people do not have all the advantages enjoyed by students in Arlington. I've learned,

however, that at their core, the children of Arlington and the kids in Harlem, or the south side of Chicago, and or south central Los Angeles have much in common.

Young people in Arlington have had parents out of work for many months and sometimes many years, and they worry about their parents, their families and their futures. The children on the south side of Chicago see and feel the same thing.

Arlington's kids wonder if their favorite teacher or a social worker they've come to know and trust will be here next year, and kids in Cleveland, the poorest city in America, have similar fears.

The young people in Arlington, Massachusetts just like their peers across the country have a much better sense of the times we live in than most of us. They watch shows like "American Idol", "Lost" and the "OC", and then they log on to the world wide web and communicate with people all over the world.

Our students are trying to be patient with us adults. They understand better than we do that the world we face is changing more rapidly than at any point in our history.

They know they have special gifts and talents that are waiting to be unleashed, and they want desperately to make a difference in this world.

They want us to help them realize their full potential.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation says that American schools need to focus on the three Rs - Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships.

The first R, rigor, calls for making sure all students are given a challenging curriculum.

The second R, relevance, says that kids need to have courses and projects that clearly relate to their lives and goals.

And the third R, relationships, says that we must make sure that all kids at all levels have a number of adults who know them, care for them, and push them to do their very best.

We cannot achieve the three R's in our schools unless we have the people and the resources to do it. It's that simple.

The June 11th override vote presents a critical choice for everyone in Arlington. Over the next five years the town's projected deficit is more than \$30 million. By managing our insurance and other costs well, lobbying for a restoration of the \$3.2 million in annual state aid we've lost, and increasing our property tax base by \$6 million, we can take care of most of this deficit.

What's important about this override is that we are doing this once and not coming back to you the taxpayers for at least five years. The School Committee, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee have united to support a five-year fiscal responsibility plan that invests in Arlington and protects the taxpayers.

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Some cities and towns in the state put an override on the ballot every year or every other year. That's not the way we want to do business in Arlington. We want predictability and stability, and this plan gives us both. Last September my wife gave birth to our son, Aidan. Of course, this is a wonderful gift, but we soon realized how costly it is to raise a family here in Massachusetts. When news of the override came our way, we thought long and hard about whether we could get behind it. The 10% increase in our property taxes will not be easy. But then we realized how privileged we are to live in Arlington. How wonderful our parks are, how good our schools are, and how safe and well-run our town is.

To keep Arlington the Arlington we've come to know and love, we decided to support and work for the override, knowing that it would affect our family's finances. Many in Arlington are wondering what to do on June 11th. Well, I urge you to do as you've done in the past. I urge you to invest in Arlington by voting yes. A Yes vote will sustain our schools, support our children and provide the services that all of us in Arlington have come to expect.

The children of Arlington and their parents have put a great amount of trust in us taxpayers. They trust us to support the schools, they trust that the schools will be safe, and they expect that our schools will prepare young people for an ever-changing world.

Every day the young people of Arlington come to our schools eager to learn and grow. Day after day Arlington's children believe in us and believe we will do right by them. Now it is time for all of us in Arlington to unite in our resolve, to believe in our young people, and to invest in the future of both their education and our broader community.

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MINUTEMAN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL School of Applied Arts & Science www.minuteman.org

After several years of dedicated service, the Arlington representative left the Regional School Committee in 2005. The entire Minuteman Regional School District thanks Dr. Erin Phelps of Arlington for her years of service and leadership.

Class of 2005 Graduate Achievement Highlights

- 91% of the Class of 2005 graduated into college, employment in their field of study, or the US military.
- Commercial & Human Services graduates achieved 94% placement rate with 25 of 48 (52%) enrolled in college and 20 of 48 (42%) employed in their field of study.
- Science Technology graduates achieved 92% placement with 53 of 64 (83%) enrolled in college, 2 of 64 (3%) employed in their field of study, and 3 of 64 (6%) enlisted in the US military with 100% of electromechanical engineering, environmental science, and graphic communications students attending college.
- Construction-Trades graduates achieved 89% placement rate with 16 of 72 (22%) enrolled in college, 47 of 72 (65%) entering the workplace in their field of study, and 1 of 72 (2%) enlisting in the US military.
- 100% of Dental graduates passed the National Dental Board examination.
- 100% of Early Childhood Education graduates were certified by the Office for Child Care Services.
- 96% of Cosmetology graduates passed the state board examination.
- Medical Occupations graduates achieved 100% placement in college.
- Laura Cyr, a Carpentry graduate from Arlington, was honored as an Outstanding Vocational Student of the Year by the Minuteman Regional School Committee, the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, and state Commissioner of Education, Dr. David Driscoll.
- Erin Meister, an Environmental Science student from Arlington, graduated Valedictorian in the Class of 2005 and earned the prestigious University Scholar status for enrollment at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.
- Student speakers at the Class of 2005 graduation ceremony were Valedictorian Erin Meister of Arlington, Salutatorian Kevin Maloney of Stow, and Class President Deanna Reynolds of Cambridge.

Outstanding Student of the Year 2005

Laura Ann Cyr, a Carpentry graduate from Arlington, is the daughter of Susan Cyr. Ranked sixth in her graduating Class of 2005, Laura has excelled in academics, her technical program of study, and sports, and has been active in extracurricular activities. This past school year, Laura held the distinction of being one of first ever carpentry student-apprentices for *This Old House*, the nationally renown PBS television program, working on the restoration of an old farm house in Carlisle, Massachusetts. During her time at Minuteman, she was a member of the National Honor Society, the Minuteman Cheerleading Squad, the girls softball team and an active member of SkillsUSA and a top placer at events competing at in-house, districts and state level competitions. She also holds the honor of being the first girl ever to participate at the state level SkillsUSA competitions in Carpentry finishing tenth in the state in 2004!

Laura has brought honor to her family, community, and school throughout her high school years through student activism and leadership both on and off campus, including being the student representative to the Minuteman Carpentry Advisory Committee, her membership in the Arlington Girl Scouts, and volunteering with the Salvation Army and Red Cross Blood Drives.

Complimenting her carpentry and construction management studies at Minuteman, Laura has combined her interest in design and computers with an appreciation for math and science as they relate to her field of study. She enjoys both geometry and physics and says that she came to better appreciate these subjects as they were taught both in the academic classroom and her shop through the perspective of carpentry. One of her first obstacles to overcome in studying carpentry was convincing people that she could be a competitive and skilled carpenter regardless of her gender. Her grandparents were both carpenters, owning a small, but successful, business and Laura began working with them at a young age. She soon demonstrated to her teachers, her fellow students, and the *This Old House* crew of Tom Silva, Norm Abram, and Kevin O'Connor that she could more than hold her own as a carpenter. In fact, she has been offered a job working for Silva Brothers Contactors after graduating Minuteman.

Laura has also been an outstanding and always willing student ambassador assisting at various school functions including freshman orientation programs, school Open Houses, and 8th grade tour programs. Laura has been accepted to a few colleges including the University of Massachusetts and Wentworth Institute of Technology, and plans to enroll majoring in business and/or construction management with later plans to start a general contracting business.

Laura Ann Cyr, Minuteman's Student of the Year, envisions a carpentry and business career in a field

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that she has enjoyed since working with her grandparents, studying academics and her trade at Minuteman, and hoping to make her mark one day by designing and building some of the most efficient, warm and family-friendly new homes of tomorrow.

Academic Division Highlights

- Minuteman Regional High School sophomores tied for third place in Massachusetts among regional technical schools on MCAS test performance.
- Forty-five students took advantage of college level pre-calculus and calculus courses under an articulation agreement with Middlesex Community College.
- Minuteman students on the Math Team competed strongly at all levels against academically diverse groups of area schools finishing the year ranked in first place in the state vocational conference for the third year in a row.
- A Latin course was expanded to serve the growing number of students interested in medical careers, biotechnology and science.
- The Minuteman Players, the school's drama students, produced and performed a full production of Neil Simon's, "The Odd Couple".
- The Special Education Department teamed with mainstream teachers to help students achieve one of the highest levels of special education MCAS "pass" scores in the state.
- Faculty members from English, Guidance, Social Studies and several vocational fields designed another series of Character Education curriculum for use throughout the school.

Science & Technology Division Highlights

- The Biotechnology Academy formed a new partnership with Harvard University Molecular Biology Laboratory and Children's Hospital and introduced three new components into its curriculum, namely bioethics, cell graphing and forensic science.
- The first state-approved high school pre-engineering program entered its sixth year and graduated its second class of students, again with 100% attending college.
- Electromechanical Robotics students Alex Hatherly of Lexington and Patrick Maloney of Stow took National Third Place in Skills USA National Competition on Team Robotics and Automation held in Kansas City, MO in June 2004.
- Many new business/industry projects were achieved, including - - Verizon supporting with after-school technology training for middle school students, Cognex Corporation of Natick providing weekly on-line interactive training on Visions

Systems, GTE helping with new physics units for biotechnology, the Northeast Center for Telecommunications providing grant assistance, a \$80,000 gift from Adept Robots for the Electromechanical Engineering/Robotics program, etc.

- The Environmental Technology students were active in numerous off-campus service projects for such agencies as the MWRA, Cambridge Water Department, Bolton Conservation Commission, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Northeastern University Marine Biology Research Laboratory, and the United States National Park Service, Minuteman National Historic Park.
- Minuteman staff members are active and taking a leadership role in working with the Department of Education in developing the vocational Certification of Occupational Proficiency (C.O.P.). They include Maryann Ham serving as state chair for Office Technology, George Taliadouros as state chair for Engineering and Richard Caruso as state vice-chair for Telecommunications.

Construction – Power Mechanics – Building Trades Division Highlights

- The Automotive Technology Department won the industry's Most Outstanding Automotive Program in Massachusetts award for the sixth year in a row.
- Students in Carpentry, Electrical Wiring, Plumbing and HVAC completed construction of the three-bedroom colonial home for the Lexington Housing Authority in partnership with the Lexington Rotary Club.
- Carpentry and Drafting students designed and constructed classroom improvements for the Brooks Elementary and Middle School in Lincoln.
- The Drafting & Design Technology students completed plans for a large garage to be built by Minuteman's construction students in Lexington.
- Underclassmen created four scaled New England style homes for display at the New England Home Show in Boston. Minuteman is the only participating vocational high school in MA.
- The Automotive Technology program earned the top honors 5-year recertification through the National Automotive Technical Education Foundation (NATEF).
- The Automotive Collision Repair program also earned the NATEF certification.
- The Landscape Management Department won several awards again, including their seventh consecutive First Place at the Annual New England Flower Show in Boston.

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Commercial & Human Services Division Highlights

- The Child Development Center and the Early Childhood Education department was recertified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Many commercial centers do not receive this certification for excellence and good practice in curriculum implementation.
- The Culinary Arts Department became a certification site by the American Culinary Federation, awarded in June 2005.
- For the third year in a row, Culinary Arts students won first-place in the annual culinary competition at Newbury College and in so doing earned \$7,000 in scholarships for enrollment at Newbury College.
- As a community service project a team of junior Graphic Communications students worked with the Lahey Clinic in designing and printing a 2005 calendar incorporating artwork drawn by elementary age students who are patients in the "young hearts" clinic.
- Kara Burgoyne of Bolton, a sophomore Culinary Arts Baking student won National First Place in the Skills USA skills competition held in Kansas City, MO in June 2005. In 2003, she earned National Second Place in the same national competition.

National Honor Society

The Minuteman Chapter of the National Honor Society proudly served the school and the community with thousands of volunteer hours maintaining a solid and diverse membership while inducting thirteen new members.

Overall School Highlights

- A new Freshmen Exploratory program was designed and implemented as a means to ensure that members of the Class of 2009 have a full opportunity to experience each of Minuteman's twenty-two technical programs before choosing a major. This new exploratory program runs half of grade 9 and allows students to develop a better understanding of their talents and interests while exposing them to diverse careers.
- New and/or updated college articulation and advance credit agreements with numerous top colleges in 26 different career areas.
- Community Education services, including After School programs for middle school students, Adult High School services, Evening and Continuing Education courses and Summer School programs and camps, provided to member town residents continued at one of the highest participation and success levels in the state.
- The Facilities Management Department completed major campus renovation and facility improvement projects including conversion to gas heating, upgrading athletic fields, and renovation of the school's administrative offices.
- Numerous staff development efforts focused on obtaining national rather than just state certification in graphics & digital media, culinary arts, and collision repair (ASE).