

Survey results in long-range plan for library

By Michaela Kennedy

The board of trustees of the Jamestown Philomenian Library accepted its new three-year long-range plan at its June 6 meeting. A joint effort by the trustees, staff, and other residents in close support of the library, the plan lists the library's accomplishments in the last five years and goals from now until 2009.

"It's a living document," said Library Director Judy Bell of the plan, adding that changes and new goals continue to take place. Bell noted that she worked with board members Rosemary Forbes Woodside and Delia Klingbeil on a committee to create the new plan, with input from library staff.

Last summer, in July 2005, the Planning Committee created and sent out to residents a four-page survey to gather comments on public service. Pointing to the bulleted information on the first page, Bell said the mailing was a good way of acquainting islanders with many of the services the library provides.

Expanded access to books and media, community meeting facilities, and passes to area museums were just a few of the services mentioned in the survey's introduction.

Bell expressed her disappointment with the response to the survey, which was less than 200. She said that most of the survey results came from ages 60 and over, which did not provide a good analysis of the island's demographics.

Although a strong written response to the survey was lacking, Bell said the staff talks with patrons who come in, and many good ideas arise from face-to-face

Library Friends' cruise on July 13

The Friends of the Jamestown Library will host a narrated tour of Narragansett Bay this summer on Thursday, July 13, at 5 p.m. aboard the Viking Queen.

Up to 100 passengers will be picked up at East Ferry for what is sure to be a fun-filled two-hour event, complete with hors d'oeuvres and music.

Tickets, at \$20, may be purchased at the library or by calling Sue Fay at 423-3027. This 60-foot vessel has two decks. The bottom deck has an open bow, glass-enclosed benches, a cash bar, and restrooms, and the top deck is open with seating around all sides. Only 100 tickets will be sold.

If the weather is bad, the event will be held in the library at 26 North Main Rd.

interaction. "We listen to the public every day," said Bell. "They (patrons) depend on us to know what goes on in the library world that we bring in here."

The survey results were overall very positive, and responses praised the extensive services offered, according to Bell. Two main complaints that came out of the survey results, however, were the hours and the closure of the drive-up drop-off bin. Bell said that the library had been closed between 5 and 7 p.m., dinner time. "We are now open straight through, two days a week (Monday and Tuesday) until 9 p.m.," she said.

Noting that the hours were good "for a small public library," Bell said that one drop-off box is now open 24 hours a day to accommodate the request from the community. The emptying times are posted on the box outside the entrance.

Bell smiled at the modern convenience of the drop-off box. She reminisced that not so long ago, before the current electronic tech-

nology, borrowers would have to stand in line to have their books checked back in and have their library card stamped "The library has changed a lot," Bell added.

Indeed, the changes that the library has gone through in the last five years are significant, especially for its size. Among more than 20 accomplishments listed in the long-range plan, the library has installed WiFi access, improved and expanded its Web site, and contracted for download-

able e-books and audio books with 10 other Rhode Island libraries.

Bell attributes the improvements to the strong community here. "We are very well supported," she said.

Library Trustee Delia Klingbeil noted that in considering the library's goals, "We try to plan for what any library is going to look like in the future. We want to make sure that it is going to help us."

One aspect of change that Klingbeil mentioned was the Internet at the library. She said that using the Internet could be thought of as a solitary thing, but people come in to browse the Internet and at the same time be around others. "Students use it for school, and older folks sit at the computers just as they would sit and read a book or magazine in the circulation room." The use of the computers has made browsing of the library's media easier as well, Klingbeil added.

Under the Statement of Community Needs, the plan reads, "The Comprehensive

Community Plan clearly sets goals supported by the community, and our plan should support those goals." One goal listed from the community plan is "to preserve and protect all significant historical and cultural resources."

Bell confirmed the community focus of the library, adding that the library staff is eager to support the town in its goals and objectives. "We like to participate with other community organizations," she added.

"As good as it is for the library to generate events, we encourage the community to take an active part in how the space is used here. We're a community meeting place," she said.

Other goals listed in the plan state that collections will be specifically developed to suit the community's needs, and the library space will be reorganized for maximum use.

To view the complete 2006 to 2009 long-range plan and other aspects of the library, visit online at www.jamestownri.com/library. For more information, call 423-7280.

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