

THE FRIENDS OF THAYER PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Friends of Thayer Public Library has a long history of advocating for and promoting library programs and services. From the time the library was established in 1874 there have been many individuals volunteering to offer time and talents in support of the library. The first recorded Document of a Friends organization is dated 1972, when Allen Barnett, then President of The Friends of the Library, began a ledger of income from dues paid by members and receipts from Book Sales held monthly at the library, plus expenses incurred. The record shows that in January, 1972, there were 253 dues paying members of The Friends. Despite the rather large membership, for the next twenty years the organization was essentially a one-person operation. Mr. Barnett provided the leadership and executive functions, with sporadic help from members. He worked closely with the library director to arrange bus tours to museums in Boston, purchase museum passes for use by library patrons, and to provide materials for the Adult as well as the Children's Departments.

In 1972 a town-wide survey was conducted by The League of Women Voters to determine what the residents of Braintree thought the library needed, to better serve the library patrons specifically, and the Braintree residents in general. One of the results of the survey indicated that, in the opinions of the residents, the library needed a more active volunteer group. A group of interested residents, some from the League and other concerned citizens as well, began meeting and subsequently formed a group called "People and Libraries", or PALs. The first meeting of PALs was held in May, 1992. The group began a series of fund-raising activities, initiating programs in the library for the public, going out into the community for visibility to recruit new members, and in general to introduce themselves in the Town of Braintree as a volunteer organization in support of the library.

The Friends and PALs coexisted for several years, with different functions and providing different services. There were some discussions about merging into one organization, but no merger materialized. In 1995 Allen Barnett resigned as President of The Friends of the Library, and Larry Fogg was appointed interim President. He met with PALs and on May 13, 1995 it was decided to form a Steering Committee which would merge PALs and The Friends into one group, with by-laws and officers. The organization would be called The Friends of Thayer Public Library.

The First meeting of the newly formed Friends of Thayer Public Library was held on October 21, 1995. Larry Fogg was elected as the first President of the new organization, serving until October, 1998, when current President John Cobble succeeded him. In 1998, The Friends was approved as a charitable organization in The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and became a Federal non-profit, tax-exempt organization under 501(c)3.

The purpose of The Friends of Thayer Public Library is to be an advocate for the library in the community. The Friends work closely with the Library Director and with The Library Board of Trustees to determine needs of the library which cannot be met through the budget annually allocated by the Town of Braintree. Through fund-raising activities, new materials are purchased, programs of public interest are sponsored, and other activities which enhance and promote the library are carried out. The Friends continually seek to expand its membership, and since membership dues help The Friends to carry out its mission, all who wish to be supportive of the library and its services are invited to become members.