

2011 Annual Report of the Mountainside Public Library

Michael D. Banick, Director

This annual report will present some of the measures of use of the Mountainside Public Library, as well as highlight some special undertakings of the past year. Thank you, as always, for your interest in the MPL.

Circulation

The Mountainside Public Library's total circulation for 2011 was 72,591 items. This represents a decrease of 2.4% from 2010 (74,383 items, down 1,792). The MPL was open 283 days in 2011 (286 days in 2010), with several unexpected snow days plus one furlough day. These closures account for part of the decrease in circulation this year. The decrease can also be attributed to reduced spending on new materials, as necessitated by budget reductions.

The average daily circulation was 256 items. The average cost per item checked out in 2011 was \$20.84.

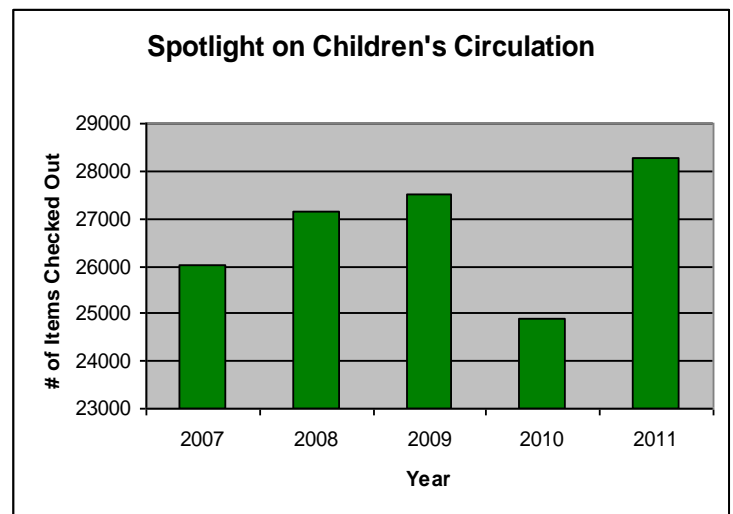
The total value of last year's checkouts was \$1,512,796.

Some circulation highlights:

<u>COLLECTION</u>	<u>TOTAL '10</u>	<u>Total '11</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>% Change</u>
ADULT				
Books	25,980	23,446	-2,534	-9.8%
Audiobooks	2,374	2,057	-317	-13%
CDs	4,417	3,318	-1,099	-24.8%
DVDs	15,756	14,502	-1,254	-8%
Periodicals	973	980	+7	+0.07%
<i>subtotal - Adult</i>	<i>49,500</i>	<i>44,303</i>	<i>-5,197</i>	<i>-10.5%</i>
JUVENILE				
Books	17,833	20,188	+2,355	+13.2%
Audiobooks	255	346	+91	+35%
CDs	248	261	+13	+5.2%
DVDs	6,547	7,493	+946	+14.4%
<i>subtotal - Juv</i>	<i>24,881</i>	<i>28,288</i>	<i>+3,407</i>	<i>+13.7%</i>
TOTAL	74,383	72,591	-1,792	-2.4%

While total circulation was off by 2.4% when compared to last year, it is important to view this within the framework of the 2011 library budget. The MPL's 2011 municipal appropriation has fallen over 12% in two years, requiring a large cut in spending on new materials. With fewer new items coming in, and fewer multiple copies of popular bestsellers to offer, it is easy to understand why circulation figures have tapered off.

It is refreshing to see the uptick in **children's materials usage**, particularly in light of the attention we have given to developing and updating these collections. In fact, of all print collections in the library, the Picture Book collection had the highest total circulation, with 6,007 checkouts from just this one area.



If we look at circulation over several years, we notice that the numbers tend to vacillate in the 70k range:

Circulation Totals					
YEAR:	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TOTAL:	76,837	75,902	78,194	74,383	72,591

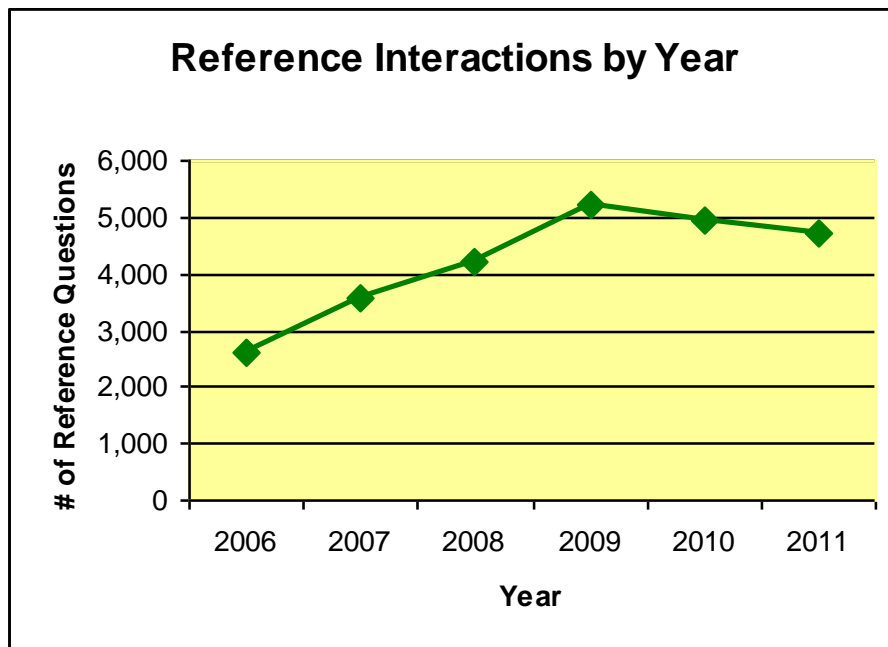
Lastly, it is the case that library use is changing. Even if circulation is down, visitation is up. In 2011, there were 64,800 visits to the MPL, a new record for attendance. People are increasingly coming to the library to relax, to use our WiFi, and to attend our various programs and special events (see page 3).

Reference Interactions

The Mountainside Library prides itself on providing friendly service from courteous and knowledgeable library professionals. There were 4,724 reference interactions in 2011, a decrease of 4.8% (-236 interactions) compared with 2010. This can be partially attributed to the snow days, furlough day and to the fact that the Part Time Reference Librarian #2 position was eliminated in June.

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Interactions	2,602	3,594	4,200	5,204	4,960	4,724
% change (over previous year)		+38%	+17%	+24%	-4.7%	-4.8%

The percent change in reference interactions from 2006 – 2011 is exactly +81.5%.

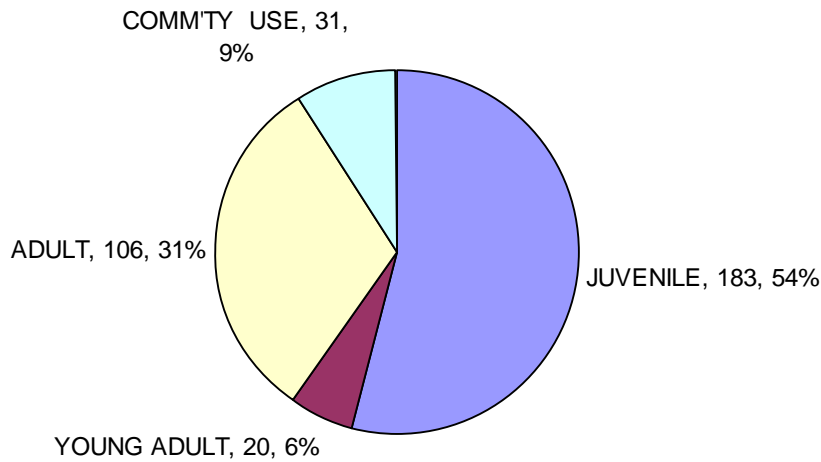


Programs

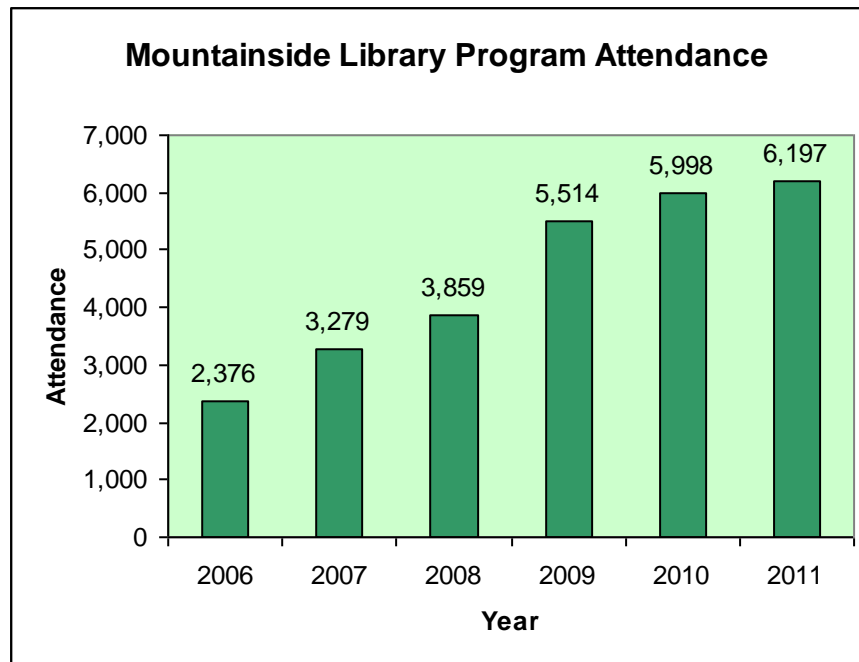
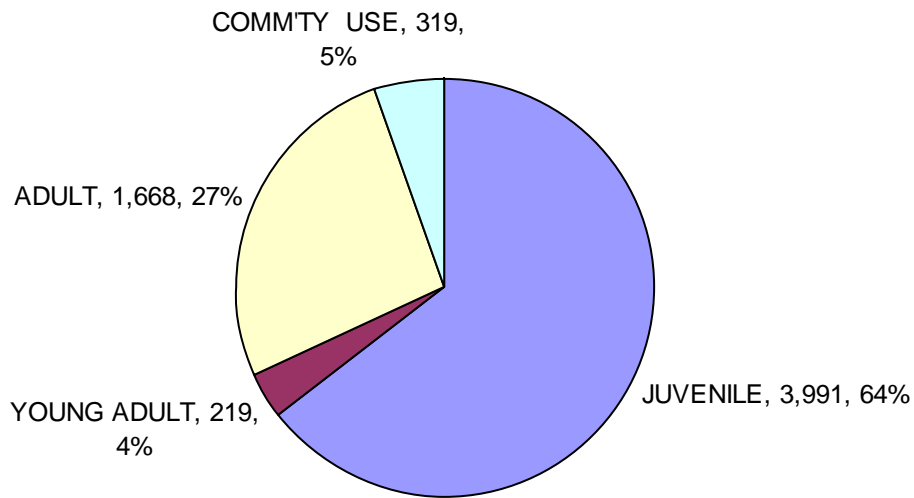
In 2011, 6,197 people attended 340 events and programs at the Mountainside Public Library, making 2011 our biggest year for program attendance on record. This is a 3.3% increase over 2010, our previous record year (+199), which had been our best year up to now.

2011 Programs & Attendance												
LIBRARY SPONSORED PROGRAMS									COMMITY USE		GRAND TOTAL	
JUV		YA		Adult		Subtotal Lib Prgms						
#	Att	#	Att	#	Att	#	Att	#	Attend	# of Prgms	Att	
Jan	9	243	1	10	9	136	19	389	4	42	23	431
Feb	21	394	0	0	8	69	29	463	4	54	33	517
Mar	17	379	1	8	11	215	29	602	3	16	32	618
Apr	14	264	2	26	8	126	24	416	1	26	25	442
May	16	316	0	0	12	158	28	474	1	4	29	478
Jun	11	309	2	20	11	175	24	504	2	19	26	523
Jul	19	596	6	111	9	197	34	904	0	0	34	904
Aug	9	256	4	27	6	103	19	386	2	17	21	403
Sep	9	194	0	0	8	90	17	284	7	77	24	361
Oct	13	297	1	3	8	74	22	374	1	15	23	389
Nov	28	420	0	0	9	139	37	559	2	22	39	581
Dec	17	323	3	14	7	186	27	523	4	27	31	550
TOTAL	183	3991	20	219	106	1668	309	5878	31	319	340	6197

Number of Programs by Audience



MPL Program Attendance by Audience



The percent change in program attendance from 2006 – 2011 is +160.8%.

The average attendance per event/program, including community use of the room, increased in 2011 to 18 people per program, (up from 16). Looking at *library-sponsored* programs only, our average attendance also increased, to 19 per program (up from 18).

The 2011 Summer Reading Program was a huge success for the MPL. The theme this year was “One World, Many Stories.” Many books and programs were built around the theme culture and included folk tales, native legends and stories of exploration. There were 364 registered participants this year from grades Pre-K through 8, a 190% increase

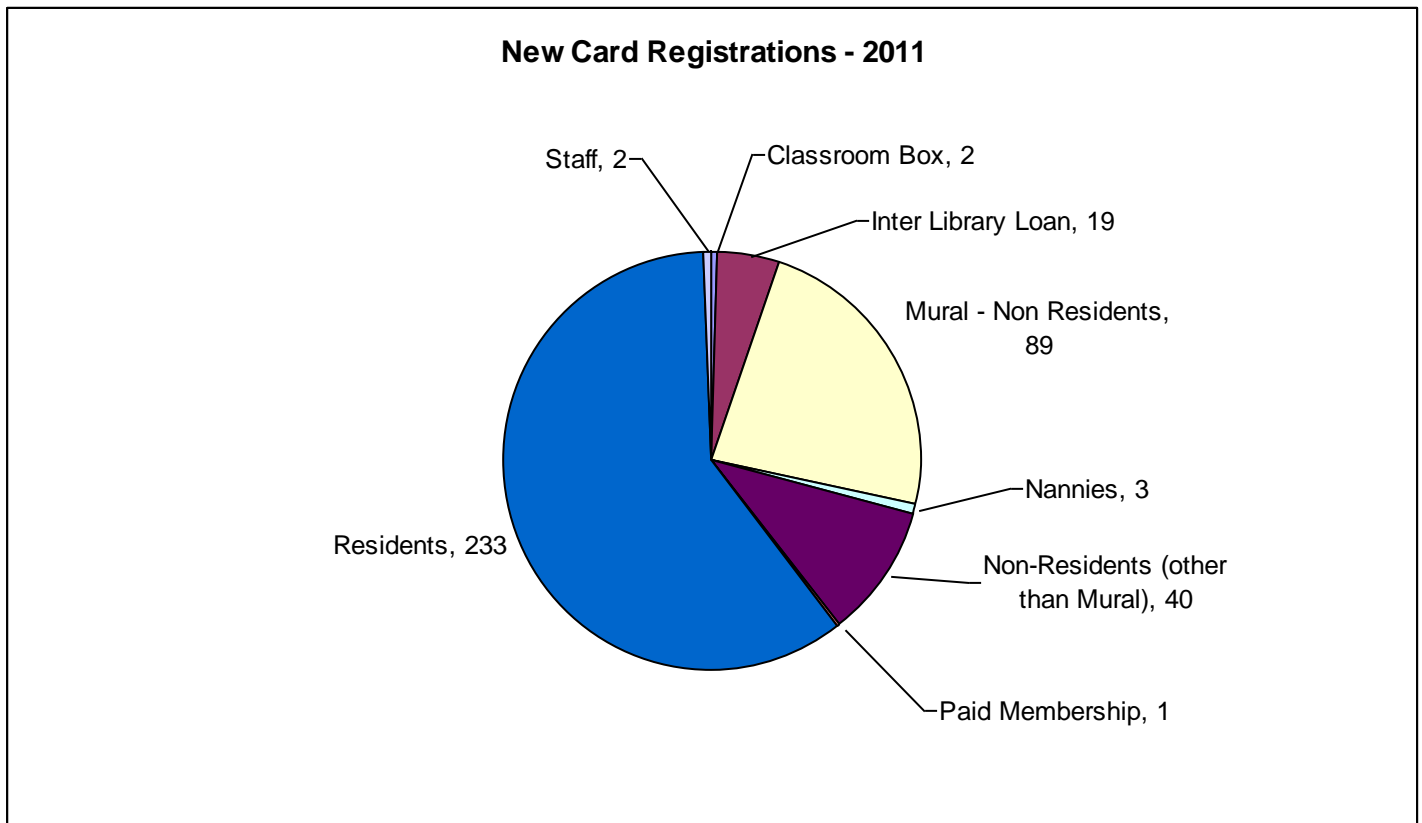
over last year's participation and a new record for the MPL. The increase can be attributed in part to our coordination with the school district, which tied summer reading in with the schools' own summer reading requirements. Special thanks are sent to the Friends of the Mountainside Library who fully funded all special events, programs and prizes associated with the 2011 Summer Reading program.

There were three categories of participation: Family, Independent Readers and Teen. The following table shows participation by category:

Category	2010 Partici- pants	2010 Total Read	2010 Avg amt Read	2011 Partici- pants.	2011 Total Read	2011 Avg amt Read	Change in partici- pation	Change in Amt Read
Family PreK – 1 st Gr	32	1,262 bks	39 bks	35	1,319	38 bks	-6 ; -16%	+57 ; +4.5%
Independent Grades 2 - 5	82	47,500 min	580 min.	80	60,000 min	750 min	+8 ; +10%	+12,500 ; +26.3%
Teen Grade 6 +	11	27,000 min	2,455 min.	249	543,000 min	2,180 min	-7 ; -38%	+516,000 ; +1,911%
Total	125			364			+239; +190%	

Patron Registration

In 2011, we registered 389 new patrons. 233 of these registrations were for Mountainside residents, a new high for resident registrations in a single year. The remainder is a combination of non-residents, nannies and partner libraries who borrowed books from us through Inter-Library Loan.



Collection Management

Our collections consist of books, DVDs, books on CD, audio CDs and periodicals. Our collections improve in two ways: through the acquisition of new material and through the careful selection of items for withdrawal. In 2011, we added 3,735 items and withdrew 4,511 items, bringing our total holdings to 61,519 items. This is a net decrease in holdings (-776 items). Purchasing was held back in 2011 due to cuts to library funding.

In 1967, when this library building was built, the MPL owned 17,106 items and the capacity was put at 45,000 volumes. Since we now own 61,519 items, the facility is, essentially, 35% above its intended capacity. For the last several years, we have culled out about as many books as we have added in order to maintain some kind of equilibrium.

One area that is particularly tight is children's picture books, a large and popular collection for young and family readers. A new range of shelving was ordered in December to relieve some of the pressure on this collection and provide room for additional growth. Plans are also in the works to shift the books in the adult 4-week section (mysteries, fiction, non-fiction and biographies) to make better use of that space.

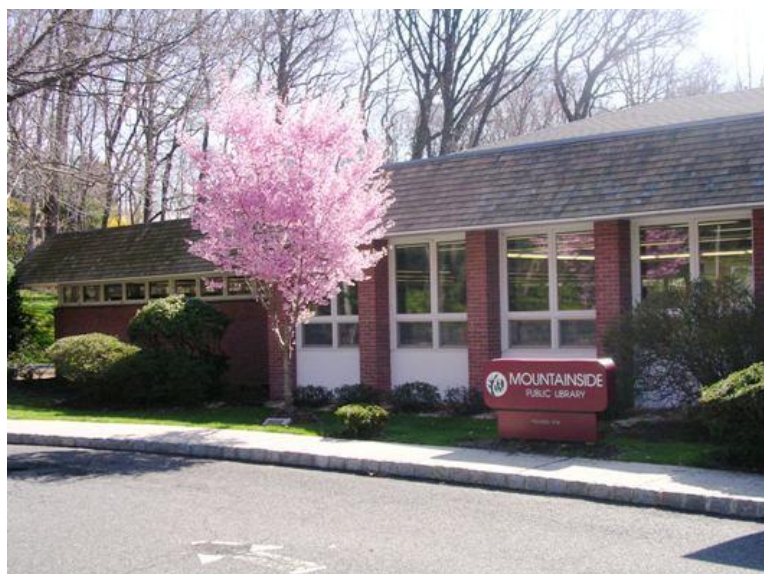
Capital Improvements

Following the major renovation of the meeting room in the fall of 2010, 2011 was more about routine maintenance and general repairs in order to keep the building safe and operational.

A new library computer server was deployed in October. This is a capital expense due to the cost and projected service life of this item. The server that the library had been using was over 10 years old and the warranty on it could no longer be extended. Rather than risk a catastrophic failure to our hub, the library, with help from the Friends, purchased and installed a new server to host all library work files and network operations.

While the library replaced the boiler using its own funds in 2008, the remainder of the HVAC system is original to the building (ca. 1967). Every year brings new (and sometimes repeat) repairs to keep the heat or a/c working. Required repairs this year included a new pump, a new electric motor and a complete refill of refrigerant.

Improvements were also made to the covered entrance of the library. Previously, the gutter would leak, leading to icicles overhead and ice buildup on the walkway below. In the spring of 2011, the drains were snaked clean, new downspouts were installed, the Yankee gutter was re-lined and all rotten wood was replaced. The entrance area is now safer, provides better shelter from the elements, and gives a fitting welcome to our wonderful library building.



Cherry tree in full bloom in front of the MPL.

Friends of the Mountainside Library

The Friends continue to be active supporters of the MPL. In April 2011, the Friends held their big community book sale. The turnout was especially great since there was no book sale in Fall 2010 (due to the meeting room renovation). The other fundraiser was the annual September membership drive, which again garnered a great public response.

Through generous financial support from the Friends, we were able to again offer many special programs and events in 2011, including various lectures & music programs, the popular summer theatre program from Drew University, and all programs and prizes associated with the summer reading series. The Friends also provided funds to help purchase new books and also assisted with the purchase of a new computer server.

Thank you to the Friends, and to all individual donors, for your support -- past, present and future. The Mountainside Library is fortunate to have your help and generosity.

Grants

The Mountainside Library received one \$2,000 grant from Watts-Mountainside Community Foundation for the continuation of the popular Folk Music Café program. The funds will be used to pay for musicians, food, publicity and other incidentals related to producing this event.

The library also received two small settlements as a part of two class action lawsuits, one against Salton Corporation (\$266.67) for claims against the George Foreman Grill; the other against the music recording industry (\$575) for claims against the pricing and distribution process of recorded music CDs. The stipulations were that the funds be used to purchase materials on healthy eating, or, in the other case, new recorded music for lending. The terms of the settlements were met and final reports were submitted to the State Library.

Finally, the Mountainside Library was able to take part in a statewide e-Rate grant program to bring faster Internet to the library at a lower price. The MPL was upgraded from a T-1 service to FiOS in the fall and was awarded a total subsidy of \$3,024 to cover Internet service costs for the period from 7/1/2011 to 6/30/2012.

Technology

Public libraries, including the MPL, continue to serve, in part, as community technology centers, with public computer workstations, internet access, scanners, printers and even WiFi as a part of their service array.

As noted above (see *Capital Improvements*), the library deployed a new hub server to manage all library files and network services. This capital item should serve the library well for the next several years.

In February 2011, the MPL began a subscription to ListenNJ, now known as eLibraryNJ. This is the state-wide downloadable audiobook and e-book program. It is compatible with almost all computing products including Apple and PC computers, smart phones, portable readers (Nook, Kindle, etc) and other portable media devices. In its first year of service at the MPL, 367 book downloads were made.



In response to increased demand for wireless service, the library installed a new wireless router in January. The new router is capable of handling the connectivity demand generated by the popularity of smart phones, tablet computers and laptops. The library also upgraded its main Internet service from a Verizon T-1 line to a faster fiber-optic connection. The MPL now has 10x the bandwidth, but with the federal e-rate subsidy, the greater speed will cost less.

In 2011 there were 8,754 network computer logins, a decrease of 1,822 over last year (10,578, down 17%). This decrease in network logins is attributed to the greater number of people bringing in their own laptops and tablets to connect to our wireless service.

Online databases remain an important part of our service array. Databases are searchable information banks that provide access to news articles, book and product reviews, reference information and more. Our databases are Web-based, but searching them should not be confused with just doing an Internet search. Databases are better for research than a general Internet search, as the sources they pull from are qualified and reliable. In 2011, there were 6,107 queries to our databases, a decrease of 6.7% (-437). 2010 was a record year for database use at the MPL, with over 6,500 searches.

Corfacts Online™

The MPL added the business database Corfacts Online, a sophisticated, highly searchable database of NJ businesses. It is useful for targeted business searching for such things as B2B purchasing and direct mailing, even allowing users to print address labels based off of search results. The database is also useful for job searchers by allowing specific searches by industry or geographic area in the state. Contact information found in the results allows for a customized cover letter.

In response to decreased demand for some databases, and in light of reduced funding, three database services were cancelled in 2011: Country Watch, Grolier Online, and General Reference Center Gold. Remaining databases can be searched in the library or from home by logging in with your Mountainside Library card.

Library Website

Recognizing that more users are accessing information via mobile devices, the Library launched a mobile website in the fall. The site is formatted to fit into the screen of a smart phone and contains fewer graphics. (See image to the right →)



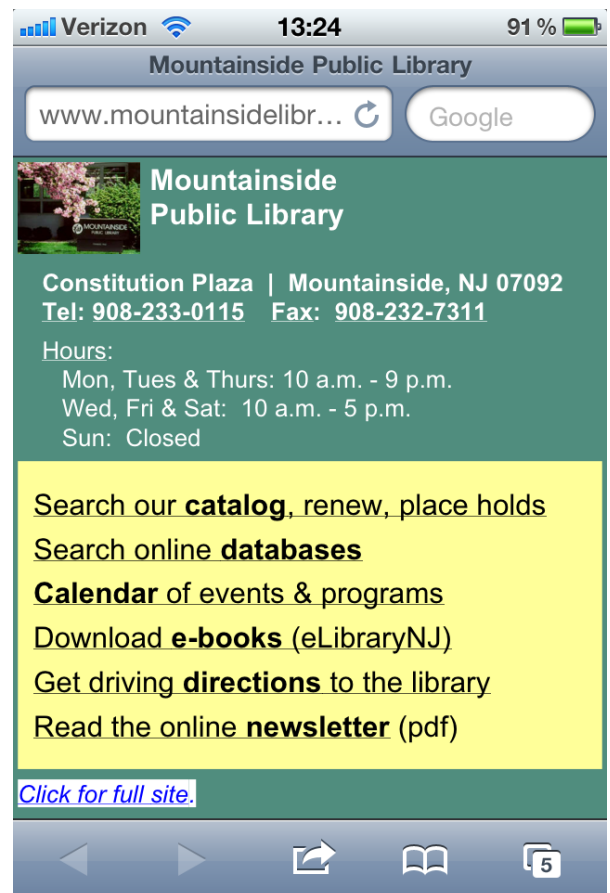
The MPL also began using QR Codes (like the one on the left) on its fliers and publications. These allow people with QR apps on their smart phones to scan the box-shaped code, bringing them directly to our mobile website.

Staffing

In response to reductions in funding, the library eliminated one part time librarian position in June. There was also one staffing change: Shelbi Babcock resigned and Lisa Glock was hired as secretary / office assistant.

Board Activities

With one eye on the environment and another eye on the bottom line, the Board unanimously agreed to end the practice of printing and mailing lengthy packets to all trustees every month. This will save the library both paper and postage, as



packets are now distributed electronically to trustees. Permanent paper copies are still produced for the record, as required by OPRA, the Open Public Records Act.

Continuing education requirements were met with Dr. Christopher Belden attending the two-day strategic planning training workshop at the Clark Library. A focus of the upcoming year should be a reformulated strategic plan for the Mountainside Library, using the information gleaned from these helpful seminars.

The Board also bid a fond farewell to two of its members at the December meeting: Allan Bahrs, and Todd Garran, who together brought almost 25 years of experience to the Board of Trustees, both resigned at the end of 2011. These positions will be filled by Steven Witt and Sarah Post, beginning in January 2012. Doreen Lane, whose term was to expire on 12/31/2011, was reappointed to another five-year term.

There When You Need Us

Sometimes the weather can wreak havoc on a community. It happened to the Borough of Mountainside not once, but twice in 2011: First in August, with Hurricane Irene, then in late October with the untimely snow and ice storm. In both of these instances, power was out in large sections of town. This was particularly troublesome in October as the lack of power translated to a lack heat at home. Fortunately, the MPL fared well through both of these storms and did not lose power. In the days following both of these events, the Mountainside Library served as an ersatz day shelter, providing visitors a comfortable place to relax. Fresh coffee was brewed, power strips were put out for cell phones, and A/C (in August) or heat (in Oct/Nov) were provided. The days following these storms were our busiest days of the year. Residents very appreciative... we were glad to lend a small hand.

Looking Ahead

As expected, 2011 presented some challenges between delivery of service and operating within a reduced budget. The municipal appropriation, our chief source of funding, is tied directly to property values, and the soft real estate market of the last couple of years has brought our appropriation down over 12%, from a high of 650,000 in 2009 to just 568,000 in 2011 – a level not seen since 2005.

All things considered, the library did an excellent job, setting new records for use in some areas, maintaining a strong showing in others, and always working to meet the needs of a grateful community.

Our primary goal for the year is simple but clear: Maintain our service standards. In everything we do here, be assured that we will first ask ourselves, “How will this improve service?” Some specific ideas to be explored include upgrades to our electric service to maintain a stable power supply; technology upgrades so that all public PCs are able to handle today’s multimedia websites; and, bearing in mind the popularity of mobile devices, we may even launch a “reference by text” service.

Our 2012 municipal appropriation will increase, albeit slightly, up just about \$5,000. While we are still about \$80,000 off of peak funding levels from 2009, after two years of decline, any movement in the positive direction is welcome. Please be assured that the MPL will always do everything it can to deliver the best service at the best possible value!

Thank you, as always, for your support.

Michael Banick
Director

January 20, 2012