

# PUBLIC LIBRARY



*Selectman and building committee chairman Michael Donaroma addresses the crowd at the new library's formal ribbon-cutting in June.*

## *To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Edgartown:*

This has been a historic year of new beginnings for Edgartown and its 125-year-old public library. On March 21, 2016, our town's new facility next door to the elementary school was officially opened and began its service to the public.

Designed by Tappé Architects and Celia Imrey, and built by general contractors Maron Construction, with the close supervision of a hard-working building committee and project managers from Pomroy Associates, the new library was brought in on budget, featuring 15,000 square feet of public space and – for the first time in many decades – ample public parking in a dedicated library lot nearby.

Citizens of Edgartown got a sneak preview of their new library on March 5, at the end of a ceremony decommissioning the 1904 Carnegie library on North Water Street. Then came two intense weeks for the staff and a crew from National Library Relocations Inc., which moved the library's entire collection of some 40,000 items to their new shelves at 26 West Tisbury Road.

The library saw a surge of traffic as an eager public thronged to their new community center. All through

the summer and fall of 2016, traffic through the library's doors held steady at levels roughly double those of the year before. And with plenty of parking available, many patrons found themselves staying longer, choosing favorite spots among the new building's comfortable reading nooks, study spaces and meeting rooms. For the library's first several months in its new space, applications for new library cards actually surged by a factor of almost ten.

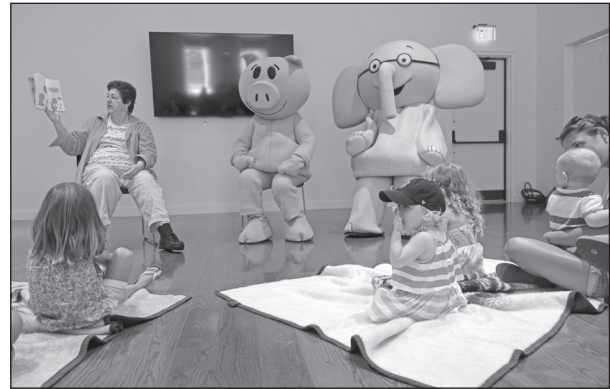
From the very week of opening, the library staff began making good use of the new program room with its space for 100 people and its auditorium-grade sound and projection systems. The Island's AARP Tax Aid Program set out tables and counseled dozens of people in the early weeks of spring. A Shakespeare film festival, the library's first public use of the projector and 12-foot screen, included a performance by Shakespeare for the Masses to a standing-room crowd, and concluded with a concert of period music by the Duo Marchand. The Vineyard Conservation Society held a public forum at the end of March, the Island's Sustainable Book Club met in early April, and the Vineyard's Scottish Society gave a free concert.

All this, in just the new library's first weeks, made it clear that this new facility is growing into its promise as a center for civic outreach and public engagement. Our

experience during the rest of 2016 has borne out that first impression. In its new program space, the library has presented monthly opera screenings, a vast variety of feature film events, and day-long workshops on subjects ranging from creative writing to trainings for Island law enforcement. Kids gathered to play classic video games on the program room's eight-foot wall monitor, and the room's advanced sound system was put to good use during a well-attended and nationally broadcast program on new approaches to preventing Lyme disease.

During the school vacation months, the Children's Department presented programs around the state's summer reading theme, "On Your Mark, Get Set . . . Read!" These ranged from science programs about sundials and whales, boats and robots to presentations by expert athletes on such specialties as Frisbee tricks, juggling and yo-yos. Another highlight of July and August was a continuation of the Tuesday music series, Sounds Like Summer, featuring favorite Vineyard bands on the library's front lawn.

Our new community room brought Island organizations into new relationships with the library, and also enabled our staff to undertake new programs of outreach. The Yard, Chilmark's center for the art of dance, led weeks of free community dance classes at the library this fall. Elyce Bonnell of the library staff organized a community clothing swap in September that transformed the program room for several days into



*Children gathered for a story hour with the storybook characters, Piggy and Elephant.*

a center for trading in children's clothes. (At the end of the year Ms. Bonnell led another impressive community initiative, partnering with MV Community Services, DCF, First Light Child Development Center, and Rising Tide Equestrian Center to distribute some 1,200 books to children across the Island.)

Through the summer and into the early fall, the Vineyard Colors team of photographers Moira Fitzgerald and Yann Meersseman presented an exhibit chronicling a full leap-year's 366 days of Island beauty along the 50-foot southern wall of the program room. This dramatic and beautiful first use of the new gallery space drew hundreds of people to the library. The gallery hanging system for that show was provided by the Edgartown Library Foundation, and later this year the Friends of



*On the program room's gallery wall, a display of photographs by Vineyard Colors drew hundreds of admirers in the summer and fall of 2016.*





*Curled up with a classic in the children's room.*

the Edgartown Library provided funds for a small professional lighting system – it has already been used, most notably for live performances of dance in the new program room.

The Friends of the Library, an essential support organization which funds many of the programs described in this report, saw Mary Jane Carpenter step down in 2016 as president, with Ellie Bates succeeding her. The Friends raised money for library programs with several projects, the most ambitious of which were the creation of a book about the library's history and the fourth annual running of the Pennywise Path 5K run to the library on Labor Day. At year's end, the Friends organization was well on its way to raising the funds to commission artist Margot Datz for a mural project in the children's room.

For the Edgartown Public Library, the road to 2016 has been long and winding, but our town now has in place a solid, spacious, comfortable and conveniently located center for life-long learning and civic engagement. Our new building is here to serve patrons for generations to come; the challenge now is to maintain a level of excellence in service that matches the quality of the facility and of the collections in our care. Because in the end, a library building – even one as magnificent as the new Edgartown Public Library – is only a vessel for the community life that plays out within its walls.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Edgartown Free Public Library Board of Trustees  
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Board of Trustees meets on the third Thursday  
 of each month.

### LIBRARY STAFF

Lisa Horton Sherman, Director  
 Deborah MacInnis, Children's Librarian/  
 Assistant Director  
 Elyce Bonnell, Circulation Supervisor  
 Alison Leslie, Technical Services Librarian  
 Eric J. Alexander, Department Assistant  
 Nis Kildegaard, Reference Librarian  
 Tom Ignacio, Library Assistant II  
 Virginia Munro, Library Assistant II  
 Amy Vaughan, Library Assistant II

[www.edgartownlibrary.org](http://www.edgartownlibrary.org)

## Facts at a Glance

*fiscal year ending 6/30/2016\**

Collection size.....	198,470
Books .....	34,168
Subscriptions.....	134
Audio CDs .....	2,687
Video .....	7,217
Downloadable audio .....	6,846
Downloadable books.....	146,514
Circulation.....	82,876
Edgartown residents holding library cards .....	2,360
Edgartown library cards total .....	7,088
Volunteers .....	40
Volunteer hours .....	1,082
Total attendance at programs.....	3,990

*\* These figures include the first three  
 months in Edgartown's new library.*

