



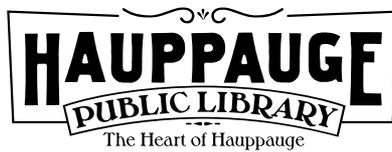
# HAUPPAUGE PUBLIC LIBRARY



OUR FORMATION  
AND THE  
FIRST 20 YEARS



**HAUPPAUGE PUBLIC LIBRARY:  
OUR FORMATION AND THE FIRST 20 YEARS**



## **Acknowledgments**

We thank everyone who shared their time, memories, and remembrances to help us compile this history of the first 20 years of the Hauppauge Public Library, including: Theresa Arroyo, Steve Bard, Dorothy Becker, Anna Beltrani, Catherine Berntsen, Judith Berry, Matthew Bollerman, Kathleen Brett, Michele Brosnan, Peter Crociata, Benita Hammer, Jill Kenyon, Donna Mauceri, Jerry Nichols, Fran Palumbo, Ralph Plotke, Carol Poma, Kevin Verbese, and Christa Zaros. Additional information was obtained from the archives in the Long Island Room at Smithtown Library and we thank Caren Zatyk for her assistance locating the information. Instrumental in conducting the interviews and sketching out the story were Paul Arfin and Nancy Picart.

Design and production by Marlow Palleja

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Published by the Hauppauge Public Library, Hauppauge, New York  
Printed in the United States of America  
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## **Dedication**

This history is dedicated to the residents of the Hauppauge Public Library district – past, present, and future residents, its founders, staff, and all who have helped support the mission of the library.



## **Introduction**

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of Hauppauge Public Library, we have endeavored to share with you the library's story. Matthew Bollerman, CEO of the library, explains why we decided to publish this booklet:

“It was time to capture the history of the library and make that the celebration of our first 20 years of service to the community. Our history is going to continue and new things are going to happen, but it is a way to cement our story - have it all compiled - before we lose the voices that would add to its richness.”

Current and former trustees, staff, and community members were interviewed to help us document the library's history. Current library staff searched the library's extensive archive for photographs.

**We hope you enjoy the story of the first 20 years of the  
Hauppauge Public Library.**

## OUR BEGINNINGS

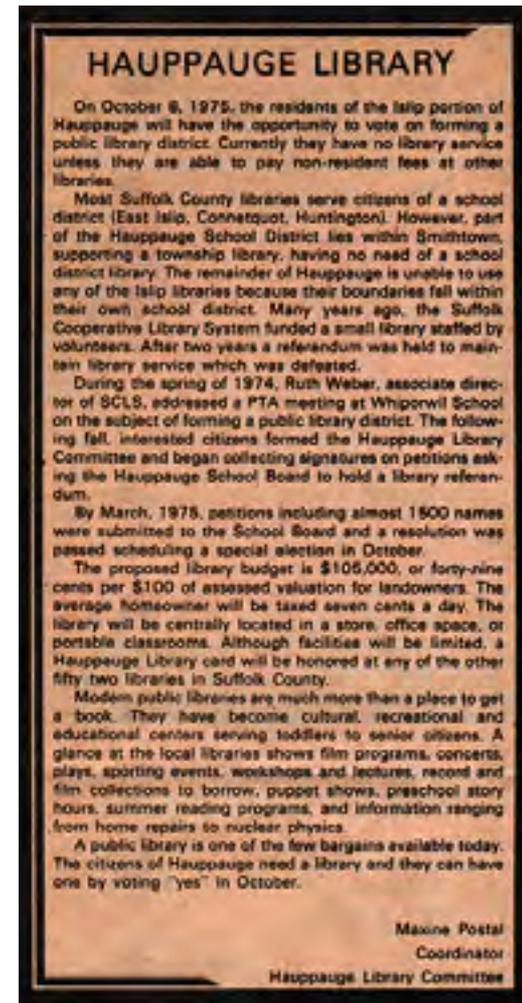
Hauppauge Public Library's history is relatively short compared with other libraries on Long Island and in the United States. The first public library in the United States, the Library Company of Philadelphia, was founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin. It was a subscription library supported by its members. The earliest public libraries on Long Island were established in the late nineteenth century – the Bryant Library in Roslyn was founded in 1878 and Emma S. Clark Memorial Library in Setauket was established in 1891. Plans for a library in the Islip portion of Hauppauge began much later (in the 1960s) and it took decades before the library opened to the public on July 9, 2001.

From 1964-1966, a Federal grant funded a small library in Hauppauge called the Hauppauge Reading Center. According to the Islip Bulletin, the Reading Center was “a small public library run entirely by volunteers.” It closed on September 30, 1966, when the two-year lease for the space expired and funding ran out.

At this time, volunteers and community members formed the Hauppauge Library Committee to advocate for a state-chartered public library in the Town of Islip portion of Hauppauge. The Committee, led by chairperson Parker Kendall, was successful in their effort to pass a bill in New York State to establish a library. The bill was introduced into the Assembly by Prescott B. Huntington and the Senate by Bernard Smith. Upon the signing of the bill by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Parker Kendall stated: “We’ve been working for more than two years to bring good library service to the community and now the goal is in sight.” This was wonderful news, however, it took many more years to attain the goal.

A second bill to establish a library in Hauppauge was approved by Governor Rockefeller on June 17, 1971, spurring another attempt by the Hauppauge Library Committee to explore the possibility of establishing a library.

In 1974, with Maxine Postal serving as Coordinator of the Committee, 1500 signatures were gathered to petition the Hauppauge School Board to hold a special election to establish a library in Hauppauge and select 5 library trustees. The election was scheduled and put up for vote on October 8, 1975, and successfully passed with 449 residents voting yes and 397 voting no. The first trustees elected were: Maxine S. Postal, Dominic A. Camera, Allyn M. Kanowsky, Philip Pakula, and Elsie T. Schmid.



Newspaper clipping from *Pennysaver*, published September 17, 1975, regarding the October 8, 1975 vote for the formation of a public library district for the residents of the Islip portion of Hauppauge. (*Hauppauge Public Library Collection, Richard H. Handley Collection of Long Island Americana, The Smithtown Library*)



this  
bookmark  
needs a  
book  
a book needs a  
public  
library



a public library  
in Hauppauge  
needs you  
vote yes

Wed. Oct. 15  
12 noon ~ 10 p.m.

Give your family a lifetime education.

ARE YOU TIRED OF TRYING TO GET MATERIAL FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER AND FINDING IT UNAVAILABLE OR THE CENTER CLOSED ?

Public libraries are open daily, evenings, weekends, summers. If material is not in your library, it will be borrowed for you from other libraries within a few days.

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Public libraries run kiddies' matinees every Saturday free of charge.

HAVE YOU CUT DOWN ON READING BECAUSE THE PRICE OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES HAS CLIMBED ?

Public libraries lend books, magazines, records, cassettes, paintings, sculpture, slides, and films.

DOES YOUR CHILD SPEND HIS FIRST MONTH IN SCHOOL EACH FALL CATCHING UP TO HIS PRE-SUMMER READING LEVEL ?

Public libraries offer summer reading programs for school-age children and pre-school story hours for younger tots.

HAVE YOU GIVEN UP ATTENDING CURRENT FILMS AND CONCERTS BECAUSE TICKETS ARE SO EXPENSIVE ?

Public libraries show adult movies and sponsor concerts, plays and dances.

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Public libraries provide instruction in every field from crafts to vocational training.

\*\*\*FOR ALL THE FACTS ABOUT A LIBRARY CALL\*\*\*

724-9322

265-9277

724-1123

234-2865 (evenings)

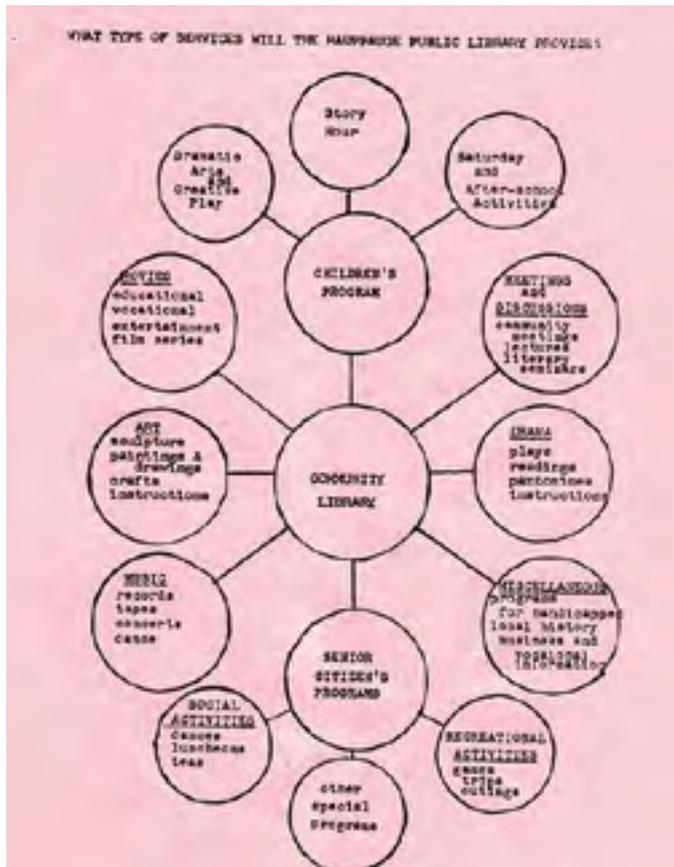
IF YOU DESERVE A LIBRARY, A LIBRARY DESERVES YOUR VOTE.

VOTE "YES" ON OCTOBER 15

A "YES" VOTE WILL COST YOU NOTHING BUT YOUR CONFIDENCE.

Bookmark and flyer, distributed by the Hauppauge Library Committee advocating for the establishment of a library, 1975. (*Hauppauge Public Library Collection, Richard H. Handley Collection of Long Island Americana, The Smithtown Library*)

Following the successful vote for the establishment of a special library district in Hauppauge, the Hauppauge Public Library trustees drafted a budget for voters to approve on December 17, 1975. The budget included rental of space for the library and limited library services and would have given Hauppauge Public Library cardholders access to shared library services in Suffolk County. The vote failed: 485 to 167.



As a result of the defeated budget, community members formed another group to advocate for the library, called the Friends of the Library. The Friends mailed letters, designed posters, circulated petitions, and held open meetings to support the continued effort to establish a library in Hauppauge.

The April 13, 1976 election was another attempt to pass the library budget and was defeated. As a result, an election held on January 26, 1977 included two propositions: the first was to dissolve the library district; the second was to pass a library budget. The community voted in favor of dissolving the library district.

In 1985, the Friends of the Library organized another public referendum to form a library, pass a budget in the amount of \$310,000, and elect a board of five trustees. At the time, community members were concerned about the location of the new library. They feared that the library might possibly be housed in the Whiporwil School, which was closed in 1981 due to carcinogenic gases detected at the nearby landfill. Although Robert Sheridan, Director of Suffolk Cooperative Library system, explained at a public meeting that the location of the library would be determined after the referendum approval, the June 26 proposal was defeated, with a vote of 466 to 330.

Graphic used to advocate for library services in Hauppauge, 1975. (Hauppauge Public Library Collection, Richard H. Handley Collection of Long Island Americana, The Smithtown Library)

Newspaper clipping, article from Newsday, October 5, 1976. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)

Janet Mallen, a Hauppauge resident and Friend who was instrumental in organizing the proposal, commented on the defeat in the Smithtown Messenger. She stated that the campaign involved “a lot of emotional and physical energy” and “there were people a little apprehensive as to where the building would be...That sort of thing would have been up to an elected board of trustees.”

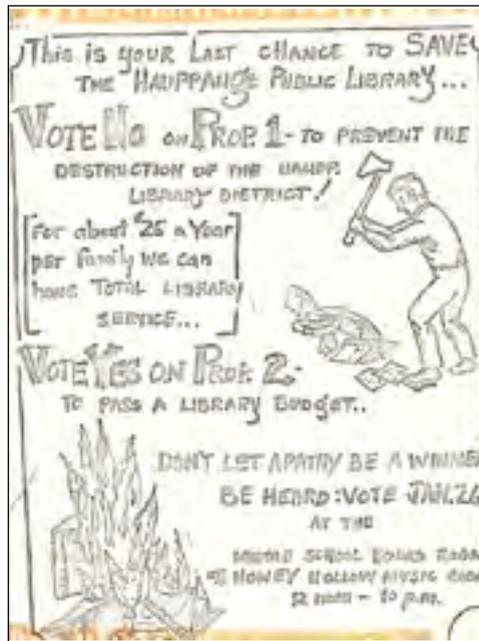
As a result of the defeated proposal, residents living in the Islip Town portion of Hauppauge continued

to purchase library cards from neighboring libraries to access library services for the next 14 years. The purchased cards allowed for limited access to library services, and there were many restrictions.

In November 1999, New York State regulations regarding the sale of library cards changed. Jerry Nichols, the Director of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System, informed the libraries near Hauppauge – Central Islip, Smithtown, and Commack – that they needed to cease offering library cards to people living in the Hauppauge area beginning December 31, 1999. As a result, Hauppauge/Islip Town residents could no longer use neighboring libraries and needed to plan for their own public library in order to gain access to library services. Seeing a need for a full-service library, community members began a new campaign.

Flyer distributed to the community in support of the library budget vote, January 1977. (Hauppauge Public Library Collection, Richard H. Handley Collection of Long Island Americana, The Smithtown Library)

Flyer distributed to the community in opposition to the library budget vote, January 1977. (Hauppauge Public Library Collection, Richard H. Handley Collection of Long Island Americana, The Smithtown Library)



## NEW LIBRARY CAMPAIGN

A few of the community members who took part in this new campaign for the library were interviewed for this history. What follows is their recollection of the timeline of events that led up to the opening of Hauppauge Public Library.

In 1990, Joe Beltrani, Jr. settled in Hauppauge with his wife, Chrisanne. His parents, Anna and Joe Sr., moved to Hauppauge from Brooklyn in the early 1970s. Joe Jr. and Chrisanne were concerned that there was no local library for their children to attend and enjoy. He knew it was time to act.

A few years later, in 1994, Ralph Plotke moved to Hauppauge with his wife, Veronica, and young child. They had purchased library services through the Smithtown Library but were not happy with that arrangement. They had been big library users since they were children. Not all of the services offered to residents who purchased



Board of Trustees elected October 3, 2000. From left to right: Peter Crociata, Robert Druckenmiller, Carol Poma, Joseph Beltrani, Jr., and Ralph Plotke. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

library cards were available to Hauppauge/Islip residents. The Plotke family was frustrated that their community had no full-service library available to them so they resolved to become more involved.

Both the Beltrani family and the Plotke family were present at a public meeting called by Jerry Nichols, Executive Director of Suffolk Cooperative Library System, in fall 1999. About 200-300 people were present as Nichols explained the recent changes in the State Education regulations. The regulations stipulated that beginning December 31, 1999, neighboring libraries would not be able to sell the previously issued limited-access cards to Hauppauge/Islip community members. Residents decided that this was not a fair or equitable way to provide library services to areas without a local public library.

Prior to this public meeting, sometime in mid-1999, Nichols had begun to work with the Superintendent of the Hauppauge School District to provide access to the Hauppauge High School library to all district residents after 4 p.m. This proved to be an unrealistic alternative for the community.

Anna Beltrani, Joe Jr.'s mother, joined the Hauppauge Library advocates in 1999 after retiring from her career as a teaching assistant in Hauppauge School District. Along with her very good friend and neighbor, Michele Brosnan, Anna walked many blocks delivering flyers and knocking on doors to encourage residents to attend meetings to discuss the library. Mrs. Beltrani was met with enthusiasm and hope as she spoke to her neighbors about establishing a library. She had very few naysayers. Their concern was about a possible raise in taxes. She declared that through a small raise in taxes they would get a really "big bang for their buck."

A Steering Committee, created to organize a campaign to motivate the community about establishing a library, was formed at this time and grew to over 35 residents. Ralph Plotke and Joe Beltrani became the first co-chairs. The relationship between these two men was one of mutual respect and great admiration.

Committee members reached out to neighbors and friends, sharing their ideas for building a library, and asking residents about the kinds of services they wanted and needed. Many weekends passed while they walked and talked to every homeowner. They knocked on doors, spoke at the Islip Chamber of Commerce meetings, met with religious leaders and the Knights of Columbus, and met with staff in the schools.

According to Anna Beltrani, the Steering Committee took its time to understand and then communicate the requirements necessary to establish a true community library. They discussed many models and were prepared to make their recommendations public. The Committee undertakings culminated with a public meeting attended by over 500 residents.

By March 2000, the Steering Committee, with help from Jerry Nichols, accomplished several critical tasks to get the library started: hold a special election for the library; identify nominations for the Board of Trustees; and file a certificate with the State Department.

On October 3, 2000, a vote took place where the community voted to establish a public library, approved a budget of \$800,000, and elected five trustees to the Board. The vote was almost 3-1 in favor of the library and the budget. The Board of Trustees consisted of Joseph Beltrani, Jr. as President, Ralph Plotke as First Vice President, Robert Druckenmiller as Second

Vice President, Carol Poma as Secretary, and Peter Crociata as Treasurer. The hard fight for a library in Hauppauge was finally realized.

## THE EARLY YEARS

With a community approved budget and board, Hauppauge Public Library was established. The library board appointed Kevin Verbesey to be the director. Verbesey hired two librarians: Alison O'Reilly and Diane Leddy, and one clerk: Kathleen Brett, to set up the new library. He was also tasked with working with a local commercial real estate agent to secure a rental space for the new library. Library staff worked both from home and at the Suffolk Cooperative Library System in Bellport to prepare library items for the new space and to plan library programs and services.



Library staff working at St. Thomas More Church, 2001. From left to right: Kevin Verbesey, Alison O'Reilly, Kathleen Brett, and Diane Leddy. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Once the modest collection of books, movies, and other materials were prepared, a temporary space at St. Thomas More Church was set up for the community during the summer of 2001. Guests visited the space to obtain library cards, borrow from the collection of items shelved on mobile carts, and attend programs. The library's first summer reading club was launched in this space and was positively received by the community. Library services and hours were limited, but that changed rather quickly when a larger space was secured at 380 Townline Road.

The space at 380 Townline Road was used for a brief time, from late 2001 through August 2002. The library then moved to a larger space at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway, where it would stay until April 2018.



Guests browsing books and participating in craft activities for the first Summer Reading Club at St. Thomas More Church, 2001. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

### Hauppauge/Islip Library Moves Ahead Offers Programs for Children

by Erica Bowers

Though it doesn't look as official "home" for a large number of employees, the newly established Hauppauge/Islip Library System has stepped up to offer programs to the community's youth as the period adds to business levels.

"It's a tough one since we have a library, we wanted to make books available to adults and professionals to read over the summer, like other ones libraries do," said Director of the Hauppauge/Islip Library Kevin Verhey.

Since the Hauppauge/Islip Library, created in October 2000 after a public vote, is still in negotiations for space, Verhey says the library is offering a children's reading program and story hours at the St. Thomas Church, located on Kings Highway. The programs are being held on Monday and Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. through August 13.

In addition, Hauppauge/Islip residents can pay

limited in borrow books from a 14,000 collection that includes mostly fiction, non-fiction, and local history titles and best sellers.

During the program that commenced on July 9, an area nearby had library staff on duty, according to Verhey, who says he plans to hire additional staff as the new home.

When discussing the timing of space for the library, Verhey says officials have estimated that the price of the space is \$100,000 to \$150,000 a year, while the cost of the building is \$12,000 sq. ft. The price range is "in the same ballpark," he says.

"We hope to make a decision this month," said Verhey. He mentioned "it is a process." Verhey added that before a decision can be made, the library must receive approval from the State Education Department, which oversees all public libraries. "We have to make sure the space meets codes and State Education requirements."

Verhey could not give an expected date for a library opening because it would be like "starting a new project," he said. "Once a building is found, Verhey says, books, chairs, and other items will be placed in it and they will have much more than 100 staff."

### With Office Space Things Are Happening

story and photo by Erica Bowers

With their temporary headquarters behind the way from their expected "home," things are beginning to happen for the newly created Hauppauge/Islip Library, according to Director Kevin Verhey.

"We are excited to be here," said Verhey.

Employees of the Hauppauge/Islip Library moved into a 1,200 square foot office at 380 Townline Road last week, setting up makeshift bookshelves, computers, reading tables and chairs. This will be their command center until a 12,000 square foot building is renovated for the new library.

According to Verhey, the new library will eventually be located at 601 Veterans Highway, the old Bankruptcy Court Building. It is expected to be ready in a couple of months.

In the meantime, Verhey said the Smithtown Messenger, that he, along with three full-time employees, will start the job of cataloging 15,000 items, including books, video tapes, and recordings. They will then open the temporary office to the public.

In a couple of weeks, Verhey said the public will be permitted to borrow best-selling novels, popular fiction, and participate in limited programs, like book discussions, and children's programs.

"We will make 2,000 items available to the public at first," said Verhey, who added that any book or item can be borrowed during the open library hours program.

The new office will also allow the 15,000 residents who will be served by the library, to pick up their new library cards. Verhey says forms for library cards are available on the Internet at [www.hauppauge.org](http://www.hauppauge.org).

Residents can also call (516) 779-1100 to request a library card, which can be picked up when the temporary office opens to the public.

Director of the Hauppauge/Islip Library Kevin Verhey, Children's Librarian Alison O'Reilly, Library Clerk Kathleen Brett, and Adult Service Librarian Ellen Laska

Newspaper clippings from the Smithtown Messenger, 2001. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Fran Palumbo checking out a book to Thomas Crociata, 2002. Thomas Crociata grew up using the Hauppauge Library and built a display case for the library as part of an Eagle Scout project (see page 21). (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Guests using the first public computer at the 380 Townline Road location, 2002. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



## LIBRARY AT 601 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY OPENS

The official opening of the library at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway was on October 27, 2002. Community members, staff and library trustees gathered to celebrate. What follows is the dedication speech given by Jerry Nichols. His message is a tribute to the perseverance of the many Hauppauge residents who worked so hard to make the library a reality:

### October 27, 2002 Dedication of the Hauppauge Library

*"For those of us who have been around a bit, we recognize that it has taken 30 years to get to this place. I'm here to tell you that it was worth the effort and that your adventure of learning, of imagination; and of community has just begun. It is a day of celebration, and I think you all deserve the credit for this remarkable achievement. This may be the dream of a few, but it is the work of many. As we gather here, it is with a certain sense of pride; pride in this facility, the beginning it represents and the promise it holds; pride in our purpose, and pride in the place we live.*

*So, to the library trustees, Kevin, and the Hauppauge Public Library staff; congratulations on behalf of the 55 public libraries that are the Suffolk Cooperative Library System. In a world of compromise and concession you have aspired to excellence.*

*The people of Hauppauge deserve our congratulations and respect as well, for their willingness to invest in the future through this wonderful institution. It is truly an expression of community pride.*

*For those who have worked so hard this sense of pride is fortified with a sense of purpose - a noble purpose we believe - that it is right to share with others the wisdom gained by humanity over the millennia; that each individual, no matter who they are or from where they come, has the potential to change the world; that the challenges we face as a society can be met by an informed citizenry; that the opportunities of the future are limited only by our own imagination.*

*This is why we who love libraries come here: to tell the children our legends and our stories, to instill a lifelong love of learning, to transform information into knowledge and, with luck, perhaps to capture a bit of wisdom along the way. A celebration like today affords us an opportunity to reflect on our purpose. Billy Collins, America's Poet Laureate, recently referred to libraries as "intellectual campfires." Like campfires, they are a place of light and (we hope) of truth, that draw the curious to them. And, like that campfire, the library is, at its very heart, a place of stories.*

*Now, did you ever wonder what makes us human? I'm not talking in a religious sense such as the soul or spirit, but in an intellectual sense. Why are we different from all the other species of this world?*

*People once believed it is our language, our ability to communicate. But anyone who has seen the dance of an insect or heard the song of a whale knows this cannot be true for us alone.*

*I submit that, though there are many qualities that comprise our very humanity there is one talent that not only makes us different, but also has driven the further development of our species and ultimately, our civilization. And that is the ability to tell stories.*

*In prehistoric times the skill to decipher an animal's track and to plan the hunt, in other words, to read what had happened in the past and to imagine what would happen in the future; made all the difference in our survival. Those who could read the signs and tell their story prospered.*

*Can you imagine our lives without stories? Every day we trade stories with our children, our spouse, at parties...stories are woven into our every conversation. The first "fish story" was probably about the woolly mammoth that got away.*

*It's no wonder that in so-called primitive cultures the man or woman of power and magic was the one with the stories. In our society this library is a place of magic and power because it is the place of stories and wisdom. It's the place where, from childhood to old age, we come to participate in humanity's conversation. I believe*

*it is our ability, or perhaps our obsession, with stories and storytelling that makes us human and has brought our civilization to this point.*

*We should also recognize that libraries have a special place in America. It was Thomas Jefferson who described "Information as the currency of democracy." Of course, Jefferson, whose personal collection formed the foundation for our nation's library, the Library of Congress, recognized the fact that an institution such as a library is a place of vision and of revolution, where people are free to explore new ideas, to learn what they wish, as they wish. To lubricate the wheels of change in a truly free society. Perhaps he recognized, to paraphrase his own words, that the library could be a place where*



Jerry Nichols delivering his speech at the dedication ceremony for 601 Veterans Memorial Highway, October 27, 2002. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway, October 27, 2002. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)

*the tree of liberty might be refreshed by education and understanding rather than by the blood of patriots and tyrants.*

*A more contemporary American, Toni Morrison, put it this way: "Access to knowledge is the supreme act of a truly great civilization. Of all the institutions that purport to do this, free libraries stand virtually alone in accomplishing this mission."*

*In recent years, people have predicted the death of the library due to our changing society and the onslaught of technology. Nonetheless, our role has remained the same, adjusting and adapting to change.*

*In fact, it seems the more we witness the spread of technology and the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, the more communities, like yours, have come to recognize the importance of place. A place like this, filled with ideas, with mystery, and with wonder. Together this sense of place and of purpose articulates a promise not only to our community today, but also to those who came before and again to generations yet to come.*

*It is a promise by this community to past generations that they will keep their stories and their wisdom alive. It is the promise to today's citizens that you will offer them the opportunity and wisdom to make the best of their lives. And it is the promise this community makes to future generations that here there will always be a place of mystery, of wonder, and of stories. That here, in this place, we believe in the wisdom of the past and the promise of the future.*



Guests and staff at the front desk on opening day at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway, October 27, 2002. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)



*There is one more feeling we all share about this institution, and that is a sense of potential. For every person who ventures here, in whatever manner, for whatever purpose, has the potential to change themselves, to change their community and, perhaps, to change their world.*

*This library building, what it holds, and what it*

Newspaper clipping from the Smithtown Messenger, August 8, 2002.  
(Hauppauge Public Library archives)



*stands for, expresses our belief that, in a democracy, all people must share in the wealth of knowledge... because in our society we believe that anyone and everyone has the potential to make a difference, has the potential to move civilization perhaps just one more millimeter toward a brighter tomorrow.*

*So, I thank you, all of you, for creating this marvelous expression of purpose, of place and of potential. It tells all who see it of your faith in the future and your commitment to your community. Cherish it and use it wisely."*

## **A LIBRARY GROWS IN HAUPPAUGE**

At 601 Veterans Memorial Highway, the Library began to offer a wide range of services to its residents, including public computers, classes and events for all ages, excursions to New York City and museums in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, indoor and outdoor concerts, technology training, and more. The collection grew over time to include popular materials (books, movies, magazines and newspapers), reference materials, databases, museum passes, video and board games, guitars, binoculars, and other items of high interest to the community.



Exterior of library building at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway, 2002. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)

The library became a place for community groups, organizations, students, and business people to meet: scouts frequented the library to meet and earn badges; business owners and professionals used the resources to improve their business and meet with others; retired community members met to play games, watch movies, and socialize, just to name a few of the ways the library was used. It quickly became a hub for community gathering.

*Below:* Children enjoying Fire Safety Day with the Hauppauge Fire Department in the library parking lot, 2003. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

*Right:* Librarian Fran Palumbo reading a story in the children's area for the library's Readathon program, a recurring event where librarians, teachers, and school principals read to children, 2004. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)





Friends of the Arts table at the library's fifth anniversary celebration, 2005. From left to right: Anna Beltrani, Michele Brosnan, Dorothy Becker, Arlene Pisapia. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Librarian Catherine Berntsen leading a dance at the Robbi K & Friends concert, 2005. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



*Above and Next Page: Group of men and women with exercise instructor Cathy Lowd, 2007 and 2008. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)*





Group of teens who won first place in the Battle of the Books competition, 2009. From left to right: Reah Vasilakopoulos, Jocelyn Aptowitz, Librarian Catherine Berntsen, Meghan Dyckova, Varun Mehta, Daniel Nasta, Robert Black. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Carol Poma, Andrew Black, Ralph Plotke, and Judi Berry at the Library's 10th Anniversary Celebration, 2010. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Toni Petti and family at the Library's 10th Anniversary Celebration, 2010. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Library staff wearing their Summer Reading Club T-shirts, 2011. The Hauppauge Library has hosted Summer Reading Clubs each year using the themes shared with other New York State Libraries. The Clubs promote reading and participation in library events. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Presentation of a display case made for the residents of Hauppauge for an Eagle Scout Project. Thomas Joseph Crociata from Boy Scout Troop 343 on the left, Library CEO Matthew Bollerman on the right, May 17, 2012. Mr. Crociata grew up using the Hauppauge Public Library (see page 8). Eagle Scout Projects give Scouts an opportunity to plan, develop, and give leadership to others. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Child reading a picture book to a dog in our Read to a Dog program, where children read to therapy dogs in order to improve their reading and communication skills, 2012. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Yarncrafters group displaying some of the items they made to donate to children's hospitals, veteran's homes, and other organizations in the community, 2015. Cornelia Hirner, pictured here (front row, fourth from the left), has led this group since 2005. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Community members playing Mexican Train, 2014. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Family Paint Night, 2016. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)





Girl Scout Troop 1606 book swap event, 2017. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)



In the early years, library director Kevin Verbese used a team approach to find the right combination of programs and services for the Hauppauge community. The library reached out to The Friends of the Arts (later called the Friends of the Library) for input. This organization was instrumental in bringing the Hauppauge community into the library and was focused on including all families and community members.

Helen Lustberg, a member of the Friends of the Arts, recommended that the library offer music concerts during the summer. This idea was realized and has become an annual event, with the Friends and library hosting several outdoor concerts in the parking lot.



The Friends, led by Anna Beltrani and Rose Milazzo, also organized an annual juried community photography contest. Winning photographs are now displayed on the walls of the library.

Through book and cake sales, direct appeals, and raffles, the Friends raised money to support many events at the library, including lectures, concerts, and performances for all ages, to make the library the best possible community center.

Helen Lustberg introducing the first outdoor summer concert (Dan Policar Trio) organized by the Friends of the Arts, 2006. Also pictured here is Alison O'Reilly, the library's first children's librarian. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Winners of the 2007 Community Photography Contest. From left to right: George Mann, Raj Chari, and DiAnna Dezago. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Aerial view of library property at Hidden Pond Park. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

## SEARCH FOR A PERMANENT HOME

The Board of Trustees of the Library began looking for a permanent home almost as soon as it opened its doors at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway in August 2002. For five years, the Board and Library Administration visited properties within the Islip portion of the Hauppauge School District boundaries. All of these properties were expensive and the Board felt it was not feasible to ask the community to finance their purchase, in addition to building or renovating a building.

A Permanent Home Committee was convened of citizens who wanted to see the library have a place of their own. Judi Berry, Library Director helped the Board of Trustees in 2007, with approaching the Town of Islip for help in locating a property. Hidden Pond Park was suggested and a parcel was located within the Park. In October 2007, the Town passed a resolution allocating an acre of park land for the library in exchange for the acquisition of additional park lands and/or capital improvements to existing park and recreational facilities. In October 2008, Governor Paterson signed legislation allowing the sale. Then in October 2010 a contract of sale was executed between the Town and the Library for \$270,000. Each of these steps required advocacy and community support.

Once the land at Hidden Pond Park was secured, the Board of Trustees undertook a process to involve the community in informing them about the purpose, goals and conceptual design for the project.

These sessions, called charrettes, took place in June and July 2013. At each meeting over 50 community members attended. During the first charrette a purpose statement was written:

- To build Hauppauge’s permanent community Library as a safe environment for all,
- In a way that embraces intergenerational collaboration to develop community priorities that use resources creatively, regenerate ecological health, and celebrate diversity,
- So that the project inspires personal and professional growth and fulfillment, generates continuous community participation, and enhances the quality of life in the park, Hauppauge, and the world indefinitely.

At the second charrette, the goals to achieve this purpose statement included:

1. Within Budget
2. Connection to Outdoors
3. Functional Flexibility
4. Hive of Activity
5. Indoor Environmental Quality
6. Copious Day Lighting
7. Durable (physical & operational)
8. Energy Efficient
9. Cultural/Arts Center
10. Ease of Access/Inviting
11. Tranquil Natural Landscape



Artist rendering of the proposed library building at Hidden Pond Park, 2015. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

The Board of Trustees asked the CEO, Matthew Bollerman, and his staff to write a plan for the building based on the public's purpose and goals. This plan included the number of square feet it would take to accomplish the desired activities. It called for a building size of 18,000 square-feet, 4,500 square feet larger than the space at 601 Veterans Memorial Highway. The Board approved the program before the third charrette took place.

The third charrette focused on conceptual design. Now that the Library has an 18,000 square feet plan, where should areas go? Where is the front door? Where does the children's department go? One floor or two? After eight hours of discussion, many items were settled.

A Design Team met after the three charrettes to work on the concepts. This group met in person three times to consolidate the community's desires and to make sure the purpose, goals, and initial conceptual designs were followed. Weekly phone calls were held to ensure everything was on schedule. In January 2014, the Board of Trustees approved the site plan, ground floor plan, budget, and schedule and took the steps necessary to put up a bond vote in October 2014 for construction of a new building at Hidden Pond Park. The October 2014 bond vote failed.

As a result of the defeated bond, the Board reexamined other options for a permanent home for the library. These included existing buildings, renting

other spaces within the District, and a reduced cost for a building at Hidden Pond Park. Using results from a survey conducted by the Board of Trustees of all who voted on the bond in October 2014, along with comments received by community members and ongoing investigations on cost, a decision was made to pursue a less expensive building at Hidden Pond Park. The cost was reduced and put up for vote again in June 2015. The bond did not pass.

After the bond for a new facility at Hidden Pond Park was defeated, the Board of Trustees hired a real estate broker to help locate all available properties in Hauppauge/Islip. The properties needed to be at least 18,000 square feet and as centrally located as possible. A number of properties were examined that met the criteria. A proposal to buy an existing facility was explored and dropped. A short list of properties was pursued. 1373 Veterans Memorial Highway was

From left to right: Andrew Black, Library Trustee; Matthew Bollerman, CEO; Steven Bard, Library Trustee; Robert Druckenmiller, Library Trustee, and Senator Thomas D. Croci. Bard is holding a certificate of recognition from Senator Croci, which was presented at the Grand Opening Ceremony, April 28, 2018. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



identified to have the best combination of price, availability, and location.

At their March 16, 2017 meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to lease for 30 years a portion of 1373-1 Veterans Memorial Highway for Library use. “Since the failure of the June 2015 Hidden Pond Park bond vote, the Board of Trustees has spent almost two years looking for another place for the Library to function from,” said Stephen Bard, President of the Board of Trustees, “We are very excited by the location and the increased space for more and varied library services. ...The Board of Trustees has been looking at properties to buy or lease, including vacant land and existing buildings. ...We looked at buying an existing building but the cost did not make sense.” Mr. Bard shared, “The best option was a long-term lease.”

Once the lease was secured, the Board of Trustees entrusted CEO Matthew Bollerman to work with staff to develop plans for the space at 1373 Veterans Memorial Highway. Bollerman formed a staff design team. The team was tasked with incorporating the design features and concepts proposed in previous plans. Library design and furniture installation company, A. R. Kropp & Sons, worked with the staff design team to plan the space and select furniture. In just over 13 months, the space at 1373 Veterans Memorial Highway opened to the public on April 28, 2018. A celebration was held on opening day, with approximately 200 community members in attendance.



Guests in the parking lot at the 1373 Veterans Memorial Highway Grand Opening Ceremony, April 28, 2018. (Hauppauge Public Library archives)



Library staff gathered at the Grand Opening Celebration, April 28, 2018. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Sznurkowski Family at the Grand Opening Celebration, one of the many wonderful families who joined us, April 28, 2018. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)





Girl Scout Troop 1606 with artist Cat Ferraz in front of the mural they painted in Classroom C, 2018. *(Hauppauge Public Library archives)*



Cooking demo with Chef Rob Scott, 2018. *(Hauppauge Public Library archives)*

Carole and Sheldon Cutler at Trivia Night, 2018. *(Hauppauge Public Library archives)*



With the increased space at 1373, the library's service offerings grew to include a room for technology instruction ("Classroom D"), a music and video production room (the "Media Studio"), two study rooms, and a conference room. New technology and modern conveniences were added to the large meeting spaces, including smartboards, sinks, dishwashers, and refrigerators.



Guests enjoying a 1920s style summer tea, 2019. At these events, we share stories and have fun. *(Hauppauge Public Library archives)*

Pet beds made by teens as part of the Great Give Back, 2019. The Great Give Back is celebrated throughout Suffolk County and promotes volunteerism and community service. *(Hauppauge Public Library archives)*



Families exploring the successful indoor Trunk or Treat event, 2019. This event provided a safe and fun alternative to trick-or-treating door to door. Representatives from local businesses distributed treats and crafts. *(Hauppauge Public Library archives)*





Meet the Artist event with Hauppauge resident Catherine Moschella, 2019. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Meet the Artist event with Hauppauge resident Lily Klima, 2019. Many talented artists share their artwork in the library's gallery space. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

Book discussion led by Helen Bergman, 2020. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)





Guests painting a winter scene on canvas, 2020. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Guests gather for instruction in the library's new Media Studio, 2020. The media studio includes hardware and software for podcasting, audio recording and editing, piano lessons/playing/composition, digitization of video recordings, video and photograph editing, scanning, and more. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Guests enjoying the Kiddie Café program, 2020. At this popular program, children create food art and have an opportunity to enjoy their creations. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)



Guests enjoying the Long Island Scrollworkers Association reception, 2020. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

The library's programs and services at 1373 were soon tested by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the library's doors were closed to the public for several months, the library continued to serve the public remotely. Classes and events were presented remotely on Zoom and YouTube, reference services were offered by phone and email, Take & Make craft and activity kits were made available, and the library's electronic book collection was expanded to meet the needs of the community.

A special effort was made by the library to connect with the community during the pandemic. Library staff members were assigned to call 7,000 community members twice to check in with everyone and ask if they needed assistance with anything. Common requests were for assistance downloading ebooks and audiobooks, how to view virtual library programs, and how to access food pantries and home delivery services. Other community members noted that they were lonely and missing so-

cialization and library staff offered ideas to help them stay connected.

As the Hauppauge Public Library reaches its 20th anniversary, COVID-19 restrictions have eased and the community is beginning to reconnect in person and enjoy all that the library offers. The pandemic presented the library with many challenges, but it has adapted and continues to remain an essential asset to the residents of Hauppauge.

The story of the Hauppauge Public Library stands as a testimony to the community's commitment to improving the lives of Hauppauge residents. For twenty years, the library has been a hub for the community's educational, informational, and entertainment needs. A generation of individuals and families have enjoyed the many benefits and services the library provides. Future generations will have an opportunity to enjoy the same benefits thanks to the dedication and support of the community.



Group Seal Walk tour at Jones Beach State Park, 2021. (*Hauppauge Public Library archives*)

**MEMBERS OF THE  
HAUPPAUGE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
STEERING COMMITTEE**

Stephen Bard	Helen Lustberg
Dorothy J. Becker	Sharon Mack
Anna S. Beltrani	George Mann
Joseph V. Beltrani	Marilyn Mann
Michele Brosnan	Ralph Plotke
Allison Buturla	Carol Poma
Peter Crociata	Frank Poma
Carole Cutler	Rochelle E. Rossi
Sheldon Cutler	Grace Sciacca
Fjeril Deal	Frank Scozzari
Joseph Fici	Martin Sparago
David Howell	Susan Sparago
Donna G. Iannucci	Marie A. Stackhouse
Cynthia Irvine	Scott Vinci
Maria Kettell	Barbara Wurzel
Rick Llinares	Lynn M. Wylie
Chuck Lloyd	

**FOUNDING STAFF  
OF THE  
HAUPPAUGE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Diane Leddy	Sarah Cunniff
Alison O'Reilly	Margaret Hartmann
Kathleen Brett	Jacquelyn Hornung
Fran Palumbo	Robert Johnson
Linda Hoff	Melissa Lopez
Amy Lilawski	Inur Mamoor
Vivian Lorper	Jacqueline Martinez
Michele Toscanini	Patricia Mitchell
Helen Bergman	Andrea Perdue
Lauren Nichols	Megan Sanders
Antonina Petti	MaryAnne Stevens
Angela Armenti	Ryan Woltering
Michael Berse	Melissa Wojciechowicz
Diana Bosak	Jill Wylie
Jesse Columbo	

**CURRENT AND FORMER BOARD OF  
TRUSTEE MEMBERS**

Julian Aptowitz, December 2018-present

Stephen Bard, January 2002-present

Joseph Beltrani, October 2000-December 2001

Andrew Black, January 2010-July 2021

Peter Crociata, October 2000- November 2009 and December 2015-December 2018

Robert Druckenmiller, October 2000-October 2019

Nayana Mehta, January 2020-present

Ralph Plotke, October 2000-present

Carol Poma, October 2000-November 2015

John White, August 2021-present

**HAUPPAUGE PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS &  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

Kevin Verbese, January 2001-May 2006

Judith Berry, July 2006-October 2011

Matthew Bollerman, October 2011-present







This history is dedicated to the residents  
of the Hauppauge Library District – past, present,  
and future residents, its founders, staff, and all who  
have helped support the mission of the library.

