

Further information: Mary L. Charnley, Library Trustee Chairman

Linda Frawley, Heritage Commission Chairman

Belmont Public Library: July 10th

Celebrates Historic Building and More Than a Century on Main Street

The Belmont Public Library will celebrate more than a century of community library services and historic status of its current building on Thursday, July 10 at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend the celebration, featuring a community reception for library director, Rebecca Albert, appointed last October.

“Belmont Public Library heritage dates to the 1890s, said Library trustee chairman Mary Charnley. Early records note 1893 as our beginnings, with other locations before today’s home.” According to Laconia Democrat news reports of March 1927, town residents voted unanimously to accept the gift of a public building fully equipped and endowed, given by the owners of the Belmont Hosiery Company, George E. Duffy of Worcester, Mass. and Walter E. Duffy of Franklin, N.H. Charnley said, “That generous community spirit still exists today, as the Heritage Commission gifted us with a National Register plaque and others plan another special gift to be announced Thursday,” Charnley said.

That library of nearly 86 years ago, began with 4000 volumes of books. Current library director Albert, who has served as Director of Library Services at the Tilton School, and as Special Projects and Literacy Coordinator for the New Hampshire State Library, today oversees 16,000 volumes, plus collections of audio books, other new media, and programs for all aged residents from the same desk and building made possible by the generous Duffy brothers and other local mill leadership. “Despite the challenges of serving diverse needs in 2400 square feet, we provide community resources including computer access, to more than 1500 patrons,” according to Charnley

Research by David Ruell in 1984-5 for the Lakes Region Planning Commission, which nominated the structure to the National Register, summarized its distinction as, “significant architecturally, both as one of the best small libraries in the Lakes Region, and as one of the region’s best examples of the Colonial Revival style.”

The library was formally dedicated on February 4, 1928 and opened for business the same day. The Journal Transcript of Franklin noted it was “built by Belmont men, supervised by local master builder Eli Perron” and a Tilton mason, and designed by Hanover architects Harry A. Wells & Archer E. Hudson.

Just like the 1928 building dedication, the library will be open for business Thursday, throughout the community reception and until 7:00 p.m. Hours include Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings as a convenience to residents.