



Library Report

Compiled by Ian White



Board profile

Patti Durkee

Patti Durkee brings a passion for literature and decades of teaching experience to Western Counties Regional Library board.

"I'm a huge fan of literature," she says. When she learned of the opening on the board to represent the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, Coun. Durkee says "I chose it."

Coun. Durkee grew up in Yarmouth. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science from Dalhousie University, she received her teaching diploma from Mount Saint Vincent University and taught in Toronto, ON, for 26 years.

While teaching, she had an online folk art business. Wishing to return to Nova Scotia and create a storefront business, she took a three-year leave of absence in 2014, moving to Port Maitland and opening the gallery Hubert and Belle's, named after her father and mother. In 2017, she retired from teaching.

Active in the community, she belongs to Friends of the Yarmouth Light and Roaring 20s Antique Car Club, is chair of the By-Law and Policy Review Committee, and is a member of the Waterfront Development Corporation, Planning Advisory Committee, and Yarmouth-Acadian Shores Tourism Association.

She is impressed by how well the regional library operates. "The library is well-run, well-organized, and really positive," she says.

Two things she would like to work on with the board are raising literacy levels of children in the region and improving library funding.



Barrington library clerk Michelle Cook, second from right, holds out a hat for a young participant during story time at Bay Side Home in Barrington on Nov. 15.

Partnership benefits preschoolers and seniors

On Nov. 15, Barrington Municipal library clerk Michelle Cook tells a story of a little cat and hats to an audience hanging on every word.

Today's theme is hats as the young participants pick out a hat to wear and identify other pieces of clothing. The only unusual thing about this library program is that it is taking place in the long-term care facility Bay Side Home in Barrington.

This partnership between Western Counties Regional Library and Bay Side Home enables facility residents to enjoy time with preschoolers during a story time session.

The program is a time of interaction between generations. On this day, four residents participate along with five preschoolers and their caregivers, mostly grandmothers.

"I've always liked children," says Bay Side resident Eleanor Atwood, 88. She has grandchildren and great grandchildren.

"I like watching kids," she adds. "They're so interesting."

Nancy Atkinson has brought her grandson Everett Swim, 2 ½, to three or four of the story time programs put on by the library at Bay Side.

"I like it," Atkinson says. Her grandson buzzes around the room, excited by the stories, participants and the venue.

Diane Quinlan brought two of her grandchildren to the program. She works at Bay Side, but she had the day off, enabling her to bring her grandchildren.

"I think it is beneficial for the children. The stories were awesome," Quinlan says.

"She's really enjoyed it," she says of her three-year-old granddaughter. "I'm glad I brought her."

Resident Agnes Blades says it is "good just to see the kids enjoying themselves."

For Patsy Morrison, it brings back memories. "I love it," Morrison says.

No longer able to speak, another resident named Patsy gets involved with the stories, using hand signals to accompany the stories and play activity. She beams a smile and is very involved in the storytelling and the activity in the room.

"Patsy keeps teaching us as we go along," Cook says.

"It's a great little program," says Kathy Maxwell who has brought her grandson Bronson Snow for the second time. "Songs and stories are great for children."

She also believes it is beneficial for all involved to get out and socialize.

For Cook, the 10-week program is a fun challenge as she plans a whole list of activities and changes them on the fly.

"It keeps me on my toes," she says, adding "It's going pretty well."

She says the numbers fluctuate from week to week, but she believes it will only grow with time.

Although the program ended in November, it will start up again in January and run weekly unless bad weather shuts it down.

Library, YREACH, municipality partner to help newcomers

Western Counties Regional Library, YMCA Recognizing Enhancing Aligning Community Horizons (YREACH) and the Municipality of Clare invited newcomers for an evening of networking and community orientation on Nov. 24.

The goal of the reception at Senator Ambroise H. Comeau Memorial Library in Meteghan was to have temporary foreign workers at Riverside Lobster International Inc. meet representatives of the municipality, the library and YREACH and learn about available services and community organizations and be welcomed into the community.

"Often left to themselves, these workers mostly from Mexico, Guatemala, or Chile do not know anything or anyone in the community. Speaking little or no English and French, they follow a simple daily routine of work-home-work," says Doris Ponce, French services manager for the regional library. The temporary foreign workers learned about language learning programs at the library, had face-to-face discussions with municipal officials, and discovered the many opportunities awaiting them in Clare.

Warden Ronnie LeBlanc says these people contribute to the economy, and it is important to make them feel welcome, appreciated, and ensure they understand what is available to them in the community.

YREACH provides information, orientation and settlement support to Immigrants and temporary foreign workers and their families who



Clare library clerk Faith Dugas McNeill, seated centre, shows newcomers, attending the function at the branch, how to access Rocket Languages, a language learning software program. The newcomers had expressed interest in learning both English and French.

are new to communities across the province of Nova Scotia. It also has a mandate to raise awareness about the benefits of immigration in Nova Scotia and to work with local partners to create welcoming communities.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Headquarters

Office Manager Yvonne LeBlanc received her 30-year service certificate on Nov. 30.

Leap Frog tablets were issued to all the branches. The tablets offer a wide range of educational apps for children visiting the library.

Coordinators Joanne Head and Doris Ponce attended the YREACH Newcomers dinner at Burrigge Campus, NSCC. The library provided book prizes to the children in attendance.

Barrington

Ruth MacKenzie left her reserve library clerk position on Sept. 17

Julissa Smith was hired as library clerk I on Oct. 25.

Gabriel Jones was hired as reserve library clerk on Oct. 26.

Digby

The branch, in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), has a collection of NSCC materials available for loan to the public.

Promoting library services, branch coordinator Joanne Head attended Terrific Tots, assessments for three-year-olds, at the



Yvonne LeBlanc, right, receives her 30-year service certificate from regional library director Erin Comeau.



Lance Robicheau tries out a new Leap Frog tablet at Weymouth Waterfront Library.

Digby Family Centre.

The repairs to the oil tank and branch entrance are complete.

Pubnico

Kimberly Adams left her reserve library clerk position on Oct. 25.

Bobbiann Markle is the new reserve library clerk. She started on Nov. 30

Shelburne

The branch has a deposit collection of adult fiction available to students and staff at Shelburne Campus, NSCC.

As part of the partnership with NSCC, librarian Joanne Head has answered online questions from four NSCC library technology students at Dartmouth Campus, NSCC, who are conducting research on rural libraries, library services, and new buildings.

Yarmouth

Library clerk Carol Wing went from 40 hours every two weeks to 59 hours every two weeks on Oct. 16

Vanessa Goodwin-Clairmont moved from reserve library clerk position to library clerk I as of Oct. 23.

Sherry Churchill was hired as reserve library clerk on Nov. 10.

Weymouth

The branch entered a Winnie the Pooh Christmas tree at the Sissiboo Landing Festival of Trees.

Westport

Reserve library clerk Patricia Outhouse received her 20-year service certificate on Sept. 18.



Westport library clerk Patricia Outhouse, right, receives her 20-year service certificate from librarian Deborah Duke.