

Library Report

Season's

Greetings!

Compiled by
Ian White

Board profile

Sherry Thorburn Irvine

Born in Sandy Point, Shelburne County, Western Counties Regional Library Board Chair Sherry Thorburn Irvine's Nova Scotia roots go back to 1783. Although she moved out of province as a child, she returned to the province in 2013 after retiring from a career in nursing, purchasing her great grandfather's home in Sandy Point.

As part of her work as a councillor for the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, she chose to serve on the library board. She became board chair after Shaun Hatfield stepped down from the position in June 2021.

"I am pleased to accept the position of chair for Western Counties Regional Library Board (WCRL), and I have volunteered to represent WCRL at the provincial level through Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia," she says. "I have a sense that I will gain a 360-degree view of library services, and I will endeavour, with our team, to advance the important work that libraries contribute to community, at large."

While she believes the challenges faced by the library are numerous, she says the board and staff are up to the task.

"The pandemic has tested those boundaries and shown how important library services are to our general well-being and health."

She wants the library to achieve the province's accessibility goals in all areas, including its buildings, services, programs and collections.

"Ensuring workable funding formulas for libraries is top-of-mind," she adds.



Yarmouth library clerk Yvette Frost reminisces on her 45-year library career that began on the bookmobile. She retired in October.

Yvette Frost's retirement 45 years in the making

In the final days of her 45-year career at Western Counties Regional Library in late September, Yarmouth library clerk Yvette Frost pondered what next.

Given the state of the world amid the COVID-19 pandemic, her plans for a post-retirement cruise were put on hold, and for now she plans to "enjoy her grandchildren." "It doesn't feel like 45 years," she says of her time at the library.

While attending Dalhousie University, she wanted to come home to Yarmouth and saw an advertisement in the local newspaper *The Yarmouth Vanguard* for a position at the library.

Following an interview with Regional Library Director Trudy Amirault and Deputy Director Virginia Stoddard, she got a job as a bookmobile library clerk.

Trained by bookmobile driver Eric Whitehouse, she began as a bookmobile clerk serving the northern part of Yarmouth County and Digby County. The service required two nights stay in the Digby area, one in Smith Cove and one in Digby.

On Monday, she would leave Yarmouth at noon with stops in Bear River and

Smith's Cove. On Tuesday, stops included Centreville, Sandy Cove, Tiverton, Freeport and Westport. On the way back to Yarmouth on Wednesdays, stops were Barton and a long stop in Weymouth.

Eventually, when the library reduced its bookmobile service from two vehicles to one, she started to cover the South Shore route from Tusket to Lockeport.

"You met interesting people and got in some interesting situations," she says of her time on the bookmobile.

This included when the bookmobile was lodged on the loading ramp of the Tiverton ferry during low tide, and it nearly being clipped by a train at the Saulnierville station.

Working at the library helped her expand her skill set and knowledge. She earned her diploma in Library and Information Technology from the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) over several years outside of work through distance education.

She also served as President of the Nova Scotia Library Association in 2008-2009.

Continued on Page 2

Printing, lamination of POV proves popular

Matthew Reeves was in McKay Memorial Library in Shelburne trying to print his proof of vaccination (POV), but he was unsure what to do.

He was pleasantly surprised to learn that he could get his POV printed and laminated for free at the library.

"They helped me out," he says of the Shelburne library clerks.

A regular library user, Reeves knows the clerks, but it was not a service he expected.

"I think it was above and beyond (normal library service)," he says.

Yarmouth library clerk Susan Young says 243 people have had their POV printed and laminated at the branch by early November.



Weymouth library clerk Marguerite Thibault has heard shouts of joy from some people making use of the service.

"Everyone who made use of this service

was quite happy," Thibault says. "One lady in particular came in to get the POV printed for a few members of her family."

In Digby, most people are so thrilled that the library is offering the service, says library clerk Joanna Jarvis.

"They are shocked when they find out there is no charge for this service," she adds.

"It's what people needed," says Executive Director Erin Comeau. "We were able to help people coming to our door."

She says the fact that the library has 10 branches throughout the Tri-Counties able to assist hundreds of people access their vaccine passports and print them proved an invaluable service.

Funding and changing technology prove challenging

From Page 1

"It's been a pleasure to work at the library, and it afforded me lots of opportunities in Nova Scotia and to visit other libraries across Canada," she says.

She knows the library faces many challenges, especially changing technology, fundraising and budgeting.

Funding is so important to the library which runs a very lean operation, she says.

She says it is hard to promote services without adequate funding. At her branch in Yarmouth, she says the support of

Yarmouth Public Library and Museum has been so important and a big help over the years.

The biggest shift is in the use of technology and the computerization of libraries, she notes, acknowledging that keeping up with changes is a necessary expense.

In the early days, most of her work was getting people their books. The library has evolved into a community hub, a place for job interviews, tutoring, business displays, computer and Internet access. It offers access to

many government services with staff assisting people in printing off necessary government documents or filing for such services as employment insurance.

"We will continually change to accommodate patrons," she says. "We are willing to change."

Overall, Frost is going to miss seeing the library users every day.

"I've been doing it so long; I will miss talking to people."

She says she has met a lot of interesting people, who were "pro-library, big supporters, good patrons and sponsors."

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Headquarters

Top right, Headquarters volunteer Mark Pitman received a certificate marking 30 years of service to the library from Executive Director Erin Comeau in September.



Right, Yarmouth caretaker Michael Robicheau received his five-year certificate (as of Oct. 3) from Erin Comeau in October.



Clark's Harbour

A teacher at a local school is picking up boxes of books for use by students at the school, creating a new outreach opportunity for the library.

The library's cork buoy grab-and-go kit was a huge hit.

Digby

After attending a number of programs, a journalism student has expressed an interest in writing about the library's art displays or its paint programs.

Casual clerk Maria Wong marked her 25th anniversary

with the library on Oct. 1.

Lockeport

Friends of the Lockeport Library had a fall fundraiser, selling tickets on a colouring book and book bag designed and made by Marion Goyette.



Cheryl Nickerson had the winning tickets for the Friends of the Lockeport Library fundraiser.

Shelburne

Library staff is taking part in Miracle on Dock Street, a stationary parade on Dec. 4 from 5 to 8:30 p.m.



Read to Me returned to Shelburne library this fall.

Weymouth



Weymouth Waterfront Library had a metal roof installed after its shingled roof leaked this fall.



Systems Administrator Ryan McKenzie installs a new computer at the Weymouth branch with a larger screen and Large Print keyboard.