

Library Report

Compiled by Ian White



Board profile

Elizabeth Acker

Town of Shelburne Coun. Elizabeth Acker brings a wealth of committee and life experience and her love of libraries to Western Counties Regional Library board.

The long-time Shelburne County resident is a retired teacher and municipal councillor. She believes she has a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a board member, the ability to ask questions on important issues, and the ability to make difficult decisions.

"I welcomed the opportunity to serve because I believe the role and importance of libraries is crucial in all communities," she says.

She says the biggest challenge before the board is adequate funding for the library.

"Our staff are skilled, knowledgeable employees and that must be reflected in their compensation," she says. "Secondly, it is essential to continue to ensure our libraries are meeting the needs of our communities through programming and technology."

The importance and the role of libraries continues to increase, she says, acting as a hub for community groups, providing children's and teen programming and never-ending resources of books, music and movies.

"I cannot imagine the impact on a community and its residents, if services now provided were downgraded because of insufficient funding."



From left, Yarmouth library clerk Jeremy Ayotte and Executive Director Erin Comeau point to the 2022 Adopt-A-Book campaign's goal of 750 books.

Adopt-A-Book set to launch

People have an opportunity to help their public library in a big way over the next two months during Western Counties Regional Library 2022 Adopt-A-Book campaign.

The Adopt-A-Book campaign will run from Saturday, Oct. 1 through Wednesday, Nov. 30.

"This fundraiser comes at a critical time for the library," says Library Executive Director Erin Comeau. "Our funding has been frozen for the next three years. With rising inflation and related-costs of operation, we have to cut back on the number of new books and other library material we buy."

The fundraiser allows people to adopt (purchase for the library) books to put on their public library's shelves. All 10 branches will have books on display that are available to adopt and borrow right away.

People can adopt in person or online via westerncounties.ca. The goal is to have 750 books adopted, valued at approximately \$20,000.

"This is a fundraiser the public has really got behind over the years," says Sherry Thorburn Irvine, chair of the regional library board. "I believe people support the campaign because it is gift they can see, feel and use right away," she says, adding, "Library boards have to raise three per cent of their annual budget, and this is one way we do it."

Every book adopted will have a nameplate acknowledging the adoption placed inside the front cover of the book. The person adopting the book can also be the first one to borrow it.

The average price of a book is between \$25-30, but books are available for much less.

For information about the Adopt-a-Book Campaign visit any branch library, or go online at www.westerncounties.ca.

25-Year Work Anniversary



Headquarters Catalogue Maintenance / Collection Exchange / Interlibrary Loan clerk Bonnie Doucette, left, receives her 25-year work certificate from Lydia Hunsberger, Manager of Collections and Digital Services on July 7.

Technology arrives for those with print disabilities

Western Counties Regional Library has acquired the latest reader technology, providing better support and services for those with print disabilities.

The Victor Stratus DAISY readers can be borrowed by any library user who self-identifies as having a print disability. DAISY readers will read a variety of formats such as .txt, ePub, .html, Mp3 and DAISY.

“DAISY readers have greater accessibility features compared to other audio devices, such as the ability to adjust the pitch and speed without distorting the sound,” says Lydia Hunsberger, Manager of Collections and Digital Services for the regional library. “On a DAISY reader, users have greater navigational control of the book, depending on the format. This makes it easier to browse the book, and users can place digital bookmarks to make it easier to find where they left off.”

DAISY files can come on discs, or can be downloaded. A DAISY file includes text, but it can also include audio and images. Users can choose to listen to the book along with descriptions of images or view the images separately, read the book using screen-enlarging



Lydia Hunsberger, Manager of Collections and Digital Services for Western Counties Regional Library, holds one of the library's new Victor Stratus DAISY readers available for those with print disabilities.

software, or read the book in Braille using a refreshable Braille display.

“The library purchased 10 DAISY readers in order to make library services more accessible for patrons with print disabilities,” Hunsberger says. “Each library branch will have one reader.”

A print disability is defined as a

condition that affects an individual's ability to read printed materials and can include vision impairment, physical dexterity and perceptual conditions.

“If you have a print disability, library staff can register you for additional library services that will provide you with accessible materials,” Hunsberger says.

Families benefit from library's relationship with schools

Children are gaining a love of reading thanks to a partnership between Weymouth Consolidated School and Weymouth Waterfront Library.

“It is very important to have a relationship with our local school as most of the children do not visit the library on their own,” says Weymouth library clerk Marguerite Thibault. “When we visit the school, we bring boxes of books which may not be available in the classroom or in the small school library.”

Weymouth library staff has a long history of going out to the schools to read and promote library activities, says Erin Comeau, Western Counties Regional Library Executive Director. The COVID-19 pandemic put a pause on school visits.

With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, the library and Weymouth schools have been able to revive their relationship. The school is within walking distance of the library, making it easy to set up for both the library and the school.

“When the class visits the library, I explain the shelving system. I make a little game afterwards by writing down questions on pieces of paper and put them in a bag,” says Thibault.

The students pull out a question that they have to answer.

“Some of the questions I will ask are ‘where are the books by J.K. Rowling’ or ‘what is the call number for books about cats’,” she says.

Class visits also include a story time and an explanation of the coming programs.

During story time, Thibault says students hear about different authors and ask for books by those authors to be delivered to the school.

“The teacher plays an important part by having the class visit the library,” she says.

During a recent tour of the library, several students went home and asked their parents to take them to the library.

“We have seen quite a few families visit the library this summer,” Thibault says.

Children became excited about finding new books to read and wanted library cards because of the school visits, Comeau says.

“The school and the library work together to get the kids interested in reading,” she says.