

# Library Report

Compiled by Ian White



## Staff profile

**Shelley Smith**

An avid reader all of her life, Shelley Smith found work that meshed with her passion thanks to her mother-in-law.

"This is funny – I was just out of work and my mother-in-law comes to my house with an application for the library," says Shelley, the Library Clerk III at the Clark's Harbour library. "She had been in and the clerk told her that she needed a Reserve (clerk). She knew I loved to read, so I applied."

The rest, as they say, is history. Since June 9, 1985, Shelley has been serving patrons and keeping the shelves in order at the various incarnations of the Clark's Harbour library.

Her favourite part about working for Western Counties Regional Library is the people.

"I like the people! I guess it's a social thing," she says. "I love it when someone asks me, 'what's a good book?' and then comes back and tells me 'that one was great! I need another one!'"

She believes the biggest moment for the Clark's Harbour library and the community was the building of the new civic centre in which the library is housed. The library moved into the new building in December 2007.

"The opening of the new library has to be the most memorable moment," she says. "To go from that very small, cramped space to this brand new large, beautiful library – it doesn't get any better than that."

That said, she says the biggest challenge is getting more people in the area to take advantage of the new library and all of its services.

## Partnerships extend reach and role of library

Western Counties Regional Library realizes the importance of forming community partnerships to enhance its services and the community it serves.

"It is important that the library reflects the community it serves and is actively engaged with that community," says Acting Regional Library Director Joanne Head.

Head, like her predecessor Trudy Amirault, advocates being involved with other organizations and developing partnerships.

The partnership with the Community Access Program (C@P) was one of the first major associations that pushed the library outside of its comfort zone and helped keep it on the cutting edge of new technology.

"Partnerships broaden our horizons as well as the organizations we work with cooperatively to benefit the public," says Head. "It is fiscally responsible and an enriching experience for all."

C@P got the library involved with local economic development agencies and those partnerships have evolved, creating the Immigration Information Navigator position out of library headquarters and the Seniors Mentoring Newcomers program. Although the navigator has left to work at a Yarmouth car dealership, the position is being covered by the navigator from Queen County. The role of the navigator is to co-ordinate the delivery of information and to provide referral services to immigrants and people new to Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties. The navigator organizes programs and workshops on many topics useful to newcomers and works with volunteers to assist people with English and French as second languages. The navigator has a toolkit for newcomers covering all the bases for someone new to the area, everything from setting up a phone to finding car insurance.

The Seniors Mentoring Newcomers project, based out of library headquarters, is designed to increase the retention of newcomers in the region and enable the active participation of area seniors as mentors for newcomers. Funding came from the New Horizons for Seniors program, but the initiative had its roots in the Immigration Information Navigator project.

The most recent partnership for the library has been with Waste Check, which provides waste-reduction awareness, education and program support for the municipal units in Digby and Yarmouth counties. Through Waste Check's Community Sponsorship Fund, the regional library added \$1,000 worth of books providing information on waste reduction and related environmental activities for the public.

In addition, the regional library works with area daycares, South West Health, art groups, public speaking and writing groups, and other organizations to provide space, programming and resources.



**Acting Library Director Joanne Head holds up two books from the collection provided by Waste Check funding.**

# Library staff tackles continents' highest peaks

## *Workplace wellness program mixes physical activity with fun and rewards*

Staff at Western Counties Regional Library have strapped on their climbing gear to tackle the tallest peaks on the seven continents. The Seven Summit Challenge is all part of a workplace wellness initiative that came out of a meeting attended by Public Relations Manager Ian White in 2010.

"The intent was to motivate staff in a fun way to become or stay physically active," says White. "Staff members track any walking or running they do every week and fill in their own personal logs."

The mountains have elevations that range from the 4,884 metres of Indonesia's Carstensz Pyramid to Asia's Mount Everest's 8,848 metres. In total participants are asked to cover just over 43 kilometres. Staff members are encouraged to complete the challenge as many times as they can. One staff member has climbed the seven peaks seven times (over 300 kilometres) since it started in mid-January.

The challenge begins with Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa, and finishes atop Aconagua in the Argentinean Andes. More than 20 staff members have taken up the challenge, including staff at most of the branches.

"This has motivated me to get more active," says Shelley Smith, Library Clerk at the Clark's Harbour library. "I challenge myself to try to walk an average of 10,000 steps every day. Some days it's a lot less, but then some days I really step it up!"

Shelburne Library Clerk Debbie Fraser adds: "I have been enjoying doing this challenge. It is nice to set goals, and I'm getting to see more of my community. The fresh air is nice, too."

The regional library approved \$200 toward the program to provide monthly prize draws of aluminum water bottles and a grand prize of a \$50 gift certificate to a local sporting



**From left, Verna DeViller and Vicki Cheesman of Headquarters have both won water bottles during the monthly draws for the Seven Summit Challenge.**

goods store in the winner's region. The challenge wraps up in December 2011.

"It is a fun way to exercise and having a chance to win prizes is a plus," says Weymouth Library Clerk Marguerite Thibault.

The experience has helped give some of the regional library staff a greater sense of belonging.

"It was fun knowing other staff were doing the challenge," says Lockeport Library Clerk Heather Suttle.

Some staff members have reported a healthy change in their lifestyle.

"Walking in the evening is very relaxing and helps me sleep better," says Headquarters Clerk Vicki Cheesman. "I've also lost 15 pounds so far, along with eating healthier. I am hoping to lose a lot more. The water bottle that I won as a prize is great!"

## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### **Barrington**

Barrington Reserve Clerk Cheryl Devine started at the branch on Feb. 3, replacing Crissy Nickerson who finished at the library on Feb. 1, 2011. The library had a booth on April 16 at Something for Everyone, a Shelburne community fair held at the Barrington Municipal High School.

### **Clare**

The puzzle exchange that started in January 2010 continues to thrive and be a hit among patrons.

### **Clark's Harbour**

The branch revived its preschool story hour, and it has been a hit averaging seven children per program with 11 children attending the special Easter program.

### **Digby**

The new nine-metre awning over the entrance of the library was installed in December. Unfortunately, it blew off on a windy day in early April.

### **Lockeport**

Lockeport has had the doorsill for its main entrance adjusted so it

meets the ramp and is wheelchair accessible.

### **Pubnico**

The weekly bilingual program Baby and Me continues to be popular at the Pubnico library.

### **Shelburne**

During March and April, the Friends of the Shelburne Library raffled off an oil painting donated by Shelburne County artist Ernie Dexter. The raffle raised \$310 for the Friends group. The winner was Kate Turner.

### **Westport**

Library Clerk David Tudor offers adult reading classes from 1:10 to 1:50 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday to help teach adults (19 and over) to read.

### **Weymouth**

There has been a significant increase in the use of the library's program room which is now being used for training, meetings, programs and celebrations.

### **Yarmouth**

The Seniors Mentoring Newcomers program, based at Headquarters within the Yarmouth library, has matched six immigrant families with six local families to help the immigrant family settle in the area.