

Library Report

Compiled by Ian White



Board Profile

Sherry Atkinson

The Western Counties Regional Library Board's newest member brings extensive experience with her.

Sherry Atkinson, a Clark's Harbour town councillor, is stepping in to the spot vacated by the late Catherine Goreham, who stepped down last fall because of health issues and died on May 18, 2011. Although she is sad about the circumstances that had her join the board, she is excited to become part of something for which she has always been passionate.

"I immediately said 'yes' when they asked me to do this," she says. "I do love books."

The grandmother of three is a former school teacher and employee of the Royal Bank of Canada. She is a longtime volunteer whose interest in the community led to her involvement in municipal politics.

"I've always been involved a lot in things, just because I like to know how things run," she says.

An avid library user, she leaned heavily on the Clark's Harbour library when she was seeking more information on her husband Ronnie Atkinson's illness. Ronnie died last year, but during his illness, she used the library to obtain information on managing his illness and learning about possible treatments.

As a town councillor, she is well aware of the challenges facing the library.

"I think we have a big challenge just to keep it going," she explains. She understands that with budget cuts and a struggling economy, it is that much harder for the library to continue to deliver its services to people.

Meet the new director

Western Counties Regional Library has hired its new library director from within, elevating French Services Coordinator Erin Comeau to the position.

"The selection committee was impressed with Erin's enthusiasm for, and her knowledge in the field of public library service to the community in general and the users in particular," said Gary Archibald, chair of the regional library board. "She has been a valued worker for our Western Counties Regional Library Board during her tenure with us."

May 2 was her first day on the job as Regional Library Director, a post previously occupied by Trudy Amirault before her retirement in early December 2010.

"I want to work with staff as well as the community to establish goals to provide innovative, quality services," Comeau says. "Being a recent grad, I bring fresh ideas to the table."

Comeau has been very involved in the community, especially in the Municipality of the District of Clare where she grew up. She believes that experience gives her a good understanding of the region and the possible partnerships for the library.

She says the biggest challenge, aside from funding, is to keep up with new technology and stay current while still providing traditional library services.

"Public libraries are very lean operations," she says. "Our funding is static which means we face challenges in that area because our operating costs continue to climb."

"But technology is changing at a rapid pace and we have to find a way to stay with it and remain relevant."

Comeau joined the management team as French Services Manager on June 13, 2005. She completed her Masters in Library and Information Service at the University of Western Ontario in 2007, becoming the librarian for the Clare, Pubnico and Weymouth branches.

In addition to her duties as librarian, she is the library's webmaster and developed the French side of the library website.



New Western Counties Regional Library Director Erin Comeau's first day on the job was May 2.



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Summer is going to be a Splash at the library

Life could be a beach or a voyage 20,000 leagues under the sea during this year's TD Summer Reading Club at Western Counties Regional Library's 10 branches.

Running from June 27 or 28 (depending on branch hours) until Aug. 20, the Summer Reading Club with its Splash theme offers fun, prizes and programs for children, teens and adults. Programming, geared toward children, will be water-related and cover everything from sharks to sea legends and beaches to water balloons.

"It's fun, free entertainment," says Joanne Head, coordinator of the program at Western Counties Regional Library. "Read what you want to read and be rewarded for it."

Head says the rewards are plentiful and include the mental stimulation of reading in addition to the prizes.

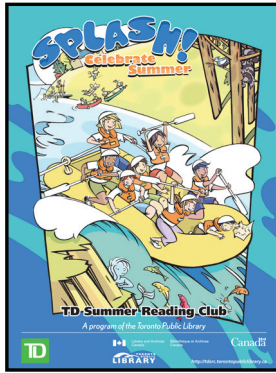
"Reading is a skill that suffers when we don't do it," Head says. "The club makes reading that much more fun because it is non-competitive and non-judgmental."

The club is divided into three separate groups for children, teens and adults, each with its own set of prizes.

The Children's Summer Reading Club is for children up to the Grade 6 level. Young readers can choose from reading goals of 10, 20 or 30 hours over the summer months. When participants reach their goal, they receive a FastPass to Upper Clements Park and a chance to win great prizes including a grand prize of a bicycle and helmet per county provided by Digby Canadian Tire in Digby, McDonald's in Yarmouth and Wilson's Home Hardware in Barrington Passage. Secondary prizes include skating and pool passes to various area rinks and pools.

Every teen that signs up and completes 25 hours of reading is entered in a draw for an 8 GB Apple iPod Touch or a \$25 gift card from Staples Yarmouth and receives a FastPass to Upper Clements Park. For every five hours of reading, teen participants will have their names put in draws for bags of books.

FastPasses will be given out beginning Aug. 2 for children and teens who have completed their reading goal. Children and teens can only earn one FastPass.



"You can exercise your mind through reading and your body with a visit to Upper Clements Park," Head says.

The potential rewards for adults reading for 25 hours over the summer include a prize draw of brunch for two and golf for two at the Digby Pines Golf Resort and Spa, books from Coles, or gift certificates to a restaurant in each county, Chez Christophe in Digby County, Rudder's Restaurant & Brew Pub in Yarmouth and Charlotte Lane in Shelburne.

Head says because the club is for children, teens and adults, it is truly a family affair, and the prizes

provide incentive to keep reading over the summer. For more information, visit any one of the branches of Western Counties Regional Library or www.westerncounties.ca.

Action!



A film crew was in the Yarmouth branch earlier this year filming a short commercial piece for the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Pictured above, Yarmouth Library Clerk Yvette Frost, right, is given some direction for the commercial that aired in February.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Barrington

The Barrington library is starting a teen advisory group. The first meeting is at 6 p.m. on Friday July 8 and is open to all teens.

Clare

Angelique LeBlanc started work as the summer Community Access Program (C@P) student on June 13.

Clark's Harbour

Joanne Head is now coordinator for the Clark's Harbour library.

Digby

The rugs have been shampooed. The new hanging system for artwork was installed in the Program Room. This year's C@P student is Haley Andrews who starts June 20.

Lockeport

Recreation Month displays, games and draws are proving very popular among patrons.

Pubnico

Wednesday's Baby and Me at the library has grown into a popular social time for babies and caregivers with participants staying beyond the hour and borrowing lots of books.

Shelburne

Library Clerk III Debbie Perry received her certificate for 15 years of service. She began working at the library on June 3, 1996.

Westport

C@P student Zoe Dixon will spend part of her time at the Westport library this summer. She begins work on June 20.

Weymouth

Amanda Bright has returned as the Weymouth summer C@P student. Rick Beharriell is now coordinator for the Weymouth library.

Yarmouth

Connie Nickerson, Yarmouth library clerk I, resigned on May 4. Julia Plaizer, Yarmouth reserve library clerk, resigned on May 26. Veronica Hubbard's first day as the new Yarmouth reserve library clerk was June 6.