



Food-for-Fines program makes triumphant return

After great success last year, the Western Counties Regional Library's Food-for-Fines program is running again this month. Patrons of the library can trade food in exchange for overdue fines during the month of March.

The library has re-instituted a region-wide fine-amnesty program tied to donations of non-perishable food items for area food banks. For every item of food donated to

the library, up to \$5 in overdue fines will be forgiven. If a patron owes \$30 in fines and brings in six food items, the account will be wiped clean.

Fines on materials borrowed through Inter-Library Loans are not part of the Food-for-Fines program. The Western Counties Regional Library is charged fees on overdue material borrowed through an Inter-Library Loan by the lending library and these costs must be recouped.

Regional library director Trudy Amirault says the program serves two purposes. March is a difficult month for food banks and for people having to pay power and oil bills.

"We can give our patrons a break and at the same time help replenish area food banks' dwindling supplies," she said.

Library branches throughout Yarmouth, Shelburne and Digby counties will collect the food for the food banks that serve their areas.

There is no limit on the amount of fines for overdue materials that will be forgiven. However, the food-for-fines program does not apply to lost or damaged materials.

Library Express patrons can also trade food for fines. If they can arrange for someone to drop off the food items to their nearest library, the fines will be forgiven.

Whether they owe fines or not, anyone is welcome to contribute a donation.

"You can still donate to the food bank even if you have no fines owing, but you can't use the donation to defray the costs of future fines," said Amirault.



John MacDonald

Board profile

younger patrons or potential patrons in a language and with the tools they understand. This could range from how the library provides Internet access to library programs and services to changing the way the library staff think in terms of serving the public.

Finding the right mix to meet the needs of the various generations using the library is the tricky part, he says.

His experience with the Yarmouth Public Library and Museum has given John a solid background in maintaining and planning for the physical building in Yarmouth, but being part of the Western Counties Regional Library is quickly broadening his horizons.

"It's altogether a different focus, a different mandate," he explains. Essentially it is about providing a library for the community.

He is becoming aware of what is going on in other areas such as the hard work being done to provide some of the great new facilities just opened or in the works for the various communities served by the library. "It's very rewarding to see those things happen."

A branch manager of the Bank of Montreal by day and a staunch supporter of the library by night (and day), the Western Counties Regional Library's newest board member wants to ensure the library remains relevant.

John MacDonald joined the library board in November 2006 as a representative of Yarmouth Public Library and Museum, serving on the executive of the public library as its past president.

"There's a need for the library to remain relevant for the population it serves," he says.

The challenge is to allocate the resources to achieve that goal, such as having enough large print and audio books and current publications for the aging population, he says.

The library must also stay in tune with the younger generation so that it can serve

Clark's Harbour library getting new home

The federal and provincial governments announced funding of \$663,120 toward a new civic centre for Clark's Harbour on Feb. 16.

The new facility will house the Clark's Harbour branch of the Western Counties Regional Library, a new visitor information centre, conference room, Community Access Program (C@P) site and municipal offices for the Town of Clark's Harbour. Mayor Leigh B. Stoddart said, "This investment in the Clark's Harbour

Community Centre brings many benefits to our residents. The centre will help encourage economic opportunities for our area."

The majority of the funding, \$267,363, is coming from the Municipal-Rural Infrastructure Fund, \$183,903 is through Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), \$172,255 from the Town of Clark's Harbour and \$39,599 from the Clark's Harbour Friends of the Library and other local fundraising.

Upgrading gives library clerk big boost

Decades into her career with the Western Counties Regional Library, Yvette Frost took a risk that reaped many rewards.

Yvette has earned her diploma in Library and Information Technology from the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), something that has reenergized the Library Clerk III at the Yarmouth branch library.

"It's been interesting," she says. "I've learned a lot and I've used it (knowledge gained during her studies). I've used something from every course."

She has a long list of skills gained and emotions attached to working full-time while completing her degree via distance education from January 2001 through January 2007.

"I've told others it is worth taking, but it does take a lot of commitment," she says. "You gain the personal satisfaction from learning and realizing 'I knew I could do it.'"

Techniques to tackle cataloguing, disaster preparedness, reference interviews, new technologies, management skills are all things she has taken away from the program.

She says, "You learn hands-on skills to run a branch."

One of the best courses she says she took and has since shared with fellow staff is how to use a basic reference room.

"What you learn, you want to share," she explains.



Yvette Frost received her diploma in Library and Information Technology on Feb. 23.

Dissatisfied with her career as it was in 2000, Yvette decided it was time to take on a new challenge that would improve her skill set and possibly give her more opportunities.

She discovered the two-year Library and Information Technology program was available online through the NSCC Institute of Technology Campus in Halifax. Over the six years, she worked with students of all ages from across Canada.

The diploma program trains students to assist clients in organizing and accessing information in university, school, special and public libraries as well as archives, corporations and museums.

It is the only program in Atlantic Canada that follows the Canadian Library Association's Guidelines for the Education of Library Technicians.

Staffing Updates

Ian White is the newest member of the management team at the Western Counties Regional Library, starting Jan. 29 as the Public Relations Manager.

Ian is familiar with the library, its goals and challenges. He helped with the library PR on a part-time basis for the last two years.



He brings lots of experience to the publicity side of the position, having worked in the newspaper industry for over 10 years, including three years as managing editor of a daily newspaper in Portage la Prairie, Man.

He knows the region well, starting his newspaper career as a reporter for The Yarmouth Vanguard in the late 1980s, early 1990s. He managed a project for the South West Shore Development Authority in Shelburne and Yarmouth counties from 2000 to 2003 before becoming a stay-at-home dad and running a home-based business.

He is looking forward to the challenge of fundraising for the library in new and innovative ways without forgetting established campaigns such as Adopt-A-Book.

Welcome Jade Malone to the Barrington branch as the new Reserve Library Clerk. Jade came on board Dec. 4. She is replacing Kimberley Adams who is now the 17-hour person in Barrington.

Nakita Walker began Dec. 6 in the Digby Student position at the Digby branch.

Belle Hatfield finished up as Public Relations Manager on Dec. 31 after four years of service. All the best, Belle!

Karen Doucet started Feb. 12 as the new Reserve Library Clerk in Yarmouth.

We wish to welcome all our new staff and best wishes to those who are moving on.