

The Book Nook

by Kate Oland

On any given day, I get asked some pretty interesting questions at the library. Helping people answer those questions is a part of the job I really enjoy. But there's one question I'm hearing more and more often lately - a question that makes me grit my teeth and shudder. In this issue of the Book Nook, I'm going to address this question head on, and hopefully change a misperception that seems to be gaining a foothold out there.

The question is: "Aren't libraries dying out because so many people are using the Internet?" Although the question does tend to make me cringe, part of me celebrates a bit when I hear it, because it gives me an opportunity to tell people the truth: libraries are alive and well and growing!

Across Nova Scotia, our regional libraries are experiencing annual increases in circulation, program attendance, computer usage, and "holds" (requests for books in other library branches). That pattern holds true for the Cape Breton Regional Library. Circulation increased over that of the previous year at 13 of our 15 branches and bookmobiles in 2009/10, and our patrons placed a total of 55,939 holds - an increase of 11.77% over the previous year!

Some of the recent increases may be a result of tougher economic times, and there is a good body research to show that public libraries become even more essential as "social infrastructure" when times are tough. This only makes sense, when you consider that Nova Scotia public

library programs and services are absolutely free. The public can join the library, borrow books and other materials, access the Internet for recreation or to apply for work, attend early literacy programs, learn new skills, use community rooms for meetings, or socialize - all at no charge.

And not only do libraries provide free programs and services, they also contribute to the local economy. Studies have shown that public libraries have an economic impact that greatly exceeds their cost, returning somewhere between \$4 to \$6 to the local economy for every \$1 invested in them. That's an awful lot of value in one public building!

For those who are wondering whether that increased usage means "more people using the computers, fewer people borrowing books," let me dispel that notion as well. In 2009/2010, the Victoria County library branches alone (Baddeck, Ingonish, and bookmobile), loaned out 40,879 items, up from 35,570 the previous year. The most popular items borrowed? Adult fiction, and children's books.

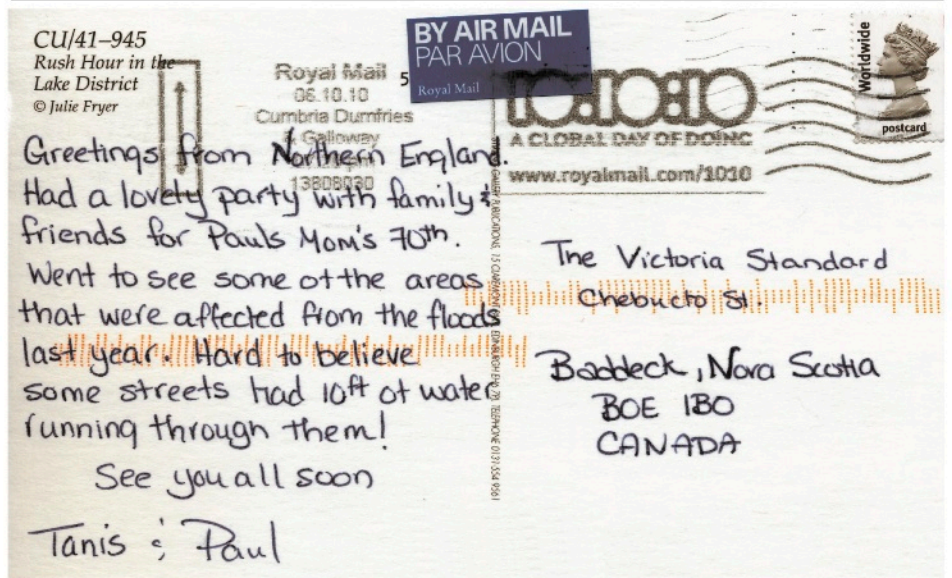
In addition, we ran a total of 130 programs attended by 1,152 children and adults; had a total library membership of 2,260 people, saw a total "door count" of 18,723, and placed holds on 6,383 items. And, of course, answered lots of questions. 2,188 of them (not counting the question I'm writing about!).

Kate Oland, Baddeck Branch/Victoria County Bookmobile - 295-2055
 Leona Stockley, Victoria North Regional Branch (Ingonish) - 285-2544

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 Stuart MacLeod, President and CEO, is pleased to announce the appointment of **John Pino, B.Comm., FCIP, CRM, CAIB,** as **Vice President, Industry Relations,** of the **MacLeod Lorway Group.**


John joined the MacLeod Lorway Group in 1994 after working briefly with a chartered bank. He became manager of Island Insurance with offices in North Sydney and Baddeck in 1998, and is currently a shareholder and director of the group.

John was elected to the board of the Insurance Brokers Association of Nova Scotia (IBANS) in 2005 and served as President in 2008-2009. In 2009-2010, he served concurrently as a Director of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada (IBAC) and Chairman of the IBANS board.

John is a graduate of Riverview Rural High School and Saint Mary's University and has pursued continuing education in the insurance industry. He holds his Fellow Chartered Insurance Professional (FCIP) designation, his Canadian Risk Management (CRM) designation, and is a Canadian Accredited Insurance Broker (CAIB). In 2009, John was selected as one of only 15 brokers from across Canada to participate in RSA Group's Making Partner Program in Queen's Executive Development Centre at Queen's University.

He resides in Westmount with his wife, Cora Lee, and their two daughters and combines his commitment to his community with his passion for golf and hockey by serving as the President of the Members' Society at Bell Bay Golf Club and he was an active fundraiser for the new Northside Civic Centre.

The MacLeod Lorway Group is one of Nova Scotia's largest independent brokers with offices in nine Nova Scotia communities offering all lines of insurance.

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