

SOUTH SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020



BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

It's my pleasure to once again be invited to bring greetings in the South Shore Public Libraries annual report on behalf of the members of our Board of Directors.

The past year has been one full of fun, change, opportunities, and challenges for South Shore Public Libraries.

At long last, after years of advocacy, we learned that the funding formula which determines provincial and municipal contributions to library boards across the province was being revised.

For more than a decade, that formula had remained unchanged, meaning that each year our staff and board faced the challenge of having to “do more with less” as the cost of living, doing business, and providing modern library services continued to rise.

The change in funding, phased in over the next two fiscal years, will mean we are able to invest more than ever in our collection, our resources, our mobile branch, our programs, and our people.

Early 2020 has brought a new set of challenges associated with the arrival of COVID-19, but I am grateful and proud of the resiliency shown by each and every member of our staff. SSPL has adapted to the current crisis and found unique ways to allow us to continue providing a variety of library services through the pandemic.

In fact, I do not hesitate to say that our library was on the cutting edge of all such library organizations in Nova Scotia in terms of what we were able to continue to provide to the residents of Lunenburg and Queens counties during the pandemic.



I am incredibly proud – and we should all be incredibly proud – of the public service we continue to provide, the adaptability of our staff, and their willingness to put all options on the table as we continue our mission to celebrate reading, discovering, learning, and sharing, even during the most challenging of times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patrick Hirtle'.

Patrick Hirtle
SSPL Board Chair

CHIEF LIBRARIAN'S MESSAGE

In last year's report I made the case for libraries being essential social infrastructure. South Shore Public Libraries proudly celebrated this idea when we chose it as our theme for the 2019 NSLA Conference in October at White Point Resort, Queens County. It was a good description then, and is perhaps even more appropriate now.

Given our current predicament of learning how to live in a global pandemic because of Covid-19, our celebration of libraries last October seems a long time ago. For this reason, I want to remind people what we mean when we talk about libraries as social infrastructure.

Eric Klinenburg in his book "Palaces for the People", says social infrastructure is the interdependent mix of facilities, places, spaces, programs, projects, services and networks that maintain and improve the standard of living and quality of life in a community. In short, it is the glue that holds community together.

In my opinion, the role of public libraries as the "glue" that holds communities together has never been more important than during this pandemic when people are encouraged to shelter in place and exercise an abundance of caution when they go out. While this extended period of social isolation is hard on us all, it is very difficult on the most vulnerable members of our community who may not have the resources they require to safely weather this threat to public health. Cut off from their usual networks and resources they may find themselves in trouble. We at South Shore Public Libraries feel strongly about our mission to keep everyone connected to the resources they need to cope during these extraordinary times.

To this end, we have worked tirelessly to adapt our services to adhere to the latest guidelines from NS Public Health to safely provide library services. Since closing our outlets to the public on March 17, staff began working on ways to continue to provide access to services and foster community connections. We quickly increased the capacity and volume of our on-line digital resources including: e-books, audio books, original content, a list of curated resources, and most recently a digital publication called "QuaranZine" which is collecting your thoughts and observations of how our community adapts to living with Covid-19.

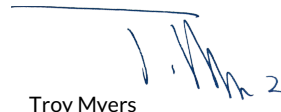
While the digital collections and resources have been well received, staff also wanted to find ways to continue to circulate physical materials to our friends and neighbours who do not have access to the internet. For these folks we began to offer curb-side pick-ups at our branches within days of closing and we had the bookmobile on the road one week later. While the safe circulation of physical collections has proven to be difficult and time-consuming, staff consider it an essential service and the people who make it happen deserve the highest commendation for their commitment to community. On behalf of the entire Board I want to thank them all. It is my honour to work with such dedicated people.

As we make the slow and deliberate journey back to our regular hours of service, the Library remains in regular contact with our partners and we are taking steps to ensure that we return to our regular levels of service in a safe and orderly manner. Despite these challenges and unique time for the Library, we continue to do what we can to serve the public as we eagerly await a return to normal service levels.

Looking back on 2019, prior to the province wide shut down, we were on track for a banner year! Our programming hit new milestones and other success metrics illustrated growth. I encourage you to have a look at all the success measures included in this annual report. We are very proud of the work we accomplished in 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. If you have any questions regarding any of the data included in the report please contact me at troy@ssplibraries.ca

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our incredible staff and dedicated Board members — the heart of our Library Family — for their continued support and patience during this uncertain time. We can't wait to reunite with all of you and to welcome you back in our physical spaces. Like Klinenburg says, it's the enduring value and power of community, information, and accessibility which keep us healthy and happy, and that's what libraries are all about.

I look forward to seeing you all one day soon in the Library!



Troy Myers
Chief Librarian





MISSION

Our Libraries Celebrate
Reading, Discovering, Learning and Sharing



VISION

South Shore Public Libraries is a vital centre of the community, sharing a robust collection and innovative technology, that inspires life long learning and literacy in a positive, welcoming environment.



VALUES

Literacy • Innovation • Inclusion •
Intellectual Freedom • Collaboration • Community



BRANCH UPDATES



Real Experiences. Real Information.

ALEAN FREEMAN LIBRARY, GREENFIELD

Another year and we have again seen an increase in our numbers. While it may not seem like a lot, throughout this past winter we have seen our numbers consistently in the double digits each day we are open, even on the dark and stormy Wednesday evenings!

In December we hosted author Tim McDonald for a book launch which saw 19 people in attendance! Thankfully we were able to use the multi-purpose room at the school, as it would have been difficult to host that many people in the library. It was especially exciting because it wasn't only regular library patrons who attended, but also other community members. As a thank you to the library for hosting, Tim donated a signed copy of his latest book for our collection

Some other programming highlights in the past year included hosting SuperNOVA (Dalhousie University science program for kids), making light-up unicorn cards to celebrate Pride week, and celebrating Harry Potter's birthday (there was cake). For most of these one-off programs we have a consistent turnout of 6-10 participants, which we are more than happy about!

Over the past year the majority of the collection has been weeded to ensure that we have the best examples of new and popular titles while still maintaining the classics. Our collection of Reading Nova Scotia titles has been added to and is very popular, especially with summer visitors.

During the current closure due to COVID-19 the branch supervisor worked from home and kept our volunteers up-to-date. We have provided curbside pick-up service once and will be continuing to offer that on a monthly basis while the branch is closed.

Thank you again to all of our dedicated volunteers who continue to keep this branch running. It is a pleasure to work with you!

Charity Fraser,
Greenfield Branch Supervisor

BOOKMOBILE

It was a very active year for the Mobile Library

We are much beloved by our loyal patrons. Some stops are seeing a resurgence of circulation due to new families. Petite Riviere has perked up and Chester and Mahone Bay are always busier with the return of summer residents. Our newest Book Club, facilitated by the Mobile, is called The Mahone Baybes. A name to make you smile. This year we are encouraging borrowers to participate in the 2020 Reading Challenge by doing a display with title possibilities. Thank you to Charity, Alean Freeman Library Coordinator, for creating this fun program. Last year the Mobile had the most participants.

A new Bookmobile is in the works for the near future. The Mobile has added a new stop at Barss Corner. There are regular patrons with more in summer when cottage people arrive.

We are very pleased to be the recipient the "One Word" book fundraiser. This compilation of stories by the South Shore Scribes is still available at all SSPL branches and all the profits go to the library for the new Bookmobile fund.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused us to close mid-March, but we were able to transition to curbside pickup at the Bookmobile as well as library branches before the end of the month. A sincere thank you to Christina Pottie for organizing this. Our South Shore Mobile Library will have the BEST circulation numbers of any Nova Scotian Library.

Crystal E. Madill
Mobile Branch Coordinator





Real Information. Real Conversations.

Real People. Real Information.



LUNENBURG LIBRARY

What a busy year we've had! July marked our first anniversary in our new home at the Lunenburg Academy, and it couldn't have gone any better - membership grew, we ran more (and more diverse) programs with many more attendants, and loaned more materials to more people than ever before. In short, everyone loves the new location and we've been able to do bigger and better things to serve the public in this great space!

Throughout the year we offered many presentations, workshops, and other activities for all ages. Beginning in April 2019, our Writer-In-Residence Chris Benjamin was in-house every Thursday conducting one-on-one appointments with people to provide feedback on writing, as well as hosting writing workshops each Thursday evening (sometimes with special guests). Chris was kept busy helping a great many writers improve their craft and learn tips about navigating the business side of this art form as well.

Last spring we rented a garden plot in the community gardens behind the academy, and ran children's programs where kids learned by helping in the garden. The program was heightened by the addition of arts and crafts, as well as stories in the willow dome. We played and learned in the garden all summer and into the early fall, to follow the complete growth cycle (and eat the rewards of our hard work).

In June we received news that our grant application with Music Counts was successful and we received instruments throughout the summer. New programs began in early Fall for children and youth, and included a xylophone program, a hand-drumming program, and a recording program that used various instruments and equipment. The library got a little loud at times, but it was fun!

Throughout July and August, summer students ran various programs for kids pertaining to science, stories, outdoor play, green-screen, lego robotics and virtual reality. We also had special presentations by comic artist Mark Oakley, a performance by Dr. G Science Music, and an ocean science workshop by SuperNova.

In September we held an event for Climate Action day, where local groups such as Coastal Action, Plastic Free Lunenburg, the Council of Canadians, and Project Lunenburg, participated in discussions to share ideas, thoughts, actions, plans and goals with other interested community members. The team from Coastal Action also delivered a hands-on activity for children afterwards where kids made "seed-bombs".

Our various after-school programs continued with popularity as well as one-off programs such as escape rooms, scavenger hunts, and holiday crafts.

Just a few other highlights: Adam Shoalts (one of Canada's greatest living explorers) talked about his 4000-kilometre journey across Canada's Arctic; Peter Roe was in to share his findings on haunted town halls; Solar NS presented on home options for solar energy; Project Lunenburg held public information sessions; and much more!

Of course, a recap of the year would be incomplete without mentioning the 4th annual Lunenburg Lit Fest! The fourth annual Lunenburg Lit Fest took place September 25-28, 2019. Building on three successful years, Lunenburg Lit 2019 highlighted 10 Canadian authors and featured several local writers. Two additional days of events were added this year to include a Pitch the Publisher evening and a middle grade book launch. Held in several locations throughout the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Lunenburg Lit showcased the cultural diversity, architectural history, and natural beauty of the town and region.

Jeff Mercer
Deputy Chief Librarian



MARGARET HENNIGAR PUBLIC LIBRARY, BRIDGEWATER

Another exciting, busy year has gone by, and the Margaret Hennigar Public Library continues to be an active community hub. We strive to provide our local communities with programming for all ages, educational classes and one-on-one education. We continue to deliver friendly customer service. We look forward to all the wonderful conversations with our patrons, and the challenge of finding the right books for each patron. Please feel welcome in our space. Whether you need to relax with a book in a chair by the window, research for your home business, or play a game on our computers, we are here for you.

This year we added even more programs to our already popular line up. We appreciate our patrons that continue to support these programs, and are willing to try something new. Many of our programs continue to grow such as baby group, cooking with kids, crafternoon, and tech-help. We would love any suggestions for programming. Many of our programs start with a small idea, and grow into something many can enjoy.

Technology is an important element at our library. We continue to update and add to our collection of devices for public use. We encourage you to come use our computers, scanner, photo-copier, tablets, and virtual reality. We offer technology help and classes to help you learn how to use your own devices, or borrow one of ours to learn a new skill.

This past summer was the busiest yet. We have had over 1500 youth attend our programming. We offered French and English programming, outdoor programming,

and continued with our popular programs surrounding the TD Summer Reading Club, which helps to support literacy over the summer months. We added to our very popular Monarch Program. Monarch Butterflies are an endangered species. We acquired a license to raise them to adults, and release them into the wild. We continue to work with the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute. They provided transplants for our community garden to support our monarch program. This year we released 94 monarchs.

We are now into our fifth year of displaying art at the library. This year we shifted focus to art displays by community groups. As a result we had a Midwives display, Mahone Bay Quilters, Centre Scolaire de la Riv-Sud, and Waldorf School. If you are an artist, or community group, please contact us if you wish display your art work. Our Seed Library is also in its fifth year. If you need seeds for your garden, all you need to do is join our seed club and grab your seeds.

The staff at Margaret Hennigar Public Library look forward to greeting our patrons every day. We appreciate you all, and look forward to another year with you. Thank you to our hard-working volunteers, who continue to support us and make our days brighter.

Katherine Sharp
Branch Coordinator



THOMAS H. RADDALL LIBRARY, LIVERPOOL

A great deal has happened at Thomas H Raddall Library over the past twelve months! Last April saw the departure of our Branch Manager and Emerging Opportunities Librarian, Eric Pottie. He left to take up a new position in Alberta, and although he will be greatly missed, we wish him all the very best.

This past year saw an increased number of programs, classes and information sessions, all created to help serve the needs of Liverpool and Queens County residents.

For Children, we had a variety of art, craft and S.T.E.A.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) programs, making everything from paper bag puppets, pipe cleaner ninja's, toilet roll animals, rock painting, bookmarks, Valentine's day, Easter and Christmas cards and decorations, to simple, fun science experiments. We've even made some delicious ice cream! The branch has had an Escape Room, where puzzles are solved in order to open the Break Out! box, Green Screen Film making, Lego Robotics and our Virtual Reality system, which continues to wow us! This is in addition to an African dance and musical performance, and Dalhousie University's SuperNOVA team providing a day of fun science experiments. Throughout the year, we've put on a regular selection of scavenger hunts, which have proved popular to the young and not so young!

We've not forgotten the adults either – we've developed and expanded our range of programs. Rug Hooking, Fibrecraft, Sewing Machine Savvy with Bev, Chair Yoga, Relax and Paint and the Raddall Reading Club have all become regular activities. We had several organisations provide information and practical help sessions for the people of Queens County – Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Queens County Transit, Second Story Women's Center, Elections Canada and the increasingly busy Queens County Tax Volunteers.

Two great services, made possible by grants, also deserve mentioning. Kris, the Seniors Digital Trainer, provided much needed tech help and information to our patrons, and Marieke, the Community Collections Facilitator, assisted in capturing the narratives and photographs of our community online.

We've also had a diverse range of guest speakers come to the branch. Presentations have been made on energy efficiency, composting and recycling, banking and making the most of your finances, solar energy, food security, mindfulness, dementia and making Christmas decorations.

A couple of events, co-presented with the Branch, have exceeded our expectations – Death Café and Kas Stone's presentation on photography. Death café, a first for South Shore Public Libraries, provided an opportunity for people to come together and talk about the inevitable end of life. Professional photographer, Kas Stone, gave a presentation on how to capture land-sea-sky-scape images, as well as essential tips on gear, techniques and processing the digital image.

Thomas H Raddall Library is very proud to be part of the Liverpool and Queens communities. We host a number of groups, including Queens County Garden Club, Milton Canoe and Camera Club, a number of group sessions from Family Services of Western Nova Scotia and Autism Nova Scotia, as well as local Churches and even a Ukulele group. We are here for the community!

I'd like to thank our dedicated regular and casual members of staff, volunteers and Summer Students for all of their hard work and enthusiasm. The success of this branch is always a group effort. A big thank you must also go out to our patrons and visitors, all of whom make working at the branch so enjoyable!

Covid 19 has had a major impact on all of the branches of South Shore Public Libraries. However, this situation will pass and we very much look forward to serving our community to the full again

Branch Supervisor,
David Trueman





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is about making connections, sharing ideas, building partnerships, and striving to engage and serve people while encouraging them to embrace literacy and the joy of reading. I'd like to highlight a few of the connections we've been working on this year.

First is our work with new parents, we've grown an amazing baby group at our Bridgewater Library. We start with rhymes, songs and stories that promote early literacy skills. With the help of our community partner, the Lunenburg County Community Health Board we've been able to bring in subject area specialists to impart their wisdom once a month on topics such as nutrition, dental health and postpartum depression. After the formal part of the program is over new parents get a chance to talk with people who are experiencing all of those firsts together. I have no doubt that many lifelong friendships are beginning here on Wednesday mornings.

We've also been connecting with school age children. Our libraries are full of kids. We do many school visits throughout the year and have many classrooms come visit us as well. I want to highlight a pilot project we've begun with Aspotogan Consolidated Elementary School (ACES) and their community funding partners. Twice each month a SSPL staff person travels to ACES to deliver literacy programming, share books and bring requests. This enables each classroom to have one period of dedicated library service each month.

The third area to highlight is our work with aspiring writers this year. We have hosted award winning author, Chris Benjamin, through a grant from Canada Council of the Arts, as our Writer in Residence. Housed at our Lunenburg library, Chris had weekly office hours where he met with writers one to one and held writers workshops on various topics. Our connections with Chris also helped us create a new event for the Lunenburg Lit Fest called Pitch the Publisher. Chris arranged for three publishers to critique pitches by 16 prescreened writers. This turned out to be a very well attended spectator event as the writers all brought their support teams and many other curious folks came too.

This brings me to the Lunenburg Lit Festival, we've reached our fourth year of hosting this fabulous event. Working with our partner Nevermore Press, we were able to give all the grade 5's who attended our Children's event a copy of Jan Coates new book, "Say what you mean, Mean what you say". Evening events saw talented writers such as Michael Crummey, Craig Davidson, Shandi Mitchell, and Leslie Crewe read to the largest audiences we've hosted so far.

Another area of engagement this year was with our colleagues in the provincial library community. SSPL hosted the Nova Scotia Library Association / Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia annual conference at White Point Beach Lodge in October. We arranged this three day conference of professional development and fun for library staff and Library Board members from across the province. The event sold out and we received fabulous feedback and comments from both board members and staff. It was a real pleasure to be able to host this event and network with all colleagues and board members, it gave us all a real feeling for the library services being delivered across Nova Scotia.

The final effort I'd like to highlight is the Curbside service we pioneered and delivered in March. We devised and implemented a service that enabled us to keep borrowers engaged, have them stay connected and stay safe during the the state of emergency due to the Covid pandemic. We closed our doors on the evening of March 16 and by that Friday, March 20, we started our first day of Curbside Holds delivery which, over time, grew to encompass all of our branches and Bookmobile. Before we reopened the doors more than 10,000 items were picked up through our curbside program.

Christina Pottie
Community Engagement Lead



"Coming to the library feels like going home to my moms house, my kids can be themselves there. I can relax and watch them start their love affair with books."

SSPL Parent of Three



2019-2020 BY THE NUMBERS



15K

BORROWERS USED THEIR



184K

IN PERSON VISITS



286K

ITEMS BORROWED



16K

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

ATTENDED BY

14K

2K

CLASSES,
ACTIVITIES &
EVENTS





122K

VISITS TO WEBSITE

5.5K

ITEMS LENT FOR
INTERLIBRARY LOAN



6K

ITEMS BORROWED FOR
INTERLIBRARY LOAN



8.3K

OPEN HOURS

33K

EBOOKS BORROWED



60K

REQUESTS FILLED

SSPL ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

18/18

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

135 North Park Street
Bridgewater NS
B4V 9B3

902-543-2548

LUNENBURG LIBRARY

19 Pelham Street
Lunenburg NS
B0J 2C0

902-634-8008

BOOKMOBILE

135 North Park Street
Bridgewater, NS
B4V 9B3

902-527-7656

ALEAN FREEMAN LIBRARY

5060 Highway 210
Greenfield, NS
B0T 1E0

902-685-5400

MARGARET HENNIGAR LIBRARY

135 North Park Street
Bridgewater, NS
B4V 9B3

902-543-9222

THOMAS H. RADDALL LIBRARY

145 Old Bridge Street
Liverpool, NS
B0T 1K0

902-354-5270

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Lynn Robart

Christina Pottie

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Deputy Chief Librarian

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