

# History of the Library in Cobourg

*FROM MECHANICS INSTITUTE – TO PUBLIC LIBRARY – TO COMMUNITY HUB*

**Presentation by Heather Viscount,**  
Manager of Support Services – March 2021

# History of the Library in Cobourg

Cobourg has offered library service since the 1830's. Our library has evolved over the years, from a one-room Mechanic's Institute to the 2-storey public library we have today. We continue to change and to grow, and look forward to exciting challenges that the future will bring.



**King Street**



**Chapel Street**



**Ontario Street**

# The Mechanic's Institute

- ▶ There is evidence to indicate the presence of a public-use library in Cobourg as early as the 1830's.
- ▶ Referred to as a Mechanics Institute, the early library was designed to provide educational opportunities for workmen and tradesmen through books and lectures.
- ▶ In 1886 – The Mechanics Institute and Reading Room had 128 subscribers from Cobourg and Hamilton Township.
- ▶ Members paid \$1 per year for use of the library six nights per week.
- ▶ The total budget was \$200 per year.

## Cobourg in 1846

"The District Town of the Newcastle District, in the township of Hamilton; is pleasantly situated on a gently rising ground, on the bank of Lake Ontario, 103 miles from Kingston, and 72 miles from Toronto. The town is incorporated, and the corporate limits extend to the north and west."

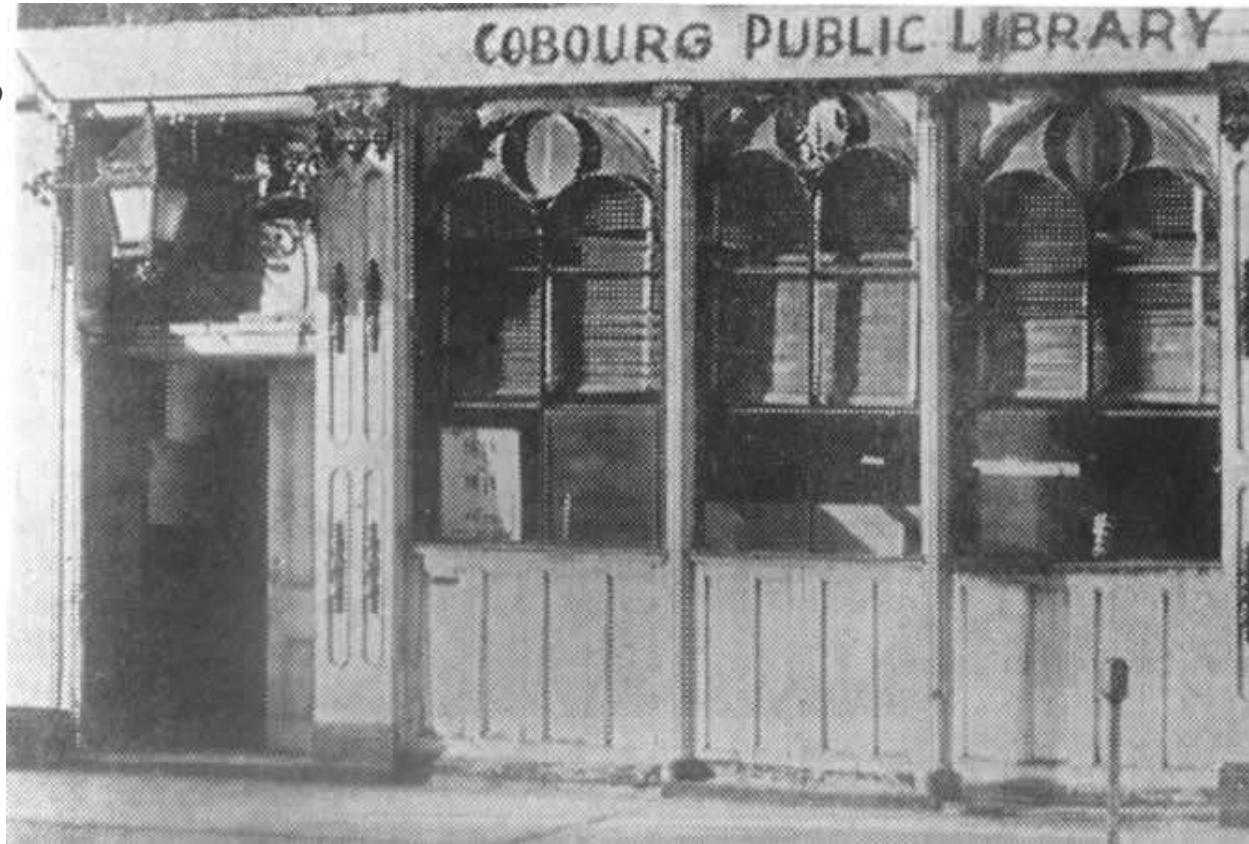
"Victoria College was founded by the Wesleyan Conference; the institution was chartered in 1835, as an Academy, and by Act of Parliament, in 1842, was constituted a College, with power to confer degrees."

"The merchants have established amongst themselves a "Board of Trade", for the purpose of regulating the commercial affairs of the place; they have a newsroom, where several papers are taken. There is also a Mechanics' Institute.

Post Office - post every day.  
Population - 3,347  
Professions and Trades - Six physicians and surgeons, seven lawyers, one steam grist-mill, two water do., two saw-mills, one cloth factory, one brewery, three distilleries, one ashery, one soap and candle factory, three tanneries, two foundries, twenty dry-good stores, ten groceries, two hardware stores, twelve taverns, two druggists, three printers, three booksellers, two surveyors, five waggon makers, one hatter, two livery stables, one veterinary

# The Mechanic's Institute

- ▶ Early sources indicate that the library was located at the Town Hall, but in 1889 the Mechanics Institute rented space in the Y.M.C.A. building (86 King St. W) for an annual rent of \$40 per year.
- ▶ This location remained the library's home for the next 75 years.
- ▶ The Encyclopedia Britannica was purchased in 1891, and chess and checker games were added the following year.



# Public Library in Cobourg

- ▶ In Cobourg the new term "**public library**" was first used in 1895 when the operation of the Mechanics Institute came under the Public Libraries Act.
- ▶ The library was funded largely by subscriptions from its members, with additional support from the Province and from the local municipal government.
- ▶ Board officials, elected by the membership, managed the Reading Room on a voluntary basis until 1899, when the first librarian's salary was offered.
- ▶ In December of that year, a chimney-fire resulted in a loss valued at \$585, the equivalent of an entire year's budget.

# Public Library on King Street

- ▶ As the collection grew, handwritten lists of holdings became unmanageable. In 1902, the Board began to consider the possibility of obtaining a Carnegie grant for a new library building.
- ▶ The issue was still being discussed in 1911, but nothing ever came of it.
- ▶ In 1907 the library purchased its first 6-drawer card catalogue, and all items were catalogued using the Dewey Decimal Classification system.
- ▶ In 1908, the Librarian's salary went from \$75 to \$100 per year
- ▶ In 1914, the Town grant was \$100 ; by 1919, it was \$300, and remained at that level throughout the 1920's



# Public Library on King Street

- ▶ In 1918, water damage from a plumbing catastrophe in the Domestic Science room above the library resulted in book damage and rendered the cards of the catalogue "unfit for use."
- ▶ By 1918, the library held 5,271 volumes, with an annual circulation of 16,923 books.
- ▶ By the late 1950's, Cobourg was one of only two towns left in the province still operating as a subscription or "association" library
- ▶ The tax levy was 20 cents per capita – the same since 1937. The library had 1 book per capita.
- ▶ The standard was \$1.00 per capita, and 3 books per capita.

# Public Library on King Street

OVER 29,000 BOOKS CIRCULATED IN 1957

## Cobourg Library Badly Needs A New Home

"This has been co-operation among the proper people — the Council, the Library Board and a service club."

No, this was not made in Cobourg. It was made in Ottawa, at the Bowmen's Club library a year ago. It took approximately a year to purchase, and a service club generously worked for six months to renovate and furnish the interior.

Here in Cobourg, it would be out of the question for a service club to offer such help to date; after over seven months of delay Cobourg Public Library is still attempting to function in a state of indecisive flux. At this time our library is one

of only TWO in towns this size in Ontario still operating under the association set-up.

Asked how long the library has been located in the small room on King Street, the librarian replied, "It seems as if we've been here since the year One."

to the doorway some days," says Miss Reynar.

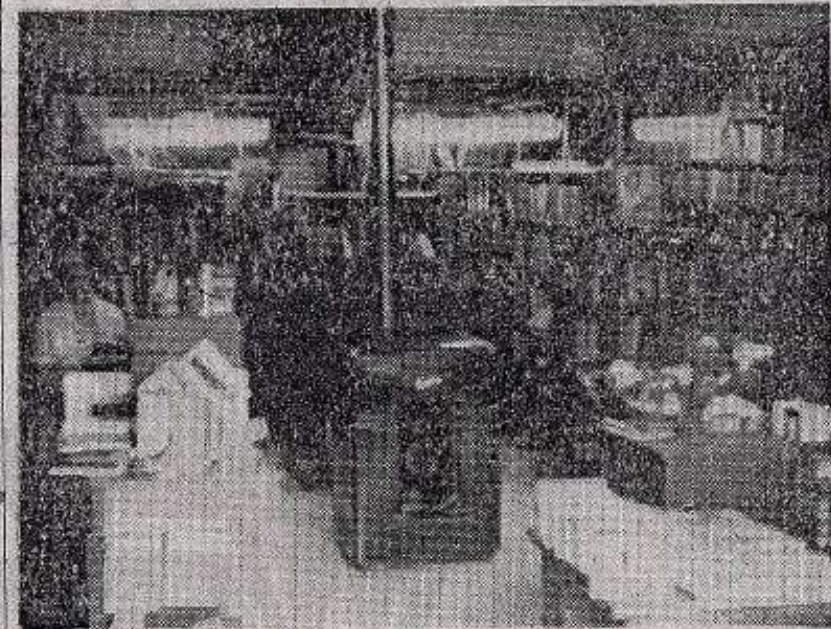
Asked how long the library has been located in the small room on King Street, the librarian replied, "It seems as if we've been here since the year One."

Library Services director Angus Mowat made an informal survey of the old building recently and came to the con-

clusion that if outer hall partitions were torn down, and the small area now used by the library was added, it would be possible to renovate the present premises at considerable cost. The premises would have extended again within a year.

Special arrangements for the library, inadequate for the present, are now worse than ever. Under the association system members had been \$1 annually for adults, 50c for children. When the fiscal year ended this April 1, Council had taken no steps to appoint a new Library Board. The librarian hopefully extended members' cards for a 3-month period, charging a quarterly rate. This extension will expire again by the end of next month.

When trustees and a new board are appointed, (Continued on page 2)



INTERIOR OF COBOURG LIBRARY



# Public Library on King Street

- ▶ In June 1957, the Library Board petitioned to the Town Council to make the library a “free” library and, became a fully tax supported public library with a municipally appointed board in 1958.
- ▶ Judge H. R. Deyman was its first chairman, and the members were:
- ▶ Mayor Jack Burnet, Mrs. Jane Field, C. Gordon King, Mrs. Christine Gardiner, Mrs. Amelia Lawson, Mr. Grant Sine, Mrs. Lois Ann Verney and Mr. Alan J. McConvey.
- ▶ They held their first meeting October 1st, 1958.

# Public Library on King Street

- ▶ With the growth of the clientele, services were offered to all age groups.
- ▶ In April 1959, a separate room for the children's collection was established - the first facility equipped especially with children's needs in mind.
- ▶ Mrs. David Dick was in charge of the Children's Library.
- ▶ Mr. Grahame R. Barnett was appointed Chief Librarian in June 1959 – the Cobourg Library's first fully qualified professional librarian.
- ▶ He believed the Library should be a cultural centre – a place where people of all ages could gather and indulge their various tastes



# Mr. Grahame Barnett

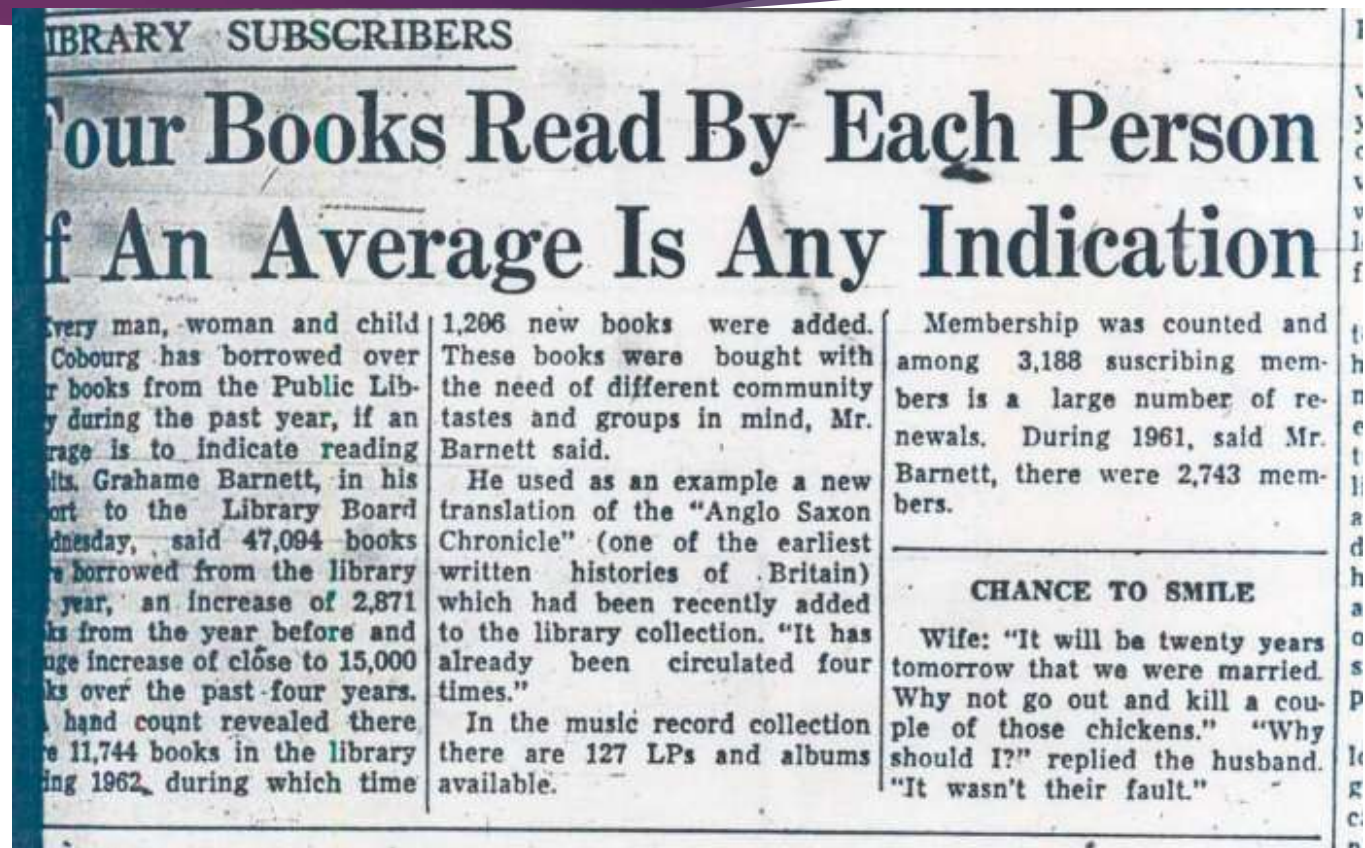
Classicist, linguist, Anglican priest, mystic, soldier, librarian, mentor and survivor.

- ▶ Born 9 May 1911 in Scotland. Died in Cobourg 15 July 2002.
- ▶ Masters Degree in Philosophy from the University of Edinburgh in the 1930s
- ▶ Attended the Theological College of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and became an ordained priest in the Anglican Church of Scotland
- ▶ He was commissioned as a Chaplain in the British Army, and went to France with the British Expeditionary Force at the outbreak of WWII
- ▶ He was shipped to North Africa to join what became the 8<sup>th</sup> Army
- ▶ After the war, he worked as headmaster of a boys school in Sao Paulo, Brazil
- ▶ After emigrating to Canada, and in his forties, attended the University of Toronto, and obtained his degree in Library Science.
- ▶ He worked to improve our Library, and was instrumental in opening the Town's first art gallery



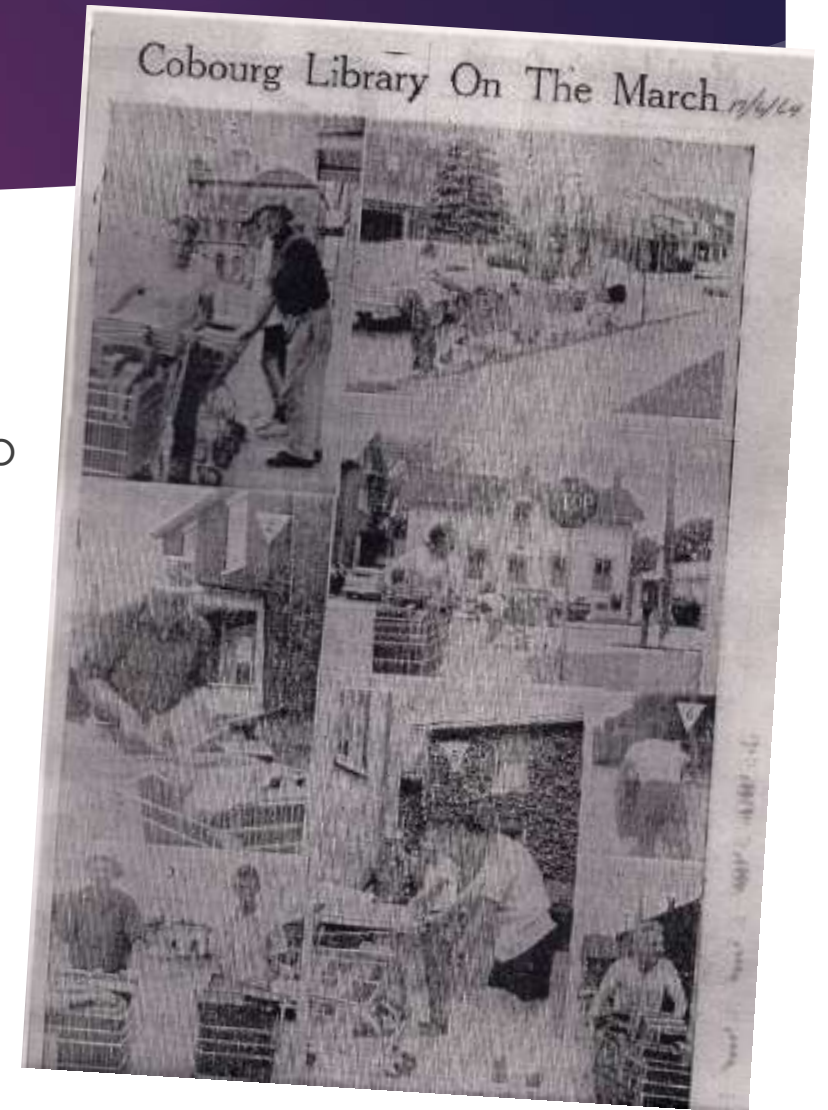
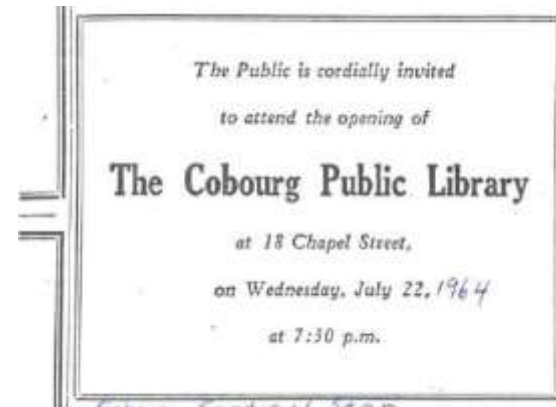
# 1963 article by Grahame R. Barnett

- ▶ Source: Cobourg Sentinel Star-Wed. Feb. 20, 1963
- ▶ “47,094 books were borrowed from the Library last year (1962), an increase of 2,871 books from the year before, and a huge increase of close to 15,000 books over the past four years.”
- ▶ “In the music record collection, there are 127 LPs and albums available.”



# The move to Chapel Street

- ▶ Mr. Barnett pursued the vision of a new building – with adequate space and heat
- ▶ His dream was realized in 1964, when the Library moved to the former Trinity United Church Sunday School building.
- ▶ 14,000 books were wheeled by trolley and shopping carts from the Library on King Street to the new location



# 18 Chapel Street

- ▶ The brick Sunday School Hall of the Trinity United Church was built in 1881
- ▶ Previously, Sunday School had been held in a schoolhouse immediately south of the present church and later in the church basement.



# Cobourg Library History

- ▶ In **1968**, an official Inter-Library Loan policy was adopted.
- ▶ Provincial incentives encouraged the library board, under the leadership of its Chairman, Dr. Jack Leeson, to negotiate a contract for service with the Township of Hamilton.
- ▶ The independently operated **Gore's Landing library** was brought into the system in **1973**
- ▶ This building is still the site of the Gore's Landing branch library



# New Children's Room added

- ▶ A children's room was added to the library building in 1974.
- ▶ The seventies were years of growth, as membership and the circulation of library materials climbed steadily.



W. Barron, Wendy Brown (Chief Librarian), and Dr. Leeson (Chairman).





# Chapel Street – Chief Librarians

- ▶ 1947 to 1959 – Miss Josephine Reynar
- ▶ 1959 to 1965 – Mr. Grahame Barnett
- ▶ 1965 to 1965 – Mr. A. A. Hrycuk
- ▶ 1966 to 1968 – Mrs. Barbara Dick (acting)
- ▶ 1968 to 1969 – Mr. Grahame Barnett
- ▶ 1969 to 1972 – Mrs. Francis Marsh
- ▶ 1972 to 1976 – Miss Wendy Binns (later Brown)
- ▶ 1976 to 1977 - Miss Judy Ettinger
- ▶ 1977 to 1999 – Miss Valerie Scott



Grahame Barnett

Miss Josephine Reynar



Mrs. Barbara Dick

# Cobourg Library History – 1980's

- ▶ In the **1980's**, a library branch was established in **Bewdley**.
- ▶ Outreach services were extended to local homes for the aged
- ▶ Large print and talking book collections were first acquired.
- ▶ Newspapers and documents relating to local history were microfilmed and indexed for easy access
- ▶ A government document collection was assembled.
- ▶ The library began to automate its catalogue of holdings, making the sharing of materials between libraries and the management of a 47,000 volume book collection more efficient.



# Cobourg Library History – 1980's

- ▶ In the fall of 1988, the staff room/tech office (that had been located next to the Adult Circulation Desk) was transformed into a reading room to hold the collection of magazines and newspapers, with tables and seating
- ▶ The offices for the Chief Librarian and the Technical Services Dept were moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, and the Staff Room to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

## Community

### New reading room an interim step for the library

By Suzanne Atkinson

With a budget of \$10,000 in hand, Cobourg's library board has taken steps to ease a crowded situation.

All the while the board and library staff are hoping that one day soon their dream of a new library facility will be realized.

But so far, that's still a dream. "If you can find me a couple or \$3 million..." Mayor Angus Read said at the opening of the Cobourg Public Library's new reading room yesterday. "You have to get a community campaign going."

Read saw that campaign begin this week.

A recent interim grant of \$10,000 from the town supplied the library with the new room. The mezzanine has been transformed into a study room. New offices for chief librarian Valerie Scott and Ronda Perry, the head of the library's technical services and its secretary, now grace the second floor. A new

staff room overlooks Chapel Street from a perch high on the third floor.

With an additional \$3,000 matching grant expected to arrive soon, the library has also planned to order bookshelves for its non-fiction room.

"This is phase one of our in-

terim program," board chairman Gloria Ashcroft announced before she and Read cut the ribbon.

"We're taking steps to improve the facility until we have a new library," she said. "This is makeshift. Hopefully it won't be for too long."

Books Ashcroft termed as being "super popular" will be located in the non-fiction room on the shelving. She said book space is so tight right now that some seasonal books, and others, are rotated on the library shelves.

"Anyone who can't climb stairs has not had access," she said, adding that until now, teachers had not had an area to take their classes.

For his part Read complimented the library board and

staff on their "ability to make do with what you have."

Read expressed support for the new library.

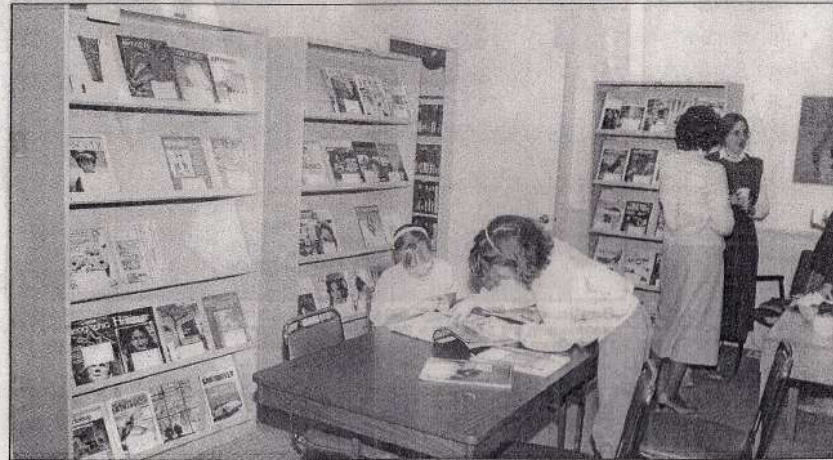
"The library board is especially grateful to staff for their cooperation and support, and to the town for a special \$10,000 capital grant for shelving and renovation," said a press release from Scott.

#### Bridge results

Monday bridge results:

Overall winners:

1. Donna Heenan and Fred Mol;
2. Russ and Dianna Dignam;
3. Bev Howard and Ed Tanaka;
4. Dick Jones and Grant Fryer;
5. Gord Curtis and Tracy Fuhr;
6. Les and Judy Miklos.



The new reading room at the Cobourg Public Library is now open.

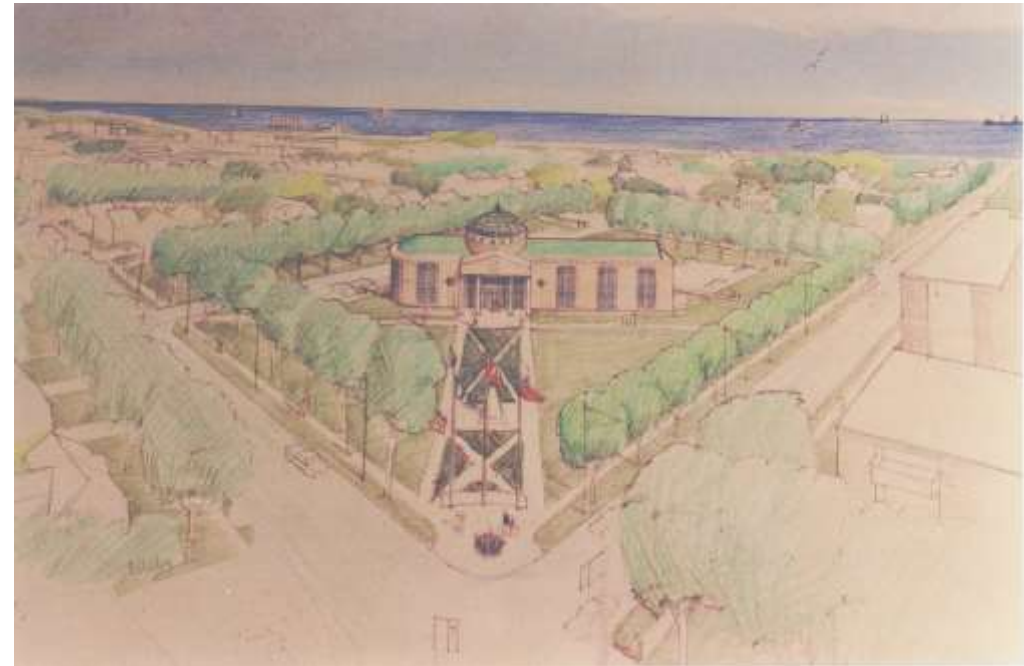


The official opening — The new reading room at the Cobourg Public Library was officially opened Monday afternoon. Cobourg mayor Angus Read was joined by the chairman of the library board, Gloria Ashcroft as well as Rajja Kumpula and Tyrrell Ashcroft in cutting the ribbon.

Photos by Suzanne Atkinson

# Formation of the Foundation

- ▶ As the use of the Library increased, along with the population of the Town – it became obvious that a newer, larger building was required to meet the growing needs of the community
- ▶ In 1985 the Library Board, with the support of the Cobourg Rotary, created a Joint Feasibility Study Committee.
- ▶ Architect Philip Carter had submitted his recommendation for a new building to the “Cultural Centre Committee” as the building was originally planned to include the Cobourg Public Library, the Cobourg Historical Society and the Northumberland Art Gallery.
- ▶ The art gallery was later dropped from the plan.



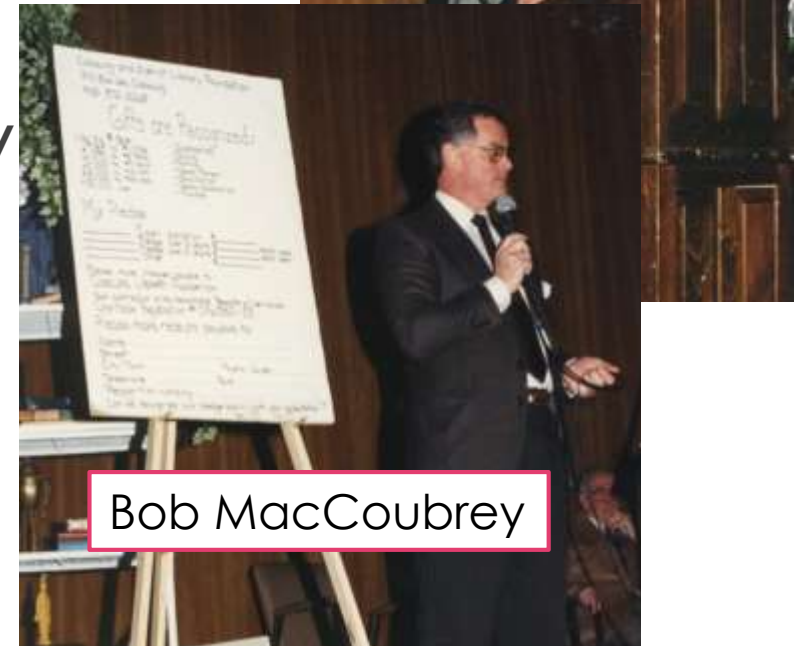
# Cobourg & District Library Foundation

- ▶ In 1986, a campaign began to raise money for a new building
- ▶ The campaign intensified in 1991 when the town council stipulated that the Cobourg Public Library Board must provide the amount of \$500,000 towards the funding, the remainder being provided by the province and town.
- ▶ This inspired the formation of the **Cobourg and District Library Foundation**.
- ▶ Under the leadership of its Chairman, Jeff Rolph, and Vice Chairman, Bob MacCoubrey, the newly formed foundation more than rose to the challenge.

Jeff Rolph



Bob MacCoubrey



# Cobourg & District Library Foundation

- ▶ Community response was overwhelmingly positive.
- ▶ The Foundation's fundraising efforts were so successful, that they not only reached their goal – they surpassed it!
- ▶ Several sites were considered – including the former Loblaw's site on Albert Street and the trailer park



# New Library site chosen

- ▶ Then, in 1993 the decision was made to use Duke of York Square, so named after the 1987 visit of the Duke and Duchess of York.
- ▶ In previous years, this site had been the location of the CDCI West school playfield, and a baseball field named Five Corners.



# The C. Gordon King Centre

- ▶ In 1993, Town Council announced the naming of the future new facility in honour of Col. C. Gordon King.
- ▶ The same year, the architectural firm of Moffat Kinoshita was selected to design the new building.
- ▶ In April 1994, the official ground-breaking ceremony at the Duke of York Square took place.
- ▶ Those in attendance included: Peter Delanty, Tony Farren, Mayor Angus Read, Col. C. Gordon King and chief librarian Valerie Scott.

PAGE 18 NORTHUMBERLAND NEWS - Wednesday, April 20, 1994



## Cobourg library makes history

The first sod was formally turned at the site of the new Cobourg library at Duke of York Square. Doing the honors were chairman of the library building committee Gil Brocanier, representing Cairn Construction Paul Szczucinski, building committee member Peter Delanty, Cobourg

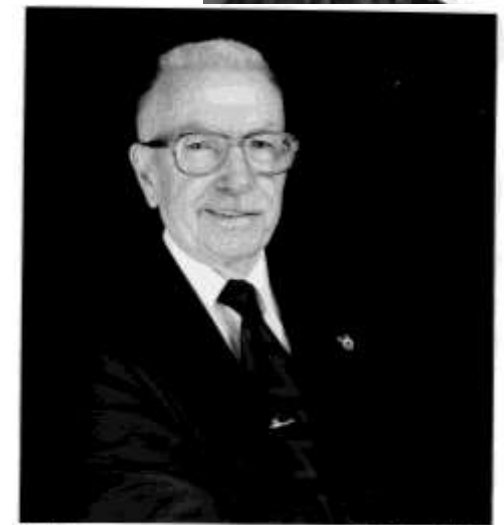
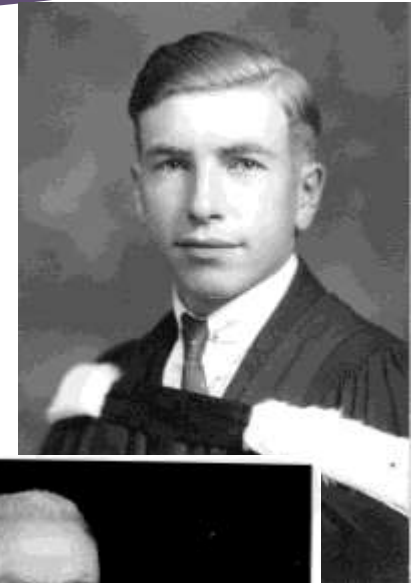
Councillor Tony Farren, Cobourg Mayor Angus Read, fundraising chairman Jeff Rolph, architect Gene Kinoshita, library namesake Col. C. Gordon King, architect Gord Robinson, library board chairman Bill McDonald and chief librarian Valerie Scott.



# Col. C. Gordon King

Soldier, educator, historian and sportsman, Colonel King has played a vital part in Cobourg's development and has a long and active association with the Library.

- ▶ Born in Uxbridge, Ontario in 1911.
- ▶ Graduated Victoria College, University of Toronto with the Regent's Gold Medal in Latin and Greek, and gained his teaching certificate at the Ontario College of Education
- ▶ In 1935, he joined the staff of the Cobourg Collegiate Institute, and was appointed Principal in 1953. After CDCI East opened in 1960, he supervised both schools for several years, before retiring in 1972 after thirty-seven years of service.
- ▶ In 1938, he married Grace Mitchell. Their daughter Carol, lives in Australia.
- ▶ Col. King was one of the first board members when the Library became a Public Library, and served as Chair for several years.



# Col. C. Gordon King – Military History

- ▶ As a Captain with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Cobourg Medium Battery – led as troop commander in WWII
- ▶ Promoted to Major and commanded troops in North West Europe
- ▶ In 1946, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and became Commanding Officer of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Medium Regiment in Cobourg.
- ▶ For over half a century, he was active member of Branch 133 of the Royal Canadian Legion



# 18 Chapel Street

- ▶ Although the Chapel Street location was indeed a giant step up from the King Street location, the building did have its limitations
- ▶ Initially, the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, which was a great open space with high ceilings – accessed by climbing a set of wide curved staircases – housed the Art Gallery.
- ▶ After the Art Gallery moved, this space was used for many children's programs, and the annual book sale.
- ▶ Eventually, the floor was deemed too weak to support these functions, and became storage – with boxes around the edge of the room.



# 18 Chapel Street



Outdoor Book Return

Display Case – just inside main entrance



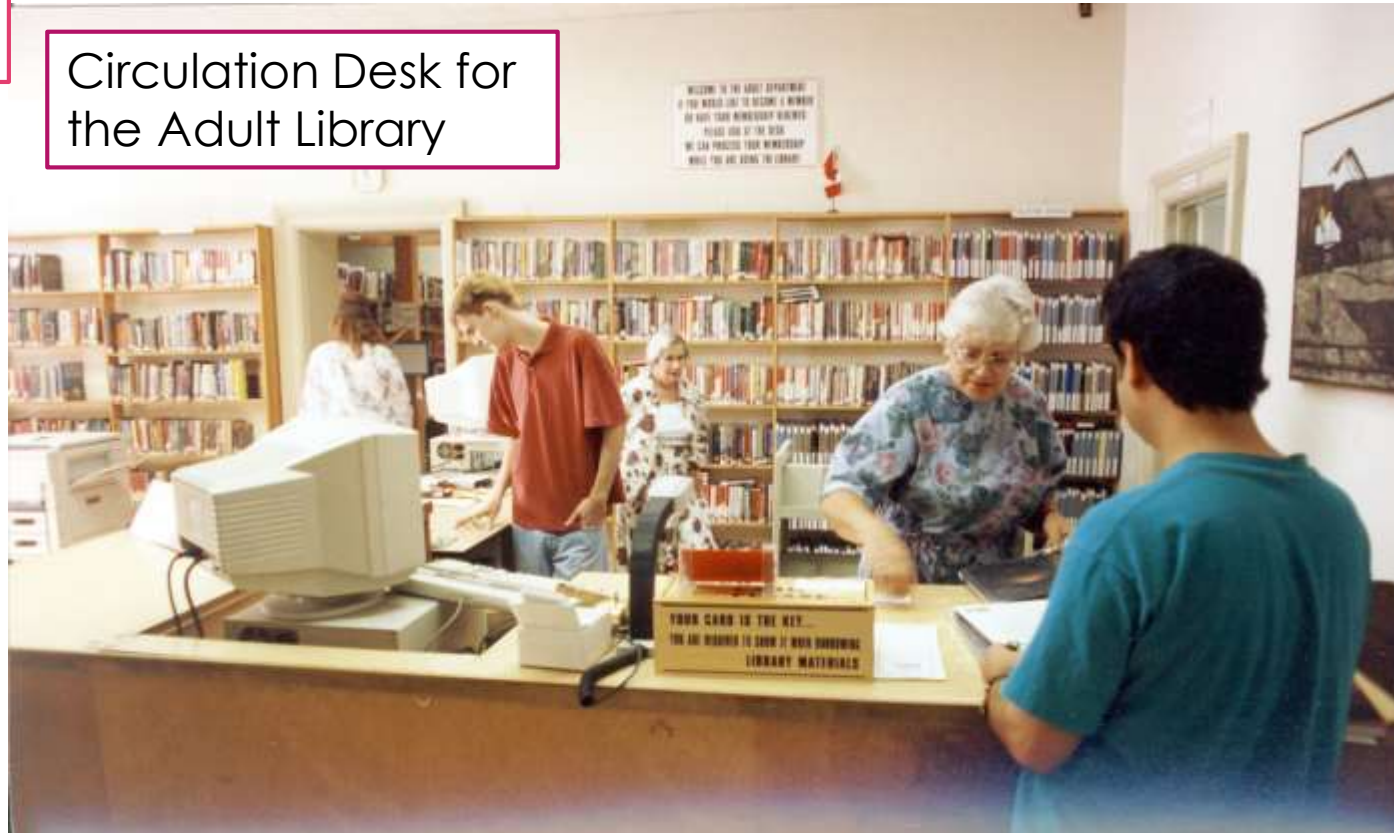
Hallway to the Adult Library

# 18 Chapel Street – Main Room

Selection of Children's Materials



Circulation Desk for the Adult Library



Adult Video Collection



# 18 Chapel Street – Adult Fiction

- ▶ The Adult collection was broken up into many rooms.
- ▶ The Adult Fiction could be found in one room, while the Adult Mysteries, Large Print and CNIB talking books were in the main area, surrounding the circulation desk.



# 18 Chapel Street – Reading Room

- ▶ The magazines and newspapers could be found in a room next to the main desk
- ▶ Note the bamboo rods for newspapers



Newspapers on  
bamboo rods

# 18 Chapel Street – Adult Non-Fiction

- ▶ The Adult Non-Fiction collection, was split into three areas. Two on the main floor . . .





# 18 Chapel Street – Adult Non-Fiction

- ▶ The rest of the Adult Non-Fiction collection could be found by ascending the spiral metal staircase. This is also where you would find the study tables



# 18 Chapel Street – Reference Area

- ▶ The Reference collection was housed in the back area, along with the Microfilm collection and microfilm readers.
- ▶ Reference Librarian – Mrs. Mary Maclean



Page 8 Cobourg Daily Star ■ Friday, January 13, 1995

## This librarian has the answers

By Valerie Reid

From moral issues of the late 19th century to the care of pet rabbits, Mary Maclean can help in many ways.

The Cobourg and District Public Library reference librarian has been asked plenty of questions during her 10 years on the job, some of which have required a lot of research.

Mrs. Maclean says there are two basic types of questions thrown at her: directional, which require her to direct the person to a particular area of the library; and traditional, in which she shows the person how to use a source and helps them to become familiar with the use of the reference department.

The two most researched topics are local history and genealogy.

The library has some research materials as far back as the 1790s.

Mrs. Maclean receives questions by mail, fax, telephone and from people just stopping by.

The full range is there for users of all ages, from high school students preparing reports to adults in need of information on a company for a job interview, she said.

Privacy is an important factor. The library staff do ask awkward questions, Mrs. Maclean said, and try to make researchers feel as comfortable as possible.

In other cases, a person who has seen a movie might request help finding the book version. The library can help.

Likewise, the reference librarian can help to identify the body of criticism surrounding a popular author such as Margaret



Answers to questions — Mary Maclean fields inquiries in the library's reference section. Photo by Ted Amaden



# 18 Chapel Street – Children's Library

- ▶ The Children's Library had its own entrance, its own checkout desk and card catalogue.



Mrs. Dorothy Lees  
Children's Librarian



# What happened to Chapel Street?

- ▶ January 28, 1988 article – “Rebuilding history”
- ▶ The former site of the Cobourg Public Library is undergoing some major renovations. The upper storey is being transformed into two one-bedroom apartments and two two-bedroom units. While two original staircases will remain, the entire downstairs is being gutted for commercial space.
- ▶ May 7, 1988 article – “Sprucing up the old girl”

## Rebuilding history



The former site of the Cobourg Public Library is undergoing some major renovations. The upper storey is being transformed into two one-bedroom apartments and two two-bedroom units. While two original staircases will remain, the entire downstairs is being gutted for commercial space. Top: Dan and Paul Wakelin remove floor board removal in the area that was the library's check-in counter. Above left: an addition which was the children's library has been torn down to restore the original facade. Above right: owner/builder Rick Lovekin holds a bottle of South African brandy that was found in the floor boards. Photos by Ted Aschken

## Sprucing up the old girl



Kevin Morton is a mason working on the exterior reconstruction of the old Cobourg Library on Chapel Street.

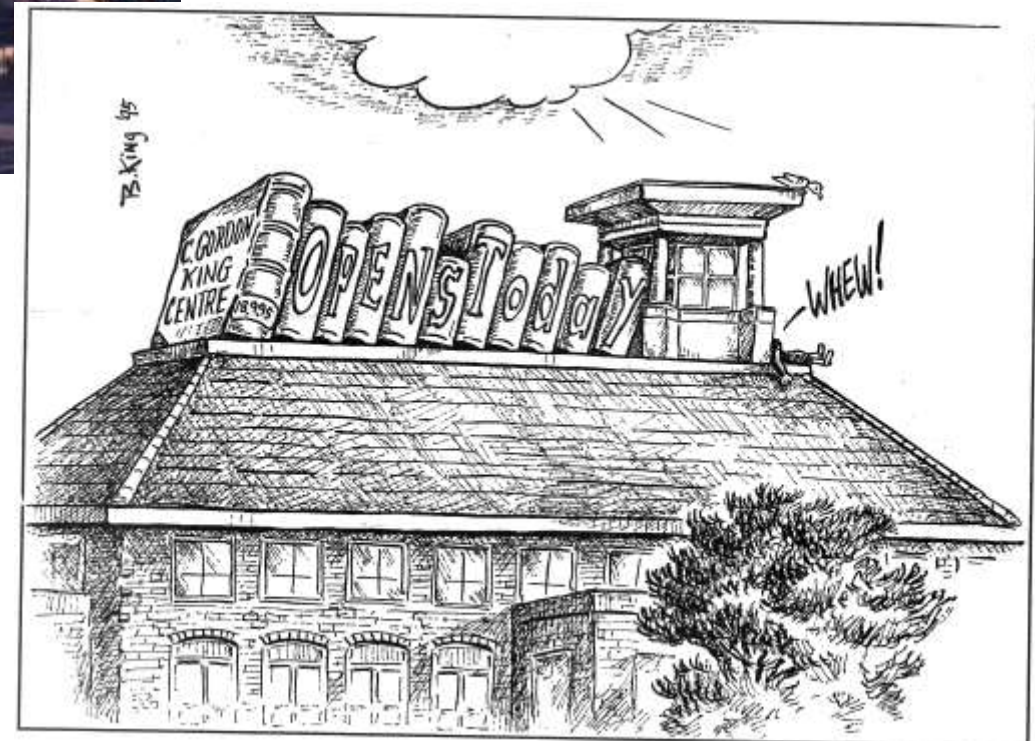
# Building the C. Gordon King Centre



# Building the C. Gordon King Centre



# Building the C. Gordon King Centre




# The C. Gordon King Centre

- ▶ In September 1995, the new facility officially opened its doors.
- ▶ The C. Gordon King Centre was accessible, with level access, accessible washrooms and an elevator – and offered new services and programs for children, youth, adults and seniors



Col. King – opening speech


Ribbon Cutting – Cobourg Mayor, Joan Chalovich, Col. C. Gordon King, Minister Mushinski



**C. GORDON KING CENTRE - COBOURG, ONTARIO**

**OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONIES PROGRAM**  
**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1995**  
**2:00 P.M.**

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	- Town Clerk <i>Tam McWhirter</i>
<b>WELCOME</b>	- Masters of Ceremonies - Councillor <i>Douglas Scott</i> - Building Committee Chairman <i>Glenn Casserly</i>
<b>O CANADA</b>	- Concert Band of Cobourg, Solists - <i>Laura Nally</i>
<b>INVOCATION</b>	- Reverend <i>James Macdonald</i> , Cobourg Ministerial Association
<b>ADDRESSES</b>	- Her Worship Mayor <i>Joan E. Chalovich</i> - The Honourable <i>Maxime Mushinski</i> , Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation
<b>REMARKS</b>	- <i>Kevin Charlester</i> , City-Inland Township of Hamilton <i>Governor General C. Gordon King, E.R. (1945)</i>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	- <i>Governor General King, Mayor Chalovich, Minister Mushinski</i>
<b>OFFICIAL RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY</b>	
<b>PRESENTATION OF KEYS</b>	
<b>BUILDING TOUR AND SIGNING OF GUEST BOOK</b>	- <i>William Macdonald</i> , Chairman, Cobourg Public Library Board





# 200 Ontario Street - 1995

- ▶ The collection included 53,000 books and 6,000 other pieces of information
- ▶ There was a Program Room for children, and a large meeting room for both Library programs and for use by the public with a kitchenette
- ▶ And the home of The Cobourg and District Historical Archives



# 200 Ontario Street – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

- ▶ The Adult Fiction collection - now altogether on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- ▶ A bright, spacious windowed reading room for magazines and newspapers



# 200 Ontario Street – Children's Section

- ▶ An integrated Children's library on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor – including a large window
- ▶ 2 computers for children to access educational CD Roms



# 200 Ontario Street – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

- ▶ The Adult Non-Fiction and Reference collections were altogether on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor – with many windows for natural light
- ▶ There was a separate room for the Local History materials
- ▶ Tables and study carrels, and a Group Study Room



# 200 Ontario Street - 1997

- ▶ In 1997, on the library's second anniversary, artist Alice Luke Chenevert's bronze bust of Gordon King was installed in the lobby.
- ▶ Also in 1997, the first Internet station was installed with dial-up access.



*Making the connection — Kevin Siblock is introduced to the Internet at Cobourg Public Library yesterday by Randy Vilneff, technical consultant with the Northumberland Networked Community, a grassroots organization promoting the information system to which library card holders now have free access. Looking on are Michael Vanderpost, a co-ordinator with Networked Community, and chief librarian Valerie Scott.*

*Photo by Ted Amsden*

*COB STAR 2/5/96*

# 200 Ontario Street – 1998/1999

- ▶ In 1998, the Friends of the Library Reading Group was formed
- ▶ In 1999, the library design was awarded for excellence by the Ontario Library Association.
- ▶ In September 1999, the library extended its service to 7 days per week
- ▶ The Library was now open 55 hours/week.



Photo by Ted Amsden

**BOOKISH TYPES:** Yvonne Green, left, and Lee Beech, co-ordinator of the Friends of Library Reading Group, talk about a book the group will be discussing during an upcoming session.

## Library to open all week

By CECILIA NASMITH  
STAFF WRITER

COBOURG — For the first time in its history, Cobourg will soon be able to take advantage of seven-days-a-week library service.

Sunday openings, which begin September 13, are a response to a 1997 user survey in which a large number of student patrons asked for Sunday opening, said library board chairman Art Cockerill. The Sunday openings bring to 55 the number of hours weekly in which the library is open. The board's 1998-2000 business plan envisions an eventual 64-hour library week.

At the time of the survey, said trustee Wendy Curtis, the library closed at 3 p.m. Fridays, leaving students only Saturdays to make use of the library over the weekend — a concern since the board is keenly interested in making the library's resources, including internet access, available to students, she said.

Sunday hours will continue throughout the school year, said Ms. Curtis. During that time, some kind of user survey will be undertaken to determine whether Sunday

usership is mainly confined to students. Should there be heavy family use of the library Sundays, she said, "we would strive to maintain those hours."

This is part of the board's shift from being a resource deliverer to trying to understand the needs of the community, she added.

The Sunday openings are from 1 to 5 p.m. The other hours remain the same as they have been for the past three months, when the hours were last expanded: 1 to 5 p.m. Mondays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Ms. Curtis is trying to determine how many other Ontario libraries offer Sunday service.

"My bet is very, very few," she said. "This is superior-quality service, and we are striving to do that in every way, shape and form."

The increased hours will not affect the library's two branches in Hamilton Township. In Bewdley, the hours are 3 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. In Gore's Landing, the hours are 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays and noon to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

# 2005 – 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Ontario Street

- ▶ Much growth and change happened in those first 10 years
- ▶ Highlights include:
  - ▶ 72,000 books ; 2,700 videos ; 900 DVDs ; 1,000 Talking Books ; 1,800 periodicals
  - ▶ High speed internet access ; 13 public internet/word processing stations
  - ▶ Genealogy research computer – with CemSearch database access
  - ▶ Online databases – including full-text newspapers and magazines
  - ▶ Young Adult's section
  - ▶ Library webpage
  - ▶ Security system ; Automated calling system for Holds and Overdues



# 2006 – Archives

- ▶ We had a tour of the Archives in 2006



Work Area



Entry to Archives



Storage Area



Public Reception Area



# 2010 – 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

- ▶ The Library continued to grow and change
  - ▶ 60,000 books ; 4,000 DVDs and videos ; 1300 talking books
  - ▶ 1,400 music CD titles ; 200 game titles ; Graphic novels
  - ▶ 3 Genealogy Research computers ; Digital microfilm reader/printer
  - ▶ Dedicated computer with Accessibility software
  - ▶ Printer control software ; Computer reservation software
  - ▶ Wireless access for patrons
  - ▶ Databases – Ancestry, NoveList, Tumblebooks and more
  - ▶ Over 450 programs held – with 7,500 attendees



# 2010 – 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Past and Present CEOs – Donna Bright (2001-2008), Charmaine Lindsay (2009-2013), Valerie Scott (1977-1999)



Board Chair, Patricia Fenner – CEO, Charmaine Lindsay - Mayor Peter Delanty - Hamilton Township Board Rep, Pat McCourt



# January 2014 – The Flood

- ▶ In January 2014, a pipe burst in a washroom in the foyer, and flooded the entire 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Library
- ▶ The Library was closed before new CEO Tammy Robinson had a chance to begin



# 2014 – The Flood – The Mall

- ▶ We were lucky to be able to open services at the Northumberland Mall in late February, while renovations took place
- ▶ We occupied 3 store fronts – Adult Services, Child and Youth Services and the offices



# 2014 – The Flood – The Mall – and Back Again

- ▶ Once renovations were complete, we moved back to Ontario Street in May, and had a Grand Opening BBQ in June
- ▶ New reading room chairs and study carrels were now available



# 2015 – 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



2<sup>nd</sup> Floor - DVDs



Children's Area



Reading Room



New computer tables



First Floor – with Game collection

# 2019 – Community Hub

New Adult DVD/Blu-ray shelving



YA Graphic Novels



Maker Space



New Outdoor Garden & Furniture



Story time Benches



DISCOVERY BACKPACKS



Chess/Checker tables and umbrellas



New Junior DVD shelving



# 2020 – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (or the year we adapted)

- ▶ 2020 showed us just how adaptable we could be!
- ▶ Staff worked together (but apart) to provide:
  - ▶ Virtual programs
  - ▶ Curbside pick-up
  - ▶ Online Summer Reading Program
  - ▶ Story time on the lawn
  - ▶ Access to more digital resources
  - ▶ Computer Lab to 1<sup>st</sup> floor
  - ▶ **We kept our patrons engaged**





# Where are we now?

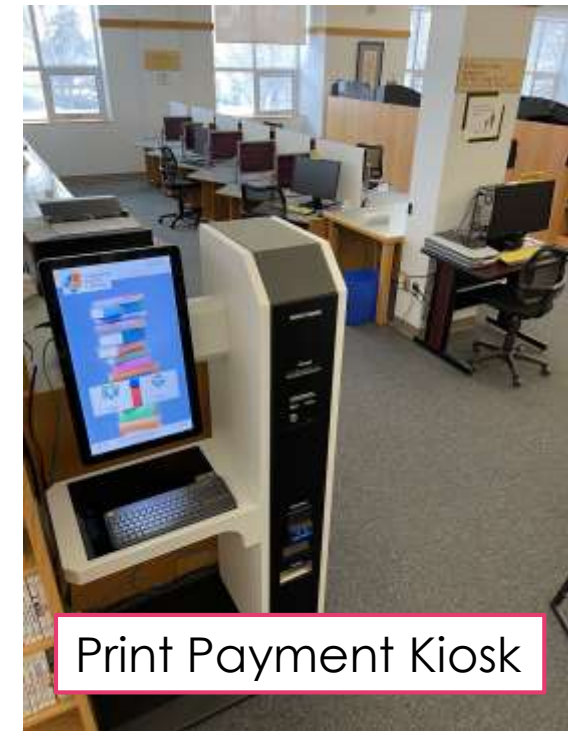
- ▶ Our staff (and patrons) continue to adapt and thrive in this new world we are living in
- ▶ All three branch locations are **open**, and new safety protocols in place
- ▶ We have new collections – such as our **Ontario Parking Pass Kits** and our **Binge Bundles** (6 DVDs in one case)
- ▶ New Print Payment Kiosk with a touch screen to pay for printing / copies



Ontario Parking Pass Kits



Binge Bundles

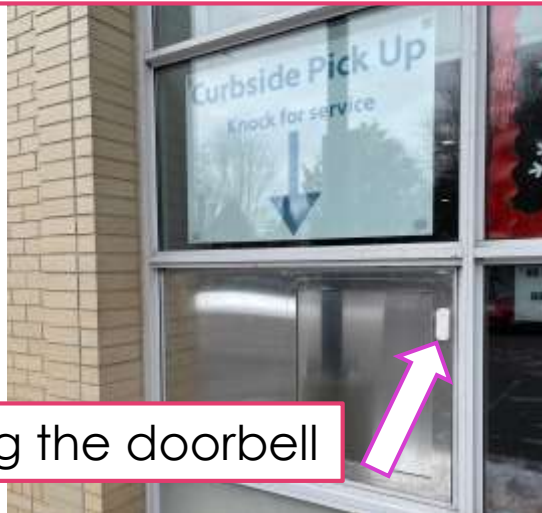


Print Payment Kiosk

# Where are we now?

- ▶ Our **Curbside Pick-up** window is available for all patrons to pick up the materials they placed on hold – and for patrons who feel more comfortable not coming into the Library for materials
- ▶ All items are returned through our **dropbox**, and **isolated** before becoming available again.

New Curbside Pick-up Window



Ring the doorbell



# Looking forward

- ▶ We are all looking forward to the day when we can once again provide in-person programs, show movies in our meeting room, and have story time in the Children's Area.
- ▶ Until then, the Library and its dedicated staff, will continue to provide the best virtual programs and materials we can, and work to keep our patrons and staff safe
- ▶ In the words of **Col. C. Gordon King** in his opening ceremony speech:  
**"diu floreat" - long may it flourish"**

