



# Ex Libris News

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## Done On Purpose

A message from the President

by John Wilkinson

Ex Libris has, since its formation, been blessed with a series of remarkably competent executives—a blessing which some may attribute to the unexpected number of senior librarians and library educators who have joined the Association. Possibly the membership has developed as it has because the qualities of initiative and involvement which led individuals to become leaders in the profession also disposed them to join yet another association in their retirement, for certainly nothing in the constitution of Ex Libris favours leadership experience. Indeed, many present members wish for a stronger representation from non-administrative and non-professorial retirees. This is not to suggest, however, that the management experience present in today's membership presents any hindrance to the Association's effectiveness. Indeed, although members probably never think in such terms, Ex Libris currently represents one of the greatest concentrations of senior experience and expertise in librarianship in Canada today.

Although the opportunity to maintain lifelong friendships is probably

reason enough for most members to belong to the Association, only those who live close enough to Toronto are able to "get together" on an annual basis. A more far-reaching *raison d'être* for the Association is needed which will focus the experience and knowledge of its membership wherever they may live. Moreover, according to the Association's Constitution, such a mission must "stimulate the recollection and publication of the history of Canadian librarianship"—a requirement met admirably by the recent publication of *The Morton Years: the Canadian Library Association 1946-1971*. It is possible that a sequel to *The Morton Years* may yet be the best project of which the Board can conceive; but the great disadvantage of such an undertaking is that it can only involve a very small proportion of the membership.

There are then at least three challenges facing the new President and the Board of Ex Libris: first, to maintain the remarkably high level of achievement set by previous executives; second, to enlarge and broaden the Association's membership base; and third, to utilize, within an historical context, the talents of an expanded and involved membership to further Canadian library interests. Any suggestions from readers of *Ex Libris News* which attempt to resolve any or all of these challenges will be most welcome.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Update from the Morton Committee

At Ex Libris's January board meeting, Al Bowron reported that arrangements had been made allowing CLA to sell copies of *The Morton Years*. CLA now handles all sales to non-members at a price of \$18.75 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. Ex Libris will continue filling orders from members (\$15.00 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling). With fifteen hundred copies of the book printed, Bowron stressed that a concerted effort must be made to increase sales. Review copies have been sent to major library and literary publications, and to associations across Canada, the U.S. and Britain. Promotional brochures were sent to library schools throughout North America.

Approximately half of our members have bought copies of *The Morton Years*. Our goal is to increase this percentage dramatically. We hope that sales of the book will be substantial at the 50th Anniversary CLA Conference, which will be held in Halifax.

### Charitable-organization status

Since our last issue of the *News*, Ex Libris's application for charitable-organization status has been accepted. Recognition was granted as of January 1, 1995. This means that membership fees paid after that date qualify for a tax receipt, as do donations to the organization. This February, Treasurer Mavis Cariou organized a bee to mail out receipts so that members could include them in their 1995 tax returns.

Regulations governing charitable status stipulate some financial-reporting requirements as well as some restrictions on activities. For instance, the Association cannot become a lobbying or advocacy group, nor can it bestow benefits on its members. These restrictions, however, do not affect the operation of Ex Libris as expressed in its Goals and Constitution.

We hope that our new status will encourage more people to join Ex Libris.



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## Ex Libris' 10th Annual Get-Together

by Arn Bailey

*Over fifty people attended the Tenth Annual Get-Together, which took place on November 6, 1995 in the auditorium of the North York Central Library. The program was organized by Les Fowlie and Al Bowron; other arrangements were handled by Joyce Sowby and Elizabeth Ketchum.*

*The scheduled guest speaker was unable to attend because of illness. His speech was replaced with a panel discussion (hastily convened by President Les Fowlie) which proved to be both stimulating and informative. The afternoon speaker was author Marian Fowler.*

### PANEL DISCUSSION

The participants presented papers on the theme "How are librarians coping with the restraints of the nineties?"

The first speaker, Frances Schwenger, CEO of the Metro Toronto Reference Library, told us that budget cuts in the nineties are chronic, demanding creative treatment. She made their extent clear. Eighty-six percent of the library's budget comes from Metro Toronto and, after years of cuts, new provincial slashing of a minimum of 25 percent is expected. The final amount received will depend on such factors as welfare rolls and police demands; the latter could affect up to 40 percent of the cuts. The library has filled no vacancies since 1992. Twenty-seven staff members have been released, and eighty have taken advantage of programs to leave. The library now has lost one-quarter of its staff. Carpeting is no longer being replaced. The collection budget has been reduced. There has been a ten-hour reduction of hours per week.

But in the midst of all this gloom, Ms. Schwenger told us, remedial measures have begun. A business processing review has already resulted in streamlined acquisitions—even though it is difficult to admit that there are flaws in the traditional way of doing things. To face the new situation, an overall vision statement has been created, emphasizing high quality service even with fewer staff. Eighteen implementation committees, involving all levels of staff, were working toward a deadline of January 1, 1996. New job

descriptions were written. Terms such as "flattening administration" and "centralizing" are accepted principles, and their consequences are being met. With new joint decisions taken by teams with specific mandates (e.g., budget teams), a new position was established: a training officer for people with new responsibilities. The library was closed for three weeks so that five thousand books could be moved closer to where they are needed. New signs are being posted. Purchases are not made if the same titles are on order for local libraries.

But even though there is increased use of remote access, people in the library still need help, so librarians are now doing more teaching to help the public use new information networks. In addition, the library is looking for new sources of income, and these could include selling nonbook collections, such as paintings; user fees (for which there is intense pressure); support from the private sector; partnerships with private enterprise, such as technology firms in which the library has an interest; and a coffee shop in the library.

Carole Moore, Chief Librarian at the University of Toronto, was the second presenter. She described the university's financial situation and showed the library's place in the problem of financing. Cuts to the university from the Province of Ontario—where funding is already lower than in Alberta—are in the range of \$53–75 million. To alleviate this, the university is hoping that student fees for tuition, which make up 15 percent of the university's budget, will be deregulated and repayment of student aid will become income-dependent. Student exchanges and partnerships with other institutions throughout the world will add to the prestige of the university. By the year 2000, the University of Toronto will be smaller, stronger and more focused. The library's plan in all of this is to be a link between teaching and research, provide ease of access through electronic technology, develop special collections, make worldwide connections, provide packaged information for students doing research, train staff to meet user expectations, make space available for students—still a requirement, even when remote access is available—and

to seek revenue from external sources. Putting this plan into effect will be difficult after a loss of sixty-six positions. There will have to be cost recovery for outside use of resources. Changes already underway are self-service charge-out, streamlining of material processing and a centre for students to learn about information searching.

The third speaker, Jo Bryant, is the CEO of North York Public Library, host of our Get-Together. She suggested that her presentation would be more positive than the distressing accounts we had just heard. The library and the politicians of North York started to face reality in 1990. Their objective was a closer relationship among all civic service departments in the city, and library cuts were not disproportionate with those in other services. A decline in staff was managed mainly through attrition. Cooperation was seen to have rewards and returns. Planning extended over several years, not one at a time, so that at the time of the Social Contract the library had savings to draw upon. The library has improved processing through technology so that an eight-month backlog has been reduced to none. This was done without compromising the integrity of the catalogue even while using fewer staff. There is a new emphasis on access above acquisition to meet client requests. They have also introduced Gateway Service, an introduction to technology for the user. For alternate sources of funds they have relied on Friends of the Library, which has opened a bookstore to sell donated and discarded books. Volunteers help with teaching programs. User fees will be adopted because of pressure. The library continues to support demand for reading materials for users, whose numbers increase by 7 percent each year. The aim is to be in a position where the library is not dependent upon provincial whims and unexpected decisions. The staff is ready to implement change that would be impossible without their support.

### COMMENTARY

These were very impressive presentations by obviously very capable people who are in the position of knowing their libraries' needs but are having to live with increasingly limited funding. Despite the discouraging

statistics they presented, the energy, commitment and enterprise communicated by all three speakers were infectious.

It was encouraging to hear that technology can help solve some staffing problems, even though it provides librarians with new challenges of using it for their own administrative problems and of teaching its potential to library users.

The new role of librarian as teacher is, it seems, a newly perceived responsibility. Why have so many librarians, other than school librarians, been so slow to realize that this is a key function? Did librarians, even in educational settings such as universities, think that their users were being taught to do research in their lecture halls or places of work? We think of all the librarians who used to be hidden away in basements and closet-sized offices, never meeting a library user with problems of how to find answers in a variety of resources. Apparently, these people now have to be taught to work with the public. Think of all the empire-building that used to go on as assistants to assistants were appointed. To hear of new co-operation of libraries with other municipal services makes us wonder why these links were not forged earlier.

In situations where this kind of co-operation does not yet exist, and where there is in fact great rivalry, we hope that libraries will call out the troops of support that could surely be found in the public (and of course among retired librarians). As individuals, Ex Libris members can certainly serve as knowledgeable volunteers and join or organize Friends of the Library groups.


## THE GILDED AGE

Most of Marian Fowler's books deal with women at different periods of history and in many countries: *Below the Peacock Fan: First Ladies of the Raj* (1988); *Blenheim: Portrait of a Palace* (1989); *The Embroidered Tent: Five Gentlewomen in Early Canada* (1982); *In a Gilded Cage: From Heiress to Duchess* (1993); *Redney: A Life of Sara Jeannette Duncan* (1983). She first spoke of her experience with librarians—all, as we would expect, giving helpful, personable service whether in London, England or Metro Toronto.

Since her topic was the "Gilded Age," mainly of the 1870s to 1890s but lingering on to 1914, she mentioned the excellent revelation of those years in the novels of Edith Wharton and the films made of them (*The Buccaneers* and *The Age of Innocence*). She described the age as one of total optimism, industrial growth and a huge increase in personal wealth. In the U.S.A. in 1860 there were three millionaires, but by 1892 there were four thousand. People displayed their wealth conspicuously and for publicity by such antics as rolling cigars in money and serving black pearls in oysters. This vulgarity was unacceptable to the "old money," who disdained marriages to daughters of the *nouveaux riches*. These daughters were therefore sent overseas with their fortunes to tempt the aristocracy.

Five of the girls won the highest catch from the printed catalogues of eligible bachelors, the Dukes. Their parents were pushing them, but the girls themselves were romantic and ambitious. Even in the extreme cultural clash of America's open society and Britain's traditional and hierarchical one, the

marriages occurred. Their husbands were cynical; the women were selected for their dowries and their suitability to be mothers (that is, their beauty). And the marriages ignored two quite different views of sexual morality. According to the Puritanical American view, the girls were to have had no sexual relations before marriage and the men were to stop having them at marriage. In British society, women would marry to produce an heir and a spare, and then both parties were free to have affairs as they chose. The American public was as fascinated by these marriages as they are today by Princess Di. Americans have always missed the British royal connection, and it captured their imagination.

The five Duchesses that interested Marian Fowler were the wives of the eighth Duke of Manchester (Consuelo Yznaga), the eighth and ninth Dukes of Marlborough (Lily Hammersley and Consuelo Vanderbilt), the ninth Duke of Manchester (Helena Zimmerman), and the Duke of Roxburghe (May Goetlet). She described each of these marriages briefly, with the last being perhaps the ideal. 

## Isolated Libraries Serving Isolated People

by Adele Fasick

My trip to the Russian Far East last September as the only Canadian at a library conference in Siberia began with two days of plane rides that took us from Toronto to Vancouver, and Seattle to Anchorage. We finally entered Russia at the faded but elegant city of Khabarovsk, where the last lap of our journey took us to Petropovlask on the Kamchatka peninsula. Kamchatka was closed to outsiders, including other Russians, for seventy years until it was finally opened in 1991. Even now, security on trips to the region is very tight. No one visits Kamchatka without a visa and a letter of invitation, and my travelling companion, Professor Pamela Spence-Richards of Rutgers University, was denied entry because of a slight discrepancy between her name on the letter of invitation and her married name on her visa. After long, passionate arguments in Russian, she was allowed to board the flight but told sternly to report to the militia as soon as we landed in Petropovlask.

It was almost midnight when the plane landed, and everyone waited on

the airport luggage hall where we competed with tiny Siberian Inuit women and burly fishermen to snatch our bags off the carousel. From the airport we were driven directly to the hotel, so it was not until the next morning that we had a chance to see the city of Petropovlask.

The view from my hotel window was typical of the city. I could see a line of cone-shaped mountains, the famous volcanoes of Kamchatka, in the distance, their snow-covered peaks backlit by the morning sun. Closer to the hotel were barren fields of scraggly grass dotted with unadorned concrete buildings. Directly beneath my window was a concrete yard with overflowing trash cans. During the seven days that I stayed at the hotel, I never saw the trash cans emptied or even visited, except by an occasional gull noisily searching for food.

Petropovlask is a city of 270,000 people stretched out along one main road between the mountains and the bay which opens into the Pacific Ocean. Because the Kamchatka penin-

sula is so rugged, neither roads nor railroads exist between cities. All long-distance travel is by air or sea. The natural scenery is spectacular but the city itself is ugly. Almost all of the buildings are made of concrete, and although they are not old, their walls are stained by water and rust, glass windowpanes broken and patched with tape, and the unpainted doors look unwelcoming. A few older wooden houses built in the nineteenth century Russian style remain, but they too look derelict. The entry ways to most buildings have ragged grass about them but no flowers or shrubs; the whole effect is dreary and unkempt. A fragment of a poem remembered from a high school English class came to mind: "Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile."

On our first day, we were taken on a tour of the city including monuments to Vitus Berin, who discovered the area and founded the city in 1740, and to the magnificent harbour, large enough, we were told, to hold all of

the ships of every country in Europe. Hundred-year-old cannons from the Crimean War are still poised overlooking the harbour to commemorate the city's struggle to fight off foreign powers.

We also went to the Fishermen's Union Library inside one of the dreary concrete buildings. Entering through a narrow wooden door, we found ourselves in a sunny room with lace curtains and a comfortable reading area with a television set and videos as well as books and magazines. We were introduced to a former fisherman who had used the library for many years and had become so interested in books and reading that he attended our conference.

The chief librarian welcomed us and answered questions about the kind of books the fishermen wanted (everything from great literature to Stephen King) and how long they could take out books (as long as the voyage lasts, months at a time) and other such questions. All of the conversation was conducted through an interpreter although most of the Russian librarians understood some

English. There was some discussion about whether librarians were giving the fishermen books they thought they should read, or what they really wanted. Fishermen are among the most prosperous of Petropovlosk's citizens and are also well educated because they train in a technical secondary school with a broad curriculum. The library service appears to be excellent, although the librarian acknowledged that a lack of money has made it difficult to buy new materials. While we talked we were served candy and cookies, and tea from an immense silver samovar.

Registration for the conference started at nine

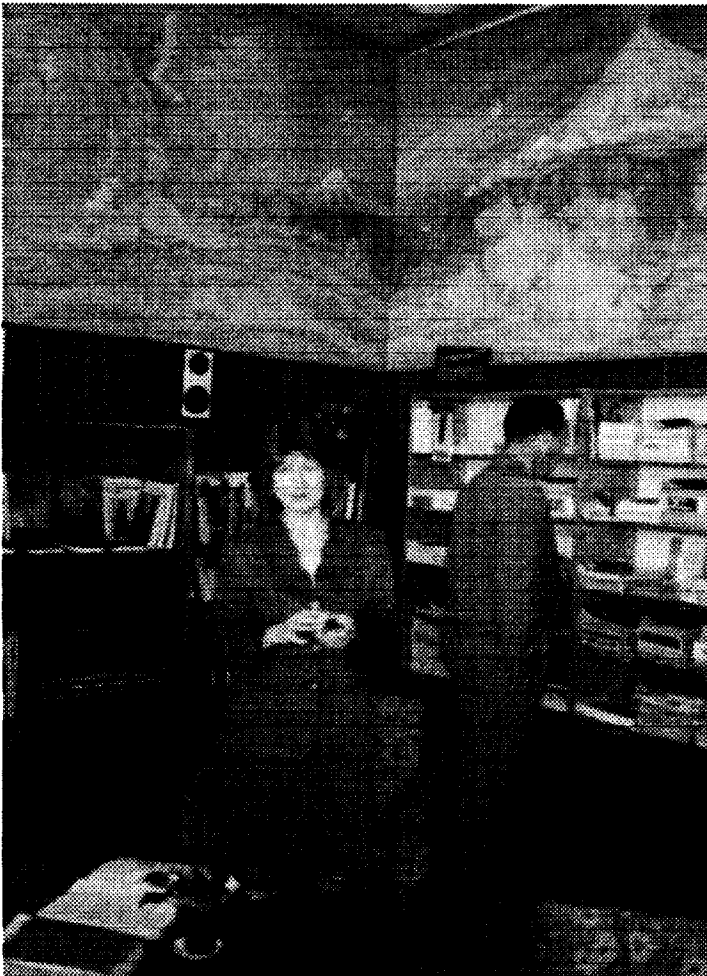
o'clock the next morning, and it turned out to be a lengthy process. Foreigners had been instructed to bring registration fees in U.S. cash; a woman from the bank carefully placed each bill on a light table and examined it with a magnifying glass before accepting it. Luckily the librarians were an honest group, and no counterfeit bills were discovered.

The conference hall proved to be utilitarian but well equipped, and the simultaneous translation using modern, wireless headsets was excellent. The entire proceedings were televised. At the opening session we were welcomed by the library officials and the vice-chair of the province as well as the representative for culture in Kamchatka.

Approximately one hundred people, most of them from the former Soviet Union, attended the conference. Pam Richards and I were the only participants from North America, but about twenty non-Russians had come from Germany, Italy, Sweden, the Czech Republic, the U.K. and South Africa. The speakers discussed library services to many kinds of clients. One woman talked about service to people with mental disabilities, a population increased by the severe social strains in Russia; a librarian from the Sakha Republic in far Northern Siberia talked about services to nomads. The population of her republic includes fifteen hundred reindeer herdsman and about a thousand other nomads. Reindeer herders work nine to ten months as they follow the herds, and libraries provide them with books to take on their wanderings.

Russians in all parts of the country suffer from a lack of appropriate books, especially textbooks. The publications director of the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation talked about the four hundred new books the foundation is publishing to replace outdated Soviet textbooks. She said there is a shortfall of 150 million books in Russia because many books currently in libraries and schools are from the Soviet era and are no longer acceptable. Books produced by the Open Society are bought by Soros Foundation and sold to libraries at cost.

Our first long working day was followed by a day trip to Kamchatka's most spectacular attraction: the Valley of the Geysers, which is accessible only by helicopter. At nine o'clock in the morning we boarded a bus which took us to a small private airport, a Japanese-Russian joint company venture. The helicopters on the field were old and rusty, and their camouflage



The Chief Librarian of the Fishermen's Union Library

paint made it obvious that they were left over from the Afghanistan war. It was a little scary to think of going up in one, but impossible to back out. Finally we were assigned our helicopters—the Russians in one and the foreign guests and officials in the other. The inside of our plane was shabby but roomy, with two rows of double seats to carry twenty-four passengers. No seat belts were provided, but we were equipped with ear protectors. Several Russian women scrambled in at the last moment after all the seats were filled. One sat on a kitchen chair in the front of the helicopter and one stood in the doorway of the cockpit during the entire trip. They were kitchen workers who had come along to prepare our picnic.

Despite the informal arrangements of the helicopter, the flying was superb. The volcanoes, tall and snow-covered, were noticeable for their pointed volcanic tops and the streaks of lava dust running down their sides. We flew low over forests of birch trees and barren stretches covered with volcanic ash. At one point the pilot sighted a bear and tilted the helicopter so that we could see the great beast run clumsily across a field—probably terrified by our noisy flight.

We flew directly over the cone of one active volcano and could see the smoke rising from the desolate interior. We also flew over a cone that had a small, bright aqua lake inside it, called the Acidic Lake because of its high aluminum content. One of the windows on each side of the plane could be opened for picture taking, but I was too nervous to lean out and use my camera.

Suddenly we landed in an empty field with a ramshackle house at one side and two outdoor toilets at the other. We were directed to the primitive toilets, and then taken to walk into the gorge which was reached by a wooden walkway with steps that extended all the way down. The sight of steam curling out of the walls of the valley was impressive enough to make the steep descent worthwhile. We watched one geyser erupt and then walked further up the valley to see the steaming hot springs and the mud cauldrons. At intervals a deep crackling noise almost like gunfire came from within the hillside. Because of heat generated by the geysers, spring

comes early to this valley and so it is a favourite place for bears to hibernate during the winter. There were no bears in evidence in September, but we did meet two television cameramen who were filming a documentary about the valley to be shown on the Disney Channel in 1997. Television reaches everywhere.

The next two days were filled with more papers, some by local librarians explaining how they served the various groups within their regions. The foreign participants gave some geographic and historical perspective. Pam Richards described the library service, or lack of it, to blacks in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. My paper was on library services to young people in the Baffin Region of the Northwest Territories and it was interesting to discover the similarity between work in Russia and in Canada. The president of the Aboriginal Compensation Foundation talked about service to the small aboriginal communities of Kamchatka and adjacent areas. The Russians have developed written languages for the Koriak, Itelman and Kaminchall peoples, but there are very few books or other printed materials for

them. Most of the aboriginal people of Kamchatka live on a reserve, but many of the younger ones move to the cities to find jobs and often lose their language and culture.

The week at the Kamchatka conference was exciting and stimulating both socially and professionally. There is not time to describe the excellent concert we attended, nor the lavish Russian banquets with their rounds of toasts and musical entertainments, nor the trip to different hot springs where between courses of a lengthy dinner we could take a dip in a pool as warm as a bath. But at the centre of the experience was the contact with our Russian colleagues, working to supply books and materials to all the people of their vast country despite the dislocations of a stumbling economy. Some of our hosts had not been paid for four months because municipalities are virtually bankrupt, yet they continue to hope and plan for rebuilding their libraries and revitalizing information services. We in the West can learn a great deal from them about the importance that a cultured society places on the written record. ❦



## An invitation to our readers

Over the years, ELA members and others have helped make this newsletter a reality by sending us their reminiscences, historical articles and other items of interest.

We are always looking for new, lively material. If you have a short item you would like us to include, an idea you would like us to pursue, or an article you have written or plan to write, we would like to hear from you.

Articles on any aspect of our profession—memories of your own career; first-hand histories of a library or library service (municipal, regional or provincial; in or outside Canada); reports of interesting collections, projects, or organizations; biographies of outstanding librarians—all will receive our careful consideration.

*Milestones* items are also very welcome, as omissions and late reports do occur despite the heroic service long provided by Janette White, who scans the journals and newsletters in the University of Toronto FIS collection for each issue. Information from outside Central Canada is particularly useful, as we may not have access to it locally.

Also, any photographs you can send in to accompany your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

## The Children's Literature Service at NLC

by Irene Aubrey

When I retired as Chief of the Children's Literature Service at the National Library in December '93, the Service had been in existence for eighteen years. My position title was Children's Literature/Librarian Consultant, and the job proved to be one of the most challenging and rewarding of my professional career.

Establishment of the service in June 1975 was due to the tireless efforts of the members of a special committee made up of librarians from the Canadian Library Association and what was then the Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française, or ACBLF (now the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation [ASTED]). The brief they prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State argued for the need for a specialist in children's literature who would provide expertise and reference information, with emphasis on Canadian children's literature.

How does one begin such a momentous task? In a sense, the public made it easy for me, for on the first

day of my arrival at the National Library there was a pile of letters waiting to be answered. Some were from well-wishers, but others were from patrons with specific requests. There was no alternative but to get started.

It soon became clear, however, that to provide maximum and efficient service, it would be necessary to collect not only children's books but also professional children's literature (that is, books on the history and development of children's literature) into one unit. Thus, with the approval of my superiors, the work began of identifying these books in the National Library's general stacks. To help with this major project, Sandra Burke, a professional librarian, was hired on contract for a period of nearly a year and a half. Once the identification of the books was completed and an author record made for each book, work on assembling these two separate collections began.

One of my fondest memories of the National Library is the incident that took place shortly before the retirement of the Assistant Director of Public Services, of which the Children's Litera-

ture Service was a division. He mentioned to me that he had found a room in the stacks where I could assemble the children's collection. The room turned out to be located in the third basement. Wire netting covering most of the outside wall, and, peering over the netting, I saw old, used typewriters lying on the floor. I could scarcely believe my eyes. But I soon realized that if I did not take this particular location, I would not have anything. So I agreed, on condition that it be renovated, and work soon began on assembling the children's books. The project took several years as, in the beginning, I had very little assistance, and much of my time was devoted to reference service. Eventually, staff grew to comprise three permanent members: the Chief, the Children's Literature Librarian and the Library Clerk.

At the same time, we were assembling a separate professional children's literature collection consisting of reference books, international in scope, that was located in my office. Over the years, the service moved at least six times, but each time we were allocated a little more space. Happily, shelving was provided to hold the growing reference collection, which took up most of the book budget; this was set up in a

## the MORTON YEARS

### THE CANADIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 1946-1971

Researched and written by Elizabeth Hulse for the Ex Libris Association

Elizabeth Morton was one of the founders of the Canadian Library Association. As the CLA's first Executive Secretary—a position she held for 22 years—she was responsible for creating a strong national voice for libraries.

"The astonishing developments that took place between May 1944, when she arrived in Ottawa, and June 1946 (founding conference of the CLA in Hamilton) would not, I am convinced, have taken place without her."

—from the foreword by Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, Canada's first National Librarian

"Elizabeth Hulse has created an account of the CLA that is vital in understanding the history of the Canadian libraries and library associations. Everyone involved in libraries will want to own a copy. We are proud to offer this as the first of a series of publications that record the history of our libraries and the achievements of those who have developed them."

—Les Fowlie, President, Ex Libris Association, 1995

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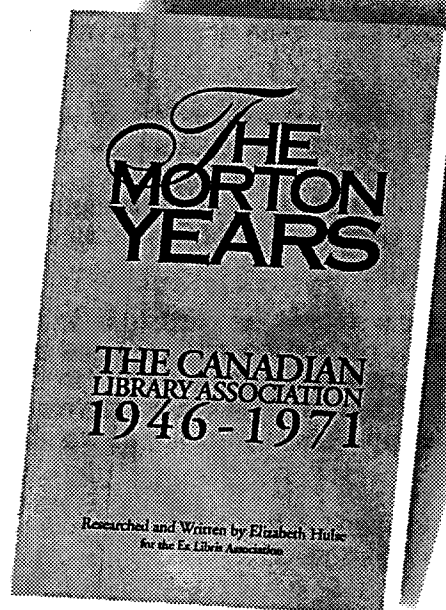
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small area upstairs in the Children's Literature Service to accommodate the reference service.

Before 1979, the service was known by the title of the staff position. In 1979, this was changed to Children's Literature Service to reflect the growing interest in, and demand for, the service. It is now part of the Canadian Literature Research Service, which includes the former Music and Rare Books divisions.

The most comprehensive part of the collection of books for children up to and including sixteen years of age is the Canadiana collection. It includes new and old books published in Canada, foreign editions of books written or illustrated by Canadians (in many languages) and non-Canadian books that deal with Canadian subject matter. Also included are non-Canadian children's classics, folk and fairy tales, and books that have received awards such as the Newberry and Caldecott awards. With the establishment of the National Library's Preservation Collection a few years ago, preservation copies of reference and children's books were transferred to this restricted-use special collection.

As an enhancement to the children's collection, and to give researchers the opportunity to conduct in-depth research, recommendations were made to purchase manuscript material and original book illustrations by Canadian children's authors and illustrators. As a result, the manuscript collection now contains works by Laszlo Gal, Elizabeth Cleaver, Ken Nutt (a.k.a. Eric Beddows), Robert Soulières, James Houston, Barbara Reid and Marie-Louise Gay.

By the end of 1993, there were about 20,500 titles in the children's collection and 2400 reference titles. A recent article in the *National Library News* (January 1996) sets the current number of Canadian children's titles at 28,000, but does not give a figure for the reference collection.

Each time a book was added to these collections, additional cards were made, providing access by illustrator, translator, title, date of publication, series and language. The cards were filed in separate catalogues and used regularly to answer reference questions. For the past two years no cards have been added, since the new bibliographic system AMICUS is programmed to answer these needs.

The benefits I experienced working with Canadian children's books never diminished. They came from witnessing, at first hand, the richness of a growing literature, from serving researchers, and from meeting and talking with Canadian children's authors and illustrators. Many years ago, I began to take a copy of each book of an author or illustrator who was visiting Ottawa, usually for a speaking engagement, and to ask him or her to autograph the book. At a recent visit by Kit Pearson to our capital, I was happy to see that the Children's Literature Service is continuing the tradition. Writing or speaking on the service or on other aspects of Canadian children's literature also brought untold benefits. I remember speaking in Chicago on French-language Canadian children's literature at an International Board on Books for Young People (U.S.) meeting. I had prepared a list of the titles I mentioned in the speech as well as a list of sources of French-language Canadian children's literature, and brought only twenty copies, thinking that only a few might be picked up. I

was pleased indeed when all the copies disappeared in a few minutes, and obligingly jotted down requests for many more. This experience led me to update this source list every so often. It was widely distributed in Canada and elsewhere as *Sources of French Canadian Children's and Young People's Books/Sources d'information sur les livres de jeunesse canadiens-français*. Over the years, several lists of publications were prepared, including the annual *Notable Canadian Children's Books/Un choix de livres canadiens pour la jeunesse* (now discontinued) and others on specific topics, such as *Pictures to Share: Illustration in Canadian Children's Books/Images pour tous: Illustration de livres canadiens pour enfants*.

The services we provided, the participation in workshops and conferences both in and outside Canada and the countless contacts made over the years reinforced the need for a children's literature consultant at the national level. It was my good fortune to have filled that position for eighteen years.

## Library Service North of North

by Yvonne Earle

From an office in Iqaluit (formerly Frobisher Bay), Baffin Regional Library provides library service to approximately 14,000 Northwest Territories residents spread out over 109,000 square kilometres from Grise Fiord to Sanikiluaq (Belcher Islands). Of the thirteen communities in our region, six have public libraries; the other seven have access to borrower-by-mail service and deposit collections provided from regional collections.

Until 1987 all library services in the NWT were administered from Hay River in the western Arctic. This is a little like being in Newfoundland with everything originating from Winnipeg except that the planes were less frequent, phone lines were worse and community staff were very isolated. In September 1987 Baffin Regional Library came on-stream. It consisted of one desk requisitioned from surplus, one phone, and a "cozy" workroom I shared with the Iqaluit library staff, bolstered long-distance by the camaraderie and enthusiasm of the headquarters staff in Hay River. The fax machine had also become part of north-

ern operations by then (much in advance of "the South," as southern Canada is known) and it was a turning point for library service delivery. Since then regional office has moved to a lovely new building, added a library technician to the staff, hooked into the Northwest Territories Public Library Service OPAC and most recently connected to the Internet.

Currently the administration of library services is in English, so while local staff outside Iqaluit must be able to read, write and speak English, it is also important that they speak Inuktitut, the language of their communities. I can often only speak to the Inuit storytellers or artists whose works are in our collections through an interpreter, and the Inuktitut I have learned from the preschoolers at story hour does not help me at library board meetings. We have worked hard to build community collections written in syllabics or recorded on video and audio tape in Inuktitut, but materials are still limited, and shelves contain predominantly English-language items. As might be predicted in an oral culture, our video collection

(the documentaries in particular) gets the heaviest use, and magazines are well thumbed. They line up for *Hockey News* in Baffin communities too!

Community libraries are administered locally using funds provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories. These grants currently allow for the hiring of a local staff person for fifteen hours a week and cover operational costs. All libraries must have access to a fax machine and have their own phone. Library materials, equipment and training are provided by NWT Library Services. Since small northern communities are not tax-based, any additional funds for special projects and collections must be raised by library boards; two in Baffin have become successful proposal writers and consequently have made significant contributions in the areas of family-based literacy, local archival photograph collecting and expanded Inuktitut language collections for their communities.

Some libraries are joint operations with schools, but more recently we have joined with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Three communities, including Iqaluit, now have joint Interpretive Centre/Library facilities, and these are working well.

In 1992 the world opened up for community libraries: a CD-ROM workstation with the NWTPLS catalogue was installed in each library, transforming it from an isolated unit with-

out any searchable catalogue to an integrated part of the territory-wide system. We had been expecting a rise in the interlibrary loans faxed to our office, but the response was amazing and it has been growing annually. If Canada Post eliminates "Library Rate," this will have a critical impact on resource sharing and document delivery to remote communities; unlike southern Canadian libraries, we currently have no cheaper option between our branches.

So what does all this mean for the library-service user? Well, if you are living in Pangnirtung and you have just read a book review in *The Globe & Mail*, you can go to your library and make a request. If your book is on the shelf in Inuvik they will receive your request via fax and e-mail within forty-eight hours and you could have it in Pangnirtung in ten days, weather permitting! If your book needs to be purchased or borrowed on interlibrary loan from the south, your request is e-mailed from regional office to headquarters, and you may have to wait eight weeks.

If you reside where there is no community library, the regional office is your gateway to library service by phone, fax or mail once you are registered. Slow phone lines to most Baffin communities and long-distance charges to hook into the Iqaluit server are current deterrents to using the Internet, but that is changing rapidly. Meanwhile, regional staff take subject, author and title requests from borrowers-by-mail and

try to have something out on the next mail plane. This service often builds a real camaraderie between the staff and the client as notes and interests are shared back and forth. We currently have two home schooling parents and someone reading their way through Sartre among our active clients.

The regional manager and the library technician who work at Baffin Regional Library office have great variety in their jobs. The technician does everything from mail clearing to Internet searches, interlibrary loans to online MARC cataloguing and computer trouble-shooting, with many unsung tasks in between. The regional manager runs the gamut from obtaining capital funds and helping to design new facilities to putting up the shelves (every library school should include "Shelving 101" as a required course) and from writing training manuals to shovelling out a snowdrift-bound library. Collections maintenance, selection, shrinking budgets all fit in there too, but I have not yet delivered books by dog team like Pinkwater's Aunt Lulu. 🐶

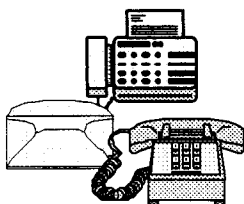
*The author extends an invitation to anyone interested in a closer view of library service in Baffin. There are daily flights on First Air from Ottawa and Montreal, while NWT Air and Canadian fly from the west. Ms. Earle would be delighted to share a cup of coffee and show you how they operate. Yvonne Earle can be reached at 819-979-5401 or fax 819-979-1373.*

## Let us hear from you!

If you have comments (pro or con) or information to add to anything we have published, please contact us by mail, phone or fax:

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Thanks for your help!

*The Membership Committee*



## Not Just Another Branch Library

by Albert Bowron

The Lillian H. Smith Branch of the Toronto Public Library is named after the first trained children's librarian in Canada and pioneer of library service to children.

I was shown around by the Branch Head, Mary Anne Cree. She has the responsibility of supervising the care and use of a concentration of resources unique in this country. The gross floor area is 51,000 square feet, with a capacity of 277,000 volumes. There is seating for 389. The cost of construction for the building alone was \$9 million, or \$176.50 per square foot, and the total project cost including the site, equipment and furnishings was \$15 million.

Situated south of the university on the edge of a huge residential/commercial Chinatown, this addition to the College and Spadina scene is, in my view, an eccentric structure. Phillip Carter, the architect, disagrees: "It is a four-towered castle with a harlequin brick patterning and a dominant copper roof, all of which add to the fantasy quality of the building's design," he says. To me, this weighty block of flawlessly laid creamy brick is more like the town residence of a successful member of the French bourgeoisie. I have seen a castle that looks like this.

One enters through a perfect semi-circular entrance, finely patterned in tiny buff brick reminiscent of the Romanesque style. A huge lion griffin and an eagle griffin, designed and cast in bronze by Ludzer Vandermolten, menace the entrance. This is the most deliciously frightening introduction to a library that I have ever seen. The lions flanking the entrance to the New York Public Library are pussycats by comparison.

Once past the double glass doors, the handles of which are in the form of vipers, you stand on a beautifully patterned slate floor. Facing you is your typical heavy-handed TPL control desk. But look up and you are at the bottom of a kind of concrete silo, colonnaded, four storeys high, lit by an enormous

UFO fixture. This atrium is impressive, simple in construction—and it fulfills the vogue for atriums designed into most public buildings in Toronto these days.

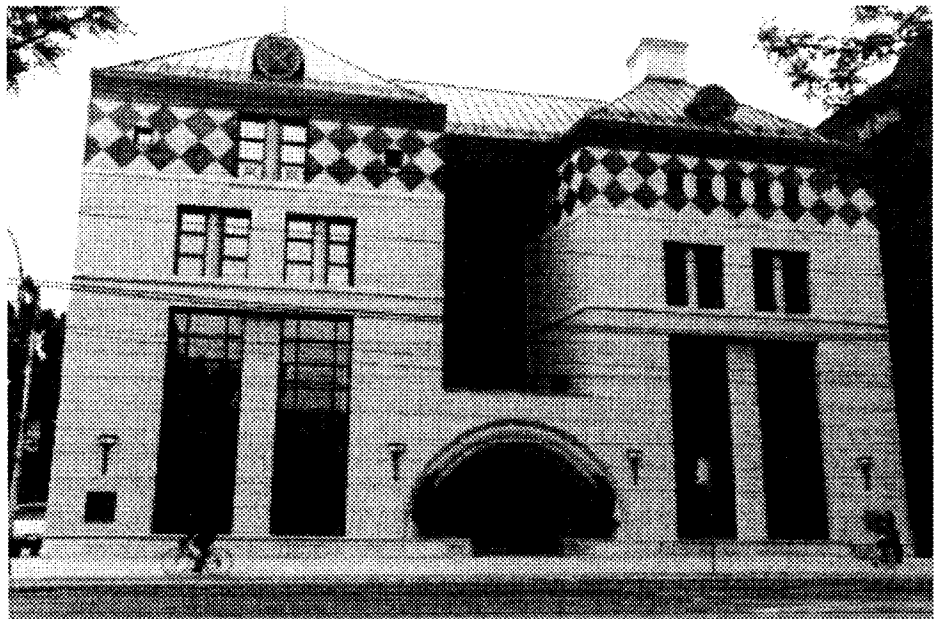
There are two public elevators, but the curving, brass-balustrated stairways clinging to the outside of the atrium beckon one to climb through the four floors to an unsurpassed wealth of resources.

The first two levels house a general multimedia branch collection including a large French, Chinese and Vietnamese component, the Margaret Bagshaw reference collection of puppetry and children's drama, and a circulating science-fiction collection. The third floor is dedicated to the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy. The core collection was a gift of the Canadian author and editor Judith Merrill in 1970. It has grown tenfold since then to 72,000 volumes in addition to endless files of science-fiction magazines.

In the public area, one notices a formidable, burnished metal partition with two hardly noticeable doors. These lead to a cozy office for the lifetime use of Ms. Merrill and the office of the section head. On this level across the atrium are the dimly lit compact stacks of the Merrill collection, and in the

brightly lit northeast corner is the Electronic Resource Centre where twenty-three computers provide interactive resources on CD-ROM or online connections to other libraries, home, school and work. This innovative facility also is used to train the public in the use of electronic information tools and resources. Already there are three hundred CD-ROMs available. The centre has been open since the fall of 1995, and although it is too soon to assess its success or effectiveness, I was told that it is almost always totally occupied by adults and students. The day I returned for my second visit it was indeed fully occupied by youths playing computer games.

The fourth level houses the world-renowned Osborne Collection of early children's books augmented by the Lillian H. Smith collection, books from 1910 to the present, and the Canadiana Library of Children's Books from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—about 60,000 volumes, manuscripts, letters, artworks, etc. The space reserved for research is separated from the exhibit and general-public section by an elegant glass partition. The large compact stacks are again on the windowless west side of the atrium. The exhibit area has a comfortable atmosphere and museum-level lighting. However, behind the information desk and workroom along the east wall is a row of tiny windows,



The Lillian H. Smith Branch Library