

OALT/ABO

NIAGARA REGIONAL BRANCH

Newsletter

May 1979

vol 2, no 2

A SINCERE THANK YOU

All members of the Niagara Regional Branch would like to express a sincere thank you to Barb Shannon and Andrew Porteus for their excellent work on behalf of the Association. They drafted letters in protest of the proposed budget cut of the Niagara Falls Public Library. Their effort was successful, and copies of the letters are enclosed in this mailing.

We would also like to thank Barb for the high quality of work she is doing with the newsletter.

APRIL MEETING A SUCCESS

The highlight of the April meeting was a talk on job interviews, given by Mrs. Molson, Librarian at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library. Her talk was both informative and entertaining, and we would like to express our appreciation to her.

COMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 1979

Picnic at Fireman's Park, Niagara Falls (weather permitting). Details will follow.

THIS MONTH: WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 30, at Centennial Secondary School, 240 Thorold Road West, Welland.

Featured will be a post-conference roundtable, where conference participants will be asked to give their views on the workshops held.

Also: "Pack your own shute", a film relating to self motivation, will be shown.

Raffle A copy of Barry Bowes' book, "Between the stacks", will be raffled at the meeting. The following is an excerpt:

It's no wonder most members of the public don't realize there are differences in status between individuals. Little do they suspect that some of us are professional and some not professional. A few might think we're all equally stupid. (p.9)

EVERYONE WELCOME

Just a reminder that non-members are welcome to attend our meetings

Fee structures are as follows:

Full member	\$20/year
Student member	\$ 6/year
Associate member	\$16/year
Institutional member	\$35/year

Shocked library board girds

By NANCY REYNOLDS
Review Staff Writer

Niagara Falls Library Board is prepared to show cause why city council should not cut any substantial amount from the 1979 budget and why branch libraries should be preserved.

Council tried to cut \$100,000 from the city's share of the library service's \$875,000 budget Tuesday, then tried for a \$50,000 reduction, and finally tabled the issue until next week.

The Library Board has until Friday to provide city staff with any additional rationale for the budget, which came in well within the city's six per cent increase guideline.

The board decided Wednesday the brief will outline the costs of operating each of the three branch libraries; the amount of use; the amount of saving that might result from closure; and the effect of losing many of the intangible benefits a community derives from a library.

LESS THAN BEFORE

"We reduced our last year's budget \$35,000," Frank Lewis, chairman of the board, said. "A reduction of \$100,000 would leave us in the position of trying to operate with \$66,000 less than the amount we found absolutely necessary last year."

A committee of the volunteer board will meet Thursday with chief librarian Dorothy Van Slyke

to put the brief on paper, but board members seemed shocked and reeling from the enormity of the blow from council.

Mr. Lewis said council found the budget "unsatisfactory" and lengthy debate did not result in either passage or refusal of the document.

The board could not cut the spending forecast Wednesday because every conference, every travel allowance, every contingency had already been removed.

PROBE CLOSING

Mr. Lewis suggested the board look at the effect of closing branch libraries, as council proposed, with the action to take place "Almost immediately."

"Which branches?" Pat Feeney asked, and Mr. Lewis said he gained the impression Stamford and Drummond branches were in jeopardy.

"The picture I got was that a branch in Chippawa and this main library may be all council envisages," Mr. Lewis said.

Mr. Feeney said Stamford library is in leased quarters with five years of the lease still to fulfill.

Where will the books go?

Where will the people who borrow them go?

How will they get there?

How much effect will this have on the operation of the main library?

MOVE BOOKS

The board agreed that the books are still needed by the community so they must be shifted either to overcrowded Chippawa branch, where there is no space, or to the main library, which was not designed to absorb two branch operations.

The same numbers of staff will be needed to serve the same numbers of clients and this will compound a space and parking problem already existing in Victoria Avenue quarters.

The board owns Drummond Branch library on Main Street, so the insurance and other costs related to ownership will go on while only utility costs will be saved unless someone buys the building.

"What about the groups who routinely use the library meeting rooms?" Mrs. E. Newby asked. "Where will they go?"

"What about the children's programs at Drummond?" she asked. "Many of the children walk to that library."

This is also true of Stamford branch.

CORE OF LIFE

"We must try to get council to agree to the premise that libraries and similar institutions are at the very core of the quality of life of a community," Mr. Feeney said.

And the board agreed that when times are

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for battle with city council

hard and many people are out of work, libraries become even more vital, because culture, technical training, recreation are as near as the book shelves, and are free. For children of the poor there are toys, pictures, music, story hours, countless programs and the vast world of reading.

Miss Van Slyke said a travel statement made by a council member Tuesday, which placed any library client within 10 to 20 minutes walking or driving time of the main library, is "unrealistic" and should be corrected.

"What about a pre-school child living on Garner Road or an elderly person even closer," she said. "Even if a bus or car were available, the time involved is much greater and may be far beyond what that person can achieve."

CAN BUY BOOKS

Then there is a premise mentioned by a council member that people read for recreation and pleasure only and can buy a novel or two at the corner store.

This too is not based on fact, Miss Van Slyke said.

"This is fine if you can afford it," she said. But aldermen completely overlooked those who read for education, training, research or business purposes."

And there is the cultural aspect. Fine music,

paintings for loan, reference books on the arts and on travel, concerts and programs, presented under federal and provincial programs, are available to those who might not be able to buy them.

Statistics, microfilmed records, government reports, and countless technical reference books are also available plus the assistance of highly trained people and a national network of resource material.

"Pleasure reading is such a small part of the library function but it loomed so large," she said.

CAN'T COMPETE

School libraries can't compete with the hours or the extent of community facilities and are planned to be compatible with local libraries, not replace them. And school libraries are available only to students, board members said.

Comparisons of the numbers of libraries in municipalities have very little value unless you study the historic, geographic, and demographic reasons for the branches, the board agreed.

Fort Erie, for instance, has four libraries and is expanding the main one. St. Catharines has four and has recorded a seven per cent increase in the budget for them. Niagara-on-the-Lake recently approved a 15 per cent increase in the library budget, Mrs. Newby said.

Niagara Falls gained four libraries by

amalgamation Ron Pierce said, and there has been a steady increase in the use of them all.

In March, 26,074 people used the main library and 2,578 the Drummond Branch. Stamford Centre had 7,917 clients and Chippawa 3,302.

In addition 339 people used the Drummond branch reference sections; 4,096 the Victoria library; 612 in Chippawa and 630 in Stamford.

In total, 45,533 people in the city used a library in March compared to 40,951 in the same month last year. At every location circulation has increased.

In addition, there is a service for shut-ins, and 10,437 attended events at the libraries. Another 1,211 borrowed records and 800 borrowed films.

Why are costs so much greater for the main library?

Miss Van Slyke said administration, repairs, cataloguing, and all technical work is done there so the highest-priced staff is there. In addition, the comparison is between the branches with about 3,000 square feet and the 47,000 square feet at the main library.

The essence of the board's submission appears to be that libraries are "a great, long-lasting resource for every body in the community."

"We don't serve any special interest group," Mr. Lewis said. "We have something for everybody."

Library board circulates petitions against budget cuts by city council

Members of the public are rallying around the public library board in its attempt to forestall budget cuts from the city.

Copies of a petition were placed in the four libraries Thursday and by this morning almost 1,000 names had been collected. And library users are requesting copies to distribute at club meetings and take door to door in their neighborhoods.

The city budget was delayed Tuesday when council could not decide what to do about library costs and a meeting will be held Monday at city hall to further discuss the matter. Members of the public who sign the petition are being asked to show their support by attending that meeting, Dorothy Van Slyke, chief librarian said.

She said 400 people signed the petition at the main library Thursday and reports from Stamford and Drummond branches were more than 200 and 123 respectively. No figures were



DOROTHY VAN SLYKE
... asks support

available from Chippawa at presstime.

The library board is not prepared to take any cut in its

requested budget, Frank Lewis, board chairman, said this morning.

The board is requesting \$689,813 from the city this year to cover part of its \$875,800 budget. The rest of the money comes from service and fee revenue and from the provincial government.

The request is a 4.6 per-cent increase over last year and the board will present a brief to council Monday asking that their budget request be accepted without cuts, Miss Van Slyke said.

Mr. Lewis said the board is taking the position that if they accept any cuts at all they would be below last year's services if the budget is cut, saying it would have to be a decision of the board.

"The budget has not been passed," he said, "We don't know where we stand yet."

he said council has asked the board to prepare a statement on what savings would be realized

if any or all branches of the library are closed and that will be presented Monday at the meeting.

Asked if staff layoffs are a possibility, Mr. Lewis said "we're not even thinking about layoffs."

Miss Van Slyke said the reaction from the public is one of shock, when they realize some branches are threatened with closing.

"People are surprised our branch system is in jeopardy after its long history," she said.

Last year the city cut \$35,000 from the library's budget. This year discussion in council has ranged from no cuts to cutting as much as \$100,000 from the library. The petition states if the cuts suggested by some aldermen are made it could mean drastically curtailed service which could result in the possibility of closing at least two branches and reduced service at the main library on Victoria Avenue.

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Niagara Falls Review April 24, 1979

Library cuts denies rights, society says

The Editor:

We, the members of the Niagara Regional Branch of the Ontario Association of Library Technicians Association des Bibliothécaires de l'Ontario, were appalled at the apparent irresponsibility of City Council in its drastic measures proposed that would deny citizens of Niagara Falls their cultural and educational rights. The irreparable damage caused by such action would have set this city back by decades.

The library's value to the com-

munity cannot be determined in dollars and cents; unfortunately, society tends to place a dollar value on everything. The excellent service provided by the library is dependant on the amount of funding provided. To see where their policy may lead, perhaps City Council should pay a visit to the library and borrow a copy of "Fahrenheit 451".

NIAGARA REGIONAL
BRANCH,
OALT-ABO
Andrew Porteus,
President

OALT/ABO

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARY TECHNICIANS/ASSOCIATION DES BIBLIOTECHNICIENS DE L'ONTARIO

Niagara Regional Branch,
OALT/ABO
P.O. Box 611
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6V5

21 April 1979

Members of City Council
City of Niagara Falls
4310 Queen Street
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6X5

Dear Alderman:

As the local chapter of OALT/ABO, the Niagara Regional Branch would like to express concern for the future of the Niagara Falls Public Library.

We feel that the library is an essential service, providing cultural, educational and recreational pursuits to city residents. The proposed cutback would force the library to limit and curtail these vital services.

Children, our future leaders, need to be stimulated by the vast expanse of knowledge available in order that they grow to their fullest capacity. The public library is a great source of stimulation, and it's importance should not be underestimated.

All age groups enjoy the pleasant atmosphere of the branch libraries and would certainly feel the loss should they be forced to close.

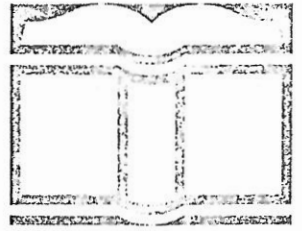
As citizens of this community and as a professional organization, we urge you to ensure that the excellent service provided by the library can be maintained in 1979 by accepting the proposed budget.

Sincerely,

NIAGARA REGIONAL BRANCH, OALT/ABO

Andrew Porteus,
President

Ontario Association of Library Technicians/
Association des Bibliotechniciens de l'Ontario
P.O. Box 682
Oakville, Ontario
L6J 1C5



Niagara Regional Branch,
OALT/ABO
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21 April 1979

His Worship Mayor Wayne Thomson and
members of City Council
City of Niagara Falls
4310 Queen Street
Niagara Falls, Ontario L2E 6X5

Dear Mr. Thomson and members of City Council:

The Niagara Regional Branch of the Ontario Association of Library Technicians/Association des Bibliotechniciens de l'Ontario is very concerned about the effect the proposed budget cut of the Library Board will have on all citizens of Niagara Falls.

Over the years, the library system has been of immeasurable service to the community, serving preschoolers to senior citizens, service organizations and clubs, the handicapped, and others with special needs. To curtail these vital programs would discredit the library's fine reputation and deprive our residents of one of the city's finer services.

One of the library's main functions is to provide current information in the form of books, both fiction and non-fiction, records and tapes, art, films, theatre, and displays and demonstrations of community resources. Due to the \$35,000 budget cut in 1978, it has been difficult for the library to maintain its high quality of service to the community. During these times of inflation, a 4.6% increase in budget reflects the library board's concern for the taxpayer, and their realistic financial policies. To cut their existing budget would certainly be detrimental to the community.

Branch libraries were introduced in this city to provide service to those unable to travel to the main branch. This system has proven to be most effective in serving all age groups. To expect toddlers and senior citizens to travel to one distant location is both irresponsible and unrealistic.

The library buildings themselves are of great value to the community, as they are frequented regularly by many. Facilities at the branches are well used because of their strategic locations. The closure of these buildings would result in a serious loss to the people of these districts.

The possibility of losing the dedicated and capable staff of the branch libraries is disturbing. As some of the city's more visible employees, they would be sorely missed.

As a professional organization, OALT/ABO is dedicated to being receptive and aware of the constant changes and needs in the field of library technology, and the community. In order to do this, conferences and workshops are held throughout the year. Last year's budget cut eliminated staff attendance at these important functions, therefore making it more difficult for them to advance according to the needs of the community. Any further reduction in staff or in funds will have damaging effects.

The citizens of Niagara Falls are entitled to the cultural and educational value of the public library. We therefore urge you to accept the proposed budget of the library board as it stands.

Sincerely,

NIAGARA REGIONAL BRANCH, OALT/ABO

Andrew Porteus

Andrew Porteus
President

cc: Mr. Roger Young, Member of Parliament
Mr. Vince Kerrio, Member of Provincial Parliament
Mr. Rueben C. Baetz, Minister of Culture and Recreation