

TECH TALK

Volume 25, No 3, November 1997



President's Message!

The snow is flying and soon we will all be scurrying about getting those last minute Christmas gifts. This time of year creeps up on us all.

HO-HO-HO!!

Our October workshop was not well attended which was a disappointment for the Executive ... so it is back to the drawing board.

We held a dinner meeting at the Valhalla for the Executive to put our heads together for the up and coming months. Needless to say, we had a great time and some good ideas came from this planning session.

The November workshop will be held at the Thunder Bay Historical Museum. Janet Levis is our hostess and she will conduct a short tour and answers questions. After the tour we will be making Victorian Christmas tree decorations.

Our annual Jingle Mingle and General Meeting will be held at the home of LaRea Moody in early December. This is always a popular event, and we hope to see everyone there to help celebrate the season.

Merry Christmas to everyone and a happy and safe New Year.



Carol Young

Provincial Report



THE PROVINCIAL BOARD MEETING- REPORT -- North York City Centre, November 15, 1997

Mary-Beth Kupferschmidt from **Vision PR** gave an excellent presentation on her proposal for a public relations campaign to promote OALT/ABO. It contained a list of activities that she felt would help us solidify our identity and communicate that identity to the community. A list of costs for each activity was also included. This was done so that any activity we felt was unnecessary could be easily deleted from the plan. The complete proposal would cost in excess of \$6500.00 in implement. After much discussion it was decided that we would retain Mary-Beth's services and concentrate on **four of her main ideas**.

MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY:

Graduates	32
Students	12
New Members	12
Institutional	01
Total:	44

OALT/ABO EXECUTIVES

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR	Valerie Barten H: 344-1682 W: 473-9252 and 935-2692
ARCHIVIST	Helen Heerema H: 767-4987

RECAPI!

Here is a brief summary of events that have taken place thus far for those of you who were unable to attend the OALT/ABO functions.

Our September *General meeting* was held at the *Lakehead Centre for Northern Studies*. After the business at hand was covered, *Kathy Crewdson* (our hostess for the evening) gave a summary of centre's mandate as well as introduced us to its unique and varied collections. Everyone in attendance will contest to getting actual hands on experience as Kathy handed out reference questions pertaining to the centre and expected (or should I say demanded) that everyone answer at least question correctly before they were allowed to enjoy the refreshments. A wonderful *OALT/ABO cake* was served and enjoyed by all. Your newsletter editors' regretfully did not get a snap shot of the cake as we forgot to have our camera in tow for this event. Our apologies!

Our *October presentation* dealt specifically with "*How to Give Effective Presentations*" *Jennifer Graff* was the presenter .

As Carol mentioned previously, we are invited to the *Thunder Bay Historical Museum* for a tour and the opportunity to create *Victorian Christmas decorations*. This promises to be a fun evening and we hope to have a good turn out.

Don't forget our Annual "*Jingle Mingle*" and *General Meeting!* *LaRea Moody* will be hosting this festive event on *Wednesday December 10th* from 7:00 pm. - 9:00 pm.



FROM THE HALLS OF LEARNING

Rumour has it that all Library and Information Studies students are gearing up for exams. Believe it or not ... we have all lived through it ... and so will you.

Good luck to you all in your academic endeavours.

THE STEPS IN BECOMING AN INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN

I will never forget the day I got a call to attend an *interview* for the position of *Information Services Technician*. I received the call on a Wednesday afternoon, however, I was not in Thunder Bay, I was visiting my parents in Midland, Ontario. I had to call the Lakehead Board of Education Thursday morning and they told me I had an interview for Friday afternoon.

Panic rushed through my body, I had to pack all my belongings, drive two hours to Toronto, catch the last plane out of Toronto and hope that nothing would go wrong. Needless to say I did not have time to think about the interview the next day, which was probably a good thing because it didn't give me enough time to get nervous.

On Friday I arrived a few minutes before the interview, and to my surprise I ran into several *familiar faces*, waiting to enter the testing room. I was a little shocked because I was under the impression that it was a one on one interview when in fact it was the written portion of the interview process. They called us in to a rather large room and had each person sit at a separate table in which they placed a test sheet in front of us. It was at this very moment that I could feel my heart pounding very hard, and was sure the person next to me could hear it! Once everyone was settled in their seats, I heard

a voice say "you may now turn your paper over and begin".

The first thing I did was read the questions and the second thing I did was panic! The questions were all in regard to computer software and hardware, library material was not asked simply because I have my diploma in *Library and Informations Studies*. I suddenly felt like I had forgotten to study for an extremely important exam. I took a deep breath and began to answer the questions to the best of my ability. After the written portion, I had to go downstairs and perform a hands on computer test. Again, I got rather nervous because I have a hard time typing in front of someone, without having to perform several different tasks.

I had the weekend to ponder all the mistakes I could have made before I was going to find out whether I went on to the next interviewing stage. It was Tuesday afternoon when I was expecting the phone to ring. I picked up the phone and I remember the voice saying "*congratulations*", and proceeded to tell me when my interview would be and that some of it was to take place in French. I was so excited, and of course I was all by myself with no one to tell.

Finally the day of the interview arrived. I was lucky because it was first thing in the morning, therefore I didn't have time to really think about it and get nervous.

As I sat on the chair outside the interviewing room, I remember my hands getting very cold and my face slowly getting hot, I knew at this point that I was beginning to get nervous. One of the interviewers came out and greeted me in French, I suddenly thought I misunderstood and that my interview was going to be completely in French. I panicked because my French was a little rusty and I thought *I was never going to get through it alive!!* I breathed a sigh of relief when she explained to me that the interview would be half in English and half in French. The twenty minute interview was filled with many questions, posed by a panel of four people. I was a little intimidated at first because I was the only one sitting on one side of a very long table with four pairs of eyes intently focused on

me. They assured me to relax and to simply answer the questions to the best of my ability. As I answered each question, the interviewers were busy writing down everything I was saying, and I had so many thoughts run through my mind, I could only hope that what I was saying was making sense on paper.

When the interview was finished they thanked me and said those dreaded words "*we will be in touch*". I left the room, made my way out of the building as quickly as possible and as I reached the fresh outdoors, I took a deep breath and realized all I could do was wait.

I believe a week went by before I got the great news. The moment I hung up the phone I *jumped for joy*, and of course, once again, had no one to share the news with.

August 11, 1997 was the first day of training for all the *new Information Services Technicians*. As I walked into the *Oliver Road Public School* I began to get a little nervous because I didn't know if I would recognize anyone there. It was a pleasant surprise to see some very familiar faces amongst those I did not recognize.

It didn't take long, however, for everyone to get to know each other and I think from that very first day we have all made some great contacts and friends. Between coffee breaks and some fun group lunches, we were able to get to know each other and share some new and exciting thoughts about our new positions.

The *training session* consisted of eight days filled with some very useful and interesting information. The information was divided into two main concepts, *computer technology and trouble shooting* and the second being the *catalogue and circulation system* which is called *LIMMS* (Lakehead Information Material Management System).

The *computer technology and trouble shooting* section seemed very overwhelming at the time. I began to feel a little intimidated because there was just so much important information to remember but once I arrived in my assigned schools, it seemed to slowly fall into place. I have had the experience of fixing printers, dealing with monitors that just would just turn

on, mice that no longer work, hard drives crashing along with installing new software. I make a lot of calls to the *I.M.C. Technical Shop*, sometimes for advice and other times for some important trouble shooting tips.

There was also a lot of important concepts to learn for the *LIMMS* system as well, but I didn't find it as intimidating simply because I was already familiar with it due to a student placement. Finally after eight days of *rigorous learning*, we all had the Labour day weekend to take a deep breath, put all of our new found knowledge in place and await Monday, our first day in our assigned schools.

Submitted by Kelly Maheu
Information Services Technician
Kingsway Park/Hyde Park Schools



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS

"A good conscience is a continual Christmas"

Benjamin Franklin

"What is Christmas? It is the tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal and that every path may lead to peace."

Agnes M. Pharo

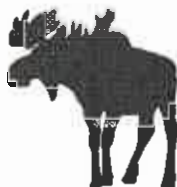
"The sweetest gentleness of civilization is the gift of Christmas to the world".

Lynn Harold Hough

*"You are indeed charitable when you give,
and while you are giving, turn your face
away so that you may not see the shyness
of the receiver".*

Kahlil Gibran

**TWO AND HALF YEARS IN THE LIFE
OF ... Jason Duhaime --
North of 60**



Upon graduating from *Lakehead University's Library and Information Studies Program*, I was fortunate to find a temporary library tech contract with the *Northern District School Area Board* in *Armstrong, Ontario*. The original contract was to run from May 1st to September 1st. The main task was to perform a retrospective conversion on the public and community libraries' using the Lakehead Board's LIMMS automation system. After a week of training in Thunder Bay, I load my things and made the move to *Armstrong*. And a move it was ... 260 kilometers due North from Highway 17. On the way up, I counted more moose than passing cars. It was hilarious! But I arrived safely managing to dodge the zoo that inhabited the road up to Armstrong.

The community is located right on the CN main railway line. The highway ended at the town ... end of the line I thought! With roughly 500 residents, the town was never dull. Complete with a General Store/Liquor Store/Hardware Store/Bank/Butcher Shop/Catch up on the town gossip about you or anyone else you wish to inquire about. **ONE STOP SHOPPING AT ITS BEST!!**

The *School library* I was to learn was to house the *community library's collection* as well, so to allow *access to the residents* of Armstrong. The first day on the job I was introduced to the staff of Armstrong Public School where I was

well received. The staff was quite happy to have me.

The *Library* in the school however *was a disaster*. No order, books stored in unit kits to be shared with another school down the tracks, ancient material, ... overall, ... *it was grim*. The facility was very nice, complete with a sunken reading area and lots of windows and sky lights. This was home. But not where I was to lay my head. That was a different story.

My place of residence was a cozy 14 by 38 trailer which was locally known as the Granny Suite. I was to learn later that the *local ant population of carpenter ants* had moved in as well. Literally thousands of them. Every morning I was awakened to the lovely sounds of diesel engines roaring down the tracks at six a.m., right on schedule.

Speaking of train schedules, my job after my contract was extended to the end of the school year. In that time I was also asked to visit the *Savant Lake School Library* down the tracks. I would hop on the VIA train around 8:30 am, ride for an hour and a half west to Savant Lake (a community of maybe 200), hop off the train when it slowed, then do my days work. Sounds easy right? The trick is catching the train in the dead of winter at 2:00 am in the morning. *Picture this* ... Because there are no waiting areas for you to catch the train, or lights for that matter, this is what I did. *At 40 below zero*, a fire had two very useful purposes, warmth and so that the train engineer could see me waving along side of the tracks in the dark. I survived in my two and a half years in Armstrong approximately twenty five of these trips to Savant Lake by train.

After my first year in Armstrong, the *Armstrong Community Library* became a legal corporation. *The N.D.S.A. School Board* had set aside almost \$10,000 per year for my library budget. That is not including the fund raising I did on the side. (*I became a master BINGO caller*). It really payed off. By the time I left Armstrong Community Library in August of 1997, I had bought over *\$23,000* in new material, and raised almost *\$9000* through various fund raising techniques (all legal of course ... well

sort of). By the way, the school population was about 100 students, so if you're having trouble finding that new book that someone just has to have ... try requesting an interlibrary loan from Armstrong Community Library, I'm sure they could help.

After working for the Board for about 1.5 years, I was again asked to stay on another year. I agreed. In the Summer of 1996, I was asked if I would be interested in setting up a library for a new school that was built in *Summer Beaver, Ontario*. Where is that?? It is a fly-in community about *300 kilometers north of Sioux Lookout* (no roads). I spent 11 days of my summer up there.

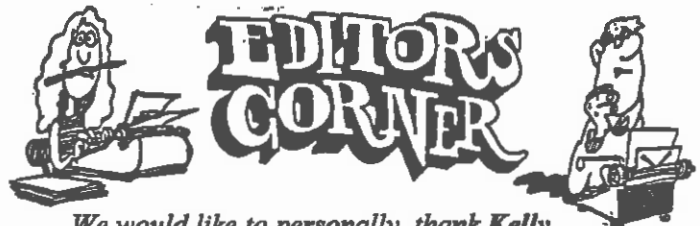
The first day *I landed on a gravel/mud airstrip* littered with pot holes in *a plane no bigger than a grocery cart*. Let's just say that I could have been the co-pilot. I was greeted by a train of pick up trucks that all waved and snickered at my presence. I jumped into the back of a pick up truck and was whisked off to the school where I would be staying and working (no Super 8 Motels up there!!)

At the front door of the school, the local OPP, (the only one) was just taking aim at a dog that had been hit by one of those trucks I mentioned earlier. *BANG!!* As I grabbed my bag from the back of the pick up truck, the officer took out the dog with his side arm, not 30 feet away from me.

I did all the ordering for the library, again I was given a large lump sum of money to order books, non print materials, shelving, etc. I was given one key to the building so I could get in and out. The first morning I was there, I showered in the boys change room in the school (the only running water in the community), I had to pass through a set of fire doors, down another hallway in the school. When I passed through them, they locked behind me. Thinking nothing of it at the time, I continued with my business. Well, I locked myself out of the main part of the school where I was staying. No way to get back but to run around the outside of the school in the mud, in my little white towel, to get to the front door. This was about a 400 yard sprint.

Later on that day at the local eatery, many people speaking in Oji-Cree were staring and laughing at me. After feeling just a tad uncomfortable with my situation, a woman leaned over and said to me, *"the people want to know who the white guy was running around the school this morning in a loin cloth"*, I was beet red ... then had to join in their laughter. I chalk my time in *Summer Beaver* up as one of *the most interesting and rewarding experiences* of my life thus far. If asked to do it again ... I would jump at the opportunity.

I spent two and half years in Armstrong until I was hired with the *Lakehead Board* as an *Information Services Technician* for two schools. I enjoyed my time in the Armstrong area to the fullest. Meeting new people and seeing amazing country was an experience I will never forget. Living in a small remote northern community *was a challenge* at times, but the things a person learns about oneself in a place like Armstrong is *truly unique*.



We would like to personally thank Kelly Maheu and Jason Duhaime for sharing their experiences and exploits with us. It is always nice to hear how are recent graduates are doing.

WANTED:

- intriguing internet addresses to share with our membership
- interesting articles/tidbits pertaining to our profession for our feature columns such as "ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF...", "BOOK TALK" and "FROM THE GRAPEVINE"
- nifty graphics that would enhance our publications of TECH TALK
- other suggestions for future newsletters

FROM THE GRAPEVINE



Debbie Squire-Bernst will be Evelina Pan's. (Library Technician at Churchill High School Library) permanent supply for the Lakehead Board. She is also on the Board's supply list for the elementary as well as the secondary panel.

Municipal elections results are in and *Valerie Barten* was acclaimed councilor for *Gillies Township*. Congratulations Valerie.

Internet Addresses

Canadian Libraries on WWW
<http://library.usadk.ca/~scottp/canlib.html>

Canadian Kids Page
<http://www.onramp.ca/~lowens.htm>

List of FAQ's
<http://www.cs.ruu.nl/wais/html/na-dir/html>

Interent Public Library
<http://ipl.sils.umich.edu/>

Your Executive would like to extend their best wishes for a safe and happy holidays to each and every one of you.

See you in 1998. And remember to make OALT/ABO part of your New Year's resolutions.

