

# County libraries get cash boost for books

by Paul Dalby  
THE INDEPENDENT

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THIS IS SHAPING UP TO BE A good month for the library users of Northumberland County.

As part of a new \$5 million initiative by the Ontario government to support rural, remote and First Nations libraries, every library in Northumberland county is receiving a \$9,000 cheque.

The one-time grant to support literacy, learning and computer access to information benefits libraries serving

populations of less than 20,000 people and all of the county's libraries qualify.

They are: Alderville First Nation library, Alnwick/Haldimand Township public libraries, Brighton public library board, Cobourg public libraries, Cramahe Township public libraries, Port Hope public libraries, and Trent Hills public library board.

"Our support will ensure that all Ontarians, regardless of where they live, have access to traditional and digital library services

that enable them to participate fully in the life of their communities," said Ontario's Culture Minister Caroline Di Cocco.

Meanwhile the Brighton public library board has extended the opening hours for its main library in Brighton and its branch library in Codrington.

The longer opening hours were made possible by a one-time grant of \$5,000 from the Municipality of Brighton during its final budget meeting back in March.

Both libraries have shown an increase in membership and book loans in the past year and the call for longer opening hours was the most frequent request from patrons.

Brighton library will now be open for business every Monday (except holidays) from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in addition to the present hours. At the Codrington branch, extended hours mean the library is now open on Thursday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The longer opening hours come into effect on Monday, May 28.

## HELPING HANDS



Volunteers from Cramahe Township give a show of hands at a Volunteer Recognition Evening at the Keeler Centre. The 85 volunteers at the event each received a pin from the township and gardening gloves because they're "willing to get their hands dirty" in growing a better community.

# Tree damage can be fatal

## Expert on rural environment says brushing often not necessary

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A LEADING AUTHORITY ON the protection of the rural environment criticizes the use of modern brush-cutting machinery being used by municipalities like Trent Hills.

"Last week I saw the aftermath of one of these shredding machines. I have never seen anything like it before. It left a terrible mess," said Stewart Hilts, chairman of the Department of Land Resources Science at the University of Guelph.

"This machine cut trees up to 20 feet above the ground and just chewed the branches off and left them lying on the ground. It is aesthetically

unpleasing and for the most part unnecessary."

He said there is evidence from the logging industry that this kind of shredding will damage the tree, causing it to stop growing or quite possibly to die off.

Dr. Hilts said the previous system that employed a crew with chainsaws worked "perfectly well". "They went along country roads, identified specific trees that encroached on a right of way, then cut them down and removed any debris.

Dr. Hilts' department is currently researching reforestation success and failure in Ontario and preparing a reforestation handbook, and is also de-

veloping a stewardship program for the Oak Ridges Moraine and rural landowners

"There is a tendency to a lot less management of the side roads today but that has more to do with budget cuts and a shortage of manpower than environmental input."

But Dr. Hilts said there have been some notable efforts to allow natural environmental restoration. "There are sections of the 401 where they've allowed natural vegetation like sumac to grow back in.

"It saves money on roadside maintenance, it looks better and the public likes it."

Dr. Hilts said there are

some situations where tree pruning is definitely necessary, such as close proximity to hydro lines.

He said there is a growing pressure for rural municipalities to change traditional methods of countryside management. "There are different people living in farmland today who are non-farmers," Dr. Hilts said. "They are supporters of the rural community but they have a different appreciation of the countryside."

Dr. Hilts' department at Guelph is part of the university's Faculty of Environmental Sciences, established in 1992 to promote education, research and outreach related to the environment.

# Officials cite public safety

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The proposal to close that section of Concession 2, "thereby saving a minimum of \$200,000 in taxpayers' money," came out discussions she had with Mr. Peters and Mayor Hector Macmillan.

Ms. Pillsworth said Trent Hills should be known for its "thoughtful management of...greenspaces, not negatively for the decimation of them."

"Roads were never designed to be greenspaces," the mayor rejoined later. "They're for traffic." The consensus among municipalities in Ontario, he said, is "that trees will be removed from fence to fence because of the issues they are causing," having to do with public safety and exposure to lawsuits.

"We've got to weigh how much public safety we're willing to sacrifice for aesthetics."

Mr. Peters said the public meeting, to be held within 30 days, will give residents with "a special love" for the natural environment an opportunity to have input into decision-making that affects their lives. But it will also provide them "with a clear understanding" of the obligations and risks being placed on the municipality, he said. Trent Hills pays \$250,000 for insurance each year and often has to deal with settlements that range from \$500 to upwards of \$100,000.

"I want some communication and I want some compromise," Mr. Peters said.



Jill Pillsworth asked that removal of trees be suspended pending review.

"There have been a lot of people killed on municipal roads and county roads and most of the time it's been from running into trees," Coun. Bill Thompson said. He and Coun. Gene Branahan voted against the deputy-mayor's motion.

Mr. Peters said Mr. Kelly

assured him that he was "not going to clear cut anything" and that "he wants to leave a canopy along there that is reasonable."

Mr. Macmillan expressed hope that "a happy medium" can be found between council's interests and the citizens' wishes.