

Sub-prime library borrowing

COLBORNE CHRONICLE Feb. 28/08

The Cramahe Library Board has a long way to go before anyone will consider it halfway effective, but it is making painful progress toward becoming a forward-looking governing body of a functional library system.

There is an awareness on the board that changes need to be made. But, they are coming at great personal expense to some board members who see the bigger picture, one unfettered by unabashed bias and fear.

Change is coming slowly. The board actually passed motions at its February meeting which will improve the administration of its libraries and create a more efficient use of staff time.

Everyone on the board acknowledges there are circulation problems in Castleton. Some have gone past observing that it needs to operate more efficiently and are taking steps to change practices.

It remains to be seen whether or not the Castleton branch is fulfilling a need or whether, in reality, there is no appreciable need. There may even be a fear among some on the board — that it may be discovered there is no need. There is a general understanding people are not using the Castleton library branch during the current hours. But, that is where agreement ends.

Board members are not on the board to protect an ill-used library under the cover of loyalty and affection for an anachronism.

It is the board's responsibility to administer the township taxpayers' money effectively to provide an efficient library service. It is the CEO's duty to run the libraries efficiently. The CEO is accountable for everything that goes on in Colborne and Castleton branches of the Cramahe Township library, turning the board's vision into a reality.

It remains to be seen if this board can sustain any consistent direction, and whether the CEO can lead in a cost-effective, technology-driven system. Recent records of their actions can be said to be spotty at best.

If it is one day established there is no demand in Castleton, then someone will ultimately move to close it. In that sense, it is like any other service offered by the township.

The Community Services

Department understands that premise. It tried unsuccessfully to run summer camps for a couple of years. When the camps failed, the concept was reworked. Last year, the Keeler Centre-based camp in Colborne was an unqualified success, drawing significant numbers of kids to its day programs.

If Library Board members are unsure about Cramahe Township council's sense of fiscal responsibility, they need only to look at the disinterest being shown by this council to put in summer ice at the Keeler Centre at an ongoing considerable loss. They were elected on a mandate to provide cost-effective service to the community. Fiscal prudence and community need govern all their decisions.

Ultimately, the Castleton branch may close. But there is no one now on the board who is even remotely willing to do that without trying everything to resuscitate it.

There is a clear and determined will in the township staff and the township's elected members to fix the problems. But there will be a limit to patience when the library continues to cost a great deal to service a few, and when its board stumbles along so slowly, blocking necessary change.

Library Board meetings are regularly interminable, with lengthy wanderings around the same topic. When agenda items have any implications on both libraries, or a change in service in the Castleton branch the inevitable insecurity and territorial bastions rise. At some times the insecurity and protectiveness lurks just below the surface, at others it reveals itself in blatant negativity and resignation.

In the end every small victory is tinged with bitterness and frustration.

Can this library board move forward and find a way forward for our libraries?

The intellect is there. And there is no fear of imminent closure forcing drastic moves with guaranteed success — they have time to explore and find solutions to make the system effectively meet the needs of the greater community.

But, will its members sacrifice their territorial allegiances and set aside their feelings of victimization and do the work they are appointed to do in service of the community?

Time will tell.

Will the board do the work?

Thanks for support

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To the Editor:

A good time was had by all at the Valentine's Dance at the Keeler Centre Saturday, Feb. 16.

It takes many people to put on a dance (as I learned!) so I'd like to thank all those who helped along the way: Derek Jones, Mary Kristensen, Roger Doidge, Janice Wilson and Lisa Meekes; all the ticket sellers including Bruce and Lydia Kim (Castleton General Store); Pat Kavanagh for his patience and support; the radio stations, papers and especially Bob Owen (Colborne Chronicle) for promoting our worthy cause; Cold Creek (Erich Bojarzin, Tanya and Terry Ritchie, Dave Washburn and Randy Petlock) for keeping the dance floor humming; and The Keeler Centre (Donna Rusaw and Clinton) — great advice, wonderful decorations and terrific service.

As well, thanks to Steve Clark (Diemo) and Evan Taylor (Comfort Inn, Cobourg) for the donation of door prizes and to our winners: Nina, Rick, Janice and Evan.

Thanks also to Rick and Judy Norlock and everyone who attended or bought tickets for supporting The Friends and the Castleton Town Hall.

As work has already started, it shouldn't be too much longer before we'll be back enjoying ourselves in the Hall.

Karen Nicol / President, Friends of Castleton Town Hall

Cramahe Briefs

Colborne library offers free program

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If you have kids between five and nine years of age, your March Break entertainment problems may be over.

The Colborne Library is hosting five days of fun — and it's all free.

Kym Rusaw will start the festivities off Saturday, March 8 at 11:30 a.m. with a one-hour storytelling and activity about pancakes and maple syrup.

On Tuesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 1, bring the kids at 6 p.m. for the bedtime story hour. The Possum and the Peeper, and It's Spring will get things going for puppet-making and little white duck crafts.

On Friday, March 14 at 2 p.m., the kids will enjoy My Spring

Robin and make a robin redbreast door hanger.

The five days of child's play will conclude on Saturday, March 15 when Kym reads The Spring Equinox at 11:30 a.m. By the end of the one-hour session, the kids will have made a plastic bag butterfly.

Space is limited so sign up as soon as possible at the Colborne Library for as many days as you like.

Library hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m., and starting on March 1 the hours on Friday will be extended and run from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays it is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

— BOB OWEN

June opening goal for Castleton hall

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Cramahe Township is hoping to throw open the doors to the newly renovated Castleton Town Hall in June. That's the goal of chief building official Natalie Moroz-Cornell, and the message she has given the contractor on the job.

Work began earlier this month when Cramahe Township council approved the latest plan to complete renovation and restoration work on the century-old building.

Ms. Moroz-Cornell is expecting

the work will not affect the operating hours of the Castleton Branch of the Cramahe Libraries as most of the work will be done outside library operating hours.

The renovated hall will include a restored symmetric entrance, proper support for the balcony, a kitchenette under the balcony and ramps to the upper and lower levels with entrances on the north and east side of the building. Users will appreciate new washrooms which will be installed.

— BOB OWEN