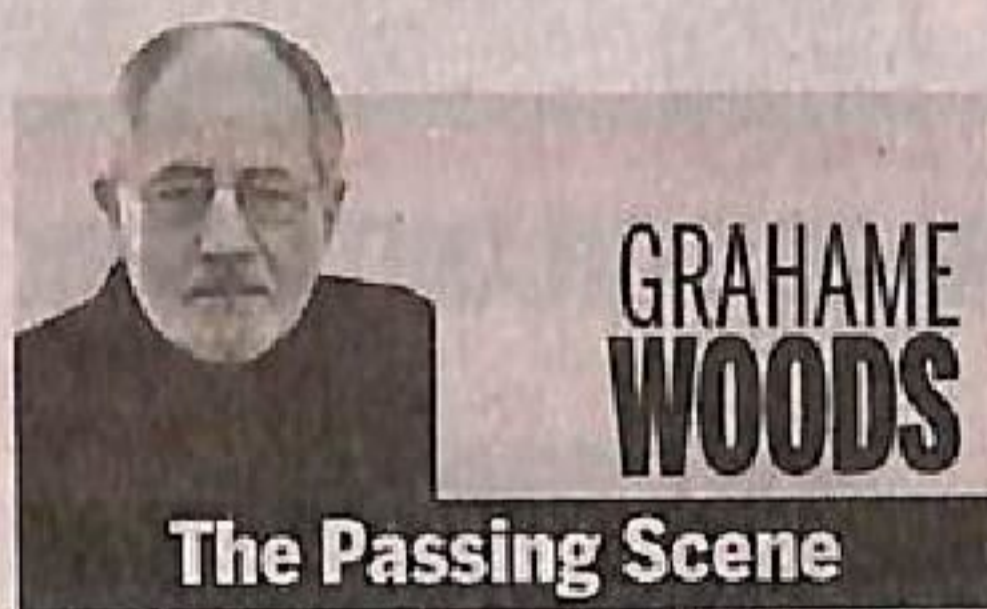


# COMMENT

■ COLUMN

## Our library - nourishment for the brain

There's a danger in life of being lulled through the familiarity of things that become part of our day-to-day routine, of taking them for granted; so it comes as something of a shock when that routine is suddenly shattered. The familiar has been wrenched from our lives. Even though one knows it will happen - the favourite coffee shop that closes between Christmas and New Year's; the addictive political television show that takes a hiatus through that same period; a restaurant that closes for good. And so it is with the news that the Cobourg Public Library will be closed until further notice due to flooding caused by a burst water pipe during the recent frigid cold spell.



The library is so much a part of Cobourg, a fixture that's always there, like Victoria Hall, the park, the beach, St. Peter's church, the harbour. Ever since my wife and I moved to Cobourg in 2000, the library has been a part of our lives; it's there, comfortable, part of the fabric of living in Cobourg. And, yes, taken for granted. It's a unique hub where one can browse over the latest newspapers and magazines, have

access to the Internet, research for projects, find a DVD or CD for relaxation at home, explore Cobourg's and Northumberland County's history. Oh, and yes, borrow books from a vast selection of fiction and non-fiction, specialty books, all constantly updated.

In recent months I've had occasion to check with the ever helpful and friendly staff about what I thought might be a fairly obscure book - having read about it in one of the weekend newspapers' review section - only to find that, not only does the library have a copy, but there are six people already on the waiting list. To which I am added. Then one waits for the pleasure of hearing the stern, authoritative, telephone mes-

sage, a pre-recorded male voice, summoning one to pick up the book by a certain date, a voice taking me back to distant, pre-historic school days, a teacher swishing a bamboo cane. "Woods! To the front. Talking in class!"

I belonged to a library at an early age, one that was a long trek from where I lived, but worth the bike ride to get Coward's Book of Birds before I saved enough money to buy my own copy, or the Romany books about a gypsy and his Labrador dog moving around the country in a horse-drawn mobile home. Or the Biggles books, fictional accounts of a dashing fighter pilot who, with the license of fiction, fought in both World War I and II, flying Sopwith Camels,

then Spitfires and Hurricanes, bringing an impressionable kid closer to the reality of the dogfights at 15,000 feet above his head, a silent movie of interwoven contrails and, occasionally, a dark spiraling shape trailing black smoke, falling to a distant horizon.

The Cobourg library has an excellent section for children, supported by its website ([www.cobourg.library.on.ca](http://www.cobourg.library.on.ca)), announcing the myriad of programs for children of all ages. As well, one can check the site for the availability of books and is well worth surfing to glean its full potential. I often wonder if an interactive page for readers' reviews would be good - "Have just finished Malcolm Gladwell's David and Goliath - very inspir-

ing and I highly recommend it." In my primary school, another teacher, Miss Lucas, urged everyone in the class to 'read, read, read', assuring us that reading was food and nourishment for the brain. Fortunately, I have several books of my own clamoring for attention that will carry me through until the library re-opens. In the meantime, this hiatus provides a pause for thought and appreciation for what our library contributes to the community - doling out food and nourishment in spades. And it's free.

*Grahame Woods, a retired mental-health counsellor and Gemini-winning television playwright, lives in Cobourg. He can be reached at [ggwoods@sympatico.ca](mailto:ggwoods@sympatico.ca).*

**Obituaries**  
**IGNATIEFF, Nicholas - June 30, 1940 - January 15, 2014** Peacefully in Lammermoor, Ontario, after a long struggle with Waldenström Macroglobulinemia, a rare form of blood cancer. He was cared for until the end in his home by his wife Cecelia, his children Nicholas Alexander (Anne-Catherine) and Natalia (Colin), and his sisters-in-law Deborah (Franco) and Eden (John). He will be mourned by his grandchildren Marie-Alexandra, Sarah-Gabrielle, Louis Philippe, Yevgenya and Anisya, as well as his loving cousins and the extended Ignatieff and Fraser families. Nicholas was educated at Upper Canada College, University of Toronto (Trinity College), and the University of Manitoba. He pursued a career in public administration from 1963 with the Government of Canada and later with the Government of Ontario. His expertise became Labour policy and Occupational Health and Safety, in which he sought to guide successive administrations at Queen's Park toward more progressive and humane regulatory measures. After retirement from the public service, he consulted to government agencies, worked for causes such as refugee integration and local sustainable development, and was active in the Russian Orthodox Church community. He is fondly remembered by colleagues and friends for his integrity, his care for others and his commitment to truth and justice. An historian by training, Nicholas held a strong interest in his dual Scottish and Russian ancestry, whose legacy formed his vision of a Canada shaped by immigration and diversity. From childhood, he was profoundly attached to the natural world and Canadian wilderness, particularly his final resting place - the Lanark Highlands of the Ottawa Valley. His family is grateful to many dear friends and neighbours for their help and support, especially to the Cross family of Lammermoor. Family and friends may pay their respects at **BLAIR & SON** (15 Gore St. W., Perth, Ontario) on Friday January 17, from 3:00 to 7:00 P.M. A funeral service for Nicholas will be celebrated at the Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral, 15 Lebreton St., Ottawa, on Saturday January 18th, 2014 at 1:00 P.M. followed by a reception. In Memoriam donations to the St. John the Compassionate Mission, 155 Broadview Ave., Toronto, would be appreciated. For condolences or further information, visit our web site at [www.blairandson.com](http://www.blairandson.com)

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