

Eramosa Community Library entering computer age

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Rockwood Miller

The Eramosa Community Library is joining the computer age.

Phase 1 is automating the card catalogue system, which should be in full operation by December.

"Technology is part of the '90s and it's the way a lot of libraries are going," says chief librarian Linda Hornick. "Currently, we're entering 15,000 items into a database, so patrons can access it from a work station."

Gone will be the tedious, inaccurate and time consuming effort of pulling cards of books that are lost. Pressing a couple of computer keys will soon be the rule.

Hornick is often questioned by customers who are unaware if they have an overdue books at home.

"The mess of going through all

the cards will be eliminated. The computer will tell us what books are out, what ones have been returned and existing fines."

Hornick adds the Winnebago software package, which is geared for small libraries, will hopefully allow the library staff to spend more time with customers to do reference work and improve service to them.

The fact the library is becoming computerized shouldn't scare away book enthusiasts of any age, Hornick says.

"It will be extremely easy. The volunteer staff is trained, the library board is trained and there will always be someone here to help patrons," she says, adding there will be at least two computers to access information.

"If you can read and press a

button, you can use a computer for this type of work. You can make spelling mistakes and still access what you want."

Hornick says a fully automated system, which already exists in Erin Township and Fergus, had always been targeted for the future when the Main Street library was built in 1992. In fact, plans to install a computerized system were to begin last year, but all energy was turned to a busy new library.

Busy indeed. In its second year, the Eramosa Community Library has an astronomical circulation rate of 46.5 per cent.

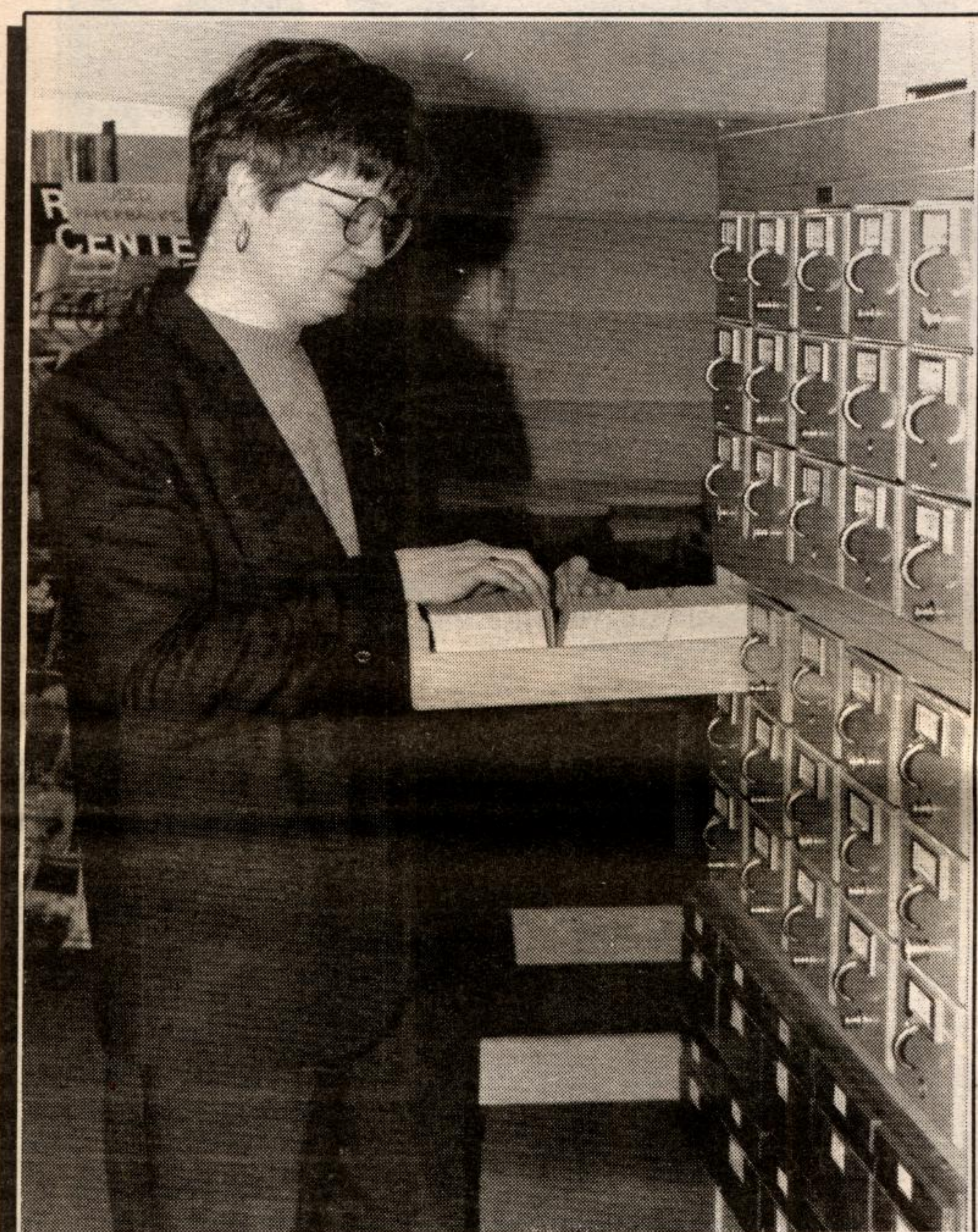
"That's incredible," exclaims Hornick, who adds the library's ordering desk and bookkeeping is

already automated. "It's supposed to be about 30 per cent in the first three years of opening a building.

"When times are tough, people

turn to libraries as a service."

Hornick says automating circulation will take place in Phase 2 of the plan.



COMPUTER AGE IS COMING!

Eramosa Community Library assistant librarian Susan Marcoux checks over the facility's card catalogue that will soon be computerized. The card catalogue is Phase 1 in the automation of the library's system. It should be in full operation by December.

(Doug Harrison photo)

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