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Ask About
The PLAN



Library celebrates 100 years

Continued from Page 1

the eastern boundary, then library services would have to be centralized.

Acton Councillor Norm Elliott, a library board member for 22 years, doesn't think the library missed a golden opportunity to relocate at the Acton Arena and Community Centre, despite the obvious inadequacies of the existing building, including no handicapped access.

"My preference would be to see the library stay central in downtown Acton. I know that's there a lot of local sentiment to keep the library where it is and whether that means a complete overhaul or an extension I don't know but I don't want to see every service stuck on the east end of the community," Elliott said recently, adding that cramped library quarters are nothing new to Acton.

Early days

Acton's library grew from the middle of the 19th century when school promoters convinced the government that formal education for youth was a priority. By 1883 the Acton Board of Education transferred its books from the overcrowded public school to the new Town Hall and on Monday nights the public could borrow books.

Acton's first public librarian was Miss Ettie Laird, 16, who was paid \$40 a year to run the library. The Dewey Decimal system arrived in Acton in 1915 and then the card catalogue. In 1935 the

library moved to the front of the YMCA building on Mill Street where it remained until the River Street library was built as a Centennial project. In 1974 the amalgamation of Acton and Georgetown also merged the two library boards and librarian Betsy Cornwell was hired.

Partnerships

Cornwell said automation and computerization have been the biggest changes and have been both a revelation and curse.

"It really forces you to be very analytical and very careful about what you do because back in the early days a consultant said when librarians took up automation they were engaged in 'you bet your career' and a lot of careers went down the tubes," Cornwell said, adding that Halton Hills got lucky.

"We were partnered with the other libraries in Halton and that business of working

together, watching one another's back and conferring and sharing the risks and the developing expertise has been a tremendous source of comfort for me."

Library staff say in many ways the future of the library is defined by HALINET, the Halton Information Network, an automated inventory control system. People with modems and computers can access a wide range of information and in 1995 the Halton Hills Public Library became one of the first libraries in Canada to launch its own Web server on the Internet.

The library has an operating budget of \$1 million this year - \$100,000 for new books - the same amount spent a decade ago. In what Cornwell called "damn good market penetration" library statistics show over 80 per cent of Halton households have an active library card.

-With files from Walter Lewis and Geoff Cannon

No June tax bill

Continued from Page 1

"We like to have our billings by now and be moving on. Lots of people are calling (the tax department) because they want to know what's happening with their taxes and we can't tell them yet," Koopmans said.

Koopmans said the delay in issuing the tax bills will cause some minor cash flow problems for the Town.

"We're not getting interest revenue that we'd be earning on some of the funds that we collect now and would be paying out in later months but the impact is not substantial," Koopmans said, explaining the major payments the Town must make to the Region and school boards are also being delayed because of the problems with the tax rolls.

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