

## AGENDA

### OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 1:30 p.m.  
Embro Public Library

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
3. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF**
4. **ADOPTION OF BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**  
March 21, 2023
5. **DELEGATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND CONSIDERATION THEREOF**
  - 5.1 Tour of Library Branches  
Verbal Presentations by Lisa Marie Williams, Cristina McLaren and other Library Branch Staff.
    - 5.1.1 Innerkip Branch
    - 5.1.2 Princeton Branch
    - 5.1.3 Plattsville Branch
    - 5.1.4 Tavistock Branch
    - 5.1.5 Harrington Branch
    - 5.1.6 Thamesford Branch
    - 5.1.7 Embro Branch
6. **CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE**
7. **REPORTS**
  - 7.1 2023-09 Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Framework  
RECOMMENDATION:
    1. That the Library Board receive the updated Key Agenda Items and Policy Review

Framework for information.

7.2 2023-10 Librarian's Report and Monthly Statistics

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Library Board receive Report No. 2023-10 for information and discussion.

7.3 2023-11 Outdoor Movie License Update

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Library Board receive Report No. 2023-11, *Outdoor Movie License Partnerships*, for information.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**9. MOTIONS**

**10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

**11. NEW BUSINESS / ENQUIRIES / COMMENTS**

11.1 Public Libraries Update

11.1.1 Times Colonist Article: B.C libraries receive \$45M boost

11.1.2 Medicine Hat News Article: Drag community gets support at public library story times in Calgary after escalating protests

11.1.3 CBC Article: Ontario NDP urges legal protections for drag shows

11.1.4 Globe and Mail Article: Librarians have always been my superheroes

11.1.5 Columbia Journalism Review: When is a library not a library? When it's online, apparently.

**12. CLOSED SESSION**

**13. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION**

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

## OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

### MINUTES

**March 21, 2023**

Member Present	Chair Julia Harris Vice-Chair Laura Langford Councillor David Mayberry Councillor Brian Petrie Cynthia Lacroix Katherine Grieve
Members Absent	Ellen Devlin
Staff Present	L. M. Williams, CEO/Chief Librarian (arrives at 1:00 PM, Otterville) L. Buchner, Director of Corporate Services (arrives at 1:00 PM, Otterville) C.McLaren, Deputy Chief Librarian Branch Services

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Oxford County Library Board meets in regular session this twenty first day of March, 2023, in the Ingersoll Library at 9:00 a.m. with Chair Julia Harris in the chair.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

RESOLUTION NO. 1

Moved by: Councillor David Mayberry

Seconded by: Cynthia Lacroix

Resolved that the Agenda be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

**3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF**

**4. ADOPTION OF BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLUTION NO. 2

Moved by: Councillor David Mayberry

Seconded by: Katherine Grieve

Resolved that the Library Board Minutes of February 13, 2023 be adopted.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

**5. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

5.1 Tour of Library Branches

Verbal Presentations by Cristina McLaren and other Library Branch Staff.

5.1.1 Ingersoll Branch

5.1.2 Brownsville Branch

5.1.3 Tillsonburg Branch

5.1.4 Mount Elgin Branch

5.1.5 Burgessville Branch

5.1.6 Norwich Branch

5.1.7 Otterville Branch

Remaining agenda items will be considered at the Otterville Branch beginning at 1:00 p.m.

**6. CONSIDERATION OF DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**7. CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE**

7.1 Zorra Township

March 3, 2023

Re: Collaboration for Multi-Service Co-Builds

RESOLUTION 3:

Moved by: Councillor Brian Petrie

Seconded by: Cynthia Lacroix

Resolved that the Oxford County Library Board supports Zorra Township Resolution No. 16-03-2023

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

**8. REPORTS**

8.1 2023-05 Updated Key Agenda Items

RESOLUTION NO. 4

Moved by: Councillor David Mayberry

Seconded by: Councillor Brian Petrie

1. That the Library Board receives the updated Key Agenda Items for information.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

8.2 2023-06 Librarian's Report and Monthly Statistics

RESOLUTION NO. 5

Moved by: Councillor Brian Petrie

Seconded by: Cynthia Lacroix

1. That the Board receive Report No: 2023-06 for information and discussion.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

8.3 2023-07 Ox on the Run Pilot Update

RESOLUTION NO. 6

Moved by: Laura Langford

Seconded by: Councillor David Mayberry

1. That the Library Board receive Report No. 2023-07, Ox on the Run Pilot Project Update, for information.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

8.4 2023-08 Library Strategic Planning Project

RESOLUTION NO. 7

Moved by: Cynthia Lacroix

Seconded by: Councillor Brian Petrie

1. That the Library Board receive Report No. 2023-08, 2023 Library Strategic Planning Project, for information and discussion;

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

RESOLUTION NO. 8

Moved by: Councillor Brian Petrie

Seconded by: Laura Langford

2. And further, that the Library Board authorize staff to proceed with engaging StrategyCorp Inc. to facilitate the Library's 2023 strategic plan

project, subject to Council approving StrategyCorp Inc. to facilitate the 2023 County strategic plan project.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

9.1 Outdoor Movie License Partnership

Staff provided a verbal update on Outdoor Movie License options. The Board requested a written report for the April 2023 meeting.

**10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS – N/A**

**11. NEW BUSINESS / ENQUIRIES / COMMENTS**

11.1 Public Libraries Update

11.1.1 Guardian Article: Why US libraries are on the frontlines of the homeless crisis

11.1.2 Medium Article: Libraries in the margins. 01. A place of enunciation

11.1.3 Toronto Star Article: Libraries ask for Ontario-wide digital system to ensure equal access to materials

Added for discussion: 11.1.4 – CBC Article: Public library won't display this artist's images critical of Ford, Trump in women's rights exhibition.

**12. CLOSED SESSION**

NIL

**13. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION**

NIL

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

The Oxford County Library Board adjourns its proceedings at 3:04 p.m. until the next meeting scheduled for April 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Minutes adopted on \_\_\_\_\_ by Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_  
SECRETARY

**To: Oxford County Library Board**

**From: CEO/Chief Librarian**

## Updated Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Framework

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Library Board receive the updated Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Framework for information.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Oxford County Library Board Key Agenda Items list provides an overview of all the annual and regular reports provided to the Library Board and the month that said reports are expected to be brought forward.
- The updated Policy Review Framework will provide an anticipated update to the Library Code of Conduct in May 2023.

### Implementation Points

Library administrative team will work to provide the Key Agenda Items and the Policy Review Framework to the Library Board in a timely manner as projected by the list provided.

Should items not be ready according to the schedule, the CEO/Chief Librarian will report to the board on the issues preventing said items to be brought forward in the timeline expected.







### Financial Impact

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's operating budget.

### Communications

Deadlines for projected Key Agenda Items and Policy Review Framework will be communicated internally with Library and Oxford County staff required to complete said items.

### Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
<b>WORKS WELL TOGETHER</b>	<b>WELL CONNECTED</b>	<b>SHAPES THE FUTURE</b>	<b>INFORMS &amp; ENGAGES</b>	<b>PERFORMS &amp; DELIVERS</b>	<b>POSITIVE IMPACT</b>
				5.ii.	

## **DISCUSSION**

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### **Background**

In fall, 2022, library administration first prepared a Key Agenda Items spreadsheet for the Library Board in order to project the required reports and agenda items for the remainder of the year.

Library staff are committed to updating the Key Agenda Items spreadsheet monthly to reflect any anticipated changes or new requirements.

### **Comments**

The Key Agenda Items spreadsheet has been updated to reflect necessary adjustments to the expected 2023 Business Plan and Budget Update and the 2022 Financial Audit. These items have been delayed due to staffing issues within Corporate Services.

Library staff have also delayed the 2022 Annual Community Report at this time to better analyze the 2022 data for the report. Staff are also investigating moving the Annual Report to a Video Report going forward.

Staff have also moved forward the review of the Library's Code of Conduct to a May 2023 review date. The review of the Code of Conduct will assist staff with ongoing and anticipated issues within the library branches.

### **Conclusions**

Library staff welcome any comments, discussion, or new items for inclusion in the updated Key Agenda Items spreadsheet. Any changes to these items will be adjusted for the May 2023 Library Board meeting.

## **SIGNATURE**

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### **Departmental Approval:**

Original signed by

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Lisa Marie Williams  
CEO/Chief Librarian

## **ATTACHMENT**

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Attachment 1 – Key Agenda Items 2023, updated April 2023  
Attachment 2 – Policy Review Framework, updated April 2023





### Oxford County Library Board - Key Agenda Items 2023

Agenda items	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes
Board Orientation	X	X	X	X	X							2023 Goal
2022 Year End Statistics		X										Yearly Agenda Item
Monthly Statistics		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	Regular Agenda Item
Quarterly Metrics and Trends Report				Q1					Q2		Q3	Regular Agenda Item
Monthly Librarian Report	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	Regular Agenda Item
2023 Business Plan and Budget Update				Q1				Q2		Q3		Regular Agenda Item
2022 Annual Community Report				X								Yearly Agenda Item
2023 Financial Audit				X								Yearly Agenda Item
Technology Plan					X*			X				2023 Goal / *Draft Plan
Service Delivery Model				X*		X						2023 Goal / *Draft Plan
2024 Business Plan								X				2024 Planning
2024 Budget Plan									X			2024 Planning
Strategic Planning					X*	X						*Draft Plan / Final Plan

Additional Agenda Items of Note will be added as anticipated.  
 Updated April 2023

## Oxford County Library Board - Policy Review Framework 2023 - 2026

Operational Policies	2023	2024	2025	2026	Notes
Oxford County Library Vision, Mission and Values	X				Process
Code of Conduct	X				Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Children and Teen Services Policy			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Membership and Circulation Policy			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Collection Development Policy				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Community Information Policy				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Internet and Technology Policy		X		X	Reviewed bi-annually to keep up with new technology needs
Donations, Sponsorship and Fundraising Policy		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Local History Policy			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Meeting Room / Study Room Policies		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Privacy and Access to Personal Information Policy				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Use of Library Resources During Elections Policy			X		Reviewed as part of planning for next election cycle, will be reviewed earlier should an election be called.
Programming and Outreach Policy		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Information and Readers' Advisory Policy				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Diversity and Inclusion Policy	X	X	X	X	Reviewed annually
Indigenous Awareness and Reconciliation Statement	X	X	X	X	Reviewed annually



## Oxford County Library Board - Policy Review Framework 2023 - 2026

Governance Policies	2023	2024	2025	2026	Notes
Oxford County Library Board Terms of Reference				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Advocacy	X				Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Annual Board Evaluation	X				Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Board Code of Conduct	X				Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Board Committees		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Board Duties and Responsibilities				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Board Orientation				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Board Training and Development		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
CEO Performance Appraisal		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Delegation of Authority			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Planning			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Policy Development			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Succession Planning		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Personnel Policies	2023	2024	2025	2026	Notes
County General Policy Manual - Section 5 - Personnel				X	Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
County General Policy Manual - Section 7 - Health and Safety	X				Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
County General Policy Manual - Section 8 - Communications and Technology			X		Reviewed at least once per Board cycle
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service & Multi-Year Accessibly Plan (County)		X			Reviewed at least once per Board cycle

Updated April 2023

**To: Oxford County Library Board**

**From: CEO/Chief Librarian**

## Librarian's Report and Statistics

### RECOMMENDATION

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1. That the Board receive Report No. 2023-10 for information and discussion.

#### Statistics – March 2023

In Attachment 1 to this report, statistics for:

- Branch Attendance
- Computer Use
- Physical Circulation
- Digital Circulation

As requested, the March 2023 statistics now include branch level change percentages. March statistics still represent reduced hours, curbside pickup and limited in branch services for 2022.

#### Community Engagement

##### Oxford Reads

Voting has opened for the 2023 Oxford Read's shortlist. Staff at Oxford County Library and Woodstock Public Library reviewed nominated titles by library staff in both systems to create the shortlist for public voting. The short list includes:

- Mad Honey by Katie Welch
- Horse/Man by Julia Merritt
- Tilly and the Crazy Eights by Monique Gray Smith
- Sufferance by Thomas King
- The Maid: a novel by Nita Prose

Voting ends May 31st, and the selected title will be announced in June.

##### Circles Oxford County Presentation

Circles Oxford County helps build supportive relationships between people of different economic income levels through weekly meetings in an effort to help lift families and individuals out of poverty. Library staff attended the Circles meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> to talk to the group about library programs and services. As the meeting took place in Woodstock, OCL staff provided information on County and Woodstock Public Library services and explained how each system was different.

**Report No: 2023-10**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**Board Date: April 18, 2023**

### **Free Skate Events**

In March the library offered free skate events at the following locations.

- Norwich Arena –March 4<sup>th</sup>
- Tillsonburg Community Centre – March 12<sup>th</sup>
- Embro Arena – March 13<sup>th</sup>
- Thamesford District Recreation Centre – March 16<sup>th</sup>
- Tavistock & District Recreation Centre – March 19<sup>th</sup>

Norwich branch had 49 people attend the free skate event and registered two new card holders. They also gave out 21 Craft & Connect kits and 36 OCL stickers.

Tillsonburg branch had 65 people attend their event. While the skaters were primarily families and children, staff also were able to engage with teens at this event. While they did not register any new card holders, library staff did hand out OCL branded beach balls and book bags.

Embro's event hosted 31 skaters and issued one new library card. Library staff handed out information about OCL and chatted with people as they entered to skate.

Thamesford hosted 25 skaters at their event. Many of the families attending had been in the library branch earlier in the day. While they did not register any new users, staff felt like it was a great way to be visible in the community.

Finally, Tavistock hosted the final event in March and hosted 14 skaters. The team at this skate reported good feedback from those that attend but did not register any new card holders.

Overall, staff felt that these events were helpful to showcase the library's programs and services. However, the events did not translate into new card holders at the events. New Card holder data showed a very slight uptick in card holder registrations across the system in March. However, that increase is consistent with data from 2022 and is more likely attributed to March Break programming and events in general.

Library staff will look to potentially host more events in the future to continue to engage the community, budget permitting.

### **Radio Ads for the Library's "Cool Stuff to Borrow"**

Two radio ads were featured during late March and early April to promote the library's "Cool Stuff to Borrow" collections. Library staff will be reviewing circulation data in May to see if there were any increased usage of these collections that could be tied to this different marketing approach.

### **Upcoming Activities**

*Oxford Rural Entrepreneur Networking Event – April 25 at Terra Nova Nordic Spa.*

Library staff will be on hand at the event to discuss library services and register new card holders to local business owners and entrepreneurs.

*Oxford Community Foundation AGM*

Library staff are hoping to have a table at the AGM to feature library programs and services, as well as the new OCF Library Fund created by former CEO Lisa Miettinen.

## **Branches and Programming**

### **Branch Updates**

#### *Ingersoll Branch –Donations*

Ingersoll Kiwanis Club has donated \$1500 to update the mural in the children’s area of the Ingersoll branch. Library staff will be working with local artist AJ Nunns to put together a collaborative children’s program during the summer to help create a fun installation event for the new mural.

Ingersoll Community Foundation has provided a \$5000 grant to the Ingersoll branch to refresh the Library Atrium as a “branch living room” to host adult and seniors programming. The funds will go toward new furniture, signage and refreshed painting of the space.

#### *Ingersoll Fusion Centre Partnership*

Library staff will be providing the Fusion Centre with library card registration materials and cards to allow new Fusion members to register for a library card while registering for Fusion membership. Staff are currently working to revise library registration materials before starting the program later this April.

#### *Tillsonburg Branch – Food Security*

Tillsonburg branch has provided the community with over 140 food and hygiene care kits since January of this year. To provide more privacy and equity, staff have moved the care kits from behind the service desk, to a cart in the library foyer. This move will allow those in need to access the kits without needing to ask staff and will provide more equitable access. Tillsonburg branch has also applied for a grant to expand the care kits to a full Food Pantry with shelving and a refrigerator for fresh foods. Should the grant be successful, staff will work with Food Forward Oxford and other providers to provide food security to those in need who frequent the library.

## **Staff News**

### **Staff Day – March 27<sup>th</sup>**

Library staff met on March 27<sup>th</sup> for the first Staff Day of 2023. The day was filled with learning opportunities and a chance for staff to discuss issues such as technology needs, gathering statistics and more. Amy Smith, Director of Human Resources presented HR’s findings on Staff Engagement in the afternoon.

### **Recruitment**

Library staff continue to recruit for the following positions:

- Outreach Services Specialist (Ox on the Run Pilot)
- Outreach Services Clerk (Ox on the Run Pilot)

Staffing announcements for these two vital positions are expected by the end of April.

### **Strategic Planning**

Library Staff met briefly with consultants from Strategy Corp, Inc. to launch the Library Strategic Planning process. The consultants will be reaching out to board members individually in the coming days to schedule one-on-one interviews.

**Report No: 2023-10**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**Board Date: April 18, 2023**

### Upcoming Events in April

Event Name	Branch	Dates
CMHA Wellness Social Group	Ingersoll	Mondays at 1:00 PM
Library Tech Help	Ingersoll	Mondays at 2:00 PM
Oxford EarlyON	Otterville / Princeton	Tuesdays at 9:30 AM / Wednesdays at 9:30 AM
Purposeful Play Prep for JK	Tavistock	Tuesdays at 10:00 AM
Yarn & Yack	Norwich	Tuesdays at 12:30 PM
Lego / K'nex Club	Brownsville	Tuesdays at 4:00 PM
Playdough Drop In	Innerkip	Tuesdays at 3:00 PM
Monthly Films for Adults: The Eyes of Tammy Faye	Tillsonburg	Tuesday, April 18 at 1:00 PM
The Write Stuff Writing Club	Thamesford	Tuesday, April 18 at 2:00 PM
Storytime with Sue	Ingersoll	Tuesdays at 9:30 AM
Shake, Rattle & Read	Tillsonburg	Wednesdays at 9:30 AM
Storytime	Plattsville	Wednesdays at 9:30 AM
Tales for Tots	Tavistock / Thamesford	Wednesdays at 10:00 or 10:30 AM
SMART Exercise Classes	Norwich	Wednesdays at 1:00
Read with Me – Reading Buddies	Norwich	Wednesdays & Thursdays after school
Library Tech Help	Ingersoll	Wednesdays 11:00 AM
Tween Club	Tavistock	Wednesdays at 4:00 PM
National Canadian Film Day Screening	Thamesford	Wednesday, April 19 at 1:00 PM
Community Employment Services	Princeton	Wednesday, April 19 at 12:00 PM
Local Author, Tim Van De Kemp	Harrington	Wednesday, April 19 at 6:30 PM
2023 Nature Notes – Hodge's Pond Restoration 2.0	Ingersoll	Wednesday, April 19 at 7:00 PM
Sip n' Stitch	Tillsonburg	Thursdays at 1:00 PM
Heart Strings – Knitting and Crochet Group	Burgessville	Thursdays at 4:30 PM

**Report No: 2023-10**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**Board Date: April 18, 2023**

<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Branch</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Spanish Circle	Norwich	Thursdays at 5:00 PM
Thursday Night Trivia	Virtual	Thursdays at 6:00 PM
Homeschool Hub	Tillsonburg	Thursday, April 20 at 9:30 AM
Free Income Tax Clinic	Ingersoll	Thursday, April 20 at 10:00 AM
Community Employment Services	Thamesford	Thursday, April 20 at 1:30 PM
Brightside Youth Hub	Norwich	Thursday, April 20 at 4:00 PM
After School Hangout: Pokemon	Tavistock	Thursday, April 20 at 4:00 PM
Crafty Night Out – Planter People	Ingersoll	Thursday, April 20 at 6:00 PM
Tales for Tots	Norwich	Fridays at 9:30 AM
Knits 'n' Knots	Thamesford	Fridays at 10:00 AM
SMART Exercise Classes	Norwich	Fridays at 1:00 PM
Friday Films for Adults – Black Adam	Ingersoll	Friday, April 21 at 2:00 PM
Local History Day	Tillsonburg / Ingersoll	Saturday, April 22 at 10:00 AM / 11:00 AM
Seed Bombs	Innerkip	Saturday, April 22 at 11:00 AM
Robots on the Run!	Ingersoll	Saturday, April 22 at 2:00 PM
CMHA Wellness Social Group	Ingersoll	Monday, April 24 at 1:00 PM
Tech Toys Exploration	Brownsville	Tuesday, April 25 at 2:00 PM
Family Tree Nuts	Virtual	Tuesday, April 25 at 1:00 PM
Lunch & Listen: Adult Storytime	Ingersoll	Wednesday, April 26 at 12:00 PM
Thamesford Book Club	Thamesford	Wednesday, April 26 at 3:00 PM
Writer's Circle	Norwich	Wednesday, April 26 at 5:00 PM
Otterville Book Club	Otterville	Wednesday, April 26 at 6:00 PM
Tech Toys Exploration	Brownsville	Thursday, April 27 at 10:00 AM



**Report No: 2023-10**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**Board Date: April 18, 2023**

Event Name	Branch	Dates
After School Hangout: LEGO	Tavistock	Thursday, April 27 at 4:00 PM
Support Native Pollinators Presentation	Innerkip	Thursday, April 27 at 6:00 PM
Norwich Book Club	Norwich	Thursday, April 27 at 2:00 PM
Teen Advisory Group	Virtual	Thursday, April 27 at 4:00 PM
Friday Films for Adults – Amsterdam	Ingersoll	Friday, April 28 at 2:00 PM
Tech Toy Exploration	Brownsville	Saturday, April 29 at 9:00 AM
Adult Crafternoon: Macrame	Tavistock	Saturday, April 29 at 12:00 PM
Robots on the Run!	Ingersoll	Saturday, April 29 at 2:00 PM

To view our Program Calendar, go to:

<https://engagedpatrons.org/EventsCalendar.cfm?SiteID=2048>

## SIGNATURES

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### Departmental Approval:

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Lisa Marie Williams  
 CEO/Chief Librarian

## ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment 1 – Library Statistics March 2023





## Branch Attendance Statistics - March 2023

BRANCH	HOURS PER WEEK	YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	TOTAL	
PRINCETON	15	2019	323	273	408	450	417	438	603	422	391	477	401	286	1,004	4889	
		2022	88	113	94	172	228	240	402	212	219	245	252	164	295	2429	
	15	2023	279	220	398										897	897	
	% Change 19 to 23			-14%	-19%	-2%										-11%	
	% Change 22 to 23			217%	95%	323%										204%	
TAVISTOCK	35	2019	1026	741	1083	940	1014	927	1300	1226	879	1079	918	757	2,850	11890	
		2022	302	317	426	525	560	585	756	908	564	696	723	478	1,045	6840	
	35	2023	679	629	937										2,245	2245	
	% Change 19 to 23			-34%	-15%	-13%										-21%	
	% Change 22 to 23			125%	98%	120%										115%	
THAMESFORD	35	2019	882	717	913	902	993	750	1202	1246	814	1147	1041	787	2,512	11394	
		2022	178	229	319	431	455	500	737	930	541	588	753	526	726	6187	
	35	2023	672	593	796										2,061	2061	
	% Change 19 to 23			-24%	-17%	-13%										-18%	
	% Change 22 to 23			278%	159%	150%										184%	
TILLSONBURG	59	2019	7866	6408	9328	8104	7759	7329	8650	8037	7227	10209	7430	5991	23,602	94338	
		2022	2,323	2,725	3,736	3,686	3,373	4,022	4,571	5,258	3,980	4,328	4,664	3,378	8,784	46044	
	54	2023	4,934	4,480	6,702										16,116	16116	
	% Change 19 to 23			-37%	-30%	-28%										-32%	
	% Change 22 to 23			112%	64%	79%										83%	
TOTALS	366	2019	22,659	18,931	25,103	23,229	22,148	21,140	25,198	23,531	20,468	24,729	21,017	16,570	66,693	264,723	
		2022	5,234	6,495	9,307	9,658	9,619	12,141	13,879	15,565	11,596	12,044	13,788	9,535	21,036	128,861	
	335	2023	15,468	13,801	18,839										48,108	48,108	
TOTAL Change 2019 to 2023				-31.7%	-27.1%	-25.0%									-27.9%		
TOTAL Change 2022 to 2023				195.5%	112.5%	102.4%									128.7%		





## Computer Use - March 2023

BRANCH		YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	TOTAL	
PRINCETON	Computers	2022	0	2	0	13	7	17	16	10	7	9	7	3	2	91	
		2023	9	14	10											33	33
	Wireless	2022	14	1	2	13	17	21	16	13	15	12	10	10	10	17	144
		2023	8	15	23											46	46
	Totals 2022			14	3	2	26	24	38	32	23	22	21	17	13	19	235
	Totals 2023			17	29	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	79	79
	% Change			21%	867%	1550%											
TAVISTOCK	Computers	2022	0	1	5	5	8	5	8	16	21	13	16	9	6	107	
		2023	16	21	25											62	62
	Wireless	2022	84	8	13	11	24	31	24	22	25	27	22	31	105	322	
		2023	14	16	20											50	50
	Totals 2022			84	9	18	16	32	36	32	38	46	40	38	40	111	429
	Totals 2023			30	37	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	112	112
	% Change			-64%	311%	150%											
THAMESFORD	Computers	2022	1	7	11	10	14	14	11	17	15	19	17	18	19	154	
		2023	13	17	18											48	48
	Wireless	2022	37	16	14	26	24	71	107	40	56	63	73	56	67	583	
		2023	47	92	65											204	204
	Totals 2022			38	23	25	36	38	85	118	57	71	82	90	74	86	737
	Totals 2023			60	109	83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	252	252
	% Change			58%	374%	232%											
TILLSONBURG	Computers	2022	150	251	267	327	350	321	417	496	408	419	390	249	668	4,045	
		2023	331	338	476											1,145	1,145
	Wireless	2022	338	126	652	1,010	863	913	1,143	1,087	895	707	900	550	1,116	9,184	
		2023	770	676	1,156											2,602	2,602
	Totals 2022			488	377	919	1,337	1,213	1,234	1,560	1,583	1,303	1,126	1,290	799	1,784	13,229
	Totals 2023			1,101	1,014	1,632	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,747	3,747
	% Change			126%	169%	78%											
TOTAL COMPUTER USAGE		2022	1,266	1,123	1,917	2,556	2,269	2,445	3,034	2,814	2,552	2,320	2,699	1,964	4,306	26,959	
		2023	2,318	2,196	3,228										7,742	7,742	
% Change 2022 to 2023			83.1%	95.5%	68.4%										79.8%		









## Digital Circulation - March 2023

	YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	TOTALS
Digital TV & Movies	2022	726	644	669	636	561	575	655	641	513	619	766	817	2,039	7,822
	2023	792	706	673										2,171	2,171
% Change - Digital TV & Movies		9%	10%	1%										6%	
Digital Magazines and Newspapers *platform change 4/21	2022	2,253	1,325	1,448	1,369	1,692	1,477	1,662	1,627	1,822	2,239	3,051	3,080	5,026	23,045
	2023	3,587	2,650	3,663										9,900	9,900
% Change - Digital Magazines & Newspapers		59%	100%	153%										97%	
Tumble Books	2022	248	143	162	145	117	138	39	40	10	38	100	57	553	1,237
	2023	92	66	73										231	231
% Change - Tumble Books		-63%	-54%	-55%										-58%	
Digital Music	2022	1,564	1,724	2,837	1,596	2,291	2,430	1,239	1,460	1,605	1,236	1,498	1,965	6,125	21,445
	2023	2,769	2,346	1,418										6,533	6,533
% Change - Digital Music		77%	36%	-50%										7%	
Digital Audiobooks	2022	6,176	5,522	6,153	3,385	3,430	3,424	3,571	3,842	3,536	3,523	3,652	3,565	17,851	49,779
	2023	3,973	3,646	4,133										11,752	11,752
% Change - Digital Audiobooks		-36%	-34%	-33%										-34%	
Digital ebooks	2022	6,996	6,315	6,686	6,500	6,464	6,258	6,683	6,827	5,893	6,317	6,055	6,137	19,997	77,131
	2023	6,885	6,489	112										13,486	13,486
% Change - eBooks		-2%	3%	-98%										-33%	
TOTAL Digital Circulation	2022	17,963	15,673	17,955	13,631	14,555	14,302	13,849	14,437	13,379	13,972	15,122	15,621	51,591	180,459
	2023	18,098	15,903	10,072	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44,073	44,073
% Change - Digital Circulation		1%	1%	-44%										-15%	

## Definitions:

Digital Movies include the following: Hoopla Movies, Hoopla TV, Hoopla Binge Passes, Kanopy

Digital Magazines and Newspapers include the following: Overdrive Magazines, Zinio (Jan 2021 to April 2021), Press Reader

Digital Music includes the following: Freegal, Hoopla Music

Digital Audiobooks includes the following: Hoopla Audiobooks, Overdrive Audiobooks, Axis 360 Audiobooks

Digital eBooks includes the following: Freading, Hoopla Comics, Hoopla eBooks, Overdrive eBooks, Axis 360 eBooks

**To: Oxford County Library Board**

**From: CEO/Chief Librarian**

## Outdoor Movie License Partnerships

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Library Board receive Report No. 2023-11, *Outdoor Movie License Partnerships*, for information.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Potential for partnering with area municipalities and community organizations to provide outdoor movie events in 2023.

### Implementation Points

Library staff will seek out partner organizations and secure the required licenses for offering outdoor movie events at the direction of the Library Board.







### Financial Impact

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year’s operating budget.

### Communications

Planned outdoor movie events will be communicated with the public via social media, news outlets and other communication avenues in partnership with the hosting organization or municipality.

### Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
<b>WORKS WELL TOGETHER</b>	<b>WELL CONNECTED</b>	<b>SHAPES THE FUTURE</b>	<b>INFORMS &amp; ENGAGES</b>	<b>PERFORMS &amp; DELIVERS</b>	<b>POSITIVE IMPACT</b>
				5.ii.	

## **DISCUSSION**

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### **Background**

Oxford County Library has been hosting indoor movie events at four branch locations for fifteen years. Currently licensed branch locations include: Ingersoll, Plattsville, Princeton and Tillsonburg. Movie events at these branch locations are covered by license agreements with the two Canadian non-theatrical film distributors, Criterion and Audio Ciné Film Inc. (ACF).

During the summer of 2022, South-West Oxford Township approached the library about potential outdoor movie events. At that time, the library's current license structure would not support the showing of outdoor movies.

### **Comments**

Under the direction of the Library Board, staff have investigated the potential of offering licensed outdoor movie events in partnership with area municipalities and/or other community partners in 2023.

Library staff have reviewed license structures and potential film offerings by the two non-theatrical film distributors in Canada. Of the two, ACF would offer more family friendly films and a better cost structure to support such events.

The Library can purchase an annual outdoor movie license through ACF that would permit up to 10 showings. A second option, to buy individual licenses per film showing is also available at a higher per event cost. This option would be more fiscally responsible if the library is unable to book more than 7 showings this season.

Locations and films to be shown will need to be planned in advance. ACF reviews each location to determine if the site is deemed "too close" to a local movie theatre. Film studios, such as Disney, restrict the distance between a licensed showing and a commercial movie theatre. At this time, library staff believe that only Tillsonburg would be within the restricted areas for outdoor showings.

ACF's license does not allow the library or municipality to charge for tickets, however concession sales and donations are allowed.

### **Conclusions**

The Library does not currently own the equipment to host outdoor movie events. Library staff will work with area municipal partners to determine if there is interest in a partnership for outdoor movies in 2023 before proceeding with licence agreements.

**Report No: 2023-11  
CORPORATE SERVICES  
Board Date: April 18, 2023**

## **SIGNATURE**

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### **Departmental Approval:**

Original signed by

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Lisa Marie Williams  
CEO/Chief Librarian

## B.C. libraries receive \$45M boost

Times Colonist · 25 Mar 2023 · JEFF BELL jbell@timescolonist.com

Provincial funding of \$45 million for B.C.'s 71 public libraries was announced Friday at the Vancouver Island Regional Library's Cumberland branch.

The funds, which are in addition to the \$14 million in annual provincial support for libraries, will be used for such things as modernized technology and enhanced programs and services.

"This is an important time for our library system with a new strategic plan on the horizon, rapidly increasing demand for our digital resources and a continuing trend towards pre-COVID use of our physical branches and collections," said Erin Hemmens, chair of the VIRL's 38-person board.

"Support from the ministry means VIRL can look at new opportunities to build literacy and learning, continue our journey toward reconciliation and build connections across our service area."

Libraries offer a good return on investment "and play a pivotal role in ensuring equitable access to technology, resources, learning opportunities and safe spaces," Hemmens said.

The VIRL's new strategic plan is set to be adopted today, she said.

Rina Hadziev, executive director of the B.C. Library Association, said investments in libraries are investments in communities.

"With over 60 million visits per year, public libraries make life more affordable, foster lifelong learning and community connections, and provide vulnerable people with a welcoming space to access services," Hadziev said.

"This funding will help stabilize public libraries, ensuring they are able to meet the evolving needs of their local communities over the next few years."

Digital resources at B.C.'s public libraries were used close to 16 million times in 2021, an increase of 47 per cent over 2019.

Minister of Municipal Affairs Anne Kang said libraries do everything from offering regular internet access to delivering programs to newcomers, job seekers and seniors.

Summer-reading programs and clubs are provided as well, she said.

Kang said that libraries have been "a safe harbour" for her at times in her life.

"Libraries mean so much to British Columbians," she said.

The new funding will be in place at libraries by March 31, with each site determining how the money will be spent.

# Drag community gets support at public library story times in Calgary after escalating protests

Medicine Hat News · 11 Apr 2023 · COLETTE DERWORIZ

## CALGARY



In a classroom inside Country Hills Library, a member of Calgary's drag community reads books to children.

Dressed in a green and blue vest over a white shirt with a black tie, The Frizz asks participants to join in.

"Just. Be. Who. You. Are," the drag monarch says with some of the couple dozen children brought to the story time by their parents and grandparents.

The Frizz, who has long, curly hair and a moustache, is joined by drag king Shane Onyou, who is dressed in a glittered jacket and bejewelled captain's cap, at the Reading with Royalty program.

The program, held on March 27, was recorded in a video provided to The Canadian Press by the Calgary Public Library after declining a request for a reporter and a photographer to attend.

The family-friendly story times are led by members of the local drag community, and children are invited to dress in their best outfit, cape or crown.

The program, however, has faced escalating protests in Calgary and other cities around the world with complaints that drag contributes to the sexualization or grooming of children. Derek Reimer, a 36-year-old pastor, faces hate-motivated offences after protesters disrupted a reading at the city's Seton Library in February. Police said Thursday he was rearrested and charged again with causing a disturbance and shouting hate speech at two more events. Calgary city council recently updated its bylaws to try to get a handle on those demonstrations. Protesters are now required to be 100 metres back from the entrance of any public library or recreation facility.

At the Country Hills Library in March, two men stood holding placards along the edge of the library's parking lot. A larger protest could be heard on a loudspeaker a few blocks away. Dozens of members of the drag community and its supporters gathered closer to the entrance of the library.

A line of people wearing pink angel wings and masks stood silently, attempting to shield children from protesters. Some held signs that read "Kids Love Drag" and "I Support Drag."



Several teens sang “Let it Go” and “Dancing Queen” nearby as police officers, on bikes and in marked vehicles, kept watch and recorded video between the protest and the rally.

Deborah Donovan, a grandparent attending with her daughter and 14-month-old twin grandchildren, said she doesn’t understand why there are protesters.

“I really think they are living in another century or decade,” she said.

“It’s ridiculous. It’s almost Americanized, something you see happening in the Deep South. It can stay there.”

James Demers is an activist who helped with the rally. Reading with Royalty, he said, has been running for five years without problems.

“This is a post-COVID impact,” suggested Demers. “These people are looking for community, they found it over COVID protesting and we have become the target.”

Many have shown their support to the drag community in recent months.

“I am here to support the drag queens and the idea of diversity and the idea of children learning to read rather than hate,” Alison Whitley said at the rally.

“It’s human rights. It’s our children learning that the world can be a beautiful, rainbow place with literacy rather than narrow views.”

Parent Lisa Ha said it was a fun program to attend on the way out of the library. She wants her boys to be “exposed to everything and anything, and share that everyone is equal.”

Kris Wells, an expert on gender and youth at MacEwan University in Edmonton, said many of the protests are connected to a movement in the United States.

“This far-right fringe movement ... (is) using the 2SLGBTQ+ community as a scapegoat for hate and prejudice, continuing to recycle tired old stereotypes under this new language they’re using of groomers, of talking about protecting children from whether it’s child pornography or pedophilia - that they associate with being a 2SLGBTQ person,” he said.

Wells said it’s trying to undo the social and legal progress that has been made on the issue in Canada.

“A large contributor to that is the social media and the unregulation of these kind of conspiracy theories, this hateful and harmful rhetoric, the stereotypes, the misinformation,” he said.

“You go online and it’s really the Wild West, anything goes.”

Wells said there needs to be a broader conversation about online hate spreading into communities.

“The first thing we have to do is loudly denounce it and show that these kinds of beliefs are not acceptable ... and they’re not based in any legitimacy or facts or research,” he said.

“We need our political leaders, our corporate leaders, our major social institutions to speak out and denounce, because hate thrives when it has an audience.”

Toronto

## Ontario NDP urges legal protections for drag shows

Drag artists say protests at performances are negatively affecting their livelihoods

[Allison Jones](#) · The Canadian Press · Posted: Apr 04, 2023 12:07 PM EDT | Last Updated: April 4



MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam, speaking at the podium, is introducing a private member's bill Tuesday that would allow the attorney general to temporarily designate specific addresses as community safety zones. (Mathieu Simard/Radio-Canada)

Ontario's NDP urged the government Tuesday to create community safety zones that would protect drag artists and LGBTQ communities from harassment and intimidation at their performances.

Drag performances have been targeted by organized protests across the United States but also here at home, said Kristyn Wong-Tam, who is putting forward a private member's bill to designate 100-metre zones around show venues.

"The topic that brings us here is deadly serious," Wong-Tam said at a press conference. "The rise of hate and violence facing the 2SLGBTQI-plus communities, including the drag artists, happening across Ontario and right (across) the nation has been alarming."

Statistics Canada figures show a 64 per cent rise in police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation, jumping from 258 in 2020 to 423 in 2021.

Wong-Tam, the NDP's critic on 2SLGBTQ+ issues and who uses they/them pronouns, said their bill is designed to keep the community safe.

"Drag artists, their audiences, the businesses and the facilities that host those drag performances have been put at risk," they said.

"Unless we put forward a strategy to protect them, Ontario's social, economic and cultural richness is under attack. We have to protect that."

## **Drag artist reports hate crimes, speech**

The bill would allow the attorney general to temporarily designate addresses — such as where a show is taking place — as community safety zones, and anti-LGBTQ harassment, intimidation and hate speech within 100 metres would be subject to a \$25,000 fine.

Scarlett Bobo, a drag artist who has competed on Canada's Drag Race, said she has been subject to hate crimes and hate speech in recent weeks.

"Apart from the glamorous, dazzling and wacky characters I play on television or in venues around the world, I also deal with the very real struggles of homophobia, hate crimes, and acts of purposeful intent to intimidate and now disqualify who I am as a person and what I do as a job," she said at a press conference with Wong-Tam and other artists.

"Drag is all about spreading love and acceptance and allows people to feel empowered and special. Drag artists and trans people have an inherent right to live freely and authentically in their truth. Everyone wants and deserves to feel safe and valued in their work. That is why these recent acts of organized protests and hate speech need to be halted and condemned immediately."

- [London, Ont., bar in hot water after making drag shows age 19+ events](#)
- [This petition asks Canada to grant asylum to transgender people from the U.S. Could it work?](#)

Crystal Quartz, a drag artist based in Guelph, Ont., said she primarily does shows for ages 19 and up, but after doing a few all-ages shows she was targeted for harassment, first online then in person, by what she describes as an organized campaign.

"They then started showing up to all of my events, screaming at parents and myself saying they were groomers, pedophiles and a bunch of other homophobic slurs to make everyone there feel unsafe to attend," Quartz said.

"These acts of intimidation now made our safe spaces feel unsafe. Unfortunately, all these venues decided to not rebook leaving a huge loss of revenue for me and these businesses. And to be honest, I don't blame them. It was very scary for everyone involved as they just came to have a good time."

Quartz said it is negatively affecting her ability to earn a living.

## House to consider bill

Responding to questions from the NDP in the legislature, Government House Leader Paul Calandra said once Wong-Tam has tabled the bill, the house would give it due consideration.

"I think members on all sides of the house understand how important it is that everybody feel safe in the province of Ontario and that we honour everybody's rights to live and prosper in Ontario, regardless of who you are, who you love and what god you worship," he said.

Ontario, under the former Liberal government, created safe access zones around abortion sites, and NDP Leader Marit Stiles called on Premier Doug Ford's government to offer the

LGBTQ community the same protections.

"The sad truth is that this government has done nothing to recognize the growing violence against the queer community and even less to help stop it," she said.

"New Democrats have been calling on Ford to act for months, but the premier hasn't lifted a finger."

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## **LIBRARIANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MY SUPERHEROES; My local library was a safe haven, a rich world of knowledge that fostered a lifelong love of books, Shirley Phillips writes.**

**Author:** Shirley Phillips

**Date:** Mar. 23, 2023

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Full Text:

Byline: Shirley Phillips

For several years I was a deputy minister in the Ontario government. Before that, over a 30year career, I had many titles - assistant deputy minister, general manager, director, team lead, executive assistant. But before all that, I was a librarian.

I only worked in the library sector for a few short years before jumping into government. Those who discover I first chose librarianship as a profession often shake their heads in disbelief. "You don't seem like the librarian type," they say. Then they make the usual jokes about the archetypal bun-wearing, noise-hating, dusty spinster in horn-rimmed glasses and sensible shoes (or the sultry temptress that lurks beneath, once she lets her hair down). People tend to forget about the great librarians portrayed in books and film - rebels, strategists, censorship-fighters, mystery-solvers. Inevitably, the negative trope wins, and my argument - that librarianship is fundamental to democracy - is drowned out by a lot of dramatic shushing. It's not that smart, but I'm used to it.

Many millennials I know see libraries as irrelevant, soon-to-be obsolete, not worth wasting public funds on. They look at me with confusion when I defend the investment. "Really?" they ask. "Even with the internet?" I may as well be talking about keeping rotary phones and Rolodexes going. I resist going into lecture mode about privilege, fairness and levelling the playing field. Not everyone's literate, has a computer or can navigate the system. But I do say, in no uncertain terms, that I would not have made it to where I did had it not been for my local library.

As a latchkey immigrant kid adjusting to life in a new country, I found escape and refuge at Mimico Centennial Library. My parents' rough divorce plunged our already precarious existence into poverty. My family couldn't afford a single book, but when I discovered I could go across the road and read anything I wanted - for free! - my life changed significantly. That library became a safe haven, a rich world of knowledge that fostered a lifelong love of books.

The place was magical to me - warm brick, white stucco, natural wood, with an angled copper roof.

Built in 1967 to commemorate Canada's 100th, its award-winning design drew considerable attention.

The children's section had floor-to-ceiling windows where a giant drum-shaped aviary housed noisy budgies that entertained the kids. The adult wing was a two-storey atrium with a bright balcony, cozy window seats and comfy plant-filled reading lounges. There was even a theatre and a cobbled courtyard with reading benches and a butterfly fountain. I was there all the time.

Being a voracious reader, I quickly grew out of the children's department. At 12, I got up the courage to ask to use the adult section. The friendly librarian said "No" with a smile - you had to be 14 - but if I was willing to work there when I turned 13, she'd make an exception.

The day after my next birthday, I got my first parttime job. It gave me pocket money to ease the burden for my now single mom. It also opened up my world. I was exposed to the Canadian book trade and publishing industry. I learned about acquisition, client service and conservation. I witnessed the transformative power of libraries for those facing barriers related to language, economics, disability or remoteness. And I discovered authors that are my favourites to this day.

I often got teased about my job. Kids earning half what I did stocking shelves, cleaning arenas, building one giant bicep scooping ice

cream made the same dumb jokes. I didn't care. I kept working in public libraries until I finished university, both front line and behind the scenes. Thanks to those roles, which paid increasingly well as I gained experience, I was able to supplement my scholarships, study abroad in France and graduate debt-free.

While completing my master's in library and information science, I learned about the ancient roots and philosophies of the profession. Beyond theory, the curriculum covered a range of topics - business administration, computer programming, policy issues such as censorship and privacy. We learned about harnessing technology through the world wide web well before it was a household term. Much like the librarians I'd worked with as a kid, my profs were thoughtful, funny, well-read, interesting people. I didn't think I'd mind being like them when I grew up.

After a couple of research stints, I landed a job as the CanLit librarian at the Metro Toronto Reference Library, Canada's largest. While I expanded the collection (and my own expertise), I organized authors' nights, poetry readings, literary festivals, and couldn't believe I'd translated my love of books and literature into a job that paid decently with benefits.

Best of all, I was part of a diverse, eclectic, intelligent, supportive team of professionals, devoted to the equalizing effect of free information. They weren't rigid gatekeepers protecting rare books in silent, hallowed repositories (though some books were precious). They fought for freedom of expression. They'd literally search the world over, using their knowledge and uncanny problem-solving skills to find needles in haystacks. But they also helped high school students with their homework.

No matter the question, there was no judgment.

They went out of their way to put people at ease, ferreting out their true needs, especially those who were ashamed to display what they thought of as ignorance in a knowledge-based institution. It was public service at its finest.

As much as I loved my work, there were shortcomings in the profession. Female-dominated except at the highest levels, stagnant in terms of growth and promotion. I was young and ambitious. I wanted to get ahead, needed broader scope for advancement. I moved into government and never looked back.

Now, in retirement, I am looking back. Well, forward too. I'm reading ravenously and using my public library again, virtually and in person. I'm also writing, and find myself reconnected to the strange, often impenetrable, but still fascinating world of publishing, where a former career in librarianship is understood, even valued. What a concept.

To those who eschew public libraries, consider this: Just after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Ukrainian Library Association issued a statement declaring their libraries "strategic weapons" of war - places of power, security, asylum and freedom for all Ukrainians. Since then, Ukrainian "warrior" librarians have used the tools available to them - books, knowledge, cultural wisdom - to participate in the resistance, fight cybermisinformation and preserve national memory.

If that's not essential - and badass - I don't know what is.

Shirley Phillips lives in Toronto.

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# Columbia Journalism Review.

## THE MEDIA TODAY

# When is a library not a library? When it's online, apparently.

MARCH 30, 2023

By MATHEW INGRAM



**In March 2020**, the Internet Archive, a nonprofit created by the entrepreneur Brewster Kahle, launched a new feature called the National Emergency Library. Restrictions linked to the spread of COVID-19 had made it difficult or impossible for people to buy books or visit libraries in person, and so the Archive removed



limits on the digital borrowing of the books in its database—of which there were more than three million, most of them in turn borrowed from physical libraries and scanned—and made them all publicly available, for free. The project was supported by a number of universities, researchers, and librarians. But some of the authors and publishers who owned the copyright to these books saw it not as a public service, but as theft. In June 2020, four publishers—Hachette, HarperCollins, John Wiley & Sons, and Penguin Random House—filed a lawsuit. The Internet Archive shut down the project, and went back to its previous policy of “Controlled Digital Lending,” which only allowed one person to borrow a free digital copy of a book at any given time. But this didn’t stop the lawsuit—because the publishers argued that *any* digital lending by the Archive constituted copyright infringement.

Last week, Judge John G. Koeltl, of the Southern District of New York, finally ruled in the case. He came down in favor of the publishers and dismissed every aspect of the Archive’s defense, including the claim that its lending program is protected by “fair use” exemptions in copyright law. Koeltl wrote that the concept of fair use protects *transformative* versions of copyrighted works—a copy of a famous photo used in an artistic collage, for example—and that the Archive’s copies of books don’t qualify; the Archive made the case that its digital lending program is transformative because the practice “facilitates new and expanding interactions between library books and the web,” the judge noted, but he ruled that “making an invaluable contribution to the progress of science and cultivation of the arts” did not constitute transformation. In 2014, a court ruled that a book-scanning project led by Google was protected by the concept of fair use, but Koeltl pointed out, in his recent decision, that Google used the scans to create a searchable database, thereby *increasing* the utility of the books, rather than distributing complete digital copies. Any “alleged benefits” from the Archive’s lending, Koeltl wrote, “cannot outweigh the market harm to the publishers.”

Scanning and lending digital books is only one part of what the Internet Archive does. When he founded it in 1996, Kahle told *TechRadar* that he hoped it would become a modern version of the ancient Library of Alexandria, offering “universal access to all knowledge.” The Archive has since created digital copies of more than seven hundred billion webpages, which are available for free through a service called the Wayback Machine. It has also archived millions of audio files, video games, and other software. Meanwhile, a number of physical libraries, including some that have partnered with the Archive, have offered a version of controlled

digital lending for some time; limiting digital borrowing to a single copy of a book, after all, is similar to what libraries do with physical books. Until now, the legality of this idea had never been tested in the courts. But publishers and authors were critical of the practice even before the current lawsuit. In 2018, the Authors Guild, a professional association for writers, called the Archive's lending program "a flagrant violation of copyright law."

If you buy a physical book, you are allowed to sell or lend it because of a legal principle known as the "first sale doctrine," which gives the owner of a (physical) object the right to dispose of that object in whatever way they wish, regardless of copyright. The Archive argued that the same principle should protect the sale or lending of a legally purchased digital copy, pointing out that all the copies of books it lent out had previously been acquired lawfully by libraries. But Judge Koeltl didn't buy this defense. In rejecting it, he cited an earlier case involving a company called ReDigi, which allowed users who had bought a digital music file to sell it on. ReDigi claimed that the "first sale" doctrine applied to that practice, too, but the company ultimately lost that case, with courts ruling that selling a digital file creates a new copy, which isn't protected by the "first sale" principle.

The Internet Archive's lawyers also pointed to a Supreme Court decision, from the nineteen eighties, ruling that using a Sony Betamax video-cassette recorder to make a copy of a TV show was fair use. The Archive argued that its digital copies of print books similarly "improved the efficiency of delivering content to one entitled to receive the content" in a way that didn't "unreasonably encroach on the commercial entitlements of the rights holder." Koeltl, however, dismissed this argument, too, ruling that the Archive is not comparable "either to Sony, the alleged contributory copyright infringer, or to the home viewers who used the Betamax machine for the noncommercial, nonprofit activity of watching television programs at home." While Sony only sold the machines in question, Koeltl said, the Archive "scans a massive number of copies of books, rather than purchasing ebook licenses from the publishers" as physical libraries do.

Koeltl's ruling—and the rationale behind it—raised red flags for some. Mike Masnick, who runs a tech-commentary site called *TechDirt* and also co-founded a digital think tank called the Copia Institute, wrote in a blog post that the judge's reasoning is questionable on a number of levels. Koeltl's ruling that the Archive isn't engaged in noncommercial activity, Masnick wrote, is "just weird" since the

Archive is clearly a nonprofit and doesn't charge anything for the digital copies that it lends. Masnick also questioned Koeltl's decision to throw out any comparison to the Sony and Betamax case. In many ways, Masnick wrote, the Archive's position "should be seen as *stronger* than Sony's, because Sony actually was a commercial operation, and [the Archive] is literally acting as a library, increasing the convenience for its patrons, and doing so in a manner that is identical to lending out physical books."

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Nor did all professional authors celebrate the verdict. Last September, more than three hundred writers—including Neil Gaiman, Naomi Klein, and other household names—signed a letter criticizing publishers for launching lawsuits like the one against the Internet Archive. Such suits are "undermining the traditional rights of libraries to own and preserve books," their letter stated, noting that a proposed law in Maryland, which would have required reasonable fees for the right to lend digital editions, died after the Association of American Publishers sued. The letter also asked publishers to ensure that libraries would have the right to "permanently own and preserve books, and to purchase these permanent copies on reasonable terms, regardless of format." Even when libraries have access to digital versions of books, the letter noted, the prices charged by publishers can be exorbitant.

Terrence Hart, the general counsel for the AAP, wrote in response to the letter that publishers do support libraries, and that this was not at issue in the case against the Internet Archive because the Archive "is not a library." At least one group of current and former university librarians disagreed, however. In a statement on the recent case, they argued that publishers are trying "to redefine the Internet Archive on their own terms and, in so doing, deny it the ability to leverage the same legal tools that thousands of other libraries use to lend and disseminate materials to our users." Not only that, the librarians wrote, but the Archive is actually "the most significant specialized library to emerge in decades. It is, and continues to be, a

modern-day cultural institution built intentionally in response to the technological revolution.”

All this gets to the question at the heart of the Internet Archive case: *What is a library?* Should a nonprofit entity that makes copies of legally acquired books and then allows users to borrow them be considered a library, or does the term describe only a small group of specific physical entities that cut deals directly with book publishers? And is the lawsuit against the Archive a valid defense against copyright infringement, or part of a broader attack on libraries and digital lending? For Masnick, the answer is clear; he titled his post “Publishers Get One Step Closer to Killing Libraries.” Hyperbole? Perhaps. But—like Amazon deleting copies of *Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty Four* (yes, really) from users’ Kindles in 2009—the Archive case appears to be another example of copyright holders trying to remove rights in the digital sphere that we have become accustomed to in the physical world.

Fight for the Future, a nonprofit group focused on digital rights, said following the recent ruling that “a future in which libraries are just a shell for Big Tech’s licensing software and Big Media’s most popular titles would be awful—but that’s where we’re headed if this decision stands.” Drawing a direct connection between book licensing and the internet economy in general, the group called it “patently absurd” to equate an ebook license issued by a “surveillance-ridden Big Tech company” with a digital book file that is owned and preserved by a “privacy-defending nonprofit library.” For his part, Kahle, of the Internet Archive, said that the Archive would appeal the decision. “Libraries are more than the customer service departments for corporate database products,” he wrote. “For democracy to thrive at global scale, libraries must be able to sustain their historic role in society—owning, preserving, and lending books.”

## Other notable stories:

- Breaking this morning: security services in Russia detained Evan Gershkovich, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, who is a US citizen, in the city of Yekaterinburg, accusing him of spying on state secrets “on the instructions of the United States.” The *Journal* “vehemently denied” the claim. The arrest, [the Times notes](#), represents “a significant escalation” of Russia’s clampdown on journalism during the war in Ukraine.
- According to Mandiant, a cybersecurity subsidiary of Google, hackers suspected of ties to North Korean intelligence have posed as staffers for US news organizations in an attempt to solicit information about international nuclear-security policy. Hackers have apparently masqueraded as a journalist from the state-backed international broadcaster Voice of America and a recruiter from the *Times*; [Bloomberg’s Jeff Stone has more](#).
- In local-news news, James Rainey, of the *LA Times*, [reports on the gutting of a California newspaper where paid death notices are now “virtually the only sign of life.”](#) Elsewhere, Matthew Prince, the billionaire co-founder of the cybersecurity firm Cloudflare, [is acquiring the Record of Park City, Utah \(where he was recently at the heart of a land-use controversy\)](#). And, following a crowdfunder, [the Texas Observer won’t close after all](#).
- Last week, “Ellen,” a juror in the recent trial of six defendants from the Oath Keepers militia over their actions on January 6, sat for a lengthy interview about her experience, on C-SPAN. The interview was unusual, [Politico’s Kyle Cheney reports](#) —for its level of detail, but also because the juror worked at C-SPAN for more than thirty years. She said she was shocked that a “person from the media” was allowed to join the jury.
- And a scientific institute in the UK has called on the country’s tabloids to stop using the word “boffin”—a broad slang term for clever people or experts—on the grounds that it is “unhelpful, stereotypical, inaccurate, outdated, and clichéd,” [Press](#)

[Gazette's Charlotte Tobitt reports](#). One tabloid, the *Daily Star*, has already pushed back, taking aim at “Bin the Boffin befuddlement” and insisting that the term is one of endearment.

## **[ICYMI: Kyle Chayka on his 'cultural investigations'](#)**

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Mathew Ingram is CJR's chief digital writer. Previously, he was a senior writer with *Fortune* magazine. He has written about the intersection between media and technology since the earliest days of the commercial internet. His writing has been published in the *Washington Post* and the *Financial Times* as well as by Reuters and Bloomberg.

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