

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

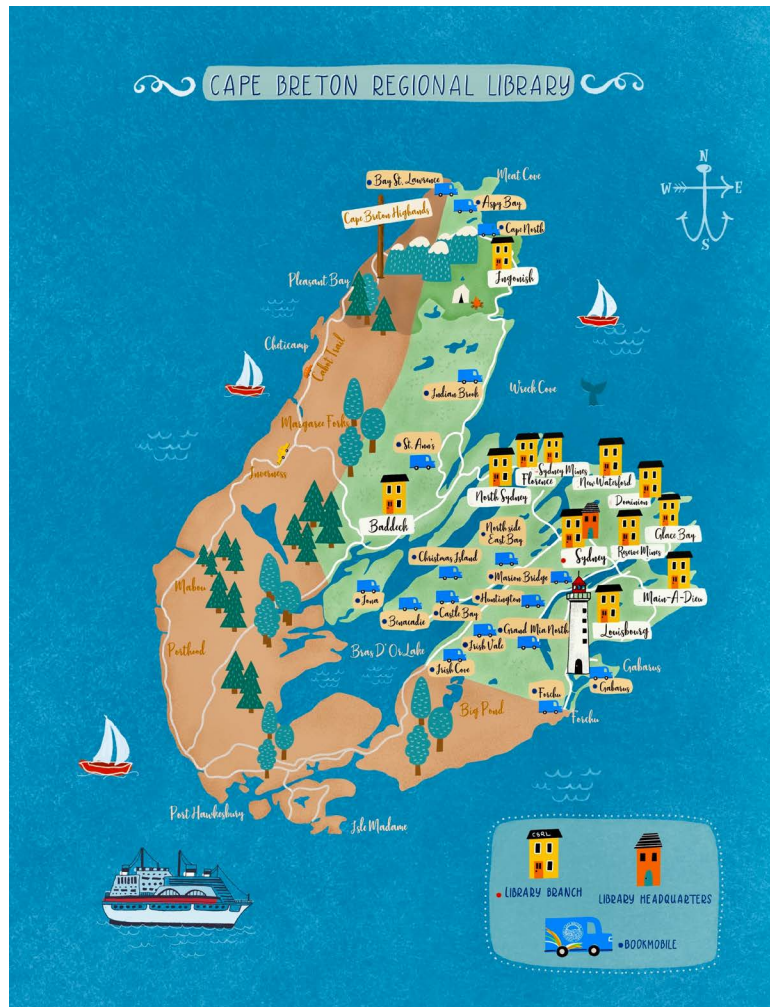
Dedicated in memory of the late Ian MacIntosh (1954-2021)

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MISSION

To strengthen and inspire our community by providing quality collections, cultural resources, programs, and services in a welcoming environment where all can enjoy reading and learning.



YOUR LIBRARY BOARD (2020-2021)

We welcomed new board members in 2020. Appointments to the Library Board are made by Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Victoria County and the Province of Nova Scotia.

Province of Nova Scotia

Ken MacDonald (to October 2020)

Murdoch Moore, Treasurer (from August 2020)

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Councillor Amanda McDougall (to October 2020)

Ron MacDonald (from February 2021)

Councillor Darren O'Quinn (from December 2020)

Councillor Glenn Paruch (from December 2020)

Councillor Steve Gillespie (to October 2020)

Douglas MacLennan, Vice Chair (from February 2021)

Councillor Eldon MacDonald, Chair (from December 2020)

Victoria County

Bruce Morrison (to October 2020)

Terry Murray (from March 2020)

Councillor Barbara Longva (from December 2020)

COMMUNITY MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR AND REGIONAL LIBRARIAN



Libraries are widely known as places where stories are discovered and told. The pages that follow tell a story of resilience, community connection, innovation, and quite simply kindness. There is no surprise ending but some twists and turns along the way that demonstrate the true spirit of modern libraries as valuable community assets. As the library of today continues to evolve, so does our story, and the best element is that you write the plot.

As COVID took hold, CBRL entered a lockdown of our physical spaces. Library staff instinctively pivoted to engagement from a distance. During the closure, CBRL offered virtual programs and launched new e-resources. Library staff delivered story times and puppet shows from their living rooms. We facilitated Book Clubs and Newcomer Conversation Circles via Zoom. Library staff met every challenge and newly required skill set with resilience and tact.

We know that libraries help build strong communities. This year CBRL welcomed 1400 new members to the Library. Further proof that people look to their public library during difficult times. CBRL did our part to help people stay healthy and connected. We launched our first ever Seed Library, filling close to 800 seed orders delivered to homes throughout CBRM and Victoria County.

In addition, a community cupboard was put in place in the Baddeck Library with the help of funds from the NS Health Authority's Community Health Boards. We also launched programs such as Kids in The Kitchen and Snacks-to-Go, all focusing on healthy living and food literacy.

Although our success stories were many, unfortunately there were patrons we were unable to serve without being opened. COVID revealed the depth of inequities many people experience everyday—whether it is access to technology or basic necessities such as public washrooms. Vulnerable populations rely heavily on their Library and

without access to our physical spaces we knew our reach was limited. When our physical spaces reopened, programs and services were reimagined that helped address these inequities. Public libraries, including CBRL, have proven to play an essential role in the community, as we continually expand our role beyond lending books.

This year a third library study was completed related to the replacement of the Sydney Library. The Service, Programs and Operational Plan (SPOP) further articulated the services and programs required in a new central library, providing an in-depth look at capital costs and ongoing operating costs for CBRM to maintain this important municipal service. Building on the previous studies, the SPOP further reinforces the need for community space and an increased footprint in order to deliver barrier-free collections, programs, and services to all citizens in our region.

CBRL is grateful for the many partnerships we have within our communities and acknowledge that our endeavors would not be possible without these important collaborations.

To the staff at Provincial Library, CBRM and Victoria County, thank you for your continued support.

Councillor Eldon MacDonald,

Chair, Cape Breton Regional Library Board

Lisa Mulak

Regional Librarian, Cape Breton Regional Library

HERE FOR YOU



IRCC English Conversation Groups at CBRL

One of the most rewarding projects we worked on as a team during the first lockdown was reaching out to our patrons via phone calls. It added an element of human contact that we were all missing and it provided a way to let our patrons know we were thinking of them. Some calls were quick check-ins, and others turned into longer conversations about how we were feeling and coping with the isolation. For many of our patrons, the library may be their only point of contact—it's often part of their weekly or even daily routines to see familiar faces and exchange a few words ...and it was as good for us as it was for them! Months later, when we reopened, many of our regulars commented on how nice it was to have that one-on-one conversation and they were thankful for the efforts that were put forth. It was just one more way to stay connected during such a difficult time.

Shelley Brown, McConnell Library



All branches of CBRL were abruptly closed on March 16th. Among the many serious challenges presented by COVID-19, imposing distance while remaining connected, was one we needed to master somehow. Staff rose admirably to the challenge of staying safe and staying connected. They displayed a truly remarkable and instinctual “need to help” by quickly working from their kitchen tables instead of usual work spaces within their library branches. Programs and services were adapted and delivered, which brought comfort and reassurance during such unprecedented times. Working collaboratively with our colleagues across Nova Scotia, barriers such as library fines were quickly removed and WiFi access remained accessible from outside our closed doors.

Library staff seamlessly moved into the uncharted territory of virtual programs. We successfully launched new services like:

CBRL's Seed Library, an initiative focused on gardening and food literacy. A total of 800 seed packages were delivered to households in CBRM and Victoria County.



Filling seed package orders during lockdown

I found myself thinking about the families stuck at home, and how disorienting the experience was proving for children. On a personal level, I was feeling incredibly cut off from my patrons and my community and felt a strong need to make contact. I began offering a morning “Wee Ones Online” via Facebook Live (with stories, songs, puppets, crafts... and at one point, a lamb) so that local kids could see a familiar and trusted face every day. I thought the routine might be helpful - both to the viewers, and to me! Each afternoon, I offered an “Afternoon Story time” session in which I read a chapter of a book out loud for anyone who cared to listen. These sessions ended up being a powerful way to connect with people, to share stories and feelings, and to add some structure to life in lockdown.

Kate Oland, Baddeck Library



OurZine: A Community Project featuring a variety of content from local contributors. You shared your stories, poems, recipes, photographs and by doing so we stayed connected.



Cover page of “Our Zine”

CBRL puppet shows are enjoyed by all ages. Our puppeteers and friends took to the virtual stage to provide some lighthearted entertainment with a mix of pandemic wit and humour.



A Virtual Puppet Show

- CBRL expanded our collection of digital library resources
- CBRL offered support to parents and teachers as they navigated at-home learning
- CBRL donated books to be included in Better Bite Community Kitchen's Good Food packs that were delivered throughout CBRM
- CBRL worked with partner organizations ensuring basic needs like washroom facilities were available to vulnerable populations

CAPE BRETON HISTORY

Freeman Collection

The restrictions associated with COVID-19 have provided the opportunity for staff to spend more time on the Freeman Collection.

The Freeman Collection, purchased by the Cape Breton Regional Library from a second hand bookseller in Halifax, Nova Scotia, consists of various papers, letters, photos and other ephemera produced by Charles Freeman and his family. Staff are working on transcribing the three binders of reports sent by Charles Freeman to the U.S. State Department in Washington D.C. The reports date from the period that Freeman served as the U.S. Consul in Sydney, Nova Scotia (1911-1924). The Freeman family consisted of Charles Freeman, his wife Susan, and their daughters, Harriet and Mary.

Once transcribed, these documents will be made available online and will be of great interest to local historians, as well as researchers from around the world.



Members of the Freeman Family. From left to right: Mary, Susan, Charles, Harriett

WELCOME BACK



NAVIGATE

"I was very relieved to welcome people back into the library. We missed the patrons, they are the heart and soul of our days here. It had been an extremely tough few months for everybody and it was gratifying to give people back a space where they could begin the process of rest and recovery, where we could make connections and have some laughs and begin to rebuild what we had lost in this past year"

Emily Chasse, McConnell Library



RENEW

E-books borrowed:
60,994

Website visits:
58,000

Number of bookmobile
stops: 56

When public health restrictions began to ease in June, library staff returned to their physical locations and began planning for the safe delivery of library services. This was new territory for all of us with our number 1 priority being the health and safety of staff and patrons.

- CBRL developed a multi-phased Pandemic Reopening Plan in adherence with Public Health protocols.
- As a first step we launched our contactless service, Library Take-Out in all CBRL branches.
- CBRL supplied 30,000 face masks to the people of CBRM and Victoria County

On July 14th we re-opened our doors.

As the seasons changed and with capacity limits in effect inside our locations, library staff once again found new ways to connect. We brought our programs outdoors where we could safely enjoy each other's company.



Two new stops, Westmount and Howie Center were added to the CBRL bookmobile schedule.



Knit-a-thon at Petersfield park

Library Outreach

Victoria County Outreach attended the Ross Ferry Farm Market offering a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction books for adults, young adults, and children to explore or check out, as well as some forest nature backpacks, Earth Walk Kits, and free craft kits for children. Some folks returned books that they had been holding onto or just stopped by for a socially distanced chat. All were surprised at how many of our services were available at a roadside booth thanks to technology. We were even able to sign up several new patrons for library cards, which meant they had instant access to an incredible selection of downloadable e-books & audio books.

Nicky Duenkel, Victoria County Outreach Service

“REVIEW”



Pop-up Library at the Ross Ferry Farm Market



Crafts-to-Go kits

In the absence of in-person programming for kids, take home kits have been one way in which we've kept our young patrons engaged. They can never replace in-person programs, but they are just one of the ways CBRL has adapted to restrictions and helped to keep kids engaged, learning, and creating in our community.



Families loved our crafts-to-go kits. Grandparents even mailed them to grandchildren living away!

Story Book Walk



Cantley Village Playground



Groovy Goat Farm, Ingonish

Food Literacy

As a recipient of the Province of Nova Scotia's Building Vibrant Communities grant, CBRL launched FoodSmart in Cape Breton with the goal of addressing food security and improving food literacy in our communities. Kids in the Kitchen, modeled after Halifax Public Libraries' food focused programs, brings families together to create healthy recipes at home. In addition to the many benefits of food literacy, children also learn math, science and language skills. Through the generous support of the FoodSmart grant, CBRL was able to coordinate the recipes and purchase all of the groceries and supplies necessary for families to make healthy meals at home.



Kids in the Kitchen offered through Sydney, Glace Bay and North Sydney

My three-year-old son and I very much enjoyed the Kids in the Kitchen program. It encouraged us to feel more comfortable cooking together, especially me as I was nervous having him around the stove before! It gave me the confidence I needed to include him in food preparation and now he sees me in the kitchen and he drags a chair over and asks if he can help!

L. Noble



Healthy Living at the Library

Furthering our mission to fulfill lifelong learning opportunities, CBRL continued to provide programs and services that make a difference in people's lives. With a focus on wellness, CBRL offered programs for all ages contributing to the overall health and physical well-being of our entire community. These projects were made possible through funding support from NS Health Authority's Community Health Boards.



Community Cupboard,
Baddeck Library



Chair Yoga at Wentworth bandshell in Sydney

RENEW

Gentle Exercise Series

New video posted weekly on CBRL's
facebook, youtube & website
www.cbri.ca (starting March 8th)

Week 1 Meditation
Week 2 Qi Gong & Tai Chi
Week 3 Chair Yoga
Week 4 Yoga

This active living series is funded by the Central C.B. Co. Health Board & N.S. Health Authority



NEW BEGINNINGS



Digital Literacy

As we re-imagined library services it was important that CBRL continue to combat the digital exclusion that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdown. We are here to help, whether it's setting up an email address or learning how to use your smartphone.

CBRL resumed our popular 1-on-1 tech help and launched TechConnect for the first time. This new initiative was made possible through a partnership with Victoria County Home Support Services and Victoria County Senior's Safety Program. TechConnect provided seniors living in Victoria County with devices, connectivity, skills support, and transit passes enabling them access to their Library.

TechConnect is a perfect example of the much needed collaborations across organizations that improve the overall health and well-being of our communities.

TechConnect participants were provided with training on how to use an iPad.

It makes a big difference. It's almost like having company.

C. Bonin

I'd be lost without it. That kind of surprised me because I'd been around them but never had an interest and couldn't find anyone to show me slow enough. Nicky at the library was a real help.

B. Arseneau

Dad uses it every day! He gets to talk to and see people he otherwise wouldn't be able to. His home is an isolated village that, due to Covid, he wasn't able to get back to. But friends have sent pictures and he's really enjoyed that.

Kathy, daughter of R. Ingraham



CBRL offered technology training to 100 people over the past year.

REIMAGINE

Number of in-person
visits: 62,512

Number of new card
holders: 1,300

Number of items
circulated: 240,148



English Conversation Series

CBRL, using Zoom, offered newcomers a virtual place to practice their English conversational skills and stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Snacks-to-Go

Through the Food Smart grant, this program provided nutritious snacks to people visiting our libraries. This program was available at all locations.

CBRL knows how far a snack can go. People make better decisions and learning is easier when they're not hungry.



1120 nutritious snacks were made available to patrons.

STORYTELLER-IN-RESIDENCE

New Moon Stories

CBRL's Storyteller-in-Residence, Bill Conall brought a modern spin to his storytelling sessions during the lockdown. New Moon Stories, a monthly Zoom series brought 132 people together to share and connect through the power of storytelling. Bill created a welcoming environment where participants comfortably engaged and freely told stories of their own. Participants commented on the sense of calm and wellbeing these storytelling sessions provided during such difficult times.



New Moon Stories was a monthly zoom storytelling series hosted by CBRL's Storyteller in Residence, Bill Conall.

LIBRARY LOCATIONS

- Sydney
- Ingonish
- Baddeck
- Dominion
- Florence
- Glace Bay
- Louisbourg
- Main-a-Dieu
- North Sydney
- New Waterford
- Reserve Mines
- Sydney Mines

The Cape Breton Regional Library Bookmobile

The Bookmobile serves many rural areas, offering convenient access to those who cannot visit one of the library's 12 branches.

It visits 56 locations across Cape Breton and Victoria Counties.

WiFi hours: 70,800

Number of computer
one-on-one sessions: 100

Number of virtual
programs: 216

GRATITUDE REPORT

This past year has been a challenging one, but Cape Breton Regional Library has much to be thankful for. Through community support and partnerships, CBRL branches continue to provide quality collections, programs, and services to patrons. Staff of CBRL would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to each individual, group, and organization that contributed to the collective success of our 12 branches and Bookmobile during the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Special thanks to CBRM, the Government of Nova Scotia, and the Government of Canada for investing in our public library system and its many benefits to our island community.

Adopt-a-Book Donations (\$4802.00)

- St Joseph's CWL, North Sydney
 - Rotary Club of Sydney-Sunrise
 - David Harris & Louise McKenna
 - Wayne & Miriam Almon
 - Viola & Angus Fitzgerald
 - Joan MacFadden
 - Ritchie Robertson
 - Ron MacDonald
 - Marilyn White
 - Margaret Tubrett
 - Graham Crosby
 - I.O.D.E. King Edward VIII
 - Martine Remillard
 - Anne Connell
 - Mary Osyany
 - Dr. Michel & Marie-Paule McKeough
 - Allan Nathanson
 - Ellen Buchanan
 - Maureen Murphy
 - Tanya Doucet
 - John MacNeil
 - Whitney Gibbs
 - Gaelic Society of CB County
 - Cape Breton Fiddlers Marathon
 - Evelyn Wells
 - Elizabeth Henderson
- As well as several donors recognized as "Friends of the Library"

Gifts in the amount of \$3887.00 were generously donated in memory of:

- Joyce Babin
- Harvey Lewis
- Allie Leadbeater
- Heather Morrison
- Gina MacAulay
- Susan Plath
- Florence Jury
- Inga Milburn
- Gerald Cluett
- Theresa Turner
- Ruth Melanson
- George Turner
- Earle O. Tubrett
- Eleanor March
- Susan Adams
- Michelle Taylor
- Marguerite Allen
- John Burchell
- Agnes Wroblewski-Stephenson
- Ruth Spurrell
- Peter Stephenson
- Keith Sanderson
- Doug Schaller

Library Legacy Donors

Many thanks to our Library Legacy Donors who help to ensure a lasting legacy of great books for CBRL's collection. For a donation of \$500.00, Cape Breton Regional Library purchases a book each year in the donor's name for life. Here is a list of the foundations, estates, corporations, organizations, and individuals who supported CBRL's Library Legacy Book Fund from 2000 to present day.

- R Howard Webster Foundation
- S.M. Blair Family Foundation
- Estate of Elizabeth Herridge
- Estate of Christina Hickey
- Estate of Fannie Cohen
- Mary T. Fisher Bequest
- Canada Post
- Cape Breton Development Corporation
- Stora Enso
- Political Science Department, Cape Breton University
- Sunrise Rotary Club of Sydney
- Richard & Marcia Bird
- Paul & Kathryn Black
- Margaret E. Burchell
- Peter Campbell
- Peter & Emily Campbell
- Tom Campbell
- Kathleen & Donald Caswell
- Dr. Yolanda D'Intino
- Rick Farmer
- Steve Gillespie
- Stephen Gillis
- Bob & Mary Hill
- Robert Hodder
- Blanche & Charles Johnson
- David Johnson
- Mary Jane Kelley
- Heather Lamoureux
- Mrs. Wayne Lorway
- Roberta H. Lynch
- Vince & Natalie MacLean
- Bernie MacNeil
- Robert Morgan
- Maureen Mueller
- Primrose Oram
- Freda Robb
- Tom Urbaniak & Alison Etter
- Krista Vigneault & Micki Murphy
- Douglas Watt
- A Friend of Dominion Library
- A Friend of The Library

Thank You to Our Partners

Cape Breton Regional Library appreciates the continued support of our partners who help us do the work we do. They help spread the word about our initiatives through their networks, write letters of support for our organization, and share their spaces with us for library outreach programs. Thank you all for your support.

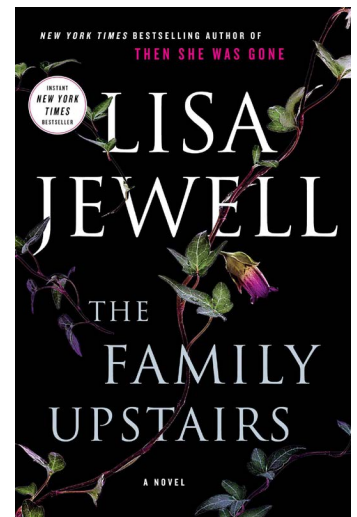
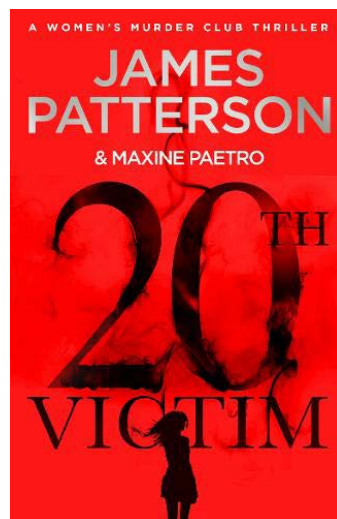
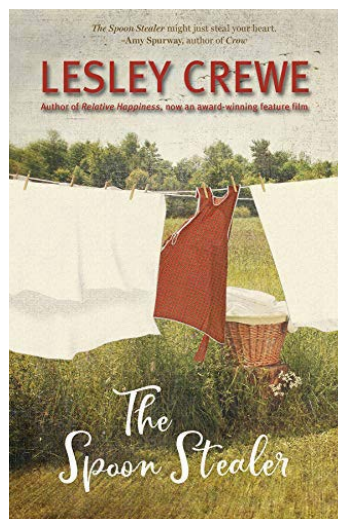
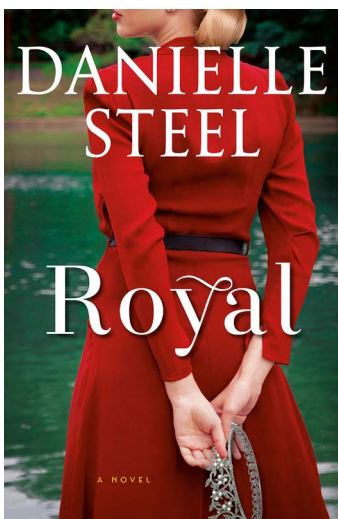
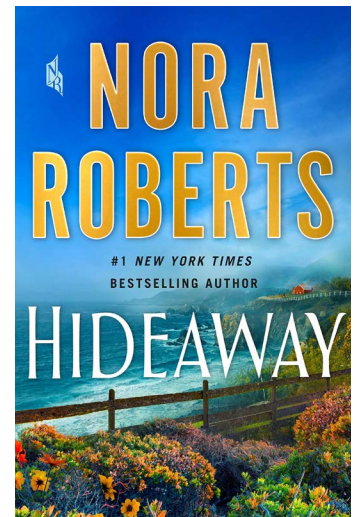
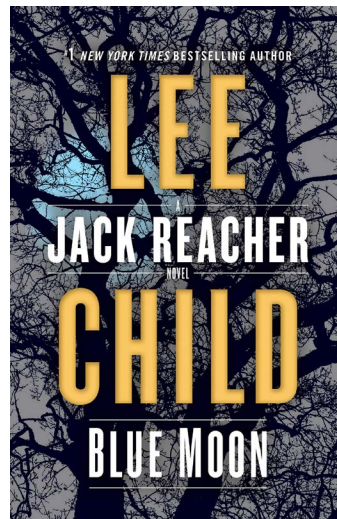
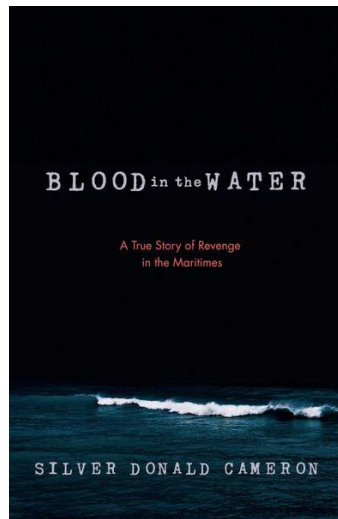
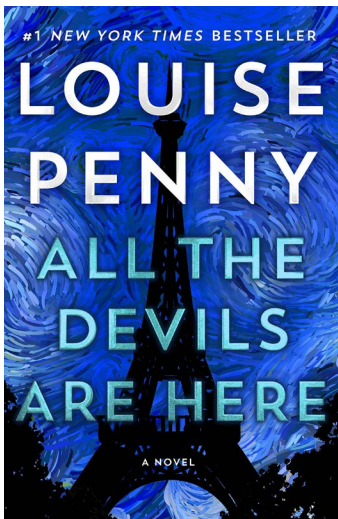
- Cape Breton Farmers Market
- Cape Breton Partnership
- Cape Breton Post
- CBC Radio-Sydney
- CBRM Recreation
- Cape Breton Regional Police
- Cape Breton University
- Community Links-Aging Well Together Coalition
- Family Place Resource Center
- Nova Scotia Employment Works
- Nova Scotia Health Authority
- NSCC Marconi Campus
- Sydney & Area Chamber of Commerce
- Sydney Downtown Development
- Transition House
- YMCA

“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” ~Helen Keller

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY



CBRL TOP CHECKED OUT ITEMS IN 2020-2021



IAN MACINTOSH

Ian MacIntosh, a member of our CBRL family passed away on May 22, 2021.

Ian was dedicated, highly respected, and much admired within Nova Scotia's library community. He held the title of Regional Librarian at CBRL from 1982-2004. After 22 years at the helm, Ian assumed the role of Collections Librarian. He retired in 2019.

All who interacted with Ian in any capacity, would agree that his greatest gift as a leader, as an innovator, and as an administrator, was his humanity and concern for others. As a colleague, library staff described Ian as incredibly helpful, humorous, kind and supportive.

Ian was instrumental in creating the culture of caring service that CBRL is known for and so effortlessly demonstrated over the past year.



