



Insights Farewell

Andrew Hunt, Executive Director, NLPL

It is with mixed emotions that I announce the discontinuation of Insights in its current form. Prior to HQ's move to Stephenville, the idea of Insights existed as print-based library newsletters distributed only sporadically. Starting in spring of 2002 the newsletter officially became Insights and was published four times a year featuring recurring sections like "Uplink" with updates from the IT Department, "Money Matters" with news from the Director of Finance, profiles of individual branches across the system as well as a list of staffing appointments and retirement announcements. More than anything, Insights has been a tool for sharing news about all the incredible work our staff members do in service of local communities throughout the province. While the Insights name and format will be retired, the same content will remain available in new locations and formats.

Here in 2026 we have many different tools that can help us share information about the system and updates on all the wonderful work we are doing, including social media and the News section of our website. So, while it may go by a different name or be found in a different spot, NLPL still has plenty of news, updates and accomplishments to share!

I would like to close with a sincere thank you to all NLPL staff, past and present, for making Insights such a huge success. Whether you were at the center of one of the stories, contributed content to one of the issues or simply read and enjoyed the content; thank you! I look forward to seeing stories, news and contributions from staff throughout the system in the new iteration of this project!

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Insights Retrospective

Emily Blackmore, Children's and Youth Collections and Services Librarian and Assistant Editor of Insights

An internal newsletter has been in existence here at the NLPL in one form or another since 1952 when the first issue of an internal news bulletin simply called "Newsletter, Newfoundland Regional Librarians" was published in November. The cover was hand drawn and the issue itself was hand typed on a typewriter. At six pages long, it includes a letter from the Editor, notes about Young Canada's Book Week, an update about a recent conference, circulation updates, and a Personals section that included anecdotes about recent vacations, marriages, and employment changes of library staff.

I've reproduced for you here the first letter from the Editor, who at the time was Jessie B. Mifflin, Supervisor of Regional Libraries. Jessie was a big part of the early years of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries, working with the library system from 1949-1972, and her name is all over the earlier issues of our newsletter. Please enjoy this look into the past of our organization. The mention of not having enough time to do the things we might wish to certainly still rings true today!

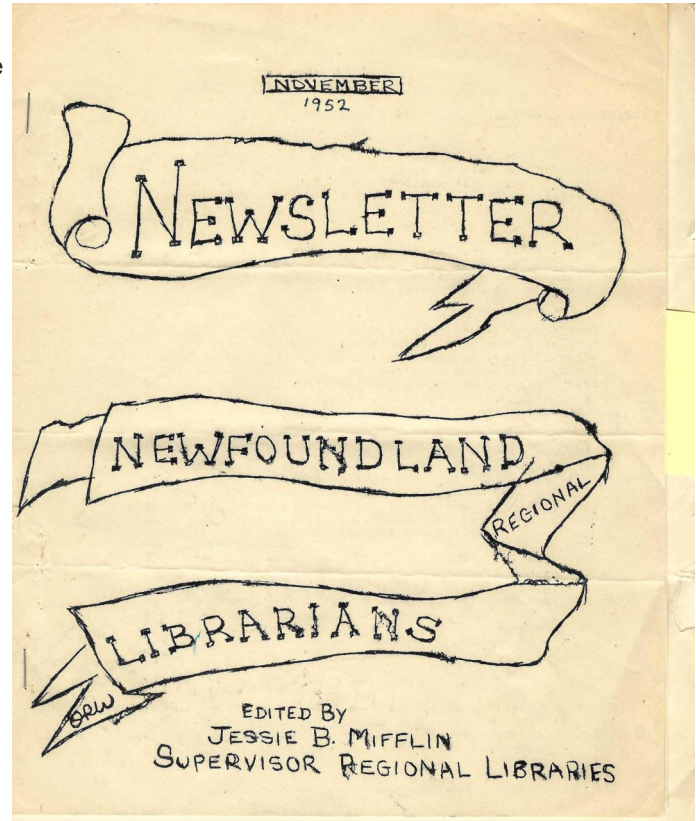
Newfoundland Regional Library Newsletter

Edited by Jessie B. Mifflin, Supervisor of Regional Libraries

For some time now we have been toying with the idea of issuing a Newsletter periodically, but lack of time has prevented us from carrying out our intention. Now, however, that we have caught up somewhat with the backlog of work that had accumulated during the Conference and the preparation for it we are trying to make a start.

We cannot say definitely how often it will be published. That will depend partly on the amount of time we can give it, on how often we shall be away from the office and for what periods of time, as well as on how you as librarians or Board members send us materials for it.

It will give any of you who care to contribute an opportunity to express your views, to publish any interesting news items that you might have or to make any appropriate suggestions. It will also give you all an opportunity to know what other librarians or Library Boards are doing, and so, I hope, will be a means of stimulating enthusiasm among you and give you ambitions to "keep up with the Joneses: in initiating improvements, putting into effect ways and means of improving circulation, etc.



First edition Newsletter, 1952

This, then, is really your newspaper, and while it may not have as wide a circulation as the Newfoundlander or the Sunday Herald, it will at least get to all the places where libraries are situated.

We invite you, then, to send in a contribution for the next issue, which, if possible, will be published in December. You may send it letters, news items or whatever you please.

Many of you know one another now as a result of meeting at this or other Conferences so that the items about the work of different librarians will seem like hearing from old friends, which will of course make it seem more interesting. We hope that you will co-operate in this venture.

It's so interesting to look back at these old newsletters and see how much is still applicable today. The care they took with reproducing these without computers or modern technology, speaks to the importance such internal documents held, and still hold, to our institution.

As well as being historically interesting, these older newsletters also hold many tidbits of interest and fun. The April 1954 Newsletter shared a song submitted by Twillingate.

"At last we have persuaded Miss Anstey to let us have a copy of the song she wrote for 'Young Canada's Book Week', and are pleased to quote it forthwith. It was, as we mentioned earlier, sung at a performance held in connection with the event to the tune of 'Home on the Range'.

Our Libraries

*They gave us two Libraries right here in the town,
With books all arranged on the shelves.
Our favourite authors quite distinct to the eye,
We can go there and help ourselves.*

Chorus

*O, we love our Libraries, the buildings on the North and South Side.
Our friends we meet, as we go long the street, and the knowledge there is so wide.*

*Our Librarian, is there always ready to help, to select all the books of our choice,
the Westerns and Mysteries and Sea Stories too, and magazines there beside.*

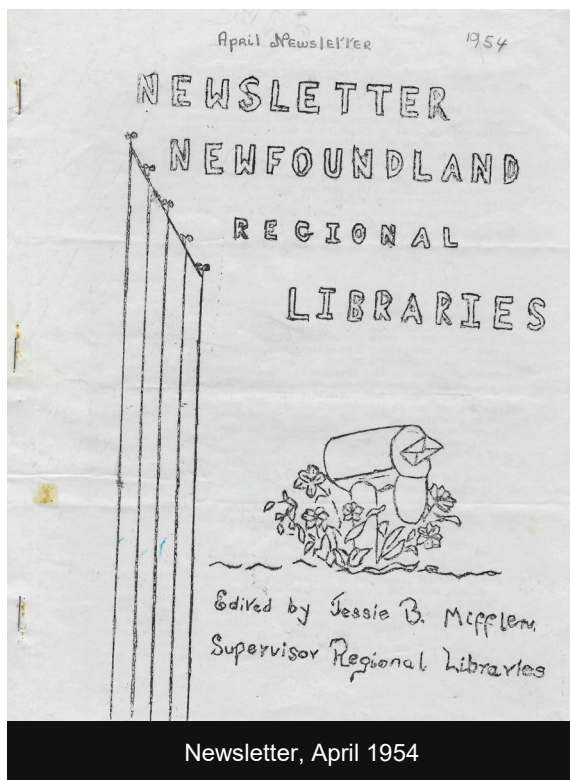
*There are books too on Travel, on Science, and Plays, On History new and old,
On Biography, Poetry, Gardening, Art, And Fiction with characters bold.*

*Picture books for the children can be seen on the shelves, Adventure for boys and girls too.
The Royal Family we meet which we think quite a treat, and books showing "Things to do".*

*Reference books are there now for the students to read, Encyclopedia and Dictionary too;
The Librarian and Teachers need to co-operate, to get more success in the schools.*

*We can go there to pass away many an hour, browsing over the books on the shelves,
With chairs and a table already at hand, a quiet read we can have for ourselves.*

*With the distance around makes it needful to have, a branch at Arm Academy,
With stations in all the outlying schools, no complaints from the people who read.*

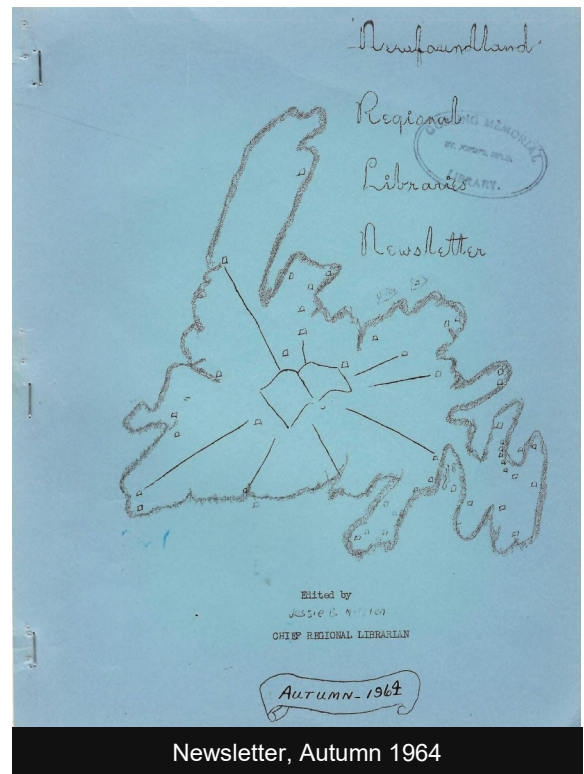


The sixties issues of our newsletter, still called Newfoundland Regional Libraries Newsletter at this point, are thicker than the previous decade, with a more stable cover image for a lot of the decade. Still hand typed, the covers use the shape of the island part of our province as a template, a trend that continues into the seventies.

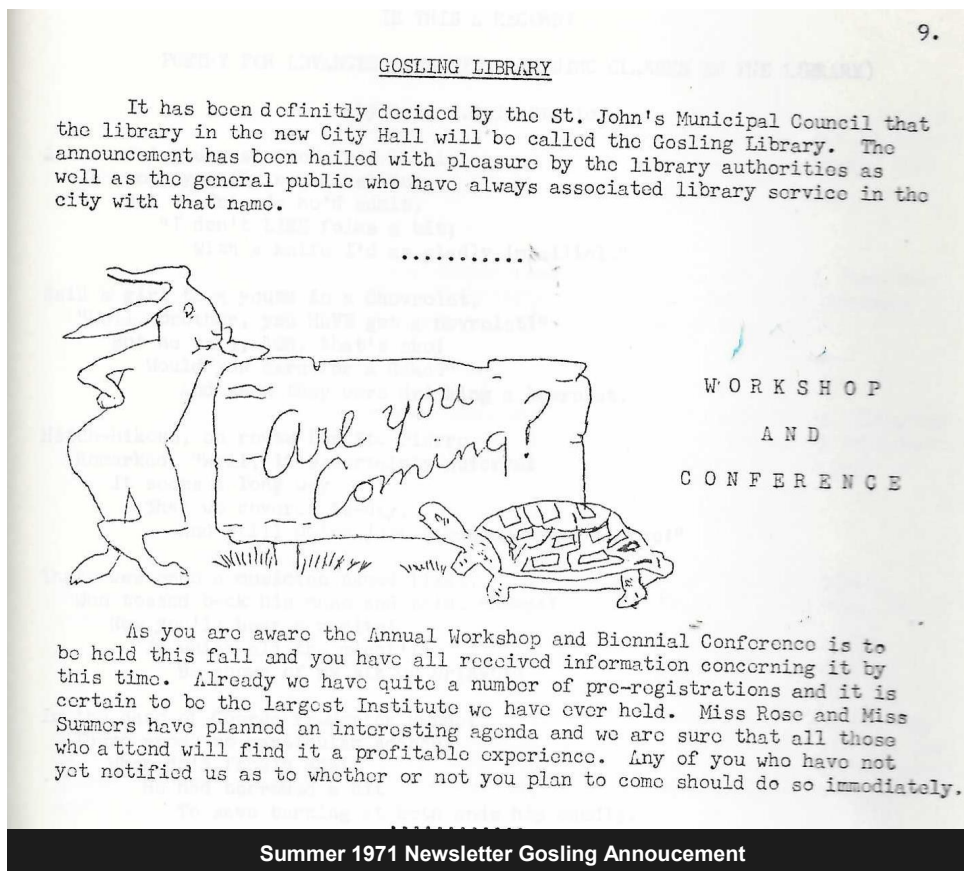
The Autumn 1964 Newsletter includes sections such as 'Directorial Digressions', 'Visits to Libraries', 'Obituaries', and 'Personals', as well as sections for individual library news items. This issue is over 20 pages long, and includes at the back a Report on a Library Trustees' Workshop held on October 10th, 1964.

This issue is also notable for announcing the opening of "Grand Falls" Harmsworth Regional Library on November 20th, 1964, when "Mr. Ambrose Peddle, MHA for the District of Grand Falls and Mayor of the neighbouring town of Windsor, cut the ribbon and declared the library open." It also announced the opening of a new library in Wabush, at the time our newest library.

As well as openings, our Newsletter announced closures, the moving of branches, and renaming. In the Summer 1971 issue, there was an announcement that the St. John's Municipal Council had decided that the library in the new City Hall would be called the Gosling Library.

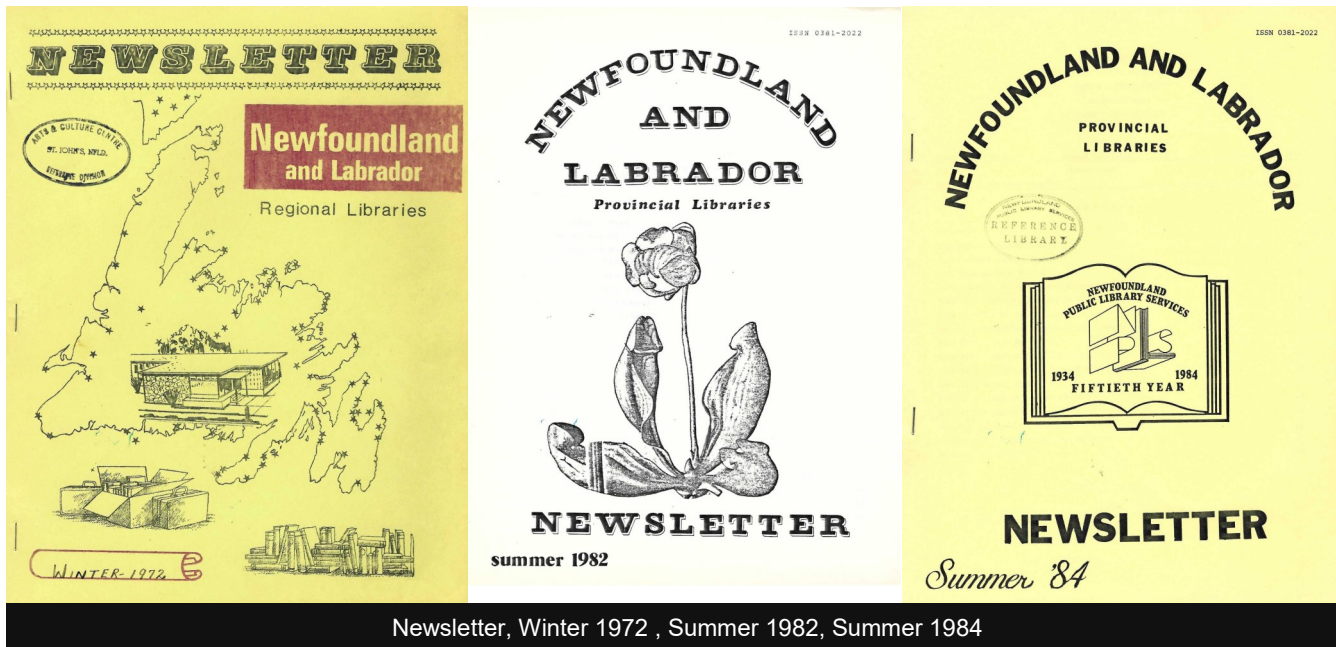


Newsletter, Autumn 1964



Summer 1971 Newsletter Gosling Announcement

The cover used for much of the seventies for the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Libraries Newsletter is one with stars where all of the libraries of the time were located. This cover was a staple until the eighties when there was a different cover for every issue— many of them hand drawn or matching the theme of the issue.



Newsletter, Winter 1972 , Summer 1982, Summer 1984

Also highlighted in the eighties were some retro bookmarks, which are both great fun, and a reminder that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Multiple issues in this decade shared bookmarks as well as other fun materials for in-library use. I'm already tempted to print some off on card stock for use in the library!



The nineties started with the Newsletter called Library Footnotes and later called the PPLB Newsletter, and they were short and inconsistently released. The 1994 issue has a piece on the introduction of an Automated Book Ordering system developed by David Penney from the Business Office and successfully implemented in April of that year. The piece reads that *“the new system has eliminated the filing of paper records and manual computations, and has considerably shortened the time frame for the whole order process.”*

Insights as a name appears in 2002, and continues to this issue.

The 2005 issue has a small but important item about a change of name for our organization that reads:

“Over the past several years there have been complaints about the length of the name of our organization. It is also confusing when one refers to the organization as the PILRB and the Provincial Board as the PILRB. At the fall Provincial Board Meeting, a motion was tabled to change the operation name of the organization to the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries (NLPL).. The motion was passed by the board. Effective immediately, we can use the new operational name when making reference to our organization but our official name will remain the same because it is legislated in the Public Libraries Act. The PILRB will now be used to refer to the Provincial Board which is the administrative body of the organization. Our next goal is to design a new logo to accompany the name”

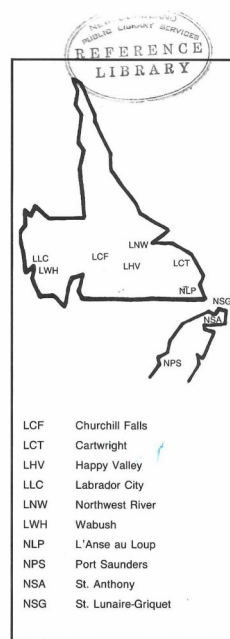
Our institutional memory is captured in these pages so well, and it is a gift that we can still look back and find these issues in the basement of the A.C. Hunter Public Library.

In 1984 we celebrated the Public Libraries 50th Anniversary. The Summer 1984 cover reflects that momentous occasion and the Newsletter includes multiple pieces dedicated to telling libraries about the upcoming celebrations. Included in this is the following paragraph that tells us that the issues facing libraries don't always change as much as we might think!

“So while we may be disheartened by poor funding which doesn't enable us to keep service at the level it was five years ago, we should be thankful to all those who made a start in providing public library service to the province. Let's hope that the planning, preparation and work that we do today will enable those preparing centennial celebrations to be thankful for us.”

With the centennial anniversary less than ten years away, this is poignant to look back on now. Thankful for the work they did we are, and shall remain!

A big thank you to the Newfoundland and Labrador collection staff at the A.C. Hunter Library for helping access these old newsletters. Thank you all for looking back on our Newsletter with me, and if you are interested in seeing any of the scans included in this issue, please email elblackmore@nlpl.ca.



MEET OUR NORTHERN FRIENDS



Back row (Left to Right)
Linda Mitchellmore (Regional Office), Trudy Andrews (LLC), Ethel Foley (LLC), Hyra Skoglund (LHV), Sandy Chilcote (Regional Librarian), Betty Gould (NPS), Phyllis O'Brien (NLP), Ann Murphy (LCF), Bernice Smith (NSA)
Front Row (Left to Right)
JoAnne Swain (LNW), Patsy Hollett (Regional Office), Mae Bussey (NSG), Patricia Hayward (Principal in Rigolet, Guest Speaker), Alfrede Harkins (LWH)

Newsletter, Spring 1991

NL Reads and Love Our Local Authors Month

Rachel Head, Newfoundland and Labrador Collections and Services Librarian

Love Our Local Authors (LOLA) is a celebration of Newfoundland Labrador books, authors, and readers! April is LOLA Month, when we especially recognize the many talented storytellers of Newfoundland and Labrador. All month long we will be celebrating LOLA at NLPL branches throughout the province, culminating with the announcement of our NLPL 2026 Must-Read Book of the Year.

Alphabetically, the top ten highest circulating NL books for 2026 are:

Blinders by Ida Linehan Young

The Crane by Monica Kidd

Friends are Forever: A Sgt. Windflower Mystery by Mike Martin

The Girls of Belvedere by Michelle Clemens

Just Around the Corner: A Memoir by Yvonne Rumbolt-Jones

The Lucky Seven: The Story of the Elite Navigator by Gary Collins

Murder of Painted Place: A Novel by Emily Hepditch

Openly Karl: A Memoir by Karl Wells

The Weather Diviner: A Novel by Elizabeth Murphy

We Will Meet Again by Helen C. Escott



Dublin Literary Award 2025

Rachel Head, Newfoundland and Labrador Collections and Services Librarian

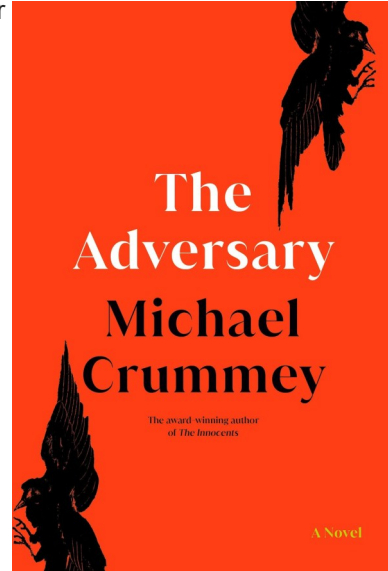
On May 22nd, 2025, The Dublin Literary Award announced that the winner of that year's prize was Newfoundland and Labrador author Michael Crummey's *The Adversary*.

The Dublin Literary Award is presented annually to promote excellence in world literature and 2025 was its 30th year. Nominated by Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries, *The Adversary* was chosen from a shortlist of six novels by writers from Argentina, Ireland, The Netherlands and the United States. The longlist of 71 titles was nominated by 83 libraries from 34 countries.

Winner Michael Crummey commented that "I am absolutely overjoyed to have received this news. It was an honour to be included on the shortlist with so many exceptional writers. To have won the Dublin Literary Award leaves me thrilled and deeply, deeply grateful. It's something I will carry with me always."

Two Canadians have won the prize since its 1996 inception: Alistair MacLeod in 2001 for *No Great Mischief*, and Rawi Hage in 2008 for *De Niro's Game*. Crummey is the first Newfoundland author to win this award.

To select this novel for nomination we took our top ten circulating books and staff participated in a survey to choose the winner and give their own opinions. Thank you to everyone to participated, and congratulations to Michael Crummey.



TD Summer Reading Club 2026 Theme

Emily Blackmore, Children and Youth Collections and Services Librarian

The 2026 theme is Dive In! Set sail on an adventure across all kinds of waterways—ponds, lakes, rivers and vast oceans. Dip your toes into the cool, refreshing and precious water, and be on the lookout for a message in a bottle. But beware! You don't want to fall under a siren's enchantment or stumble into the kraken's trap!

Imagine daring pirate battles, narwhal "tusking" rituals and the mesmerizing, synchronized dance of a school of fish. Slip on your wetsuit and discover hidden treasures—glimmering pearls, long-lost shipwrecks and secrets of the deep. Venture into the inky depths where bioluminescent fish and jellyfish drift silently. Play hide-and-seek among anemones, swaying seaweed and vibrant coral reefs. Catch a glimpse of playful and curious otters fishing in rivers, swim in crystal-clear lakes surrounded by forests and mountains, and cross marshy wetlands teeming with newts, turtles, geese and other wildlife.

As the sun sets on the horizon, casting a golden glow over your sandcastle, take a moment to appreciate the water that sustains all life. Let's protect our blue planet and cherish its wonders!

I know we will have a lot of fun with this theme this summer so let's get ready to get our summer read on!



Black History Month Story Time

Lori Luff, Library Technician III, Harmsworth Public Library

For the second year in a row Harmsworth Public Library has been pleased to host a Black History Month Story Time during the month of February. Library Supervisor, Lori Luff, worked with members of the Grand Falls-Windsor Black Community to present a celebration of diversity and inclusion and to honour Black brilliance across generations in line with this year's theme. The story time took place during a regularly scheduled program with an attendance of about 50 people including caregivers and children. This session is predominantly toddlers so the program included plenty of singing and rhymes. Guest readers, Samantha Mudzengi and Erica Smith got through two selections before the usual chaos ensued! Then it was time for Johnny Selemani to take over with scarf songs and interactive rhymes. A special part of this event was feedback from guests who expressed gratitude in being involved in the planning of the event such as selecting the books they chose to read; *I am Enough* by Grace Byers & *Bright Eyes, Brown Skin* by Cheryl Willis Hudson. Harmsworth staff look forward to fostering this community connection to sustain this celebration as an annual event to take place every February. Thank you to staff at Harmsworth and our guest readers for their collaborative efforts in the spirit of community building.



Celebrating Black History Month at Harmsworth Public Library

Supporting New Canadians

Renee Harris, Library Technician I, Buchans Public Library

Buchans, deep in the heart of Central Newfoundland, has seen an influx of new residents whose first language is not English and staff at the library there have gone above and beyond to create a welcoming environment for these new community members. Malayalam, spoken in the state of Kerala India, does not feature prominently in the NLPL catalogue so when resources were needed library staff reached out to Central Regional Librarian, Nancy Barker. Nancy then enlisted the help of Children's Librarian Emily Blackmore. And between all parties Renee now has access to a library pamphlet in Malayalam and programming ideas for the library in Buchans! This wonderful chain of assistance also included a contact in the Malayalam speaking community in St. John's who graciously offered to connect with folks in Buchans. In that, a special thank you is extended to Jan Moffett, Branch Supervisor at the AC Hunter Children's Library. This small request out of Central spanned across the NLPL system and is a demonstration of the lengths staff are willing to go to in order to enhance community wellness and inclusion. It also helped identify a gap in services so that we can better serve our patrons. Thank you to everyone involved.

Teddy Bear Sleepover

Nagille Walsh-Besso, Library Technician I, Lewisporte Public Library

Programming staff at Lewisporte hosted a 'Teddy Bear Sleepover' at the library and it was 'beary' successful! The program was easy to implement with little additional cost to the library or library board. A total of 5 children and 4 adults attended the first part of the program which was when the stuffies were brought to the library for their 'bedtime'. During this part of the program each child participant made a nametag for their stuffy and everyone did a teddy bear themed craft. Everyone enjoyed a read aloud story and the animals got tucked into bed! Through the 'overnight' staff posted pictures on the library Facebook page that featured what the stuffed toys got up to during their stay at the library. During the following morning each animal sat at the circulation desk with library staff to watch their work and learn all about working in a library! The animals stayed with library staff at the circulation desk until they were picked up by their owners.

The program was not restricted to specific age, although all participants were between the ages of 4 and 9 years old and the craft was designed for ages 5 -10 years. The event garnered great attention on social media and staff commented they would host the program again in the future. The sleepover was adapted through work done by staff in previous museum work experience, and an invitation from the Town of Lewisporte to participate in their Winter carnival was the inspiration to give this program a try. Thank you Lewisporte library staff for taking initiative to implement this low-cost high entertainment programming.



Conception Bay North Wildfire Response

Sarah Bartlett, Eastern Division Regional Librarian

The summer of 2025 will be remembered in a blaze of heat and ash by those on the northeast Avalon. As flames spread in communities throughout the peninsula, thousands of people were evacuated from their homes while firefighting crews tirelessly tried to limit the damage.

For many, this meant a disruption of routines, staying with friends and family, and trying to bide their time whilst they waited for news.

Libraries in areas with active wildfires, including Conception Bay North and other affected areas, extended hours of operation to support those under evacuation orders. Wynda and Anthony Barton, of Carbonear, relied on libraries during this period of uncertainty.

“When you’re thrown out of your house by the government”, says Barton, “you go to the library, you walk around the pond, and you read a lot of books.”

For Susan King, the library in Carbonear was a lifeline.

“We lost our house, we lost our car... we lost our MCP cards, everything; so we were very thankful that the library was there,” she says of that time. King notes that because she and her husband didn’t have a cell phone or computer, the library enabled them to apply for government IDs and access essential services they would otherwise do easily from home.

The library offered the couple a reprieve from the anxiety of worrying about their home, visiting the library “every day just to get a break from everything... it was peaceful.”

The Carbonear library offered extended hours through July and August to better serve those affected by wildfires. With Carbonear Academy acting as an emergency shelter, extended library services allowed people to access free wi-fi and public computers, grab a bottle of water, and try to retain a sense of normalcy.

Local librarian Tracey Vaughan-Evans says many people expressed gratitude to have a safe space in the library. “For weeks, when the internet was not back down the shore, there would be several people in for hours each day, working on their laptops.” Tracey supported many displaced community members with application forms for aid, including from the Red Cross, Provincial Wildfire Relief funds, and insurance forms.

In times of crisis, libraries across the country often step in to provide support. This can include extending operating hours during natural disaster like wildfires or floods or acting as warming centres during severe cold. This past summer, NLPL branches with extended operations to continue providing free wi-fi and public computer access, support applying for government services and programs, and helped provide an escape for those whose lives were upended.

For Anthony and Wynda Barton, the public library system offered a lifeline in a time of tremendous stress: “the library saved our lives.”

Launchpad by Playaway Digital Educator Kits

Chantel Gale, Early Literacy Training Administrator

One of NLPL's newest initiatives, the Digital Educator Kits, have been designed exclusively for educators working with children aged 7 and under. These unique kits are intended for classroom use and include the following:

Five Launchpad Tablets, a fact sheet containing information about screen time usage, 3 charging cords and plugs, which all comes packed in a zippered NLPL tote bag.

The Launchpad Tablet by Playaway is a pre-loaded learning tablets that is completely secure, easy to use and packed with fun educational apps. The best part is, No WIFI needed! Simply turn on to provide an additional resource for enhancing children's learning experiences!

Patrons holding an educator library card can borrow a Digital Educator Kit at the following NL Public Libraries:

Carbonear, Clarenville, Conception Bay South, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor- Harmsworth, Happy Valley- Goose Bay- Melville, Mount Pearl- Ross King Memorial, Port Aux Basque, St. Anthony, St. John's- AC Hunter, St. John's- Marjorie Mews, St. John's – Michael Donovan, St. Lawrence, Stephenville, Torbay, Whitbourne.



Corner Brook Public Library is a Dementia-Friendly Space

Natasha Wells, Western Division Manager

Supported by the Alzheimer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Corner Brook Public Library recently announced their recognition as a Dementia-Friendly Community Space. Dementia-friendly spaces ensure those living with dementia can continue to live independently by creating inclusive, supportive spaces. Some of the updates made in the library include: high-contrast, wayfinding signage using recognizable symbols; quiet areas with less distractions to hold private discussions; and, space free of clutter. The library also offers dementia-friendly games, books, and activities available for checkout, all of which are supported by a grant from the Dementia Friendly Communities Working Group. Memory Care Kits are also available for check out. The kits are designed to spark memories, encourage conversation, and support meaningful time between people living with dementia and their care partners. Additionally, the library staff completed Dementia-Friendly Training through the Alzheimer Society NL. Staff look forward to making additional updates throughout the library. Their goal is to continually provide a welcoming, supportive, and accessible environment for all. For more information you can view [this video](#) available on Rogers TV Community News.

Murder Mystery Night at St. Lawrence Public Library

Emma Curtis, Library Technician I, St. Lawrence Public Library

The St. Lawrence Public Library has hosted two murder mystery nights and, due to popular demand, we are preparing for our third. This fun-filled event was brought to our attention by a board member who grew up with her parents hosting murder mystery evenings for family and friends. Our librarian was able to find free online murder mystery scripts, and we are presently working on one that is specific to our Newfoundland and Labrador culture. To participate in the murder mystery, each person registered is given detailed background information about their assigned character, as well as an overview of the crime committed. The goal is for the players to take on the identity of their assigned characters by dressing and acting as that person. They develop spontaneous dialogue and offer clues based on the information they have, and players attempt to solve the murder. Patrons are invited to watch, and find the antics and performances of the players very entertaining! They also get an opportunity to put their detective skills to the test by declaring who they think is guilty of the murder. Midway through the evening everyone takes a break for a cup of coffee and a snack, then it's back to figuring out who done it!



Bonavista Public Library Celebrates 80 Years of Community Service

Samantha Rolls, Library Technician I, Bonavista Public Library

The Bonavista Memorial Public Library first opened its doors on March 17, 1945, in the surgery of Dr. C.A. Forbes. Eight decades later, the library marked its 80th anniversary with a celebratory open house on March 22, 2025, in its current building. The celebration featured a lovely storytime for children, where they enjoyed a song, a story about a library, and a bookworm craft activity.

In the spirit of community and creativity, together, the library and local library board held a friendly competition involving both schools in the town. Elementary students took part by designing potential mascots for the library. The winning mascot was created by Grade 4 student Jordan Dalton. Meanwhile, high school students submitted poster designs celebrating 80 years of the library, with Grade 12 student Jada Mouland taking 1st place.

A special moment during the celebration was the ceremonial cake cutting, performed by mother and daughter Brenda Wilton and Samantha Rolls —librarian and substitute, respectively, two of three generations of women who have worked at the Bonavista Public Library. The open house drew many visitors from the community, including members of the local library board, and Bonavista's Mayor John Norman, making the event a true celebration of the library's legacy and its continued impact.



THANK YOU

For 74 years *Insights* has been the product of editors, contributors and proofreaders throughout our system. It would be impossible to name each of the individuals involved in all of the issues so let this be a blanket-thank you to everyone who has helped make *Insights* such a success!

Thank you all.

Typically, this spot is where we would include instructions on how to submit stories for upcoming issues. However, we are still in the process of finalizing exactly how we will be sharing this type of content in the future.

Instructions are forthcoming, but if you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to reach out to Fred Whitmarsh at fwhitmarsh@nlpl.ca



Newfoundland & Labrador
Public Libraries