



OSNGUPL Presentation 2023
Presentation to Georgian Bluffs Council
By Tim Nicholls Harrison, Chief Librarian / CEO
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Your Worship, Councillors, Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity today to visit Council and share information about the Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library. Congratulations to Council members on your recent election. Your service to our community is commended. This presentation includes a short history of the library, an overview of the governance, the 2023 proposed budget and a summary of the services and resources that we offer.

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While I can in this presentation, talk about the library, we often think of it as just the building, but it is more than a building. More and more, we are challenged to look at how your citizens can access the library services throughout our delivery area.

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The library is a community hub that strives to provide the best services and resources to local residents throughout the ages and stages of their lives.

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Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish immigrant boy who went on to make a fortune in the steel industry, donated over fifty million dollars worldwide for the construction of free public libraries. Of the 2,500 public library buildings erected with Carnegie funds, 111 of them were in Ontario. He famously said, "In a public library men could at least share cultural opportunities on a basis of equality." We use language now that is more inclusive, but the concept remains that the library must be available for our entire community. Free libraries for everyone is the key provision of the Public Libraries Act. Equity and access are fundamental to library service delivery. Today, one of the biggest challenges for libraries is helping to ensure that information technology is available for everyone. Libraries work relentlessly to minimize the digital divide in our communities.

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Sharing is the starting place of libraries. We are a co-operative made better by the participation of all of the members of our community. Recently, you helped us share this message on social media, reminding everyone of the resources available to them at the library.

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One of the highlights of 2022 was the launch of the Open Card with our partners: the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Billy Bishop Museum, and the Marine and Rail Waterfront Museum. The new Open Card provides the holder access to all of the resources they know and love from the Library, but also free membership to our amazing cultural institutions. We understand that we are serving the same people and that we can deliver better programming and services by working together. As an additional benefit, through the TOM's affiliation with the Ontario Association of Art Galleries, the cardholder will also gain free admission to over 100 Ontario art galleries.

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How and when did our local library start? One hundred and sixty-seven years ago, before Owen Sound was a city, before Owen Sound was named Owen Sound. The roots of our library are in the Mechanics Institute movement which was established to provide adult education including access to lending libraries to working men. The Mechanics' Institute library and its reading room was first located in a one-storey building on 8th Street East between Second and Third Avenues, then in the Market Building, and later in the old City Hall. With the advent of the free library movement, many Mechanics Institutes became public libraries.

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Owen Sound was granted Carnegie Foundation funds to build a public library in 1904, but City Council debate over local support delayed the beginning of its construction until 1912. A by-law introducing free library service and creating the Owen Sound Public Library was finally approved in 1911. The library was officially opened on February 3, 1914. On that date, the headline in The Owen Sound Sun announced "NEW LIBRARY OPEN TO-DAY: Opening of Carnegie Public Library This Afternoon Marks Era in History of Owen Sound". The article noted that "Today, the town comes formally into possession of its \$26,000 library without a dollar of expenditure, but from today the town is bound, under the agreement with the Carnegie Trust, to maintain it."

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After a decade-long campaign, the Library Board was successful in persuading City Council of the necessity of renovating the Carnegie building and constructing a 15,000-square-foot addition. This major construction and renovation project began in 1971 and eventually completed in the fall of 1973. In the end, the total project cost just over half a million dollars. The formal opening of the new 22,500-square-foot Owen Sound Public Library was held on October 22 1973.

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In the spring of 2003, the “great hall” was sensitively restored to its original grandeur, with design work by G.M. Diemert, Architect. This \$130,000 restoration and renovation project was successfully undertaken by Dwight Burley Construction. The walls and ceiling were painted in several shades of Georgian Bay blue and sand; these classic colours, along with new light fixtures, highlight the grid of original plaster ribbing and decorative medallions on the room’s tall, gently vaulted ceiling and upper walls. The provincial Heritage Community Recognition Program, in 2004, commended the Library Board for the careful restoration of Owen Sound’s Carnegie Public Library. We understand that our library boasts the last vaulted ceiling left in a Carnegie building that is still a functioning library. Some visitors from across North America journey to see our Carnegie library.

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With few changes having been made over the years since the 1973 expansion, in 2009 the Children & Youth Services Department, located on the upper level, underwent an extensive cosmetic renovation. The project, entitled “*Library Makeover: Kids’ Edition*” set out to create a revitalized space that would be more welcoming for young people and caregivers.

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Ten years later in 2019, we completed our “*Main Floor Refresh*” which included new flooring, fresh paint and the installation of new circulation and information service points. We were honoured that internationally renowned wood artist Stephen Hogbin, designed and created our beautiful main floor desks.

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The functional art installation was a legacy project for Stephen. He sourced 29 varieties of wood that can be found in this area to create the variations in the top of the desks. The painted fronts represent, earth, air, water and fire. The speaker’s podium includes all 29 of the woods, in alphabetical order.

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The past few years have been challenging for everyone as we navigated living and working through a pandemic. The recent library annual reports have documented how we adapted and delivered services to our community during this time. Whether it was supporting the public by assisting with the printing and laminating of over 3,000 vaccination receipts, pivoting to delivering online workshops via zoom, offering curbside services or implementing new health and safety protocols including masks and quarantining books, library staff worked diligently to provide exemplary customer service to our community.

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Our library has always provided services to people living beyond the boundaries of Owen Sound. In the late 1980s, the municipalities involved began to discuss a more equitable cost-sharing arrangement. The Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library was born in 1994.

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"Union" is a specific designation in the Ontario Libraries Act which means that the library is formed through the active co-operation of more than one municipality. Serving the municipalities of Chatsworth, Georgian Bluffs and Owen Sound, our library is the largest "union" library in Ontario by service area and population. For over 25 years, we have been fortunate to be able to demonstrate the commitment of our local municipalities to work together to ensure library services for their citizens. In December of 2021, all three municipal partners approved a new Union Library Agreement for 2022 through 2031.

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The Board, according to the Public Libraries Act and the Union Library Agreement, is comprised of both council members and members of the public appointed by the councils. Membership is available to residents of Chatsworth, Georgian Bluffs and Owen Sound. Residents of the Municipality of Meaford, based on a current service agreement with the Meaford Public Library, can obtain a membership with proof of a current Meaford Public Library membership. We thank Councilor Ryan Thompson and Georgian Bluffs community representative Rosemary Buchanan for their commitment, wisdom and service to the library during the last term.

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The operating costs are calculated using a percentage formula based on historic membership use. The City of Owen Sound is responsible for the capital costs associated with the Library because the city owns the building. If we offered services in Chatsworth or Georgian Bluffs, it is expected that the partner municipality would cover those capital related costs.

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The 2023 proposed library budget is approximately \$1,9000,000. This municipal cost is 3.88% higher than 2022. This percentage is approved by the Union Library Agreement. The proposed amount for the municipality of Georgian Bluffs is \$383,939.62.

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The nature of the Union Library Agreement does create funding challenges for the library. The municipal contribution per household calculation is one of the lowest in Ontario for libraries our size. We have approximately the same number of library staff as we had in 1972. When compared with other libraries serving populations of 30,000 – 50,000 people, we are understaffed.

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The Library is focussed on delivering the best services possible. We try to quantify our services and analyze the numbers so that we can make improvements in service delivery and efficiencies. We complete a mandated annual service analysis for the Provincial government. We have a monthly Library Service Index that is used as a performance measure. It is shared with the Board. The following charts provide a snap shot of some of these metrics. The final data point is information for the ten months through to the end of October 2022. As you can see, we faced real challenges during the pandemic, but the numbers are improving. Memberships are annual.

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Visits to the library. Some members come daily, some weekly, some monthly and some less regularly. The borrowing period is 3 weeks for everything except DVDs which are loaned for 1 week.

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This count also incorporated materials used in the library by the public.

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We offer many programs for all ages to the public. There is a comprehensive list in our annual report. Current programs can be found on our website event calendar and in our newsletter.

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Reference questions are a significant part of the job at the Information Desk. Whether it is reader's advisory, quick fact, deeper research or help with technology, the public is able to access our services in person, by phone, via email and social media.

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Wifi is available throughout the building for the public. There is strong demand for this service.

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While use of our public computers is still important for many local citizens, the popularity of smart phones and tablets has diminished the overall use of our public computers. We also loan Chromebooks and Amazon Fire tablets.

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We returned to public use of the auditorium and boardroom in September. We anticipate that we will be back to historic use patterns in 2023.

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The Library Service Index helps us quantify both the business and “busyness” of the library. We strive to provide the best service possible to all of our patrons from the “power user” to the one-time visitor from afar.

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We have a talented and dedicated team at the Library. The numbers represent the Full-time equivalent staffing in each department. As an educational institution, we have made a strong commitment to ensuring that our staff receive the training and support that they need to best deal with the difficult and complex situations that they encounter daily. I extend special thanks to all staff for the hard work, willingness to take on new challenges and commitment to delivering exemplary customer service.

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Since 1983, the library has delivered adult upgrading services to our community. These services are not funded through the municipal taxation. The Library receives over \$800,000 annually from the Province of Ontario to deliver Adult Learning Services throughout Grey / Bruce and the Georgian Triangle. Eight staff are employed at the Adult Learning Centres in Owen Sound, Collingwood, Walkerton, Port Elgin and Wiarton. We receive an additional \$70,000 from the County of Grey for our Early Literacy Facilitator, a specialist supporting services and families throughout Grey County.

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The Adult Learning Centres have worked to build innovative partnerships with other literacy and basic skills programs, educational institutions and other community services and organizations. The Centres have been leader in recognizing the resource challenges of many adult students seeking upgrading and working proactively with other community groups to lessen these barriers to learning. Staff of the Adult Learning Centres have contributed significantly to the fostering of anti-poverty initiatives within our region.

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The Owen Sound Poet Laureate is a program of the Library. Never supported by tax-based funding, the existence of the poet laureate program depends entirely on donations from community members who see the benefit of having a local advocate for the literary arts. The poet laureate writes poetry about the area, composes poems for special events, participates in public performances, works with local poets and writers, and acts as a literary ambassador for the city and the region.

The work of the poet laureate culminates with the creation of a legacy project which is a unique and lasting contribution to the community. The poet laureate's honorarium and other expenses for the current term are covered by donations from David Madill, CFP of BMO Nesbitt Burns, John Tamming of Tamming Law, and Andrew Armitage, former Library CEO.

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Words Aloud has been overseen by the Library since the 2019 festival. Like the Poet Laureate Program, the Words Aloud Program is fully funded by community supporters and grants. On hiatus during the pandemic, plans are underway for 2023 programming.

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Many library programs are supported by outside funding. Our Adopt A Magazine program is one example. Over 45% of the magazines available to the public are funded by local citizens, organizations and businesses.

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We receive donations for our Honour with Books program. A few library patrons also provide additional support through legacy donations.

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Donations can be made to support the **Ioleen Hawken Local History Collection**. We purchase non-fiction books containing information about Grey or Bruce County, in memory of Ioleen Hawken, Chief Librarian, 1951-1973.

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Donations can be made to the **Andrew Armitage Grey Bruce Authors Collection**. We purchase books written by authors living or who have lived in Grey and Bruce Counties, in memory of Andrew Armitage, Chief Librarian 1973-2000.

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The Library as an organization understands the role and importance of libraries in ensuring that the people in our community have access to information for their educational, employment and entertainment needs. We make this commitment knowing that data and information, has for many years, moved beyond the “book” to encompass many audio and digital technologies. Libraries have always been early adopters of technology, in part, because we have needed to manage significant amounts of data within our organizations as a role in purpose itself – collecting and cataloguing materials for the public.

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There are many ways that we help the public access the materials that they are seeking.

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We have an OSNGUPL app at the Apple and Google app stores. The app, for smart phones and tablets, helps library patrons to sign out materials, manage their account, access eBooks and eAudio through Libby, access Mango Languages, PressReader and LinkedIn Learning and access our social media.

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It's time to update your browser bookmarks to the Library's new website at <https://www.library.osngupl.ca>. The Library worked with a small web design firm, and utilized in-house staff to build a brand new site. Feedback from library staff and the general public was collected throughout the process to determine how the community used the Library's website and what features they most wanted to see added or kept. Usability scores collected from the old website and from a soft launch of the new site demonstrated a marked improvement.

This website is our newest branch, open 24/7. It features an event calendar, easy to navigate menu, streamlined pages, and easy to locate information on open hours and location. This project is just one of the ways that we are evolving to serve the community. With more online resources and great new programs, there's always something to check out at the Library.

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Last year, we transitioned to our new online catalog which is designed for enhanced user engagement and satisfaction. We are members of the Ontario Library Consortium, a group of libraries representing approximately 10% of the population of Ontario. We work together as a consortium to share resources and ensure that we are getting the best price possible for the infrastructure that we need to support library delivery in our communities.

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This slide shows a catalog view that highlights our specific collections.

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Back on our webpage, you can navigate the website by selecting from the tabs and pull-down menus. Let's check out our online resources.

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You can scroll over each of the logo images and learn about the specific eResource available through the library.

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Library members can read over 7,000 newspapers and magazines from around the world. Google translate is built into the app for many languages. Most newspapers and magazines including the Toronto Star, The Toronto Sun and the Owen Sound Sun Times are accessible from anywhere. A few others including the Globe and Mail need to be accessed from the Library.

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Libby provides access to over 100,000 eBooks and eAudiobooks and over 4,000 magazines.

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Through LinkedIn Learning, formerly Lynda.com, library members can access over 15,000 online courses (most video and audio, some audio only) on a huge variety of topics including business, self-improvement, professional development, health, education and and creative interests.

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Mango provides language instruction, pronunciation aids and support for learning over 70 languages.

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Novelist is a reader's advisory service that includes author and book suggestions, read-alikes, reviews and themed lists.

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Ancestry Library Edition is one of the few resources that we offer that needs to be accessed at the library on one of our computers or through or public wifi.

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Kanopy is a service that we have just started offering. Library members receive 7 credits each month to access this movie and television streaming service.

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There is a huge Kids Kanopy section that is always available. No credits are required.

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Great Courses Series is an additional part of Kanopy that is available to our library patrons. Currently there is no limit to the content accessed.

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As mentioned on the “Black Friday” slide earlier, the Library offers much more than just books. This “Library of Things” is part of the services available in libraries across North America.

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We encourage our members to manage their borrowing by placing holds on items. It helps us understand the demand locally for the resource. If you place holds, we will notify you when the resource is available and collect it and get it ready for you to pick up / sign out.

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But wait... there’s more. The library offers hundreds of programs and services every year.

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We are actively trying to support healthy community initiatives. We understand we have a role to play in building resources and supports to help our local citizens navigate their world.

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We know that people want to find ways to make things simpler and easy for them to communicate with others.

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Our goal is to “keeping information at your fingertips”.

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Lastly, we would like to thank you for supporting local library service as a Council and as library patrons. We strive to provide quality twenty-first century services to you. Please let us know how we can better serve your information, education and entertainment needs. Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support!

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Happy to answer any questions.