

## **Executive Summary**

### **Report of the Friends' Task Force**

Thank you once again for making room on your agenda for all of today's presenters. I find myself before you today with the honour of delivering to your board the executive summary of the Report of the Friends' Task Force.

The entirety of the report was delivered to you on Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 2004. In the interest of brevity, I will present publicly only the key recommendations from that report. The following suggestions fall into three categories: short term solutions, long term solutions and governance. They are as follows:

- We recommend that the Library Board reverse its decision of November 26<sup>th</sup> 2003 to close the Connaught, Glen Elm and Prince of Wales branches as well as the Dunlop Art Gallery and the Prairie History Room.
- We recommend that the Library Board initiate a series of broad public consultations over the next year and a half to enable the public to consider and comment on the proposed model put forward by the Library Task Force along with other models, including the current hybrid model.
- We recommend that the Board adopt measures to increase and stabilize revenue available to the Board, effect economies in the operation of the libraries and submit a request this year that City Council approve a mill rate increase sufficient to cover the balance needed to prevent the closures. The measures are described as follows:

We believe that City Council is now aware of the urgency of the Library's situation and of Regina citizens' tremendous support for the Library. Therefore, we recommend that the Library Board apply to City Council for assistance in enhancing and stabilizing the Library's revenues and costs by adopting a different model of funding whereby the library is funded on the basis of the amount of taxes assessed rather than the amount of taxes collected after appeals and payments in a particular year. As well, we recommend that the City allow the library a portion of the funds generated for the City from back lane, sewer and water fees.

- We recommend a short term reduction in acquisition spending from \$9.00 per capita to \$7.00 per capita in year one, which will net an approximate savings of \$375,000.00, followed by a \$1.00 per capita reduction in year two.
- We recommend that the Library seek the means appropriate for its continued functioning, therefore requesting a mill rate increase of 5% which will amount to additional funds of \$525,000 for this year.
- We wholly endorse the recommendation from the Library Task Force that a mill rate increase .5% above CPI should be requested for the future so that the library is secure.

- We recommend that the Library and City develop a strategy of cooperation by applying for infrastructure funds from the federal and provincial government. The library must apply to all levels of government to access any funds that might be available. As well, we recommend that the Library apply for all heritage grants that it is eligible for.
- Further to the strategy of cooperation mentioned above, we recommend that the City value and include the Library's contribution as a developer of good citizens, especially when considering downtown and inner city revitalization programs.
- We recommend that the Regina Public Library promote itself more effectively and aggressively. Our library has many unique features such as the Film Theater, the Dunlop Art Gallery and art rental program and the Prairie History Room, not to mention incredible programming.
- We recommend that the Library increase communication between management, board and staff. Increasing staff involvement in budget processes and in identifying possible cost savings as well as possible revenue generating ideas should be encouraged as part of a regular process with serious consideration given to suggestions.
- We recommend that the Prairie History Room be kept intact and in the Library. Reference collections are quite common in libraries, and as such, we feel it is not outside the mandate of core services for a sophisticated library system. It is our understanding that, as a reference collection, the future physical growth of the collection is limited. We also submit the suggestion that requests for research done by staff by non-Saskatchewan residents be subject to a cost-recovery charge.
- We recommend that a long term rolling capital plan be drawn-up, including a detailed summary of the current condition of each branch and all foreseeable repairs and costs over the next ten years. This plan should be renewed yearly.
- Dialogue is lacking in the current method of public input with the board. Accordingly, we recommend that the library incorporate an alternative structure for and hold public consultations before it undertakes any steps to change the structure of the library system. These consultations should become part of the public record.
- The Detailed Strategic Plan 2001 - 2005, a well thought out and prudent document that was born of true public consultation and cooperation with staff and management was never acted upon. We recommend that the library incorporate the prongs of that plan, including but not limited to: an advisory board for the Dunlop Art Gallery as well as the formation of citizens' groups to assist in community input and fundraising.
- We recommend that the library promote its charitable status. The many citizens of Regina who do not directly pay property taxes could be given the opportunity to contribute to the library. The library could make use of the City's infrastructure to do a mass mail out by including a donation slip with the water bill. The library could use their creative community to help design this, possibly making it humorous. As well, there should be a donation box place at every

branch, advertising cost of services, or "Save your Library". Lastly, the city could include an extra tick box on property tax notices where the taxpayer can indicate if he or she wishes to voluntarily pay more for the library portion of their bill and how much.

- Currently, citizens cannot make contributions directly to the Dunlop or Prairie History Room. We recommend that a donation system be set up that allows for the public to donate funds specifically to the area of their choice. The library should extend its charitable number to include the Dunlop.
- We recommend that the financial documents of the Library be produced in a more understandable fashion. Some of the documents are very technical, and in other cases, comparisons are of apples to oranges. As an example, the chart labeled Activity Levels - Appendix L: Re-Structured RPL: 2004 is very misleading. The 2003 budget for the George Bothwell Branch does not include the cost of the lease or common fees. These are paid from capital reserves, and when included in the total makes the cost of Bothwell \$604,370 rather than \$381,370. Proper calculations can then be extrapolated from the correct figure. That is why it is important to present clear, understandable figures. Using the corrected figure, consider the following two calculations:

1. Circulation over budget:	George Bothwell	1.5
	Prince of Wales	1.3
	Sherwood	1.0
2. Circulation over square feet:	George Bothwell	29
	Connaught	31
	Prince of Wales	101

- We recommend that governance of the Dunlop should be transferred to the Friends of the Dunlop who will elect a board for the gallery to maintain the gallery mandate and communicate on a board to board level with the RPL board. As well, the Gallery must stay within the library if the library is to meet its own mandate of providing visual literacy. Both the library and the Dunlop benefit from their co-existence.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FRIENDS' TASK FORCE ON THE REGINA PUBLIC LIBRARY**

### **Establishment, Procedures, and Activities**

The Friends' Task Force was created by the Friends of the Regina Public Library (FRPL), which in December of 2003 invited applications for the Task Force from the general public, with the aim of finding a group of citizens who were broadly representative of the various communities directly affected by the Library Board's announced closures. The members of the Friends' Task Force were elected in a public meeting of the FRPL at the Unitarian Centre on February 1, 2004.

Since that time, the members of the Friends' Task Force have:

- attended all of the five public meetings of the Library Task Force chaired by Dean Garven, listened carefully to and made notes on all of the submissions made to it, and obtained copies of many of the submissions;

- held our own less formally structured meeting in the Core Ritchie Centre with citizens affected by the proposed closures in order to encourage discussion and the development of solutions that are both practical and creative;

- considered submissions received by mail and by email to the Friends' website, and actively solicited submissions from numerous individuals and groups, many of whom felt constrained, inhibited and intimidated by the overly formal requirements required by the Library Task Force;

- promoted public information and awareness of the issues surrounding the closures by setting up a panel discussion at the City Hall Forum that was taped and telecast by Access Communications. Panelists included Vanessa Thorson of the Friends of the RPL, Phil Jeffreys of the reference staff at the Central Library, Bill Henderson from Heritage Regina, and Councillor Fred Clipsham. They addressed themselves to finding "viable, sustainable alternatives" to the proposed closures, and they answered questions from the audience of over 100 people;

- reviewed the process the Board used in making its announcement on November 26, 2003 as well as the Board's rationale for the closure decision;

- discussed and debated a range of short and long-term proposals for "viable, sustainable alternatives to the closures"; and

- considered proposals regarding the governance of the Regina Public Library, the need for greater accountability from the Board, and for more effective and direct consultation by the Board with the citizens of Regina in the future.

The Friends' Task Force is well aware that we face a very tight deadline that cannot be extended. In order to present our recommendations to the Library Board at its meeting on Tuesday, March 30th, these recommendations must be submitted to the Library no later than noon on March 24th.

Unfortunately, the Friends Task Force did not have complete access to the Library's financial records and documents. As a result, the suggestions we make are specifically based on the information that was publicly accessible at the time. We hope that these recommendations will assist the Library Board in making its decisions regarding the proposed changes to the current library system.

The Friends' Task Force respectfully makes available the following summary of its recommendations to the Friends of the Regina Public Library, the Public Library Board, City Council, the 26,048 voters who signed the Friends' Petition, and all other citizens of Canada's Cultural Capital for 2004 who are concerned about the preservation and future of the best library system in the nation:

#### **PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1) That the Library Board reverse its decision of November 25, 2003 to close the Connaught, Glen Elm, and Prince of Wales branches as well as the Dunlop Art Gallery and the Prairie History Room.
- 2) That the Board adopt the measures suggested below in order to increase and stabilize the revenues available to the Board, effect economies in the operation of the libraries, and submit a request this year that City Council approve a mill rate increase sufficient to cover the balance needed to prevent the closures.
- 3) That City Council act in co-operation with the Library Board to sustain the current operations of the library system by:
  - a) granting the Library access to civic revenue funds in addition to the property tax,
  - b) assuming responsibility for some of the library's administrative functions.
  - c) approving library mill rate increases sufficient to cover the balance needed to prevent any closures until the next civic election in 2006.
- 4) That City Council request the Government of Saskatchewan to make changes in the Libraries Act to enable the Regina Public Library Board to be elected and to set its own mill rate independent of City Council, and to ensure that the Library Board is accountable to and required to consult with the public in the same manner as elected School Boards.
- 5) That the Library Board initiate a series of broad public consultations over the next year and a half to enable the public to consider and comment on the proposed model put forward by the Library Task Force along with other models.

## **Part One -- “Viable, Sustainable Options” to Closures**

### **I. Short term Solutions – to be acted upon immediately**

#### **A. Address the library’s financial situation and funding sources**

The Library is unfortunately placed in a precarious financial position due to the method in which it is funded through its reliance almost totally on the collected property tax. The Library Board must approach City Council to amend this fundamental funding strategy so that its resources are secure and less subject to the vagaries of the markets and large reductions in revenue due to loss of tax appeals. It is not reasonable to expect the Board to come up with an effective budget when is subject to such unexpected shifts in revenues as it appears to have experienced in the Fall of 2003.

We believe that City Council is now aware of the urgency of the Library’s situation and of Regina citizens’ tremendous support for the Library. We believe that the members of Council, as representatives of the electorate, want to assist the Library in ways that are within their capacity.

We recommend that the Library Board apply to City Council for assistance in enhancing and stabilizing the Library’s revenues and costs:

1. Adopt a model of funding in which the Library is funded on the basis of the amount of taxes assessed rather than the amount of taxes collected in a particular year. This will help to secure the funding to the library because it would avoid large reductions in revenues due to the loss of tax appeals over which the library has no control but which can affect the Library’s budget very significantly.
2. The City currently collects funds that are essentially taxes – on backlanes, sewer, water – but that are not part of the property tax system. Allow the library access to the funds generated for the City by these rate increases. (approximately %2.5 of these funds). Council’s attempts to freeze mill rate increases over the last decade or more have significantly reduced the pool from which the Library must draw its revenues.
3. The City should be asked to provide the following services to the Library free of charge. –
  - payroll
  - human resources assistance, (at the time of contract negotiations, instead of using high priced lawyers as lead negotiators), training for employees
  - legal services
  - website improvements and maintenance
4. The City currently charges the Library a commission for collecting the taxes. This fee may release the Library from administrative burdens which the City then takes over on the RPL’s behalf. This is our understanding, but the commission costs of \$216,000.00 and benefits to the library should still be investigated to confirm their benefit to the Library.

#### **B. Reduce current costs temporarily to reduce this year’s shortfall.**

5. **Incorporate a laddered reduction of acquisition spending from \$9 per capita to \$7 per capita for this year and to \$8 for next year.** This will produce a savings of \$375,000. (Figures based on Library documents for material acquisition costs and City of Regina population.)
6. **The real efficiency of outsourcing acquisitions must be revisited and a full cost accounting performed.** This should include costs of personnel, books, processing, cataloguing, and also consider the benefits to the community. Outsourcing was originally proposed as a cost saving measure, but it is unclear whether it has decreased or increased overall costs to acquisitions. In the RPL's 2003 budget presentation to Council, the board chair states that the RPL saves approximately \$25,000- \$43,000 per year by outsourcing. Our research suggests that this may be a savings from the real discounts through purchasing, or possibly the decrease in a staff position. We have other information however which suggests that errors, extra charges for outside processing, and problems with electronic record overlay create problems for the RPL and in the end actually increased processing and cataloguing costs from \$.90 per unit to \$2.40 per unit (an increase of 160%).
7. **Reduce use of consultants immediately.** Restrict the use of consultants to areas where in-house staff do not have the required knowledge/skills. (The consulting budget has risen 500% in the past year, from \$47,542 in 2002 to \$242,000 in 2003.)
8. It is not the Library's responsibility to be attentive to the needs of City Hall. The Library must seek the means that are appropriate for its continued functioning. Ask the City for a mill rate increase of 5%. This amounts to an increase of \$5 on the average property tax bill of \$2000. This will amount to \$525,000.
9. **Seek input from staff on ways to improve efficiency.**

## II. Long term solutions

1. As the report from the Library's Task Force suggests – a mill rate increase .5% above CPI should be requested for the future so that the library is secure.
2. The Library and the City must develop a strategy of cooperation. With the City's assistance, the Library can apply for infrastructure funds from the federal and provincial government. The Library must apply to all levels of government so that it can access whatever funds might be available.
3. Should the Library decide to move the Prince of Wales and/or Albert branches, they should approach the City for assistance with the physical move. This may be an area in which the City can defer potential costs to the Library and at the same time avoid impacts on the library mill rate.

4. The Library must apply for all heritage grants that it is eligible for.

In order to take advantage of #2 and #4, it will be necessary for library staff to become skilled at grant writing. The library should consider asking the assistance of Dunlop staff to become more versed and sophisticated in this field.

5. Consider debt as an option. The Library is obligated to keep its capital assets in sound condition. In order to access funds for the continued repairs required at Connaught, for the possible move or repair of Albert and Prince of Wales, the Library should consider taking out a loan to finance capital projects. Current interest rates are extremely low and with sound management this debt will allow for the repairs to be completed now rather than later when the situation will be exaggerated.

6. Review the pension plan. The library should look at the benefits of an eventual switch from a defined benefit to defined contributions. New employees could be given a new plan, and old employees are given the choice.

7. In order to retain more space for books and circulating materials at Central, **the administrative offices, technical services, executive offices and possibly maintenance should be moved out of the Central Branch** and into the Winnipeg warehouse (if suitable) or City-supplied vacant office space. The City should be approached to request this extra space which they may be able to provide at minimal or no cost.

8. As mentioned above, the City and the Library need to institute a new era of cooperation. The library is an extremely good developer of good citizens and its presence improves the nature of a neighbourhood tremendously. As the City grows, it must consider the Library's mandate, and allow for more funds to go to the Library accordingly. The Library is part of the City. If the City is planning downtown and inner city revitalization programs, it must consider and include the Library's contribution to that. It contradicts itself if it closes library branches while at the same time implementing such revitalization programs.

9. The Library must promote itself much more effectively. Many citizens do not know of the variety and calibre of Library programs on offer. The Library should promote itself aggressively. Its film theatre is the last cinema in the downtown and shows film of the highest caliber which are not on offer in the larger commercial theatres and which nourishes the burgeoning local film industry. The existence and uniqueness of the Prairie History Room is not widely known, the Dunlop Art Rental is not advertised beyond the sign in Central's main floor foyer. All of these services are evidence of the Library's commitment to the city's cultural health and should be championed and cared for. The library should advertise the few programs it offers that people pay for directly, as well as its many excellent free programs.

10. Increase communication between management, board and staff. Increasing staff involvement in budget processes and in identifying possible cost savings as well as possible revenue generating ideas should be encouraged as part of a regular process, with serious consideration given to suggestions. (from Susan Birley) As the people on the floor, the staff are the best positioned to advise the management of the appropriateness of opening and operating hours, use of services by the public, accessibility of resources etc. The staff must be consulted before changes are made and plans drafted and their input seriously considered and heeded. Past dismissal of staff input has led to the current situation at Glen Elm where one of the reasons cited for closure is the requirement to re-orient the building. Prior to construction, staff were “consulted” and they found and explained problems with the suggested design, but they were not heeded. If their input is not valued, they will be less willing to participate in any form of consultation.
11. The Prairie History Room Collection is in keeping with the Library’s mandate and roles. It is essentially a reference collection, and as such is quite common in libraries in general. Its status as non-circulating should not immediately make it inappropriate to be housed in the library. The library has **many holdings** outside of the PHR that also do not circulate but are integral to the library. The PHR collection should be kept together. As the provincial archives do not have room to house the collection, and the University is relatively inaccessible to the general public, the collection should stay within the RPL. The potential growth of the archives should be discussed with the local heritage group, as it is the understanding of this committee that the future physical growth of the collection is limited, and instead the growth is occurring in the acquiring of databases etc. There have been suggestions from the public that people from outside the province be charged a nominal fee for research done by staff on their behalf.
12. A long term capital plan must be drawn-up. This should a detailed summary of the current condition of each of the library branches and include all foreseeable capital repairs and costs over the next 10 years.
13. **Effective use of Human Resources.** The RPL demonstrates a history of moving in-scope staff to out-of-scope positions. The economic and work efficiency implications of this management strategy must be examined. A full review of staff positions needs to be undertaken. There are opportunities to share the staff across the system more effectively and make use of in-staff expertise.
13. **We recommend that the library complete repairs to the Connaught Branch mudjacking work that was done in the fall of 2003.** The Engineers report calls for grading and landscaping work to be completed in order to maximize the effect of the mudjacking.

## Part Two -- Accountability, Governance and Management

1. The RPL needs to implement a more accountable process for keeping track of the existing state of the library's capital assets – its infrastructure – and for planning proposed improvements. Each year, the library's budget presentation to city council should include:
  - a detailed description of each library branch's physical state
  - a detailed inventory of any necessary maintenance or upgrading required with cost estimates acquired through a tendering process of at least three quotes
  - a detailed summary of maintenance and capital upgrading carried out during the year with actual costs
  - a schedule for implementing the maintenance or upgrading necessary with an indication of costs, and sources of funding identified
  - a summary of capital costs for upgrading or new development needed that is outside the ability of the existing library's resources.(from Susan Birley)

2. **The library must hold public consultations before it undertakes any steps to change the current structure of the library system.** Dialogue is lacking in the current method of the public input with the RPL Board. As well, it only permits input of a particular form and in doing so limits the number and kinds of voices that are heard. **An alternative structure for public consultation must be instituted which allows for marginalized voices to be heard.**

These consultations should become part of the public record.

If any changes are considered for any of the branches, public consultation must take place a minimum of 6 months before the decision can be voted on by the Board. Subsequent to that, should the Board vote for the changes, a minimum period of 6 months must elapse before the changes are brought into effect. The province's Education Act requires school boards to follow such procedures when it proposes to close schools.

3. **Detailed Library documents must be accessible to the public** in a manner similar to the City of Regina's documents. This includes all minutes and all documents that the library board is privy to in making its decisions.
4. We strongly recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan amend *The Public Libraries Act, 1996*, to provide that the Regina Public Library Board be elected rather than appointed, and that it should have the power to set the library mill rate independent of the need for the approval of City Council. Elected members of the Board are more likely to be sensitive to the need and concerns of the community. Accordingly, we propose that there be a seven-member library board, elected on the basis of the same boundaries that are used for the election of members of the School Board, and that they be elected in accordance with the provisions of *The Local Government Elections Act*.

We also recommend that the elected Library Board be required to follow the same requirements for notice and direct public consultation prior to implementing a fundamental change affecting a branch (including closure) that school boards must follow to close a school.

In addition, we recommend that each branch library be supported by a Local Branch Library Advisory Committee, whose members are drawn from the community served by that branch, and that the elected Library Board be required to consult with the Local Branch Library Advisory Committee prior to making any decision that has a fundamental impact on that branch. A representative from each Committee shall be allowed to attend Library Board meetings and have a voice, though not a vote.

**In the interim, we recommend that City Council develop a specific application for appointment to the Library Board.** This should include questions such as:

- i. How do you use your library? What programs etc. are you familiar with?
- ii. Do you have knowledge of library systems (i.e. be a former librarian or working in another library system other than the public library, have an education in library sciences)?
- iii. Do you have knowledge of civic planning and community development – i.e. how do we keep communities healthy?
- iv. What other community/volunteer work have you or are you involved in?
- v. What is your level of knowledge regarding reading financial statements?

**5. We recommend that the Detailed Strategic Plan of 2001-2005 be implemented. The Vision Statement and Strategic plan for the Regina Public Library must be adhered to once approved.** This includes: the formation of citizens' groups to assist in community input – Friends of the RPL, and Friends of the Dunlop, fundraising, an advisory board for the Dunlop.

**6. We recommend that the Board engage an independent auditor who is intimately familiar with public libraries to conduct a thorough value-for-money audit of the Library's finances and management practices over the last few years.** The audit should include a broad social and economic cost-benefit analysis to the library and the community of such practices as the outsourcing of cataloging. Such an audit should also recommend ways of making more effective use of the library's human resources by determining, for example, whether duplication and inefficiencies have appeared as a result of the Library's practice of moving more and more staff into out of scope positions.

1. The financial documents of the Library are not easily understandable. For example, expenses are not always described within expected categories. i.e. in the 2004 Budget, "Schedule 5 Building Costs" lists rental facilities as \$152 000, but this is only the rent for Regent Place. The rent for Bothwell is not specifically listed in this document (though it is found in the past financial documents as being \$191 000 for 2004 plus in common fees of \$32 000 annually). This inflates the costs associated with Capital and skews subsequent analysis. This kind of bookkeeping makes it difficult to engage in any meaningful analysis of the figures.
2. The information presented in *Re-structured RPL 2004* uses the visual language of science, yet the process of data analysis is flawed. *The Re-structured RPL 2004* document

makes it look like the branches slated for closure have low usage and hence low efficiency. A closer examination of the figures shows that they are both efficient and well used. Please read the quote below taken from one of the public presentations made to the RPL Task Force. The information has been verified.

from Susan Birley:

[W]hen looking at activity levels of all libraries, although circulation appears low [in “Re-structured RPL 2004”] for the three targeted branches, when compared to size of collection and total area these branches actually are more effective than other branches (see chart below). The computer use at the three branches slated for closure is higher than or equal to that of the full service [branches]. For example, Prince of Wales library has only 2 computer work stations but users logged 846 sessions per work station in 2002 and 1244 per work station in 2003. This compared to George Bothwell library which has 8 computer work stations but only averaged 789 hours per work station in 2002 and 928 hours per work station in 2003.

7. **“In Camera” meetings should be limited to sensitive discussions of Human Resources, personnel, and legal issues/advising.** Minutes of in camera meetings should be taken and made available to current and subsequent boards. Any decision made in camera should be debated and ratified in open session. Taping/filming of public meetings should be permitted as they provide the most accurate account of meeting discussions.

#### **Part Four -- Fundraising.**

1. There are many resources available to research options. See Appendix A for a list of titles.
2. At the moment, of all Regina’s citizens only those who are property holders (property tax payers) *directly* contribute to the library’s running, though many others may be willing to contribute. Many people do not realize that they can give funds to the library and receive a charitable tax receipt. Promote the library’s charitable tax status.
  - At all the branches: place donation boxes and advertise. “save your library”.
  - Make use of the City’s infrastructure to do a mass mail out. With the water, gas or electric bill add a donation slip for the RPL. Partner with your creative community to help you design this – make it humorous “Redeem this coupon at your local branch – borrow one book get your second one free”
  - On the property tax notice add an extra tick box where the taxpayer can indicate if he or she wishes to voluntarily pay more for the libraries and how much.
3. Lottery for Libraries- Develop a lottery similar to the local hospital lottery.
4. Partner with other groups:
  - have an annual silent auction which auctions off services rather than art – i.e. an hour with an accountant, a designer, a home renovation person, a photo-portrait sitting,

one hour of a musician to play during dinner, a dinner for two at the Creek, landscape design etc. While auctions typically raise funds below the value of the goods on offer, they still offer some support. As well, they build community and take advantage of the community that is willing and ready to help. This may also be an opportunity for the patrons to meet their library board and director and engage in a social setting.

- The Friends of the RPL, now established, should be accessed for their broad community networking skills.
- Ask if local business will oversee some of the repairs required to buildings in exchange for a tax receipt
- Ask the Chamber of Commerce and the Business community for assistance with the Business library. The business community may be interested in fundraising, contributing, or hosting events that promote/highlight this special collection.
- Make use of the board and the director to build community relationships and raise funds – “dunk the director”? Photo-op with the mayor for charity?
- The Saskatoon library hosts a local readings program in conjunction with their writer in residence program, this could be adopted with the RPL writer in residence program and the RPL could host the Saskatchewan Writers’ Guild readings. At the moment, this group often struggles to find appropriate venues for their public reading series. Building stronger ties with the writing community will highlight the writer in residence program and make more use of it.

5. **Form a library endowment or community bond** (see Seattle Public Library’s “Libraries for All” bond measure.)
6. The Dunlop, Prairie History Room and the Film Theatre: At the moment it is not possible to make a donation specifically tagged for any of these groups. A donation system should be set up that allows for the public to donate funds to these targeted services. After Dunlop governance is transferred, the library should extend its charitable tax status to include the Dunlop so that more people are encouraged to give.
7. Review of unused assets to recover some funds.  
The library currently owns some equipment that it does not use. In particular \$100,000 of (never used) self-checkout kiosks are currently in storage. The library should attempt the sale of these while they machines are still reasonably up-to-date. McGill University instituted self-check-out kiosks in its main branch in the mid-nineties with success. The U of R and the U of S should be approached to purchase these kiosks to recover some of the costs of these items.

## The Way Forward

The four months that have passed since the surprising and shocking decisions the Board announced on November 26, 2003 have been tempestuous and tumultuous for members of the Friends of the Regina Public Library, as they have undoubtedly been for members of the Board and City Council. The debate over the future of our library system has at times been regrettably acrimonious and negative, and has been too often conducted in an atmosphere of confrontation instead of conciliation and co-operation. It is surely time to try to imagine a way forward, so that passionate advocates of the inner city branches, the Prairie History Room and the Dunlop Art Gallery can find common ground with those who have found themselves on the other side of the debate so that the community as a whole can emerge renewed and united instead of deeply riven and divided.

The members of the Friends Task Force know that the Friends of the Regina Public Library do not relish the role of antagonists of the individuals on the Board or on Council. We genuinely do see ourselves as “Friends” of the library, because we deeply appreciate the enormous benefits that our city’s progressive, visionary and unique library system have given us as individuals and as members of the “community of communities” that is the city of Regina. Surely it is time to find ways to restore the bonds of trust that are essential for the relationships between citizens and their representatives, appointed and elected. So now, perhaps, is an appropriate time to step back, pause, and see what lessons we all might learn from the arduous and less than satisfactory process that all parties to the debate have experienced recently.

The first and most obvious lesson is that **the citizens of Regina want to be part of the process** of deciding the nature of their library system. The initial outcry against the decision arose from our community’s deep sense of outrage at having been excluded from that process. For, in many ways, that process is every bit as important as the end result. So we urge the Board and Council to make a decision that will enable the process to continue in the next year or so. We urge both groups to make decisions now that will enable us all to have a breathing space to consider the full range of options available to us for our libraries, including the latest model of library operations offered by the Library’s own Task Force. The five public meetings that the Library Task Force was able to hold in the short time allotted to it are simply insufficient to enable the community to consider the full implications of the proposals Dean Garven and his associates have suggested.

We believe that the process the Board has begun must continue, in an atmosphere of trust and openness to all possibilities, with the Board itself actively engaging in dialogue with the community outside of the confines of the library boardroom. The Board itself has undoubtedly learned the wisdom of the old adage, “Decide in haste, repent at leisure.” A decision now by the Board or Council that irrevocably amputates vital parts of the Library will ensure that such a full and legitimising process of consultation will never have a chance to take place, and that we shall all be repenting our haste for a very long time.

The second lesson that has become evident in the 85 days prior to March 5, 2004 is **the deep commitment of Regina voters to saving their libraries**. In that period, 26,048 citizens signed the Friends’ Petition that the Friends submitted on March 5th to the City Clerk. We believe that is an unprecedented show of support, not for the Friends, but for the library system that has evolved here

since 1908. That too was the overwhelming message of almost everyone who took the time and trouble to make a public submission to the Library Task Force and the Friends' Task Force. Those voices should be respected.

The Ottawa Library Board recently received a petition signed by 24,000 citizens, from a city of 775,000, four times the size of Regina. And that Board decided to reverse the closures that they had believed were absolutely necessary. We urge our Board and Council to do likewise. The petition has given the Board and Council the public support they need to justify such a decision and to enable thoughtful and creative ideas to emerge so that the library system can do an even better and more innovative job of serving the people of Regina.

The Friends' Task Force believes that the referendum required by the petition is a very, very last resort. The time and expense of such a referendum can be avoided, however. We would greatly prefer to see the funds needed to hold a referendum spent on restoring and improving our libraries. And we know that the Friends would certainly prefer to put this battle behind us and move on with the Board and Council to a more thorough consideration of all the available options. We can assure you that the Friends are definitely not opposed to change, and we recognise the need to maintain the financial integrity and sustainability of the system. We also recognize that you can't get something for nothing. As the Library Task Force also recommends, an increase in the mill rate is undeniably necessary now and in the future. The Friends' Task Force has tried to give the Board a range of economy measures that will enable the Board and Council to approve an increase in library funding that voters by and large will understand and accept. The Board and Council most assuredly now have the support they need in order to resolve to make the courageous decision to save the libraries.

The final lesson we have learned over the last four months is that the hundreds of people who have gathered names for the Friends' Petition in the coldest months of the year, made presentations to both Task Forces and the Board, or turned out on frigid winter nights to listen to their fellow citizens and discuss options for the future of the libraries are, if nothing else, **committed, energetic, and supportive** of Regina's public libraries. We can assure the Board and Council that the Friends will devote the same energy and commitment to working WITH the Library Board and Council to support a library system that we all can feel that have had a part in rebuilding. We want to help you to make the RPL the best it can be. Together we can and will achieve that goal.

## **Dunlop Art Gallery Solutions:**

- 1. Governance of the Dunlop should be transferred to the Friends of the Dunlop who will elect a board for the gallery to maintain gallery mandate, integrity, and to communicate on a board to board level with the RPL board.**
- 2. The Dunlop's funding should be removed from the library's budget and directly secured from the City.** This agreement would first have to be made with the City so that the DAG is grandfathered into the Regina Arts Commission budget, and that budget is increased so as to cover this new client. This degree of municipal funding is necessary as the gallery leverages it's funding from other agencies based on (among other things) its base funding from the library/City. Once this funding is secure the DAG should continue to develop fundraising strategies as the City's contribution will probably not increase over the next years and the gallery will have to meet any new financial strains on its own.
- 3. The Dunlop must stay within the library if the Library is to maintain meeting its own mandate and if the DAG is to maintain its unique nature.** Without the Dunlop, the Library does not provide "literacy in all forms." The continuous coveting of this space for other library materials has led to tremendous instability. The space should be officially deemed DUNLOP. **Both the library and the Dunlop benefit from their co-existence.** The Dunlop is frequented by visitors who would otherwise not attend a public gallery, and the Library increases its overall program attendance by 100%.
- 4. Dunlop staff will be paid by the gallery and will not be subject to "bumping" due to other library turmoil.**
- 5. The library should engage in an exchange of information and skills with Dunlop staff who are extremely knowledgeable about grant writing etc. and might be able to assist the RPL in gaining some of the grants it is eligible for.**
- 6. Maintain the Dunlop resource centre and archives as a research station.** At the moment, these resources are not widely promoted within the library or within the city. **Unlike the University library or the Mackenzie resources, the Dunlop materials are part of a public collection which circulates to both the professional and the general public.** This must be promoted.
- 7. The Art Rental Collection.**  
**The Art Rental collection should stay within the library and continue to circulate.** The fees generated by the art rental goes to purchasing other works in the future. This service is remarkably visionary and should be continued. **It must be promoted aggressively** however, as it is grossly underused. It appears that the many professional people of this city do not know of its existence or the kind and calibre of work it contains. As well, the Civic Arts Collection does not currently have the budget or space to care for, administrate, and display the 150 pieces in the Art Rental. The archival requirements of the CAC vary from the

Dunlop to the effect that much of the work would have to be reframed etc. (From discussion with the Chair of the Civic Arts Collection).

8. **The Permanent collection should stay with the Dunlop.** The library may wish to partner with the Dunlop to have that collection programmed effectively and thoughtfully for display in the other branches.
9. While Regina does maintain several other public and private art galleries, the Dunlop is unique in its location, character and programming. **It is easily the most “public” of the public galleries in its close association with the library, as well its facilitator program serves, as no other in the city does, to assist people with their art encounter.** The facilitators are not volunteers but rather young people with Bachelors or Masters degrees in the Fine Arts and are people who have spent many years learning how to engage with work making it personally meaningful.

### **Impacts of closing the Dunlop. – the advancement of low-brow culture.**

1. The Dunlop functions as a cultural and arts research station. Its archives, artist files, catalogue collection, art collection and resource centre are used by students, professional artists, professors from the university. It is unlike the rest of the RPL collection in its specificity and care of collection. It is also unlike the U of R collection in terms of its focus on contemporary, Canadian, and often local artists, as well it is **available to the general public**. It presents the artist to the public, not as an idiot savant or protégé, but as a practised diligent profession which has its own culture and perspective, and which is open to public investigation. Unlike a medical library which is only understood by and accessible to a few elite, the Dunlop resource centre invites the public to explore a rather strange and often inaccessible world with the assistance (should you like) of the staff. **The loss of the resource centre, archives, art collection, artist files and catalogue collection diminishes the library’s ability to provide nourishing, challenging materials to its public specifically on the topic of contemporary, Canadian art.**
2. The Dunlop functions as a lab for professional artists, students and professors. It is not providing eye candy – rather feeds part of the experimental nature of making and examining art. **The loss of the Dunlop is not simply the loss of a gallery, it is the loss of an important place of intellectual research that is necessary to making strong, challenging work. Its loss will diminish the overall quality of work that the artists of this city are able to put forth.**
3. **The Dunlop brings in \$250,000 annually from provincial and federal funding which would otherwise not come to this city.** These funds circulate in the local economy and in the art economy providing income through employment opportunities and showing opportunities for new and emerging artists. It also exposes Regina to many of Canada’s most engaging contemporary artists through touring shows and panel discussions. These

funds are also dispersed into the business community through printers, caterers, and graphic designers.

- 4. The Dunlop presents an image of our city to the rest of the province and country.**  
The Dunlop gives exposure of Regina artists to the rest of the province and country through touring shows. This increases the overall “worth” of the artists’ works and ultimately makes them stronger members of the local arts and business communities. Most artists are incorporated as small businesses and do make substantial contributions to the business community.
- 5. As an extremely accessible gallery (because of its location within the library), it garners patrons who would not otherwise attend an art gallery. That said, attendance to Dunlop programming accounts for half of all library programs. Losing the Dunlop will decrease overall figures of RPL program attendance dramatically**
- 6. Dunlop partnerships with other cultural organizations (and hence RPL partnerships with other organizations) will be lost.**
- 7. The unique place which the Dunlop occupies in the cultural scene will be lost.** Each gallery in town promotes different kinds of work and maintains different audience structures. Though there is some cross over in people who attend, there is also a large number of people who specifically patronize certain galleries. The work shown in the Dunlop is unique in its flavour, but more than that, the setting of the work affects the reading of it. For example, Jamelie Hassan’s work which was shown in the Dunlop in the 90’s was specific to the library setting and specifically asked patrons to consider the power and influence of the written word in contrast to the spoken word. The piece was profound, political, beautiful and evocative. **It used the library to enhance the content of the piece, but also enhanced the experience of using the library.**
- 8. The Dunlop Art Gallery allows the RPL to meet its own mission statement. If the DAG is lost, then the library has turned its back on its own intentions and can no longer profess to promote “literacy in all its forms”.** As a professional gallery with a curator, director, preparators, and facilitators, the DAG is helping the RPL to meet its mandate. Showing art is not as easy as hanging a painting on a wall. That is usually associated with things being pretty, easy, and decorative. Showing work requires expertise, thought, careful planning and care. The RPL has a responsibility to the public. In providing other forms of unmediated visual culture (DVDs, internet, videos), it must also provide an education to read those media and consider how they function – that is what the DAG does – its teaches people how to read images, how they function, and consider how they are being affected by those images.
- 9. If the library abandons its mandate of visual literacy it is letting down the city. The contracted mandate should reflect contracted funding. If they are not willing to fulfill their mandate, then they should not expect continued funding at current**

**levels for reduced services.** If the RPL decides to offer less, then the citizen's should pay less.

**10. The library appears to be suffering from a move towards popular materials and culture (junk food) and away from challenging literary, intellectual materials (nourishing food).** The Dunlop is good food. The RPL should realize that it should encourage the consumption of materials that will make its public smarter, savvier, and more prepared to exist in the world. Instead it seems to be moving towards pre-digested, highly processed, unchallenging materials that will continue to keep its public dumb. (Is closing the Dunlop part of that agenda? There is an insidious type of propaganda going on with the DVDs – this item checked out – why doesn't that happen with all the books that are checked out? What is this for?)

**11. Loss of jobs: 9 in total. 6 paid for by the RPL**

## **Press Statement – February 6, 2004**

Thank you for coming here this afternoon.

I'm Seema Goel, chairperson of the newly formed Friends' Task Force. Our members are drawn from the many diverse communities that will be affected by the proposed library closures.

Let me introduce our members: (see Appendix 2)

### **The Purpose**

The purpose of our group is not to duplicate the efforts of the RPL Task force. Rather it is to create a task force with transparency of process whose mission is to protect the library, and whose ultimate findings are not predetermined. We hope to discover and expose the truth about the current library situation, and to allow the public to consider that situation with full knowledge for themselves.

### **Terms of Reference:**

1. To listen to the concerns of Regina's citizens regarding the library closures and the future of the RPL.

We shall do this by attending many public meetings, both the ones organized by the Library Task Force, and the ones organized by various communities. We will also have a web site, linked to the site of the Friends of the RPL, where people will be able to send us their views directly. As well, we will be collecting these responses and posting them on a publicly accessible site so that other people may follow the debate.

2. To encourage dialogue, discussion, and debate on the issue.

We intend to do this by directly soliciting advice and input from a variety of groups – i.e. the business community, unions, people on low incomes, the Aboriginal community, the views of the police force, etc. (What, for example, are the social costs of closing a community branch library? Will a closure be likely to result in an increased need for anti-crime initiatives, and publicly accessible/funded daycares etc.) We wish to reach out to groups and individuals whose voices often go unheard. We shall not simply wait in a warm hall for people to come to us, but will actively seek out the views of those members of the public who have something to say about their libraries but may lack ready access to email, who may be uncomfortable with getting up in public and making formal presentations, or who are intimidated by the need to submit typed documents before arbitrary deadlines.

We shall also try to encourage dialogue and informed discussion by organising a debate and public forum at City Hall Forum on March 1<sup>st</sup> from 7-9:30. At this event our Task Force and the public will be able to hear both the positive and negative aspects of the closures, and allow people the opportunity to ask questions.

3. To assess the process leading to the closure decision and the reasons for the it.

To accomplish this, we will require the full documentation relating to the library's budget, finances, and records regarding estimates of repairs etc. We intend to ask the Library Board to give

us access to the same information that the Board's own Task Force has access to. Anything less will suggest that the Board's Task Force is making its decisions based on inside data that the public is not able to see.

In addition, we shall request that the Library Director give us the same private tour of the libraries that he provided to the Board's Task Force.

4. To recommend, to the best of our ability, sustainable and innovative methods of maintaining library services at their current levels and enhancing them for the benefit of all Reginans.

This group has been elected from volunteers who came forward from the various communities and organizations that have banded together to halt the impending closures. We realize of course that we possess no binding authority in regards to the ultimate decisions that the Library Board and City Council make. However, considering the circumstances, we believe we have a moral obligation, as citizens who care about our city, to come forward and question decisions that will have far-reaching and grave implications for our City. We hope that by providing clear, possible (do-able), alternatives, we will be able to persuade those who make the decisions to see that roads other than closure are possible.

## List of Members

**CHAIR – SEEMA GOEL** is an artist and writer who returned to Regina in 1998 after a 13 year sojourn in other parts of the world. She currently teaches in the Visual Arts Dept. at the University of Regina, and is also a medical student (on leave) at the University of Saskatchewan. Newly appointed to the City of Regina’s Civic Arts Collection Committee, she hopes to contribute her knowledge and determination to bringing challenging, engaging work to the public of this city. She is an active member of the Saskatchewan Film Pool, and in the last years has been part of the Regina Flying Club, and the Regina Rowing Club.

Born and raised in Regina, she maintains a long-standing relationship with the Saskatchewan Writer’s Guild, the Indo-Canadian community, and through the Saskatchewan Summer School of the Arts – the Saskatchewan Arts Board. Seema holds a B.Sc. in Environmental Biology (McGill), an Associate Arts Diploma in Fine Art (Ontario College of Art and Design), and a Masters of Fine Art (Rhode Island School of Design).

Since her youth here, the library has fostered imagination, independence, and curiosity, and these tenets have shaped her life. Seema is pleased to have the opportunity to protect and give back to the institution, which gave so much to her.

**JANET BROWN**, born and raised in Regina, is a fashion designer, educator, editor, and office manager who lives and works in the Cathedral community with her husband Tim, a Regina lawyer, and their three children, aged 9, 11, and 13. She was a founding member of the original Friends of the Connaught Library in 1998.

She also helped to found the Taxpayers for Accountability in Regina Education in 1997 and narrowly missed winning election to the Public School Board in 1997, finishing eighth in the “at large” system in which the first seven candidates were elected. Since 1998 she has been an executive member of the Athabasca School Parent Teacher Association. She coaches community and school basketball, and is a dedicated gardener.

A graduate of Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario, she has a Diploma in Fashion Design which she made use of as a consultant with SPMC in its Buy Saskatchewan Division from 1988 to 1991, and from 1992 to 1997 in creating Brown Original Designs, a children’s clothing company. She currently is the manager and bookkeeper for the Tim Brown Law Office.

She has been a patron of the Regina Public Library since 1972 when, she reports, she took 22 books home on her first visit.

**AYDON CHARLTON** was born and raised in the shadow of Taylor Field fifty years ago. He is convinced that if he had not been able to make use of the nearby Albert Branch library and its committed group of librarians, it is unlikely that he would have been able to obtain the education that has enabled him to teach English and Humanities courses at the University of Regina and in community colleges throughout southern Saskatchewan since 1982. Because of his interest in preserving and reusing the best from Regina’s fascinating architectural heritage and history, he was

nominated for membership on the Friends' Tasks Force by Heritage Regina, on whose board he has served for the last five years.

He has also unloaded boxcars and driven semi-trailers for the CPTransport, and from 1975 to 1982 worked as an executive assistant to then Premier Allan Blakeney and later was chief of staff for Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Roy Romanow. While at the University of Regina, he has played an active role in the University of Regina Faculty Association, and served on the national committee of the Canadian Association of University Teachers to improve working conditions for the non-tenured part-time faculty who teach about 50% of the classes in Canadian universities. He is also a member of the Board of the Regina Community Clinic and its committee to lobby for an effective program to prevent, diagnose and assist those with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

He is married to Regina lawyer Merrilee Rasmussen, who served on the Board of the RPL for twenty years. All three of their children benefited from their proximity to the Connaught Library and its reading programs.

**APRIL DAHNKE** works and volunteers her time with several community and literacy organizations. Dahnke, 25 years old, has worked as the Community Outreach Coordinator and Program Facilitator for the Al Ritchie Community Association and Family Wellness Centre since 1996. She has also been the Regina Family Literacy Project Coordinator since its inception in 2001. She sits on Advisory Committees for the City of Regina Transit Board and the Second Glance Magazine Recycling Project. As well, she is an instructor for the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet youth program and member of the Regina Literacy Association, Early Childhood Network, and the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

**JIM ELLIOTT** has been a long time resident of Regina, more specifically the Cathedral area, and currently lives in the Al Ritchie area. He has a University of Regina degree in Biology and a certificate in Community Development.

He has been a member of a committee of City Council since 1989, including the Urban Environmental Advisory Council, the Parks & Recreation Board, and the Transit Advisory Board. He has made frequent contributions as intervener at many civic decisions including the City budget, pesticide use in Regina and the Wascana Lake Deepening Project. He has been part of the national consultations on Climate Change and sits on the Saskatchewan Climate Change Stakeholders Advisory Committee.

He currently sits on the Council for Social Development Regina, Regina Natural History Society, Friends of Wascana Marsh and the National Council of the Canadian Environmental Network. Over the years, he has been on many other non-profit organization boards, locally and nationally.

He has twice been a candidate for City council and now operates a business in environmental education.

**WENDY GERVAIS** is a teacher in the Catholic School System who lives in the Al Ritchie area. For those reasons she is aware of the crucial importance of retaining the Prince of Wales Library, which her nephews and their fellow students make extensive use of. She knows that even though

her sister works full-time, her family with four children, like so many others in the area, simply do not have the funds to afford bus fare so the kids can go down to Central Library downtown when they want to or need to. The Prince of Wales Branch, just a few blocks away, serves as a safe, interesting, and educational home away from home for Wendy's nephews and friends.

Born and raised in Regina, Wendy is proud of her Metis ancestry. She comes from a large family of seven, and has many Aboriginal relatives who live in the Al Ritchie community. She is a single parent who is also very proud of her son, who recently graduated from Riffel Collegiate.

Wendy currently teaches grade eight at St. Angela Merici in the northwest part of the city, and she has previously taught at Sacred Heart in North Central.

**ALBERT OLSON**, a resident of North Central, was the very first person to submit an application to serve on the Friends' Library Task Force. Now retired because of a serious back injury, he was pleased to mention that he signed the "Save the RPL" referendum petition while he was visiting the Food Bank. From personal experience he knows the value of libraries, which have been essential to him in his research for and writing of several books and articles on theological subjects and for his submission to the Romanow Commission, entitled "How to Heal Our Health Care System". He has recently made an extensive study of and written about BSE.

Brought up in the Hamlet of Oakshela, Saskatchewan, (between Grenfell and Broadview), he has resided in Regina for the last 34 years. In his long and varied work career, he served for eleven years in the Canadian Armed Forces, ran a general store in Oakshela, trucked fuel for Texaco, and worked on rail line repairs for the CPR. For four years, from 1980 to 1984, he was a union representative in the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees.

Albert writes, "Our rich society needs to appreciate what our City Fathers have done for us" by having the foresight to create a system of community-based libraries that ordinary people can have ready access to.

**MARGUERITE PORTER** is the representative on the Friends' Task Force of the library workers union, CUPE 1594. She has 31 years of library experience in academic and public libraries in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. She is currently the Branch Librarian at the Regent Place Branch. She has worked at Regina Public Library in Reference, Central Circulation, Technical Services, and at the Connaught and Regent Place Branches.

**EDITH SCHINDLER** has lived in Glen Cairn since February 1968. She is a founding member of the Glencairn Community Association, which was instrumental in securing the Glencairn Recreation Centre as well as the Glen Elm Library. As a member of the Association's Civic Affairs Committee, she has been vocal about the need to obtain access to Glencairn from Victoria Avenue, improve the design of the current interchange at the Ring Road and Victoria Avenue, and build the north service road. She spent many hours trying to convince the then City Council to build a Fire Hall closer to the community (that Fire Hall is now located at Victoria Avenue and Arcola), and worked tirelessly to obtain a high school for the area, F. W. Johnson Collegiate. She has also served on the Regina Planning Commission.

In her thirty-five years in the work force, Edith was a secretary to a deputy minister in the provincial government, a senior secretary with the federal government, and held positions as confidential secretary, administrative assistant, and executive secretary in the public and commercial sectors. After “retirement” she set up her own home-based business, Elms Crafts.

She is married, and her husband Ed served on the Regina Library Board for nine years. They have four children, and they are always ready to boast about their seven grandchildren.

**SUSAN SEBO** has lived in the Al Ritchie area for the past 12 years. She loves the area because it is a community full of old and new, with many seniors as well as many young people, including those attracted to the neighbourhood by the new housing project. She realizes that poverty is a big issue to many of the area residents.

Community development is her passion, and through those activities she has come to know the area and its residents very well. She is a team member of Leadership Regina, and is well respected for her grass roots approach to solving problems.

She believes that community libraries are vital to inner city neighborhoods. That is why she fought hard -- and successfully -- to keep the Prince of Wales Branch open in 1998 and 1999, and is committed to doing the same now so that it can continue to benefit all the residents of the Al Ritchie neighbourhood. Susan wonders, “Why does it seem that whenever cuts are made, it’s the people who can least afford to lose a vital service who are the ones who have to fight hardest to retain them?”

## **Regina Public Library Board: Rationale for Cuts**

The Regina Public Library (RPL) is facing uncertainty. Due to a perennial inability to act on and create changes from within its structure, the library is faced with the potential for budget shortfalls.

As far back as the 1996 audit, the auditor states that the "organizational structure was found to have several aspects where cost-effectiveness and management control came into question."<sup>1</sup> At that time, the same report also stated that "The major issue presented in the Detailed Report related to buildings is the potential capital funding deficiency for the renovation and or replacement of Central branch. The...funding issue has not been resolved. There are no clear plans for dealing with the funding dilemma."<sup>2</sup>

In 1998, the RPL announced that it would cut hours in some of its branches. The public became alarmed, and worried that this would lead to closures.

On September 17<sup>th</sup> 1998, more than 70 people attended a public meeting to urge the RPL board not to close the three inner city branches. On September 22, 1998, the RPL published a "Public Discussion Paper on the Future of the Regina Public Library". The purpose of the paper was to "provide an account of the issues,...the possibilities that exist for dealing with them and a sample of one internally consistent approach to the issues. **The Board and the Administration look forward to hearing further ideas from the public that may lead to an improved plan.**"<sup>3</sup> (Emphasis Added.)

As well, the Board then scheduled a series of public meetings to receive ideas and suggestions of the members of the public. They indicated that this information would help define strategy decisions for public library service in Regina for "the next generation".

At that time, the primary issues facing the library as outlined in their paper were as follows:

- The elimination of the business tax would result in a shortfall in revenues in 1999 and 2000.
- Central Library was too small for the functions it was expected to serve. As well, its' mechanical systems would soon be performing beyond their design lives.
- Concerns about lack of presence in the west end of the city: in other words, residents there were not living within a 3 km radius of a full service branch or two km radius of a neighbourhood branch.

The RPL also listed the concern that there was a trend within City Council not to increase taxes, that technical developments needed continual investment, and that patrons would be reluctant to give up any current service levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 14, RPL A Value for Money Audit Report, October 1996

<sup>2</sup> Page 15, RPL A Value for Money Audit Report, October 1996

<sup>3</sup> Page 1, Public Discussion Paper on the Future of the Regina Public Library, September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1998

The RPL proposed four packages of solutions, three of which included cutbacks that would result in cost savings through reduction in services, support staff and administration. These cuts, however, would be in opposition to the expressed desires of the public. That left them only the fourth option to consider: Finding the Money.

Along with requesting a mill rate increase, the RPL Board was to investigate operating grants and grants-in-lieu. The board also acknowledged that there had been no increase in the library mill rate for the past two years, and that for the previous ten, it had been well below the inflation rate. While admirable in its intent, this very policy only served to exacerbate the funding shortfalls' effect on the library. At the same time, it was recognized that across North America, there were signs that the public was willing to pay a directed tax.

The RPL produced a chart summarizing financing plans from 1998 to 2010. The goals outlined were very plausible and achievable. Unfortunately, subsequent boards and administration have neglected this plan. One of the prongs of this plan was to hold a plebiscite in 2000 on Library plans for service. The Friends of the Library has now opened the door for the RPL to follow through on that. Questions relating to library service could easily be added to the referendum vote.

Other options included in their plan were: Debt financing to construct a new Central branch, fundraising drive, and securing funding from senior government.

In response to this wealth of ideas, vibrant and lively public discourse was entered into. There were many alternatives offered by the library, well in advance of any decisions being made. Although at times the discussions were heated, at no time did anyone feel a sense of hopelessness, as the current process has done. The public was being consulted in a reciprocal method.

The RPL Board made a number of resolutions at its regular meeting held on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1998. In response to the public input it sought out and gathered, the board resolved, among other things, to:

- Seek to maintain the existing public services of the RPL through greater efficiencies, partnerships and reform of operational processes
- Pursue a fund raising campaign for capital purposes
- Continue all neighbourhood branches
- Recognizes the value of public input on public issues and particularly where specific neighbourhood issues are to be addressed
- To establish ad hoc Neighbourhood Reference Groups
- To entertain proposals for the redevelopment of the current site of Central branch where the RPL is a significant partner.

At the end of the day, the RPL gathered together the wealth of ideas along with their own and created the Detailed Strategic Plan 2001 - 2005, which saw the incorporation of both an internal and external vision for our library system. The public rested, assured that their concerns had been noted, and were being acted upon in their best interests by the board.

At some point, however, the incontinuous nature of the board, and therefore the Strategic Plan, failed the public. New policies were not acted on, and within the Public Library Act, the RPL found that it did not really have to abide by those plans. Very little changed. Fundraising was not initiated, and even the deficiencies pointed out in the 1996 audit had not been addressed. It is common logic that if you have a problem and do not attempt to solve it, eventually you will become disabled by it. Consequently, if you are faced with the same problem on an ongoing basis, but only ever attempt one solution, if that solution does not work the first time, do not expect that it will ever work.

It is in that nature, much like a twig floating on a lazy current, that the current RPL Board has been confronted with this "new" emergency. After years of not fixing the problem, the problem has now become of disabling proportion.

As late as October 28<sup>th</sup> 2003, the board in their minutes reported that the current service level would be maintained and actually supplemented by more open hours of service. As well, over the years since the last rounds of public consultation, the Library Board had not indicated to the public that in any way shape or form was the library in trouble. At that meeting, there was no hint of a financial crisis. The budget would be unchanged for 2004. Within days of that meeting, the Director had authored a report of some 27 pages in length, outlining "the anticipation of a very serious budget shortfall in 2004". This report was titled "Re-structured RPL: 2004"

Although this report contains a number of drastic measures in order to cut budget costs, it is not specifically a re-structuring of the RPL in the sense that nothing changes intrinsically. Other costs remain, other problems remain unaddressed.

The primary assumption that drives this report is "that City Council will not permit an increase in taxes"<sup>4</sup>. The Friends of the Library would like to comment on behalf of more than 26,000 constituents of the City Council that they might well not only permit but also encourage an increase in the library mill rate. Another point to make is that if you don't even ask for the money, you absolutely ensure that you won't get more! In any event, it seems to be smoke and mirrors as the director states: Even if "Council approves a \$300,000.00 tax increase...it would not be recommended that such unanticipated funding be used to re-open any of the eliminated cost centres"<sup>5</sup>.

One of the initial rationales reported on behalf of the RPL Board was that they faced a shortfall partly due to the elimination of the Business Tax. That argument was quietly dropped as people pointed out that the last year that would have had any impact was in 2000.

The RPL reported that they would face a pension fund shortfall. Although they contribute to the same fund as other city workers, the RPL is the only entity that plans to cut jobs in order to meet that shortfall. As well, the shortfall was identified through an actuarial review of the fund completed in fall of 2003.

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<sup>4</sup> Page 1, Re-structured RPL: 2004

<sup>5</sup> Page 8, Re-structured RPL: 2004

The RPL must however, meet the shortfall because of legislation. One suggestion that has been made is to lobby for changes that allow pension fund shortages a longer amortization period, as is the case in other provinces. For example, changing the payback period to 15 years would result in a much more manageable payment on behalf of both the Board and the employees. Secondly, when the next actuarial review is completed, it is likely to indicate that the underfunding has been sufficiently or partly recovered by the rebound in the marketplace, making this a very, very short-term problem for the RPL.

The report states on page 25 that the Connaught Library Branch is structurally unsound. This statement has been subsequently found to be erroneous. In fact, work was completed in the fall of 2003 that will ensure structural soundness at the building for the "foreseeable future", according to the report of the engineer hired by the RPL to provide them with an opinion as to the soundness of the structure.

The report contains many pages of statistics. Some are internal, comparing one cost centre to another. There is a lack of consistency when it comes to units, however, which makes it difficult to make comparisons with any precision. For example, George Bothwell circulates more items than Connaught. That is only logical, as it has many more items. When you compare the two on a proportionate ratio, however, the picture is very different, with Connaught having not only a higher percentage of circulation, it also has a massive increase over last year, whereas George Bothwell's percentage circulation decreased over the calendar year.

On the basis of the accuracy and acuity of the information and recommendations contained in the "Re-structured RPL: 2004" report, the RPL Board voted on November 26<sup>th</sup> 2003 to act on "eliminating the cost centres." In other words, they chose to eliminate 41 in-scope positions (a number of those positions were not filled at the time, but it is the total jobs eliminated). It is true that the physical locations would be closed for the Connaught, Glen Elm and Prince of Wales Branches, the Dunlop Art Gallery and the Prairie History Room. However, the immediate cost savings would be recognized on the books because these lost jobs would save hundreds of thousands in salaries and benefits. All other facets of library operations would remain essentially intact, unchanged, and untouched.

Regardless of whether this decision was sound, the RPL began compromising themselves weeks before this meeting. Once the board learned that there may be tough decisions ahead, they should have looked back at what had been learned in similar situations from the past. They should have looked more specifically at their own resolution to "recognize the value of public input on public issues and particularly where specific neighbourhood issues are to be addressed".<sup>6</sup>

Next, the RPL Board hastily struck a "Task Force" to gather public input. This Task Force has not been reciprocal and was very limited in nature, to the point of discriminating against people with lower levels of literacy, technological access and mobility. In an attempt to inform the Task Force, the chair authored a report entitled "Difficult Choices - The Situation Facing the Regina Public Library" which was submitted to the Task Force on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2004.

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<sup>6</sup> RPL Board meeting, November 24<sup>th</sup> minutes

The Chair continued to outline various rationale previously discussed, including the pension plan underfunding. Another issue that she outlined was the potential for the loss of revenue from property tax appeals. The Board of Revision, the municipal body that sits to hear property tax appeals, is still in the process of dealing with appeals from as far back as 1998. There are two possible outcomes for appeals: they can be successful or unsuccessful. There is no way to attempt to predict the outcome of appeals. The City instead provides numbers that outline the total maximum amount assuming successful appeals. Given the fact that it is extremely unlikely that every appeal will be successful, it is also impossible to predict which appeals will be completed, through five different levels of appeal. No one will actually know what actual impact the tax appeal process will have on funding levels for the library until the end of the year.

In her report, the Chair maintains that the Connaught Branch has a foundation problem. She states: "A third event that factored into our decision-making came to light in the late fall of 2002. The magnitude of a foundation problem at Connaught Branch was discovered at that time."<sup>7</sup> The report goes on to state that the \$25,000.00 repair was temporary, and that the permanent repair would cost \$512,000.00. The Library continued to promote that issue in their advertisement in the January 31<sup>st</sup> edition of the Regina Leader Post. As previously indicated, there is no major structural problem with the Connaught or any other branch. It would seem that, over time, the finding of the engineer's report in 2002 was misinterpreted, and the mistaken belief evolved that this problem existed. It does not.

The Board voted on these drastic measures in the face of a number of questionable possibilities mixed in with uncertainties. In the Regina Leader Post Letter to the Citizens of Regina, the Board rationalized their decision thusly: "An increase in property taxes to accommodate the two urgent issues (pension and tax appeals shortfall) **seemed out of the question.**" The board also felt that "it was **unlikely** that the City or Province would be able to provide funding to handle the Library's problems." (emphasis added) The board cannot state that they tried everything, as they openly admit that they did not even attempt these two avenues.

The position of the Board continued to be maintained as the new Chair spoke to the public. According to precedent set most recently in 1998, the public expected that the RPL administration and governing board would seek out and respect their opinions with reference to any major changes being anticipated. Instead, the RPL board chose to bear the brunt of decision making on their own, and what a deluge that brunt has been!

We are now equipped with two new pieces of information: the actual figure supplied by the auditor that the library needs to make up, as well as the fact that the City has a budget surplus of \$4.3 million. Now that some of the equation can be factually determined, this puts a very different face on the situation confronting the RPL. It is the opinion of some 26,000+ voting residents of this city that the RPL Board has made a mistake. Fortunately, there is time, political will and now money to correct the mistake.

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<sup>7</sup>Page 3, Difficult Choices: The Situation Facing the Regina Public Library

## **Quotes from presentations made to the Friends Task Force**

“Hello, my name is Grant Atter and I am a Grade 7 student at Holy Rosary Community School. I have been going to Connaught Library since I was a baby and I like Connaught Library. I want to keep using Connaught Library. Don’t shut down Connaught Library, because there we can have a lot of fun in after school activities. I like Looking Glass Book Club and I won a gift certificate which I enjoyed spending on books.

The librarians are really nice people and help me when I get mixed up. They know a lot and they also give me definitions to words. They’ve helped me a lot in many ways. And they know me.

If there was no Connaught Library, I couldn’t go to after school programs at all. I wouldn’t be allowed to go to Central, because I’m too small and it’s too far. And what about my two younger sisters? We wouldn’t have any library services at all. There is no room in the Community Centre because it’s for the community and its programs, suppers and activities. There is no room at the school because we only have one library for our students and we don’t want to make the school bigger or make our Librarian stressed out.

Finally, I like Connaught Library very much. If you think that people will drive to Central, you’ve got it backwards. They drive to other libraries, because the small libraries, like Connaught, have better services and you can get everything there. These are all my own ideas. Thank you for listening.”

From a Grade 9 student Allie Atter, the following:

“I have lived a block away from Connaught Library and I have been going to it ever since I was little. I have attended various programs, gone there for school reasons, and my own enjoyment of reading. I have walked my younger siblings to Connaught Library countless times, because it is a community library with very good stuff and we can walk to it. I attended Looking Glass Book Club for a long time, and I attended a Young Writers Workshop, where my stories and writings were heard and developed by the people who attended and the guest writer. Now I am in Advanced English at Miller High School, and I use Connaught to find books for reports and to read. I acknowledge that Connaught Library was an essential part of my growing up to be who I am now. I wouldn’t want my siblings to grow up without Connaught, which was very important to me, especially my brother who has just developed a fondness for books.

Most of the people who go to Connaught are children and families who do not have the luxury to drive downtown and take out books. These people would find themselves with small school libraries, which do not have a great variety of books to read or use for research. I even have been going to Connaught to take out books to use on school projects. I would not have been able to do this if Connaught was closed. If the Library Board believes the building is too old and in need of repair, they can do community fundraisers, and this will work because I saw the community save Davin School.

The Connaught Library should stay where it is because there are so many schools, daycares, families and homeschoolers who use it on a regular basis. Connaught has become even busier and should be open more hours than it already is because it is in the middle of a great community full of great people with great interests. I know of other people who do not live in this area who choose to come to Connaught because it is convenient and has an excellent selection of books, plus it’s easy

to pick-up and place holds. Connaught should not be put into a school because that would give it huge limits and make it harder for many people to access.”

Mrs. Julie Atter:

“I will speak of Margaret Tappin. She grew up in the Cathedral area and saw the Connaught Library being built. She frequented Connaught, grew older, married, and raised her children in the Cathedral area, ensuring that they also benefited from the Connaught Branch as she had.”

“I will speak of a little girl who spent many days, over the weeks, months and seasons at the Connaught Branch, because Connaught opened the world to her with books, programs, activities, ideas, thoughts and a network of young and old involved in improving their lives and community with library services.”

“I am that little girl, now grown with four children of my own who also are benefiting from the Connaught Branch. I’m not alone – there are numerous 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation library patrons in the inner-city. There are many who are marginalized in our society, as is my own son Grant, who can’t be served by the Central Library and who will lose out in their quality of life if these inner-city branches are closed.”

Then there is the PTA of the Athabasca School, that writes:

“Before we offer suggestions, you need to understand where Athabasca School is located. Athabasca School is located on Coronation Street and Princess Drive, across the street from Sheldon Williams Collegiate. Connaught Library is the cornerstone for the Cathedral Area, but it reaches much further, it is the branch that serves our community and school. We rely on its resources and personnel to promote reading within our families and school. Simply stated, libraries promote literacy, and literacy is a necessity for education.”

“We appreciate the fact that our children can walk to the Connaught Library, thus making library visits a part of their daily lives. As students of Athabasca they have opportunities to walk over to the Connaught Library, with classmates on school field trips. A lifelong love of books is being nurtured in our students with the community support provided by our branch library. You need to understand that closing our neighbourhood library will create a huge crisis in our eyes.”

“The public has been given absolutely no financial information to base our suggestions on. Asking us to come up with ‘sustainable alternatives’ by ourselves, without access to relevant information, as a last ditch effort to prevent massive closures is deeply cynical. Solutions should be developed **together**, not in this one-sided format, and on such tight timeframes.”

Mrs. Joanne Havelock, in her submission says:

“Many parents in the Cathedral area work outside the home. Demographic statistics show that the area has an unusually high proportion of lone parent families. Also the library serves a significant portion of Aboriginal families. Many seniors drop by. Parents with pre-schoolers attend the programs and get an opportunity to meet people in the community. The library provides a safe and caring place, within walking distance, where children can go after school for story programs, to get books for school assignments and visit with their friends.”

“Many people in the Cathedral area have lower incomes. At the Connaught Library these people can borrow books, videos, music and popular magazines. The children can use the computer for homework, the adults can use it to search for a job. One aspect of poverty is not being able to access the common things in one’s culture. Having the local libraries in the working class neighbourhoods helps provide the opportunity to access these things.”

Mr. Graham Parsons in speaking on accountability said:

“The Library Act should be changed to provide for both full public disclosure and full financial accountability. When a public agency spends taxpayers’ money, it must be fully accountable. This is not the case now.”

Finally, from Mr. Jim Elliott’s “Suggested Actions”:

“The community and its members must be acknowledged as an engaged participant in the future of their libraries and the decisions around its final structure, its sets of infrastructures, products and programs.”

“This means at least a one year moratorium on closing or changing any part of the current structure, its final sets of infrastructure, products and programs.”

“This means that all members of the community must be seen as an equal partner with the Library Board and the Library Staff in the creation of that final serviceable system.”

## **Impacts of Libraries on our Communities**

Much of what happens to our residents comes from first getting in the door of the Library. Being a part of the fabric and fully integrated into the actions and behaviors of our children, our families and our seniors, much of what we know, who we know and where we deposit that knowledge is the public library. Unfortunately much of the actions of our communications media is putting pressure to direct and force us to get the information we need through their operations and through their stores.

But that creates problems. It discriminates. It separates. If you don't have the money, you don't have the opportunity. If you can't get credit, you may in some cases not be able to even borrow a video or DVD. If you can't get to a store, then you are not able to purchase that book. If you don't have a computer, then you don't have access to websites or web-based information or opportunities. If you don't have access to cable or satellite television, many of the educational or informational programming is not part of your information base.

Without some of the public institutions like the library, many more people would be disenfranchised from their rights to be able to participate in civil society. By collectivizing our resources, our knowledge and our tax dollars, we are able to have a complete and fully accessible system that would not be possible if this was not done.

### **Financial Access**

If we were to take the average tax value of \$1342, \$65 of that goes to our common library system. In any one year, it would be very hard to get a few books, a video or a DVD for that price. Our library system allows us to take out any of those produces almost every day. Collective or public service always making a service at a lower rate than private services. Without this service, a substantial number of residents of this community would not have access at all.

### **Mobility Access**

In our community, many of our citizens make a choice not to have a private vehicle. Some are forced through lack of adequate disposable income. Others because of disabilities or other restraints cannot easily get around this city. With a fully accessible library system, we would be able to create circles of contact or access and to place enough facilities in the communities so that everyone has a reasonable ability to access the service that they are paying for through their taxes. This is done in our transit system. The City has a policy that a bus stop must be within 1200 feet of your home.

When there are statements that say this community is getting more automobiles and therefore we should discriminate against those that don't or do not wish to have a vehicle and not have libraries in their community, we would say that this is not acceptable and should not be tolerated.

Unfortunately, our daycares, our schools and other community based organizations are in the same financial crunch that families and others are having. They don't have the money to just drive 20 children across the city for some special programming. Many of our daycares and parents located themselves where they are because the library was there.

### **Support for our Young Writers**

There is much advertising going on now to show that this child might be the next CEO or the next Governor General Award winning writer, then it should be part of this society's and this community's goal and obligation to support that person so that their potential can be fully realized. Why should we expect second best or a distant third? Why should we support less literacy, not more? Why would we say it was a good day when one child doesn't get the opportunity all other children get?

### **Quiet and Supportive Learning Space**

One of the prime directives given to most adults in their childhood was to be quiet and to do your reading and research so as to not disturb others. That has enormous benefits. Firstly, it disciplines the child to focus on the task at hand and to not be disruptive. It gives the child a sense of security because he/she knows that someone will not disturb them. It reinforces a sense of control that the librarian has because adults will be disciplined as well if not cooperating. Many children need that silence so they can concentrate their efforts and their skills to read that book or find that important fact. Many children with siblings at home, do not have that quiet time after school so they take advantage of the time and do their homework or other tasks in the library.

### **Capacity Building**

Those students, young and old, that are learning English for the first time need the vastness of the library to provide them with the books that will strengthen what they are learning, challenge them through new words and to give them some place to easily explore the vast world around them within a secure and comfortable space.

In the same way that the collectivization of products and services help those that have problems of access, those with special needs require very specialized materials that can and are more expensive than traditional resources. By having them within a collective, many more people can gain access and build their capacity without necessarily expend a large amount of money. In addition, the addition of staff will make the resources more valuable, more current and more easily accessed.

### **Disproportionate Impacts on People of Closures**

Those individuals and families least able to respond to change and to large requests for items such as travel or time would be disproportionately impacted by the closure of the three inner city branches. This could displace all the past investments of literacy or many other programs available to them to build up their capacity to maintain or increase wealth or quality of life.

Currently there are a number of communities that previously had some measure of additional access to libraries. These include communities like Eastview. There are still more individual areas and individual families of the city that have further than policy distances to travel to their local branch. This has been a chronic problem.

With the divestment of three branches, there is likely to be a substantive number of publications, books and other library resources that will be removed from the system. Fewer duplicates would mean longer waiting times. With fewer locations, there would be fewer computer stations for access to the Internet.

Specialized programs like story time or other children's activities would either not happen for daycares or school classrooms or would be highly truncated or limited in their variety because of the reduced resource capacity of schools. Daycares in the Glen Elm have their library coming to

their location for puppet shows. They had experienced attempts to have this supplied by either other library locations or by going to other locations. This was not possible.

### **Application of Business Practices on a Public Service System**

The use of words like “clients” and “cost centres” place a concerning shadow over the provision of an essential community service. Unlike the movement away from this type of approach to children, families and individuals that is being done by most community based organizations around Canada, this library seems to be, by association, attempting to turn this library system into a business corporation. This not-for-profit library system is not a profit centre. Not-for-profit organizations by their very nature do not make profits. They have a public trust to maintain and respond to change as necessary. Likewise, the public does not expect to receive dividends from the operation of the library system.

It does not mean that the library system should not be responsible with their resources. It does not mean that the library should not build up reserves for future developments or replacement of assets. It does mean that, for instance, does not normally donate monies to other businesses or other organizations.

### **Loss of Reputation and Respect**

Through this past few months, there has been a fair amount of damage that is not going to be easily moved past. People in this community are feeling disrespected. They feel that they have been betrayed by the RPL Board and the Library Director. There was no indication made to the public about the RPL Board’s intentions. They were told in the last few months and years that there was no indications of any problems or any request for additional input or advice.

The impacts of these actions across the country and internationally will place this community on a no go zone for many years. Many institutions already skip over us on their other excursions and exhibitions. With this change, what would give them any other sense that they should buck the system and still come here. Likewise, many people who would think of working in the library system would not be comfortable applying for jobs here.

How much impact will this change have on the other images that are out there for Regina? It is widely known that politicians and governments are not trusted or respected. This change will further erode any sense of trust any people might have had for our institutions. The library is a knowledge-based organization. As a knowledge-based organization it is the staff working in the organization that carry the knowledge in their heads. This is knowledge that they have acquired not only over many years through education, but also knowledge of a specific library collection, knowledge of a specific clientele, knowledge of what programming works in a neighborhood and what does not, knowledge of what other staff at a location knows and how their unique skills and abilities complement each other. What is going to happen on May 1<sup>st</sup> is an “up set the fruit basket” effect that will entail a very fast and very steep learning curve. This will happen after 5 months of working in a highly stressful work environment. Never before in the history of Regina Public Library will there have been such a massive upheaval in the entire workplace. Workplace units that have been closely knit and in many cases family like will be torn asunder. It will take years to replicate this kind of team environment. In many other types of organizations, retail or factory, this would not be as big an issue but in a knowledge-based organization it has very real implications.

## **Internal Impact**

Since the announcement of closures, the amount of staff sick leave has increased. Combined with the learning curve in May, sick leave will increase even more dramatically. With more people off, supervisors will be struggling to cover opening hours with part-time workers who will be burned out. The fact of the matter is that most workers in the library are front line workers who deal with the public for most of their working hours. The client service and client satisfaction is solely in the hands of these front line workers. The front line workers are the people who answer the clients' questions and handle their transactions. The good name of the library, what makes a library good, is the service that the front line service given by the workers. In other words we can have the best collections, the best of facilities but the front line workers make or break the organization.

With all of this being known, it is horrific how badly these front line staff are being and will be treated.

At this point in time bumping is about half done and already around 65 people have been affected. Full time staff are bumping into part time jobs, people are dropping one or more pay bands and these changes will have a terrible effect on their personal lives. One staff member is going from \$47,917 annual salary to \$35,273 which is a loss of \$12,644 dollars a year. Another is going from \$24,315 to half time a pay band below \$17,525.40 a loss of \$6,787.60. This is the rule not the exception. Naturally, organizational loyalty is at an all time low.

Already we are seeing the draining away of good personnel, especially the younger segment of our staff, as they are out looking for other jobs. When they walk out the door never to return we are losing skills and knowledge that it will take a long time for new staff to acquire.

When it comes to recruiting professional staff, the Regina Public Library is acquiring a bad reputation internationally. (American Libraries January 2004). When professionals read about what is happening, they will not want to come work for a library that is beset with problems. Who would? As our professional staff are aging this is a real concern.

At the time of writing (six weeks before the closure date), our staff has received no direction or instruction about how we are supposed to prepare for the coming date. We are flying by the seat of our pants, and that is causing stress!

## Prince of Wales February 23<sup>rd</sup> Event, 2004 Results

What effects/impacts will the library closures have on you?

### Group One

- No money for books (families don't have)
- How do you take 2 kids, especially in winter, on the bus all the way downtown (it takes hours) alone?
- More "mischief"/crime related activity
- Shutting down inner city services (See also the Determinants of Health)
- City supporting businesses Not residents
- Many homes have no access to computers
- Computer access in community doesn't fit with the school-age kids/working families' timetables.
- No money for transportation costs (increased costs), will DCRE make up for the loss?
- Takes longer to get books
- Kids no longer able to access library on own
- Kids won't sleep as well without their bedtime stories (Quinn, 9)
- Lowering literacy skills
- Cutting accessibility to materials and services (storytime, etc.)
- Can the other branches handle the potential influx from the closed branches?
- Reduced access for kids for homework
- What about the staff!?!?

### Group Two:

- How many of the people who are closing our libraries live here?
- Loss of jobs
- Loss of confidence
  - In the Mayor
  - Library staff
  - Library administration
- Increase in crime
  - Nothing for the kids to do
  - Vandalism
- Reduction of Spirit in the community
  - Removing focal point
  - Removing meeting place
- Safety of Children
  - Learning literacy
  - Social skills
- Accessibility (lack of)
  - Seniors
  - Kids
  - Etc.

**Group Three:**

- Lack of resources for parents/teacher/kids
- No access to learning support/resources
- Increase in Crime – IGNORANCE
- Seniors would lose brain stimulation through loss of reading
- Loss of child development
  - Lower grades, poverty, obesity, drug abuse
- Loss of knowledge about anything
  - Health, science, language, literacy, history, nature, religion, art, etc.

**Group Four:**

- Decrease in literacy
- Decrease in education
- Bad effect on business
- Community breakdown
- Effect on community
- Access to computer denied
- Loss of space to do homework
- Miss discussion about authors with librarians
- Kids and adults can't afford bus fare downtown
- Is the Task Force being paid?

**Group Five:**

- Too much idle time for children
- Lack of knowledge and education
- Atmosphere most inviting and friendly at Prince of Wales. Always accommodation
- Formal and business-like only at Centre
- Staff give valuable time and patience for those with special needs
- Philosophy of Province of Saskatchewan Library Construction is to be universal and use for all without the burden of cost.
- Use library as resource centre
  - Computer availability
  - To acquire research material for assignments
  - Easy accessibility for handicapped

What are your solutions to maintaining the facilities slated for closure?

**Group One:**

- Use the Capital Reserve fund to fund capital expenditures (ie. Owned buildings verses leased)
- Where are the funds from the sales of the materials from the Prairie History Room going?
- How can the City spend a million dollars on fireworks, when they aren't supporting our (kids) education? Quinn, 9)

- Status quo
- Fundraisers like the Hospitals
- Why close libraries in communities where foot traffic makes up the predominant amount of visitors over communities where majority of residents have access to transportation, funds, etc.?
- Increase taxes – 1\$ from each home
- Rearrange library hours
- 10% cut to administration from across the board
- Why spend money on changing log/signage/etc. when “they” knew this was coming?
- Why increase branch hours in fall to close branch in spring (inflating costs?)
- No changing the Dunlop to anything but a public institution (increases access for); same for the Prairie History Room (currently not intimidating)
- Bake sale (Quinn, 9)
- Charge for DVD service (like only a dollar) (not cost prohibitive)

#### Group Two:

- Replace top library administration
- If there is financial crisis, reduce number of “out of scope” management
- Replace board with people who are supportive and passionate about their libraries
- Fundraise
- Endowments, donations
- Heritage funding
- Property tax increase?
- Support local businesses... keep it local!
- GST Rebate from federal government... \$1 million
- Protests/support
  - High schools
  - Elementary schools
  - School librarians

#### Group Three:

- Increase taxes
- Change library act ie. Small charge for DVD, etc.
- Fundraise for Infrastructure ie. Library Lottery
- Thorough 3D Party Analysis
- Decrease Operating Expenditures
- Reduce Administration costs
- Amalgamate city administrators and library administrators
- Elect Library Board
- Eliminate Perdiems ie. Conferences and expenses
- Make literacy a priority!

#### Group Four:

- Designate Prince of Wales as a landmark

- Respect our history
- Keep Prince of Wales open
- More community activities like read-a-thons
- Keep hours the same so people may enjoy the library with more freedom
- Fundraiser – books
- Sweat equity – infrastructure
- Fundraising for foundation – controlled by community
- Visiting author
- Money is available for digging lake, RCMP Museum
- Libraries should come together and say what everyone needs all together
- “I Love Regina” should include the oldest library in the city
- Designate Prince of Wales as a heritage site
- Write to the Prince of Wales about the library with his name closing
- Go to the Meet the Mayor Day
  - Positive Effects of the library
    - Kids will be well literate
    - Well versed
    - Kids can walk to library
    - Prince of Wales is very economical
    - Seniors are in walking distance of Prince of Wales
    - New condos are near library

#### Group Five:

- Have library hours reduced to their previous schedule of September 2003
- Full audit of RPL Board and forensic audit
- Full divulgence of what the Library Board has said and publish it
- Full publication of what Board has hidden, followed by untruths, misrepresentations of facts,
- Board certainly less than forthcoming or helpful in providing anyone (according to mayor) with information
- How and when were these freestanding and mortgage free (clear title) buildings re-zoned? (From constitutional to commercial zoned)
- Subversive, under-handed and devious methods used to re-zone for their own means
- This is a long-term plan and had to be crafted and executed over a period of years
- Name Board members and contributing councillors who sat on Board
- Was Public consulted?
- If not, was act then illegal we believe
- Sandy Cameron should be examined
- Any relations with mall owners?
- What happens with the computers Bill Gates donated because he feels so strongly about literacy for all globally?

## List of Presentations/Attendees

- Sanya Ali
- Jack Anderson
- Kay Antrobus
- W. H. Appleyard
- Frank Armistead
- Kathy Arnusch
- Simon Ash
- Grant Atter
- Allie Atter
- Julie Atter
- Marnie Badham
- R. P. Baldwin
- Wanda Barr
- Bill Barry
- Sam Becker
- Naomi Beingessner
- Lorne Beug
- Susan Birley
- Janet Brown (task force member)
- Kim Brown
- Nik Burton
- Ann Campbell
- Greg Carr
- Sabrina Cataldo
- Aydon Charlton (task force member)
- Gail Chin
- Fred Clipsham
- John Conway
- Mar Craig
- Joanne Crofford
- CUPE
- April Dahnke (task force member)
- Gloria DeSantis
- Reinhold Dressler
- Cindy Dyck
- Mark Dyck
- Barry Eisenzimmer
- Jim Elliott (task force member)
- Trish Elliott
- John Facan
- Faculty of Fine Arts
- Heather Fairley
- Peter Flasco
- Beryl Forgay
- Deb Froh
- Alice Frederick
- Rose Fulawka
- Patricia Gallagher
- Andre Gelinus
- Anne Gerein
- Loretta Gerlach
- Edie Gibbons
- Marni Gladwell
- Seema Goel (task force member)
- Terry Graff
- Shane & Brenda Haddad
- Phil Hansen
- Joanne Havelock
- Bill Henderson
- Ruth Hendrichs
- Margaret Hendry
- Trevor Herriott
- Daniel Hobrow
- John Hopkins
- Kjersten Hordern
- Denise Husla
- Bob Ivanochko
- Christine Jacob
- Don Jellic
- Phil Jeffreys
- Edward Jones
- Leif Kaldor
- Joan M. Kanigan-Fairen
- Pat Kilbride
- Steve Kirkland
- Shawn Kittler
- Kristen Kittler
- Brandon Kittler
- Al Knox
- Stan Kopciuch
- Pam Labelle
- Jean Lamour
- Victor Lau
- Kathryn Laurin

- Thomas von Ledebur
- Larry Lemoal
- Ann Leger-Anderson
- Alison Lohans
- Jeff Looyesen
- Mary Love
- Jasmine B. Love
- Philip Mack
- Ron Mack
- Nancy MacLean
- Jeannie Mah
- R. Leslea Mair
- Anna Mann
- David Margoshes
- Guy Marsden
- J. L. McCuskee
- Clara McIlwaine
- Linda McKenzie
- David McLean
- Warren McCall
- M. K. Medl
- Ken Miller
- Marilyn Moffat
- Sabrina Molnar
- Joanne Moser
- E. Mountjoy
- John Murray
- Wade Murray
- Linda Nerly
- Donna Newman
- Brenda Niskala
- Carol Nyiri
- Juli Nyiri
- Nicole O'Byrne
- Rosemary Oddie
- Andrew Oko
- Albert Olson (task force member)
- Charles Ottosen
- Jean Ottosen
- Alex Oxon
- Brian Palmer
- Loretta Paoli
- Graham Parsons
- Wendy Peart
- Brad Pennell
- Colleen Perras
- Dennis Perras
- Deither Peschken
- Myrna Petersen
- Verda Petry
- Michael Polanyi
- Marguerite Porter (task force member)
- M. Proctor
- Debbie Purton
- Trevor Quinn
- Merrilee Rasmussen
- M. Riddil
- Gwen Roberts
- Joe Roberts
- Sheila Roberts
- C. Robertson
- Ron Robinson
- Eva Roesner
- Alfred Rogalski
- Peter Rogalski
- Rhonda Rosenberg
- Dennis Ruddell
- Nicholas Ruddick
- Patricia Ryan
- Michelle Sanche
- Jim Sawka
- Edith Schindler (task force member)
- Pat Schuett
- Glen Schwartz
- David Sealy
- Susan Sebo (task force member)
- Lorna Siever
- W. K. Smith
- Wilma Staff
- Florence Stratton
- J. Sutyla
- Brenda Tamaki
- Andy Tate
- Ron H. Thomas
- Thomson School
- Vanessa Thorson

- Marilyn Turnley
- Catherine Verrall
- Bernadette Wagner
- Shawn Walley
- Helen Weber
- Marilyn Webber
- L. V. Weidner
- Judy Wensch
- Christine Whitaker
- Mark Wihak
- Dwight Wild
- Karen Wilke
- Ken Wilson
- Judy Zawruc

Regina Public Library Branches Statistics 2003/2004

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Branch	forecast 2004 Operating Budget †	2004 Operating Budget including lease costs of branches	Total Area (sqr. ft.) ‡	Circulation 2003 (annualized)*	Circulation per square foot (column E/D)	# Sessions/ computer station 2003*	Collection Size*	Cost/ Item circulated in \$ (column C/E)
Albert	200,000	200,000	5,608	71,840	12.81	607	30,222	2.78
Connaught	220,700	220,700	4,183	131,088	31.33	629	28,568	1.68
Prince of Wales	140,400	140,400	1,000	101,253	101.25	1,244	19,884	1.39
Glen Elm	341,700	341,700	13,000	138,597	10.66	624	52,132	2.47
Regent Place	518,500	518,500	9,107	252,045	27.67	696	55,184	2.06
Bothwell	431,900	<b>754,900</b>	13,735	398,840	29.04	928	72,840	1.89
Sunrise	465,600	465,600	13,725	316,715	23.08	646	69,683	1.47
Sherwood	421,800	421,800	13,875	354,645	25.56	933	78,936	1.19
Central	7,608,400	7,608,400	73,000	856,994	11.74	1,959	273,087	8.88

\* Figures derived from *Activity Levels- Appendix L: Re-structured RPL:2004*

† Figures derived from *Appendix E: Re-structured RPL:2004*

‡ Figures obtained from *RPL Value for Money Audit 1996*