

BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Annual Report 2017



The Bracebridge Public Library is an essential community hub providing everyone with materials and experiences that open minds, explore our world, inspire discovery, entertain and foster lifelong learning.

94 Manitoba Street
Bracebridge, On P1L 2B5
(705) 645-4171
www.bracebridgelibrary.ca



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library Board hopes the reader of the Bracebridge Public Library's 2017 Annual Report will obtain a broad understanding of the value of the Town's library through the figures and narratives used. This summary has been prepared to provide an overview of some of the key issues reported.

Education, positive experiences and community at core of Library programs. The Canada 150 celebration was the catalyst for most of our programs in 2017. Not only were they informative and fun, but many were made possible by members of our community who shared their expertise on a variety of topics. The Friends of BPL organized the Edible Book Contest which was a favourite of many. Due to the enthusiasm of 2 of our youngest Librarians, the Literature & Libations Book Club for those in their 20s or 30s started at the end of the year. For more great programs see Highlights of 2017. (Page 12 - 14)

The Library as knowledge & technology centre. While our Information & Digital Services Librarians may not be experts in all fields, their extensive background knowledge enables them to respond to a myriad of requests for information and assistance from our patrons. Whether dealing with business, health or legal queries, staff are either able to satisfy the request or make a referral to another source for more detailed information. Assisting patrons to navigate the ever-changing world of technological devices is a challenge requiring on-going staff education. Database use counts dropped this year due to a change to the statistical reporting method of one major vendor. E-book use is continuing to rise, although at a slower rate than the big leaps of 5 or 6 years ago. In 2017, ebooks made up 12% of the total circulation, which was a 3% increase. (Pages 7 & 8)

Library circulation, membership and visits are some of the ways we measure Library activities. While circulation at the Library was somewhat less there are several factors that may be considered. The most significant factor causing the drop in total circulation can be attributed to the DVD collection, likely the result of the newly improved Canadian Netflix. The registration of 896 new members was similar to 2016. At the end of 2017, we had 8,026 library members who had used their card within the last 2 years. Twice a year, we conduct "typical week" surveys required to gather data for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. During our survey in November (a typically slower month), we recorded over 1361 visitors entering the Library in one week. This translates to over 68,000 people coming to the Bracebridge Public Library in 2017. (Page 4 & 5)

Our Children's Department programs saw a variety of new initiatives. The introduction of an educational program aimed at children who are home-schooled was a new addition to our program lineup. This program attracted children between the ages of 4-15 and was enjoyed by the children and their parents. The purchase of a Cubelet set allowed children to build their own robots using connectors. This set introduced STEM-based programming (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) into our after-school programs. Crafternoons and the Bling Bling Club were also introduced to provide a creative outlet for children. The total participation in children's and teen library programming for 2017 was 4,524. (Pages 9 & 10)

Donations reflect community support. Each year we are fortunate to receive donations from many patrons and organizations such as the Pittsburgh-Muskoka Foundation and Spinning Reels (a local movie club). We are always very thankful for the financial support of the Friends of The Bracebridge Public Library. Other patron donations supported general operating costs and collections. (Pages 10 & 11)

Library expansion plans move forward. After a feasibility study for a joint Recreation/Library facility was presented to Council by MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects on February 13, 2017, Sierra Planning and Management presented a comparison study of the options (current and joint facility) for the Library to General Committee on August 22, 2017. They identified the joint facility as the preferred location based on a variety of factors. At the September 12, 2017 General Committee meeting, Council voted in favour of endorsing "the concept of co-locating the Bracebridge Public Library with a new Arena/Recreation Complex to be located on Salmon Avenue". We appreciate Council's support in all the work that has been done to move this project forward. (Pages 12)



OVERVIEW

“Sure, there are many business practices a library can effectively use. But it is important to remember that despite employing management or marketing innovations, we are still not competing in a marketplace; we are serving everyone... The most important, indeed fundamental, reason for government to provide libraries is that whenever anyone uses a library, everyone benefits.” John N. Berry III, Editor-at-Large, Library Journal, October 1 2016

The library of the 21st century has developed far beyond a building that simply houses materials to be borrowed by the public. The benefits to individuals, and the community as a whole, have increased exponentially. Throughout the year we continue to see new citizens discovering all that the Bracebridge Public Library has to offer. Whether they select print materials, audio-visual formats, join programs, use the public computers or simply find a quiet space, there is something for all ages, education levels or economic status.

The Bracebridge Public Library's 2017 Annual Report is intended to provide a broad understanding of the value of the Town's library through both figures and narratives.

There are many factors that contribute to the success of the Library in our community. However, circulation of the collection resources generates the bulk of the year's activity on a per item basis. These resources include material signed out or used in the library, use of databases available online through our website, and items loaned to other libraries.

A variety of programs also provide data that measure the Library's goals.

Our Children and Youth Services Department programs saw some changes in 2017 that resulted in a drop of our statistical counts. We have found that fewer teachers are choosing to walk with their classes to the library and bussing is not a feasible option. A greater emphasis on Library staff visits to the schools is desirable although this takes our only staff member away from that department for prolonged periods of time. Additional staff in this department is a future goal. A couple of weeks of programs had to be cancelled due to an at-home injury suffered by our Children & Youth Services Librarian. While staff presented some very creative programs for teens, this is still a challenging demographic to attract to the Library. It should be noted that 4,491 participants enjoyed our youth programs in 2017.

The number of adult programs remained relatively the same as 2016. While we lost the Writing Circle (who needed a more private space), we added outreach to the senior's residences and a new book club. We had exceptional adult attendance figures in 2016 largely due to our technology information sessions which were conducted once a week by a volunteer. Unfortunately, the volunteer was unavailable to continue these weekly sessions in 2017; however, a new staff member who began in June, was able to find some time in her schedule to offer similar sessions once a month commencing in September. A variety of adult programs and special events were enjoyed by 636 attendees.

Twice a year, we conduct “typical week” surveys required to gather data for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. During our survey in November (a typically slower month), we recorded 1,361 visitors entering the Library in one week. This translates to over 68,000 people coming to the Bracebridge Public Library in 2017.



CIRCULATION AT THE BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY (BPL)

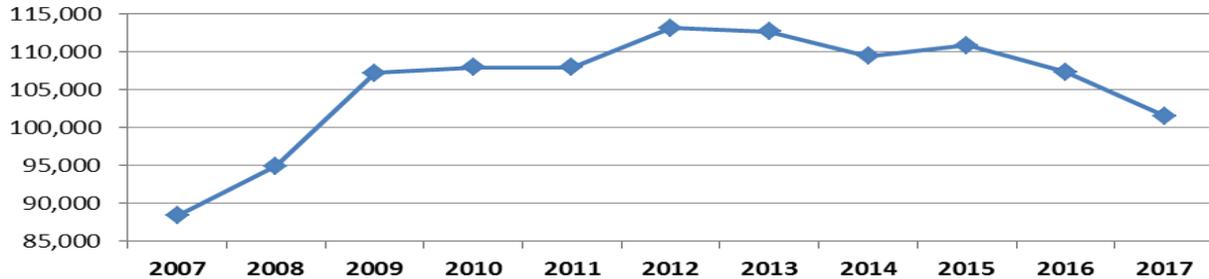
One of the Library’s many activities is the circulation of materials. There was a drop of 5% this year. The average monthly circulation was 8,460, which equates to an average of 19 fewer items per day of operation than 2016.

There are many factors that may have affected circulation: loss of circulation from former Nipissing students; fewer class visits; human error at checkout; and the usual rise and fall in readership. However, the most significant factor causing the drop in total circulation can be attributed to the DVD collection. A drop of 11% in the circulation of that format resulted in 3,200 fewer checkouts which represents 2% of the total drop. We are speculating that the improved Canadian Netflix accounted for the lower circulation, however, we still checked out over 26,000 DVDs in 2017. Adult print material (fiction, non-fiction, large print and magazines) represented another 2% loss, with the remaining 1% loss coming from a variety of collection formats.

Circulation counts reported are for materials being checked out but do not include those same numbers being checked in. Circulation staff also register new patrons, collect fines and fees, and resolve patron circulation queries, among other duties. They are front-line workers who contribute to a positive library experience for a wide range of clientele. Exceptional service skills are required particularly when dealing with the collection of fines.

As can be seen by the graph below, circulation in the past 5 years shows no fluctuations greater than plus or minus 5%. The Library continues as an essential community hub.

CIRCULATION 2007 – 2017



July and August continue to be our busiest months with the influx of summer residents and patrons using the Library more during vacations. We can generally expect an average of about 2,000 more items circulated in each of those months. February and April saw the largest drops in circulation when compared with the same months in 2016. We would have been experiencing the loss of the Nipissing University students compared to 2016 as well as some inclement weather including a “snow day” and a day with a power outage of several hours in April. December was surprisingly 2% over December 2016.

Fridays joined Mondays and Saturdays this year as the highest hourly rates. These days also have the fewest hours of operation. Sundays reflect online renewals and use is not noteworthy.

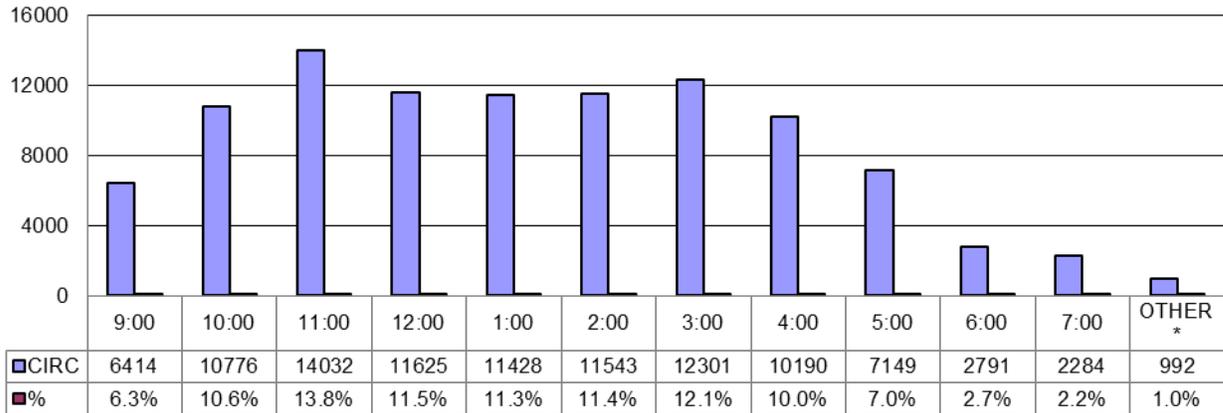
The chart below summarizes the average items per hour circulated by staff during the week:

<u>Day of the Week</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
Items/hour Circulated	N/A	39	35	32	31	37	37



Circulation activity by time of day is on par with 2016. Afternoon circulation continues to be higher than mornings, with 45% and approximately 42.5% respectively. Evenings remain at approximately 12.5% of the total circulation. We take advantage of the quieter evenings to present most of our adult programs.

CIRCULATION BY THE HOUR



*Note that "Other" includes after-hours Internet renewals.

LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

Every year we see new residents coming to the library to get a card. New registrations were very similar to 2016 with only 50 fewer new patrons, for a total of 896. At the end of 2017, we had 8,026 library members who had used their card within the last 2 years.

Our statistical reports monitor usage among residents of Bracebridge and the District of Muskoka, with adults being the primary user group responsible for almost 92% of circulation. Statistics generated by the youth in our Library account for almost 8% of the total circulation, while non-residents of Muskoka account for 0.1%.

Circulation by user is only a close approximation as we need to be aware that situations, such as parents using their child's card to sign out their own selections and vice versa, affect the results. We also know that some families or spouses will share one card making our membership numbers lower than they might be.

Among the age categories, we also have cottagers in those statistics. While these seasonal patrons are in a minority, we continue to spread the word of their eligibility, as taxpayers, for a free library card and the great resources available to them. Their circulation accounted for 3.5% of our 2017 total, which is 3,532 items, primarily over the 2 summer months.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Our professional librarians are responsible for the acquisition and removal of materials. They analyze the various collections according to the uniqueness of the material and the use by our patrons.

Due to our current space limitations, we are often removing titles which continue to circulate in order to keep our collection up-to-date. To alleviate the effect of extensive discarding of our fiction collection, staff continue to make use of cardboard storage boxes to house titles that are older but still see sufficient circulation to warrant keeping, a less than ideal situation.



The Library's collection is always evolving and being rearranged to maximize space, and sometimes to accommodate new formats. This year brought a new hand-held device with preloaded video content for children, called Playaway Views. They have proven to be a big hit, as expressed by one mom who said, "My daughter LOVED them; she set her dolls up with them and watched together!"

According to our database reports, 4,306 items were added to the BPL collection in 2017. This figure does not include electronic databases and ebooks because they are not catalogued as part of our in-house collection. Print materials accounted for 89% of the new items acquired, with audio visual, including music CDs and DVDs, at 11%. The average cost of print material is \$25 per item and \$24 for audio visual material, and range from \$13 to \$60 for ebooks.

The table below summarizes 2017 acquisitions as a percentage of the budget compared to percentage of circulation.

<u>Category</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>	<u>% of Circulation</u>
Adult Collection	46%	44%
Young Adult	5%	1%
Children's	18%	21%
Audio Visual	24%	31%
Magazines	7%	3%

The Adult collection continues to be the highest circulating category at 44%. While fiction will continue to lead the way, our readers are fairly consistent with their non-fiction interests. History has a strong lead in non-fiction followed by topics on mental and physical health, and home economics (cooking/sewing).

Print material offered by the Children's collection continues to surpass the circulation of audiobooks or DVDs in that department.

RESERVE SYSTEM

In addition to being able to reserve Bracebridge Library materials for pick-up, patrons have the benefit of the Inter-Library Loan (ILLO) system. The ILLO system provides reciprocal borrowing among libraries and enables us to satisfy the individual interests and informational needs among our patrons beyond our own collection. Our Inter-Library Loan Coordinator processes BPL patron requests coming from other libraries and subsequent returns to those libraries, as well as BPL items going out to and returning from other libraries. Regardless of whether items come from the BPL collection or from other libraries, patrons enjoy the ability to put an item on hold either from home via our website, or at the library with or without staff assistance.

The number of items reserved (from BPL collection and other libraries) and checked out by our library patrons dropped by 250 items from 2016 figures. While a decrease in use is often considered negative, it could also be an indication that staff were successful in selecting titles to purchase that met most of the needs of our patrons. Our ILLO staff sent out 70 fewer items requested by other libraries.



The following table compares 2017 to 2016 reserve activity.

<u>Location</u>	<u>2017 Reserves</u>	<u>2016 Reserves</u>	<u>% Increase</u>	<u>Monthly Average</u>
Bracebridge Public Library	4,156	4,406	-5.7%	346
Inter-Library Loan	1,368	1,438	-4.9%	114
Total	5,524	5,844	-5.5%	460

INFORMATION & DIGITAL SERVICES

“Librarians are tour-guides for all of knowledge.” Patrick Ness (British-American author, journalist, lecturer, and screenwriter.)

Bracebridge Public Library is very fortunate to have highly skilled, trained and knowledgeable Librarians who assist library patrons in the Information & Digital Services Department; all of whom have post-graduate qualifications in Library Science. These staff members involve themselves in on-going career development regarding areas such as technology, interpersonal communication, collection management and customer service. Staff are able to answer queries via email, telephone or in person.

While our librarians may not be experts in all fields, their extensive background knowledge enables them to respond to a myriad of requests for information and assistance from our patrons. Whether dealing with business, health or legal queries, staff are either able to satisfy the request or make a referral to another source for more detailed information. Assisting patrons to navigate the ever-changing world of technological devices is a challenge requiring on-going staff education.

This department is responsible for assisting with genealogical searches and the management of the Muskoka Collection. This is a valuable and extensive collection of our community’s heritage in print records, photos and microfilm, and it would be difficult to access without the organizational skills of these librarians. Among the many other duties of this department is the creation of the monthly Library newsletter, a marketing tool which has been praised by many patrons for its informative content.

The following table summarizes 2017 information requests compared to previous years.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>In Person</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Total</u>
2017	4,173	421	98	4,692
2016	5,288	538	151	5,977
2015	4,849	465	129	5,443

TECHNOLOGY

Technology continues to be a big part of libraries today. Decades ago, we saw the contents of the printed word being offered in alternative formats using the latest technology. Cassette tapes turned print into audio and the big cinema screen was down-sized for home use on video tapes. Recent years have seen rapid changes in technology and libraries continue to keep abreast of these developments as budgets allow.

Audiobooks on cassette tapes eventually made way for CDs, which you will still find in our collection, but the latest format of audiobook is our MP3 Playaways collection which continues to grow. As mentioned previously, the Playaway Views are now requiring space on our shelves. These are hand-held devices with pre-loaded video of stories and non-fiction documentaries which are easily accessed by children.



Our video games collection also continues to develop as we keep up with the requests by patrons for the latest console games.

Our website provides a variety of useful databases which make the Bracebridge Library “virtual” 24/7. Library cardholders who access these databases can feel confident that our resources have been vetted by professional staff and will provide reliable research data. The Library’s subscription to the Ontario libraries’ shared OverDrive collection also provides free access to e-books and e-audiobooks and is supplemented by our purchases of titles specifically for BPL cardholders in the Advantage collection.

Use of “e-resources”, which include databases and ebooks, moved from 26% of total collection use (not including materials used in-house) to 22.4% of total collection use. Some of the vendors of our databases changed their statistical reporting methods which caused a significant drop in recorded use counts and quite likely a more accurate count than in 2016. Ebook use alone is continuing to rise, although at a slower rate than the big leaps of 5 or 6 years ago. In 2017, ebooks made up 12% of the total circulation, which was a 3% increase.

The following table compares the number of users of technology provided by the library over three years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Database Use</u>	<u>Public PCs</u>	<u>Wireless Use</u>	<u>Ebook Use</u>
2017	29,283	8,180	3,983	16,145
2016	37,439	9,910	3,612	13,349
2015	16,029	9,571	3,199	11,484

The number of people who bring their laptops to use the Library’s wireless access has increased. Our public computers continue to be well-used.

While technology includes physical formats already mentioned and the not-so-physical online databases, it also includes the computer equipment and software that enables staff to manage inventory and patron records, as well as the popular public computers. The Bracebridge Public Library Board supports a budget that enables the continual updating of hardware and software required. Each year we generally upgrade 5 or 6 staff and public computers as warranties expire.

We were very fortunate this year to receive a 2017-2018 grant called Improving Library Digital Services (ILDS) from the Government of Ontario. These funds were used to replace 2 public computer work desks, digitize a significant amount of our microfilm of local newspapers, and purchase a green screen and related equipment that will enable all ages to experience this new media technology. We also added another “Cubelets” kit; a previous purchase has proven very popular as children learn the basics of robotics. A small amount of the grant was carried over to 2018 to expand our Playaway View collection.

One of the very popular services provided by the Library is the one-on-one Internet training, most appreciated by seniors and anyone who needs to refresh their knowledge. Our Internet Trainer, Kathy Ashby also offered occasional workshops which included how to buy and sell online, editing pictures and a “brain booster” theme that showed seniors how to use the Internet to improve or maintain their cognitive skills. Unfortunately, Kathy decided to retire in 2018 and she will be missed by our patrons.

Our inaugural Tech Talk session was presented by Information & Digital Services Librarian Sarah Babineau, with good attendance. It is often reported in the news of someone who suffered an identity theft due to providing personal information online, or their computer getting a “virus” because they accessed an unsafe website. Our Tech Talk sessions are geared at educating the public about safe Internet use and developing an appropriate comfort level with how they navigate through the aptly named “world wide web”.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The 2017 year was about re-configuring for the Bracebridge Public Library's Children's Department. Our Family Story Time and Tales for Two's programs remained popular with parents and children but we wanted to include a different audience. The introduction of an educational program aimed at children who are home-schooled was a new addition to our program lineup. This program attracted children between the ages of 4-15 and proved to be a valuable addition. Children and their families who did not attend our regular programming were attending this special program with a theme of travel and culture. Children were exposed to different music, language, customs and traditions from various countries. Australia was a particular favorite among the group. The children loved learning about kangaroos and koalas and especially liked making their own boomerang.

Other new additions to our Children's department were a Cubelets set and a PS4 Gaming system. We are always looking for ways to connect with children and the gaming system attracted a new group of "tween" boys. A group of 6 boys between the ages of 8-11 would routinely attend our PS4 program. Hockey, NASCAR, and Avengers were popular PS4 games among this group.



The Cubelet set allowed children to build their own robots using connectors. The Cubelet set was compatible with Lego and was often used during our Lego program. This set introduced STEM based programming into our after-school programs. Children enjoyed thinking of creative ways to use the Cubelets. One child made a rotating lighthouse and another made a sound activated robot.

Our after-school programming also saw the creation of a Bling Bling Club for children who love all things that sparkle. This club saw children "bedazzle" a pencil case, a gym bag, a Barbie doll, a crown, and a mask. This club was especially popular with girls between the ages of 6-10.

2017 was also a year of special events. Our very first Pumpkinfest was held in October. Children and their families enjoyed pumpkin refreshments, pumpkin themed games, pumpkin decorating and a pumpkin carving contest. Pumpkinfest was followed by Frostyfest in December. These special themed events proved to be very popular with positive feedback from participants. Providing free family-focused activities is something that we already do but these events offered festivities on a bigger scale.

The library participated in several programs in the community including Books for Brunch, Family Literacy Day, and the District of Muskoka program Get Ready for Kindergarten. The Library booth at the Bracebridge Fall Fair also marketed our Children's programs.

The theme of connecting to new audiences carried over to our Teen Department. A Teen book club was created and a core group of 7 teen girls between the ages of 13-16 regularly attended (a 12 year old sibling was allowed to attend). The girls particularly liked the social aspect of the book club. Often, they would relate events that happened in the books with events that happened in their own lives. The book club gave the Library the opportunity to connect with teens and get their opinion on the types of materials that appealed to them. Based on the data provided from this group and external research, our Teen Department revamped the graphic novel collection. Approximately 50 new titles were added and as a result, the collection is seeing a resurgence in popularity.

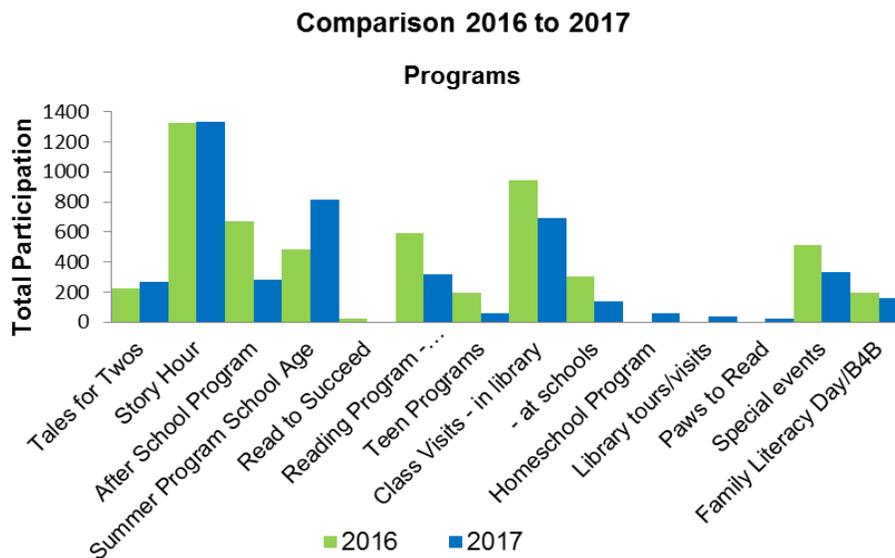
Several new Teen programs were offered but met with little response. While staff presented some very creative and fun programs for teens, this is still a challenging demographic to attract to the Library. Fortunately, we know that libraries are still important to some teens. The 2017 Teen Summer Reading Contest had 33 participants who read multiple books which we feel is very positive. The winner of the contest received a gift card for Staples.



Toasty Teens was a new venture that saw coats for teens donated by the public to the Library; teens were then invited to come and select a coat for free, and join in for pizza and pop. Other winter coat programs in the community focus on families rather than just teens so we are hoping this will grow to become an annual event that will provide an alternate venue for this age group. We assisted 7 teens and included 1 accompanying adult in this opportunity.

Perhaps the best indication of the value of the Library's programs, particularly in the Children's Department, is the feedback we received from a grandmother who brought her grandson to our storytime. She had brought her own children decades earlier and commended the Library for continuing the great programs. She was especially pleased with our Children & Youth Services Librarian who did a great job bringing her grandson "out of his shell". The Library plays an important role in the community in many ways, including the socialization of children.

The total participation in children's and teen library programming for 2017 was 4,524. The following graph compares the attendance at programs between 2016 and 2017.



VOLUNTEERS

The Bracebridge Library receives frequent offers of volunteerism from the public and we are happy to make use of their services whenever possible, whether it involves the Visiting Library Service, helping with our Statistics Week, or high school students achieving their 40 hours of community work. We are very fortunate to have the 60 member Friends of the Library group who fundraise to provide money for expenditures outside our budget limits and who support the Library in other ways as well. We are also very thankful and happy to acknowledge the wonderful volunteers from the Horticultural Society who turn our front garden into a beautiful showpiece every spring.



REVENUE/FINANCIAL

Susan Dominus, New York Times columnist, describes libraries as *"free parks with a brain, providing education brilliantly disguised as leisure."* quoted in Library Journal May 15, 2008. p 8.

Using the analogy of libraries as free parks is perhaps a good way to describe the special relationship the Library has with the community. As with a municipal park, we are a public facility that is accessible to all, primarily because our mandate to provide free service removes a very real barrier to access for many in our community. We are fortunate to have municipal support that ensures this access for all. The return on this investment is invaluable to the community as we truly provide "education brilliantly disguised as leisure". The municipal contribution in 2017 represents 92% of the Library's budget, an increase over 2016 as a result of \$70,000 going into reserves to be put towards the purchase of a new elevator in 2018. Revenue which we generate on our own includes library fees and fines (\$14,113), and printing and Internet fees (\$5,982). Money from sales of the Library's books that have been weeded from the collection brought in \$869.

The 2017 budget enabled an increase of hours for a couple of staff positions, an increase to our cleaning budget to improve the level of service, and a much needed increase to our training budget.

The Friends of the Bracebridge Public Library continue to be a very helpful source of funds which they generate through book sales and special events. In 2017 they donated a total of \$2,494. Some of these funds went towards the purchase of the prize for the teen summer reading contest and furniture to update the Teen Area, which now boasts a sofa and bistro table with 2 chairs. Funds were also used to pay for performers for special children's programs and prizes for Readopoly, the children's summer reading program. The purchase of a laminator was funded by the Friends.

The Pittsburgh-Muskoka Foundation has been an annual contributor, this year providing \$1,853 CDN. This year we received \$1,000 from Spinning Reels (a local movie club) which went toward the purchase of DVDs for our collection. We selected many of the titles which the group showed throughout the year. Other patron donations totalled \$251, some of which supported library collections.

Using the Statistics Canada's 2016 census population for Bracebridge of 16,010, the cost of library service this year was about \$55.00 per capita for the taxpayer.

2017 FINANCIAL SUMMARY (UNAUDITED)

The following is a summary of the 2017 financial activity.

<u>Revenue Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expenditure Areas</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Tax Levy:		Staffing:	
Town of Bracebridge	\$881,730	Salaries & benefits	\$554,810
External Grants & Other:		Operations & Capital:	
Province of Ontario	\$39,889	Library resources	\$123,028
Government of Canada	\$1,197	Building maintenance	\$20,026
		General Operations	\$184,731
Fees, fines, donations, fundraising	\$30,779	Library reserves	\$71,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$953,595	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$953,595



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

The Library Board's expansion plans moved forward in 2017. After Council passed a motion to consider other locations for the expanded library in 2016, it became apparent that there were two key locations: the current location and a joint facility with the proposed future Recreation Complex. A feasibility study on using the current location had been completed by CS&P Architects in 2012, with costs being update in 2017. The feasibility study for a joint Recreation/Library facility was presented to Council by MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects on February 13, 2017. Sierra Planning and Management then did a comparison study of the 2 key location options for the Library and presented the Bracebridge Public Library Accommodation Planning Study to General Committee on August 22, 2017. They identified the joint facility as the preferred location based on a variety of factors. At the September 12, 2017 General Committee meeting, Council voted in favour of endorsing "the concept of co-locating the Bracebridge Public Library with a new Arena/Recreation Complex to be located on Salmon Avenue" and "That the recommendations contained in the Bracebridge Public Library Accommodations Planning Study completed by Sierra Planning and Management be endorsed for future planning for the Bracebridge Public Library." The Library Board was asked for their concurrence, which was passed at a special meeting on October 2, 2017.

The Canada 150 celebration was the catalyst for most of our programs in 2017. We encouraged the tracing of one's heritage by providing an introduction to genealogy and the use of our subscription to Ancestry Library Edition® conducted by Information & Digital Services Librarian Ruth Holtz. A program about maple syrup production was presented by local producers, Brooklands Farm. Katya Riley gave an impressive talk that was directed to an adult audience. Refreshments included Muskoka Roastery maple-flavoured coffee, maple muffins and maple cookies, of course. A very successful adult art workshop with Nancy Hunter presented a Canada 150 tie-in with a Canadian landscape theme. Jan McDonnell, a volunteer for Muskoka Conservancy gave a very informative presentation on native plants to over 30 attendees. Our Canada 150 celebrations also included travelogues to the Trent-Severn Waterway and the Chilkoot Pass both by local resident Judi Brouse, a special Canada Day celebration on June 30th and our Passport Across Canada Reading Contest running all year.

In keeping with the Canadian theme, our Annual Mystery Night dealt with the mysterious death of artist Tom Thomson and was another success enjoyed by all the sleuths.



The year ended with the Santa Claus Parade's theme of Canada 150 where staff joined in the fun with the CEO dressed as a birthday cake and other staff dressed as striped birthday candles. Staff are to be commended for really "putting themselves out there" to help promote the Library in our community!

Other program highlights included the Muskoka libraries friendly reading challenge in celebration of Family Literacy Day, a national awareness initiative held annually on January 27th. As a tie-in with Canada 150, we posted red maple leaves in our libraries for every person who notified us that they read for at least 15 minutes that day. Our library's goal of 150 leaves was surpassed. The libraries are keen to run the challenge again next year.

The Library Board's Strategic Plan 2015-2019 cites involvement in community events as one of its goals. This was achieved in 2017 in a variety of ways, including our participation in the planning and presentation of 2 annual family literacy events by the Muskoka Family Literacy Group. One event occurs



every January in Gravenhurst and the other is presented every September in Bracebridge. Unfortunately, there has been a recent change to the provincial funding for early literacy program providers and we will be losing a couple of our partners, so the future of this group is unsure at this time. Other outreach included staff visits to James Street Retirement Residence, Castle Peak Retirement Residence, Muskoka Hills Retirement Villa and the Bracebridge Centre for Active Living to describe services and library programs that might appeal to seniors in the community. Staff also set up a library booth at the Muskoka Pioneer Power Show, and at the Pride Picnic where we gained some valuable suggestions for resources to support the LGBTQ community.

As with any aging building, repairs and maintenance are on-going. At the end of March, the floor tiles in the public washrooms were replaced; brought about by the old tiles having sunk below the floor drain which caused a potential tripping hazard. Other minor repairs were required throughout the year, but the biggest project was the painting of the upper Carnegie section of the Library and the lower Circulation Desk area which provided a fresh look.

We are fortunate to have a “Friends of the Library” group who do fundraising; however they initiated an event that was just for fun. The Edible Book Festival saw 20 entries which were judged by Mayor Graydon Smith and Friends’ president Colleen Manary. Prizes were awarded. The edible entries were very creative. Contestants and viewers felt it was a fun event that needs to be repeated next year.



The authors of “At your age?” who hailed from Castle Peak Retirement Residence promoted their book with several interesting readings. We were fortunate to provide a venue for them and regrettably add that some of the authors have since passed. Their stories live on in this book.

Two Syrian families who were new to our community and country were welcomed to the Library and each received some specially selected gift books. It was an opportunity to show these newcomers that the public library can assist with their educational, entertainment and social needs.

The CEO was invited to address the Tall Pine Tales event presented by the writers’ groups from Haliburton, Baysville and Bracebridge held at St. Thomas Anglican Church. The Bracebridge group still values their connection with the Library in spite of needing to conduct their meetings at another location due to a lack of private meeting space in our library. The lack of appropriate program space was felt as well in the Children’s Department. Two of the Library’s special events were held at the United Church as it was felt that the expected attendance could not be accommodated in our facility. Unfortunately, this meant that synergy was lost as attendees did not have the opportunity to see and use the other great services in the Library.

Due to the enthusiasm of 2 of our younger Librarians, Sarah and Ashleigh, a new program was started at the end of the year. The Literature & Libations Book Club is intended for anyone in their 20s or 30s. This club had its first book discussion with 6 young(ish) adults attending. We hope this will be a great opportunity to reach a demographic that may be ready to return to library use, after their teen years (statistically our least frequent library users).



We continue to sponsor the Scarecrow contest at the annual Fall Fair and are able to set up a Library booth close to the scarecrow entries. This is a great opportunity to speak to many locals, cottagers and visitors about the Bracebridge Library specifically and public libraries in general. People are always impressed with how libraries serve their communities today.

Our Appreciation Tea gave an opportunity to thank the many people who have supported the Library by volunteering or by a financial donation. Mayor Graydon Smith was on hand to offer thanks on behalf of the Town.

When asked to tell us what they like about the Library, our patrons' first comments always refer to the friendly and helpful staff. We know that any report on the annual Library activities must include the people responsible for providing excellent customer service and programs that are both educational and entertaining. We were sorry to see the retirement of long-time staff member, Mary Armstrong (Information & Digital Services Librarian) at the end of May after 20 years of service at BPL. Mary made great contributions in her tenure, especially regarding library expansion planning. Sarah Babineau was selected to fill that position in June. Other staff changes included the hiring of Kelly Fry who replaced Debbie O'Blenes as a Page. We would also like to extend congratulations to Library Board Chair, Arlie Freer who received the Bracebridge Outstanding Volunteer Achievement Award at the community ceremony on June 6th.





BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

The members of the Bracebridge Public Library Board for the 2014 to 2018 term are:

Arlie Freer, Chair	Councillor Chris Wilson, Council Representative
Anthony Barker	Terry Henderson
Barbara Hutchinson (filled vacancy in Feb 2017)	Mary (Lynn) Jacob
Mike Mayes-Stewart	Carol Anne Robinson
Dorothy (Pat) Schofield	

BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFF

The members of the staff of the Bracebridge Public Library in 2017 were:

CEO/Chief Librarian	Cathryn Rodney
Information & Digital Services Librarians	Mary Armstrong (Jan – May) Sarah Babineau (Jun – Dec) Cindy Buhne Ruth Holtz
Library Assistant/Office Manager	Carolyn Dawkins
Children & Youth Services Librarian	Ashleigh Whipp
Inter-Library Loan Coordinator	Nancy Beasley
Circulation Clerks	Sue Ronson Trudy Vincent Sharyn Wilson
Pages	Chris Boorman Kelly Fry (Jun – Dec) Julene Jones Debbie O'Blenes (Jan – May)