

# SNOWSHOE

NEWSLETTER OF THE N.W.T. LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

February 1999

Vol. 9, No. 3

## President's Message

things are down to the wire. A library association for Nunavut is being organized. New libraries to serve the people of Nunavut are being established. I hope that there will continue to be close ties between the two territories.

Another "event" which may have a significant impact on libraries is the "millennium bug", or the inability of some computers to recognize the year 2000. Many, particularly older, computer chips may interpret a year designation of '00' as the year 1900, and cease to function. In our highly automated world, a great deal of machinery includes imbedded computer chips. No one really knows what will happen when the clocks roll over from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000. If your organization is not checking its systems for year 2000 compliance, encourage your senior managers to start. At the very least talk to the vendor of your automation software to determine whether or not it is year 2000 compliant.

The third issue which I see facing the NWTLA and its members in the coming year is pay equity. In the latest round of contract negotiations, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Union of Northern Workers (UNW) withdrew a

proposed pay equity settlement from the bargaining table. The GNWT has since sent offers to individuals. The GNWT has determined that the class code into which librarians fall was not subject to gender bias, but will not explain how this conclusion was reached. The UNW seems unwilling to investigate. I believe that the NWTLA should actively pursue this matter. Pay equity is not simply about money. It is about recognition for our profession.

*Alison Welch*

I have been looking back over the last year as my term as President draws to a close. The year seems to have flown by without any significant issues for the NWT Library Association. I don't think that we will be able to say the same for the coming year, however. Several noteworthy events spring to mind.

The one that most northerners are thinking about these days is division of the Territories. With seven weeks to go as I write this,

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# Nunavut Legislative Library & Information Services

*Gayle Jessop*



Setting up Nunavut Legislative Library & Information Services has been an interesting experience, to say the least. Imagine establishing a mandate and policies, starting collection development, and evaluating automated library systems in the absence of clients. It's a challenge! This is where Vera Raschke's experience, and the experience of the other Legislative Librarians throughout Canada, has been invaluable.

As part of the Research & Library Services team, the Legislative Library exists to provide reference and information services to the Legislative Assembly. Services and resources will be provided on a priority basis to Members of the Legislative Assembly and their staff, Standing and Special Committees, the Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Clerk, Nunavut government departments, and the general

public. Service to the Legislative Assembly will take precedence over all other service requests. We will also strive to acquire and maintain a comprehensive collection of published Nunavut government documents on behalf of the people of Nunavut.

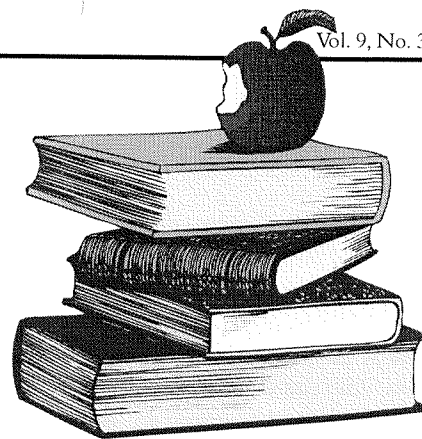
That being said, we do not actually have a facility yet. As most people are aware, the Legislative Assembly building is currently under construction. In the interim, a small collection of documents has been acquired. These documents include essential background publications related to the events leading up to the creation of Nunavut. In addition, we are a selective depository library and have begun to collect relevant federal government documents. Online information services are being evaluated and selected; we have tried to anticipate the most important services for a legislative environment by consulting with other jurisdictions.

Perhaps the most interesting (and frustrating) experience to date has been the evaluation of an automated library system. We are looking for a system that is capable of handling Inuktitut syllabics. However, the system also needs to operate in the Windows NT environment, use the Z39.50 search and retrieve protocol, and support MARC format. This combination of requirements cuts down the choice of systems considerably. However, several vendors have expressed an interest in our project. I am confident that we will find a solution in the near future.

The atmosphere of the Legislative Assembly is one of teamwork. Some projects fall well outside the traditional boundaries of "library work". It is this eclectic mix of activities that is truly exciting; it involves the detailed planning of historic events such as the swearing in of MLAs and the first sitting day of the very first session of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. It's a great way for new employees of the Legislative Assembly to get to know one another. The result of this early teamwork will be strong support for our MLAs after April 1st, 1999.

# Trends in Literacy and Reading in Canada and Internationally

Gwynneth Evans  
Director General  
National and International Programs  
National Library of Canada



(Adapted from a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Professional Librarians of New Brunswick in Fredericton on October 3, 1998. This article first appeared in *National Library News*, Vol. 31, No. 1, January 1999)

## Introduction

Having been asked to speak on some trends and perspectives on literacy and reading, I would like to add that the human elements that bring together the author, publisher, bookseller and distributor, librarian, reader and community are of particular interest to me.

Let me start with a very recent experience. In late September, author Sharon Butala read at the National Library. About 80 of us were crowded into one of our meeting rooms, with a bookseller, and a small display by the United Services of Canada, the sponsor of her trip to Ethiopia to study ecological diversification. Her most recent novel, *The Garden of Eden*, follows the seasons and moves between southwest Saskatchewan and Ethiopia. In the days since then, I have read Sharon Butala's *The Perfection of Morning*.

Ms. Butala has built up a strong reference collection at her farm, where she lives nine months of the year. (She and her husband move to their ranch when the cattle are ranging.) She has many dictionaries and atlases and books on religion, myth, philosophy, psychology, and Amerindian history and culture. And in one of these sources, she found a Sufi saying: "when the pupil is ready, the teacher will come." And she added, "my teacher was to be books." And yet a clear message of her work is - my teacher is also nature. Indeed, the subtitle of *The Perfection of Morning* is *An Apprenticeship in Nature*.

That night, we all remarked how quietly and intimately present the author was among us, taking us into her story, describing the Canadian and African settings, introducing us to her characters and to the Saskatchewan she has come to know and love so well. Here we were - listening to Sharon read and then asking her about her experience of life and literature. Literary, literate - littérature, littéraire, lettré - all come from the Latin root - littera, letter. We experienced the importance of both the oral and written traditions.

## Context

For the fifth year in a row, Canada has been number one in the United Nations human development report. The

indicators have been chosen to assess social and economic development. But there were two disturbing percentages even in this glowing report and, combined with a third, we must take heed. According to this report, 16 percent of Canadian adults are illiterate and 12 percent are below the poverty line. Moreover, our ranking for the recognition of women in the workplace, public office and leadership positions has fallen.

Why do I choose to identify those factors together? In Western society as well as other societies - Asian, African, South American - we know that poverty and illiteracy are often intricately bound. And if poverty is especially prevalent among women and children, we know that it is difficult to reach them, even when massive campaigns of basic education are undertaken by the government. We also know that family literacy and development are increased in communities where women read, learn and apply their knowledge for family planning, health, diet, small business, and the environment. Reports and studies of community development related to the dominance of sustaining a literate environment have been found in the media and major journals, but these stories are often buried in favour of the horror stories of war, famine, crime and corruption that crowd our screens and headlines.

We know much more about adult literacy than we ever have before.

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International comparative studies (*Literacy, Economy and Society, Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada, and Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society*) have given us data on societies quite different from our own - in Poland and Sweden, for example, as well as those more like our own in Great Britain and the United States. These studies test three different types of literacy: prose literacy, documentary literacy and quantitative literacy. They test the ability of an individual to understand text within its context (prose); the ability to identify information and understand and apply instructions (documentary) and numerical literacy. There are five levels - from the most basic to the most sophisticated skills - of comprehension and application of the information gained through absorbing the meaning of the passages. Interestingly enough, the European results (with the exception of Poland) generally demonstrate that the greatest portion of those tested are clustered in levels 2 and 3 - quite adequate for many forms of life and work. In North America, we proportionately have more adults in levels 1 and 5 - the two extremes of basic and sophisticated. And in this increasingly information-based economy, those at the first level find it hard to get and keep jobs. Moreover, our own figures have not changed over time - we have as many adults in that low level as there were at the beginning of the 1990s.

A number of countries have mounted campaigns to encourage. They understand the need from both an economic and a social perspective. We in Canada sometimes find such campaigns difficult to launch at a national level because education is a provincial matter. We do have the National Literacy Secretariat within the Department of Human Resources Development. Many of its agreements are worked out at the provincial,

community and organizational levels. And much has been accomplished.

The value of lifelong learning is now associated with the promotion of reading, and countries like Wales, for example, also attach the survival of Welsh to these initiatives. The Welsh Book Council, publishers, booksellers, librarians and authors join forces in a common cause. UNESCO promotes the importance of a book policy, as well as information and educational policies, in order to identify the infrastructure necessary for a viable publishing industry in developing countries.

I am a volunteer with CODE (Canadian Organization for Development through Education). We have worked in Africa and the Caribbean for many years to integrate three related programs: the provision of foreign books chosen by the partners in our countries of emphasis and pertinent to our target audiences (school children and adults with less than six years of schooling); the support of publishing in local languages, using indigenous authors, illustrators, and publishing houses; and the development of libraries and library staff. There is increased recognition of the interdependence of these activities in providing support for a sustained literate environment, which, in turn, contributes to community development.

### **The Role of Libraries**

Where do libraries fit in? A UNESCO manifesto on the public library identifies the public library as a promoter and supporter of reading and literacy. The public library is also a source of information, materials and services for all groups within the community. In recent years, we have worked on a school library manifesto to be presented to the UNESCO member states because we believe that the school library has a fundamental role to play in the teaching of reading, analytical and literacy skills. Many libraries play a variety of roles for different age groups. It is known, for example, that young children learn quickly. They can be taught several

languages before they go to school. We also now know that children who are not read and spoken to begin to lose that dexterity and capacity to learn; their brain cells begin to atrophy if they are not stimulated. So libraries have programs for pre schoolers and their caregivers, collections of appropriate reading and listening materials, facilities for tutoring and reading clubs, and some act as the focal point for bringing together all the players - authors, publishers, teachers, readers. When one accepts the necessity of practice in reading, analyzing and applying information, the importance of the library as a centre for lifelong learning (for both individual and group learning) follows. I am not saying that the centre is only physical; with the technologies it can also be virtual. However, the planning, organization and services of the library must be developed in consultation with the citizens of the community. The human element is vital to the planning and evaluation of the services. Most libraries have not seen themselves as publishers except for the kinds of materials that promote and explain their services or promote specialized collections. However, with the Internet, libraries are providing access to information in an enhanced way - information not only held by the Library but also available in different forms and from many sources, including full text and multimedia. They may also be training sites and public points of access for their whole community.

In considering the various models that libraries can emulate in providing support for individual and group reading, I would like to tell you about an experience I had in northern Peru almost two years ago. Knowing of a dynamic rural library service in the area around Cajamarca, where Pizarro took the last Inca emperor in 1534, a colleague and I spent a month with

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several of its leaders. The network is a voluntary service in peasant farmers' homes. A corner of the public room in the house is devoted to the library, and members of the community may come before their day in the fields starts or after it ends. In the evening, children and adults read together around the light of a coal lamp and discuss the content and application of the materials they read together aloud - either in Spanish or, occasionally, in Quechua. What is remarkable about their materials is a 20-volume encyclopedia, written and illustrated by the peasants themselves, under the guidance of a leader formally trained in the anthropology and culture of the high Andes.

Espousing a philosophy of *Les traditions pour demain*, based on the importance of understanding the community's history, origins, customs and beliefs, this leader has promoted confidence among the people in writing and reading their stories. Living close to nature and to the sources of their story, they have worked to piece together all the connections between their material, social and spiritual lives so that they can take hold of the present and build the future.

This network of rural libraries is built on volunteer and democratic principles, supported by a small headquarters staff who offer training and communication and provide books for the libraries in family homes. The network has been built up over 25 years and the publishing program started about 10 years ago.

My colleague and I spent a week with the leaders at a planning session and a couple of days in the home and hamlet of one of the librarians. I was impressed by the joy, the pride and the fellowship of these people. They are talented musicians and orators. They tell their stories with conviction and they see their library work as vital to

community survival and development.

We spent some time in Cajamarca to assess the essential elements of literacy in practical terms, set against all the reading we had done in international studies. We also wanted to know whether the Cajamarca experience is transportable to other situations, especially to Africa.


Literacy is a concept, a process, a set of skills, and a mode of behaviour. In our part of the world, we think of it in personal or individual terms; in the Andes, it is a community activity, based on stated principles and needs. My sense is that we all can learn lessons from our Peruvian colleagues, by recognizing that the oral and the written are different but complementary expressions of communication and by trying to understand that reading is not only a solitary exercise but a communal activity, both in developing societies and in our own. Societies learn and develop as we acknowledge the importance of literacy to our social, economic and spiritual lives.

When we discussed the Peruvian experience with African experts, they pointed out the predominance of local languages and different customs, religions and belief systems on that continent. There is a greater diversity in Africa and a greater range of circumstance - much of it even poorer economically - than in the Andes. However, we have also learned that we must provide culturally sensitive materials that correspond to the needs of women and children, as well as to those of men. The collaboration of authors, illustrators, publishers, librarians and funding organizations in finding the balance between the choice of useful foreign collections and the stimulation of new local materials is an issue which deserves our attention.

Returning to my Canadian story about the work of Sharon Butala, I would suggest that she too calls us to know and understand our pasts and our contexts so we can build our futures. She comments that when the students are ready, the teachers come. And I believe that she

realizes that we are all both students and teachers. We can learn from one another, especially if we are susceptible to being creative and open to possibility. We can work together at the local, provincial, regional, national and international levels to increase the promotion and enjoyment of reading for many purposes and to stimulate the practice of literacy among individuals and groups.

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**On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding:**  
"Product will be hot after heating."

**On the package of a hotel-provided shower cap:**  
"Fits one head."

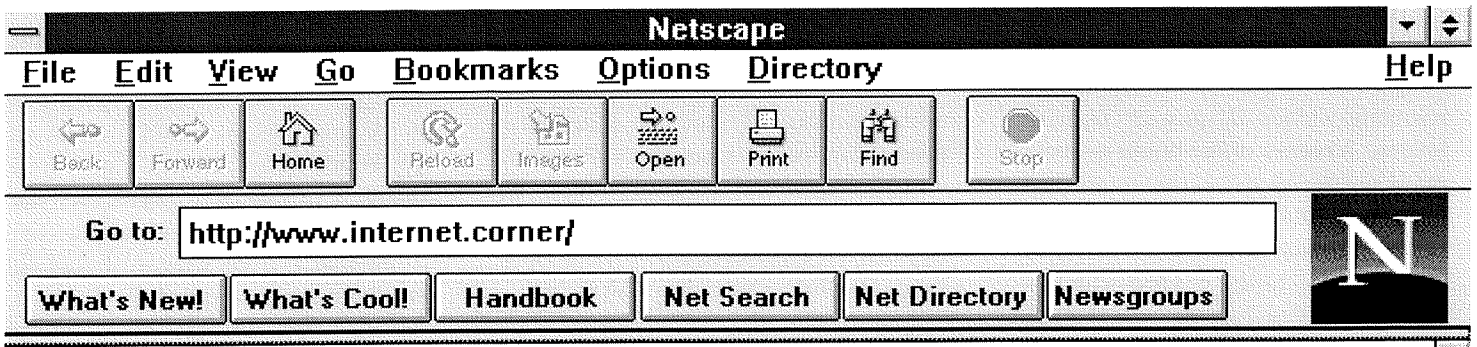
**On a Japanese food processor:**  
"Not to be used for the other use."

**On Sainbury's peanuts:**  
"Warning: Contains nuts."

**On a bag of Frito's Corn Chips:**  
"You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside."

**For a Rowenta clothes iron:**  
"Do not iron clothes on body."

**For a Swedish chain saw:**  
"Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands."



# Search Engines

## The Challenge of Keeping Up To Date

*Florrie Cook*

Can't live with them, and can't live without them! That's how I feel about search engines!

Library staff are big users of search engines and their "advanced features". But there are so many out there, and they are constantly changing. Buy-outs, changing affiliations (it's a commercial world!), better (maybe) features and ways to search... it is mind boggling to keep up to date and be an effective searcher. Here are a few sites I've found to be helpful, when I feel hopelessly out of date, and want to brush up on my Search Engine knowledge.

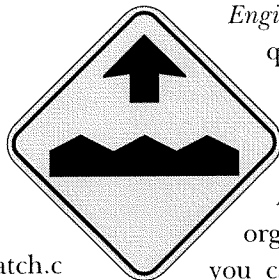
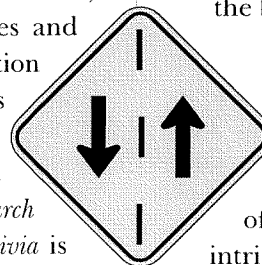
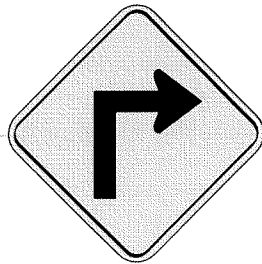
Almost everything you wanted to know about search engines can be found at Search Engine Watch (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>), a free web service. Find out about popularity, performance ratings such as relevancy, number

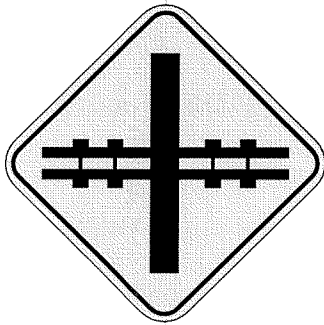
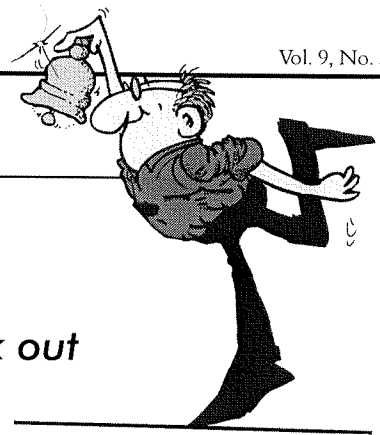
of indexed sites, currency, new or changed search features, who's making the most money, what's new, background on search engines and even trivia. There is information for researchers and librarians (that's us!), but also for webmasters and marketers.

The section on *Using Search Engines* under *Facts and Trivia* is quite useful with information about power searching, tutorials, glossary and reviews of search engines. Also useful is their news organized by search engine, so you can catch up on your two or three favourite ones. My only problem is getting side tracked. Search Engine Report is their free monthly newsletter which you can have deliv-

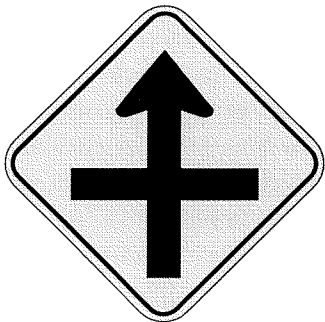
ered to you via e-mail. A quick scan will let you know if there is anything you should be catching up on, and assure you that you are not missing anything too important. This month I was intrigued by several articles about power searching using math rather than boolean logic. But there was information on changing alliances, who is now claiming to have the biggest market share etc.

The Mining Company has a WebSearch section featuring articles on various aspects of web searching all with intriguing titles. If you are looking to update your search skills, you may want to look at some recent articles which claim to enlighten you about features used by most search engines - "Super Searcher's Search Secrets" or "Seven Habits of Effective Searchers". These can be accessed from <http://home.miningco.com/internet/sites - Web Search articles>. The





Internet Guide  
 (<http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/conted/bytitle/guide.htm>) is another useful resource. There is a small charge (\$75 for 6 months but renewals are only \$25) to get access to this site, but it includes valuable information for librarians on the Internet world, not just search engines, and it is constantly being updated. It is a product out of the University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Science. When I took their course on Current Awareness, much of the material we used could be accessed through this site. A subscription includes a newsletter alerting you to changes at their site. I appreciate this resource because it is aimed at searchers and information professionals, tries to attract you with content not catchy titles, and it is Canadian. Check out the guide's description and the demo.



## Some other sites you might want to check out

### Environment Canada Library - Yellowknife

<http://www.andornot.com/envcan/>

Recently released for public access, this regional union list for Environment Canada includes the Yellowknife EC library catalogue. Contributing libraries all use DB/Textworks locally with compatible database structure and fields. The Inmagic Web Publisher has been used to make the union list searchable on the Web.

### Symbols and Interlibrary Loan Policies in Canada

<http://www.nlcbnc.ca/ill/eill.htm>

This resource is regularly updated and free! Why buy a paper edition? You will also find other useful ILL at the NL information at this site.

### Class FC Classification for Canadian History

<http://www.nlcbnc.ca/pubs/abs/eclassfc.htm>

You can view and search the FC classification using Adobe Acrobat Reader.

### Canadian Forthcoming Books CIP

<http://www.nlcbnc.ca/forthbks/efbintro.htm>

Currently the March 1998 to March 1999 is online. Items listed are those which have been submitted to the National Library of Canada for CIP.

### Canadiana on CD ROM Online Demo

<http://www.nlcbnc.ca/canadiana/ecanecd.htm>

Canadiana is now available on CD ROM complete with Personal and Corporate Author Authority records. It sounds like a wonderful research and cataloguing tool. Before purchasing you can try a demo on the NL web site.

### Northern Light Search Engine

<http://www.northernlight.com>

Designed and catalogued by librarians, sites are automatically grouped into categories. This is becoming one of the big players in the search engine field.

# Bits Pieces

## From the Yellowknife Public Library

*Deborah Bruser*



Visitors to N.W.T. Public Library Services' Home Page ([www.nwtpls.gov.nt.ca](http://www.nwtpls.gov.nt.ca)) are in for a pleasant surprise. Patrons will benefit from two resources which can be tapped by double clicking on "Online Resources". The catalogue contained therein lists all of the resources held by libraries in the N.W.T. together with an indication of availability. As well, the aspiring researcher will appreciate the electronic periodical index. This Ebsco Host product indexes over 400 popular and academic journals. There are many full text citations.

Yellowknife Public Library is preparing to welcome two talented visitors to our library. Quebec children's illustrator ("In Like a Lion" and "Secret Dawn") and water colourist Yolaine Lefebvre has been funded by Canada Council to provide two public presentations on Thursday, February 18th. At 10 a.m. in the Public Library Meeting Rooms the Yellowknife Children's Literature Roundtable will host a slide show and discussion presentation by Yolaine entitled "Surviving as an Artist". This motivational session will interest adults and high school students. That same evening in the public library meeting rooms at 7 p.m. Ms. Lefebvre presents again, this time to young people eight and up and to their parents. This slide show presentation promises to be a visual treat as Yolaine will trace the development of her career as an artist as well as demonstrate each step of the illustration process from beginning to end. Participants will come away much more knowledgeable about the creation of a children's book.

Our community has been blessed by yet another talented visitor storyteller Leslie Robbins. Leslie has been a professional storyteller since 1983 and has made numerous public presentations on television, radio and in the schools. Her stories have as well been published in two anthologies, "Tales for an unknown city" (ed. D. Yashinsky) and "Chosen tales" (ed. P. Schram). On Thursday, February 25th at 7 p.m. we invite children ages three to eight to come with their parents to our library meeting rooms to enjoy a family program of multicultural stories with Leslie Robbins. Children are invited to attend in their pyjamas if they wish and a bedtime story will be included. Refreshments will be served.

This consummate storyteller has also offered to train interested Yellowknifers in the art of storytelling. This is a five week program which will involve participants one evening per week for two hours. We propose to commence on Wednesday, April 7th. The approximate cost will be \$50.00 per participant. It is very much a "hand-on" course with each student learning one story during the five week period. Leslie suggests that these stories could be presented in a wrap-up storytelling concert. Please call me at 920-5642 if you would like to participate and/or receive more information.

# JOB OPPORTUNITIES

## Information Resource Manager Wentworth Libraries, Hamilton, ON

Wentworth Libraries is a decentralized system of 15 suburban and rural libraries serving a population of 125,000 in 4 municipalities surrounding the City of Hamilton. The library operates a Dynix library system and a LAN/WAN on NT.

Deadline: March 9, 1999

Salary range: \$44,954 - \$59,514 (under review)

A copy of job description is available by automated next-day response to interested persons sending a blank e-mail message to [irmjob@wentworth.library.on.ca](mailto:irmjob@wentworth.library.on.ca). E-mail or fax applications *will not* be accepted. Applications should be submitted by mail to:

Chief Librarian, Wentworth Libraries  
70 Frid St., Suite One  
Hamilton, ON L8P 4M4

## Academic Liaison Librarian University of Guelph Library

Deadline: March 1, 1999

Salary: \$36,287

Responsibilities include liaison and training for faculty and graduate students; collection development; collection assessments for course and program evaluations; reference assistance; participating in the management of the Library with specific responsibility for all areas related to academic liaison.

Send applications to:

Jim Brett, Manager, Science & Technology,  
Information Services  
Chair of the Search Committee  
c/o The Library  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1  
Fax (519) 824-6931  
E-mail: [jimbrett@uoguelph.ca](mailto:jimbrett@uoguelph.ca)

## Business Librarian / Reference Librarian York University, ON

York University Libraries are seeking 2 librarians to work in the Business and Government publications Library located in the Schulick School of Business. The Library has business reference sources and periodicals as well as collections of documents from Canadian federal, provincial, municipal, foreign governments and international organizations.

### Business Librarian

Responsibilities include reference assistance; library instruction; business and management collections development; faculty liaison; reference support for electronic services and databases; preparation of bibliographies, guides and other user aids; professional development, research and scholarly work; and participation on library committees and service to the University. Evening and weekend work is required.

This is a position to be filled at the Assistant Librarian level appropriate for a librarian with up to 5 years experience. The anticipated salary level is the mid 40's to the mid 50's.

### Reference Librarian

Responsibilities include reference assistance for the business and government collections; library instruction; installation and maintenance for departmentally supported CD ROM databases; training for reference staff on the content and search engines for government documents and business products; professional development, research and scholarly work; and participation on library committees and service to the University. Evening and weekend work is required.

This is an entry level position to be filled at the Assistant Librarian level and appropriate for a librarian with up to 2 years experience. The anticipated salary level is the mid 40's.

Send application with names of 2 references to:

Chair, Business and Government Publications Library  
Appointment Committee  
310 Scott Library  
York University  
4700 Keele St.  
North York, ON M3J 1P3  
Fax (416) 736-5451



**Join us today!**  
 Complete this form  
 and mail it back to us  
 with your  
 membership fee

**1999  
 Membership Application Form**

**Northwest Territories Library Association**

**\$15 Individual** persons wishing to support the objectives of the NWT Library Association

**\$30 Institutional** organisations wishing to support the aims and objectives of the NWT Library Association

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Internet Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Library Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

If an Institutional Membership, please designate an individual who will be representing the Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of interest: Public Libraries School Libraries Special Libraries  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*The NWT Library Association strives to promote libraries and archives across the Northwest Territories. To this end, projects such as the "Directory of Libraries in the Northwest Territories" are undertaken. Your participation in the Association helps to support these projects.*

**Membership fees are due 1st January, 1999**

Please make cheques payable to:  
 Northwest Territories Library Association

Mail to:  
 Northwest Territories Library Association  
 P.O. Box 2276  
 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7  
 Attention: Alison Welch, Treasurer

**SNOWSHOE**

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We welcome feedback to materials printed in Snowshoe. Signed letters to the editor will be printed. Submissions of articles, notices, bibliographies, announcements, news items, etc. are accepted. We prefer submissions in electronic format if possible. Please forward submissions to one of the following e-mail addresses:

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 nwt.court.lib

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