

Report to the April 16 2012 DIRA AGM on the activities of the VIRL/DIRA Liaison function for 2011/12

The modest role of VIRL/DIRA Liaison has existed for the past seven years. This past year, perhaps even more than other years, we have been standing, relatively, a little less still. While there have been diminutive overtures to wile away the time, primarily discussions attempting to acquire a few ancillary Library amenities, the reality is that little has been accomplished.

Nevertheless, baby steps, small and public, have been taken. Recently the following story appeared in the Echo.

“Support for Denman island library idea

Comox Valley Echo Published: Friday, March 02, 2012

Denman Island should have its own library branch, says Comox Valley Regional District.

At their board meeting on Tuesday, directors called on the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board to include money for such a branch in its forward capital plan.

Rural Area A director Bruce Jolliffe said the argument for a library had been raised before, without success. But he felt it was time to try to get things moving again, as he was confident the Denman Island community supported the idea.

Comox Coun. Barbara Price said the issue had been discussed some years ago, but the library board had not taken up the idea as one of its priorities. "But I consider it is overdue," she commented.

Hornby Island already has a branch library run by the VIRLB, as does Union Bay. There are three other branches in the Comox Valley - at Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland.”

To recognize the gesture of the CVRD, I submitted the following letter to the Echo which they graciously published”

“Dear Editor,

As a Denman Island resident who strongly believes a Public Library is an essential ingredient in the life of a healthy community, I have nothing but kudos for the CVRD Board, and especially Area A Rep Bruce Jolliffe, for pursuing and promoting the possibility of a branch of VIRL on Denman.

Libraries can be, should be, and often are, the heart and soul of community. While Denman Village, or Downtown Denman as some occasionally call it, has a long standing volunteer library, the Dora Drinkwater Community Library, which I have the pleasure of staffing once every two weeks, does operate on the respected remains of a long worn shoestring and deserves to be transported into the range of services and sweep of the 21st Century Regional Library system.

There are many of us on Denman who are willing to assist the process and now we ask the VIRL Board to embrace the overture of the CVRD and get the job done.

Yours,

Bill Engleson

Denman Island Public Library Activist (if there is such a creature)''

Next Steps

I believe VIRL needs time to consider the CVRD motion and hopefully take action. I appreciate that fiscal restraints continue to exist and may play even a greater part in postponing what I consider to be the painfully slow inevitability of a Public Library branch on Denman.

In the meantime, the Dora Drinkwater is a constant source of community reading and has a loyal troupe of volunteers. The CVRD is providing, at our request a reasonably consistent contribution via Grants in Aid to allow the collection to be replenished. This is done in concert with smaller but nevertheless helpful streams of income.

Respectfully submitted on March 21, 2012

Bill Engleson, DIRA-VIRL Liaison