

Library starts new chapter in construction effort

BY JOHN NELSON
SOUTH MOUNTAIN

EMC News — Supporters of a new library branch in South Mountain are optimistic shovels will be in the ground next month after North Dundas Township received five bids on the project by the March 13 deadline.

"It's been a long haul," said Elizabeth Earl, chairwoman of the Friends of the South Mountain Library. "It's been four years now."

Friends of the South Mountain Library formed in 2004 and started working on acquiring a new library the next year, Ms. Earl explained.

The friends have raised more than \$80,000 towards their \$100,000 share, about one-third of the project cost.

She hoped work could

begin by the middle of April.

Ms. Earl was hopeful additional money for the project would be available through recently announced infrastructure funding.

The new facility will also feature a resource centre with plenty of meeting space and separate access from the library.

North Dundas Township Clerk Jo-Anne McCaslin said township staff were reviewing the bids and she expected a recommendation would be made to council during their meeting March 24 (after the EMC's deadline).

Ms. Earl said a committee — including the mayor and deputy, representatives of the friends, and school board — investigated several locations for the new facility and the best loca-

tion was determined to be the park on Main St.

The South Mountain library branch has been contained in a former one-room schoolhouse since the 1970s.

There are a number of problems with the facility, Ms. Earl pointed out.

"It's way too small. There's just no space," she explained.

"There [are] problems with the water, too."

The children's section, she said, was crammed into a small corner of the existing facility and there was no room to hold programs or present guest speakers.

Ms. Earl said finding appropriate meeting space in the area was difficult. She noted that the agricultural hall was available for use but it is much too large for many groups.

Facilities are available

in Mountain as well but Ms. Earl said that could be a somewhat inconvenient distance for some people to travel.

"The building will get a lot more use," she explained. "The intent is for the whole community to benefit."

Ms. Earl speculated that seniors, church groups, and others would make use of the new facility.

The library/resource centre would be built where the community play structures currently exist.

She said those who make use of the structures need not worry about losing them as funding has been obtained for new equipment as well.

The new play structures, Ms. Earl explained, would remain at the site but be moved back a little further from the road.

Police issue warning of spring thaw dangers

EMC STAFF

EMC News — While most residents are happy to welcome the arrival of spring, the Ottawa Police Service is reminding residents of the many dangers that might be lurking as the city's snow melts.

The Ottawa Police Marine and Dive Unit is offering this helpful advice to keep Ottawa residents out of danger:

— River ice break up is in full swing; open water is already visible in on the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers. River ice is inherently dangerous at this time of year and is always unpredictable.

— Less than three inches of ice thickness is a hazardous environment.

— Many people die during the first few minutes of immersion in cold water. The initial shock makes you gasp and if you are under water, you can breathe in about a litre of water. If you are on the surface, your heart rate can skyrocket, your breathing will be uncontrolled and you may panic. Cold incapacitation will set in and your limbs become numb.

— Falling into water at this time of year will lead to hypothermia and death. This can occur in less than two minutes.

— The impact of cold water on physiological response rates severely impairs the ability to locate, put on and fasten a personal floating device (PDF) in the water. In fact, 99 percent of drowning in Canada in 1999 occurred in water below 20°C.

— Without a personal floating device, you will not be able to stay afloat; with a lifejacket on, you will remain floating, giving rescuers time to find you or allowing you to catch your breath and figure out how to rescue yourself.

— Over half of drownings related to snowmobiling occur after dark.

— Consumption of alcohol and/or drugs continues to be a contributing factor in snowmobiling related drownings.

— Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death, with two-thirds of drownings occurring within 15 meters of safety.

— Second only to car crashes, drowning kills more Canadian children under the age of 14 than any other cause of injury.

— Keep children away from ditches, creeks, ponds, rivers and lakes. These bodies of water swell as snow melts and ice weakens. Most drowning happen when children are playing near water, not when they are swimming or planning to swim. A child can drown in less than two inches of water. Keep your child within arm's reach at all times when near water. Cold water temperatures at this time of year can prevent even strong swimmers from escaping once they've fallen through the ice.

— Supervision and thinking ahead are essential to preventing injuries and providing a fun but safe environment for your child to enjoy the outdoors.

Healthy cooking, chef-style

BY JESSE BELL
GREELY

EMC Lifestyles — Michele Piironen starts each day much the same; dress her two daughters for school, make sure they have had a healthy breakfast, say goodbye to her husband as he leaves for work.

But once the front door closes, she also gets straight to work — in her kitchen.

Ms. Piironen is a personal chef. She owns and operates her own business, suitably called Food to Grow. She has many clients and each week prepares healthy meals at her home, packs them away in her vehicle, and drives around to various locations delivering to them healthy meals.

It all started back in 2005, with her two daughters, Eve and Morgan, in mind.

Nine-year-old Eve has what some would call a global learning deficit; therefore, healthy eating plays a critical part in her potential to learn. And as any mother would do, Ms. Piironen wanted to do whatever she



Greely resident Michele Piironen is helping families eat healthier through her business, Food to Grow.

could to help encourage positive growth for both of her daughters.

So Ms. Piironen grabbed the many recipe books that she had and started studying in the culinary arts.

She lives in Greely and is now a Certified Food Han-

dler with the City of Ottawa and a member of the Canadian Personal Chef Association.

But most importantly, she loves every moment of it.

"It's a very rewarding job," Ms. Piironen says. "I really am helping people, saving time and bringing families together."

The last aspect is what Ms. Piironen says is her favourite part of the job. She cooks the meals, mostly in her own home but occasionally at clients' homes, and watches as the food she has made gathers families at the dinner table.

"Enjoying each other's company seems like a lost art," she says, referring to the busy lives of individuals who work full-time outside of the home.

Ms. Piironen agrees that people have become so busy they sometimes forget the most important things in life, such as family.

"I get to bring people together with good food and good conversation."

Ms. Piironen trained as a personal chef through the

Culinary Business Academy at Algonquin College in Ottawa, but says that she really learned almost everything at home.

Ms. Piironen says that perhaps the most challenging of all tasks as a personal chef is deciding what to cook. She has immense amounts of recipes to choose from; all organized with a personal chef program on her computer, but not all households have that benefit.

She says that it is beneficial for those who work all the time. At the end of the day they can come home, put their already-made meal in the oven and simply eat.

She says it is a misconception that only the rich and the well-to-do can afford a personal chef.

"If you break down the time it takes to get groceries, cook, clean, a personal chef saves you valuable time," Ms. Piironen says.

For more information on Food to Grow, please visit Ms. Piironen's Web site at www.foodtogrow.ca or call 613-323-CHEF.

Do you have a story idea?

Do you have an upcoming event in your neighbourhood that other readers should know about? If the answer is "Yes" — we want to hear from you! Anything from news to arts to winning sports teams can be reported in your community newspaper by contacting us. Please call **Erin** at **613-688-1481** or e-mail us at **ekelly@thenewsemc.ca** and let us know about your story idea.

Fresh or frozen?

We'll give you answers to all your healthy eating questions.
Call a Registered Dietitian for free.

EatRight Ontario 1-877-510-510-2



ontario.ca/eatright



Paid for by the Government of Ontario