

Report to the April 11 2011 DIRA AGM on the activities of the VIRL/DIRA Liaison function for 2010/11

The role of VIRL/DIRA Liaison has existed for the past six years. This past year, while in most respects unproductive, has seen a modest acceleration in political interest in the matter of acquiring a Branch of VIRL on Denman Island.

During the past year, I arranged two meetings with Regional Director Bruce Jolliffe, the first in July and the second in November, to discuss (and continue the discussion on) the results of the VIRL Facilities study, its dearth of information directly relevant to Denman, as well as the need to generate some statistics on current usage of VIRL by residents of Denman. The following extract of a summary of our July meeting captures, to some extent, the Facilities reports impact on Denman.

We both agree that the recently completed Facilities report did not include anything about Denman Island's need for a Library or really anything about the creation of new branches. Hopefully this oversight won't impair the timely attainment of a Library on Denman. The report does clearly itemize many of the infrastructure problems that VIRL faces. It also is a proponent of a somewhat exaggerated space and size requirement for your typical rural library. Again, any eventual movement towards a Library on Denman hopefully won't be constrained by seeking to attain unrealistic space standards.

Report to the Community

In the February Flagstone, I submitted a report to the community entitled **"Libraries, Damn Libraries and Library Statistics- Going VIRL."** I believe that article provided a relatively clear summary of the situation to date as well as a reasonable prediction of next steps. My concluding remarks were:

At the moment, acquiring a public library branch on Denman is not much more than an intellectual exercise. If and when it seems that it might become a certainty, the likely course will be to form a group of the committed to assist in the transformation. Until then, I strongly recommend residents make use of Books by Mail. Additionally, any commentary in Island publications or local newspapers might assist the plodding process of gaining a sustainable branch of VIRL on Denman. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted on March 22, 2011

Bill Engleson, DIRA-VIRL Liaison

In real progress, little has been achieved over this time. An earlier Strategic Plan, outlined by now retired VIRL Director of Support Services Martin Gavin some years ago, had hoped to begin the process of Denman acquiring a Public Library in 2008. With the appointment of the new Executive Director Rosemary Bonnano two years ago, focus on Denman acquiring a branch was rolled into a comprehensive assessment of existing facilities and their needs. As noted in my report last year to the DIRA AGM, the VIRL Board of Directors hired a consultancy firm to review all of its facility standards. Their report is expected to be presented to the June 2010 VIRL Board of Directors.

Although the role of liaison this year has been relatively uneventful, the issue of a public library on Denman has been maintained on the VIRL radar. Denman was the only non-facility community to host a session of the VIRL Strategic Planning road show. Over 30 citizens of Denman attended the process in mid February. Jean Cockburn. Chairperson of the Dora Drinkwater Library Volunteers wrote an excellent summary of that session for the March Flagstone.

The coming year should hopefully see clearer indication of meaningful time lines for the potential implementation of a public library on Denman. In the meantime, our status as a rural location allows residents' to access Books by Mail. This is a practical, if interim, program for us that affords relatively easy access to much of the basic material available from a public library. Through our Regional Director, I have requested that Books by Mail be more heavily promoted on the Island. Currently a brochure is

available at the Dora Drinkwater library. This information and a wealth of other VIRL matters are easily accessible on the VIRL website at www.virl.bc.ca.

I would like to conclude my report with a re-statement of the mission statement and terms of reference for the position of DIRA-VIRL Liaison.

DIRA Liaison to VIRL Mission Statement and Terms of Reference

Mission Statement

To assist the community of Denman Island to acquire a branch of VIRL at the earliest possible moment

Terms of Reference

1. As Denman is scheduled to acquire a VIRL branch at some point in the future, the role of the DIRA Liaison is to facilitate ongoing communications between the Denman Community, DIRA and VIRL
2. The DIRA Liaison to the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) will facilitate regular reciprocal communication between VIRL and DIRA by meetings and e-mail
3. The DIRA Liaison will recommend strategies to DIRA to keep the entire community and DIRA current on any developing initiatives related to the implementation of a VIRL Branch Library on Denman Island

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Engleson, DIRA Liaison to VIRL

March 23rd 2010