

## **Hemsworth Influence on the Central Butte Branch of the Chinook Regional Library**

The Chinook Regional Library's story began on April 12, 1972. The first location of the Library was at 271 Butte Street which was the former Credit Union Office, then the personal insurance business of Maurice Hemsworth and the home of Maurice and Virginia Hemsworth and daughters Wanda and Lynda. At the Grand Opening, master of ceremonies, Rev. Gordon Duncan, welcomed the crowd, making special mention of two classrooms in attendance. Mayor Ray Stewart gave a brief outline of the background work of establishing a library in the community. The Mayor expressed thanks on behalf of the town of Central Butte and from the Board of Directors of the Library. The Assistant Provincial Librarian, Mr. Turnbull, spoke of the importance of Library branches and the community benefits of having a local Library. The structure of Saskatchewan Regional Libraries was explained by Mr. John Rafter. He expressed that lack of financial support restricts Library Services. The town was congratulated by M.L.A, Mr. Wiebe. The ribbon cutting ceremony began with Mrs. Irene Galloway presenting scissors, on a book to M.L.A. Mr. Wiebe. The Library was declared open with Virginia Hemsworth as the first Librarian for the Central Butte Branch of the Chinook Regional Library. The inaugural board members were Mr. Ray Stewart, Chair, Vi Smith, Audrey Krislock, Joyce Houseman, Ben Berger, Rev. Gordon Duncan, Marion Brandvold, Irene Galloway and Virginia Hemsworth.

Since 1972 the Library has experienced numerous Board members, all who possessed a dedicated commitment to providing services to their community – the town of Central Butte and the Rural Municipality of Enfield. Virginia Hemsworth kept the community informed with newspapers articles and board meetings.

In 1979 the Library boasted a collection of over 3000 books including Adult Fiction and Non Fiction, Juvenile Fiction and Non Fiction, Easy books, paperbacks and a Harlequin Romance and comic book exchange, as well as a variety of magazines. The inter-library loan service provided access to reading materials from other libraries, opening up choices for the readers. Librarian, Virginia Hemsworth, being the true resource in the Library, could direct readers to whatever materials they wanted.

The Central Butte Library doubled in space in 1987, when the Library space was renovated and expanded by the Town of Central Butte and the R.M. of Enfield.

Virginia Hemsworth hosted Summer Reading Programs for kids, performances for kids and author readings. Anniversary celebrations were held, including its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on April 14, 1987, a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in April of 1992, 25 years celebrated in April of 1997, and in April 2002 the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2012.

In February of 2005 Virginia retired from 32 years of dedicated service. At a Retirement party to recognize Virginia's years of commitment to the Library, Mayor Al Klassen and R.M. of Enfield representative, Ron Kurz presented Virginia with gifts and words of recognition for her 32 years of dedication. On behalf of the Library Board, Chair person Sylvia Lindquist, thanked Virginia for years of committed service and then welcomed Sandra Yonge as the new librarian.

Virginia's job meant she never had to start her car or go out in the cold to go to work. Having an empty space in her home after her husband's passing, Virginia was approached by a business man who wanted to rent the space for storing coffins, which did not interest her, but she was excited when the town approached her with a proposal to rent the space for a Library. She immediately agreed and a 48 year story began. Even while raising her two daughters, teaching at the school, and teaching music lessons from her home, Virginia was dedicated to keeping the communities' Library successful. She knew her patrons' interests and consistently brought in new materials for them – even making personal purchases.

The Library hours found Virginia shelving books, helping readers with book choices or reading herself. Generations had access to a wonderful world of fiction and non fiction by a woman with a strong, dependable work ethic who valued learning and enjoyment through reading.

The Library remained at the Hemsworth residence after Virginia's retirement from 2005 until 2020 when it moved to the Town Office building on MainStreet. The Library community would like to thank Virginia, Lynda, Wanda Hemsworth and Ken Galloway for the 48 years of allowing the Central Butte Branch Library to be in their home.