

Wollaston Limerick Library's snowshoeing just the beginning



A spirited group of people came out for the "Try Snowshoeing" event held by the Friends of the Wollaston Limerick Library in Coe Hill on Jan 23. JIM EADIE Special to This Week

By Jim Eadie

"Talk about beautiful conditions. It was minus eight degrees and no wind," said Steenburg Lake resident John Harnett. "And the sun was out. There really is a sun up there!"

Harnett was referring to the Friends of the Wollaston Limerick Library's "Try Snowshoeing" event held in Coe Hill on Saturday, Jan. 23 on what indeed may have been the most glorious day so far this winter.

"It is an absolutely beautiful sparkling winter day," agreed Anne Ireland, a member of the Friends of the Library group and adventure leader, as approximately a dozen people departed for a one-hour outing along the multi-use trail and the hills behind the fairgrounds. If you did not own a pair of snowshoes, they were provided. The Township of Wollaston purchased a dozen pairs of snowshoes a few years ago for recreational use.

Returning to the library, participants were treated to cookies and hot chocolate or coffee, and spirited conversation about their day's adventure.

"The Friends of the Library group has a program development committee," said Ireland. "We try to plan an event for each month, and they will not necessarily be about literacy."

In the past several years the library has hosted everything from backyard beekeeping to an astronomy excursion.

Ireland notes that with the present library, there is limited space and physical resources. "We are not going to get \$100,000 for a new library anytime soon," she said. Currently the library is located in a school portable on the Coe Hill Public School property.

But what the library lacks in space is more than made up with enthusiasm. Friends of the Library often attracts a dozen residents to meetings, and there is an active book club.

Harnett is a member of the library board of directors, and chairperson of Friends of the Library. He notes that a modern library provides much more than hard books, and computers.

"I believe a library is more like a community centre," he said, "offering different activities with both educational and recreational components."

The very successful model of Elder College offered by the University of Windsor particularly inspires Harnett. "They offer up to 60 short programs every semester taught by volunteer instructors from the community, covering everything from the history of World War Two to running a winery. It has really caught on, and the interest is tremendous" and there is not much money involved. It stimulates people to think, and keep learning."

This is a similar concept as the Free University of Coe Hill, offered successfully a number of years ago by the late Fazlur Rahman

and his partner Jessie Wilson when they were operating the café and bakery.

On Feb. 7, Friends of the library will present an Alzheimer's workshop with a guest speaker, at the Coe Hill Legion.

On March 15, they will be offering a professional puppet show and puppet-making workshop at the community centre in Coe Hill.

Further information can be obtained by dropping by the library, calling 613-337-5731 or visiting www.wollaston-limericklibrary.ca