

Club Library needs support – from you!

BY SUZAN CHAMNEY

The Alpine Club of Canada's Library occupies 600 cubic feet with some 3500 volumes. Books in the Library range from an historic 1600s-era leather bound volume to history texts to contemporary guidebooks.

After being housed at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff for the last four decades, this coming September the Library will be boxed up and sent into storage to await its next home. Due to space constraints, in 2008 the Whyte Museum requested that the ACC remove its Library from their building. The Mountain Culture Committee, led by our dedicated Vice-President Isabelle Daigneault, has been seeking a suitable location ever since; however it has proven impossible to find a location with enough space to accept our Library on a loan basis, with the Club maintaining ownership. The Committee has contacted public libraries, university libraries, museums and art centres, but none have the space to accommodate the entire collection on loan. Those who would consider accepting the Library would only agree to do so on the condition that we make it an outright donation, allowing them to manage and disperse the collection as they see fit.

Graeme Nunn, executive director of the Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation, has been extremely helpful, suggesting one of the museum's heritage

houses as a possible home. Committee members investigated this possibility and determined that in order to be usable as a library, the house would require extensive renovations, including upgrading of all electrical, plumbing and heating, and possibly, the re-configuration of the floor plan and room layout. The Foundation would provide a long term right of use (lease) at a nominal value in exchange for the ACC funding the upgrading of the house. Mountain Culture Committee members toured the

In an e-mail, Barb Bulat, Banff Public Library head librarian, said, "I looked at the FABULOUS Alpine Club book collection at the Whyte, and it is 92 shelves of books. Unfortunately we can't accommodate it in our present location."

historic home and determined that the cost to carry out the necessary renovations would be prohibitive given that the Club does not own the building.

With all this in mind, the Committee is now considering options, in particular, housing the Library at the Canmore Clubhouse, and creating a resource centre where members (and others) could access books for research. Also, a lending library could be established for the part of the collection that is suitable. For this to work will require the support of the Board and the membership. It is not a project that the Mountain Culture Committee could take on by itself, but it would spearhead

The ACC collection includes editions of *Mountaineering and Explorations in the Canadian Rockies*, by Smythe 1951, Outram 1905, Thorington 1925, Stutfield and Collie 1903, and Coleman 1911. PHOTO BY MEGHAN WARD.



ACC Ottawa Section Member Rachel Slater reads *The Palliser Reports (1859)*, written by John Palliser, leader of the famed Palliser Expedition. PHOTO BY MEGHAN WARD.



A bird's eye view captures all five racks of ACC books, publications and pamphlets currently housed in the Whyte Museum archives. PHOTO BY MEGHAN WARD.

the initiative. With sufficient support, the Club would need to make space for the Library in the Clubhouse, perhaps in the Guides Room or, if sufficient funds were available, in an addition or annex to the building. This phase of the project would have to be led by the Facilities portfolio. During conversations regarding our dilemma, many people have suggested that financial donations to a library would be an attractive option for philanthropists. As well, we believe there are numerous grants available to support the infrastructure required by a project of this nature.

What do you think? Should we keep the collection? Where? Would you be willing to donate time or money to the project? Would you be willing to pay an extra \$5 on your annual membership fees to support the operational costs of the Alpine Club of Canada's Club Library? Please visit www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/survey/library/ to complete our questionnaire. Also available on the website is a listing of our Library collection titles.

Suzan Chamney is ACC Director of Mountain Culture.

Thank You

to the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies and the Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation for their dedicated care and support of our Library over the years.