

Cottage cheese pies, tea bags and Mary-Ann Kirkby

Both Standard Municipal Library and Okotoks Public Library were fortunate to host Mary-Ann Kirkby, author of *I am Hutterite*, for two successful videoconferences in mid-May. The two author talks were attended by 26 people in Standard and over 50 people at the seven other participating libraries. Mary-Ann's talk in Okotoks the following night saw an equal audience, with 24 people in attendance in the library and over 50 in attendance at the other seven libraries. The popularity of this well-attended program reflects the relevancy of—and keen interest in—Hutterian life for so many southern Albertans.

Who knew that such warmth, passion and humour could be conveyed using videoconferencing? Although these author talks were Mary-Ann's first experience using this technology, she was able to engage both the live and remote audiences and answered questions from both audiences without hesitation.

I am Hutterite has sold over 70 000 volumes in Canada, and on May 4th of this year, Mary-Ann celebrated the release of *I am Hutterite* in the United States. During her talks, Mary-Ann read excerpts from her story and talked about her experiences growing up in the Fairholme Colony. She gave a strikingly honest viewpoint of the traditions of colony life, and expounded on the Hutterite love of great food and good humour. Mary-Ann spoke about how 'community' serves as a built-in source of strength, understanding and acceptance for an individual; that "beneath the skin we all have a beating heart yearning for acceptance." (Continued →)

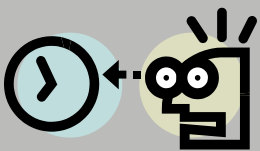
The evenings with Mary-Ann Kirkby were as warm and entertaining as a piece of cottage cheese pie, a cup of "kreichter complaining tea," good friends and great laughs.

Encourage users to plan ahead

As the RISE Network becomes more well known in our communities, more and more people are asking to use videoconferencing for business or personal reasons. A rise in individual and business use is great for the RISE Network, as these are the users who will keep the service sustainable in the long run.

However, with more requests coming in weekly, it's important that we encourage users to plan ahead. While we want to encourage the public to use the equipment, we need to be sure that we arrange this use in the most efficient way possible.

So, if you have patrons asking to use the equipment to connect with external (literacy offices, schools, etc.) or RISE Network sites let them know that you would prefer to be notified of the connection at least one week in advance. Remind your patrons that last minute connections are possible, but cannot be guaranteed. Contact your consultant if you need help setting up these connections for your patrons.



Teen Book Club

Chinook Arch Regional Library System has two new volunteers—Eric Murphy and Zane Peters. Eric and Zane are with Katimavik and have just come from volunteering in Burnaby, B.C.

In the past, Chinook Arch's Katimavik volunteers have delivered storytime programs by videoconference to RISE Network libraries. This summer, however, Eric and Zane have got some great teen programs planned, including a teen book club. These programs will promote the Teen Reading Club and follow this year's theme—"Get into Character."

Watch for their programs beginning mid-June.



RISE impresses “techies”

Donovan Hoggan from Memory Lane Computers reflects on her RISE Network experience —

I remember the first time I saw video conferencing. The picture quality was terrible, and the audio lag made having a real conversation virtually impossible. I remember thinking, “this is worthless, but in the future, it might be a really useful tool.” Well, the future is NOW. With outstanding picture quality and less than a second of latency, the RISE system is what I imagined video conferencing to be.

I’ve now done five presentations using the RISE Network on various aspects of technology. As a techie myself, I’m impressed by the hardware, software and networking that is needed to make this work. What impresses me more, though, is the capacity. I’ve done presentations in towns 90 minutes away for one or two people. Can you imagine driving 3 hours round-trip to present to such a small group!? By using the RISE Network, I can meet with one or two people in five different towns and I only need to drive 8 minutes to get there.

So far, I’ve done presentations on the basics of computer security, servers for small businesses, and my current favourite, basic technology terms. I enjoy doing the presentations but the most fun for me is the questions. People ask all sorts of questions that they might normally have to call a computer store to ask. It’s a great opportunity to get information to and from people that I would otherwise never get to talk to.

RISE is a great win-win opportunity for presenters, libraries and, most importantly, for patrons. As more people start using it I think we’re going to see increasingly creative and interesting uses for such a powerful tool.

Submitted by Donovan Hoggan, Memory Lane Computers



Recording is once again possible! When booking a session, ask about recording.

Mary-Ann Kirkby continued...

She inspired and engaged audiences, and spoke with a compassion and generosity that crossed the technological divide. Mary-Ann ended the evening by announcing her new adventure: an upcoming Hutterite cookbook! The evenings with Mary-Ann Kirkby were as warm and entertaining as a piece of cottage cheese pie, a cup of “kreichter complaining tea,” good friends and great laughs.

Submitted by Lynne Thorimbert, Marigold Library System

