

College library open for business

by LYNN WELBURN
Staff Writer

Did you miss an interesting article in one of last year's editions of the *New Internationalist*?

Would you like to listen to a jazz record before adding it to your collection?

Want to know more about something that happened 100 years ago in Nanaimo?

This and much more is what the Malaspina College library has to offer, not only to students but also to the public.

"Obviously our first priority is the students, because that's who we're here for," said Doug Bridges, director of the learning resource centre since it opened in 1969. "But we also have a lot to offer the public, anyone who wants to come up and get a card."

The library cards are free and will be issued to anyone who can produce some identification with an address in the college region, which includes Vancouver Island north of the Malahat, plus Powell River.

But while cards are free and relatively easy to obtain, the number of library users in the community is small. There are fewer than 200 secondary students and about 860 members of the community with cards.

"It seems like quite a low number compared with just the population of the city, never mind the outlying areas we serve," Mr. Bridges said. "I don't know if it's because we haven't advertised the service enough, or whether people are happy with the reading material they're getting elsewhere."

It certainly can't be because of a lack of services offered at the college.

Available to the public are 70,000 books including works of fiction and non-fiction, microfilm copies of *The Daily Free Press* and *Victoria Times-Colonist* since their inception, 1,200 videos and films, back and current editions of more than 500 magazines, 2,800 records and cassette tapes by a wide variety of musicians, and government publications from Statistics Canada and the ministries of fisheries, forestry and others.

As well, the library's resources are now computerized and easier to find. There are two terminals now operating and four more will be installed by the summer. There is also a computer lab in the library, but its use is primarily for students.

"Our staff are glad to help anyone because, with the amount of material available, it can be a little intimidating," said Mr. Bridges. "We have a good reference service and we'll help people find what they're looking for."

"The people of the region help pay for the college and they're entitled to get more use out of it. We do put students first, but, especially in the summer months, there's a great deal we can offer the community users as well."

The library is open until 10 p.m. weeknights and for four hours on Saturdays and Sundays during the college term, and for shorter periods throughout the summer.



Lynn Welburn Photo

Community users like Petar Svedruzic can find their choices using a computer system.



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Doug Bridges, director of the Malaspina College learning resource centre (library) picks one of the nearly 3,000 records and tapes available.



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Library assistant Karen Lanegoets with microfilm copies of the *Daily Free Press*.