

Bancroft Lions assist Books on Disk



By **Tony Pearson**, Special to This Week

These days, there are many resources for the visually impaired ? from large print books to braille and talking books, described video TV, as well as refreshable braille displays and a host of special computer programs like Microsoft Narrator. However, none of these devices fills one important information need ? the desire to keep up on what's happening around you own local area. That's where the ?books on disk? program of Community Care North Hastings comes in. Volunteers come in weekly to read articles from the local media. The recordings are duplicated onto computer disks, which are mailed to a dozen clients so they can follow what's happening in the community.

Last week, the Bancroft Lions dropped off a cheque for \$2,400 to help the program. This was the last payment in the club's four-year commitment of \$9,600 to Books on Disk. These funds go toward the cost of recording and duplicating equipment, as well the purchase of the disks used.

Lions president Bryan Adams explained that vision care has been a Lions priority since 1925, when the famed activist Helen Keller challenged the newly formed organization to become ?knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness?. In the nearly 100 years since that challenge was issued, Lions around the world have helped hundreds of millions of the visually impaired through such direct programs as the training of more than 600,000 eye care professionals and the establishment of more than 300 eye care hospitals, and related programs such as the recent inoculation of 40 million African children against measles, which is a leading cause of childhood blindness. Adams noted that the Bancroft Lions have several vision initiatives, including vision screening at local elementary schools, the collection of used eyeglasses at area eye care offices, and support ? including training ? for Dog Guides of Ontario.

Community Care North Hastings has a partnership with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to ensure the availability of books on tape. But it also hopes to expand the local focus of the disk program in future, by recording books by local authors, as well as magazine articles about Bancroft and North Hastings.

Executive director Gordon MacDonald thanked Adams and Bancroft Lions for their help, stating ?the Lions Club has been central to this program; their contributions have sustained it for some time, and allowed us to take it from the old tape reels into modern computer disks. We really value our partnership with them.?