

Preservation and Digitization Committee at Work
by Rian Farley



The Preservation and Digitization Committee, a sub-group of the Durham Friends of the Library, as announced in last week's issue of The FORUM, is actively researching the various types of equipment that will be needed to do the actual scanning and digitization of historic and present-day newspapers.

One piece of equipment – a camera tripod, is already part of the arsenal of equipment being gathered. Some mounted incandescent lights, supported by brackets and elevated to the correct height above the work surface as well as a good quality digital camera (still needed) over the work table will allow for flat-bed scanning of larger format originals. The quality of the images will be superior with the high-resolution cameras now available verses the older microfilm / microfiche viewing methods of past years.

Older, discolored newspapers with a variety of print quality, as well as mimeographing of school and club newsletters is bringing a huge element of work to the project. The committee is fortunate to have two excellent hardware/software technicians: Sharon Fisher and Michelle Briggs, both of whom have worked in the IT sector for many years.

The ability to find articles about past residents of Durham – whether in a school newsletter or local newspaper of the time will prove invaluable in understanding our community – especially as more people are using computers to connect their lineage /genealogy / roots / local history as a means of gathering and compiling the vast rich resources that up to now may have remained in someone's drawer, cedar chest, shoe box or under their bed.