

# OLA 2011

**Tanis Fink, President**

## INNOVATION

## IMAGINE. INNOVATE. IMPACT.

**W**hen putting together this annual report for my year as 2011 President of the Ontario Library Association, three words came to mind — exciting, eventful and memorable. It has been an honour to serve as the president of my association and also a remarkable learning experience. This year was an opportunity for me to work with the 2011 board on several exciting achievements and meet many new members of our association. I discovered how diverse our profession is, how hard our members work to make this association the best and a leader, and how passionate our members are about their profession.

My role as president of OLA, in conjunction with the board, was to champion the OLA strategic plan and its four strategic priorities: growing career paths and potential, collaborating to extend libraries strategic voice, transforming ideas into solutions, and strengthening the organization. As president, I was also able to participate in several great events this past year. I found myself getting caught up in the excitement alongside 8,000 children at the Forest of Reading Festival, scanning the crowd for my favorite authors. My friend Brian Nettlefold gave me a personal tour of the beautiful Nippissing University/Canadore College's Learning Library and we got to enjoy a lecture by Rod Carley, Coordinator of Canadore College's Theatre Arts Program at the OCULA Fall Event. The Book and Periodical Council and OLA's Idea Exchange: "Crisis or Opportunity? School Libraries in the 21st Century" was edifying and the WNYO-ACRL Spring Conference, provided an opportunity to work alongside many creative people at the Innovation Boot Camp, which was run by the amazing University of Guelph team, M.J. D'Eli, Randy Oldham and Sarah Barriage. But with all the fun, there was an equal amount of hard work.

### GROWING CAREER PATHS AND POTENTIAL

OLA's first strategic goal is growing career paths and potential. OLA must provide progressive professional development and ample learning opportunities. One of my aims as president this year was to offer a virtual conference, as part of our successful Super Conference (more on the conference later). The virtual conference committee, under the leadership of Michelle Arbuckle,

made available the "2012 Virtual Experience Portal," in response to membership's requests for alternatives. This new product enabled our membership to: attend the conference from a distance; bring the conference back to their workplace for review; use the sessions as training modules; and attend more conference sessions than they were physically able to do in the past. The OLA staff and the board want the association to be the "go to place" for our membership, so we will continue to develop new offerings every year. With each passing year, it seems the benchmark for these offers rises, but we will continue to react to the demand. As part of celebrating this strategic goal, the Dr. Janette Baker Scholarship was awarded to Meghana Jakate and Heather Lavallee. On behalf of OLA, I would like to send congratulations to these individuals as they embark on a path towards a career full of challenges and rewards.

The Ontario Library Association is known for our mentoring and career development programs, and as president, I was able to recognize the significant work of one of our members. Jim Brett, University of Guelph, McLaughlin Library was awarded the 2012 OLA President's Award for Exceptional Achievement for his outstanding contribution in the leadership, development and implementation of the OLA Mentoring and Career Development Program. Through such work, Jim Brett has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to the library profession and his passion and commitment to the importance of



## COLLABORATING TO EXTEND LIBRARIES' STRATEGIC VOICE

do; articulate the changing nature of what a library is; and address some of our own professional barriers by speaking with one voice. One of our first initiatives was the "What I Do Library" campaign. The OLA Advocacy Committee asked librarians and library workers what their working days really looked like. Delegates at the OLA Super Conference 2012 shared their roles in writing and by tweeting using the hashtag #whatIdolibrary. The wordle below is a transcription of those ideas. OLA needs to continue its advocacy growth as the value of libraries continues to be challenged.

The most significant 2011 initiative was the successful implementation of the Technology Plan and will continue to be a priority for several years. The board realizes that technology is the key enabler for the success of our association and for the achievement of our strategic plan. We now have a three-year IT road map, which consists of several components: a strong web presence and content management system, an improved OLA store e-commerce platform, improved membership management tools, a new learning management system, improved services for all our members and improved working processes for the OLA staff. With this capital investment, the next three years are going to be transformational for OLA's online presence. The development and implementation of the IT Plan is a reflection of the hard work of the OLA Board, but also the strong leadership and contribution of Shelagh Paterson, Helios He, and OLA staff.

The Annual Institute on Library as Place was a project under the leadership of our 2010 OLA President, Mary Ann Mavrinc and was a great success. A steering



committee was formed and the first Annual Institute on the Library as Place was held on July 12, 2011 at the University of Toronto. Interest demanded that the event be expanded to include 60 delegates and proved a great learning experience.



This year's Institute will take place over two days, July 10 – July 11 and will be held at the Blue Mountain Resort, Collingwood. It is going to be a great event, so register now: <http://bit.ly/IRqKJ5>. The OLITA lending library, another new initiative, focused on transforming ideas into solutions by making available 25 Sony e-readers and five Flip videos to our membership. Thank you to OLITA for spearheading that great initiative.

### SUPER CONFERENCE

The theme of the 2012 Super Conference was Innovation — Imagine.Innovate.Impact and one word comes to mind — WOW! This event gets better every year and is a success thanks to the enormous amount of work done by our volunteers, conference planners, board members and of course, OLA staff. What a Super Conference to be president of. My favourite conference events were: presenting awards to outstanding members, individuals and institutions including Margaret Ann Wilkinson, Bonnie Starr, Jim Brett, Sam Coghlan, Brantford Public Library, Carole Moore, Robin Bergart and M.J. D'Elia, Scholars GeoPortal, Margaret Rule, Shonna Froebel, Ken Roberts, Bernard Dowling, Helen Fisher and the People for Education; introducing and listening to inspirational speakers such as Tom Wujec, Neil Pasricha, Jonah Lehrer (he was my favourite), Catherine Gildiner and Nora Young; doing the hustle with 400 delegates; getting to meet the famous librarian, Nancy Pearl; honouring a student activist, Michael Lajoie-Wilkinson; having one of Seneca College students win the Super Conference Artwork Design Competition, Weimar Lee; and eating lunch with George. The energy at the conference was contagious and I would say—"the best conference ever". Congratulations to our Super Conference co-chairs, Kristin Hoffmann and Jim Brett, the division and stream planners, the dozens of OLA committee volunteers and the incredible OLA staff.

### THE MANY THANKS

As reflected in this annual report, 2011 was an exciting year for the OLA with several achievements being made. I had the privilege to work with a very strong, dynamic, insightful board. The 2011 Executive of the Board was made up of four individuals with different working experiences, expertise and backgrounds, but they shared a similarity — in being four bright, committed and



**The 2011 OLA Board**



**Michael Lajoie-Wilkinson, 2012 OLA's Media and Communications Award Winner**



**Super Conference plenary speaker Jonah Lehrer**



passionate library supporters. I want to thank Mary Ann Mavrinac, Karen McGrath, and Paul Takala for their wonderful support to me as president, and also for their hard work and many contributions to the OLA. Next are the 2011 presidents and vice-presidents of the OLA divisions — OSLA, OLBA, OCULA, OPLA, OLITA and ABO-Franco. These individuals are responsible for providing

leadership to their individual sectors and ensuring that their sector needs are being met, but also come together to form the OLA board and provide the direction and support to ensure that our association is being effective and meeting the needs of our membership. Thank you to the OCULA team of Janice Mutz and Lynn Prunskus, the OLBA duo of Joyce Cunningham, and Frances Ryan, the OPLA team of Tammy Robinson and Lila Saab, the OSLA partnership of Roger Nevin and Elizabeth Gordon, the ABO-Franco duo of Monique Brûlé and Cathy Seaman and finally to the tech team of Krista Godfrey and Nick Ruest. You are an amazing group of people, and thank you for making my year as president such a memorable one. Special thanks to the OLA staff, Helios, Beckie, Liz, Michelle, Meredith, Carla, Suzanne, Yvon, Mark, Claire, Melissa and Brian. Thank you for all your support this

year and never tiring of my many questions, also a thank you to Brian for your great photography skills. A special thank you to our Executive Director, Shelagh Paterson who had the most unbelievable patience that was always accompanied by smile and offer of support. Our 2012 president is Karen McGrath from Niagara College and has already demonstrated her strong visionary and leadership skills implementing initiatives already. Congratulations Karen, you will be an amazing president of OLA for 2012. Go Colleges Go!!!!

Finally, I want thank the Seneca College senior administration for enabling me to be the OLA president, especially my boss Laurel Schollel. Also, big thanks to the wonderful Seneca Library staff that I have the pleasure to work with everyday and who continuously supported me and championed me in this extraordinary role.

### THE FINAL THOUGHTS

It was a year of innovation, but also a year of challenges. Advocacy was a significant piece, as the value of libraries continues to be challenged. Together, library associations and those that work in libraries need to champion what we do. We need to make our association a stronger advocate for our profession. It is an important time for us to become strong, active members by: being informed of the advocacy issues, writing letters, joining OLA committees, attending conferences, participating and voting at the meetings of your particular sector. Let us build an association together that is a strong unified voice for libraries. Thank you again for the honour of being your OLA 2011 president and hope to see you at the 2013 Super Conference. Be innovative, and of course, "Do the hustle."

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**2012 Super Conference Planning Team**



**Top left:** Karen and Tanis in their Friday Night Party disco gear.

**Right:** Seneca Libraries Extraordinary Team attending Super Conference (Patricia Presti is an honorary member)

**Below:** CBC personality George Stroumboulopoulos jokes with fans at the Super Conference gala luncheon.

