

OLA 2012

Karen McGrath, President

This past year has been another banner year for OLA. The Board oversaw many important milestones to complete the last year of the association's current strategic plan and was proud to represent the membership's interests in assisting the association to complete another successful year on financially sound footing.

Some of the major issues that crossed the Board table included the implementation of phase 2 of the association's IT infrastructure, which saw the rollout of the membership database, OLA Store, EI, the OLA Community and myOLA. This type of work is somewhat behind the scenes, and invisible to the membership, but critical to the future of the association. Congratulations to Shelagh and staff for completing phase 2 of the migration on time. We also received many requests from organizations who recognize a successful organization when they see one — for funding and partnership opportunities — and these caused much spirited debate (as it should!) — around the Board table. By way of example, decisions were taken to support Our Digital World, and also to enter into a partnership with the Toronto Special Library group.

OLA advocacy efforts have become top of mind for all of us. Over the past year the activities related to copyright in libraries, the cuts happening at all levels of government — with Library and Archives Canada at the top of that list — and the continual questioning of the relevance of our work provided much work for the advocacy committee. To help us in these efforts, we began the year with Michael Ridley helping us through an exercise to articulate the organization's values. Why? In responding to the issues that were coming fast and furious, we realized that we had articulated our mission/vision but the values on which we stand were not there. Now as Michael would say, values are lived, not written on a piece of paper to sit on a shelf somewhere. Point taken! These values have provided a good benchmark for us in our advocacy efforts and can be accessed online at http://bit.ly/ola_strat. Thanks to Tanis Fink, 2011 OLA President, who continues to lead the Board's advocacy committee to provide a framework for identifying and responding to issues of concern.

Super Conference "The Ultimate Library Experience" was once again the highlight of the year. Until you are an active participant on the Super Conference Planning Committee you don't have an appreciation of the

hardworking volunteers and the OLA staff who put hours into making sure your conference continues to be the best in the country! But OLA does not rest on its laurels, and this year the committee continues to review the format to determine if there are some tweaks or major overhauls needed. Please contact the committee if you have any suggestions as these are welcome any time.



Personally I am so pleased to see the membership of ABO-Franco continue to grow. The Foire Franco at the conference was the first time we have put a spotlight on French language programs and services in libraries in Ontario. Félicitations et bonne continuation to the ABO-Franco team for organizing a wonderful program which garnered quite a bit of attention particularly from Radio-Canada (radio and TV). We cannot forget that there are over 600,000 people in Ontario who are looking for these services, and I am pleased that library workers serving these populations can find a home at OLA as well.

Volunteering first as Vice-President, then President and the Past-President has been a refreshing and renewing experience for me. I encourage all of you to consider running for Council and for the Board. Yes, there is a commitment of your time, but the enriching experience through the colleagues you meet and learn from, the new thinking you are exposed to is ...well... priceless. Start by volunteering at the conference itself, or on your division's planning committee...but just start!

Turning to the future — we are into a new strategic planning process under President Susanna's leadership. The organization doesn't exist without its membership. Please contribute to the future of your association by completing the survey which will be on OLA's website, or participating in the other ways that will be offered. We are at a critical time in the lives of libraries and library workers. What do you want from your association and more importantly — what can you do for it as well? Take the opportunity to help define the future — we need you.

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