

OLBA Annual Report

Submitted by Don Lynch, 2014 President

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Unlike the other divisions, OLBA's membership is comprised of volunteer members of public library boards. With The newly elected local governments would appoint new library boards and that would result in a domino effect of creating several vacancies within OLBA Council.

- Work began early at Super Conference 2014 with an election year Boot Camp especially planned for board members. Topics included the Board and CEO relationship, and Recruitment and selection of Board members.
- To assist the new Municipal councils with the selection of their library boards, educational material in the form of a document titled, *Choosing An Effective Library Board*, was updated and made available, in both English and French, on the OLBA website.
- **Leadership By Design**, which has been the centerpiece of OLBA's educational resources for board development since 2008, was in need of a makeover. Thanks to a partnership between Ontario Library Association and the Federation of Ontario Provincial Libraries, and a grant from the Ministry's Cultural Development Fund, '**Leadership by Design – The Next Generation**' was born. The goal of the project is to strengthen public library board performance and effectiveness across Ontario.
- Gaps in existing tools and documents were identified and formed the foundation on which to build an educational plan for each year of the four years of a library board's term. Steps were taken to create a learning framework for online dissemination, as well as developing the first learning module: year one for new boards. The new program builds upon the resources developed for *Leadership by Design*, and through the support of the Ontario Library Services, North & South, will be available to all public library boards **at no charge**, online via **LearnHQ**.

Another challenge for OLBA Council in 2014 was membership. Not only did we work diligently to maintain our numbers but we were challenged to increase membership, since increased membership to OLBA generates increased revenues:

- Personal contact with member and non-member boards by OLBA's Regional Representatives was encouraged. The use of video on the website was begun. In the future, Councillors will be able to introduce themselves and put a voice to the name and face of each Councillor.
- In an effort to increase membership, any board that had not been a member of OLBA for at least five years was offered a one-year, trial membership. It is hoped that the benefits of membership will be incentive enough for them to renew at the appropriate time. We continue to encourage boards to join, and are striving to increase membership one board at a time.

- **InsideOLBA**, our bi-annual newsletter was promoted with the aim of increasing readership. Now distributed exclusively in electronic format, its circulation by openings and clicks can now be quantified.
- OLBA continued to be represented at SOLS Trustee Council meetings and through participation at an annual conference for Northern Boards sponsored by OLS-North.

Super Conference was given special attention:

- Planning for the first, all-day Trustee Boot Camp to be held on the Saturday of Super Conference 2015 was a top priority. Workshops and speakers' topics of particular interest to board members were developed, with emphasis on the CEO and Board relationship.
- Responsibilities and liabilities for board members would be addressed at the Boot Camp.
- To assist board members in recognizing fellow board members at future Super Conferences, a button with the slogan, **Keep Calm, Govern On!** was created.

The tradition of a joint meeting with OPLA to share success stories and common concerns was continued. Representing both the operational and governance aspects of Ontario's public libraries, we share many common interests.

Several questions were posed to the Council from the Membership and each one was given careful consideration and addressed in strictest confidence. The experience and collective wisdom of the Council helped me in so many ways to serve the membership of OLBA as its President. I am extremely grateful for their help and support.