

# REPORT OF JANE HILTON

## 2015 PRESIDENT, ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



It was another eventful year for OLA. The accomplishments achieved and progress made on reaching our goals was thanks to the collaboration and commitment of volunteers, who dedicate their time and talent to make the association so successful.

### Advocacy

Advocacy was a priority again this year, both in terms of demonstrating value of libraries and in securing funding. Several policy issues were addressed ensuring library perspectives were heard. Specifically, the OLA responded to the following:

- Proposed School Library cuts
- Community Hubs consultation
- Municipal Legislation review
- Culture Strategy consultation
- Fair e-Book Pricing campaign

A second Library Day at Queen's Park resulted in 25 visits to MPPs and their staff. They were provided with compelling evidence on libraries as essential contributors to the economy, education, culture and quality of life. Behind the scenes there was considerable planning and logistical support to ensure a seamless execution for this advocacy work.

### Super Conference

The theme of the 2016 Super Conference was Library Lab: The Idea Incubator. As a card carrying Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT), the team had my enthusiastic support for applying the lab concept in a novel and unique way. The new

conference structure proved to be successful as over 4,000 delegates attended the almost 270 sessions. The energy at the conference was infectious (pun intended) and many would agree that it was the "best conference ever!" Congratulations to our Super Conference co-chairs, Richard Reid and Peggy Lunn, and all planners, volunteers and staff.

### Milestones

The annual report is a reflection of several achievements over the past year and I was fortunate to have worked with a committed board that embarked on a journey of change. My sincere thanks to the 2015 presidents and vice-presidents of the OLA divisions who brought their passion, knowledge and perspectives to each board meeting. These individuals were responsible for providing leadership to their respective sectors and, as members of the OLA Board, ensured the vision and direction of the association was effective in meeting the needs of its members.

While there were many initiatives, the most notable include:

- Participation in the Canadian Federation of Library Associations model taking into consideration the survey responses from OLA members
- Completion of the Governance Review report by the Governance Review Committee with the following priority recommendations developed and implemented:
  - Committee Terms of Reference Template and Committee Evaluation tool
  - Executive Director evaluation template.
  - Board self-assessment
  - Ten governance policies
- Approval of the French translation plan/guidelines

- Development of a revenue generation plan and a "New Initiatives" planning form
- Establishment of Indigenous Library Task Group
- Moved the OLA fiscal year to an August year-end after a thorough review of the implications
- Improved the visual appeal and functionality of the OLA website
- Provided sponsorship, funding and support for:
  - ACCESS Conference
  - Our Digital World
  - Corporate and charitable status wind down of Knowledge Ontario

As President, I delivered the keynote speech at a Niagara Regional Public Library Board Development session and, later in the year, presented to first year Durham College Library and Information Technician students. In addition, it was a great honour and a privilege to serve as a member of the Advisory Group for the province's first Culture Strategy.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of the Executive Director, Shelagh Paterson and the OLA staff. They bring events to life and the sound of 8,000 excited children celebrating 81 authors at the Festival of Trees will not soon be forgotten. I was somewhat more prepared for, but in no less impressed by, the Durham Region Festival of Trees event.

As the first public library board member in 35 years to serve as President, I'm especially proud to have participated in the leadership of OLA. We are strong in numbers and in diversity with a common conviction that libraries can, and do, make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.