

# REPORT OF ANDREA CECCHETTO

## 2020 PRESIDENT, ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



It goes without saying that 2020 was not what I anticipated for my year as OLA President. We lived through so much history in the span of one relentless year. As a profession, we faced incredible challenges and unique opportunities to innovate and transform our services, engage with our colleagues, build community, and reconnect with our core professional values and goals.

Amidst the chaos of the year, OLA continued to advocate on behalf of the profession to provincial stakeholders on a number of critical issues. In partnership with the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, OLA lobbied throughout the 2019-2020 budget process to maintain provincial funding thresholds for public libraries and advocated for targeted investments in broadband. OLA contributed recommendations for the provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy and highlighted the impact of libraries on their community's pandemic recovery responses. OLA lobbied throughout the year for the protection of school libraries, advocating legislative changes to ensure funds earmarked for library resources be used for this purpose. OLA continued to build relationships with MPPs in individual local meetings to raise awareness of the important work of all divisions. As recently as November, OLA participated in GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) sector pre-budget consultations, again to champion equitable broadband access for the province.

Within the Association, the OLA Board was proud to welcome our newest division, the Ontario Health Library and Information Association (OHLIA). OHLIA officially became OLA's 7th division as of 2020, at a time when health literacy has never been more relevant. Previously an independent association, this new division will create opportunities for collaboration across disciplines and expand the body of knowledge within the sector.

The Board continues to make progress towards the completion of our Strategic Plan, currently in its final year. As the board looks to the year ahead, we are committed to expanding work in several key areas, most critically in the area of inclusion and anti-racism. Following the murder of George Floyd by police officers in April, OLA issued a statement outlining its commitment to antiracist and decolonizing efforts within the association. The

Board has since engaged with an experienced public sector equity specialist to complete a thorough audit of its systems and structures, implement anti-racism training for all staff and volunteers, and implement an antiracism plan which will inform the development of our next strategic plan. The Board is also undertaking a Governance Review to assess our ongoing effectiveness and inclusion. This is an important opportunity as the Board itself is largely remaining in place for an additional year to provide continuity through a turbulent time.

Working with OLA in this strange year was inspiring – not only to see so many examples of creativity throughout all our sectors but to behold the incredible commitment of the divisional councils, committee volunteers, board members, and most especially the OLA staff. As we saw across the sector, the team demonstrated tremendous leadership and resiliency adapting operations to reflect the realities of lockdown. Staff launched new initiatives such as OnLibChats, informal discussions designed to foster connection and collaboration, while rapidly shifting many popular annual programs such as the OPLA Children's and Youth Expo, to virtual platforms. I am particularly excited to experience the first Virtual Super Conference this February. The theme of the Super Conference, *Clever Minds, Human Hearts/ Esprits brillants et coeurs bienveillants*, was inspired by a quote from Dr. Jane Goodall – that “only when our clever brain and our human heart work together in harmony can we achieve our true potential”. Given the extraordinary events of the past year and the opportunities in the year ahead, this feels powerfully resonant.

Under the strong leadership of Executive Director Shelagh Paterson, the OLA team worked tirelessly and I could not be prouder of this team of professionals, whose commitment will ensure our Association remains vibrant for years to come. I thank the board and division councils for their commitment, advocacy, and continued leadership and look forward to continuing to serve alongside them throughout 2021-2022. Lastly, I wish to thank all OLA members for your continued support and engagement – in the face of so much anxiety, frustration and sorrow, we remained a community for each other and a source of hope for our communities.



## ASSOCIATION DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES DE L'ONTARIO-FRANCO

**HÉLÈNE CARRIER, PRÉSIDENTE**

# ABO-FRANCO

**Membres ABO 2020 : 203**

Quelle année mémorable en ce temps de pandémie. Merci à l'équipe du Conseil 2020 de l'Association des bibliothèques de l'Ontario-Franco, à la responsable de la programmation francophone des ateliers de la Super Conférence et à tout le personnel de l'OLA pour leur engagement et leur appui indéfectible malgré des circonstances difficiles. Ce fût un plaisir et un privilège de travailler avec vous tous!

Créée en 1995, l'ABO a célébré ses 25 ans en 2020... alors qu'OLA célébrait ses 120 ans! Le **plan d'actions stratégiques 2020** de l'ABO-Franco a été guidé par les quatre priorités de l'association : éducation, recherche, mobilisation et partenariats.

L'année 2020 se décline en un avant et un après confinement. Fort heureusement, la **Super Conférence 2020**, qui se déroulait à Toronto en début d'année, nous a donné une fois de plus l'occasion de se rencontrer, de réseauter, d'apprendre et d'échanger en personne. Nous avons reconnu l'excellence du travail de nos membres en remettant le **prix Micheline-Persaud** à Madame Monique Désormeaux de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa pour sa contribution au développement et à la promotion des services de bibliothèque en français. Sept ateliers en français ont été présentés sur des thèmes variés, allant du contenu culturel numérique francophone à des collaborations innovatrices en milieux scolaire et universitaire. La séance *Plein feu* avec Madame Florence Ngenzebuhoro, membre du Conseil des gouverneurs de l'Université de l'Ontario Français (UOF), nous a fait connaître la mission et les plans pour la nouvelle université en préparation à son ouverture en septembre 2021.

Du côté des partenariats et de la mobilisation, l'ABO-Franco est devenue membre du **Réseau des bibliothèques et archives desservant des communautés de langues officielles en situation minoritaire** (CLOSM) créé par Bibliothèque et Archives Canada. Nous planifions une **Journée Congrès de l'ABO-Franco** virtuelle en mai 2021 en partenariat avec le réseau des CLOSM. Nous avons aussi déposé une présentation de politiques écrite et participé en novembre à une **Table ronde sur les bibliothèques et les archives du ministère du Patrimoine canadien** réunissant des intervenants du secteur pour discuter de l'impact de la pandémie et de nos recommandations pour augmenter la résilience et la relance du secteur. De plus, nous collaborons à un **projet de recherche**

portant sur le développement des collections en français dans les bibliothèques publiques canadiennes en situation linguistique minoritaire.

L'impossibilité de se rencontrer en personne nous a amené à redoubler d'efforts pour garder le contact. Les réunions du Conseil ont eu lieu par téléconférence tout au cours de l'année. L'ABO-Franco a organisé un premier **Forum de discussion communautaire autour du thème « Transformer la pandémie en opportunités »?** Le forum a réuni une dizaine de participants venus des quatre coins de la province qui ont partagé leurs expériences. Avec d'autres représentants d'associations professionnelles, nous avons rencontré les étudiants de **L'École des sciences de l'information de l'Université d'Ottawa** ... sur la plateforme Zoom!

La **revue Open Shelf** a publié quatre articles en français au cours de l'année 2020, dont un article sur la francisation de Scholars Portal, la division des services numériques du Conseil des bibliothèques universitaires de l'Ontario, et un article sur la future bibliothèque universitaire de l'Université de l'Ontario Français.

L'équipe du **Festival de la Lecture** a fait des prouesses pour organiser des célébrations virtuelles et l'annonce des lauréats de la Forêt de la lecture 2020 volet francophone. En collaboration avec Radio-Canada, les célébrations virtuelles du festival de la Forêt de la lecture ont été animées par l'humoriste Ali Hassan qui a présenté les finalistes des prix sans oublier de recommander un mot de 19 lettres idéal au jeu de scrabble... bibliotechnicienne!

En portant notre masque et en respectant les consignes de la Santé publique, c'est le temps de s'impliquer, plus que jamais, dans l'ABO-Franco et de travailler ensemble au développement et à la promotion des services de bibliothèque en français en Ontario!



# ONTARIO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## ANGELA HENSILWOOD, PRESIDENT

# OCULA

**2020 OCULA Membership: 576**

I am grateful and honoured to be writing this message as the President of OCULA for 2020. While this year has been unbelievably challenging in many ways, our group was able to rally and has several exciting initiatives to report.

One is the creation of OCULA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. The committee's initial priorities include creating terms of reference and deciding on the committee goals for the next few years. In order to help us determine those goals, we hosted two events in the late fall. The first was an open discussion for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) community members only, so they could have a safe space to share their experiences and ideas and to network. The second event was an open discussion for the wider academic library community. Both occasions generated fruitful discussions about EDI and how to make academic libraries safe and inclusive environments for library workers and patrons alike. The EDI Committee now has many ideas and avenues to explore for supporting EDI work in the academic library sector. I would like to thank Zack Osborne for getting this new committee started and for setting a tone of engagement, vulnerability, and compassion for the committee. I would also like to thank Heather Buchansky and Melanie Mills for taking over as co-chairs and for already showing a great vision for the group.

I want to acknowledge the hard work that went into planning our annual Spring Conference, which had to be postponed because of the pandemic. In Fall 2019, a small group began planning the event, with Abeer Siddiqui and Aliya Dalfen (both Councillors-at-Large) taking the lead. The theme selected was "Active Participants: Exploring Experiential Learning in Libraries" The conference was intended to explore how libraries can provide accessible, experiential learning opportunities to our diverse communities. A fantastic keynote speaker was engaged, engaging concurrent sessions were outlined, and plans for a fun and informative market showcase were well underway. OCULA Council hopes that a virtual version of this event can take place in 2021. Please watch out for more details.

I would also like to share exciting changes at *InsideOCULA*. Our intrepid Editor-in-Chief, Rob Makinson, expertly steered the ship on his own for several months, after saying goodbye to Jennifer Robinson, Co-Editor-in-Chief, and Thomas Guignard, Deputy Editor, who both had to depart because of exciting new job opportunities. However, Rob was able to hire several new people to the team. Welcome, Melanie Parlette-Stewart, Deputy Editor; Susan Bond, Editor; Nic Brewer, Editor; and Nicole Doro, Editor. We are thrilled to have you on board!

Finally, I must share some initiatives that are still in the planning stages but that are too exciting to pass over. Our amazing Councillor-at-Large, Abeer Siddiqui, put together an impressive proposal to create an award for BIPOC library students and a scholarship to introduce BIPOC undergraduate students to the library and information professions. The planning for this exciting award is still underway but the OLA Board is supportive and we hope to have more on this in the near future. Also, a small working group created and circulated a survey to ask OCULA members about the changes in their reference services during the pandemic. The group also gauged interest, which was high, in the formation of a "community of practice" (CoP) for those providing reference and user services. We hope to have the inaugural meeting of this group early in 2021. A huge thank you to Natalie Colaiacovo (Councillor-at-Large) and Lola Rudin and Mai Lu for all their work on this initiative.

I cannot close without expressing my undying gratitude to all the members of OCULA Council. It goes without saying that this year has been almost unbearable but the fine people who make up this Council have never wavered. They are strong, and determined and so much fun! What a gift that I get to work with you all for an extra year! Thank you!



# ONTARIO LIBRARY BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

## BEN HENDRIKS, PRESIDENT

# OLBA

2020 OLBA Membership: 858

This past year was a year like no other and I just want to say that I hope that everyone is continuing to be healthy and coping as well as they can as we make our way through this second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rules around restrictions may be changing where you are, so please keep safe!

The work plan for this past year quickly got replaced with the more important activity of supporting library boards as they dealt with the effects of COVID-19 in our communities. We saw physical library space closures with significant workforce impacts, and boards pivoting to online meetings while figuring out how to continue good governance in this new landscape. Seeing things unfold, OLBA also quickly pivoted and worked to build on our partnership with SOLS and OLS-N. We started engaging you, our members, online with conversations that we hope were topical and helpful. Here are the online sessions offered this past year:

- April – Labour/Employment Relations during COVID-19
- May – COVID-19: Next Steps for Library Boards
- June – COVID-19: Library Boards during Re-Opening
- October – Evidence and how Library Boards use it
- November – Strategic Planning in the Context of COVID-19
- December – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)

I want to thank everyone who was able to attend or has had a chance to listen to the recordings, I hope you found them useful. I invite anyone who was not able to make it to view the recordings by logging into LearnHQ and you will find them there.

### Municipal Relations & Budgets

One of the areas we have kept an eye, and ear, on has been municipal relations and budgets. We'll be sending out a more formal survey to our members here in early 2021 but know that we and OLA are watching the municipal space and are here to support your library board if you have any questions or concerns. Whether it's a question of the value of the library at a time when physical locations are shut down or an issue where a municipality is facing budgetary constraints due to the pandemic, it's important that the lines of communication be open so that our communities can access the important resources of the library.

### SOLS's Governance Hub

The Southern Ontario Library Service continues to operate their online, interactive Governance Hub that involves input from key organizations who constantly work with libraries and their governance structures. FOPL, OLA, SOLS/OLS-N, and OLBA all participated and provided resources to support an inclusive and comprehensive Governance Hub that we highly recommend and that guides board members, trustees, and CEOs on governance issues. The Governance Hub takes you through the full 4-year cycle of a board member's term by providing information on many different issues and concepts relevant to library governance. We want to thank all parties involved for their continuing efforts on this one-stop-shop for all things library board related.

### OLBA Bootcamp of Engagement

The sessions from Bootcamp 2020 (It seems like 20 years ago!) were drawn from suggestions from our membership, as well as from an understanding of the needs of our members. From the very beginning with Counsel Public Affairs presenting on the political landscape and the Regional Governance Review, through excellent and knowledgeable speakers on "Municipalities: What Library Boards Need to Know", library experts on "Community Engagement: What it looks Like and Why it's Important", and the team from SOLS and OLS-N following up with "Board + CEO: The Crucial Governance Partnership", it was a day not to be missed! Speaking of not to be missed, the last session of that day was a wonderful update from Leslie Weir, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, on the new space being built in partnership with the Ottawa Public Library! Of course, Leslie had a few stories to tell along the way as she has been, and continues to be, a shining star in the world of libraries. The planning team heard a number of great comments about the sessions, which were appreciated and taken forward into the coming year.

We would like to thank the members of the OLBA Council for their time and efforts this year. We are welcoming S.S. Ahmad, the former Central West Regional representative, as our new Vice-President, and Caroline Goulding will be assuming the duties of President in 2021. She knows she's got a great group committed to listening to, and representing, the interests of library board members and trustees province-wide!



# ONTARIO LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

## SARAH MACINTYRE, PRESIDENT

# OLITA

2020 OLITA Membership: 962

It has been a privilege serving as President of OLITA in 2020. We all know that this year has been totally unlike anything we have seen before, and so I would be remiss if I didn't start off by sincerely thanking Shelagh Paterson for her leadership and all the OLA staff for their dedication. I am certain that OLITA would not have seen the same success this year if not for the support of such an outstanding team.

We started the year off on a high note, with a successful Super Conference in January. We had the pleasure of having Justin Ling as our OLITA spotlight speaker, where he discussed his work as an investigative journalist and his work on the CBC Podcast *Uncover: The Village*. Our March Council meeting was the last of our "regular, pre-COVID" meetings – we planned the year's activities and were discussing a refresh of the popular Tech Lending Library service that OLITA offers through OLA.

Of course, our plans had to change quickly in April, and instead of being able to offer our annual conference Digital Odyssey in-person in to June, we opted instead for a series of webinars over the course of the summer, with a theme of "Exploring AI in Libraries". The series started with an engaging session about *Machine Information Behavior* with speaker Mike Ridley, followed by *Exploring AI in Libraries: What is Being Done and What Comes Next* where speaker Amanda Wheatly provided valuable insights tailored to the library profession. The final session saw speaker Rediet Abebe, with the important topic of *Roles for Computing in Social Justice*. All three were well-attended and provided enriching discussions about artificial intelligence and machine learning.

The summer also saw a virtual version of Library Carpentry hosted by Tim Ribaric at Brock University. A smaller session was first run in June, and then a larger session was held in August. Both received positive feedback and had great attendance. OLITA hopes to support another session of Library Carpentry online in 2021. OLITA was also delighted to see councilor Jorge Rivera's *Open Shelf* article in October, *Library tech services are crucial to social well-being during a pandemic*, which discussed the role that public library services play in ensuring equitable access to technology.

In addition to the Digital Odyssey webinar series in the summer, OLITA held a webinar with the Education Institute in December, on the topic of ethics in cataloguing. The panelists included May Chan, Sarah Furger, Dr. Diane Pennington, Beth Shoemaker, and Karen snow, and the speakers led the attendees through a variety of examples and discussions regarding key ethics issues in cataloguing.

Although the Tech Lending Library service had to be put on pause in 2020, OLITA is planning on refreshing and re-launching the service in the Fall of 2021. Also looking ahead to 2021, OLITA is looking forward to the next Digital Odyssey conference, which will be held virtually in June 2021, on the topic of Accessibility and Accessible Technologies. Although the exact date and speaker information have yet to be firmed up, we anticipate this event to be an engaging mix of practical application and inspiration for libraries of all types. We look forward to seeing you there!

I would like to take a moment to thank our Super Conference planners Matt Rowheder and Jennifer Corrin, who have done an outstanding job pulling together a strong program for OLA's first virtual Super Conference: *Clever Minds & Human Hearts*. As well, none of what we have achieved this year could have been done without the dedication of the OLITA Council – with special thanks to outgoing councillor Pam Saliba. We have all had to navigate constant change at our workplaces, as well as in our personal lives, and I am so proud of what OLITA has accomplished this year. I feel so fortunate to have been able to serve as President of OLITA in 2020 and look forward to all the fantastic activities OLITA has planned in 2021.



# ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## ERIKA HEESSEN, PRESIDENT

# OPLA

**2020 OPLA Membership: 1,233**

It has been an honour to serve OPLA Council as President this year. And what a year it was! OPLA Council has had a busy 2020 rapidly adjusting our membership engagement and services to meet the changes demanded by the global pandemic. For myself personally, I returned to work in September following parental leave. It is quite a different world from the one I left. I think it's important to remember that we are all doing best, and we are doing OK. I am grateful for the camaraderie both at work and in the broader library world.

Here is a snapshot of the council's activities this year.

Nicole Zummach's work with *HoOPLA* has continued to highlight how public libraries have adapted during this time. As the editor, she has solicited stories on your strategies for working from home, innovative ways that you are reaching out to patrons, and the heroes in your world.

While RA in a Day was postponed for 2020, the Reader's Advisory Committee is hard at work looking at ways to bring RA in a Day online in 2021. In December 2020, the Committee ran Connecting with Readers During COVID-19, a webinar that shared ways in which their libraries have been providing Reader's Advisory in these extraordinary times.

The Best Bets Committee, as ever, has been hard at work reading to award the 2020 Top Ten Best in Canadian Fiction and Non-Fiction for children and teens. Check out their "Book Tasting" session during the Super Conference for their picks!

The OPLA Child and Youth Services Committee and OLA staff did an incredible job with the first completely digital Child & Youth Services Expo. Feedback was excellent, and we will use the lessons learned in future digital events.

The Research and Evaluation Committee supported the COVID19 library services survey administered in Spring of 2020 and assisted with the data analysis for the [Ontario Public Library Response to COVID-19 Report](#). The OREC also presented two webinars, for library staff and boards, on data collection and analysis during COVID-19. Be sure

to attend their Super Conference session "What's Your Data? Choosing, Analyzing, and Using Your Library Data for Advocacy and Decision-making".

Northern outreach and engagement have been an ongoing OPLA focus area. Dayna DeBenedet and Ardis Chedore have created a Facebook group for northern library workers to discuss areas of common interest.

With FOPL, OLA has continued to regularly advocate for public library services and funding, particularly during this precarious time. Members and supporters are encouraged to reuse the content in our [letters](#) as they see fit.

This year's re-imagined, virtual Super Conference 2021 (*Clever Minds & Human Hearts / esprits brilliants et coeurs bienveillants*) will bring us together (even when we are apart) – a connection that I am looking forward to. I am delighted to continue to work with OPLA Vice-President (and 2022 President) Douglas Davey and the entire OPLA Council to connect with the public library community and meet their changing needs this year. Thank you to OPLA Super Conference Planners, Hamid Printer and Ashleigh Dronyk, for their tireless efforts in working with the OLA staff and Super Conference Team in building a program for our new reality. Have a great Super Conference!



# ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## MAUREEN MCGRATH, PRESIDENT

# OSLA

**2020 OSLA Membership: 961**

2020 was an unprecedented time in the school library sector and the work of OSLA Council. With schools physically closed for almost 4 of the 10 months and most School Library Learning Commons closed for 8 of the 10 months, as Educators, we had to re-envision how we provide the many aspects of our job in a virtual and hybrid world.

The results of our Member Outreach Survey were invaluable in informing the council as to how to help our members. We provided the virtual opportunity to connect in #ONLibChats through the summer and we worked hard to share, connect, and advocate online (@OSLAcouncil). To offer professional support, council members actively ran webinars in their own communities as well as through the OLA Education Institute and in partnership with OTF. Current and past members of OSLA contributed to the ETFO Summer Academy, ECCO Camp 2020, and the 2020 Child & Youth EXPO: Virtual Conference. An incredible resource to our members through this year has been the *Teaching Librarian* magazine, which has also pivoted to virtual, led by editor Caroline Freibauer.

OSLA Council, with the amazing initiative and support of OLA, continues to advocate to the Ministry of Education to keep School Library Learning Commons in mind as they plan and allocate funding. We met virtually with Ministry representatives of both policy and curriculum last June, July, and August to discuss the role of SLLC's professionals and the continued ask to designate funding given to school boards more specifically so that it translates into library budgets for resources both human and other. OSLA continues to partner with ETFO to take a stand on the importance of trained professionals in the SLLC. Council member Johanna Lawler has been at the forefront of this advocacy partnership and is an invaluable resource for those who would like to work with their union to do the same.

When we returned in September, a letter was sent to Minister of Education Stephen Lecce outlining the threat to the future of school libraries after the decision was made by numerous Ontario school boards to repurpose all school library staff and close access to school libraries

as part of their fall re-opening plan. We also reached out by letter to Directors of School Boards in August and Trustees in December to remind them of the important role of the school library on student achievement and to urge them, as planning moves forward for the 2021-22 school year, to protect funding for the school library program in their school boards.

In response to library closures, the *Save School Libraries Coalition* was created through the initiative of Ontario a dedicated and passionate group of publishers, educators, and authors who recognize the impact the loss of school libraries will have on children. With the help of the OSLA council, they have initiated a social media campaign and outreach plan to the ministry, news organizations, and parents.

This past year challenged us in many ways and reset our priorities moving forward. OSLA Council committed to anti-Black racism work. We are reading, viewing, and learning and are working on ways to put this learning into action. We are pleased to offer an initial session with Dr. Andrew B. Campbell for our members during Super Conference to support their journey in this work. We have a powerful and pivotal role as leaders of change in our schools; we must take on this responsibility with humility and passion.

This year has certainly been full of challenges, and I give great thanks for the unending collaborative spirit, commitment, and support of the OSLA council. A special thank you to OSLA Super Conference planners Kate Johnson-McGregor and Dawn Telfer for their resiliency, hard work, and enthusiasm in building an amazing program in this unprecedented pivot to a virtual conference. I am honoured to have served as your President of OSLA for 2020 and look forward to the year ahead.



# ONTARIO HEALTH LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION

## SARAH BONATO, PRESIDENT

# OHLIA

2020 OHLIA Membership: 73

I was very lucky to have the privilege of leading the Ontario Health Library and Information Association in 2020. It has been extremely rewarding to work with such an inspiring team of councilors, and also to represent OHLIA on the OLA Board. Together, with the amazing staff at the OLA office, OHLIA had an eventful inaugural year.

We have continued working on the logistics needed to transition from an independent organization to a fully affiliated division of OLA. It has been an honor to help move this initiative forward, an initiative that was insightfully proposed by previous leadership. Building upon the hard work of past presidents—who are the ones that made this endeavour possible—we have continued and continued and continued to check off/accomplishing tasks to shepherd this merger to a triumphant conclusion.

2020 began with a final vote to dissolve the Ontario Health Library Association (OHLA) as an independent organization in order to join the Ontario Library Association as a division. Over the past three years, previous leadership identified joining OLA as a division as key to reaching a wider range of members and also increasing our visibility and future relevancy. At both annual general meetings, a majority of OHLA members and OLA members voted to support the creation of a new division.

After the vote, our council discussed strategies that would enable us to reach new members and also how to recognize that many of our members may not work in traditional health science libraries. Much thoughtful discussion and debate followed, and the council decided to explore a divisional début with a new name! After consultation with our council, the OLA Board, and surveying both OLA/OHLA members our name was changed to the Ontario Health Library and Information Association. We will not lose sight of our past mission and scope, but when a new partnership changes to a hyphenated name, our names change notes how we are both the past while preparing for the future. While many of our members work in health science libraries, others also work in other settings that are not traditional libraries or they frequently help patrons with health-related information requests. Our name tweak will also

hopefully attract new members that may be interested in learning more about providing health information and health information needs, even though it may not be their primary job responsibility.

The OHLIA mission to support library specialists who provide health information and/or services to those in the Ontario communities is a worthy cause—high-quality health information and information services benefit all and helps everyone thrive. OHLIA has a promising future ahead of us; to quote James Thurber, “It’s better to ask some questions than know all of the answers,” the future holds many opportunities and promise for us to advance our cause by not only continuing our past initiatives but also identifying new ones.

I would like to thank everyone who served on the OHLA board/OHLIA council this year and also to our faithful and very patient members. Transitioning from an independent organization to a division requires dedicated attention to a myriad of details, which could not have been accomplished without the help of many. Many thanks to all of our councilors and a very special thank you to our outgoing councilors, Caitlin Carter and Stephanie Sanger. It has been a great pleasure to serve as President, and I wish all the best of luck to our incoming 2021 President Julie Waddick!



# REPORT OF SHELAGH PATERSON

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



When I look back on the first week of March 2020, it seems like we were in another universe. The first quarter of the new year at OLA is always a rush – starting with a bang with Super Conference (*Dream Here / Rêvez ici*) in January, followed in March with more than 70 OLA members from across the province and different library sectors who meet at the OLA office for full-day board, council, and Super

Conference planning meetings. The energy is intense, and new ideas and friendships are forged. Aware of COVID-19 impacting other countries, but not yet declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization until March 11, OLA Staff had blithely thoroughly cleaned the office and stocked up on hand sanitizer in anticipation of the range of volunteer meetings.

On March 16, Ontario began lockdown.

From April to May, our mantra was ‘survival’ as we scrutinized the budget, the bank account, obsessively researched every government support, and compared notes with other non-profits.

Staff reconstructed and then presented to the OLA Board the strategic plan through the lens of:

- Revenue Generation: selecting the OLA General Fund as the annual campaign, assessing special grant opportunities, revisiting program pricing to ensure OLA was affordable and accessible, yet could still realize revenues.
- Member Engagement: instituting pay-what-you can EI programs, free #OnLibChats to connect and problem solve, free ‘class of 2020’ OLA student memberships, and moving events online.
- Support for Libraries: surveying the library sector to identify issues, gather data and disseminate back to members, communicating regularly with provincial ministries including presenting to COVID recovery standing committees.

OLA’s Board, Divisions, and committees acted swiftly with brainstorming and devising plans to maintain programs and connections with members, but in different ways.

The spring amplification of racist brutality drove action on anti-Black racism as an urgent priority for the association. The OLA Board endorsed a statement, actions, and began viewing OLA work and activities through an anti-racist and diversity lens. There is a lot of work to do and members are passionate about effecting change within the association.

OLA only exists because of the people who believe that we can do great things for libraries together and are willing to work hard to accomplish this. This year demanded an extraordinary commitment from OLA members who were already challenged by scarcity and disruption in their own workplaces. There are some great examples of this commitment in this annual report. A few further notable examples of OLA leadership in 2020:

**School Library Professionals:** March-June of the pandemic, the skills and expertise of school library professionals were critical for the abruptly imposed at-home education scenario. In September, the hybrid at-home and in-class school year brought a massive re-allocation of school library professionals to other parts of the school board and in worst case scenarios, board-wide lay-offs. OSLA council have been unwavering in their efforts to engage government, maintain a sense of community, and to participate in the national #SchoolLibrariesMatter campaign.

**The exceptional 2021 OLA Super Conference Planners:** the ‘Human Hearts and Clever Minds’ of this 25 person team signed on for an intensive but rewarding planning experience that usually culminates in 4 snowy days in Toronto. Instead, they had to completely blow up the plan by learning a lot of new skills quickly in order to build a stellar virtual conference for 2021.

**The OLA Board, Divisions and Committees:** led by Andrea Cecchetto, OLA President, the majority of folks on the OLA Board, divisional councils, and committees agreed to postpone elections until 2021 and extend their terms to maintain continuity and stability for the association during an uncertain time.

**OLA staff:** this remarkable team have been unwavering in their commitment and their ability to adapt under pressure. Key accomplishments:

- In the spring and in partnership with CBC Reads, the Forest of Reading Festival was re-imagined as an online awards ceremony available to all of Canada and featuring more than 100 nominated Canadian authors and illustrators.
- Significant IT implementations including a new membership system, web presence, and virtual meeting/event/expo platforms.
- Re-imagining workflow logistics and planning as a result of ‘going virtual’. Of note: The Child and Youth Expo and 2021 OLA Super Conference.
- In September, adapting to a reduced work-week (on average, 3-day work week) to mitigate budget impacts. We are in tough times and despite this the OLA team have remained creative, optimistic and future-focused.