

*Inside*OLBA



MESSAGE FROM OLBA PRESIDENT

October 20-24 was Ontario Public Library Week. This year's theme was "Libraries for Life." I can't help but think of the many hours that I spent in public libraries throughout my life. As a child, I fondly remember going to the Carlingwood Branch of the Ottawa Public Library every Saturday morning. There was magic in the children's department! Imagine being able to take books home to read for free, only to return them and do it all over again! Later, following a move to Thunder Bay as a teenager, I found solace once again in the public library. This time it was the Waverley branch of the Thunder Bay Public Library. There, I could "get lost" in a book, read a magazine or more importantly, ask the ever so wise librarian where I could find information that I needed for a school project. When I began my teaching career in Kenora, I knew very few people in the community. I quickly discovered the Kenora Public Library, and it soon became like a second home to me. By then technology was beginning to be a part of the lending program, and I was able to take out not only books but movies using my library card. As a young mother, I was able to share my love of reading with my daughter, and through her eyes, I saw that she too was caught up in the magic that happened in the children's department. Books, crafts, Fancy Nancy Teas, Harry Potter magic, the TD Summer Reading Program, The Forest of Reading...the list was endless, and she wanted to do everything!

Libraries have certainly evolved even from when I was a little girl. They have become community hubs that span every generation, from the young to our beloved seniors. There is something for everyone. They are places where like-minded people can meet and listen to a book reading, or join a book club, learn a new craft, socialize by playing games or doing a puzzle, get involved in clubs in genealogy or SEEDS, and learn how to navigate recent technologies. Today libraries are more than just books, although books, whether they are hard copies or digital, remain a focal point. Libraries are a place where anyone, at any age or point in their lives, can find something which will resonate with them.

As members of OLBA, you already know the value of public libraries. Hopefully, you are aware of the programming and events that are happening in your libraries. Therefore, I challenge you to go and visit a branch of your library. Not as a board

member, but as a community member. Take some time to reconnect with your library. Better yet, take someone close to you, a family member or a friend. Let's spread the word loud and clear, that our libraries are truly "libraries for life."

Marj Poirier

President, OLBA

News

Join OLBA Council

Nominations are currently being accepted for vacancies on OLBA council.

Current 2025 call for nominations includes:

Vice President/President Elect – **3 year term** – [Learn more about this position](#)

Northwestern Region – **3 year term**

Northeastern Region – **1 year term**

East Central Region – **3 year term**

Central West Region – **3 year term**

[Review regional information for Library Boards.](#)

[Submit Nomination](#) by November 15.

Super Conference

This year's Super Conference will be from January 29-February 1, 2025, in Toronto. This year's theme is "Building Bridges." Nathan Etherington has provided a report on what will be happening at this year's OLBA Boot Camp, which takes place on February 1. This day is dedicated to library board members, and no doubt you will walk away from the day with new information and vigour to share with your fellow board members.

Get Ready To Register for OLBA Boot Camp

The prep work for OLA Super Conference 2025 has already begun, which includes OLBA Boot Camp on Saturday, February 1st, 2025 at the Inter-Continental Toronto Centre located steps away from Union Station. This year's topics build on discussion from last year's Boot Camp as well as topics in Year Three on the [Governance Hub](#) created by the Ontario Library Service.

Boot Camp will kick off with the Annual General Meeting, hosted by OLBA President-elect, Nathan Etherington and Past President, Marj Poirier. OLBA Treasurer, Eric Guernsey will present the financials.

Our keynote speaker, Kate Graham will speak on The Curse of Leadership and how it is easier to follow than lead a team. She will explore contemporary challenges facing library Board including the social, political, and economic concerns of society today.

A relatively new tool becoming more common is Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between Library Boards and Municipal Governments. This session will explore MOUs, provide tips for successful MOUs, as well as preventing municipal overreach which is quickly becoming an issue in Ontario.

As a result of last year's Boot Camp, we will have a session on Safety Issues in the Library. While the CEO oversees the operations, the Library Board is the employer with other challenges in the modern world. Those challenges are showing up at the front door of the libraries across the province. This session will explore how the Board can support their CEO in creating a safe environment for their employees and the community.

Another session will focus on an overarching Board Governance session discussing evaluation, recruitment, and succession planning. All of these tools can help identify areas of improvement for your Board and optimize your performance for your community.

Hopefully, this information helps you as you are preparing your budgets for next year and is a reminder that OLBA has bursaries for you to consider applying to receive. This is also a reminder to apply for the OLBA elections as well.

OLBA Super Conference Bursary

For library board members who live in Northern and small libraries, attending Super Conference can be costly. The OLBA Bursary assists board members in distant and small communities with travel expenses to conference, and allows them to choose from hundreds of professional development events, including the OLBA Board Boot Camp.

Bursaries Available:

2 X Northern Region (includes Northeast and Northwest): \$1,250 per person
1 X Any Library Board (excludes Northern libraries) serving a population under 15,000: \$500

Visit the OLA website for more information about [OLBA member regions](#).

The requirements for eligibility for one of the bursaries are:

- Your Board must be a member of OLBA
- The person applying has never been to Super Conference before
- The person must state which bursary they are applying for and ensure that they are applying for the correct geographic area.

Applications open November 15 - Information available on the [Super Conference](#)

[website.](#)

OLA/OLBA Awards

Submit an OLA/OLBA award nomination by November 30.

Award nominations includes:

[OLBA W.J. Robertson Medallion](#) - presented by the Ontario Library Boards' Association to a public librarian who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of public library service in Ontario.

[Joyce Cunningham Award \(Public Library Board of the Year\)](#) - This award is given to a Public Library Board [or two Public Library Boards that participated in a collaborative effort] that has demonstrated a high level of collaboration and innovation to produce outstanding results.

[James Bain Medallion](#) - The James Bain Medallion is awarded to a library board member who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in governing a public library in Ontario.

[And more!](#)

[View more details](#) about OLA Awards and submit a nomination by November 30.

New Policy

Nathan has also written a report on the new policy, which will be voted on at this year's Super Conference. Please take a moment to read the changes to the existing policy. Questions will be answered prior to voting.

Suggestions

InsideOLBA is a document that is intended to keep you up to date on what is happening at the provincial level of library boards. But we would like to hear from you! What would you like to see in *InsideOLBA*? Are there specific areas, for example, governance or succession planning that you would like covered? Please let us know! You can email Marj Poirier at marjpoirier@gmail.com.

Last, but certainly not least I would like to thank my hard working and dedicated OLBA Board. It has been an absolute pleasure and honour to serve as your president. In January 2025, Nathan Etherington will be your new OLBA president. He is extremely committed to serving you and working on your behalf as Ontario public library board members.

Thank you to

Kerry Badgley
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Eric Guernsey
David Mackey

Nick van Velzen
Alex Hilson
Eric Guernsey
David Mackey

Special thanks to Michelle Arbuckle, Executive Director, Ontario Library Association for all her help, guidance and support this past year.

Marj Poirier,
President, OLBA



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