

# *Inside*OLBA

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings, and apologies for the delay in getting this to you. Welcome to *InsideOLBA*. For new library board members, this newsletter appears twice annually and is meant to inform you of OLBA activities/initiatives and serve as a forum for you, our members. As such, if you wish to submit anything that you think would be of interest to fellow library board members, please do not hesitate to contact me at [kerry.badgley@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:kerry.badgley@inspection.gc.ca). We are always looking for stories (hopefully good news ones!) to share with our members.

This edition begins with your President's message and an introduction to the OLBA Council. As you will note, there are vacancies, so please consider becoming part of the team as we move forward with an ambitious agenda.



**Kerry Badgley**

*InsideOLBA* Editor

North Grenville Public Library Board

*"There is no power for change greater than a community  
discovering what it cares about."*

*— Margaret J. Wheatley*

## MESSAGE FROM OLBA PRESIDENT

Hello!

Welcome to *InsideOLBA*. My name is Marj Poirier, and I am your OLBA President for 2004. I look forward to being your president, and along with the members of the board, we are here to help you any way we can.

Here's a little bit about me. I live in Kenora, which is the final Ontario community before the Manitoba border. In fact, we are only 36 km from the border and in a different time zone than most of the rest of the province! We live nestled near the shores of the beautiful Lake of the Woods. I'm married to Andrew, who is the Mayor of Kenora. We have an extremely spoiled dog and are forever parents to Chloe. I love to run outside all year long, ski in the winter and go boating and fishing in the summer. I currently teach grade 2/3, choosing to come out of retirement due to the need for teachers.

I have been a member of the Kenora Public Library for about twenty years and have held every position except treasurer. I am currently the chairperson of the board, a position I've held before. Provincially, I was a board member of Ontario Library Services North (OLS-N) before it was disbanded.

Public libraries in Ontario are constantly evolving to suit the needs of their communities on very tight budgets. The Provincial Libraries Operating Grant (PLOG), which is the funding libraries receive from the provincial government, has remained unchanged for more than twenty years. Everyone is acutely aware of how the cost of everything continues to rise. CEOs and library boards have had to become extremely creative in offering the best possible service to our patrons with limited funds. Somehow, it gets done, but imagine how different things could be if provincial funding was aligned with the cost of living.

Libraries continue to be a gathering place in a community. It doesn't matter whether this is in the heart of the GTA or Atikokan. The impact of homelessness has made public libraries a safe and warm place for these people to go. Many people use library computers to stay in contact with family members or even to look for work. Library staff are often asked to help with resumes and letters. Libraries also offer services for babies to seniors, so the need for safety has never been greater. In fact, a session at the Super Conference Board Boot Camp was devoted just to this. It is our hope that we can offer some Zoom sessions throughout the year where libraries can get together and talk about what's happening in their library and what works and what doesn't work.

One of OLBA's main mandates is to ensure good governance. There is a wonderful document that is put out by the Ontario Library Association (OLA) named "Cut to the Chase." It is an excellent at-a-glance governance booklet. I highly recommend that every board member have a copy of this. These can be ordered through the OLA website under "Shop with us." Cut to the Chase can be broken down into sections so that it could become a starting point for further learning and discussion at your local meetings. Governance should be a big part of what you will be doing with your board, and I have found it helpful to have it as a standing item on your agenda.

Advocacy, especially during these uncertain economic times, is another important area upon which OLBA focuses. In November, some of the members of OLA met for “Library Days at Queen’s Park.” It was an extremely interesting couple of days, which were full of meetings with different staff members who worked directly for MPPs. We went in with an agenda to talk about the digital public library, First Nations salary supplement and the increase to the PLOG.

The highlight every year is the OLBA Boot Camp at the end of the Super Conference, and once again, this year did not disappoint. This day is targeted specifically at board trustees. It always provides a wealth of information, whether from the presenters or the many discussions held around the room.

Please keep an eye out for potential educational webinars or Zoom meetups that could further enhance your effectiveness as a library board member.

Yours in solidarity for public libraries in Ontario,

**Marj Poirier**

President, OLBA

*“A library is infinity under a roof.”*

— Gail Carson Levine

## News

### Board News From Around the Province

Here are some news items that relate to library boards in Ontario. If you have any stories that you wish to share, please contact me so that they can be included in an upcoming *InsideOLBA*.

#### Springwater council split on contracting out library services

Wayne Doyle, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter  
February 22, 2024

"Over the past few months, Fisher says he has exercised his rights and duties as a duly elected council representative and challenged multiple library requests — from replacing an aging lighting system in the Elmvale branch to adding staff. He has also supported a number of library requests. And, he’s not alone in his desire to review the library’s activities." [Read more](#).

**Editor's Note:** The above excerpt is reprinted courtesy of [BarrieToday](#) and sincere thanks are extended to that news source for allowing us to do so. Mr. Doyle's article is an excellent example of local journalism, and I hope that it generates some discussion for the Ontario library community more generally.

### County's library cuts show, 'at best, unconscious bias'

Rob Paul, BradfordToday  
August 13, 2022

"With cuts to library services being made by the County of Simcoe, more than 1,000 Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library visitors who access multilingual services and information technology services could be impacted each month... The library board and the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee don't believe there's bigoted intent with the decision, but with who the situation is affecting, they feel there's a misunderstanding and disconnect on who this will specifically affect." [Read more.](#)

**Editor's Note:** The above excerpt is reprinted with the kind permission of [BradfordToday](#).

*"A library is a place that is a repository of information and gives every citizen equal access to it. That includes health information. And mental health information. It's a community space. It's a place of safety, a haven from the world."*

— Neil Gaiman

### Meet Your [2024 OLBA Council!](#)

#### [Marj Poirier](#)

2024 President  
Kenora Public Library Board

#### [Nathan Etherington](#)

2024 Vice President/President Elect  
County of Brant Public Library Board

#### [Eric Guernsey](#)

Councillor - East-Central Region  
Oshawa Public Library Board

#### [Kerry Badgley](#)

Councillor - Eastern Region

North Grenville Public Library Board

**Nick van Velzen**

Councillor - Central West Region  
Hamilton Public Library Board

**Alex Hilson**

Councillor - Mid-Central Region  
Halton Hills Public Library Board

**David Mackey**

Councillor - Southwestern Region  
Stratford Public Library Board

## Are You Interested in Joining OLBA Council?

**Vacancies:**

Northwestern Region  
Northeastern Region

[View more information about regions](#)

Interested? Be in touch: [mmacks@accessola.com](mailto:mmacks@accessola.com)



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