

Present and Future Leaders Gather in Victoria

By Adrienne Wass.

On February 6, 2009, the library leaders of today and tomorrow gathered on a sunny day in Victoria to participate in a one-day workshop at the Inn at Laurel Point. As part of the BCLA's President's Program, the event was entitled "Becoming an Effective Leader". The facilitators were a dynamic team:

- Ken Roberts, Chief Librarian of Hamilton Public Library,
- Daphne Wood, then Manager of Communications and Community Development for the Hamilton Public Library and currently the Director of Planning and Development at the Vancouver Public Library.

Sharing insightful experiences and presenting well-researched ideas, Ken and Daphne described how the definition of leadership has evolved. Rather than imposing their own beliefs, for example, leaders empower staff, embody values and create an environment conducive to accomplishments.



Attendees participate in a group activity.

Ken and Daphne then presented the attributes of positive organizational cultures and the characteristics of high-performing organizations. In both cases, effective leadership is a vital component. They also highlighted the individual characteristics of exceptional leaders and managers (noting that leaders and managers have different roles!).

And that was just the morning.

The focus of the afternoon was on the ideal type of organization for libraries; participants agreed that a library needs to be a "resilient organization". These organizations are highly adaptable to external market shifts, yet focused on and aligned behind a coherent business strategy¹.



Ken Roberts speaking about effective leadership and organizations.

The afternoon concluded with a discussion about finding ideas and best practices outside the library and adapting them, including:

- distributing beepers to patrons waiting for computer time
- holding birthday parties and meetings in libraries for communities that lack a place to meet
- mobile check-out lines
- and even wine bars in the Amsterdam Public Library!

Following the workshop, many attendees took a break and enjoyed a brief walk along the waterfront, returning to a spontaneous gathering in the scenic "Harbour Room". People had the chance to mingle and the conversation was lively; some had travelled

¹ Neilson, Gary L.; Pasternack, Bruce A; and Van Nuys, Karen E. "The Passive-Aggressive Organization." *Harvard Business Review*, October 2005, pp. 82 – 92.

from the mainland to be part of this workshop while others lived on the island.



Enjoying the view and sunshine just outside the Harbour Room are Fern Teleglow from Okanagan Regional Library and Rita Penco of the Fraser Valley Regional Library.



Debbie Schacter (Vancouver Public Library), Judy Bennett (Legislative Library), Horst Huelscher (Legislative Library) and Tracy Kendrick (Greater Victoria Public Library) enjoy dinner at the Inn at Laurel Point.

The day drew to a close with a dinner talk presented by the ever-energetic Ken Roberts, who shared a moving and personal story about truths he had learned.

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