

President's Message

By Ken Cooley, BCLA President.

In an organization whose membership is as diverse as that of the British Columbia Library Association, many different responses to the kinds of challenges we've faced over the past few months are to be expected. BCLA collaborates with a number of important institutional partners like the British Columbia Library Trustee's Association (BCLTA) and the Association of British Columbia Public Library Directors (ABCPLD); deals with several layers of government, municipal and provincial; interacts with various agencies like The Public Library Services Branch; maintains a number of constituent committees and draws from at least four distinct categories of members based on the public, academic, school or private libraries in which they work.

Members, partners and related agencies are impacted differently by events and their responses are based largely on the intensity of the impact. This results in a significant number of recommended courses of action, many antithetical to one another.

Regarding recent government cuts, part of the challenge facing the BCLA Executive has been developing a strategy that we felt would be effective and in concert with a majority of members.

In responding to funding decisions made by the Provincial Government, The BCLA Board and Executive have sought to maintain dialogue with the government both through the Public Library Services Branch and the Ministry of Education; avoiding actions that would damage what has typically been an excellent relationship or rupture channels of communication which we feel need to be maintained if we are to achieve the objective of restored funding.

Not all members have been comfortable with this first line of response. As the next provincial budget approaches, BCLA will continue to highlight the importance of libraries to the province's social fabric and the contribution libraries make to economic recovery. We will judge the effectiveness of this plan on government response including indicators like budgetary decisions next spring. Over the intervening months BCLA will continue to investigate other ways in which we can take our message to the government and we welcome any input to our work on this issue.

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