

# The Benefits of Being Part of BCLA

By Adrienne Wass

Becoming a BCLA Member helps you stay informed about library-related issues and events across the province. Participating in BCLA offers even more benefits! Whether you join an interest group, serve on a committee, or attend a workshop, BCLA provides you with the opportunity to contribute your ideas and talents, develop your skills and make connections with colleagues in a variety of libraries across BC. To help illustrate how participating in BCLA can be a rewarding experience, several BCLA members have shared their stories.

**Deb Thomas**  
Deputy Chief Librarian and Bob Prittie Metrotown  
Branch Manager, Burnaby Public Library

**BCLA Experience:**

2009 – 2010 Convenor, Public Librarians Interest Group; Member, Intellectual Freedom Committee and Member, Fund Development Committee  
2008-2009 Past-president  
2007-2008 President  
2006-2007 President-Elect  
2004 – 2006 Continuing Education Director (2-year term)  
1993 – 1994 1-year Director on Board during Taskforce on Administrative Restructuring  
Early 90's Member, Intellectual Freedom Committee

Membership in any community includes sharing responsibility for its well-being and being active in library associations has been a means for me to fulfill that responsibility. I have found my involvement in BCLA to be rewarding – and sometimes challenging – on so many levels. I've met countless committed librarians and library staff from all library sectors – many of whom I count as friends. I have been able to keep informed on issues that affect libraries and to involve myself in responses to some of those issues. I have gained skills and confidence in diplomacy and communications, and a deep knowledge of the value of libraries. My involvement in BCLA (and other library associations) meant that I was known and respected among my colleagues while I was director of a small interior library and has contributed to my appointment to my current position as deputy chief librarian in a large urban library.

**Roan Janyk**  
Web Services Librarian, Okanagan College

**BCLA Experience:**

2009 – 2010 SLAIS BCLA Student Representative

It is difficult to express what the BCLA has helped me accomplish as a new librarian, as the people I have met, benefits to my career, and learning experiences cannot be communicated in a few short paragraphs. Looking back at the person I was when I began my MLIS, I have grown immensely due to my involvement in the BCLA and those who mentored me within the association.

My exposure to the association came within my first week at SLAIS. As most new students are, we were sat down and presented to by various groups as to why joining affiliations was important. This information was great, but each talk began to sound the same. However, when the BCLA student representative at the time spoke and said "BCLA represents members from *all* types of libraries, and they have a lot of fun doing it" that sparked my attention. When I began my MLIS I struggled identifying myself as a public librarian, a clinical librarian, an academic librarian, and so on. Finally I could join an association, learn all corners of the profession, and not have to make up my mind about what kind of an informational professional I wanted to be.

I not only joined, but became involved, and learned about the importance of community. Our skill sets may be different depending on our job title, but this does not change why we entered the profession and what we have to share. It has become clear that our members care about sharing their experiences, what they have learned, and what they are eager to learn from others. The BCLA has shown me what it means to be a professional, what it should mean to be a member of an association, and I hope future library students will see this value and continue to create a bright future for our organization.

**Lynne Jordan**  
Deputy CEO / Director, Strategic Development,  
Vancouver Public Library

**BCLA Experience:**

2009 – 2010	Past President
2008-2009	President
2007-2008	Vice President/ President Elect
2006-2007	Appointed Member at Large (1 year term)

Sitting on the BCLA Board was an excellent opportunity to be involved in responding to issues affecting libraries and library workers, from TILMA to Copyright legislation and more. My involvement in the provincial association started with being a Vancouver Island appointed representative to the Board, but yours could be to organize a social event in your community, or it could include conference planning, assisting with nominations for Board positions, workshop host, or leading constitutional change. During my time on the Board, my favourite tasks were those that rewarded our dedicated librarians and library staff – giving grants, annual awards and recognition. I challenge all BCLA members to find an opportunity to contribute to their association.

**Adrienne Wass**  
**Manager, Community Development, Greater Victoria Public Library**

**BCLA Experience:**

2009 – 2011	Second Vice-President
2008-2019	Vancouver Island Interest Group Co-Convenor
2007-2008	Member at Large and Communications Committee Member

As a University of Western Ontario graduate and Librarian from “the East”, BCLA has helped me settle into my new community of Librarians. It’s given me countless networking and professional development opportunities, not to mention many happy memories from the BC Libraries Conferences! As a Board Member, I’ve gained experiences and skills that would have been otherwise unavailable to me at that point in my career. BCLA has also offered me the vital support I needed when I taking on new

BCLA project or volunteering to organize a library-related event. I’m proud to include my participation in BCLA as an important part of my career and grateful to be part of a Board that includes many of the province’s most dedicated and talented Librarians.



*Adrienne Wass is the Manager, Community Development at the Greater Victoria Public Library.*