

# Treasurer's Annual Report: 2011-2012

By *Debbie Schachter*.

2011 was another positive financial year for BCLA. The 2011 budget had been developed with the expectation that we would experience our significant planned revenue reductions, based on Libraries and Literacy project work moving away from the Association, but this did not wholly occur in 2011. Our budget was developed with an expectation that we would be accessing previous retained earnings to buffer the Association while we planned our future with smaller revenues and potential revenue development in new areas. Several factors came into play that have ended the year on a positive note, specifically with a significant surplus. These include the delay in the transfer of the database licensing revenue to the B.C. Libraries Cooperative, stable and growing membership renewals, some reduced expense areas, as well as the significant revenue generated by the Conference.

In 2011 we achieved a positive balance of \$80,803. Our reserve fund balance is now \$282,172, up from \$197,513 in 2010. This returns our reserve to pre-2009 levels and provides a level of stability which will allow BCLA to pursue options for financial changes in the coming years.

## Continuing the plan to reduce expenses and increase revenue

It has been several years since BCLA identified the need to address financial sustainability, relating to the uncertainty of our revenue streams. This was based primarily on factors from early indicators of reductions in membership renewals to the move of Libraries and Literacy BC (then PLSB) to discontinue various project activities through BCLA. Based on the work of the Task Force on Strategic Sustainability in 2011, we have continued to implement responses developed to address the impacts of decreases in revenue streams. Some of these activities have been implemented and the Board has also developed scenarios with identified responses to a number of potential situations.

## Results from 2011

Revenues in 2011 were up in a number of areas, which led to our overall positive situation for the year. Specifically, conference, membership, and interest

income were up over budget, providing us with another year in which to replenish our reserve funds.

At the same time, expenses in many areas were budgeted at a reduced level and some others came in under budget, most notably committee expenses and staffing. All expense lines were again examined and reduced where possible, without impacting our essential services to members. Expenses related to the shift away from Libraries and Literacy project work will include a reduction in accounting costs and will be reflected in 2012 and onward, rather than in 2011 as originally anticipated.

## Future

With the continuation of government funded revenue streams in 2011 and the anticipation that it is in 2012 where the reduction to these project funded streams will now occur, we have developed a conservative budget for 2012 which reflects a deficit. This deficit budget will act as a transition year while we continue to focus on new revenue sources. We will continue to examine expense lines and focus anew on increasing revenue potential in existing as well as new areas, while reducing expenses wherever feasible.

Some of the success we are already seeing in our current year is based on the strategic work begun in 2010 and 2011, including revising the membership fee structure; significant communication with and input from the membership related to the value of BCLA, leading to stability of membership levels; and the focus on increasing conference revenue, while still providing an excellent conference experience to our members.

I must thank Allie, Alane, Errin and Rita for their dedication, focus, energy and drive, and specifically providing value to the members of BCLA through their work. The uncertainty over funding these past years has not been easy for the staff of BCLA, as well as for the Board and our members, but with renewed focus, BCLA continues to demonstrate clear relevance and purpose for our members in library communities throughout B.C.

*Debbie Schachter is the BCLA Treasurer, 2011-2012.*