

# Executive Director's Report

By Annette DeFaveri.

Happy New Year all!

It's been a hectic 2012, mostly because I have much to learn, but also because there is much to do to continue to build and strengthen BCLA.

## Surveys & communication

Associations exist for their members and therefore we need to know what members expect, need and want from the organization. Building strong communication among members and with the Association staff and Board, in order to understand member's needs, is a priority articulated in BCLA's developing Strategic Plan. We have been using more surveys this year in order to gauge member interest in certain areas and to gather feedback for projects and plans. In November we held an "Open House" for representatives from Sections, Committees and Interest Groups (SCIGs) to hear their thoughts and suggestions about the developing Strategic Plan. This is a model we will continue in 2013 so we can engage members in discussions about BCLA priorities and directions. It is always a more dynamic and creative experience to have discussions with people than it is to simply ask for written feedback. Of course written feedback is necessary as well so those people unable to attend in person have an opportunity to make suggestions and comment on the ongoing business of the Association.

## Setting priorities

Our challenge though is to balance people's expectations and hopes for the Association with our capacity to realize those expectations and hopes. As many of you know, Allie and I combined represent a staff of 1.8 people. To complicate matters both Allie and I think we are always able to do anything! One of the things we hope to do this year is to be more realistic about the projects and tasks we can take on. To this end having the new Strategic Plan will be very beneficial to us as well as to members. Allie and I can measure and plan our work based on the priorities articulated in the Strategic plan and members have a document that sets out discrete priorities and objectives. The Strategic Plan lets us define ourselves to the library community and to the general community.

## Website

As you all know our website needs much care and attention. Where to begin is the resounding question. There is never a perfect time or place to begin a project of this size so our decision was to start by asking members, through the SCIGs, what they need in terms of functionality on a website. We are currently collecting this information from SCIG Chairs and will use it to begin defining our needs for a new website. Gordon Coleman, Tamarack Hockins and Tara Stephens volunteered to write the survey and then analyze responses. This is a first step in what is sure to be a big project in 2013.

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## Conference

Planning for the 2013 BC Library Conference is also well underway. This year's Conference Chair is Christina de Castell and Program Chair is Debbie Schachter. Learning from last year's conference and building on the feedback we received, we are making some interesting changes to this year's program. We added 45-minute slots to the program and had an overwhelming response from members who like this limited time allocation and are interested in presenting in a concentrated time frame.

The success of last year's "Hot Topic" session on libraries and ebooks inspired us to add a hot topic session to this year's program. While the topic hasn't been decided yet we are looking at issues that keep us talking, engender debate, and provide an opportunity to develop opinions.

We had a great response from members, over 60 submissions, for possible conference session topics. Thank you to all who submitted. Unfortunately we can't mount every session that was proposed. This year, as in past years, we assembled a committee of BCLA members, SCIG representatives, and partners to make the selections. The committee based its decisions on criteria built from member feedback collected after the 2012 conference and then again in a new survey distributed to members in September 2012. Each conference session selected should meet one or more of the criteria listed below:

1. To help educate members about new ideas and strategies for the future.
2. To support members who want to explore new ways of doing traditional work.
3. To support members who want to explore new

ways of doing new work.

4. To provide opportunities for learning and discussions that further our understanding of the new directions libraries are taking.
5. Transcends a simple report focused on "what we have done" and instead demonstrates how the work is beneficial to the library environment as a whole.
6. Demonstrates how libraries are handling rapid change and what was learned in one library can apply to other libraries.
7. Shows how the library can partner and learn from institutions, businesses, associations, etc that are not part of the traditional library environment.
8. Presents new and topical subject matter that is relevant to libraries.

We are just now beginning to shape the conference program and identify any significant gaps we might have. Our hope is to deliver a first class conference that is relevant, exciting and beneficial to BCLA members. The one outcome we are striving for is to have people leave feeling energized and excited about the future of libraries.

Much more is going to happen in 2013 and through the opportunities presented to me in the Browser and in regular ED Updates I hope to talk more about BCLA advocacy work, strengthening our financial position, ongoing communication strategies, and building additional continuing educational opportunities for members. It is going to be an exciting year!

*Annette DeFaveri is BCLA's Executive Director.*