

# Incoming President's Address: 2013-2014

By Gwen Bird.

My first order of business here is to thank June for her leadership over the past year as our President. June, it's been a true pleasure working with you, and coming to know you as someone who is deeply knowledgeable about BC libraries but in a different sector from the one in which I work. I have appreciated your diplomacy, your attention to detail, your clear commitment to BCLA, and your calm and thoughtful leadership style. Please accept this gift that I present to you on behalf of all of us at BCLA.

I'm delighted to be here as incoming President of BCLA. Through my involvement in this association I've made deep and wide connections, as a long time member, a past Chair of ALPS, member of the FNIG. I've attended Info Policy Salons, continuing Education sessions, been involved in the mentoring program, and attended and presented at many BCLA conferences. I am truly proud of this Association, and the vital community it represents. At its best I know it to be responsive, representative and bold. Thanks to the info policy folks, it's vigilant and sometimes even a little bit sassy. I know that I landed at least one of my rewarding jobs in BC libraries as a result of collegial relationships that arose out of BCLA connections. So when I was approached last year and asked about putting my name forward for this role, it was very easy to say yes. It's been obvious to me for some time how much I've gained from BCLA and I'm very happy to now be in a position to give back and continue learning along the way.

Over the past year it's been a pleasure serving on the Board, getting reacquainted with the inner workings of the association, meeting new people and learning the ropes from June and other members of the Executive Committee.

I'm looking forward to the year ahead. As you've heard, we have a shiny new strategic plan. In the coming year our agenda will be driven by that plan. My role as President will be to steer the course for the Board to make strategic decisions that are needed, and make sure we all stay out of the way for our outstanding staff to do the operational work of running the association day-to-day. We'll be working on renewed Mission, Vision and Values statements for BCLA, and in this we'll be considering the input from

conversations here, including the notes you are pinning up on the boards in the lobby. These are still up! Get out there add your voice. This year we also look forward to unveiling the rest of the new state-of-the-art website, one that will be current, easy to update by staff and authorized member groups, and that will meet the needs of members, volunteers, and sections and committees within the association.

Looking ahead to next year's conference when the CLA annual conference will also be held in our region, we aim to keep the best of BCLC but to change it up in some ways that will make it new and exciting as well. Stay tuned for further details on this as our work evolves.

Stepping into this role has prompted me to reflect on what I get both personally and professionally from BCLA. As my jobs in libraries have become more specialized over the years, it may not always be the place where I get knockout content that's directly applicable to my day job. That's OK, I get that elsewhere. But I get something else equally valuable—an unrivalled opportunity to connect with friends and colleagues, to tap into the energy of students and others new to the field, hear about library life in regions of the province beyond the lower mainland, and to benefit from the wisdom and experience of mentors.

It's also my hope and goal for the next year, at least, that we can also use this association to challenge ourselves. To nudge each other to develop in areas that are most meaningful for us, our communities, and the readers we serve. For me this includes asking how we can support more diversity in our profession, how we can support new models of scholarly publishing, it means finding ways to energize and engage mid-career library workers. It will involve asking difficult questions about business models that may have become too comfortable. You have your own list.

The conference is BCLA's best opportunity for us to do these things, but it's certainly not the only one. I'm looking forward to the year ahead, to connecting with many more of you during that time, and to guiding BCLA toward more chances for all of us to connect, challenge, develop and learn together.