

President's AGM Report: 2012-2013

By June Stockdale.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the 2013 BC Libraries Conference such a great success. From the tongue-in-cheek theme of "Are we there yet?" to the quality of the sessions and the speakers, it has indeed been a wonderful experience. Thanks to the committee conference chair Christina de Castell, session coordinator Debbie Schachter, conference coordinator Shannon Stumph of Dragonfly consulting, and committee members Michael DeKoven, Carla Graebner, Michael Burris, Chris Middlemass, Kate Sloan and Jennifer O'Donnell. And of course, our Association staff Annette DeFaveri and Allie Douglas, as well as all of the volunteers who assisted with convening sessions, manning the welcome desk, and everything else to make this happen.

2012-2013 was a year of rebuilding for BCLA. With a new Executive Director, Annette Defaveri, at the helm we focused on the development of a strategic plan. Few associations would have the audacity to begin a strategic planning process with no funding and a pledge to complete the plan with no cost. With the financial challenges we were facing and a clear need to prioritize the work of the Association to best meet member needs within our limited resources, we did indeed do just that. Working with the expertise of the Board, we had two half-day internal planning sessions from which we emerged with a draft plan. It took a year to complete and included consultation with members and collaboration with SCIG chairs to ensure we captured the essence of the Association and issues of interest to our members. Our areas of focus are around advocacy for libraries and library personnel, facilitation of professional development, clear and timely communication, and financial sustainability. To see a complete copy of the plan, please visit the website. Thank you to the past and present Board and our Executive Director who all worked so hard to get this in place.

The Information Policy Committee did a super job of making sure BCLA was at the forefront of responding to advocacy issues as they arose, thanks largely to Heather Morrison and Myron Groover. From the Library and Archives Canada issue, to public library funding being subsumed in the Ministry of Education budget, to consultation on federal legislation, BCLA has played a vital active role. We also worked with BCLTA to prepare a document outlining the key library issues for advocacy in the provincial election.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ken Haycock, the BCLA, BCLTA, ABCPLD, BC Library Coop, and Interlink met a few times to discuss a collaborative provincial advocacy strategy. As those of us involved in collaborative efforts in our communities know, the benefit of these interactions cannot always be measured in tangible outcomes, but more in the forming of relationships that may result in all kinds of long-term benefits. Ideas are sparked when people get together and we've certainly got a few percolating.

Working with our partners BCLTA, ABCPLD and the BC Library Cooperative, we sponsored a reception at the Union of BC Municipalities conference, featuring Education Minister McRae as our guest speaker. We had over 200 municipal and provincial government representatives in the room talking about libraries! We subsequently met with the new Minister to share highlights of BC library work in the community and to ask that the line item for public libraries be reinstated in the Ministry budget. On another front, Past President Christopher Kevlahan and Annette DeFaveri were also involved with other provincial library leaders in a conversation with Education Critic Robyn Austin.

The BCLA Mentorship Program is another volunteer initiative currently underway. The stated objective of this committee is to connect library and information professionals in B.C. with their more experienced colleagues for support and sharing of experience. The Mentorship Committee strives to build relationships and strengthen the Association, as well as to encourage leadership and commitment to the profession. Thanks to committee members Amy Ashmore, Patricia Cummings and Tamarack Hockin for doing an excellent job with this program.

Thanks to Christopher Kevlahan, Anne Olsen, Vicki Donoghue, and Leanna Jantzi for their ongoing work on the development of a communications strategy – a need identified in our strategic plan. We partnered with the iSchool at UBC and with Libraries and Literacy on a one day summit "Changing times, Inspiring libraries". We hosted international, provincial and local leaders in library innovation and community engagement to explore relevant, exciting, engaged libraries responsive to community needs.

BCLA was not immune to the financial challenges we all face in these times of rapid change and shifting priorities. Fortunately, through some excellent work on the part of the Board Finance Committee and much diligent work on the part of our Association staff, we were able to achieve a balanced budget in 2012. In order to ensure we continue to achieve this financial sustainability objective, the Board is looking into using an 'areas of interest' fundraising model to help guide future fundraising efforts.

Website update and redesign has been on the Board agenda for the past few years. It's a huge undertaking and difficult to manage within the constraints of our yearly cycle, especially the conference. This year we bit the bullet and took the leap! We were able to use funds from our reserves and also had generous funding support from the Province. We worked with the Sections, Committees and Interest Groups to determine the requirements to support member needs. We hired Jon Whipple to take on the task of what is actually three website redesigns: the conference website, the partnership website/job board and the BCLA website. The website re-design team worked really hard to ensure that the conference website was up and running in time for the conference registration to begin in February. Stay tuned for future updates!

In closing, I would like to thank the outgoing Board members: Christopher Kevlahan, Past President (VPL); Heather Morrison, 2nd Vice President (BC Electronic Library Network); Heather Compeau, Treasurer (University of the Fraser Library); Pat Cumming, Director at Large (BC Institute of Technology); Melanie Houlden, Director at Large (Surrey Libraries); Ursula Brigl, Director at Large (Cranbrook Public Library); Tara Stephens, ALPS Chair (ciRcle, UBC'S Information Respository); Tara Williston, YAACS Chair

(Children's Librarian). It's been great working with all of you.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Nelson Public Library for the organizational support they have provided during of my presidency. I extend that thank you to all of the organizations, past and present, that demonstrate the vision and foresight to allow the expertise of their employees to benefit all libraries across the province.

Thanks to Annette for providing excellent leadership to the Board during this transformative year. It's been a real pleasure to work with such a seasoned professional, and to work with one with a sense of humour has been a total bonus. Annette is a great strategic thinker with an impressive work ethic and we're very fortunate to have her skills and expertise at work on our behalf. Thanks also to Allie, who is the pillar of our organization with her broad and deep knowledge of all of the mysterious workings of the BCLA. She has been with us for over nine years, and we are deeply appreciative of her skills and dedication.

And finally, thank you to the dozens of people who volunteer for the Association who are so vital to the continued successful operation of BCLA.

I have really valued the year as president of the BC Library Association, particularly the wonderful people I've been able to work with and get to know as colleagues. It's been a great honour to serve as president of BCLA and to be part of working on behalf of all BC libraries to ensure we continue to be strong and thrive in this changing society. I welcome Gwen Bird as incoming president and look forward to a great year under her skilled leadership.