

President's Report

By Gwen Bird

My column this issue is full of thanks. It has been just over a week since we closed the 2014 BC Library Conference, and I'm still reflecting on what we accomplished together and how open the community was to the many changes we introduced this year. We received very positive informal feedback during and after conference, and I also see it in the twitter stream, the emails, the buzz... it all leads me to believe the event was well received. There were many changes from previous years, including the location, the time of year, livestreaming, and new programming ideas. My sincere thanks to our crackerjack conference planning team, chaired by Baharak Yousefi, ably assisted by Tara Robertson and Shirley Lew as program chairs, and all members of the planning committee. From project management to fundraising, communications to budgeting, a lot goes into running an event like this. We truly showed ourselves how vibrant, responsive, and connected to the world we are. Throughout the process I admired the openness of committee members to forge ahead with bold new ideas and leave the old behind. As a result, we heard three remarkable keynotes, all from speakers outside of the library world, but with much to offer our community. There were countless sessions where colleagues shared their work, ideas and aspirations. I was delighted to attend a number of excellent sessions, to learn about current UBC SLAIS research, hear about the dynamism of community-led libraries, to revel with a large group in the glory of learning from our failures, and much more.

It was a short and subtle moment mid-way through the conference when Executive Director Annette DeFaveri officially launched BCLA's new website. I hope you've had a chance to see it at bclacconnect.ca, and to appreciate the positive change this brings to our Association. This much needed update would not have happened without the dedicated work of Board Member Caroline Daniels. We all owe her our appreciation for going beyond the call of duty in shepherding this project to completion this year (but as she reminds me, websites are never complete!). Part of this migration includes a sustainability plan to keep the site up to date, both from the office, and at the grassroots level of the Sections, Committees, and Interest Groups.

I travelled to the Ontario Library Association Superconference in late January, where I



represented BCLA at a meeting of The Partnership, the network of provincial and territorial library associations from across Canada. The meeting included discussion of the network's business including the Education Institute offerings, *The Partnership* journal, and shared concerns about the advocacy landscape across the country. Meeting the dynamic and enthusiastic representatives from associations in other provinces was a pleasure, and hearing about the struggles of some of the groups to find volunteers and retain members gave me a renewed appreciation for the strength and vitality of BCLA. It was a connection from this meeting that led to the joint letter BCLA and the Atlantic Provinces Library Association sent to the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, expressing concern about the closure of DFO libraries, and the disposition of materials from those sites.

I'd also like to express my thanks to the rest of the Board this year for their interest, commitment and time. Together we achieved much, including new Mission, Vision and Values statements for BCLA, new guidelines for Board Member roles and portfolios, and strengthened relationships across sectors and formal roles from our day jobs. You have been an excellent group, and made my job as President such a pleasure.

To sign off for my last Browser column as BCLA President, I'll repeat the thoughts I shared in closing the conference. It has been one of my goals as President of BCLA over the past year to explore the

Association as a place where we can push beyond our comfort zones, a site for professional and personal growth. It's not always possible to extend ourselves so fully within our workplaces—to really reach out and test new ideas, nudge our own boundaries outward in the exciting and frightening way that's necessary for real change to happen. But I believe BCLA can and should provide that space for all members. In addition to the magic of community building and networking that happens here, the Association is safe and neutral territory for

professional exploration and development. I appreciate the willingness and effort of you, our members, to make it so.

It has been a rich and rewarding year for me serving as President. Thank you for the opportunity.

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