

**The 107th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
of the ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

Toronto, Ontario

May 29, 2008

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

Esther Rosenfeld

OLA is a compelling success story, and the OLA “Brand” is highly respected for quality and innovation.

It has been an extraordinary year for OLA. It began in February 2007 with Executive Director Larry Moore’s decision to retire and it ended at the closing luncheon of Super Conference 2008 with the introduction of OLA’s new Executive Director, Shelagh Paterson. This transition from one Executive Director to another was the result of much work done by your 2007 Executive and Board. Fortunately, a Succession Policy developed several years ago by a previous OLA Board provided us with a framework and process by which to move forward. First, the Executive acted as a review team and worked with Larry Moore and Deputy Executive Director Jefferson Gilbert to conduct a detailed organizational review. Much discussion ensued with OLA staff, various OLA members, and with OLA Board. What was striking about the discussion was the recurring theme: that OLA is a compelling success story. As an organization, OLA is known for having a high level of volunteerism and member participation in a variety of programs and committees. We have a positive reputation and image in the library world with the OLA “Brand” being highly respected for quality and innovation both in program and in our business operations. Although there are always challenges, OLA leaders and staff have treated these as opportunities for growth and improvement of the organization. The organizational review report approved by OLA Board concluded that the existing administration model has served the Association well and should to remain in place for the time being. A Selection Committee was then appointed, and the recruitment process was undertaken. Several consulting firms were invited to submit proposals to assist with recruitment and selection, and the firm, Ken Haycock and Associates, was hired for this role which was fulfilled thoroughly and with great integrity. At the December Board meeting, the OLA Board approved the Selection Committee’s recommendation of Shelagh Paterson for the position.

Some other important activities and accomplishments are noted below and also in the reports of the division Presidents.

**The Forest of Reading® Program** continues to be highly successful and serves as a model for readers’ choice programs elsewhere. In May 2007 over 4,000 children and teens participated in the Forest of Reading® Festival at Harbourfront in Toronto. I attended the ceremonies for the Blue Spruce, Silver Birch, and Red Maple awards and marveled once again at the enthusiasm of the attendees and at the adulation accorded to the authors. In 2008 the Festival is expanding to two days so that more than 5,000 children and teens can attend. Bravo to the many OLA members who volunteer on the selection committees and for the Festival. As the result of an RFP process in the spring of

2007, the new official wholesaler for the program is S&B Books. S&B is working with OLA to publicize the program, and with Canadian publishers to ensure a plentiful supply of nominated books. OLA was one of the hosts for the J.K. Rowling appearance and book signing on October 23 2007. As well as providing tickets to a large number of Forest participants, OLA made it possible for every provincial and territorial association in the Partnership to send four young people to the amazing event.

**Super Conference** has continued its tradition of excellence this year. Mark Robertson and Cynthia McKeich, along with the Division chairs, organized a superb conference. A special part of Super Conference this year was the Gala Tribute to Larry Moore. Although many took part in organizing the event, it would not have occurred without the leadership of June Wilson (OLA President 1999), Jefferson Gilbert, and Meredith Tutching.

**School Libraries** remain an important focus of OLA activity. Early in 2007, the OLA Board approved funding for a second phase of research on school libraries in Ontario. This phase, which consists of case studies of exemplary school libraries, is being conducted by Don Klinger of Queen's University, and follows his first quantitative study published in 2006. Also early in 2007 OSLA received funding from the Ministry of Education to write a new curriculum document for school libraries. A large writing team was organized, a think tank with notable school library experts was held, and the team produced a draft document which has been well received. We await revision directives and implementation plans from the Ministry. The October 2007 Provincial election produced a notable campaign promise for school libraries. Premier McGuinty promised \$120 million for development of school library collections and for provision of additional school library staff. Although we obviously support the vision and intentions of this promise, we have expressed concern over the involvement of Indigo Books as the potential only supplier of resources to upgrade collections. OLA and OSLA have been working together with book wholesalers and book publishers to make the government aware of the complex issues involved in the implementation of this campaign promise.

OLA Board has continued to look at ways to help in the development of **First Nations' Libraries**. A committee has been formed to explore a formal relationship between OLA and First Nations' librarians and other ways that OLA can provide professional development and assistance.

We have examined issues regarding **Francophone programs and services**. We have a wide variance of francophone librarians, ranging from those who work in libraries in remote northern francophone communities, to those in French immersion school libraries, to francophone members working in English libraries. A Board committee has been established to study development of programs and services that will meet the needs of francophone libraries and libraries providing French services. Similarly a Board committee has been established to study ways and means for the development of programs and services that will meet the needs of **libraries in remote and northern communities**.

Members of **the Partnership** took part in a two-day August retreat at OLA. A new electronic Career Centre involving input from all Partnership member organizations has been established and work is progressing on its various components.

In closing, I want to thank the members of the OLA Board for the leadership they have provided for the Association. A special thank you goes to the members of the Executive, Sam Coghlan (President-Elect), Janet Kaufman (Past-President), and Sonia Lewis (Treasurer) for their leadership in this very busy year.

It has been a pleasure to work with OLA's dedicated, hard-working, patient, and friendly staff. They all deserve many thanks and much praise. In particular, Deputy Executive Director Jefferson Gilbert has provided extraordinary leadership as we have prepared for the transition to a new Executive Director. No amount of words can express the countless thanks to Larry Moore for 24 years as Executive Director. It has been my privilege and honour to have been OLA President during his last year leading the organization. Finally, I would like to thank you, as OLA members for your continued dedication to libraries of all kinds, and for your continued commitment to this Association. You are the strength of OLA.