

Report of Shelagh Paterson Executive Director



Transition, learning, exhilaration – and small doses of occasional panic are how I describe 2008. With 10 years of involvement in the OLA (Super Conference and OLITA) I thought I had a bit of a head start on the learning curve. While this experience came in handy – I quickly realized what an enormous, active, and complex organization the OLA truly is.

A Board of Directors, 6 Division Councils, 15 committees, 4 programs / workshops, an Education Institute with 267 sessions, 8 reading programs, 16 awards, The Partnership, our suite of publications, and of course our two signature mega-events; the annual Super Conference, and the Festival of Trees™ – just a few activities to get up to speed on. Thankfully OLA has a most capable cadre of members who volunteer and a hard working high-energy staff who stayed the course through the transition from Larry Moore to Shelagh Paterson. And fortunately Larry with his

trademark generosity was always available to field questions from “Where the heck is that file?” to providing me with context and history about our programs and services.

The highlights for me have been discussions with members on issues important to libraries and action OLA needs to take on advancing these issues: accessibility, intellectual freedom, fully resourced school libraries, public library boards as community catalysts – to name a few.

Sam Coghlan brought his strong vision to the Super Conference “You Live. You Learn. You. Your Library. Your Community.” – the vision that shaped the work of our board and committees for the year; the library place in community; as contributor to creativity, economic prosperity, and provider of opportunities – particularly in this time of economic upheaval. Under Sam’s leadership, we continued to forge connections with other like-minded organizations with the goal of strengthening our efforts whether they are advocacy, program collaboration, or just learning more about each other. Sam with his humour, perspective, and knowledge has been an incredible support to a new ED over the past year.

We had some staff changes. Jefferson Gilbert resigned as Deputy Director in November to start an exciting new chapter as principal of gap.point.reach.inc. Thankfully for the OLA, he did not go far and continues to

work on sponsorship, advertising and the Super Conference in his new capacity. Meredith Tutching also left on maternity leave in November – daughter Molly has already been to a number of OLA events. The two Amanda’s joined us – Amanda Scriver to coordinate the Forest program and Amanda Braun who answers your calls and keeps us all organized. A number of strategic initiatives continued or commenced;

- ❖ The Partnership focused on developing a certification program for professional portfolios and marketing strategies for the EI. The Partnership Journal joined the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA).
- ❖ The Forest of Reading® Project received an Ontario Media Development Corporation grant to develop reForest Interactive – an online discovery environment for young readers to promote their favourite books, interact with authors, and to post new media such as video book-trailers. BiblioCommons is the technology and strategy behind this new service.
- ❖ Access magazine was transformed to accommodate more columns and features (thanks to editor Wayne Jones!), and was redesigned to more effectively feature the writing and photography of our members.
- ❖ The mentorship committee developed a very successful “meet the employer” event at the 2009 Super Conference.

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