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**Access** is the official magazine of the Ontario Library Association, published quarterly for members as a continuing education service to keep them informed of its activities and of events, trends, and issues affecting the association as well as libraries all across Ontario and beyond. The magazine is a forum for discussion, a place for news, and a source of ideas for the development and improvement of librarianship in the province.



**On the cover:** In this issue, Walter Lewis offers his thoughts on winning this year's Larry Moore Award.

Cover photo created by Brian Pudden, OLA.

Please insert FSC Logo here.  
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# from the editor

By Wayne Jones

## Welcome to the spring issue of **Access**.

Super Conference 2011 may seem like it was a long time ago and perhaps by now you have forgotten some of the details and highlights. This issue should help refresh your memory because we include a tribute to the award winners honoured at the conference. These are some of the people who've given generously of their time and energy over the past year (and more), and whose dedication to OLA and to the cause of libraries generally has been exemplary. We also took the opportunity to ask each of the winners not only how they felt about being honoured, but what their plans are for the coming year.

One of the things I like about Super Conference is that it features many speakers who don't actually work in or for libraries, but whose careers and passions are interesting to attendees nonetheless – and often there's some library connection anyway. My favourite in this regard at the past conference was the filmmaker Atom Egoyan, who told a funny story about an encounter with a strict and watchful local public librarian when he was a child. It turned out that young Atom didn't return the item he'd borrowed in exactly the condition it was in when it left the library. I was also impressed by the way that Egoyan diligently stuck to the topic of the conference (collaboration) during his presentation, providing some great stories about how collaboration is an essential element in getting a movie made.

The speaker at the closing lunch was the host of Q on CBC, Jian Ghomeshi. He was charming and funny and articulate.

"I liked the way that he wasn't hesitant to state his own takes on library-related issues (e.g., the demise of the printed book) even in a room full of librarians who might think otherwise."

I also liked the fact that he made time to take many questions from the floor, and not just perfunctorily: his answers were thoughtful, and even funny sometimes. (And, yes, Billy Bob Thornton did come up.)

Michael Wesch, an associate professor of cultural anthropology at Kansas State University, gave a dazzling presentation in which he brought together everything from his current work with his students on various social media-related projects, to his past work as an anthropologist in the rain forest of Papua New Guinea. Among many things, I was impressed with the fact that in order to demonstrate the ease and intuitiveness of a video-editing technology, right in the middle of his presentation Wesch called up a video and edited it, and would have uploaded it directly to YouTube if we'd had time.

At this past Super Conference, we also convened the annual meeting of the editorial board of the magazine. This is the only occasion during the year when the people who put *Access* together get to meet outside of email and the occasional telephone call, and see each other face to face instead. It was an excellent meeting, with lots of suggestions for improving and changing the magazine, and for adding new content both in print and in the web version. You'll see the results of that over the course of the next year (and beyond).

As for this current issue of *Access*, in addition to the coverage of the award winners, you'll also find the regular columns. Maggie Weaver on reaching out. Jan Figurski on library services for seniors. Jennifer Dekker on Yiddish resources online. Ajit Pyati on public libraries in India. Nira Persaud on qualitative library services. Victoria Gzebb with some great general advice on readers' advisory. Mike Ridley on the free internet. Marija Dumancic on a "hotspot in a cold spot," the library in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. Another entertaining and informative interview by Robin Bergart. And Jeff Toste has the Last Word, with the question: If LIS is a science, then don't we need more scientific research for public libraries?

---

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### - 2008

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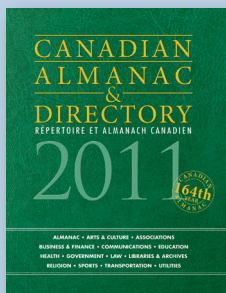
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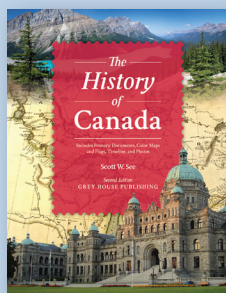
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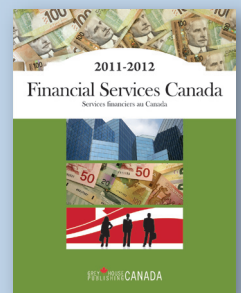
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# ontario snapshot

LIBRARY NEWS, PROGRAMS,  
AND RECOGNITION

## Toronto iSchool Interns Head for Harvard

During the last two weeks of February 2011, two University of Toronto iSchool students, Stephen Spong and Katya Pereyaslavksa, worked as interns at



Harvard University libraries. Stephen was at the Law School library and Katya was at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies library. The internships were undertaken as part of the course requirements for the Special Libraries course taught by Vicki Whitmell at the iSchool, although the students organized the internships themselves.

Despite the short duration of the internships, the experience proved to be tremendously dynamic and informative. The students were fortunate to arrive at the Harvard libraries as they are moving forward with a massive restructuring that will ultimately lead to the establishment of a centralized library system – a process which they got to observe. Furthermore, they gained additional first-hand experience with such aspects as collection development, writing online research guides, shadowing reference staff, and attending management-level meetings. The experience as a whole proved to be an exceptional opportunity to observe and participate in one of the world's most outstanding libraries.

The image above is from the cornerstone of the Harvard library system – the Widener library, which houses more than three million volumes. It was taken on a freezing, windy, but sunny February afternoon when Harvard Yard was still bustling with busy Ivy League students.

## MINI GOLF DAY THE CALEDON WAY

More than 300 people participated in the Friends of Caledon Public Library's first annual mini golf fundraiser in February. A "hole" lot of fun was had by all as participants putted



their way through the 10-hole golf course set up in the Albion Bolton Branch of Caledon Public Library. Holes were designed by the local police and firefighters, local businesses, friends, and library staff.

*From left: Joshua Ortolan, Mayor Marolyn Morrison, Kelly Ortolan, and Daniel Ortolan*



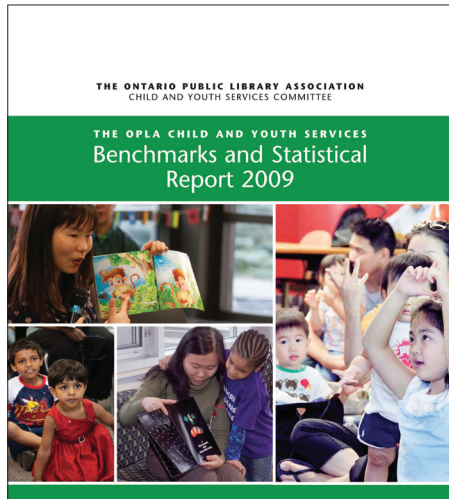
## Fort Erie's Spelling Bee

The Fort Erie Public Library and the Adult Literacy Council of Greater Fort Erie have been celebrating Family Literacy Day with a free public spelling bee for children in Grades 3 to 8 for five years now. The library found that children weren't quite as nervous if adults took a turn spelling first. This year celebrity spellers and 25 students participated; more than 85 family, friends, and teachers filled the audience. Library and Adult Literacy Council volunteers acted as judges, timekeepers, enunciators, and all-around help.

## Georgina's Eclectic Day

Georgina Public Library participated in Culture Days by hosting a Human Library event on Saturday, September 25, 2010. More than 200 members of the public visited to enjoy and talk to a variety of human "books," from an Egyptian dancer, to a Ugandan teacher, young highland dancers, and a local publisher/poet. They learned how to sign their name in ASL, enjoy Chinese tea, and paint lovely henna designs on their hands. A local band performed rock music inside the library! More soothing entertainment was provided by a quartet. The town's Equity and Diversity Committee sponsored a screening of the award-winning film *The Peace Tree* as part of this eclectic day. Georgina staff plan to repeat the event with a diversity theme in the fall of 2011.





## Child Services Report Outlines Changes & Advancements

The Ontario Public Library Association, Child and Youth Services Committee launched the *Child and Youth Services Benchmarks and Statistical Report 2009* at OLA Super Conference 2011. The report outlines changes and advancements in services to children in Ontario.

A quick overview of the report indicates that:

- Collections have become larger for children
- There has been significant gains with respect to children's access to technology and electronic resources
- Libraries with strategic planning documents specific to children see clear impacts on staffing, policies, and collections relating to children.

Unlike its predecessors, this survey was administered electronically for the first time, allowing access to the data using the Counting Opinions web portal. Libraries have the ability to logon, analyze, and manipulate the data to create reports that are relevant and significant. Libraries can now run reports and make comparisons between libraries of similar size and populations. Further comparisons can be made with respect to programming and budgets. The results can be used for strategic planning, budgeting, and advocacy.

The Report will be distributed to each public library in Ontario as well as OPLA members and number of individual stakeholders and organizations. An electronic copy will also be placed on the OPLA webpage.

For more information on the survey or how to access the electronic results, please contact Alicia Subnaik Kilgour, Chair, OPLA Child and Youth Services Committee ([akilgour@collingwoodpubliclibrary.ca](mailto:akilgour@collingwoodpubliclibrary.ca)).

## NORTHERN DISTRICT LIBRARY WELCOMES BACK COMMUNITY

Toronto Public Library re-opened its Northern District Branch after the completion of a seven-month renovation that was partially funded by the Federal Infrastructure Stimulus Fund. The newly renovated branch improves customer experience by providing more accessible community space, express check-in and check-out, digital signage to promote library programs and services, plus increased access to technology including a computer learning centre with smart board technology and additional seating and outlets for laptop use. The reno also includes a new youth space featuring arts and media equipment. This youth-friendly, youth-led studio space is a partnership between Toronto Public Library and Delisle Youth Services.



## HAMILTON'S CENTRAL LIBRARY GRAND RE-OPENING

Hamilton Public Library's Central Library celebrated its grand re-opening, in conjunction with the newly renovated Hamilton Farmers' Market, on February 11. The newly revitalized first floor has transformed the space to better meet the needs of the community with almost 50 public access computers, a wireless bar, a living room with fireplace, an aquarium in the children's area, and a living wall.



## Virtu Come Stouf

As one of  
Open Acc  
Enterprise  
partnered

hold a session in the social innovation centre of G  
scholars and community members to this global r  
University of Guelph's Chief Information Officer,



LG Onley with Sabrina Redwing Saunders, CEO Six Nations PL

## First Nations Public Library Week

Each February since 2000, First Nation public libraries have celebrated First Nations Public Library Week (FNPLW) as a means to raise awareness of the need for public libraries in First Nation communities. This year Six Nations Public Library played host to the provincial launch with more than 75 guests including Lieutenant Governor David Onley, Six Nations Chief William Montour, Minister Michael Chan and MPP Dave Levac.

With a theme tied closely to the First Nations Advocacy Campaign this year, “Join Us & Speak Up for First Nation Public Libraries” is being shouted from all 50 FNPLs and many other public libraries across Ontario. CEO Sabrina Saunders took the opportunity to challenge guests to visit the Speak Up! website and Add Your Voice by signing up. The 12 PSAs were also shown with nods of acknowledgement that only 50 FNPLs exist in Canada, all of which are in Ontario.



## New Learning Commons at Lakehead University

The Learning Commons in the Chancellor Paterson Library buzzed with activity on January 27 as students, faculty, and community users gathered to celebrate the official opening of the new dynamic, collaborative space.

Anne Deighton, University Librarian, is thrilled with response to the Learning Commons so far. “We’ve heard so many positive comments about the changes,” she says. Partnerships with the Technology Services Centre, the Math Assistance Centre, and the Writing Centre have brought vital services into the library, providing one-stop shopping for students looking to improve their skills in research, technology, writing, and math. Peer tutoring rooms, a presentation practice room, and booth seating are all part of the collaborative learning spaces created for students.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AT UTSC LIBRARY: KEEN ON COLLABORATION

The New Year ushered in a period of strategic planning for the University of Toronto Scarborough Library. With the facilitation of head librarian, Victoria Owen, and consultant Rebecca Jones, librarians and staff members took an inclusive, enthusiastic, and proactive approach in a collaborative environment in order to define and take charge of the library’s direction and strategy for the coming years. An extensive environmental scan, and all-staff guided discussions and exercises have gone a long way in helping to define the library’s vision, mission, and values, as well as its future course. This approach has helped all staff members to get involved in strategic planning, and as a result, there is a better understanding of the direction that the library is heading in, which can improve collaboration between team members in meeting the expectations of library users, be they faculty or students.



## al Reference Service es to Whitchurch ffville

the 900 participants in 94 countries celebrating  
ess Week International, a team of Research  
e and Scholarly Communications librarians  
with CU Expo 2011 and the Research Shop to  
Guelph. Guelph Voices of Open Access connected  
movement. Speakers included Mike Ridley,  
and UofG faculty member Beverley Hale.

## BLACK CREEK’S LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

The York Woods Branch of the Toronto Public Library has been involved in the Black Creek Living History Project. This project was featured in a poster session at this year’s OLA conference where it elicited much interest and feedback from public libraries across Ontario. The project’s unique online resource, which documents the history of a diverse and vibrant Toronto neighbourhood, features the results of work done by local seniors and teens in the Jane-Finch area. The website ([torontopubliclibrary.ca/black-creek-history](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca/black-creek-history)), showcases and celebrates the local history of the Black Creek community through collected oral history interviews and photographs.



## The Partnership Meeting

The Partnership (a network of provincial and territorial library associations) met during the OLA Super Conference. There was much discussion about collectively and collaboratively developing new services for members, including the development of new revenue streams for each association.



## OLA's Strategic Plan Update

The following strategic priorities are under development for 2011 and we are seeking your ideas and participation. Contact Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director, if you are interested in any of these initiatives. [spaterson@accessola.com](mailto:spaterson@accessola.com).

**Growing career paths and potential:** At Super Conference 2011 an OLA member committee created a pilot “virtual Super Conference” consisting of sessions, interviews, and keynotes recorded at Super Conference. The content is now available at OLA's website for a modest registration fee – let colleagues who missed Super Conference know!

**Collaborating to extend libraries strategic voice:** OLA is creating an Advocacy Committee to ensure the following goals are met:

- OLA as an influential voice for libraries and the information sector.
- The development of a government relationship strategy with key players.
- The development of informed opinions and consistent messages across the library and information sectors.

**Transforming ideas into solutions:** Library Architecture Symposium: very much in the early exploration stage. OLA, in conjunction with the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, Southern Ontario Library Services, Ontario Library Services North, and Knowledge Ontario is in the early planning stages of developing a symposium to support and inspire library building and renovation projects.

**Strengthening our organization:** OLA has just completed its technology plan to support the association activities over the next three years. In 2011 our focus will be on transforming OLA's web presence.

## Information at Your Fingertips

A reminder that OLA members have free access to the WilsonWeb database. Researching e-books? Embarking on a space planning or library architecture project? Exploring the situation of the library job market? The WilsonWeb Library Literature and Information Science Index/Full Text has what you are looking for. Select the “publications/information resources” on OLA's main page to get to the WilsonWeb database. Your password is your last name and membership number. Contact OLA for your membership number.



### OLA Staff Update

Michelle Arbuckle has joined the OLA staff team as Coordinator, Education Programs. She will primarily be responsible for managing the Education Institute including content programming, speaker recruitment, and daily operations of the EI platform. Michelle will be responsible for leading the EI into a new era as we aim to create more professional development opportunities accessible on a “when you need it” basis. With access to downloadable and streamed sessions, our members will be able to learn in a way and at a time convenient for them. Michelle will also be taking the lead on other education programs such as the Digital Odyssey and RA in a Day.

Michelle comes to us from the Canadian Music Centre where she was National Librarian. Previous to that she was a health librarian at the Princess Margaret Hospital. She has been actively involved with the OLITA Council for many years and is anxious to start collaborating with all of the OLA Councils. If you have suggestions for improvement within the Education Institute please feel free to get in touch with her.

**Tweet Time** – only have so much time to keep up to date on what is going on in the library world? Following tweets is a quick and sometimes amusing way to stay current. Visit [twitter.com/onlibraryassoc](http://twitter.com/onlibraryassoc) and follow the OLA tweets.

Here are a few sample tweets from OLA



OLA can also follow your twitter account and re-tweet your news about events, ideas, and programs.

### Upcoming OLA Events Not to Be Missed!

Visit the OLA web site for updates on the following programs and events in development:

- OCULA/WNYO ACRL Spring Conference April 29, Jordan, Ontario
- Forest of Reading Festival of Trees, Harbourfront Centre, May 11-12, Toronto. Tickets available at Harbourfront’s box office (some award ceremonies are sold out): [tickets.harbourfrontcentre.com](http://tickets.harbourfrontcentre.com)
- OCULA Spring Dinner. Hosted at University of Toronto at Mississauga. Featuring “the shift from manuscript to print,” a presentation by Alexandra Gillespie, Associate Professor, Department of English and Drama, University of Toronto Mississauga. May 11
- OLITA’s Digital Odyssey featuring e-books: June 10, Toronto
- RA in a Day: October 21, Toronto
- Super Conference 2012 – Innovation!  
Have a great idea for Super Conference? Interested in presenting? The call for proposals deadline for Super Conference 2012 (February 1-4) is May 13.

# The Ontario Library Association AWARD WINNERS 2011

OLA'S Annual Tribute to the Winners of  
**Ontario's Library World**



For award citations, please visit [accessola.com](http://accessola.com).

*The following awards were presented during plenaries and receptions at Super Conference.*

## OLA'S LARRY MOORE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Walter Lewis of Halton Hills Public Library /  
Knowledge Ontario

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I was speechless ... or if not utterly speechless, at least mildly incoherent. Over the years that I have been associated with OLA and Knowledge Ontario I have had the privilege of working with a number of remarkable people who have received this award. I was, and remain, deeply honoured to be counted among them.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

The year 2011 promises to be one of the most interesting and challenging years in my work in libraries. On the home front, we are moving one library branch into a brand new building in February and moving the other into temporary quarters in March as a second construction project gets under way.

On the Knowledge Ontario side of my life, we will continue to refine the work done last year in presenting digital newspaper files online blended with the work various libraries have done preparing subject and genealogical indexes. The amount of content and usage is growing by leaps and bounds. We continue to explore ways of enriching the semantics of discovery. And we always have a list of ways to improve the experience of the end user and those engaged in data entry.

Beyond that, I'm interested in the transformation of electronic texts into forms that play well with the current generation of e-book and other mobile devices. But the most interesting thing that I'll be working on this next year is something I haven't seen yet. Every year brings opportunities like that.



**“The most interesting thing that I'll be working on this next year is something I haven't seen yet. Every year brings opportunities like that.”**



## OLA'S PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Wendy Newman of the University of Toronto iSchool

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I was honoured beyond words. It was particularly humbling to read the list of previous winners of this award.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

In addition to my inspiring work with the next generation at the University of Toronto, I'll be completing a book about advocacy with my friend Ken Haycock, and collaborating with advocates across the province for sustainable funding for Knowledge Ontario. I also plan to walk the Camino de Santiago in the spring.



## OLA'S LES FOWLIE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD

Patricia Aldana of Greenwood Books

*What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

Pride and delight, as children's freedom to read is one of my passions.

*Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

I will continue publishing Greenwood's list, as always. But I am also actively involved in the National Reading Campaign, which we hope will culminate in a renewed commitment at all levels across the country to the promotion of reading for pleasure for all Canadians, from babies, to children, to aboriginal people, to old people, to university students ... in other words, for everyone. Reading and being able to read freely lie at the heart of our democracy.



**“a renewed commitment at all levels across the country to the promotion of reading for pleasure for all Canadians, from babies, to children, to aboriginal people, to old people, to university students ... in other words, for everyone.”**



## OLBA'S W. J. ROBERTSON MEDALLION FOR LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR

Margaret Sedgwick of Fort Frances Public Library

*What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I learned about the award at the December meeting of the library board. I felt very honoured and humbled to even be nominated for this award. Our new library opened in June 2010, after many years of thought and planning, and so this past year has been extremely rewarding, as well as very busy.

*Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

Even with a new building, the library must to continue to evolve and embrace change. Our great lounge areas are very popular and the new library is already quickly becoming a community living room. Although we have been in the new building for a short time, already we are in the process of installing download stations as personal devices such as e-book readers and iPads seemed to have been the most popular gift of the season. Our challenge is to live up to our new name of the Fort Frances Public Library Technology Centre. We are committed to taking a leadership role as the technology hub of the district. With an increased number of computers, small meeting rooms, and a large meeting room featuring a Smartboard, video- and web-conferencing equipment, and laptops for training purposes, we will work to better connect with the business community of the district. Seminars and training can now easily be available locally, saving the costs and time of out-of-town travel.

On a personal note, in the coming year I really need to breathe, take a vacation, and read all the professional journals that have been piling up on my desk for the past three years – as well as, of course, some fiction.



## OLA'S ARCHIVAL AND PRESERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Barbara Sweet & Krista Richardson of Prince Edward County Public Library

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I was very flattered when Carolyn Bart-Reidstra indicated that she would like to nominate the Prince Edward County archives for this award. It is very exciting that we won. I am very pleased for Krista who singlehandedly managed the move and it is a great boost to our confidence as managers of a community archives. We made many dramatic changes – the move was a huge step and one that was not taken lightly. Leaving the historic jail/courthouse, though necessary, was a wrench. The new modern facility of our archives, adjacent to our Wellington branch library, is better suited to the preservation of delicate materials and is fully accessible. We are very grateful as well for the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Stark Family Fund. It was perfect timing that just as we were making the transition we obtained the funding to house all of the materials in acid-free boxes and store them on new archival shelving units. It is not often that everything falls into place so neatly.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

For next year our plans, already in motion, are to migrate the holdings to a new data management program making our collection available on the internet and to continue to collaborate with other heritage organizations locally to promote the heritage of Prince Edward County. A strong focus is placed on education in the area schools. To this end there will be a drive to encourage the use of the archives by school classes.

— *Barbara Sweet*

In addition to Barbara's comments, my goal this year is to digitize our entire collection so that we can have all of our documents and images on our new database and make our holdings available to all through the internet.

— *Krista Richardson*

**“Just as we were making the transition we obtained the funding to house all of the materials in acid-free boxes and store them on new archival shelving units. It is not often that everything falls into place so neatly.”**





## OCULA'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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Faye Abrams of OCUL

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

Actually I was shocked. To be put in terms of “lifetime achievement” is tough to grasp. One moment you are working in your office and the next moment the phone rings and someone says, “You are very special.” It is really difficult to find all the right words to describe the great feeling knowing that folks out there notice what you are doing and appreciate your efforts. It was very heartwarming.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

The year 2011 is my retirement year. At the end of November 2011 I will officially leave the profession after 38 years of continuous engagement. I hope to leave this office so that a seamless transition can take place once I am gone. My retirement plans are not unusual – do things I haven't found time for while working. My husband hopes I will catalogue my recipes!



## OPLA'S CHILDREN'S OR YOUTH LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

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Jane Lindsay of Hamilton Public Library

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I had just arrived at home from a dental appointment feeling terribly sorry for myself when the phone call from a member of the Children & Youth Committee came through. My daughter Emily has just finished her MLIS and so my first thought was that the call was for her. My second thought was that I was being called to provide an employment reference. I was wrong on both counts. Needless to say, I was surprised and delighted at the news that I had been chosen to receive the Children's Librarian of the Year Award!

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

My career as a librarian has spanned 30 years and I feel privileged to have been able to devote that entire time to youth services. It has given me great pleasure to be able to bring children and books together whether I was doing puppetry, class visits, storytelling, collection development, summer reading, or training children's staff. More recently, I worked closely with newcomer families in the community through our participation in the Library Settlement Program. Introducing newcomers to all that the library has to offer has been most gratifying. I am also fortunate to have worked for the past 23 years at the Hamilton Public Library where the entire community has come together to ensure it is the place best place to raise a child.

Again, I am truly honoured by this award and recognition of my work. My sincerest thanks go to the staff at the Hamilton Public Library who nominated me and to the OPLA Selection Committee.





### OLITA'S AWARD FOR TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Steven Marsden of Ryerson University Library & Archives

***What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?***

When I learned that our hard work on QR Codes and barcode scanning had won the OLITA award for technological innovation, I had a great sense of pride and appreciation. I am very proud to receive this award, as it provides a great sense of recognition for our work, and earns appreciation from the library community. It is a wonderful feeling to know that people outside the Ryerson University Library can appreciate the work we do.

***Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.***

We have begun our work on several exciting projects which we should be coming out with later this year. We are in the process of implementing Atlas System's E-Reserve software Ares, which will allow students to access our copyrighted material for a course in a new and intuitive way. We are also presently working in collaboration with Ryerson University's Department of Architectural Science to develop a mobile application which will provide architectural information regarding some of Toronto's key historical buildings.



### OLITA'S AWARD FOR TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Graham McCarthy of Ryerson University Library & Archives

***What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?***

I was pretty excited to win! I actually threw up my hands in the air to celebrate a little bit. We have been doing some pretty cool things at Ryerson in the past few years to push our services out to our patrons using the latest technologies. We've taken a few chances on some of these endeavours, so it is great to get some recognition from the library community for doing a good job. It really validates the work we are doing and helps us push farther out there to do more.

***Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.***

We have started working on a few projects that I am getting very excited about for the coming year. We are implementing Serials Solutions' Summon as a new discovery layer to improve students' access to our library resources. We will also be launching a mobile application that we built in collaboration with Ryerson's Department of Architectural Science that shows information and pictures about key historic and architecturally relevant buildings around Toronto. I will also be working on the ISBN & QR scanner application to improve the functionality, create a BlackBerry version, and open-source it for other institutions to use.



## OPLA'S JAMES BAIN MEDALLION FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR

Jan Harder of Ottawa Public Library Board



### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I was beyond thrilled, very proud, and also humbled to learn that I had been chosen to share the honour of this award with Irene Moore of the Terrace Bay Public Library Board. I do what I do for libraries because I believe in them and their value to the community, and so winning an award for my efforts, especially one as prestigious as the James Bain Medallion, is really an added pleasure to an already rewarding experience.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

Libraries in Canada are facing more challenges than ever as technology increases the value libraries hold for their communities and the way in which libraries can deliver services. Story after story in the media is reporting on the digital book revolution and the latest internet program for connecting and sharing information. And every library can tell you at length about how they are fast becoming essential providers of internet access, business services, and community space in the current economy. I would like to continue finding ways in which trustees can network and discuss with each other and library professionals to find solutions and best practices to balance those challenges and changes with the financial pressures of today.



## OSLA'S TEACHER-LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Paula McNamara of Simcoe County District School Board

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

Just before the holiday, at the start of a busy school day, a "stand-up meeting" was announced. All immediately. This traditionally has been a way to alert staff to serious issues, so that we are all ready. In trepidation, I watched the staff file into the library with rather sombre looks on their faces.

Dave Heidman, our fabulous Grade 3 teacher, arrived holding a letter of some importance and an announcement that I had won the OSLA Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award. It took a minute to get the large staff managed to pull this off without my knowledge is a feat unto its own. Dave continued to thank parents, administrators, and colleagues both past and present. I was truly overwhelmed and honoured.

When Algonquin Ridge opened in 2000, I was lucky enough to be on that initial staff. It was a fantastic staff. Everyday I come to work in a beautiful setting with a supportive staff and great kids. I love to share it with staff and students. So, whether it is the challenge of creating dynamic SmartBoard curriculum for the SCDSB, or simply sharing fabulous new reads with students – this job rocks!

Then there are those special moments when a primary class spontaneously claps after a story, hissing and asking if they can still check out books, or overhearing Grade 8 students talk about how much they love the privilege to watch students become engaged readers and independent learners over their elementary years.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

The future holds many unknowns, because I plan to retire in June. What I do know is that I hope to make new discoveries. My husband has been waiting in the wings for me, so we will be travelling, golfing, and looking for our next new adventure. Receiving this award is truly the most fabulous send-off imaginable.



## OPLA'S JAMES BAIN MEDALLION FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR

### Irene Moore of Terrace Bay Public Library Board

#### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

At first, I simply wanted to shed a tear. To have people recognize that I care deeply about the well-being of our community is humbling. I am overjoyed at the thought of being able to share the award with so many dedicated volunteers. Because I believe that a library is essential to any community as it provides universal access to information, as it is a safe place to meet and to learn, and as it is part of the economic health of the community, trustees have a special role in ensuring that the community's needs are met.

It is my belief that a strong library board is comprised of many caring individuals who share a vision that status quo is just not acceptable. We move forward rich in enthusiasm even when we make mistakes. We strive to improve, through consultation with our peers and the agencies that provide support. The communities that value the services of the library keep us motivated.

As a recipient of the James Bain Medallion, I think about my motivations for remaining such a long time member of the Terrace Bay Public Library Board. My drive comes from the strong commitment of my immigrant parents who left Finland with little more than a desire to make a better life. Their hard work continues to influence and inspire me. From an early age, despite the language barrier and the limited education of my parents, reading and education were encouraged. My first experience was eagerly memorizing and finally reading Finnish books sent to me by my aunts in Finland. At school, my first visit to the Brodie Street Library in Thunder Bay was part of a class outing. That visit fuelled the curiosity already aroused in me. For the quiet but profound influence of the dedicated librarians who helped to guide me, I am truly grateful.

#### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

Provincially, working with fellow board members on the Ontario Library Service North Board and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries Board remains an area of focus.

Regionally, in 2011 networking with other trustees in the North is one project of interest. Since there are ever-increasing challenges associated with being a trustee in our small isolated communities, we are in the planning stage for a spring workshop for CEOs and trustees. To find common discussion points, such as compliance with new legislation, to hear concerns, to share best practices, and to seek ways to build better boards and better communities, and to develop a frontline advocacy plan are the goals of the networking meeting.

Locally, given that Terrace Bay Public Library is in a new facility in a new location, there is work to be done establishing our presence in that neighbourhood and solidifying partnerships with the seniors and the municipality.

Personally, my choice is to focus on education to learn how to advocate through positioning or "branding" our library to meet the changing needs of our different patrons. Change is happening quickly and we must be in a position to ensure that libraries thrive.

## OPLA'S LEADERSHIP IN ADULT READERS' ADVISORY

### Diane Crew of Oakville Public Library

#### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

This award came as a total, stunning, and quite wonderful surprise. It was as if I had been given an amazing gift. I had been told about the nomination, and felt truly honoured by that – but that I had actually won it? Surely that couldn't be right? I have had a hard time processing the reality of what is a career pinnacle for me – the best thing that has happened to me in my entire library life, and I am so very grateful to all those who have judged me worthy of receiving it.

I look back and I honestly cannot remember a time in my life when books were not my passion. Before I could read I was apparently always badgering kindly adults to read to me, and after I learned to read for myself I didn't do very much of anything else, it seems. Of course, "real" life with its daily round of necessary duties has tended to get in the way somewhat, but there are always nooks and crannies of time, even in the busiest schedules, that you can cram with reading. And with books I've found that it's only a small step from actually reading them to giving way to the uncontrollable desire to share what you've read with everyone else, who might otherwise be missing out on something fantastic. I couldn't allow that to happen, now, could I?

While I'm reading, I get so excited, as I think about which of my friends would absolutely love this too, that I can't wait to tell them all about it, and why it is essential that this particular book be added to their "to be read" list without delay. With friends it is an easier connection to make, but surely there is nothing at the information desk more stimulating than the moment a patron, usually a complete stranger, comes over and asks for some suggestions for what to read next. I love having that conversation about the books they've most enjoyed in the past, and why they found them so enjoyable, and then trying to make the connections from those books to other books and authors they would probably enjoy as well. So many people during these interactions give me suggestions for books they think I should add to my own list, that the process often becomes a genuine bonding of the spirit, all brought about by the magical power of reading. And they call this "work"!

#### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

As I look into the future, I see the coming year as an opportunity to continue to do what I love most, which is to read as much as possible, and to share more wonderful books with my friends, co-workers, and library patrons; with strangers on the GO train or in the dentist's waiting room – wherever it may be that there is a chance of making that connection with another reader, and sharing with them the joy and excitement that awaits us all in the simple pleasure of picking up a good book. How very blessed I feel in being lucky enough to work in a library, where I am not only surrounded by so many books, and so many other passionate readers, but also where the act of reading is in itself seen as something to be valued and celebrated.



OPLA Children & Youth Services Committee  
From Left to Right: Alicia Subnaik Kilgour, Agnes Sa

## CANADIAN COALITION FOR THE RIGHTS

### OPLA Children and Youth Services

#### *What was your reaction when you found out that you*

This award is a true honour for our committee. It recognizes the role of the public library as key to supporting children and teens by providing access to information and Ontario public libraries in entrenching rights for children and youth.

As the award nomination stated, "The public library has been a leader in providing free access to information and been a leader in providing access to information. The community has been active in making sure that age-appropriate information is available."

We are particularly proud that this recognition highlights the role the public library can play locally, provincially, and nationally. It was really eye-opening to listen to all the amazing things that our committee has done.

#### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

Our committee will continue to promote both the rights of children and youth. We will use the same numbers as the original children's rights document.



**OPLA'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Marzio Apolloni of Bruce County Public Library**

*What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

One normally doesn't think of awards when giving voice to library issues, haranguing politicians and decision makers, or just speaking truth to power. It was the last thing on my mind. I also know of so many colleagues in the trenches who have done as much and more, and it has been my privilege and honour to work with them. I also look to my own library board – my “bosses” – who have been instrumental in letting me pursue what I thought was right. They have indulged me, and allowed me to speak, shout, and get involved. Equally important are the people who provided support ... and quite frankly did all the legwork: Ken MacLeod, Assistant Director; Lorraine Noseworthy, Library Secretary; as well as everyone else on the team. They made it possible.

I like to think this award is in fact recognizing the organizations through which I was fortunate to be associated with: Ontario Library Consortium, which continues to provide a great model for libraries wishing to work together to achieve their automation goals; Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO), showing that by working together we can indeed make real the idea that where you live should not determine the value of your citizenship; and finally, the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries.

*Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

In the coming year I will hopefully continue to add my voice to others, through the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, working to right a great wrong perpetrated on public libraries in the '90s. I will also work to restore appropriate funding to public libraries, and help establish a true partnership with all involved. In the end, the people of Ontario win.



...mler, Jane Salmon, Jane Venus, Teresa Gawman

**OF CHILDREN TRAILBLAZER AWARD**

**Committee**

*ou had won this award?*

recognizes the unique and important role that the public library plays in the lives of children and teens. It sees the public providing a service that recognizes them as legitimate clients with unique needs. These documents have been created to aid children and teens in their service philosophy, long-range planning, and core service delivery. Every community has throughout its history taken a stand to protect the intellectual freedom rights of its citizens, fought literacy and lifelong learning. By adopting these two documents on the rights of children and teens, the public library does not play a barrier to these powerful freedoms.”

s come from outside an actual library. Our hope is that this will play a small role in expanding the vision of what the and even nationally. As the chair Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children stated after the award presentation: “It ings libraries are accomplishing.”

*upcoming year.*

ights documents in the public libraries throughout Ontario. We hope to see many libraries adopt the teen document in document.



## OSLA'S ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

### Michael Bowman of Durham District School Board

#### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

I was very humbled. It is truly an honour to be nominated by colleagues and to be recognized by the Ontario School Library Association to receive this validation of my work in promoting literacy and our school library.

I found out that I was to receive this award through a discussion with a student who had met my school-wide Forest of Reading challenge, and who wrote a letter of nomination for me. To later read the letters from my teacher-librarian, my vice-principal, staff members, this student, and a parent was an absolute pleasure. As an administrator, I firmly believe in building a team, communicating, and promoting student achievement through a love of learning. I feel truly honoured that my staff and students feel that I support them in our school with regards to literacy, and that they see my contribution as effective in promoting a love of literature.

In our school we work hard to engage all of our students and parents to work together as a true learning community, and therefore the library is always a hub of activity. I feel very fortunate to work with Yvonne Yeoman, our school teacher-librarian, who shares my vision for literacy, who actively engages and hooks kids on reading, and who has amazing ideas to share with students and staff on a regular basis.

Having a great support system in place and seeing first-hand the power of engaging students with books, is reward enough, although I am honoured that the OSLA believes that my commitment is considered exemplary. This is truly a team effort, and I share this award with my entire community as a celebration of our school motto of "making a difference."

#### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

I would like to continue looking at innovative ways to create a Learning Commons at Sir John A. Macdonald P. S. With help from my teacher-librarian, staff, and students, I feel that we have made some significant changes to our library, but I am always looking at ways to make this space more appealing, more functional, and more open for all members of our learning community.

Secondly, I would like to take a closer look at the use of technology and how I can use programs and innovative ways to engage students with literacy. I have learned to use Wallwisher, wikis, and am currently looking at experimenting with Glogster to enhance the opportunities to work with students and allow them to interact with literature in a variety of innovative ways.

Finally, I have set a goal to keep up to date on reading trends and best-selling lists of books for children and young adults. I feel that I am ready to expand my Forest of Reading Challenge to experiment with other literary sources that may connect kids and open their eyes to reading. The more I can tap into current trends, the greater opportunity I have to make connections and to demonstrate my commitment to lifelong learning.



**“The more I can tap into current trends, the greater opportunity I have to make connections and to demonstrate my commitment to lifelong learning.”**

## OSLA'S AWARD FOR SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT

David Thornley & Peter Rogers of Knowledge Ontario

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

On hearing of the award, our initial reaction was a mixture of quiet satisfaction and renewed commitment. It is encouraging to have your efforts recognized by your peers.

At the same time, in a collaborative initiative like Knowledge Ontario, and in the case of e-resources in particular, it is the sustained efforts of many people, over many months and sometimes years that delivers the end result.

In this case, much of that effort has come from the leadership of OSLA itself, which is giving us the award. The board and staff of Knowledge Ontario, on whose behalf we are accepting this award, could never have succeeded in our efforts without the persistent and determined work of OSLA members highlighting the importance of electronic resources in school boards across the province.

This award recognizes the power of collaboration and the ability to forge partnerships and build things together that we could never hope to create acting in isolation. Thanks to their collective efforts, school boards throughout Ontario have access to an expanded core suite of licensed databases with more than 150 million resources.

We also succeeded in maintaining a cross-sector consortial approach to e-resources for 2011, securing access to 13 database resources in common across all Ontario libraries. There were several notable additions including NoveList and NoveList K-8 from EBSCO and the Literature Resource Centre from Gale Cengage.

At this point, funds have been secured for 2011 and pricing is in place for three years. In the coming months, efforts will be directed to ensuring that funds are in place to sustain this commitment to December 2013. We look forward to strengthening our partnerships with education stakeholders and to working more closely with the Ministry of Education in the coming year.

**“This award recognizes the power of collaboration and the ability to forge partnerships and build things together that we could never hope to create acting in isolation.”**



## The Canadian Children's Book Centre

### *What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?*

We were honoured and delighted. The First Nation public libraries play an important role in helping young readers discover the joy of reading and the joy of reading Canadian books. It's a natural part of our mandate to assist them in this task. We are happy to provide support for First Nations Public Library Week through the TD Grade One Book Giveaway. When we hear how the Giveaway book brings children and families through the doors of First Nation public libraries, we know the program is doing exactly what we hoped it would.

We have been pleased to promote the First Nation Communities Read selections in our award listings and publications and Best Books for Kids & Teens; it's important for all our readers to be aware of this program and the fine books it endorses. A commissioned article on First Nation Communities Read appeared in our Aboriginal-themed issue in 2009 and we periodically feature the growing number of books by talented First Nation authors.

The beautiful stained glass Friendship Feather is hanging in our library, where we also display many fine pieces of original art by Canadian illustrators. Not only can it be seen by visitors to the CCBC, but it's also a lovely reminder to all the staff that their work on our many projects makes a difference.

### *Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.*

In the upcoming year, we will be continuing to work with the First Nation public libraries on the Grade One Book Giveaway. In addition, we continue to be impressed by the expanding body of work by First Nation authors and illustrators in this country – books that explore a wide range of topics and appeal to a wide variety of readers. In our publications, we look forward to covering what is happening in this field. As well, we will be highlighting the 2011-2012 First Nations Communities Read selection if it is a YA title and the children's book selection for 2012-2013. These are exciting times for First Nation books and First Nation public libraries and we are proud to be promoting and supporting them. *Meegwetch.*

—Patty Lawlor, *First Nations Consultant, Southern Ontario Library Service*



*From Left to Right: Karen Foster, Sheila Barry, Gillian O'Reilly, Lynne Mooney*

**ABO-FRANCO'S LE PRIX MICHELINE PERSAUD**

Marina O'Grady-Lamont of Ottawa Public Library

**“I remember Micheline as a positive force, a colleague, a lecturer, the founder of a publishing company, the organist at my parish church, and the friend who presented my baby daughter with an exquisite Peter Rabbit outfit.”**

***What was your reaction when you found out that you had won this award?***

Hearing the news was like biting into a delicious millefeuille. The first thought that came to mind was “Maman would have been so proud!” I was blessed with parents who cradled me within the arms of two of the world’s most beautiful literary heritages. The children’s literatures from both traditions were well represented at the small branch of the Ottawa Public library where my sister and I read our way through the French fiction on the right side of the room and the English on the left.

Into this world one summer afternoon appeared a library school student with a terrific smile. Her name was Micheline. As one of her child borrowers, and later as a young librarian who benefited from her experience in the 1970s, I was very touched to receive an award commemorating her outstanding contribution to young readers reading French as a first or second language, as well as the francophone and francophile library professionals working with them. I remember Micheline as a positive force, a colleague, a lecturer, the founder of a publishing company, the organist at my parish church, and the friend who presented my baby daughter with an exquisite Peter Rabbit outfit. The library community was indeed fortunate to count her among its own until her death at too early an age.

I was moved that so many of my colleagues had nominated me for the award. My thanks to Elizabeth Thornley, Laura Cordukes, Barbara Herd, Jane Venus, Alfonsina Clemente, and Catherine Seaman. They have been deeply committed to the development and promotion of bilingual library collections and exemplify the best of what the Ottawa Public library has been offering children for more than 100 years. None of us could have achieved such a level of knowledge and service had this institution not allocated funds from the heart, also known as its essential operating budget.

Finally I was reminded of all the trips to Toronto which helped launch the new year and warm Canadian winters with memorable guest speakers and workshops courtesy of OLA. To be recognized by this professional body is an honour. I will feel as excited boarding the train as I used to feel as a child finding a new book by a favourite author on the shelf.

***Tell us something that you'd like to work on in the upcoming year.***

I have just begun living one of the dreams of a French selector in a large public library system. Much of the time-consuming process of physically ordering books for 35 locations with various needs and budgets has been replaced by a new, multi-faceted online ordering system developed in conjunction with an innovative Montreal firm. This will free up a lot of time for in-depth development of successful collection projects such as recreational teen nonfiction and “great guy” reads. I shall continue the pursuit of vampires, fallen angels, and diaries by Aurélie Laflamme and other kids, the wimpier the better. I will treasure the smiles at baby time and the ever-delicate balancing act of matching the book and the reader. I will delight at the enthusiasm and level of bilingualism of our young staff, revel in my colleagues’ wit and love of chocolate, and rejoice that the child who came to the library to choose her six-book-per-week allocation was fortunate enough to join their ranks.

# Academic Libraries

## Creating Communities on

### twitter

By [Sandra Herber](#)

Like many other academic librarians, I have heard over and over about the potential of web 2.0 technologies to connect us with our student users.

I wondered, however, if academic libraries were actually using tools such as Twitter to their full potential. Between January 1 and March 31, 2010, I read the Twitter feeds of 32 academic libraries in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. By far the majority of those libraries were using Twitter exclusively to push out information. There is nothing wrong with this, as a number of these libraries have a large group of followers who clearly believe that this information is useful to them. Ten of the libraries, however, were using Twitter more creatively. They had direct interactions with their followers/users, thereby creating a community on Twitter which allowed them to alert their followers to the library's presence and accessibility, put a human face on the library, promote library resources in direct response to needs, and even do reference work.

The most frequent, and possibly best, opportunities for interacting with patrons, allaying their anxiety and alerting them to the presence of a library on Twitter, came when responding to complaints. The University of Sussex library responded to this complaint, "Thanks, Sussex Library, for making sure students can hear the saw whining and hammering [when] they need to focus on their studies," by tweeting, "Sorry about that. Noise shouldn't be too bad near back of the building." This kind of interaction gives the library a friendly, human face. A number of libraries initiated contact with users in response to tweets not directed at the library at all. Tweets that have not been protected are public and when done well, these interac-

tions alert users to the library's presence and open a line for future communication. When a user tweeted, "Why are people mocking my decision to use a day off to have a trip to the Open University Library?" the library responded "[W]hat a great way to spend your day.... No, we're not biased ;-)."

These active libraries are also using their interactions on Twitter to promote library resources by responding creatively to information students gave about themselves in their tweets. When a student tweeted that she was, "having a great first week of school at @CSUF. Being a KNES major is awesome!" the library tweeted back, "Congrats on a good 1st week! Have you seen our new KNES research guide?" and then sent a link. Once the library has built a large following and proved their utility by being proactive, real communication starts to take place and users will actually access reference help on Twitter. At Cal State University at Fullerton (the Pollack Library), one student tweeted: "@christakeizer @AriaFadakar @LindsayNK9 @pollaklibrary @EMUNOZJR Do you know if we have access to media directories at school or PRSSA?" What is wonderful about this tweet is that the library's Twitter ID is nestled in among four student Twitter IDs: this student has grouped all these potential sources of information together. The Pollack Library has become like a friend (or at the very least, a friendly, accessible source of information). After another a tweet from the library to clarify the request, the student was sent a link to answer his question. An actual reference interaction had taken place on Twitter.



So, how are these 10 active libraries creating community, doing outreach, and even reference work? They advertise their Twitter account (often on the home page of their library website), find and follow users of the library, follow users who choose to follow the library, or just monitor Twitter for mentions of their institution and/or library. Most use some combination of these approaches. The librarians at these institutions said that these tasks were not onerous and that they were happy with the results of their work: outreach, creating community online, putting a human face on their library, and even answering the odd reference question.

.....  
*Sandra Herber recently became the Business Liaison Librarian at the University of Guelph-Humber. She is engaged in reference, instruction, and collection development activities, and she will also be designing the library's new marketing plan. She, of course, intends to use Twitter and other web 2.0 applications in that plan. sandra.herber@guelphhumber.ca*



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## "What do we want?"

## "FREE INTERNET!"

By Michael Ridley

## "When do we want it?"

## "NOW!"

Once upon a time, in the golden age of the internet, all we heard about was how the net made us free and open. That was last year's party; welcome to the hangover.

Now all the talk is how we need to control the internet: limit content (DRM, digital locks), protect information (WikiLeaks backlash), charge for usage (the metered internet), and shut down dissent (Tunisia, Egypt, dozens of others).

As the content and the conduit (i.e., network or device) providers become the same (think Apple with iTunes and iPad, or Rogers and Bell with their networks and their channels), control in these spaces is becoming more comprehensive and restrictive. Mix in issues about net neutrality and traffic shaping, and you have a stew worthy of Macbeth's witches. Double, double toil and trouble indeed. Prices go up; access is constrained; choice is limited; internet gets walled; profits soar.

If I'm a shareholder (and I likely am given the typical Canadian retirement investment portfolio) then, Woohoo! Bring it on. If I'm a citizen, well, that's a different story. Today I'm a citizen.

At the Top Tech Trends session at Super Conference this year, @walkingpaper spoke of his concerns about the nature of content. Technological barriers were preventing public libraries

from adequately performing their basic priority – providing books to users (we are the “book” brand, like it or not). Have we lost control of our ability to provide content? Has the commoditization of information accelerated beyond our reach? Were we asleep at the switch while all this was happening?

I'm concerned about the content issue but there is another concern ... and opportunity. The conduits. The pipes. The bandwidth. The spectrum. The infrastructure.

The CRTC, the federal government, and the courts seem to disagree about the nature and extent of foreign competition in our wireless industry (e.g., the Globalive decisions). In the meantime we pay some of the highest prices in the world for wireless access. The telcos want to further meter internet usage in a nickel-and-dime strategy that will reap substantial profits. Advancing these business models continues to perpetuate the myth that the internet is a fixed resource that will never increase (in speed, capacity, or capability). It's a convenient myth if your interest is leveraging scarcity as a market force.



We can use our facilities (buildings) as sites for routers and transmitters to interconnect and create a widely deployed public Internet. Public Library ISP. Rogers, TELUS, Bell ... and us! Booyah!

This is more than frustrating; it's a barrier to innovation and economic development.

After the Top Tech Trends session, @copystar, @weelibrarian, @rmazar, and I (@mridley) were talking about the failure of libraries to manage their futures by controlling their own infrastructure. (BTW forgive the blatant promotion of Twitter but you really should follow these people.) It was @copystar who said "Why aren't we ISPs?" The public library system as an internet service provider. Very cool idea: not new, but perhaps one in desperate need of being revived.

**What do we want? Free internet! When do we want it? Now!**

**So how could this happen? Nothing is free.**

There are a couple of possibilities, but the critical thing is the vision to do this. To say that bandwidth, the internet, telecommunications, and all that stuff is, in part, a public space. That it is, in part, about nation building. That a 21st-century society needs public infrastructure in the way previously it needed public education, health care, radio, and television.

We have the public broadcaster (long may the mother ship sail); what about the public conduit, the public bandwidth or spectrum? What about the CBC for the 21st century – the Canadian Bandwidth Corporation? One way is policy; another way is technology.

The technology path is to implement something like mesh networks. It's a bit geeky to go into here, but remember Freenets? Similar idea, but on steroids. Check it out on Wikipedia – everything old is new again. We have public libraries throughout the country, more or less where the people are.

OK, it isn't actually that simple but it is technically sound and practical. The tools exist.

Another way, and perhaps a way linked to the first, is through public policy. Why, why, why isn't some bandwidth, spectrum, or network capacity set aside as a public space? We did this for radio and television. Why did the internet get to be exclusively commoditized and commercialized? Canada held a wireless spectrum auction recently. The government made a serious pile of cash out of this. Somewhere in the rhetoric was the idea of "public spectrum." Haven't heard much about this since. It faded away. We let it fade away. It seems clear that if we want to advance the idea of non-profit public infrastructure, it isn't private industry or the government that is going to take the lead.

The Community Access Program (CAP) for libraries was a "doorway" (access) initiative. We need a similar vision for the pathways. Vigilance is still required to ensure open access to content, but with public infrastructure we will have our own element of control. We can deflect the challenges of usage-based billing, traffic shaping, content blocking, monopolistic controls, and a host of other issues.

If as @walkingpaper says, the public library needs to create experiences for its community, then the net is where much of that will happen. Non-profit public infrastructure. The Public Library ISP. Interesting new roles for libraries. This might be very cool. More importantly, it might be essential.

.....  
*Michael Ridley is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph. mridley@uoguelph.ca*

# random library generator

MEET ONE OF  
OLA'S 5,000  
MEMBERS

## An interview with random OLA member #7: **Scott Robins**

By **Robin** Bergart

My previous column featured a husband-and-wife dynamic librarian duo: Megan Garza, Children's Librarian at the Angus Glen Library (Markham Public Library system) and Nick Ruest, Digital Strategies Librarian at McMaster University. They recommended Scott Robins, a newly minted librarian at the newly renovated Cedarbrae Branch of the Toronto Public Library. He is (at the time of this interview) Acting Youth Services Librarian. Megan and Scott met each other by way of a mutual acquaintance, the owner of a Toronto comic book store. I spoke to Scott by phone on a cold sunny day last December.

**So, why librarianship, Scott?**

I worked in children's publishing for eight years. I was Institutional Marketing Manager at Kids Can Press where I did a lot of travelling to the States. I became friends with a lot of librarians through this work and found them to be inspiring people. "You need to stop crashing our parties," they suggested. "Become a librarian and you'll get invited!" Back in Toronto I contacted Theo Heras (Children's Specialist, Toronto Public Library) and Ken Settington (Children & Youth Advocate Services, Toronto Public Library), who encouraged me to go to library school.

**How is working as a librarian better for you than working for a publisher?**

I really like working with people and public service, and I wanted to stay connected with books, but with the flexibility to do other stuff. As a librarian you have the headspace to do other things. I get charged up by my work and when I come home, I'm not exhausted.

**What are some of those "other things" you like to do?**

I'm writing two entries for a multivolume encyclopedia on graphic novels. And I've got plans for that great Canadian novel in a desk somewhere.

**Can you give us a tip-off of what it's about?**

It's a graphic novel for kids, and it's about a boy.

# SCOTT

**Any more hints?**

It's about a boy ... and ghosts. That's all I can say right now.

**Have you always been into graphic novels?**

I've always been a fan, and I've been able to parlay it into an expertise. I've done consulting for Scholastic's and Kids Can Press's graphic novel lines. I have a blog called Good Comics for Kids on the *School Library Journal* website. I'm also the Children's Programming Director for the Toronto Comic Arts Festival.

**What's the outlook for graphic novels?**

They've hit the mainstream now. When I was a teenager, I was afraid to admit I read comics and graphic novels because that's something only geeks and nerds did. But educators, librarians, and scholars are getting behind them now and showing they are a viable way of telling stories. They're a new language for kids who are growing up in a highly visual world. I think graphic novels for children will expand in the next few years.

**You're really tapped into the Toronto comics and graphic novels scene. Are you originally from Toronto?**

No. St. Catharines.

**So ... you've been working as a librarian for almost two months now. What's been the highlight of your career so far?**

Developing the Youth Advocacy Group for Cedarbrae. I sat in on a group at the Malvern Branch and I was pumped by that. There's a great team there and we sat around, talked, and ate pizza.



Photo credit: M. J. D'Elia

**And the most surprising thing about librarianship so far?**  
How often I'm asked for advice on how to use a printer.

**Here's a big question. As a recent graduate, I'd like your perspective on where librarianship is heading.**

You're right, that's a big question. I think it's important for librarians to realize that it's all about public service, not new technologies. Technology is a tool to help the public and I hope librarians don't get bogged down by the technology itself.

**So, tell me, what's so compelling about public service anyway?**

There's something really satisfying about meeting new people, finding out what information they're looking for and seeing how happy they are when you find the perfect thing for them. You can see their surprise when you've taken the time to help them. Everyone has a story from when they were a kid and they went into a library and had a bad experience. I like to change that and challenge the stereotype of librarians.

**What was your bad experience as a kid at the library?**

I went in and asked for something and the librarian steered me to the kids' section but I wanted books from the adults' section and she didn't understand that.

**Let's get personal. What's the most spontaneous thing you've ever done?**

A few years ago I booked a last-minute cruise in the Caribbean over Christmas. I'd never vacationed by myself before and my mom was surprised to hear I was going to be away over Christmas. It was great. It was awesome. I met great people. I climbed Mayan ruins on Christmas Day.

**What reaction do you get when you tell people you're a librarian?**

The reaction is always: "That's so cool. That's amazing." Then the conversation continues, "So what do you do?" People think you catalogue and shelve books all day. When they find out I help people find information they are surprised. They say: "You can do that?" My mom's happy too. Before when I was in marketing she didn't understand what I did. But everyone has a sense of what a librarian is. You learn that as a kid. The fireman. The engineer. The librarian.

**Does your mom still live in St. Catharines?**

Yes.

**So what are some of the hot spots there, for anyone reading this column who wants to visit.**

A tough question. Well, I would say the Bansaree Indian Restaurant downtown. When I was in high school I had a friend who was Indian and she took me there. It was the first time I was introduced to Indian food. Now I live in an area where there's lots of Indian and Afghani restaurants. I haven't yet tried Afghani food, but I will. I love food.

**Can you give us a teaser about the next OLA member you've picked to be interviewed for this column?**

I'll pick as the next victim a fellow student from Western who took a position as Children's and Youth Services Librarian at Thunder Bay Public Library. Her name is Laura Prinselaar. She's very cool.

*[Editor's Note: Laura will be the fourth children's librarian interviewed since the birth of this column. Children's librarians are taking over the world!]*

.....  
*Robin Bergart is a User Experience Librarian, University of Guelph Library. rbergart@uoguelph.ca*

# ROBINS

By Victoria Gzebb



One summer, back in my undergrad days, I briefly got a job working as a sales girl in a rather well-known shoe store in Toronto. For someone who loved shoes as much as I, it was a dream job (hello, staff discount!), but

little did I suspect that the retail training I developed there would serve me well in my future career as a librarian. What is a library, after all, but a bookstore in which everything is free? And just like in a retail environment, it is up to the staff to make sure the customer not only has a good shopping experience, but also walks out with a product that suits them and a desire to return. So here are one shop-girl's recommendations for adding some retail flair to your RA interactions.



### Know your stock.

You can't recommend things if you don't know what you have, simple as that. Reading as much as you can yourself is a great start – nothing beats a personal recommendation. And keep track of

what you read – nothing's worse than knowing you have the perfect book for a client and not being able to remember the title or author. Online services like Good Reads or Shelfari are great for that, but just keeping a list of what you read works well, too. Also, be aware of what your co-workers read. If someone on your staff loves Scandinavian mysteries and you gave up on Stieg Larson five pages in, if you get them to tell you about books they've been reading and enjoying you'll still have something to suggest to a client next time *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is out. Reading reviews is another great way to learn about books in different genres.

# If the Book FITS



### Give the client what they want, not what you think they should want.

It can be very tempting, when a client wants to try on the heinous running shoe stiletto boots, to tell them what a sartorial faux-pas they are about to make and bring out a nice pair of sensible stack-heeled courts instead, but that would come off as patronizing and downright insulting. Remember, this item isn't for you – it's for your client. So what if you can't abide post-apocalyptic sci-fi? They enjoy it, so just smile and ask if they've read *The Road*. Disparage someone's tastes and they won't feel welcome, won't borrow anything, and won't come back.

In order to make a good recommendation you need to understand your patron's taste. Ask them what books they've previously enjoyed or what books they hated, but also try to determine what in particular it is about those works which they liked or disliked – it may be something very different than you think. And don't just consider what people like to read – their taste in movies or TV, hobbies, or even music can help you make suggestions.



### Upsell.

To encourage multiple sales, the goal at my shoe store was to bring them what they ask for plus two other things: something similar, and something completely different. If someone asks for a black sling back pump, bring them that, an open-toed version, and one in a funky gold lamé. It's surprising how often it's the gold lamé they walk out with. So if a patron asks for *Twilight*, you could bring them that, a copy of *Vampire Diaries*, and *Wuthering Heights*. Get them seated comfortably, and let them try your suggestions on, giving them a chance to hold the book and inspect it for themselves. Be careful when upselling, however; it's easy to cross the line from being helpful to obnoxious. Nobody likes the overly solicitous salesgirl who trails them round the shop, constantly suggesting random items while they're trying to browse. Making sure that the client has a pleasant customer experience is more important than forcing them into taking books they don't really want – you aren't on commission!



### Check back in and follow up.

Don't just abandon your client once you've given them your suggestions. After they've had a chance to consider them, check back in and see how they're getting on. If they don't like what you've pulled, offer to try to find something else. It's also important to build up a relationship with your patrons – that's how repeat business, that holy grail of the retail industry, is born. Encourage patrons to let you know how they like the books, and encourage them to consult you again if they want more suggestions sometime.

The most important thing to remember is that if a patron hates the book they've borrowed, it's not the end of the world – we offer hassle-free returns.

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 Victoria Gzebb is a graduate of Queen's University who is completing the final term of her MLIS degree at McGill University.

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# Yiddish | Online



By **Jennifer Dekker**

Shortly after starting in my current position, I was approached by a Yiddish professor to develop a library collection in support of her students. With no knowledge of the language, literature, or book history of Yiddish, I endeavored to learn. I quickly picked up on one unique feature about Yiddish collection development: most Yiddish texts were published decades ago! Therefore, setting up an approval plan for “All Yiddish” is next to futile. Further, out-of-print books aren’t always easily or inexpensively acquired on the used market. So how does one go about collecting in Yiddish? We did it with donations of print materials, but because much Yiddish literature is older and in the public domain, finding online Yiddish collections is feasible.

**1 National Yiddish Book Center** ([yiddishbookcenter.org](http://yiddishbookcenter.org))

The centre operates as a rescue mission to save the world’s Yiddish literature from obsolescence. Fearing that Yiddish literature would someday be extinct, the National Yiddish Book Center appealed to families with Yiddish collections to send them to Amherst, MA, and since 1980, the centre has been building its repository of Yiddish literature, now numbering more than one million books. The Yiddish Book Center publishes the magazine *Pakn Treger*, an English-language publication about Yiddish literature, history, and culture, and offers nearly a decade of past issues online. More than 10,400 titles from the centre have been digitized and can be accessed from the tab “Yiddish Books” (also available at the internet archive, [archive.org/details/nationalyiddishbookcenter](http://archive.org/details/nationalyiddishbookcenter)).

2

**YIVO Institute for Jewish Research** ([yivoinstitute.org](http://yivoinstitute.org))

YIVO was founded in 1925 in Vilna (Wilno, Poland; now Vilnius, Lithuania) by European Jewish intellectuals, among them Einstein and Freud. Its goal was to promote the study of the language, literature, and culture of Eastern European Jewry. Because YIVO’s founders were concerned about the survival of the Yiddish cultural product, they amassed a great archive from Jewish communities across Europe and today it is the largest collection of research materials concerning European Jewish culture and heritage. In 1940, YIVO moved to New York City where it still resides. The archives hold more than 24 million documents. Many artifacts are being digitized and these are available under the “Digital Exhibitions” tab. Further, the *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* is available online here as well as other key publications.

**3 Essential Yiddish Books** ([yiddishbookcenter.org/files/essential\\_yiddish060201.pdf](http://yiddishbookcenter.org/files/essential_yiddish060201.pdf))

Although the 1,000 essential Yiddish books listed here are intimidating to the new selector of Yiddish, this bibliography is intended to help librarians in the development of a core collection. In describing the contents of the bibliography, the author mentions “texts relating to the Jewish religious tradition, important works of historical and linguistic scholarship, memoirs by socialist, communist, and Zionist activists (among them survivors of the Soviet Gulag), and firsthand accounts of the Holocaust ... Key reference works – above all, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and bibliographical lexicons of Yiddish authors and theatre personalities.”

4

**Yiddish Prints** ([www.literatur-des-judentums.de/jd/templates/template.xml?Sprache=eng&Skript=Home](http://www.literatur-des-judentums.de/jd/templates/template.xml?Sprache=eng&Skript=Home))

This collection of approximately 800 digitized rare Yiddish books from the Frankfurt University Library spans the 16th to 20th centuries and contains women's Bibles in Yiddish translation, liturgical works, practical guide books, works on religious customs, legends, chronicles, and classical Jewish fiction of famous East European Yiddish authors. This digital collection is searchable in roman characters and digital images are high quality.

5

**Hasafran Mailing List** ([jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/resources/hasafran.htm](http://jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/resources/hasafran.htm))

Although there is a strong orientation on this list toward Hebrew literature, many librarians post discussion items relevant to Yiddish. Hasafran ("Librarian" in Hebrew) members frequently advertise collections that are available for donation.

In addition to these five, other projects worth noting are: Judaica Sound Archives, [faujsa.fau.edu/jsa/home.php](http://faujsa.fau.edu/jsa/home.php); JewLib. Digital Archive-Library, [jewlib.freebase.com](http://jewlib.freebase.com); and Documents in Yiddish: Leaflets and Internal Documents, [digitalcollections.mcmaster.ca/documents-yiddish-leaflets-and-internal-documents](http://digitalcollections.mcmaster.ca/documents-yiddish-leaflets-and-internal-documents).

*Note to readers: Yiddish was the vernacular language of most Jews in Eastern and Central Europe before World War II. Today, it is spoken by descendants of those Jews living in the United States, Israel, and other parts of the world. (Source: "Overview," YIVO website)*



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## Upcoming Library Conferences

BCLA: April 7-9  
APLA: May 16-19  
CLA: May 25-28; Booth 49

**Come visit us!**





Each time I move to a new town I make a beeline to the local library to help me get my bearings. In Nunavut this might be called polar bearings! Not expecting much, as the hamlet has fewer than 3,000 residents, I was pleasantly surprised by the John Ayaruaq Library.

### Rankin Inlet's Magnetic North Library

Tucked into the side of Rankin Inlet's Maani Ulujuk Ilinniavik high school (Ulujuk is also sometimes spelled Uluyuk), it serves as a library for both the public and the students. Being centrally located – it is at most a 15-minute walk from any edge of town – it's hard to find excuses not to go. It is one of Nunavut Public Library Services' (publiclibraries.nu.ca) 11 libraries spread across the territory's three regions. In the parts of this region in which no physical library exists, residents need not despair as NPLS has borrow-by-mail services – vital in Canada's more northern locales, especially those that are fly-in only, which is commonly the case across Nunavut.

With skylights letting in as much light as possible, the John Ayaruaq Library is surprisingly bright (and warm!) throughout the year. It's a very welcoming destination. Local librarian Fabienne Theytaz has worked there for several years and helps set the atmosphere for a spot where both longtime locals and new resi-

dents flock for a myriad of reasons. It is so popular, in fact, that Theytaz even gets stopped at the grocery store by people asking her why the library isn't open!

### Why the Library Is a Hotspot (in a Cold Spot)

"We can get up to 20 calls a day from residents asking if the library is open," Theytaz laughs.

Looking for a new magazine but not committed enough to sign up for a subscription? Rankin's library carries titles ranging from Canadian stalwarts such as *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*, to music and pop culture publications such as *Rolling Stone* and *People*. For more local news there are also copies of newspapers, including the regional *Kivalliq News* and the Iqaluit-based *Nunatsiaq News*.

Theytaz also mentions that many first-time moms come to use the computers, to meet other mothers, and to let their children play with the toys and read the books on hand. Many strong friendships start at the library. Both of Rankin Inlet's daycares bring their tiny charges there, as does the local group home.

For most popular books, Theytaz says it is a toss-up between editions of the *Guinness Book of World Records* and *Where's Waldo?* She says the patrons love the weird and wacky pictures and stories in the Guinness series almost as much as they do search-

# Canada's North

ing out that lanky guy in the striped red and white shirt in the Waldo series. The computers often draw people in initially but after using the machines, or waiting to use them, they start looking around, picking up this book or taking out that DVD, and they keep coming back.

## The Story in the Rest of Nunavut

Depending on where you are in Canada's newest territory, the local tongue may be Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun. NPLS carries books in both these language as well as many titles in English and some French, which is spoken in small pockets of the territory. From April 1, 2009, to March 31, 2010, circulation rates were at almost 19,000 items. This number represented an increase of 8 percent over rates from the previous year. Ron Knowling, the Baker Lake-based manager of NPLS, credits this to a drive by the organization to increase DVD titles.

"Inuit culture is primarily oral so DVDs fit nicely," Knowling says. "And by getting people into the library first for DVDs often leads them to other things the libraries offer."

And soon they will offer an exciting new service. A series of classic fairy tales has been translated into Inuktitut with cut-out felt figures to go along with each story. Libraries will receive a wooden box full of folders with the translated stories, the corresponding felt figures, and a storyboard to attach them to.

.....  
*Marija Dumancic is an avid reader and a freelance journalist who lived and worked in Rankin Inlet as a news reporter for CBC Radio in 2006-2007.*



Photo Credits (above): Fabienne Theytaz



Photo Credit: Marija Dumancic

## How is *that* for a fairy tale ending!

## SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION IN SENIORS HEALTHCARE

Started in 2005 with funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Seniors Health Research Transfer Network (SHRTN) is a knowledge exchange network that aims to improve the health of older adults by increasing the knowledge capacity of seniors healthcare workers. SHRTN promotes change at the client care level, in organizational and provincial policies, and in health services research. A key component of the network is the SHRTN Library Service.

The SHRTN network model builds and sustains connections among researchers, policy makers, care providers, healthcare provider organizations, and academic institutions. SHRTN promotes – with supporting services – community capacity building, facilitation in problem solving, and finding and acting on evidence-based solutions.

By Jan Figurski

### Meeting the Need

A prerequisite for effective knowledge translation is access to information and evidence to support innovation. Workers in long-term care and community care settings have relatively poor access to best practice information. Many do not have access to an academic health library, or they work in organizations that lack the capacity to find, filter, and synthesize new information. The SHRTN Library Service addresses this issue by providing free and easy access to information and evidence for paid caregivers working with seniors in Ontario.

### The Library Model

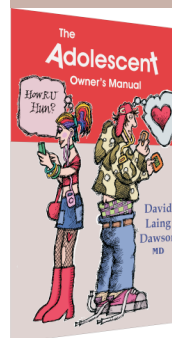
SHRTN has established and developed partnerships with five host organizations that provide care to seniors and that have existing library services: Guelph (St. Joseph's Health Care), Hamilton (St. Peter's/Hamilton Health Sciences), Kingston (Providence Care), Ottawa (Bruyere Continuing Care), and Toronto (Baycrest).

At each site, SHRTN funds a staff position, a SHRTN Information Specialist, who provides library and information services to paid caregivers in Ontario using the existing resources of the host site library. SHRTN Information Specialists provide a helpful and human interface to the sometimes complex and daunting world of published information. They are adept at understanding client information needs and knowledgeable about seniors healthcare information. Professional practice leadership and overall coordination of the service is provided by a SHRTN Library Service Coordinator.

### Services Provided

SHRTN library services include reference, literature searching, document delivery, current awareness, information literacy training, outreach and promotion, and identifying electronic tools and resources for the SHRTN website ([shrtn.on.ca](http://shrtn.on.ca)). Working together with SHRTN Knowledge Brokers, the Information Specialists also support the library and information needs of members of SHRTN Communities of Practice – individuals and organizations who work together to translate knowledge around significant issues in seniors healthcare, such as palliative care, dementia, continence care, and falls prevention.

## The Adolescent Owner's Manual



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- Library Journal,  
August 15, 2010



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Susan Inman

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With an introduction  
by Sen. Michael Kirby -  
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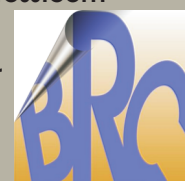
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### Making a Difference

Now completing its sixth year of operation, the library service is utilized extensively and highly valued by the roughly 8,000 members of SHRTN. Clients use the service to increase their knowledge, inform their choices, and incorporate the new knowledge acquired into practice. The library is having an impact on clients' practice and decision-making, indirectly, by informing the knowledge-to-action activities that they undertake.

The long-term goal of SHRTN is to increase the quality and volume of knowledge exchanged in healthcare to serve Ontario's seniors. SHRTN envisages a future in which caregivers, researchers, and policy makers share their knowledge of best practices and research, and engage in knowledge exchange initiatives to ensure a continuously improving healthcare delivery system for seniors. The SHRTN Library Service plays an instrumental role in helping SHRTN achieve that vision.

### For More Information

Visit the SHRTN website at [shrtn.on.ca](http://shrtn.on.ca). To become a member of SHRTN go to [surveymonkey.com/s/shrtnmembership](http://surveymonkey.com/s/shrtnmembership). To obtain library service call 866-393-4877 (toll-free in Ontario) or contact a member of the library team: [beta.shrtn.on.ca/nodes/shrtn-ke/ls/content/44](mailto:beta.shrtn.on.ca/nodes/shrtn-ke/ls/content/44).

.....  
*Jan Figurski is the SHRTN Library Service Coordinator. Prior to working for SHRTN, Jan was the medical librarian at the London Health Sciences Centre for 19 years. He holds an MLIS from the University of Western Ontario. In 2007 he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Ontario Health Libraries Association for his contributions to health librarianship. Jan lives and works in London, Ontario. [info@shrtn.on.ca](mailto:info@shrtn.on.ca)*

# especially for LTs

NOTES FROM AND FOR  
LIBRARY TECHNICIANS

By Maggie Weaver

The babies were good, whimpering quietly as I explained customs tariffs, and gurgling when I waved my arms at the overheads. The men, mostly older, nodded with understanding, then surged towards me at the breaks with numerous enquiries about finding scrap metal suppliers, the tax implications of being “the man in the middle,” the differences between company registration and incorporation. The women, mostly younger, stared fixedly at me throughout, waiting politely to the end of the presentation to approach individually to confide their plans to start consultancies, their worries about licenses, and their need for information about the Canadian consumers they hoped to serve.

REACHING **UP**  
**OUT**  
**DOWN**

It was Saturday afternoon, and I was at a local community centre to provide information about exporting and importing. No one in the audience had a business yet, but they all had left businesses “back home” and were eager to get going again in Canada.

60 new immigrants had come to a large room in the bottom of an apartment building, in the middle of their new community, to meet someone they thought might help them get re-established in their accustomed role, as entrepreneurs.

They didn’t know about the wonderful public library system in Canada. They didn’t know about the resources provided by municipalities through the Small Business Enterprise Centres. They didn’t know the names of government agencies, federal or provincial – except Immigration. They hadn’t completed a Canadian tax form yet, personal or business.

They stayed alert for four hours. They scribbled furiously. They scooped all the handouts. They asked questions. They each shook my hand before leaving. They want another session.

They made me think.

**About guts.** I'd forgotten how wrenching it is to leave your homeland, and how hard to get established again in a new country. How shy that makes you (yes, even me!). How difficult it is to ask, in case the question sounds stupid. How language differences can trip you up.

**About the familiar.** We are so used to the structures and services provided in Canada, we forget those may not be the norm elsewhere. If you don't know about public libraries, you won't check out your new local one. If you don't know that community colleges offer evening classes, you won't sign up. If you don't know that government agencies have support programs, you won't look for them.

**About expectations.** We are used to a supportive environment, and expect programs from all levels of government. But if you've come from a country where government is about rules and red tape, even something to be feared, the wealth of resources, advice, and support provided to Canadians is unexpected.

**About roles.** We library workers have long understood our role in literacy, whether that of beginners in life, or beginners in the country. And we've always understood our role in enhancing the personal lives of our community, through diverse and inclusive collections, defence of the freedom to read, and multicultural programs and services. But we also have a role in the professional lives of our community, in making sure they are able to contribute as fully here in Canada as they did in their former communities.

**And about outreach.** It's not enough to give a friendly smile at the reference desk, and offer to help locate to a doctor's office, interpret instructions on an official form, or find phone numbers and websites. We must also go more than half way to reach our community, not waiting for clients to arrive at our preferred location by accident or in response to promotions. We must go where they feel most comfortable. We must go into the community.

**We must reach out – proactively.**

---

*Maggie Weaver is a self-employed information professional, working on behalf of government and other clients to bring business information to entrepreneurs in Ontario. In her spare time she is Conference 2011 Coordinator for OALT/ABO. [kweaver5478@rogers.com](mailto:kweaver5478@rogers.com)*



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Over the last decade, India has catapulted onto the world economic stage with high growth rates and great advances in its technological development.

With this background in mind, my ongoing research over the last few years has focused on the roles that revitalized public library systems in India might play in meeting community information needs, serving as public spaces of engagement, and promoting literacy. Several states in India have existing public library systems, but they are often poorly funded,

## Making the Case for

# Public Libraries in India

By **Ajit Pyati**

With India's economic growth, a rising middle class of more than 300 million people is aspiring to higher standards of living and Western-style consumption habits. While the country has certainly seen a flowering of prosperity over the last decade, socio-economic gaps between the rich and poor are growing. In addition, state-funded social services such as education and healthcare are often quite below acceptable standards; the well-off will usually have access to privatized services, while the poor are often left with underfunded and inefficient public sector services.

severely lacking in appropriate collections, understaffed, and generally unable to serve their target populations effectively. A few urban areas in India such as Delhi and Bangalore have fairly extensive public library infrastructures, but often cannot reach the poor and marginalized. Rural public libraries in India are in considerably worse shape.

Given the number of socio-economic challenges in India, one could argue that public libraries would be low on the priority list of social needs. In addition, public libraries may not be institutions that have a strong resonance in wider Indian society. While these arguments might have some merit, a rising awareness is growing amongst India's policymakers about the importance of revitalizing aspects of the knowledge infrastructure such as schools and public libraries. India is striving to

build a “knowledge society,” but certain leaders in the country are aware that public institutions need to be strengthened in order to create a more equitable Indian knowledge society. Public libraries certainly have a role to play in this endeavour. Thus, one focus of my research efforts has been to raise the profile of the public library issue in India.

While on the one hand Indian policymakers are touting and promoting the benefits of libraries, on the other hand government-run public libraries are slow to adopt service models that can be effective in serving wide sections of Indian society. In general, public sector services in India are plagued by issues of inefficiency and corruption, and public libraries are not an exception to this rule. Stepping into this void left by the state, a plethora of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have arisen in India over the last couple of decades, focusing on a vast range of issues related to women’s rights, environmental issues, urban services for the poor, and so on. These NGOs are part of India’s burgeoning civil society sector, and they are often filling in service gaps that the government is either unwilling or unable to fill. NGOs are in many cases doing admirable work, but they are also not without controversy, as issues of accountability, transparency, and representativeness can plague them.

In the case of public libraries, a few NGOs are active in India with this issue. These NGOs support the development of libraries and community centres in underprivileged urban slum and rural areas in various parts of India. In many respects, these NGOs are developing a “shadow” public library system that appears to be serving populations that are not being reached by the government-run system. This situation is a great contrast to the situation in North America and also raises a number of interesting questions. The current phase

“Government-run public libraries are slow to adopt service models that can be effective in serving wide sections of Indian society.”

of my research project has me working more specifically on this issue of NGO-supported “public” libraries, as I am attempting to understand how these libraries are meeting community needs, while also studying the social and policy implications of their service models for future Indian public library development. Thus in my own small way, I am trying to understand how a more equitable knowledge society can arise in India.

.....  
*Ajit Pyati is an Assistant Professor at the University of Western Ontario. [apyati@uwo.ca](mailto:apyati@uwo.ca)*

**Further Reading**

Pyati, A.K. (2009). “Public library revitalization in India: Hopes, challenges, and new visions,” *First Monday* 14(7). [firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2588/2237](http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2588/2237)

# the next generation

STUDENTS LOOK AT THE LIBRARY  
AND INFORMATION COMMUNITY  
WITH FRESH EYES

## Promoting QUALITATIVE

Residents in long-term care (LTC) facilities represent a unique and diverse community whose needs and accessibility issues warrant specialized public library services. The 2002 Canada's Aging Population report identified these seniors as the fastest-growing population group in Canada. Long-term care facilities offer a broad range of services catering to the needs of this community that needs medical attention and assistance in daily activities. While there are growing trends in Canada to promote alternative support services for the elderly, "Ontario has the highest rate of institutionalization in Canada and as a consequence of the aging population, the need for nursing homes and other LTC facilities will not diminish in the future" (Maurier & Northcott, 2000).

There is a strong history of public library visionaries who saw the need to develop outreach services for shut-ins. Genevieve Casey (1984), an American advocate for providing shut-in service, suggests that public libraries can help support LTC facilities work toward an ideal "to keep people truly living so long as they are alive" (p. 76). The Cleveland Public Library serves as an early exemplar of a public library committed to serving shut-ins. The library, under the aegis of Clara Luciola, head of the Hospital and Institutions Department, was the first to consolidate "services to hospitals, to correctional and welfare institutions, to shut-ins, and to the blind" (Cramer, 1972).

One of the most outstanding outreach models Casey (1984) details is the Detroit Public Library in the 1940s, again based on Luciola. It provided extensive services to 28 nursing homes. The individualized service began with a librarian interviewing the resident to identify the resident's disability, background, and reading preferences. The librarian visited residents every three

weeks to deliver material and engage in a literary discussion. A reading record was maintained for each resident and the ultimate purpose was to develop an accounting of how "individuals, even the old-old, can grow as they receive professional reading guidance and access to the total collection of a library" (Casey, p. 74).

The emphasis in contemporary outreach services should continue to provide qualitative rather than effective outreach services. The value-added services such as readers' advisory services in libraries would offer a whole new realm of opportunity within an institutionalized setting to residents who cannot access the bookmobile parked outside the facility, much less adapt to online browsing capabilities to request library resources. Contemporary outreach formulations found in two highly credible public library resources: Honnold's and Mesaros's (2004) *Serving Seniors: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians*, and Mates's (2003) *5-Star Programming and Services for Your 55+ Library Customers* promote programming for ubiquitous crowds of residents related to generic topics such as travel, seasons, hobbies, and so on, and a book deposit that delivers resources without a personalized referral service. There are ways around these limitations and some libraries engage volunteers to deliver books to shut-ins through a Special Library Services program that accumulates the individualized criteria of the recipient and engages skilled library staff to select appropriate material. This formulation may work in the short term but is contingent on serving the needs of a relative few. The Special Library Services program also would not address in an informed or professional capacity the specialized reading needs of the resident who might warrant specialized reading aids or a structured reading program.

## Library Services



By **Nira** Persaud

There may be another formulation that utilizes the passion and determination of fledgling librarians who are eager to develop the skills to provide specialized library services. With the right training protocol and access to outreach librarians knowledgeable about resident communities, library students could advance the interest of the LTC resident community as well as have a whole new vista to explore the library studies curriculum. John Budd (2008) suggests this immense potential within the library profession that sounds a clarion call for the transformative dynamic within public librarianship.

In order for us to act as responsible, critical professionals, we must understand as completely as possible the relationship between ourselves and our institutions on the one hand, and ourselves and our communities on the other. The relationships are not merely service or the provision of goods; they are complex interweavings of self and the other (p.123).

.....  
*Nira Persaud is an MISt student at the University of Toronto and is volunteering as a Library Resident at Macassa Lodge Long-Term Care Facility in Hamilton, Ontario.*

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By Jeff Toste

## MLIS: A Science?

### The Need for Scientific Research in Public Libraries

I can proudly say that I am the new recipient of a master's degree in a little-known (but specialized) field known as Library and Information Science. I dedicated my studies to public libraries because that's what I've known and enjoyed for the past decade or so toiling on a part-time basis in the shelves of the Toronto Public Library.

When I applied to the MLIS program I was hoping to answer a decade's worth of questions that were taking up precious hard-drive space in my mind. I can now say, after completing this degree, that although some questions were answered, new ones have taken their place and I suppose that the quest for knowledge didn't really end after earning a degree. In fact, this degree has only opened the door for my pursuit of more knowledge, which means I may need a hard-drive update.

You're probably wondering, "If you had so many questions why didn't you just complete a thesis?" And my immediate reply would be, "I really don't know." After some reflection I would explain that I completed a thesis in history during my undergrad days and I must say the end product had a lot of heart but did little to pave the way for new research. There's also another significant issue which is at the heart of this article: the lack of academic research about public libraries to inspire me (and others) to contribute to and build on a debate.

#### Library and Information Science?

Unlike our colleagues in the academic library world, public librarians are not required to write and publish in scholarly journals. Academic librarians have researched library usage patterns by students and the effects of certain instructional strategies on this hard-to-please patron group. I find that the articles which public libraries often publish are usually about some recent project or program in a respective library and usually do not exceed a page or two of content. For instance, one will find plenty of case studies on a library's redesign or a new teen program, but these articles fail to include vital information on research methods, data analysis, and a discussion of results. These articles could be vastly improved if the following were included: a detailed needs analysis and issue identification, a discussion on data collection (survey, focus group, etc.), literature review, and program evaluation criteria.

The articles as they stand today are not very honest snapshots of whether a library has met or missed its objectives or targets. This could be a result of a cultural problem of sweeping failures under the proverbial failure rug, possibly in an attempt to avoid an impact on funding or similar repercussions. I believe, perhaps with cheeks rouged with the naïveté of being a recent grad, that communicating failures will transform a professional culture into one where failing is not a dirty word. After all, to avoid the subsequent shame, these articles can discuss how the library was able to regroup and ultimately meet its objectives.

#### Moving Beyond Our Walls

I am of the firm belief that solid research is what informs practice in the professional world. Professionals keep up to date on the most effective way to heal people, to build the safest structure, or to dig the deepest well. How research should inform professional practice in the world of public librarians needs to be addressed and further defined. The articles we write should do much more than brag about the latest program or project; they should guide professionals in the field by providing them with ideas that are complete and substantive (along with being groundbreaking and original). They should address and tackle larger issues that exist beyond our walls. Professional literature should provide the ingredients for the burning bellies of library students who want to conduct research of their own and make the public library a key area of academic debate.

A solution may be one proposed by Professor Paulette Rothbauer at the University of Western Ontario. In her final lecture, of my final term, she encouraged students to form partnerships with scholars to initiate and conduct meaningful research. This reminded me of an article by Wendy Sinclair-Sparvier (*World Libraries* 12/1 (2002)), a public librarian, who had led similar partnerships with Saskatchewan's provincial government to address and deal with literacy issues and barriers to library access among Aboriginal communities. Collaboration can be more than a hot buzzword. It should be a key strategy to begin and build on new areas of research that will inform our professional practice.

.....  
*Jeff Toste graduated from the Masters of Library and Information Science program at the University of Western Ontario and is currently working for the Toronto Public Library. jtoste@toronto-publiclibrary.ca*



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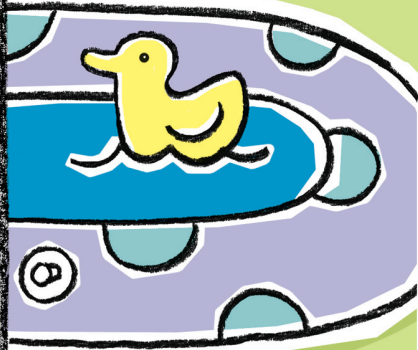
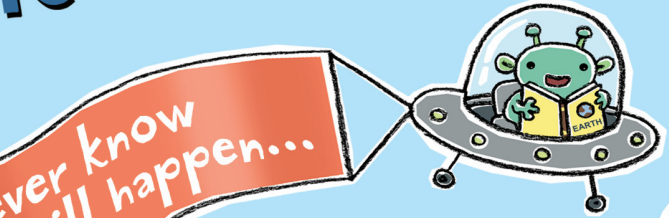


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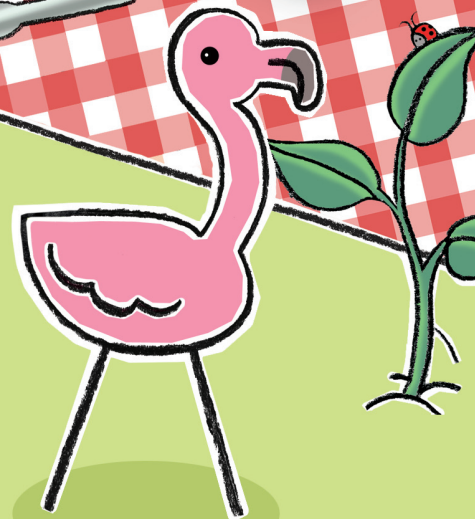


Illustration by Mélanie Watt

