

REPORT OF SHELAGH PATERSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OLA

2012 was a tumultuous year for libraries — there were so many cuts that OLA posted a timeline of destruction on our website. Within the space of less than one year, we witnessed the elimination of the Community Access Program, elimination of school libraries in two school boards, multiple cuts to Library and Archives, the loss of the National Archival Development Program, the elimination of a multitude of government libraries, and the closure of the Canadian Conference of the Arts. OLA members contacted their government representatives and were interviewed by the media — we continue to fight off the chill on information access and culture, but challenging times continue.

OLA's membership numbers took a hit due to the continued erosion of school library positions. We hear from our teacher librarians, most of whom do not work a full-time position in the library, that they have had the time allocated to their school library role further reduced. How to run a robust school library program when you are allocated 0.2 of your time? Despite this, over 60 researchers and school library practitioners met last spring in Ottawa to focus on "Transforming Canadian School Libraries to Meet the Needs of 21st Century Learners" — most on their own dime and time.

2012 was a banner year for the OLA Festival of Trees. In partnership with Authors at Harbourfront, and thanks to a grant from OCAF, OLA was able to take the show on the road along with 20 authors and illustrators to Ottawa and Thunder Bay (more than 70 are at the Toronto festival). 10,000 young readers across the province went to an OLA-hosted Festival, in addition to thousands more who celebrated at their own schools. It could not be done without the effort of close to 300 OLA members who run the programs and manage local festivals.

In addition to the Festival of Trees expansion, OLA launched or grew a number of programs:

- Copyright services: OLA members can ask a copyright related question and receive a legal brief thanks to our partnership with the Faculty of Law at Western University.
- The 10-year Anniversary of the Blue Spruce program was celebrated with an art exhibit featuring 70 illustrator works from picture books at the Canadian National Exhibition for 18 days last August.
- The launch of the OLA Discovery Fund spearheaded by OLITA council. Up to \$500 is available for interesting and innovative ideas — the freedom to experiment is the purpose.

- The launch of the OPLA Child and Youth Services Teen services survey report — among other findings, the survey revealed that public libraries are a key source of youth employment and volunteer opportunities in communities.
- The second Annual Institute on the Library as Place — quickly becoming an OLA signature event — was held as a 'destination conference' at Blue Mountain in July 2012. More than 130 delegates participated from the library and architectural worlds.

By end of July this year we look forward to welcoming members and partners to our new location at 2 Toronto Street. Our new digs will offer two meeting spaces to accommodate the more than 700 visits to our office annually!

I would like to thank the amazing OLA staff team for their commitment to the association. This mighty group of 12 help daily to make the ambitions of our members for our profession a reality.

It has been such a pleasure working with the 2012 OLA Board of Directors, and the divisional councils. You will read in this report their remarkable accomplishments over the past year. Karen McGrath, 2012 OLA president led the association through some tumultuous times (cuts to library programs, copyright and licensing controversy), and laid the groundwork for deeper conversations by implementing the OLA Values. Her Super Conference theme "The Ultimate Library Experience" challenged us all to champion how we make a difference in peoples lives. Jim Brett and Lita Barrie co-chaired a Super Conference that had record numbers! We are so fortunate to have such leadership.

Susanna Hubbard Krimmer, 2013 OLA president, has inspired us to continue to be forward thinking with her 2014 Super Conference theme "A Universe of Possibilities."

