

The BC Library Trustees Association

open door

A Newsletter for Library Trustees

Spring 2002



*HON. GEORGE ABBOTT
MINISTER OF COMMUNITY ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES*

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Spring 2002 issue of the British Columbia Library Trustees Association newsletter, The Open Door. The BCLTA Conference is almost upon us and we are looking forward to a terrific event in Nelson from May 31st to June 2nd.

This year, we are honoured to have Canada's National Librarian, Roch Carrier, as our keynote speaker. Lynn Adams, Conference Director, has put together a wonderful conference featuring a variety of excellent sessions including a pre-conference Trustee Orientation Program (TOP). So, don't miss out on learning new skills and sharing your ideas and experience with fellow Trustees. Also, help us celebrate the winners of the BCLTA Awards during the awards ceremony. Full details of the conference, including registration information, can be found on our website at www.bclta.org.

One of the key Conference events is the BCLTA Annual General Meeting. The AGM offers you an opportunity to hear from your Executive, vote on Association business and elect your Board in the elections. This year, we will have several departing Board members, so please consider running for office. It's a terrific experience and I highly recommend it!

The BCLTA Board continues to be focused on a variety of areas including:

- continuing advocacy with the Provincial government and the Municipal representatives around BC
- planning for our annual reception for delegates to the Union of BC Municipalities convention in September in Whistler
- providing of Lifelong Learning @ your library fridge magnets and bumper stickers
- overhauling and updating the BCLTA website – new domain address – www.bclta.org
- planning the BCLTA conference to be held in Nelson
- learning through the Education Survey – What do Library Trustees Want?
- Educating through a variety of programs including the TOP sessions, both in-person and online
- developing a new workshop entitled Library Leadership

This edition of the Open Door features a message from the Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Community, Aboriginal & Women's Services. In late January, I was joined by our Vice President of Advocacy, John Barton, in a meeting with the Minister. John has provided a summary of that meeting for you in this issue of The Open Door.



First Vice President, Education, Sally Gibson has provided a teaser of a few findings from our recent Education Survey entitled: What do Library Trustees Want? Full details will be available in the next edition of the Open Door.

Kay Bremner, our Communications Director, has presented a variety of interesting articles and profiles in this issue. These include:

- Profiles of Chris Peppler, Director of Public Library Services Branch and Mandy Davies, our new Administrative Assistant (and creator of the new BCLTA website)
- An article by Neil Williams, Reflections on Eight Years as a Library Trustee
- A feature by Scott Mackenzie of Public Library Services Branch on the Canada Post Library Book Rate for Interlibrary Lending.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Open Door and I look forward to welcoming you to the BCLTA Conference in Nelson.

Sincerely,

Blair Qualey
President

Report of BCLA/BCLTA Meeting

January 31, 2002 with Honorable George Abbott in Vancouver

The BC Library Association was represented by Carol Elder, its President, and the BC Library Trustees Association by Blair Qualey, President and John Barton, Vice-President Advocacy.

Chris Pepler, Director, Public Library Services Branch and Dale Wall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Department also participated.

We began by inviting him to speak to us.

He made it clear he had fought hard to maintain the per Capita Grants at their current level for the next three years, and that the fight had been very difficult at times in a department where other cuts were necessary at a level of 30%.

He spoke about the difficult decision regarding Audio-books. He was not aware that the Library Services Talking Books program provided BC authors who would not otherwise be available, nor that the Talking Books so produced were provided free of charge. However it was clear the decision was final.

Carol Elder spoke of the BCLA brief to the Premier's Technology Council and the warm response they had received. The Minister was aware of the importance of libraries in providing community internet access, and was glad to hear about the training in internet access and computer skills which librarians provide. Blair Qualey, Chair of the Vancouver Board stressed the importance of libraries as engines of economic development.

The Minister is serious about the commitment to develop a Strategic Plan for BC libraries. It will begin in January 2003 and be completed by December 2003. He looks forward to the participation of BC Libraries and their users in this process which will be led by the Public Library Services Branch. "It will allow us to focus on the big picture, the long-term goals of library services within the Province."

We discussed the importance of Provincial funding for public libraries, and in particular the difficulty of maintaining the Library as a crucial centre of small communities hit hard by the cumulative effect of a whole series of independently targeted Government service cuts. The Board Chair in McBride had urged us to raise this issue with him. We were able to use the information he sent us effectively. The Minister heard us thoughtfully. He had not yet had opportunity to grasp the details of public library financing and had not understood how crucial Provincial funding is for smaller libraries who have no large Municipal budget to finance them, nor had he realized the way the Provincial share of total library revenue has dropped in the last 11 years. While appreciating the protection of the current level of Provincial funding for libraries for the next three years, we did stress the need to raise the level of funding in '04/05 to one which is comparable with the other Western Provinces.

We also stressed the importance of Provincial legislation in establishing the values which govern library services. In particular we mentioned universal free access, library board governance benefiting from citizen and municipal representatives, the need to have regional districts fund municipal libraries which serve their populations, and ways of integrating library services, such as the Inter-Library Loan system which can only be done at the Provincial level

We felt it was a very productive meeting. As we left we gave him a copy of the Brief which you can download off the BCLTA website as a pdf. file. You will find it at www.bclta.org.

George Abbott kindly took part in the Libraries Public Reception at the Union of BC Municipalities Convention in Vancouver in the fall and addressed the two hundred delegates present on that occasion.

We look forward to a constructive and consultative relationship with the Hon. George Abbott as the process for the Strategic Plan for Public Libraries unfolds under the leadership of the Public Library Services Branch.

John Barton Vice-President Advocacy BCLTA Feb. 22/02

Chris Pepler

Chris Pepler joined Library Services Branch in 1982, as manager of the Branch's office in Prince George. Following a ten-month stint as Acting Director in 1987-88, he managed the Branch's regional offices in Cranbrook and Prince George until 1990, when he was transferred to Victoria. Chris is currently serving a two year appointment as Director of the Public Library Services Branch. Prior to joining the Branch, he worked for twelve years in county libraries in Ontario, including ten years as Chief Librarian of the Frontenac County Library. Chris has B.A. and M.L.S. degrees from the University of Western Ontario and a Diploma in Public Administration from the University of Victoria. Chris is married and he and Lynne live in Oak Bay.



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Message from Minister Abbott

To The British Columbian Library Trustees Association

As Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, I send greetings to the British Columbia Library Trustees Association on behalf of the Province of British Columbia. I had the pleasure of meeting a number of you at the public library reception at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Convention in Vancouver last fall, and in January, when your President and Vice-President of Advocacy, along with the President of the British Columbia Library Association, briefed me on issues of importance to public libraries.



I extend a special word of appreciation and welcome to those of you who have just been appointed or elected as library trustees. Thank you for stepping forward to accept this important civic responsibility. Communities across British Columbia rely on the dedication of library trustees to ensure the continued success of our public libraries.

The job of the library trustee has never been more demanding. Today, challenges faced by trustees include finding adequate funding for both traditional and technology-based services, coping with a rapidly evolving Internet while expanding public access to electronic information, and meeting the needs of diverse and changing communities. We are fortunate

that library trustees are addressing these challenges with skill and determination and are working hard to maintain and improve public library service in their communities and across the province.

As you know, the provincial government also faces challenges. Despite economic hardship, we have protected grants to public libraries for the next three years, until 2005. In the meantime, my ministry will develop a long-term strategic plan for public libraries. We will start work on this plan in 2003, at which time you will be hearing more from us.

Although the audiobook program will wind up by March 2003, we will ensure that public libraries continue to have access to the over 7,000 titles recorded under the program since 1974. We will work with Public Library InterLINK, which has expressed an interest in some of the services currently available through the audiobook program.

In closing, I would like to recognize the British Columbia Library Association for its commitment to the education of library trustees. The Association knows the trustee's leadership and expertise are vital for the development of an effective public library system in British Columbia. Best wishes for the coming year and for a successful conference in Nelson.

Sincerely,

George Abbott

Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services

Mandy Davies



Mandy Davies joined BCLTA in February 2002 in an administrative capacity. She is the owner/consultant of ThinkHelp.com, specializing in education and web site creation and maintenance for individuals, non-profit and commercial organizations. She has several years experience assisting in the delivery of Web and Internet

related courses at UBC, and teaches at British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth at the University of British Columbia (TAG) and Vancouver School Board Community Education Services.

She is a recent graduate of the Provincial Instructor Diploma Program. As she is used to working from home when developing course curriculum, the idea of working for BCLTA from a "virtual office" was appealing, allowing flexible hours and multitasking options. One of her first tasks was a website overhaul for www.bclta.org, adding clearer navigation and "current" information. Her computer talents are primarily self-taught and were developed while volunteering for various non-profit organizations.

Her son, Chris is twenty two and will soon graduate as a computer animator from CDIS.

Recognizing Excellence

The BCLTA Annual Awards Ceremony was held in conjunction with BCLA at the 2001 A Learning Odyssey Conference in Burnaby. Honouring those trustees who, in the opinion of their fellow trustees, deserve recognition is one of the most rewarding tasks of the BCLTA. I felt honoured to be part of this process.

The Nancy Bennet Award is the highest honour the BCLTA can present. Unfortunately, there were no nominations this year. The nominees for this award must have a record of distinguished service at a provincial or regional level.

Three Super Trustees Awards were presented to trustees whose efforts were recognized by their fellow trustees. These trustees are honoured for the major contributions made to their libraries.

From the Hudson Hope Public Library Anita McWilliams was nominated for her active involvement in the library and region over a period of five decades. Anita became chair of the first board in 1966. Her leadership, wit and hard work led to the accomplishment of many goals. It is an honour to recognize the outstanding commitment of Anita. She will celebrate her 78th birthday in May.

From the Castlegar and District Library Joanne Richards was nominated as an exemplary chair and for the outstanding commitment she has demonstrated to her library and community. She guided her library through two referenda for Regional District funding, and worked to see that the library was not left with an

unfinished basement. Joanne also bargained for a benefit package for the employees by convincing the City to include them in their package. It is a pleasure for BCLTA and the Castlegar trustees to honour her as a Super Trustee.

From the Pemberton and District Library for her impact on the library and its profile in the community, her fellow trustees nominated Julie Kelly.

She has become famous for her organization of many successful fundraisers. Julie also helps other organizations by sharing her ideas. She helped steer the Board through a referendum, which established the funding to start the automation project. As Pemberton begins planning a building expansion the library feels fortunate to have her continuing support. Julie is definitely a Super Trustee and BCLTA is proud to honour her.

Library Advocate Awards are awarded at any time during the year. This is an excellent opportunity for libraries to show their appreciation to corporations or individuals in the community who have assisted the library.

Two certificates were presented this year, Diana Lofstrom, submitted by the Sechelt Public Library, and the Bank of Montreal, submitted by the Nelson Municipal Library Board.

Lynn Adams
Past Director of Awards



There's still time to join us...
BCLTA Conference 2002
Leadership @ your library
 May 31st, June 1st & 2nd
 Prestige Inn Lakeside Resort
 Nelson, BC
 Visit www.bclta.org for updates

Award Nominees

| <u>Award</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Library</u> |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Super Trustee | Betty McWhinnie | Whistler Public Library |
| Super Trustee | Linda Florence | Powell River and District |
| Super Trustee | Barbara Nuttall | Port Moody Public Library |
| Super Trustee | Deryll White | Cranbrook Public Library |
| Super Trustee | Louise Levy | Vanderhoof Public Library |
| Super Trustee | Perry Mazzone | Richmond Public Library |
| Super Trustee | Judy Chrysler | Terrace Public Library |
| Nancy Bennett | Merit Award | Colleen Chambers BCLTA Past President |
| Advocate Award | Friends of Squamish | Squamish Public Library |

Reflections on Eight Years as a Library Trustee

by Niel Williams

I have just finished my statutory eight year term as a library trustee and the editors of the Open Door asked me to summarize my experiences in 50 words or less. This has not proven feasible.

My own experience was with the Greater Victoria Public Library, an urban institution serving eight municipalities and operating, like all British Columbia libraries, under the Library Act but also governed under the Byzantine provisions of something called the Intermunicipal Operating Agreement a kind of library NAFTA. Oddly enough it works rather well but a careful grounding in Machiavelli is useful.

Trustees come in several different flavours in British Columbia - the elected politicians who make up the entirety of our regional libraries and cast a mostly benevolent eye on the proceedings of our municipal boards, and the citizen volunteers, appointed by municipalities or elected in our library associations. These volunteers make up the vast majority of trustees and are the audience I am writing for today.

So what have I learned after eight years? A fair bit I suppose, some of it right and some in all likelihood completely wrong. But for the purposes of this article I would like to talk about just three things.

I learned that we are not masters in our own house and that this subtly and irrevocably changes the equations of governance. We are responsible for developing and administering our budgets but not for their final approval. We are not elected officials and this is as it should be but it does mean that once a year our role shifts from governance to one of pure advocacy and lobbying. We are in direct competition with other municipal services for budget dollars and it is our obligation as library advocates to secure every dollar we can through fair means or foul. Remember that once a year police, fire, sewers, roads and parks are your enemies. Take no prisoners but sign a peace agreement when budgets are done.

I learned that while we may not have full financial independence we are free to govern within our various legislative boundaries in other areas. When libraries come

under attack, which they do, for reasons and issues which strike at the core of what a library is then we have an obligation to defend this most open and accessible of our public institutions. Whether these attacks come in the form of a drive for user fees or as a challenge to our core values of intellectual freedom or in any other guise, our status as independent arms-length governing bodies ensures that in the final analysis we are responsible only to our principles and our consciences. Let them be your guide.

And finally while we like to think of libraries as a universal public service we are firmly based upon municipal structures and provide library services to the residents and taxpayers of our sponsoring municipalities. This inevitably means that there will be gaps and omissions. The most egregious of these omissions are British Columbia's First Nations. While obviously we as library trustees can do very little to solve any of the larger issues I have learned that we can and must make an important contribution. Even though some reserves may be completely surrounded by our service areas, residents on those reserves are not automatically eligible for library cards. Through outreach, contracts for service, negotiations or whatever else it takes up to and including simply turning a blind eye we must ensure that at an absolute minimum no First Nations child or youth is deprived of the libraries which the rest of us take for granted. The cost is negligible and the benefits incalculable.

Those are three of the things that I learned during my eight years. But library boards in British Columbia are as diverse as the rest of our province and your experiences will provide their own unique set of lessons. Hang in there and leave your library in better shape than you found it and you won't go far wrong.

Neil Williams
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Canada Post Library Book Rate for Interlibrary Lending

by Scott Mackenzie, Public Library Services Branch

Interlibrary loan has become an increasingly popular service at public libraries across the province. While there are many factors involved in a successful provincial interlibrary loan network,



one of the key elements is the existence of a reasonably cheap and dependable delivery system. The Canada Post Library Book Rate (LBR) has for years served as the delivery method of choice for shipping interlibrary loan books to and from libraries.

What is the Library Book Rate?

While the Library Book Rate has been in existence since 1939, it is not a rate that is established by the Canada Post Corporation but rather is part of the Publications Assistance Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Every few years the Department of Canadian Heritage renegotiates the Library Book Rate with Canada Post. An agreement has recently been signed that will cover the period 2002-2004. This new agreement will allow for the following increases in the LBR:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Beginning April 15, 2002 | Increase of 6.8% |
| Beginning April 15, 2003 | No increase |
| Beginning April 15, 2004 | Increase of 6.3% |

In 2004, the Department of Canadian Heritage will be required to open negotiations with Canada Post for a continuation of the LBR.

What are the advantages of the LBR?

The primary advantage of the LBR is cost. The LBR offers a very cheap means of shipping books to locations both within BC and the rest of Canada. Here is a comparison of the cost to mail a 2 kg. package from Victoria to Fernie and back using the LBR versus regular parcel post (parcel post costs were tabulated using the Rate Calculator on the Canada Post web site):

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Using LBR: | \$0.66 |
| Using Parcel Post: | \$10.92 |

When one considers that approximately 75,000 items were shipped last year by BC public libraries using the LBR it is obvious that this preferential rate is critical to sustain the current level of interlibrary lending.

Possible Improvements to the LBR

The main complaint about the LBR by libraries is that it is restricted to print material. At the time the Rate was conceived in 1939 almost all information was published in print format. Today the situation is far different with information also appearing in many non-print formats, including audio-visual formats. Not surprisingly there is increasing demand from library patrons to be able to request these other formats on interlibrary loan. While there are a number of issues involved with allowing audio-visual materials to be made available for interlibrary loan, certainly one of the key factors is the fact that the LBR does not cover these materials. Inclusion of all formats in the LBR would encourage libraries to at least consider expanding what is available for interlibrary loan as well as more accurately reflecting the reality of the publishing industry in the twenty-first century.

What is currently happening with the LBR?

As mentioned earlier a new agreement on the LBR was reached earlier this year. However, the Department of Canadian Heritage has already begun planning for the next round of negotiations three years hence and has contracted ASM Advanced Strategic Management Consultants of London Ontario to begin collecting data and input from libraries across the country. A number of public libraries in British Columbia were selected to take part in a cross-country survey conducted by this firm. These surveys have now been completed and should provide ASM Consultants with the necessary data to build a strong case for the continued existence of this program.

BCLTA Survey Results

BCLTA Educational Survey Yields Interesting Trends

Our findings from the recent BCLTA Educational Survey entitled: What Do Library Trustees Want? are being readied for publication. Many interesting trends are evident. Here are a few findings that may serve to tickle your interest!

Number of Conferences Attended by Trustees

23% of Trustees responding attended 0 conferences.
42% of Trustees responding attended 1 conference.
17% of Trustees responding attended 2 conferences
7% of Trustees responding attended 3 conferences.
6% of Trustees responding attended 4 conferences.
1% of Trustees responding attended 5 conferences.
3% of Trustees responding attended 6 conferences.

Board Members with Email and Internet Access

79% of Members responding have email access.
86% of Members responding have internet access.

Preferred Site of Learning.

63% of respondents reported their preferred site of learning as conference workshops.

BCLTA looks forward to publishing an executive summary of findings in the Fall issue of Open Door! Congratulations to the Rossland Board of Trustees who were the first Board to submit a complete package of survey responses!

Sally Gibson, 1st Vice President Education
BC Library Trustees Association

Why Belong?

A. The power of working cooperatively:

1. Gain the benefits of the active advocacy of the BCLTA in relation to the Provincial Government.

- The BCLTA has a history of meetings with various Cabinet Ministers, including current Minister Responsible, the Hon. George Abbott in January, and Premier Gordon Campbell, then Leader of the Official Opposition.
- the BCLTA achieved its primary advocacy objective for 2002 with the maintenance of Provincial Library Grants.
- Work continues to position the need for an increase in the Provincial per Capita Grant to Public Libraries by \$2.00 per person, at a cost of \$8 million.

2. Liaison with the Union of BC Municipalities. [Municipalities now provide 83% of all public library funding in the Province].

- BCLTA cooperation with the President of UBCM and its representatives.
- Last year UBCM passed resolutions affirming free access to public libraries and requesting the Provincial Government to increase its core funding for libraries.
- a Libraries Reception at the time of the Union of BC Municipalities Convention in September 2001 in Whistler. (More than 200 Mayors, Councillors and Regional District representatives participated last year in Vancouver).
- the provision of material to assist Library trustees in their advocacy and relations with Municipal Councillors and Managers and Region District Directors.

3. Regular liaison with the Director and staff of the Library Services Branch of the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal & Women's Services in matters of importance to Library Board Trustees.

B. Networking with other library boards and libraries:

1. Direct connections with the 70 other Public Libraries in the Province with 229 service points, which share many of the same opportunities and challenges.

- through participation in the Association's Annual Conference
- through information made available through the quarterly publication "Open Door"
- through exchange of questions, information and ideas on the Library Board Chairs' List-Serve.

2. Connection with Public Libraries in other Provinces and in the United States through the Canadian Library Trustees Association and the American Library Association.

C. Educational training programs for trustees:

1. Provision of the Trustee Orientation Program, to assist Trustees in discharging their responsibilities effectively.

- available in the Fall, in the Spring and in association with the annual BCLTA Conference (May 2002 in Nelson).
- available free as on "TOP-On-Line" program to member Boards.

2. Major Workshops on subjects of contemporary concern to Trustees, available through direct participation or through video-tapes.

Video-tapes available at a cost of \$19.95 to member boards. e.g. "Internet Filtering - Yes or No for Your Library"

3. Keeping up to date on key issues and developments affecting Public Libraries through the multiplicity of workshop choices available at the annual BCLA/BCLTA conference.

D. The Provision of Resources for member Boards:

1. Provision of important data on Public Library Use and Funding.

- an up-to-date BCLTA website with current information about public libraries and advocacy.
- resources for enabling Library Trustees to raise important Public Library issues with the candidates running for office in your constituency

2. The Provision of resources to raise the profile of public libraries: Bumper-stickers, Posters, and Fridge-magnets.

3. Provision of the BCLTA Trustee Handbook

4. Advice on consultants: persons skilled in the design and operation of Board "Retreats", in the development of Strategic Plans, and in the design and operation of Websites.

E. Public Recognition of distinguished service:

Eligibility for these BCLTA Awards:

- the Nancy Bennett Merit Award
- the Super Trustee Award

The BC Library Trustees Association was registered under the Societies' Act, February 9, 1977. It represents more than 70 library boards and over 700 library trustees who volunteer their time on library boards throughout the Province.

The Member Boards exercise their votes at the annual meeting, and their individual trustees are eligible to run for the BCLTA Executive which meets three times each year.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS TO OPEN DOOR

The BCLTA Open Door is the official newsletter of the British Columbia Library Trustees Association. It is published three times annually. Material should be camera ready art or in Word format if sent by email. A printed copy along with text and graphics of each original file on a computer diskette is appreciated. Material submitted will not be returned unless special arrangements are made with the editor. The editor cannot assume responsibility for rewriting any article but does reserve the right to edit all material.

Send articles to:

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MISSION STATEMENT:

'To promote and foster the effectiveness of Public Library Boards in British Columbia through unity, advocacy, education and leadership for the advancement of library service throughout the Province.'