



Highlights from CLA 2012 in Ottawa

The first “CLA on the Hill” day was a tremendous success. The day started with an Advocacy Boot Camp which gave delegates a context for our activities, training in how to manage a meeting, and the key talking points for the day. Then more than 60 members were divided into 18 teams, and fanned out over the Hill for meetings with 63 MPs, Senators, and key Hill staff. CLA members highlighted copyright legislation, library book rate, the Community Access Program, and budget cuts affecting federal libraries and Library and Archives Canada as key issues. Many members also attended Question Period – a highlight of the day!



L-R: Geoff Regan (MP), Barb Clubb, Michaela Seyler, Scott Simms (MP), David Hurle, Rick Theis



L-R: Dennis Bevington (MP), Shelley Monson, Elaine Kivisto

Our Hill Day advocacy had some immediate impact, with a question being raised in Question Period the next day on the Community Access Program ([see the press release](#)), and reference to our key issues in the latest debate on Bill C-321 on Library Book Rate ([see transcript here](#), first item under private members’ business).

The opening night reception was a fantastic party. Even after a late vote, several MPs made the effort to join us. MonkeyJunk were fabulous! – when was the last time anyone danced at a CLA opening reception?!



MonkeyJunk

The opening keynote speaker, Daniel Caron, Deputy Head and Librarian and Archivist of Canada, was not without controversy. He outlined a vision of future activities and services for our national institution, and discussed some of the implications of the modernization process as well as the recent federal budget cuts. Before his presentation, two conference delegates as well as several non-delegates handed out black ribbons in support of CAUT's day of action, protesting Dr. Caron's decisions with respect to the required cuts to the LAC budget (CLA commented on the cuts in a [press release](#) on 2 May). CLA had to ask the non-delegates to leave the conference space, as is common practice for associations holding a trade show.

Following the keynote, Dr Caron participated in a lively Q&A session. The keynote speech and a transcript of the Q&A session will be made available on the CLA post-conference website in the coming days. As President Karen noted at the closing session: it's not often that we have an opening keynote that is still being discussed at the end of the conference!

The Great Debate continues to be the must-attend session at CLA. It drew the highest number of delegates for the concurrent sessions, with nearly 200 people witnessing a wildly entertaining debate on the proposition: "Be it resolved that the core values of modern librarianship are antiquated and obsolete". Stephen Abram and Robin Thiessen Hepher spoke in favour, Mike Ridley and Andrea Siemens spoke against, and Ernie Ingles took on the challenge of moderating the lively discussion.



L-R: Robin Thiessen Hepher, Stephen Abram, Ernie Ingles, and masked Mike Ridley, Andrea Siemens



L-R: Robin Thiessen Hepher, Ernie Ingles, Mike Ridley, Andrea Siemens

We held the first CLA Living Library, which was a great success for both “books” and “readers” alike. More than 25 individuals agreed to participate as living books, and were checked out by more than 50 readers. Some of the feedback comments:

- Inspired about the future. Wonderful conversations!
- Best chat ever!!
- It was great to get out of my comfort zone - wasn't as scary as I thought

Session organizers Nancy MacKenzie and Cabot Yu are already making plans for next year! There were a record number of poster sessions this year, with [28 posters](#) presented within the Trade Show. And CLA introduced a new award at this conference for Best Poster. The winners were Emma Cross and Robert Smith for their poster “Power Up! Building a Game Collection in an Academic Library: the Experience of Carleton University Library”.

Another new initiative this year was a plenary session on Friday morning. IFLA President Ingrid Parent spoke about [IFLA's advocacy work](#), and how national associations around the world are critical partners in advancing library issues in international fora. National library associations must help prepare their national delegations for discussions at gatherings such as WIPO or UNESCO, where issues affecting libraries are increasingly debated. Victoria Owen, chair of both the IFLA and CLA copyright committees, provided specific details of current international copyright negotiations, and the roles that IFLA and CLA are playing in those discussions. Paul Whitney, member of IFLA's Governing Board, talked about IFLA's structure and how Canadians can get engaged in IFLA's work.

At the 67th Annual General Meeting, CLA members were updated on the association's activities and financial statements from the previous year. Our association continues to implement the changes to the constitution and bylaws approved in Halifax last year, and has stabilized its financial situation. Members debated [6 resolutions](#), including a proposal to increase fees for institutional members, a one-time levy on membership renewals for 2012, and a re-commitment to the establishment of a national network for equitable library service. All resolutions carried.

The closing session was an opportunity to celebrate all of our 2012 award winners. We were then treated to a fascinating look inside Ottawa politics with journalists Evan Soloman, Rob Russo, and Lawrence Martin. Each of them brought intriguing insights into the new political reality of the majority Conservative government, the rise of the NDP, and the third-party status

of the Liberals. All in the room wished we could have had another hour with them! It was a great way to conclude an eventful conference, tying back to our opening day on the Hill.



L-R: Evan Solomon, Rob Russo, Lawrence Martin

The CLA National Conference is the venue for library staff and library supporters from across the country to engage, debate and learn. More than 800 delegates took part in this year's gathering. Make your plans to join us in Winnipeg next year!