

100 years of library service for Canadians with vision

In 1906, Edgar Bertram Freel Robinson, Ontario's first blind university graduate, created the "Free Library for the Blind" and began circulation of a small collection of braille books. This library later became part of the newly-founded CNIB in 1918.

Canada Post will receive CNIB's Dr. Dayton M. Forman Memorial Award for their commitment to library services. In 1898, Canada was the first country to legislate free postage for reading materials for people with vision loss. In 2006, Canada Post circulated more than 1.3 million CNIB Library items postage-free.

Renowned Canadian musician Terry Kelly, who is blind, will launch his new song, "That All May Read," at the conference's closing ceremonies.

"Currently, less than five per cent of information published in print is produced in an accessible format such as braille, e-text, or audio," she adds. "By working together on this issue, the next 100 years promise great opportunities for people who cannot read print due to a disability," says Margaret McGrory, executive director, CNIB Library.

En français

Saturday's excitement will include 2 sessions in French with simultaneous translation. Thanks to ASTED for partnering with CLA to bring us talks by Benoît Ferland, president of the Corporation of Librarians of Québec with on L'élaboration de politiques en bibliothèque (session 53) and Robert Chiasson and Lise Rousseau. La lecture aux enfants tous les jours. (session 60)

THANK A VOLUNTEER – Part 2

Our volunteers are everywhere and numerous—there are at least 40 working at any time. All are sporting blue ribbons; many are wearing t-shirts. Please take the time to thank a volunteer, to express your appreciation for all the hard work that has gone into organizing this conference.

Doris Rankin	Linda Sherlow Lowden
Elizabeth Reicker	Carol Smale
Nancy Reid	Lori Small
Mary Anne Reinhard	Michael Szadurski
Marilyn Rennick	Terri Tomchysyn
Carol Rigby	Lise Vézeau
Susan Robert	Keith Walker
Claudette Rocan	Randall Ware
Joseph Sampedro	James Watson
Kate Santry-Malik	Tony Westenbroek
Bonnie Sastri	Dana Wiley
France Séguin	Barbara Witt
Marilyn Shanks	Lujie (Lisa) Xie
David Sharp	Joan Yanofsky

Congratulations to the 56 winners of the lucky draws of 43 exhibitors.

IFLA in 2008

Wednesday morning, the organizing and consultative committees on IFLA 2008 Quebec City met to continue the intense planning that is required for a major international conference of 5,000 delegates. The theme of the 2008 conference is Libraries without borders: Navigating Towards Global Understanding / Bibliothèques sans frontières: naviguer vers une compréhension globale.

IFLA's annual meeting has been held in Canada twice before, in Toronto (1967) and in Montreal (1982). IFLA 2008 will coincide with the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City so you can attend an international conference in your field and celebrate some Canadian history at the same time.

Ottawa is rich in libraries, here's a sample

CANADA INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION (CISTI)

The Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, CISTI, is a science library and a world leader in document delivery for all areas of science, technology, engineering and medicine. The Institute evolved from the library which first established over 75 years ago at the National Research Council of Canada. The National Science Library (as it was renamed in 1957) morphed into CISTI in 1974 to better reflect its role in the development of electronic information products and services for the scientific and technical community.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Library and Archives Canada, an innovative knowledge institution, was created in 2004 to combine the collections, services and staff expertise of the former National Library of Canada and the former National Archives of Canada. Its mandate is to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada and to facilitate cooperation among Canadian communities involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge.

JEAN-LÉON ALLIE LIBRARY, Saint-Paul University

The library was founded in 1937 at the University of Ottawa's seminary by the late Father Jean-Léon Allie, O.M.I. who devoted his life to the institution. Starting with only four books, the library grew through generous donations from other religious institutions, as well as through the founder's judicious purchases, especially of rare books, to become the largest of its kind in Canada. The excellent quality of the library has long been recognised by scholars in philosophy, medieval studies and theology.

Looking forward to seeing you
at CLA 2007
in Newfoundland



Issue 3

Saturday, June 17, 2006

Libraries Build Communities

Congratulations and best wishes to Linda Cook, CLA's incoming President.

Sneak Preview: Cate McNeely

There was a time, not so very long ago, when libraries held their books behind counters and sometimes even kept them in chains. Patrons had to know what they wanted when they entered the library and would submit their request to the librarian, whose all-important job it was to care for the books and retrieve them when requested. How times have changed!

Librarians today spend much of their time and energy creating programs to entice patrons to visit their buildings. The role of the librarian has expanded beyond book custodianship, and libraries have become much more than book repositories: they are now community centres facilitating learning and protecting access to information.

As the roles of library and librarian continue to evolve, some practitioners stand out, and we are fortunate to have one such trailblazer with us for the closing keynote. Cate McNeely, Deputy Chief Librarian of the Richmond Public Library, has distinguished herself as an innovator in her field. She has taken the role of public service provider to heart and is more than willing to share her vision with other librarians.

Cate McNeely speaks widely on topics relating to "libraries of the future," including multilingual service provision, library space planning, and fostering standards of excellence in service. She has been described as a "neophile," one who loves new things, and this description is certainly supported by her well-known philosophy and accomplishments. It will be a real treat, and an inspiration, to hear her creative, practical, proven ideas at Saturday's closing keynote.

Jocelyn Covert, Nova Scotia Community College
Sarah Polkinghorne, University of Alberta

Congratulations

To the to-be-announced CLA Award winners.
Be sure to attend the Awards Ceremony at
2pm in the Westin's Confederation Room.

Congratulations and Thanks

To many who are named in your program, sponsors, donors and many people, especially **President Barbara Clubb**, and including members of the:

Program Committee: Wendy Newman, Kathleen M. De Long, Jane Venus, Judy Dunn, Gwen Zilm and Barbara Clubb

Local Arrangements Committee: Doris Rankin, Michelle DeVidi, Franceen Gaudet, Ian Hunter, Carole Lague, Mary Cavanagh, Tony Westenbroek, Elizabeth Reicker, Carol Smale and Lori Small

Division and Interest Group liaison team: Rita Bolar (CASLIS), Isla Jordan (CACUL), Diana Gauthier (CSLA), Arthur Battiste (CLTA), Joanne Comper (CAPL), Elaine MacLean (Interest Groups), Pat Jobb (Interest Groups), Lisa Twardowska (New Professionals)

CLA Today team: Lyse Champagne, Dianne Parsonnage, the 9 Students At CLA

Ten things I (re-)learned in Ottawa this year:

10. Debate about *The DaVinci Code* may never, ever end.
9. EBSI, FIS, GSLIS, SIM, SLAIS, SLIS; MAS, MBSI, MLIS, MLS, MPA...
8. It's still fun to guess how many candies are in the jar.
7. When searching for LGBTQ materials, seemingly unlikely subject headings like "life choices" and "coming of age" might actually produce relevant results.
6. Members of the Library History Interest Group are alive and well and living across Canada.
5. GATT, GATS, TRIPS, WIPO, WTO, NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA...
4. Volunteers are fabulous.
3. Beavertails (Eastern Canada) are not the same as Bearclaws (Western Canada). (But both are delicious.)
2. Library workers (and all the things they do) are always interesting.
1. I should start saving my pennies to get to St. John's.

Sarah Polkinghorne, University of Alberta

THE GREAT DEBATE

“Be it resolved that it may not be a paperless society, but it could be a librarian-less society.”

It could have been a predictable outcome, but at the end of the day the resolution was defeated by a mere four votes.

Melody Burton came out strong for the affirmative claiming that librarians have become the profession’s worst enemy, watching from the sidelines as users no longer demand librarians’ “specialized” skills.

For the negative, Gillian Byrne compared librarians to cockroaches, claiming that those in the profession have always succeeded in adapting to constant changes in the world of information.

Supporting Melody’s affirmative argument was Nancy McCormack who equated the skills required by the average Blockbuster video staffer to those of current information professionals: staff at Blockbuster’s organize and retrieve information to satisfy user needs and they don’t need an MLIS.

Finally, Leslie Weir told the audience that librarians worry too much about this issue, and that there is actually an increased demand for the specialized service that only librarians can provide.

The debate yielded only one opinion from the audience during the designated comment period. Speaking against the motion, this individual made a lively prediction that future librarians will take up roles as “bookleggers and biblioterrorists.”

Strong cases were made by both sides, but those speaking in favour of the motion swayed many minds, a fact that was reflected in the shift in audience opinion during the course of the debate. The resolution may have failed by four votes, but the pre-debate vote - revealed only after all arguments had been made and the final vote taken— had been a staggering 81 opposed to only 19 in favour.

*Geoffrey Little, University of Toronto
Monique Woroniak, Dalhousie University*

A Real First Time Experience!

I’ve been talking about this conference for months. My friends and family have forgiven me for it; they know I’ve never been to a conference before. “You might find some of the sessions dull and sterile,” a friend of mine said, “sometimes they’ll talk about stuff that isn’t interesting at all”. In my experience so far, she couldn’t have been more wrong.

I have found all of the sessions that I have attended to be engaging, informing, and well received by all who attended them. I have had my knowledge expanded and my assumptions challenged, while meeting wonderful people. I have been fascinated by new advances in technology and real solutions to some issues that my library is currently facing. All of these things have led me to determine that I am in the right profession, and I hope to see many of you at CLA conferences in the years to come!

Lindsay Holdsworth, The University of Western Ontario

*Thank you to all the delegates, sponsors, exhibitors,
and staff who made this conference a success.*

The International Puzzle

Dr. Sam Trosow, assistant professor with the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario, and Dr. Kirsti Nilsen adjunct professor with the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario and the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto both provoked and reassured attendees at Thursday’s session on how international trade agreements affects libraries.

Libraries are overlapping the private sector more and more through the materials and services that they provide to their patrons. Many of these library services are either fee based or are also provided by the private sector. Under these two provisions, a GATS challenge could be potentially raised against libraries. This situation seems frightening and overwhelming, and cannot be dismissed by library boards and librarians in general. However, as the speakers remind us, we cannot be paralysed by these agreements.

We must continue to provide the services to our patrons that we do, and the speakers have outlined for us a number of practical suggestions and strategies to reduce the risk of a GATS challenge. Firstly, avoid splitting library services into core versus extra services. All library services must be considered core services or they may be susceptible to a GATS challenge as well as being at risk for budget cuts. Also, libraries need to avoid the use of “business speak” in their organizations. Terms such as “knowledge management centres” and “customers” reflect a business-like organization, and as such may make it easier for competitors to raise a GATS challenge. Although difficult to imagine at times, the speakers also recommend avoiding public-private partnerships and contracting out services, as these actions can create competitors for the library.

The situation is not yet out of control, however librarians must be aware of these issues, and use caution in the decisions they make.

*Lindsay Holdsworth, The University of Western Ontario,
With assistance by Sarah Polkinghorne, The University of Alberta*

Building Community

“We don’t think about the needs of the socially excluded. We don’t feel what it means to be socially excluded. So we model library services for people who look like ourselves.” John Pateman, Head of Libraries, Lincolnshire County Council, Lincoln, England, challenged us with this statement during the session *Systemic Barriers to Library Use: Libraries Engage the Socially Excluded*. His words touched me as I considered this year’s conference theme of “Libraries Build Communities.” Community is certainly important as we create and improve public library services. However, we have to ask ourselves what community we are representing as we do our work. How do we serve people that may not be coming to the library in the first place? While I have barely begun my library career, I hope that Pateman’s words will influence my interactions with patrons, young or old, rich or poor, in any library where I work. And I hope that libraries will continue to build communities, no matter the community.

Jill Boruff, McGill University

Heading for “The Hill”: Librarianship as a Stepping Stone for Political Office

As a young woman I feel fortunate to be entering a profession whose leadership – by default – is overwhelmingly female. Being surrounded by strong, engaged women is one of the privileges of membership in our profession.

But what of the situation outside the walls of our institutions? Friday morning’s “Women in Politics” Hot Topic panel addressed this question. NDP MP Peggy Walsh, Raylene Lang-Dion representing Equal Vote and journalist Jane Taber presented an informative and inspiring session.

When we as library professionals step outside the walls of our institutions we enter a national community that elects only 64 women out of a House of 309 members.

The panelists spoke of the conditions necessary to increase that figure – money, yes – but also strong organizational skills, networks of supporters and the ability to listen and find solutions to problems. Sound like any people you know?

We increasingly hear about the trend toward librarians putting their skill sets to work outside of libraries, and this session demonstrated the need for us to add the House, the Chamber and the Council room to the list of institutions we call home.

Monique Woroniak, Dalhousie University

First Time Experiences

Although there are over 1,000 participants at the CLA Conference, it feels like a small community where every librarian’s door is open. Probably the best opportunity for networking one-on-one is in the shuttle buses. You never know who you are going to sit with on the bus, but as a Student to CLA you will probably step off the bus with a business card (and a job prospect). Librarians want to see graduates hired!

Jeremiah Saunders, University of British Columbia

I’ve been enjoying my “first CLA conference experience”. As a student and newcomer to the professional world of libraries, this conference is a great opportunity to meet new people and to learn from each other’s experiences. It’s interesting to compare programs with students from other library schools across Canada; to discover what is awaiting us in the workplace environment through stories of recent graduates and new professionals; and to learn best-practices from senior librarians and others experts in the information science field. The many sessions address current issues and challenges (new technologies, literacy programs, copyright issues in the digital world, and much more), and I wish I had more eyes and ears to be able to catch a glimpse of everything that is being discussed! This conference is indeed a nice and pleasant way of getting acquainted with the “librarian’s job” and to get to know the library community better and the CLA family – a very warm and welcoming family. Je me sens privilégiée d’être ici, et je remercie l’EBSI de m’avoir permis de vivre cette expérience fort enrichissante, à tous les points de vue.

Mahalya Havard, Université de Montréal

Women in Politics and Building Community

How do *Women in Politics* fit into the theme of libraries building communities? Librarians need political influence at every level in local and national issues, even though that didn’t come up at the Friday morning session featuring Jane Taber, senior political writer at the *Globe and Mail*, Peggy Nash, NDP MP for Parkdale-High Park and Raylene Lang-Dion of Equal Voices.

That we need more women in politics is evident from the numbers. While there are women involved at the municipal level in my home town, only 20.8 per cent of our country’s MPs are women. Sitting in the gallery watching the debates Thursday afternoon during Question Period, I could see why. When Environment Minister Rona Ambrose rose to speak, at one point the Liberals three swords lengths across the floor drowned her out, shouting: “blah, blah, blah.” In the words of Ms. Nash: “who needs that?”

We haven’t come a long way baby. “Parliament is still a very male place,” said Ms. Taber, who told a story about how female MPs only got a washroom near the government chamber in the last couple of years after a female Liberal MP missed a vote because nature called.

So what to do? Women are busy raising the kids, folding the laundry, driving to soccer practice, caring for aged parents and shelving books at the library. We could start by checking out Equal Voices, a new non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the scarcity of women in politics. Ms. Lang-Dion suggests convincing young women about the value of participating in political life. We could pressure Ottawa for electoral reform that would likely result in more women being elected. We could decide to run ourselves.

We could and should do all of these things. It’s important that our voices and ideas are heard.

Lisa Morry, University College of the Fraser Valley

Building Community

I like to look at libraries as a meeting place, a public forum where people exchange information and knowledge, an institution that enhances the values of democracy and equity. Whether they are a national symbol or a local service, libraries play an important role in society – they are at the heart of communities, because by making knowledge accessible to all, they contribute to citizen awareness and creativity, therefore building a stronger community. Being part of the community, libraries contribute in making it a lively, interactive and pleasant place. Libraries are about culture, economics, politics, literacy, education. Libraries are about people. Libraries are about communities.

Mahalya Havard, Université de Montréal

Libraries build communities, you say? Well, what exactly is a community? Do we mean a neighbourhood? A group of similar or disparate people? I have an idea that libraries act as some sort of grounding force for their neighbourhoods, especially in an age of the ‘global community’. People go to work and sit in offices or cubes, or at computers back-to their colleagues; we read newspapers and check online news sites obsessively and concern ourselves more with the world all around us than our closer community. In a library, however, we sit beside each other at reading tables, we have the opportunity to engage in discussion with our neighbours, and we bear witness to families sharing the same experiences—travelling to the same worlds together. I feel more inclined to change the phrase to ‘Libraries Are Communities.’
Jocelyn Covert, Nova Scotia Community College