

OLA 2003

Liz Kerr, President



*"Whatever the mind of man
can conceive and believe,
it can achieve."*

This report marks the completion of the 103rd year for the Ontario Library Association – truly remarkable in a country that is only 136 years old!

The OLA is you, and it's me, and it's over 4,500 people whose singular efforts all contribute to the greater good of living in Ontario. Every year, hundreds of you contribute directly to the work of your association, which, when matched by the outstanding office staff, results in remarkable achievement.

And so, this report celebrates our on-going work in libraries and information environments, and highlights some of the higher profile accomplishments of the past year. An association must focus both on launching

***"Your Association welcomes
your participation... Together
we make a difference for Ontario!"***

new projects, and extending and sustaining current initiatives. This year has focused on building our strengths.

EDUCATION Super Conference

To begin the year, the 2003 Super Conference last January attracted its greatest audience to date, badging over 3,600 people. What a tribute to the quality of the program our members put together! The evaluation survey indicated over 90% percent gave it a higher rating than ever before.

The high importance the OLA puts on professional learning is reflected in your enthusiasm and participation. The 2004 conference planning team with whom I have been associated continues to grow in its ambition and its critical understanding of Ontario libraries and your needs.

The Education Institute

Launched in 2002, this undertaking is in early implementation and has incredible potential for our Association to reach beyond the traditional borders to offer professional learning in new and exciting ways to expanded audiences. To grow from six workshops in a year to eighty-six in the first year of the Education Institute project is serious business.

There have already been encouraging successes – the audio conferences, the on-line courses created by associate and partner Rita Vine, and the

spectacular combination of programs by another partner, Ken Haycock on the role of library boards in community development.

There have also been disappointments. Some of this has stemmed from tensions outside OLA's control – namely the struggle between the teachers' federations and the government regarding the Professional Learning Plan. Teachers and organizations such as ours have been caught in the crossfire, almost totally cutting off teacher participation.

However, the new Liberal Government has announced its intention to repeal the Professional Learning Plan requirement imposed by the previous government. OLA has sent a letter to Education Minister, Gerard Kennedy, applauding this decision.

Since many of the professional learning sessions are offered through various distance-learning models, additional opportunities to work with library organizations across North America are being actively explored. A partnership with Drexel University to offer an on-line MLS degree through the Education Institute is one of the exciting future possibilities.

POLITICAL ACTION The Ontario Digital Library

This has been a significant year for this initiative. The contract between OLA, on behalf of the ODL Catalyst Group, and the Ontario Knowledge Network for Learning on