

The Annual Report of the Ontario Library Association

OLA 2007

Esther Rosenfeld, President

“OLA is a compelling success story, and the OLA brand is highly respected for quality and innovation.”

It has been an extraordinary year for OLA. It began in February 2007 with Executive Director Larry Moore's decision to retire and it ended at the closing luncheon of Super Conference 2008 with the introduction of OLA's new Executive Director, Shelagh Paterson.

The search for a new Executive Director

This transition from one Executive Director to another was the result of much work done by your 2007 Executive and Board of Directors. Fortunately, a Succession Policy developed several years ago by a previous OLA Board provided us with a framework and process by which to move forward. First, the Executive acted as a review team and worked with Larry Moore and Deputy Executive Director Jefferson Gilbert to conduct a detailed organizational review. Much discussion ensued with OLA staff, association and division leaders from our past, and with OLA Board. The focus groups carried out in 2006 in the OLA Strategic Future project proved to be a wonderful base – a rich collection of opinion and comment from hundreds of our members.

Organizational review of OLA

What was striking in the discussion was the recurring theme: that OLA is a compelling success story. As an organization, OLA is known for having a high level of volunteerism and member participation in a variety of programs and committees. We have a positive reputation and image in the library world with

the OLA brand being highly respected for quality and innovation both in program and in our business operations.

Although there are always challenges, OLA leaders and staff have treated these as opportunities for growth and improvement of the organization. The organizational review report approved by OLA Board concluded that the existing administration model has served the Association well and should remain in place for the time being.

OLA Board of Directors approves Shelagh Paterson as successor to Larry Moore

A Selection Committee was then appointed, and the recruitment process was undertaken. Several consulting firms were invited to submit proposals to assist with recruitment and selection, and the firm, Ken Haycock and Associates, was hired for this role which was fulfilled thoroughly and with great integrity.

At the December 2007 Board meeting, the OLA Board approved the Selection Committee's recommendation of Shelagh Paterson for the position. A new era in OLA's rich history was ready to begin.

While the

work around the selection of OLA's third Executive Director dominated the work of the OLA Board of Directors, the Association's programs kept coming for another rewarding year.

The Forest of Reading®

OLA's huge literacy initiative continues to be highly successful and serves as a model for readers' choice programs in many jurisdictions. In May 2007, the program moved from a series of award ceremonies to the development of a broader based multi-program reading festival.

Over 4,000 children and teens descended on Toronto's Harbourfront Centre to take part in the first Forest of Reading®

