ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
President's Report

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OSLA President 2000
and 2001

This brings to a close my two-year term as your President. In this final President's Report I have the luxury of making general comments. Your Councillors report the work they have been doing in their portfolios on the next pages. I want to draw your attention to a few items for special consideration and to take advantage of the opportunity to make some broad observations, reflections, predictions and appeals.

First, let us recognize the fine work reflected in the fresh direction of this publication and its enhanced look. Thank you to Publications Portfolio Chair Cheryl Dinnin, Editor Bobbie Henley along with the new editorial Board. Special recognition goes to Larry Moore, OLA Executive Director, for his creative participation.

The OSLA web site is another new initiative. The creative hard work of Webmaster Mark Kaminski can now be enjoyed at <http://www.accessola.com/osla>. An editorial board will work with Mark to maintain and expand the site. You are urged to be a frequent visitor and active participant in the ongoing work of maintaining the high standard.

Learning opportunities

You are urged to take advantage of the learning opportunities created by your association. It could be said that the nature of our teaching role more than any other requires ongoing professional development. OLA is mindful of this; leadership in this area has a high profile. There is the OLA Store stocked with excellent professional library books including resources created by your peers such as the coded information studies expectations, Power Point slides for specific audiences, research portfolios, @ your library™ kits, and information studies/reading posters.

Then there is Super Conference, Knowledge is Sweet @ your library, a masterpiece for learning created by a team of dedicated people. There is also the promise of great Summer Institutes in August 2002 around the province. We all know that ventures such as these require teams of contributors committed to excellence. Special recognition must go to Rose Dodgson and Michelle Regina, the two portfolio Chairs whose vision and leadership guide and inspire the teams putting these together.

Some sobering issues

I want to begin by reiterating my firm conviction that although recent years have brought profound cuts to school library programs, time will also bring them back. What the new revitalized programs will look like will, in part, be shaped by what we are doing now and what the research shows in addition to influences out in the world and in education generally.

We hear it all the time, "Lifelong learning is key to success in this digital information age." Libraries are part of the infrastructure that supports that learning. That is not just school libraries, but all libraries – public, college and universities, industry, government – all have a key role to play in delivering dynamic programs and services. Libraries will continue to be important institutions, both as a physical place and as gateways to a digital network of information resources, online instruction, mentoring and services. The recent two and a half day OLA Leadership Forum, focused on the creation of the Ontario Digital Library, drove that home. The two cornerstones of school library teaching programs, information literacy and reading, are critical for lifelong learning and academic success.

There has been a recent surge of interest in the plight of school libraries. Much of this is due to the concern shown by the whole library community. I have been personally involved in a number of news publications and interest is piqued when I describe the concern of all libraries at the weakening of school libraries and I describe the action plan of OLA to address the cutbacks. The story acquires added scope, legitimacy and prestige. We must be grateful to the whole library community for their active involvement.

News coverage this fall included the Canadian Press story picked up by a number of newspapers, Canoe (an online news service),