

# President's Report



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OSLA President 2003

**T**his report's focus is our association's eventful and busy year in 2002.

## Advocacy

The Ontario Library Association as a whole has initiated an advocacy action plan for school libraries in Ontario. As the kick-off, a group consisting of representatives from all sectors of OLA (public libraries, university and college libraries, library trustees, and school libraries) organized a school library summit. The Ontario School Library Summit, held on May 26th, 27th, and 28th, 2002 brought together a wide variety of participants with expert speakers and panelists. The Summit generated much interest and a draft report. Summit proceedings (including audio) and the draft report can be found on the OLA web site. In September, Stephen Abram, President of OLA, and I made presentations on behalf of school libraries to the Rozanski Commission. Text of the presentations and many supporting articles are available on the OLA web site. Although the lack of any specific mention of school libraries in Dr. Rozanski's report is disappointing, the general thrust of the report and its call for greater funding bodes well. Other advocacy measures are being planned as part of the overall OLA action plan. We thank our colleagues in the other divisions of OLA for the tremendous commitment to and support of school

libraries they have shown.

OSLA has continued to work with parent advocacy groups such as People for Education to bring attention to the inadequacy of Ontario's funding formula for school libraries. People for Education continues to be a passionate and effective voice for quality education for all students in this province.

OSLA is represented on the new Canadian Coalition for School Libraries, an advocacy group whose membership includes representatives from Canadian publishers, distributors, and the library community. This group has presented a brief to the Council of Ministers of Education, has initiated a postcard campaign supporting teacher-librarians, and continues to work with other education and publishing groups.

There has been positive media attention in the form of articles pointing out the latest research on the positive role of teacher-librarians. Other articles showing the decline in staff and budget for school libraries have had an impact and print responses.

A database of library contacts for all school boards in Ontario is being developed so that we can communicate effectively and focus our advocacy efforts.

All in all, OSLA hopes that with

greater visibility for school library issues, with an election looming, and with a government which is being pressed to make changes, that positive change will occur in the near future.

## Reading Programs

Over the past year, OSLA has piloted two new provincial reading programs to meet the needs of our youngest and oldest students – two groups who have not been able to participate in the highly successful OLA Silver Birch and Red Maple programs. Both of the new programs had their inception at the grassroots level, having been originally conceived and run by different school boards in the province. Blue Spruce, the new provincial reading program for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students, ran successfully both in the spring and the fall of 2002, with participation by 80 schools (10,000 students) from 12 school boards in its pilot year. The author and illustrator of the winning book *When Pigs Fly* were honoured at an award presentation on Wednesday January 29, 2003.

OSLA has also just launched the White Pine reading program for high school students, adapted from the program of the same name in the Durham Region DSB.

Information for both programs about the nominated titles for 2003, how to run these programs, and how to access support materials are available on their respective web sites. These programs