



# Ex Libris News

## Inside This

President's Message Erich Schultz	1
Library Boards in Ontario: the historical perspective Lorne Bruce	2
Bill 109 and Ontario's Libraries CELPO	4
The Government Replies	6
Why we join Ex Libris	7
Amalgamation Waves: the Halifax Experience Judith Hare	8
The New Publishing & Public Libraries Jane Horrocks	9
Library Services in Newfoundland: A history Pearce Penney	10
The Imperial Oil Library 1945-1957 Clara Miller	11
A Visit to China Ethnic Library Marie Zielinska	13
<b>REGULAR FEATURES:</b>	
Letters to the Editor	14
The Bookshelf	15
Milestones	16

## President's Message

### 1997 GET-TOGETHER IN KITCHENER

We look forward to seeing you at our annual get-together in November, which will be held this year in the Kitchener Public Library. Vice-President Brian Land has organized an interesting program that leaves us plenty of time to visit and reminisce. Participants will receive a report on the Ottawa Luncheon meeting in September as well as our annual reports. The registration form for November is enclosed with this issue of the News.

The main thrust of ELA activities this year is the compilation of a list of locations where documents pertaining to library history can be found. They range from major institutions such as the National Library and other libraries to schools of information science, archives and private collections. Several items came to light in the last issue of *Ex Libris News*. The article on E.C. Kyte revealed that his papers are at Queen's University, and the review of *Readings in Canadian Library History 2* mentioned other information sources for library history. At the June meeting of the Board an ad hoc committee consisting of Jean Orpwood (chair), Elizabeth Ketchum, Paula de Ronde and Jean Weihs was appointed "to examine the project's extent and feasibility". We are anxious to identify and locate these sources. If you are aware of any hiding-places where such collections are held, please contact Jean Orpwood or another member of the committee.

### A SALUTE TO OUR PRODUCTION AND DESIGN EDITORS

This issue of *Ex Libris News* is the first produced for us by the Ontario Library Association. Les Fowlie and Raul Regalado, who have been responsible for

the production and design of recent issues, wished to relinquish this duty. We express our thanks to Les and Raul for the many hours they spent on our behalf. We would also like to thank Janette White, who researched and compiled the "Milestones" section for a number of years.

### ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

The Responsibility Statements for Board members were compiled by Past-President John Wilkinson and approved at the Board's September meeting. These will be of assistance to all members of the Board, especially new members, in clarifying the duties of each committee and officer.

### ELA MEMBERSHIP

The membership of ELA remains constant - approximately 175. Clearly, there are more retirees than members. The membership chair, John Ball, and the Membership Committee are constantly inviting persons to join our organization. They also want to know why some do not renew their membership annually. Although we are scattered across the nation, I hope we are not only an association of retired librarians but also an organization of persons who are still vitally interested in the profession. While the articles in the News keep us up-to-date on members' activities and provide us with the opportunity to reminisce about the times when we held positions of trust and responsibility, they can also keep us informed on what is happening in the world of information science. Please take it upon yourself to assist in expanding ELA's membership. ♦

Erich Schultz  
President

This fall, we continue the discussions introduced at last year's annual get-together on how libraries are responding to internal and external changes in their environment. The challenges confronting librarians today are even more serious than the continuous downsizing operations of the last two decades. Triggered by cuts in transfer payments to provinces, costs are being down-loaded to the municipal level with significant impact on public expenditures. At the same time, the Gingrich phenomenon still is having its impact on policies in Canada. The trend towards amalgamation is also being felt, arousing concern that local issues will not be addressed.

Concurrently, library boards face elimination or serious erosion of their traditional functions. Just one example: in its latest issue, *APLA Bulletin* reports that Bill 89, "just passed by the New Brunswick Legislature, makes some fundamental changes to the Libraries Act. As well as eliminating regional library boards, it removes the definition of the professional librarian from the Act, and neither the New Brunswick Library System nor its director is mentioned." None of the changes reflects proposals by a recent task force on libraries set up by the province.

To follow-up the panel discussions on "The Future of Libraries" held at last year's annual gathering, this issue features several articles relevant to that topic. An historical overview of library boards in Ontario by Lorne Bruce is followed by information on Bill 109. We also present a discussion of municipal merging in Nova Scotia and its impact on public libraries; and Jane Horrocks looks at the effect of the new publishing technologies on library collections and education.

In the "As We Were" department, we are pleased to present Pearce Penney's history of public library service in Newfoundland, and Clara Miller's memories of one of Canada's major corporate libraries.

We welcome further contributions from readers who may wish to share their information, opinions or experience. If you have an article you would like to see published, a news item you think we should run, an idea you wish to discuss, a note for our "Milestones" section -- please contact the editor by phone or by mail. (Questions regarding subscriptions to *Ex Libris News*, back issues, etc., should be addressed to the ELA office at FIS, University of Toronto.)

## Library Boards in Ontario: An Historical Perspective

by Lorne Bruce

Major revisions have been made to the *Ontario Public Libraries Act* on four previous occasions during this century: in 1909, 1920, 1966 and 1984. In another published article (1), I wrote that, despite the fact that many of the original prerogatives and legislative supports for boards had disappeared, the board form of governance would likely continue because it was a longstanding political tradition in Ontario communities. Now, in 1997, sweeping changes are being made to the Act, yet appointed library boards will remain, albeit with greatly diminished authority and powers.

From an historical perspective, the continuance and transformation of library boards raise interesting questions about the role of citizen participation in local government and the persistence of appointed bodies with limited autonomy. For more than a century, library boards seem to have satisfied Ontario's citizens that they were useful and appropriate semi-independent bodies which intersected with local/provincial roles in the delivery of library service. I can only touch on a few major points, but I would like to note that my discussion focuses on local municipalities, not larger county or regional library boards which came into being after WWII, smaller boards in police villages and school areas, or association boards that existed until 1966.

### THE ACT OF 1920

The prototypical local library board dates back to 1882, but most Ontarians will be familiar with the characteristics that were enshrined in the 1920 Act. Readers in western provinces may be familiar with some of its provisions because Ontario's development influenced legislation in British Columbia (1891), Manitoba (1899), Saskatchewan (1906) and Alberta (1907). In this archetypical arrangement, library boards were semi-autonomous appointed bodies

coexisting with municipal councils and local school boards that were responsible for selecting members. These boards had distinctive features and powers:

- nine-member boards were created by a petition/referendum process whereby local ratepayers voted to establish a board by a process set out in the library act;
- municipal councillors, the mayor excepted, were not eligible for appointment;
- the members' terms of office were staggered over 2 or 3 years, providing some continuity (and, in some cases, long-term inertia);
- boards were responsible for hiring officers who were identified in the act, e.g., a librarian;
- boards were required to submit annual estimates to council for approval prior to March 1st. They could demand a per capita levy up to a certain maximum and above a specified minimum (the "library rate" was fixed at fifty cents in 1920);
- boards could request council to raise money for a site, buildings or books, by an issue of debentures and refer the matter to electors for settlement;
- the Minister of Education required boards to submit an annual report;
- an audited statement and some board policies were subject to review by the Minister of Education (age limitations for children, for example);
- the Department of Education paid a conditional provincial grant detailed by regulation to boards.

Of course, the legislative definitions, processes, and regulations covering many of these elements evolved after 1920 as more and better services were provided. Promising plans for public library service were published in 1958 (the Wallace report) and 1964 (the St. John report), and the Ontario Library

Association lobbied for improvements throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

## THE 1966 LEGISLATION

In the 1966 Act, new provisions were introduced to reflect the political and economic changes that transformed postwar Ontario. The petition/referendum disappeared, mostly because free library service had been achieved in almost all villages, towns and cities, and municipal elections were no longer held on an annual basis. The municipal per capita library rate was abolished, as it had come to be viewed as a barrier to growth rather than as a guarantee of secure funding. Only in communities with populations over 10,000 did appointments continue to be shared and the nine-member board remain standard. A few dated Ministry of Education requirements and irksome regulations were withdrawn. The primary focus for 1966 legislation was the formation of large units of service (e.g., the abolition of association public libraries), cooperative efforts (especially regional libraries) and the role of the relatively new Provincial Library Service. The authority and power wielded by library boards were not a matter a concern at this time.

At the beginning of the 1970s, however, the autonomy of special-purpose bodies in local government began to receive more attention. After 1965, local government underwent scrutiny and enlargement: school boards were consolidated, regional government introduced, the mandate of provincial ministries expanded, and county restructuring reports undertaken. Independent boards may hamper plans to coordinate services at the local level in a host of ways; these became evident during restructuring exercises. The most common concerns are simplification of administration and accountability to elected bodies. The issue of deconditioning library grants to municipal councils to simplify transfers, the abolition of school appointments by making all selections by councils, the elimination of rotating appointments by having members' terms concurrent with the life of council, and the power of councils to retain complete control over the estimates and expenditures were raised many times in the 1970s and 1980s. A

few municipal corporations (e.g., London in 1978 and Hamilton in 1986) attempted to pass private members' bills to attain more control, but the provincial government normally required agreement by all local parties before this could be achieved.

## THE 70S AND 80S

At the provincial level, the long connection libraries had with the Department of Education was severed in 1972. Since then, a provincial library agency has been assigned to successive ministries in the "cultural sector" that participated in various special-program and planning and restructuring efforts and moved the provincial focus away from the core services libraries provide. Two provincial library studies of note were conducted after 1966: the Bowron report in 1976 and the public libraries program review begun in 1980. Both studies concentrated on cooperative efforts, although some aspects of the local council-board debates that were taking place did receive attention.

In the 1984 legislative revisions, school boards could continue to make suggestions for appointments, but the authority for all selections rested with municipal councils. The staggered mode of appointment ceased. Annual estimates now were to be approved by council which could authorize expenditure variations with or without acceptance by the board. Requests for library debentures required council and Ontario Municipal Board approval. The underlying authority and power of semi-autonomous library boards had been curbed considerably. At the same time, the number of regional library boards was reduced and their powers redefined.

## THE CURRENT LEGISLATION

The most recent 1997 proposals in Bill 109 are the culmination of a series of changes that began in February 1993, when authority for public library legislation was transferred to another new ministry, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation. The most important study to appear at this time was the 1994 report of the Provincial-Municipal Task Force established under the municipal sector framework agreement to the Social Contract regarding areas where duplication and overlap

existed. Against a backdrop of reduced government expenditure and a penchant for rethinking government structures in the 1990s, it made a number of recommendations regarding public library finance, service and administration that challenged the status quo.

In autumn 1995, the Libraries and Community Information Branch was dissolved and ministerial direction for provincial library programs transferred to the Cultural Partnerships Branch of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. As well, the Savings and Restructuring Act (which proposed to allow municipalities to charge fees for local services and to dissolve or change local boards) and a ministry decision to cut approximately 40% of its conditional grant to libraries, received considerable discussion. After the consultation, the final letter of the Who Does What Panel, chaired by David Crombie, advising the government on restructuring municipal aspects of public libraries, was released on 20 December 1996. The Crombie letter was succinct about the future of library boards:

"It is the view of the Sub-panel on Municipal Administration that municipalities should have full control over the local library function. This includes the responsibility to decide how the library service will be governed, to develop the library service policies and programs, to determine the most appropriate administrative structure, as well as to plan for the approve library budgets".

In January 1997, Bill 109 was introduced and at this point September 1997) is ready for third reading. It has retained local library boards, but many aspects of their composition and operation are targeted for change. Bill 109 mandates that local municipal bylaws will determine board size, composition, qualifications, term of office, mode of appointment and reappointment of members, reimbursement for service, and other details such as disqualification. The new act will ensure that boards will have at least three members but there is no legislative provision for retention of citizen appointments. The Ministry will offer guidelines for local bylaws and its conditional grant to boards will be assumed by municipalities as part of an unprecedented transfer of funding responsibility.

Obviously, the rationale that underpinned boards for a century has disappeared. Now boards will face the challenge of a new political environment which is itself the consequence of reduced public-sector funding at all levels, constant governmental reorganization and the advance of new technologies. A new era is emerging for boards. No longer will library service be funded by government simply on the basis of "public good" or "economies of scale." New digital transmission of information promises greater savings and even wider public distribution. The local library is but one of many information providers contending for public consumption. Boards will have to develop new strategies and new arguments to municipal

councils to justify annual expenditures. They will have to do this with less authority, power and funding than in the past because they have become administrative municipal entities, not semi-autonomous corporate bodies providing basic services with provincial and municipal revenue sources.

In many ways, the challenges that contemporary boards must address are greater than ever, in part because public reliance on governmental agencies has eroded steadily in the 1990s, and trustees' ability to create solutions is restricted by their consignment to the local administrative level. Future solutions to public information needs in Ontario communities will depend on how well boards adapt to new technolo-

gies and information policies developed in the private and public sector, usually with limited input from local governments and often from many different perspectives and responses. ♦

(1) Bruce, Lorne D. "Local Government and Library Boards in Ontario, 1882-1945." *Readings in Canadian Library History* 2, CLA, 1996, pp. 119-151.

*Lorne Bruce is Collections Services librarian at the University of Guelph.*

## Ontario's Bill 109

*The following Brief was submitted by the Chief Executives of Large Public Libraries of Ontario (CELPLO) to the General Government Committee, Province of Ontario, April 8, 1997. It was prepared by the CEOs of three public libraries: Barbara Clubb (Ottawa), Jennifer Milne (Etobicoke), and Reed Osborne (London), Chair. (We thank Reed Osborne and Jan White for sending us this document.)*

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE  
BILL 109,  
LOCAL CONTROL OF  
PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT,  
1997  
BRIEF BY  
CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF  
LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARIES  
OF ONTARIO**

April 8, 1997  
London, Ontario

The Chief Executives of Large Public Libraries of Ontario (CELPLO) are the library CEOs in Ontario municipalities serving more than 100,000 population.

Our 25 libraries serve 5.5 million Ontarians, over half the population of the Province.

Ontario's libraries play an important role in the economic and educational life of the province. Ontarians use libraries for a host of business and personal reasons 70 million times annually. Forty-three million or 60% of these transactions occur in CELPLO libraries. Likewise, 60% of circulation and 70% of Ontario's library information requests happen in these larger urban libraries.

### GOVERNANCE

As chief executives of public libraries, our membership is committed to public service, managerial excellence and to efficient effective service provided at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

The question of governance is central to the success of these themes. In their letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of last December, David Crombie and Peter Meyboom of the Who Does What Panel acknowledge that Ontario's Public Library system is "among the best in the world". We are gratified they have recognized the excellence of Ontario's public libraries and urge the government of Ontario to continue to support the public library system.

On the issue of governance, we urge the Committee not to confuse administration and governance. In recent years among our members, there has been a move toward merging some administrative services such as human resources, maintenance and accounting with the parent municipality. These developments have produced significant savings for the libraries and municipalities that have made these mergers. The point we wish to make is that these savings were achieved under the 1984 Public Libraries Act.

The board model has worked well for Ontario's public libraries and CELPLO is pleased the boards are retained in Bill 109. The appointment of volunteer citizens, people of stature and accomplishment in their community, is undeniably a factor in the success of Ontario's public libraries. A strong citizen-based board is a community advocate for library services.

We offer the foregoing comments with the proviso that among our group there is a wide diversity of opinion on the governance issue, ranging from the status quo to a "no board" option. The latter option exists presently in Ontario, is consistent with the practice and trends in other jurisdictions, and is compatible with the goals of less govern-

ment and local control.

There is some concern among our members that token boards consisting, perhaps, of the mayor and/or municipal CEO could be appointed under Bill 109. CELPO urges the committee to amend Bill 109 to ensure that true governing boards including citizen representation are created. True governing boards appear to be the intention of Bill 109, however, the most basic framework of board composition is missing. It is suggested the Committee be guided by the Ontario Corporation Act which provides for a minimum of three members on a board of directors.

It is recommended that Bill 109 be amended to establish the minimum size of a board, that such a board be consistent with the Corporations Act and further require the presence of citizen representation.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Over a period of many years, our membership has watched the continuing decline of the provincial household grant for library service as a proportion of local library revenue. We acknowledge that libraries are a local service and the local level is best placed to manage and operate libraries. We acknowledge that the concept of disentanglement has an appeal for those who would simplify the complexity of public service.

However, we also agree with the Who Does What Panel, "that the province has a fundamental interest in literacy and equal access to information for all Ontario residents." Literacy, equal access and the educational role of libraries are the broader concepts of service that require the committed involvement of the senior level of government. Unlike many other provinces, Ontario has no provincial library. Our provincial library is in fact the distributed network of more than 1,200 local libraries across the province. Provincial funding and support is essential for the effective functioning of this network, especially but not exclusively as it relates to the smaller and more geographically isolated and First Nations libraries.

CELPLO believes the provincial interest must extend beyond the creation and maintenance of networks through inter library loan and a provincially supported technology infrastructure. The Province

has an important leadership role to support research and development through special projects and grants.

Bill 109 appears to endorse this view by the inclusion of a stirring preamble to the legislation. We would suggest that the sentiments of the preamble would carry more authority if backed by financial support. Bill 109 deletes Section 30 of the Public Libraries Act which provides for grants to library boards.

We are concerned that the downloading proposals announced by the Government during Mega week, coupled with grant cutbacks, offers no reassurance to cash-strapped libraries that former education funds will be reallocated to public library boards.

It is recommended that Section 30 of the Public Libraries Act be retained providing for grants to public library boards and that the provincial per household grant continue to be made.

It is recommended that a program of sustained funding for the work of the Ontario Library Service and a Ministry unit that can act effectively and speak articulately for provincial library interests at provincial, federal and international levels.

## FEEES

The issue of user fees has long divided the library community. As librarians our managers have struggled with the dilemma:

- as librarians we are committed to universal open access to information for all our clients;
- we are inspired by the concept of the free public library and many of us see a deep commitment to this idea in our communities;
- we feel that fees are unacceptable double taxation;
- we know that fees are not a financial panacea because there is experience and research to indicate such revenue is modest;
- when we contemplate fees, we do so on the understanding there will be exceptions for those who truly cannot afford to pay;
- yet, as managers, we are trying to restructure and reinvent our institutions in a world of declining resources, and are striving to maximize sources of revenue.

We recognize that fees are an option for revenue generation. Although CELPLO members hold a diversity of opinion on this issue, our association adopted a position some years ago acknowledging that local authorities ought to determine the kind and level of user fees appropriate or acceptable to local circumstances. Accordingly, we have reservations with the Government's approach.

- Ontario Regulation 26/96 under the Municipal Act is limiting in that it will permit the imposition of charges only for library collections by format. Prior to the promulgation of Regulation 976 under the Public Libraries Act, 1984, many libraries did charge for the lending of 16mm films, videotapes and other audiovisual materials. Those libraries raised revenue which often failed to outweigh the costs of overhead.
- Regulation 26 appears to steer a middle course. By requiring that print materials be provided at no charge, the intention is to satisfy the proponents of the historic free service mandate. By permitting fees in a restricted way, lip service is paid to the idea that grant cuts can be recovered through fees. This approach will satisfy no one.
- Public libraries must continue to support Ontarians in a knowledge-based society. It is clearly evident that the knowledge-base is rapidly becoming predominantly electronic-based, not print-based. The restriction of fees to information sources reliant on newer technologies is contrary to the second purpose of Bill 109.
- In addition to permitting charging by format or media, Bill 109 precludes any general membership fee. Membership fees have been permitted in Alberta for some years now and the experience would indicate that such fees may generate 3-4% of total revenue. It is acknowledged that the concept of a membership fee is seen by many as contrary to the historic concept of the free public library. Nevertheless, some jurisdictions may consider a modest membership fee to be an egalitarian

measure and an acceptable compromise in a community.

In response to declining government funding, we are noting among our members some successful fundraising endeavours. Although no library is optimistic enough to expect fundraising to recoup the loss of the provincial household grant, many of our members are learning through trial and experience, that fundraising may be successful financially, and acceptable to the community. Fundraising is slow and painstaking. To make money through fundraising a library must be prepared to invest money in planning, expertise, marketing and training.

Other libraries are developing creative partnerships with school boards, the corporate sector, and agencies and departments of the federal and provincial governments. These partnerships reduce duplication, cut costs and in some instances generate revenue.

Fees, fundraising and partnerships are all potential strategies for reinventing library service. Library boards need the flexibility to use any or all of these strategies in whatever combination are of advantage to the local library. Some libraries may choose to develop extensive fee schedules, others may have the

resources to fundraise successfully or develop partnerships that enable them to avoid fees. Still other libraries may determine there is an acceptable mix of fees and fundraising, and finally some may determine such a mixture of strategies is counter productive.

CELPLO believes that in the context of public service evolution and reinvention, in a knowledge-based society, and acknowledging that the definition of library collections as items owned on the premises or items accessed electronically is fast blurring, it is undesirable to restrict the efforts of boards to diversify their funding.

It is recommended that draft regulation 26/96 under the Municipal Act be withdrawn and that library boards not be restricted in setting charges and fundraising.

### CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Repeal of Section 28 of the 1984 Act, Inspection of Records is a matter of concern to the library community.

A member library has secured a legal opinion which agrees that sub-section 28, (1) (v) protecting individual library records from disclosure is not necessarily covered in other provincial freedom of information legislation. This is a long fought for and hard won provision of the

1984 Act. The confidentiality of library borrowing records is an important ethical and practical issue to boards, librarians and library clients. It is *dismaying* to lose this provision in the general haste to eliminate Part I of the Public Libraries Act.

It is recommended that Section 28 of the Public Libraries Act, 1984 inspection of records and confidentiality, be retained in Bill 109.

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- that Bill 109 be amended to establish the minimum size of a board, and consistent with the Corporations Act and requiring the presence of citizen representation.
- that Section 30 of the Public Libraries Act be retained providing for grants to public library boards and that the provincial per household grant continue to be made.
- that draft regulation 26/96 under the Municipal Act be withdrawn and that library boards not be restricted in setting charges and fundraising.
- that Section 28 of the Public Libraries Act, 1984 inspection of records and confidentiality, be retained in Bill 109. ♦

## The Government's Response

*In answer to a query from Ex Libris News, the office of Libraries Planning and Operations, Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, has sent us a three-page handout entitled "Key Questions & Answers on Municipal Responsibilities." Here is a summary:*

### STATUS OF THE LEGISLATION

Bill 109 has passed Second Reading and Committee Hearings have taken place. The date for Third Reading has not yet been scheduled.

*\* If passed later this year, it would be in force when the municipal councils elected in the fall of 1997 take office. An amendment to the legislation ensures that only councils elected in 1997 or thereafter would have the powers proposed in Bill 109.*

### LIBRARY GOVERNANCE

Public library boards would continue to be statutory corporations under the Public Libraries Act and would be responsible for library operations. They would continue to be appointed by and accountable to municipal councils. If a municipality has already established a library and a public library board, it will not have to pass a bylaw to establish them again, as the Bill provides for the continuation of libraries and boards already established by the present municipality. As was the case with any previous municipal election, the board members' terms would continue until they have been replaced.

Certain matters pertaining to boards which are currently prescribed in the

Public Libraries Act would be dealt with through a municipal bylaw. Before they appoint new board members, municipalities with public libraries would be required to pass a bylaw to establish the size and composition of the board (minimum three members); members' qualifications; the rules regarding reappointment; the procedures for filling board vacancies; the circumstances under which a board member's seat becomes vacant or a member becomes disqualified; when and how the first meeting of a board in a new term is to be called; and the rules regarding the reimbursement, if any of board members for travelling and other expenses incurred in carrying out their duties.

The timing for making board appointments -- at the first meeting of

council in each term -- would not change. If the council failed to do this at the first meeting, it would do so at its next regular meeting, and the existing board would continue until then.

Library board members would hold office for a term concurrent with their appointing council or councils, or until a successor is appointed.

Bill 109 would not change the way in which upper tier libraries are established. [Upper tier libraries represent larger jurisdictions such as regional municipalities.] Resolutions of at least two-thirds of the municipalities forming part of a county, regional or district municipality would be required to establish an upper tier library. Municipalities which do not wish to take part in the upper tier library system would not have to do so.

## FEES FOR LIBRARY SERVICE

Under the Municipal Act, a library board would not be able to charge for admission to the library, use of its collections by the public, borrowing of books and other printed materials, or borrowing from a public library by or for residents with a disability of material specially formatted for persons with that disability.

The proposed Municipal Act on library user fees would take effect at the same time as Bill 109, if passed, when the new municipal councils elected in the fall of 1997 take office. At that time libraries could choose to charge user fees for borrowing video tapes or compact disks, for example.

*Although one person in the Libraries Planning and Operations Office anticipated that this should occur "within the next few weeks" (after 25 August), another spokesperson refused to commit herself on this timing. The Office also wished to make it clear that in the past, libraries could not charge patrons who wished to borrow non-print materials such as compact discs, videotapes or videodiscs. The new legislation would give them the freedom to charge for non-print materials, if they wish, but they are not obliged to do so. They may also elect to charge for certain services, e.g., extended reference searches. However, no decision has been taken on charging for online searches. ws| ♦*

## FUNDING

Public library operating grants are part of the "Who Does What" funding equation. Although they have been paid directly to the library boards, they are a municipal transfer. Responsibility for the library funding currently paid by the provincial government through per household grants is being transferred to municipalities as part of the "Who Does What" funding equation.

Bill 109 would not change the library board's accountability to council. Both Bill 109 and the current Public Libraries Act give Council full line-by-line approval of the library's budget. Both also require a library board to submit an annual audited financial statement to council. The library estimates or budget process would, the government reports, be "essentially unchanged." Library boards submit estimates to their appointing council or councils annually. The estimates are submitted in the form required by the council and must include all amounts required during the year for the purpose of the board. If there is more than one appointing council the estimates are required to include a statement on the proportion of the estimates to be charged to each of the municipalities. Council may, in the approval of the board's estimates or at any time at the board's request, authorize the board to apply a specified amount or percentage of the money paid to it otherwise than in accordance with the estimates as approved.

## A Letter to Our Readers

# Why we join Ex Libris

As the current Chair of the Membership Committee, I have been thinking about my reasons for joining Ex Libris Association. Initially, it was because a friend gave me an application form and told me that she thought I would enjoy being a member. Since then I have continued my membership because I have appreciated the opportunities to keep up my contacts with colleagues through Ex Libris News and at the annual get-togethers. The speakers, articles and news notes are interesting. Keeping in touch with our colleagues is fun!

I am convinced that people join Ex Libris because someone tells them about the Association and asks them to join. I suggest that each member invite a friend to join Ex Libris. For your convenience an application form for a friend is enclosed with this issue of the News. ♦

Margaret E. Cockshutt  
ELA Membership Committee

# Amalgamation Waves

by Judith Hare  
Chief Executive Officer  
Halifax Regional Library

Amalgamation is like the ocean. When the water looks calm and you turn your back, a big breaker comes along to knock you under.

Amalgamation waves started rolling with the release of the Hayword Report of the Municipal Reform Commissioner in July 1993. This report determined that unitary government would be most appropriate for the Halifax metropolitan area, providing administrative efficiency within a larger service unit. Expenditure reductions of \$11,000,000 initially and \$9.8 million per year thereafter were predicted if consolidation occurred. Amalgamation of public libraries received little attention at the time. The Hayword Report noted that present cost-sharing arrangements between the Province and the municipal units were not expected to change. The Halifax Regional Municipality Act came into effect on April 1, 1996, amalgamating the City of Halifax, City of Dartmouth, Halifax County and the Town of Bedford.

Public library administrators wasted no time in fighting the inevitable. A Joint Advisory Committee of CEOs and Board chairs was established prior to passage of the Act to manage amalgamation. The libraries had a long history of cooperation, shared a common service mission and could envision service delivery advantages. They were determined to seize the opportunity and work step-by-step through each issue. For this reason, library amalgamation is widely regarded as the most successful amalgamation achieved with minimal conflict and without disruption to public service.

Impact of the first waves was on personnel and technical services divisions. There was an immediate need to reorganize, merge operations, move locations, determine policies and establish salary and benefits compensation. A workplace adjustment program provided early retirement and several packages for redundant position incumbents. There were, and

continue to be, three salary scales, benefit packages and pension plans. Two of the former units were non-union; one was unionized. As a result of employee voting, the Dartmouth union was decertified and a staff association was formed. In Technical Services, merger resulted in the creation of one database, policies, procedures and practices, and the automation of previously manual systems.

With one year behind us, the next waves are hitting public service divisions. Most challenging is the difficulty of melding three very different cultures into one and standardizing terms and conditions of employment. From a public service perspective, however, library amalgamation has been a great success. OPAC access to a wider collection, delivery systems, building improvements, strengthened support services, new technology and staff development programs have all contributed to higher quality service.

Transition costs were badly underestimated. At the end of fiscal year 1996/97

the amalgamation deficit totalled \$26 million, made up of deficits from the former units, blended sales tax increases, transition costs, provincial grant reductions and provincial reluctance to pick up social service costs. A protracted 1997/98 budget process resulted in a \$705,810 cut in municipal funding and \$103,810 cut in provincial funding to the Halifax Regional Library. This triggered service reductions and layoffs to balance the budget. Most significantly, budget woes have set back the Board's plans to achieve service equity within the rural areas. Looming on the horizon is the lifting of a provincial wage freeze in November 1997.

Mixed in with the pain of amalgamation, there is pleasure. Halifax Regional Municipal Council has approved construction of a new central library to open in 1999.

The water is still very rough, but we are optimistic that the benefits of amalgamation will be realized -- eventually! ♦

## THIS JUST IN... from *InsideOLA* No. 35

Commission hears OLA but...

### Teacher-librarians left out on a limb

The Education Improvement Commission's Report, *The Road Ahead*, released this week, retreats from the original position that library technicians were a viable alternative for staffing in Ontario's school libraries, in favour of a team approach that would include certified teacher-librarians and library technicians.

There are three recommendations that have the potential to modify how school library programs are delivered. These include encouragement of a team approach to staffing, modification of the Education Act to allow non-certificated individuals to supervise students and to deliver "certain programmes", and encouragement of greater co-operation between school boards, community agencies and private sector companies.

In the July meeting with OLA, the Commission's emphasis was on library technicians as a replacement for teacher-librarians. *Partners in Action* was challenged as a program misunderstood by

many teacher-librarians and one not proving adequate to the needs of students and teachers in too many schools.

In the most extensive reference to teacher-librarians, *The Road Ahead* presents disparity across the province as an obstacle to drawing conclusions, and as such few are actually drawn.

"For example, for many schools, a study of the use of library technicians would be an assessment of adding trained staff to a facility which is currently understaffed. In other cases, it would be a comparison to the use of teacher-librarians and in still others the change would be the addition of library technicians to the delivery team. It would be difficult to do a valid comparison based on such varying starting points and types of intervention."

In order to remove the requirement of educational qualifications for others, the Minister will be opening the section of the Act requiring qualifications for librarians. Then what?



# Libraries and Electronic Publishing

by Jane Horrocks  
CEO, Richmond Public Library

*At Ex Libris Association's annual meeting in November 1996, participants asked the guest panel questions concerning the future of libraries. Because of time constraints, not all of the questions could be answered at the meeting. Here is the reply Jane Horrocks sent us to the question: Are new graduate librarians prepared through course work to deal effectively with electronic material types in the public library?*

In addressing this question, three types of digital publishing will be examined and the relative importance, or lack of importance, of electronic/digital materials in today's marketplace. After some of the services and skills needed in the public library are identified, the curriculum of the library schools will be addressed.

Publishers of periodicals have produced and distributed their titles electronically for years. Academic libraries and more recently public libraries have made electronic periodical titles available on Local Area Networks, stand-alone CD-ROM workstations and via on-line access to commercial databases. In many cases, librarians specializing in access to these materials have been the norm when the materials are first introduced with a gradual shift to generalist reference librarians assisting with these searches. This form of distribution is now well established.

The conversion of the monograph is the second area of digitization on the part of the publishers. "While electronic information access is unlikely to replace the book collection in the near future (or ever), some categories of information and knowledge will become totally digital. Data (statistics, lists, stock market quotations, anything that is immediate, changing, hard to keep up in print and distinct) will go electronic." (1) The most likely materials then to change format are reference materials and this shift has already begun. "Electronic and mul-

timedia materials have made serious inroads in reference materials - replacing encyclopaedias, atlases, writing tools and almanacs." (2) The extent to which the shift is occurring can be gauged from a recent discussion with a representative from the largest publishing conglomerate of reference tools who foresees that 50% of revenues will be derived from electronic reference titles within three years. The shift to digital is well underway and is starting to have an impact on the delivery of service in reference departments of public libraries all over the country.

Of the 7,500 reference titles at the Richmond Hill Central Library, for example, 30% are currently available from publishers in electronic formats. Richmond Hill has the right to use or has purchased 25 digital titles.

Given the proliferation of digital information in reference materials and the demand exhibited by the public for access to this material, the expectation is that general reference librarians will make these items available along with information from print formats.

Not only are publishers distributing their materials digitally, libraries are beginning to transform information they own from print to digital files, marking up the information with Hypertext, Mark-up Language (HTML) or Standard General Mark-up Language (SGML). The types of materials most often chosen for this treatment are local history scrap-book materials, photographs, maps and other items where the library created the intellectual property or has copyright clearance. In the same way that cataloguers have always been specialists in the field, their new counterparts will mark-up original materials and organize methods of retrieval for other published digital materials.

Have the library schools recognized the shift in publishing and self-publishing and how have they adapted to these changes? Both Western's MLIS program and U of T's FIS are producing new librarians with skill sets ready to meet the challenge. Both schools have core

courses that address electronic formats in document management and information resource courses. HTML and SGML are taught in both schools with electives providing a more in-depth approach. Courses on representing, organizing and storing information are also offered and deal with the creation of information and the dissemination via tools such as Web sites. Students are given the opportunity to create their own Web site as part of the programme. As all of these skills are currently in demand in public libraries, new graduates are well positioned to take their place in today's library.

The biggest challenge for library administrators will be the retooling of the skill-sets of existing employees, many of whom have resisted, and still resist, change. The new graduates will lead the way. ♦

- (1) Mason, Marilyn Gell. "The Future Revisited," *Library Journal* (July 1996), p. 71.
- (2) Carmona, Jeff. "CD-Based Reference Tools Serve as Virtual Libraries." *The Journal* (August 1, 1996).

**Contributions,  
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# Public Library Service in Newfoundland

by Pearce Penney

Five hundred years ago Giovanni Caboto - a.k.a. John Cabot - came to our shores, and, according to history, landed at Bonavista. The celebration of that event is in full swing even as I write this article.

Four hundred and thirty-eight years later, on January 22, 1935, our Government of the day saw fit to pass a Public Libraries Act. This makes our service one of the youngest in the country in terms of a formalized and legislated act. The first public library was in St. John's, and it remained the only service for many years before it extended into some of the larger towns. The very first library board was made up of representatives from the commercial, professional and industrial life of the city. The list reads like a "Who's Who" of St. John's. Anybody who was anyone served on the first library board.

However, from the beginning the overall plan was to extend library services to the "largest outports as opportunity offers." This was slow in coming, primarily because money was hard to come by - an all-too-familiar reason. During those days of the Great Depression, especially, it was hard enough to provide food for the body, much less for the mind.

The collection for the first free public library was donated by a Mrs. W.G. Gosling from her late husband's private library. That formed the nucleus of the first library collection in St. John's. W.G. Gosling had been the first mayor of St. John's, and the first library was called the "Gosling Library" in his honour. His name remains synonymous with public library service in Newfoundland to this day.

1949 was the turning-point in public library service in Newfoundland. Prior to Newfoundland's joining Canada (or was it the other way around?), there were twenty-five libraries outside the city of St. John's. In 1952 a five-year plan was

unveiled which called for the establishment of a regional library service. However, nothing really happened until 1970. It called for eight regions, subsequently reduced to six. The first region to come on stream was the Western region with headquarters at Corner Brook. It took fifteen years before all six regions were in place, the last being Labrador-Northern Region, in 1985.

From the outset public library services received its funding from the provincial government. There was no requirement for the municipalities to provide either funds or support, although many have done so on a limited scale. Therefore the service has always remained a provincial one.

Another impetus to library development was the Great Centennial Celebration in 1967, when the federal government made important additions to the province's collections of Canadian publications. Municipalities discovered that, by including space for a library in their proposal to build a town hall, they would be sure to get a federal grant. This was a bonanza for the library system, but it came with a price. Dozens of towns were building town halls and including space for a library, but there was one flaw: they forgot to consult with the Provincial Public Libraries Board. All of a sudden the Board was entrusted with instant libraries without any additional funds to operate them.

In the early 70s bookmobiles were introduced into the system. At the time they met with great favour, introducing many people to public library services. However, as the regional systems developed and more libraries were established, the bookmobiles were put out to pasture, and the service initiated books-by-mail, a delivery system patterned on the Sears and Eaton's order services (without the glossy catalogues). The service was introduced in the Central region, where it was very successful, then applied at the provincial level. Alas, it got too big for us, and had to be

scaled down considerably, thus losing much of its effectiveness.

The aim of the Provincial Public Libraries Board has always been to provide a library service to as many people as possible. During my 21 years with the Provincial Library System, finances dictated just how far and how fast we could go. But we could never have accomplished what we did without the determination and dedication of local library boards and their staff, who worked well beyond the time allocated and thought nothing of it. There are many memorable experiences that could illustrate this.

In one of our small communities, for example, the library was in a lady's home. She gave up part of her living room, with a separate entrance and a divider in the room. She lived alone, and the library was her life. The library was only open about ten hours a week, not nearly enough to satisfy the needs of students. She referred to these students as "hers." There was a standing offer to any and all students that, should they need extra time to research their projects, she would open the library and they could come to work there during the evening. She continued this practice for many years. The fire crackled in the living room stove as students roamed in and out doing their research. She did this without the slightest thought of extra remuneration.

Another community wanted to have a library, but had no building. It was during the 70s when the federal government was giving grants for Federal Initiative Projects. The community's school principal, Sister Patricia King, called a public meeting and told the townspeople what she had in mind. Then she proceeded to organize the men to go into the woods and cut logs, take them to the nearest sawmill and have them sawed into lumber. The women were asked to start a fund-raising drive to purchase needed materials. Less than a year later we were invited to attend

the official opening of their new library.

The many changes that occurred during my tenure with the Provincial Public Libraries Board brought with them many challenges. Perhaps the biggest challenge was change itself, which was constant and is still going on. The Board has had to downsize and restructure. It has reduced the number of regions from six to three, and consolidated some of the smaller libraries.

Others have been merged with schools and community colleges. There is a concerted effort to tie into the latest technological network, linking the regional offices with the provincial and local libraries with their regional headquarters. As well, they are positioning themselves to hook into the Internet and other information systems.

Thus, our young (62-year-old) library system is reaching out to its clientele through the Information Highway, while at the same time providing those of us who are still in awe of the computer with recreational reading.

For 21 years it was my privilege to work with staff and library boards to provide as many people as possible in the province with a public library service. It's a great system, and I am pleased to have been associated with it.



*Pearce Penney is the former Provincial Librarian of Newfoundland.*

### Also Noted

## Ronald F. Yeo Bursary

August 30 was the date of the last call to apply for this bursary which provided money for studies in management for librarians. The bursary is to be collapsed because low interest rates have not produced enough revenue for its continuation.

### As We Were

## The Evolution of a Special Library: The Imperial Oil Library, 1945 - 1957

by Clara Miller

Toronto 1945. After six years of war, signs were appearing that there might be a cessation of fighting on the European front and, eventually, peace in the Far East as well. Wartime rationing had meant that the products of an oil company were almost entirely assigned to the war effort. With the coming of peace, the needs of a civilian population would now have to be addressed.

This was the situation when I went for an interview at Imperial Oil Limited one wintry day in February 1945. The company's newly formed Public Relations Department was getting organized for a postwar economy; a library was one facility it wished to establish. I was lucky; the position was offered to me. As I was on staff at the University of Toronto, it was agreed that I would start full time at the end of the University year.

Come July 1945 there I was, the first professionally trained librarian to be on staff, and in a new department of about eight or ten people, all housed in a small office of about 800 square feet. It was a case of fit in where you could. There was scarcely room for a desk for each person.

The first thing to do, of course, was to get information on the company and the industry, and to discover what, if any, material was available that would be useful for the library. Already newspapers from across Canada were received and checked daily, and a one-page summary of significant items was delivered at the start of each day to the desks of company members concerned with planning, policy-making, and day-to-day operations. There were a few books in the department, such as *Canada Year Book*, *Canadian Almanac*,

and *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*. There was also a set of *Imperial Oil Review*, the company publication, which provided very useful background on the company.

At this time the head office was spread throughout various buildings. Scattered departments and lack of space did not augur well for a company library. However, plans were in the air for a building to house the executive office under one roof, improving the prospect for a central company library. With this in mind, a survey of the holdings of books and journals in each department was considered advisable, not only to show what was available, but to provide a profile of the interests and activities of each department. Such were our plans, but - and it was a big BUT - these plans would not come to pass for many years.

In Western Canada Imperial Oil had been exploring and drilling for many years. Until 1947, all there was to show for these efforts was an accumulation of 133 dry holes. But on February 13, 1947, Leduc No. 1 was brought in, a day that made history for the Canadian oil industry. With this discovery, every effort and practically every penny was directed towards financing and developing the oil industry in Western Canada. Needless to say, plans for an executive office building in Toronto were put on hold. But that was all that was put on hold! I wish I could give you an idea of the excitement and exhilaration felt throughout the company - and the country - with this discovery of oil in the west. It aroused great public interest in the Canadian petroleum industry. We were inundated with requests for publications and information on all aspects of the industry from newspapers, magazines and schools. Clubs and groups asked for speakers on the subject. As

there was practically no material available, writers, other staff and an assistant librarian were hired to handle the Public Relations Department's expanded activities.

My own job became more varied. Searching newspaper files in London, Sarnia and other places for accounts of the early days of the petroleum industry in southwestern Ontario was legitimate library work, but how about inspection of women's washroom facilities in Ontario service stations? On one occasion, I found myself on a platform in Sarnia beside the president of the Canadian Club, where I was to give a talk, facing all those members singing "Oh Canada", while I mouthed the words, hoping no sound would go over the microphone (I cannot carry a tune). For other speaking engagements I would take the "Magic Suitcase" to meetings of the Women's Institute or other women's groups. It contained products made from petroleum and newly available petrochemicals: nylon stockings, polyester lingerie and blouses, plastic dishes and containers. At the same time, the library was trying to keep up with the volatile developments in Canadian industry, such as the change from rail tank cars to pipelines, the use of lake tankers, and the production of petrochemicals. There was nothing static in those days.

Our location was not static, either. We moved twice: from the crowded quarters where we had started to the fifth floor over Birks Jewelry at the corner of Yonge and Temperance. This floor had originally been a bowling alley, so the offices were "open concept" long before this type of planning had come into vogue. The library was fortunate in having a small room accommodating two desks, a couple of extra chairs, some shelving, a file cabinet and a magazine rack. Many journalists and writers came to use our files there, among them Hammond Innes, whose novel *Campbell's Kingdom*, on the oil industry, is set in western Canada.

The next move took us to Toronto Street, much closer to the other executive offices. Our quarters were on the ground floor of York Chambers, in a room that had recently housed the Family Court. For a while we had many family court applicants coming in, only

to be sent to the court's new location. Below the library, in the basement, the cells where Lount and Mathews had been confined after the 1837 Rebellion could be seen. A large walk-in vault was off the library, where we stored back journals. There was a metal hammer attached to the inner door to the vault in case anyone was unfortunate enough to be locked inside. (I don't think we ever had to use it.)

During all those years we continued to hope for a central library for the executive offices. At last, word came that a new building was being considered. As a step towards a central catalog we undertook a survey of material held throughout the various departments. I remember calling one manager who, everyone had assured me, was a very nice person. I must have chosen a bad moment, for when I asked about getting a list of the books and journals in his department, I nearly had my ear blasted off: there was a roar, then the receiver went down with a bang. I sat and thought about what I should do, then dialed his number again and repeated my request. Judge my surprise when I got a very pleasant reply and lots of cooperation. One can never tell!

In the end we learned that there were definite plans for a new building that would include facilities for a central library. All in all this must seem to have been a long time in the coming, but the years of waiting may have been for the best. The library staff had a good idea what type of library would answer the needs of the company; at the same time the company had come to recognize the value of the services a library could provide.

So now added to the regular library work of indexing and keeping customers up-to-date came the preparation of plans for the new library, and presentations to the powers-that-be on the size of staff and space that would be required, as well as the scope and type of services that a central library would offer. I am sure that every librarian who has planned a library knows how difficult it is to get across the need for space for future expansion. I remember one remark made to me: "You have more space there than the Board Room has. Just make sure you get it all filled."

That was in 1956. On Easter week-

end of 1957 the executive offices moved from their various locations to the new building at 111 St. Clair West, and here on the 18th floor the central library opened - quite a different facility from its 1945 predecessor.

To the information specialists of today our methods of operation and the facilities we had will seem very primitive. But we did have everything that was available at the time. There was teletype, but not fax or e-mail. We did have direct phone lines to some out-of-town locations, but if multiple copies were required for a presentation, they would have to be made with carbon paper and second or even third typings. (Imagine the erasures if a typing mistake was made before the days of white-out or xeroxing.)

This must not close without a tribute to the staff with whom I worked. One person could not have accomplished much. Each brought her own expertise and personality, and to each I owe a debt of gratitude. I just hope they enjoyed working with me as much as I enjoyed working with them. ♦

*Clara Miller was Head off the Imperial Oil Library from 1945 until her retirement. She was at the same time lecturer in special libraries at U of T FIS.*

## Advance Notice

# Ontario Library Association Super Conference

January 22 - 25, 1998.  
Metro Toronto Convention  
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**Come Walk In  
My Shoes:  
The Interdependence  
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*FEES: For OLA Retired members, just \$20 per day. These fee includes all activities, sessions and exhibit.*

# A Visit to Beijing's China Ethnic Library

by Marie F. Zielinska

The opportunity to visit local libraries is one of the highlights of IFLA conferences. When I attended the 67th Conference in Beijing, August 24th to 31st, 1996, I looked for a library of particular interest that would also reflect my own area of specialization. Although I knew nothing about it, I chose the China Ethnic Library, and it proved to be an excellent choice.

Located in the Cultural Palace of the Nationalities, an imposing building close to Tiananmen Square, the China Ethnic Library served originally as the library of the Cultural Palace. In 1989, it was opened to the public under its present name as a combination research centre, public library and museum. With the collection and preservation of China's minority ethnic groups as its aim, it offers a rich mosaic of books, documents and artifacts.

Because of the uniqueness of its collection, it acts as a national lending and research library, open to the public and to scholars both from China and from abroad. It provides reading rooms for research and study as well as lending, photocopying and microfilming services; it also maintains lively contacts with scholars in many countries.

The collection includes documents in many languages and scripts. Although the majority of China's people belong to the Han group, there are also 55 ethnic groups numbering nearly 100 million people living in autonomous regions scattered over 64 percent of the country. 53 of these groups have their own languages, and 25 have specific character sets or use one of the major world alphabets. The number of scripts rises to around 60 if those no longer in use, but for which there is documentation, are included.

Chinese ethnic languages belong to five families: Sino-Tibetan (which includes Han), Altaic, South Asian, South Islands and Indo-European (including Slavic and Iranian language

branches). It is interesting to note that scripts used from the beginning of history cover all major types of scripts ever used: pictographs, hieroglyphs, syllabic and alphabetic scripts, including the three major alphabets used in more than half of the countries of the world: Roman, Cyrillic and Arabic. The Tibetan, Mongolian, Dai and Korean Hangi alphabets are also in use. To demonstrate further the complexity of writing in China, it should be noted that some ethnic groups use several types of scripts because their tribes are geographically dispersed. For example, there are seven types of Mongolian script, four types of Dai, two or more of Miao and Nahsi, etc. Some scripts are written from right to left (Mongolian, Man, Xibuo and old Yi); some are written horizontally from right to left (Uyгур, Kazak and Kirgiz) and some are written from left to right (Tibetan, Korean, Dai) as well as the Arabic, Cyrillic and Roman alphabets. Modern China promotes horizontal writing from left to right.

The media on which information is preserved are equally varied, beginning with tortoise shells, bones, pattra or pipal leaves, continuing with bamboo, wood, sheepskin and gold leaves, and ending with paper. Writing tools include brushes, bamboo, wooden pens or knives, and thorns; as ink, gold, silver, cinnabar, coral, pearl powder, blood and Chinese ink were used.

At present China has about 30 publishing houses producing approximately 5,000 titles in 23 ethnic languages. As new technologies develop, works in electronic media (tape, disc and CD-ROM) are also being published.

Managing a library of over half a million books in so many languages and scripts requires a highly trained staff well versed not only in library science, but also in history and linguistics. According to the information I received, the China Ethnic Library currently employs 33 persons from nine ethnic groups. Ten percent of the staff have university degrees, and sixty percent

intermediate college education. (According to western standards, one would expect a higher proportion of professional librarians and of subject specialists with advanced university degrees.) The staff is trained for its specific roles through in-house courses and seminars.

Our group received a very warm welcome and was ushered first to the exhibition area. In four large rooms artifacts from all minority groups were displayed: beautiful handicrafts, an extensive collection of musical instruments, paintings and examples of writing from antiquity to the present. There were handwritten documents, block-printed editions, stone tablets, maps and documents written on pattra leaves. We could have admired this treasure-trove for hours. Unfortunately, most of the inscriptions were in Chinese; only the cases with rare books provided a scant description in English, inadequate to help us appreciate fully the richness of this collection.

Later, we were shown the working areas and closed stacks. In one section, we saw shelves filled with long packages wrapped in silk, probably "books" written on leaves. However, none of our guides spoke a word in any western language. All of our questions remained unanswered, and my hope of opening one of those mysterious bundles and being able to touch its contents remained unfulfilled. The inability to communicate was especially frustrating in such a large collection of rare books, where explanations are particularly important.

Over thirty percent of the 540,000 volumes are "ancient books". They include local chronicles, annals, histories, chronologies and biographies. Some of them are the only existing copies known, for example the Guidebook of Gansu Province, Xi Chang, Golden Tibet, engraved during the Yuan Dynasty, one of the master copies for the Chinese parts of The Grand Chinese Tibetan Scripture, Annals of Yi Nationality in the

Southwest (in the Yi language), or Buddhist scripture in Western Xia.

The visit ended in the library's bookstore, where one could buy books in many languages including a good selection of publications in English at prices comparable to those in the United States. As gifts, each of us received several issues of the journal *National Pictorial*, which, despite its title, was exclusively in Chinese. We could only admire the excellent paper, layout and superb colour illustrations.

With the construction of a new library building about to start, it is to be hoped that the new facilities will be better adapted to the needs of Western visitors, so that in a few years those who have not mastered the Chinese language will be able to savour fully the riches of the China Ethnic Library.

Author's note: Information in this article about the various ethnic groups and their writing is based on the paper presented by Mr. Li Jiuqui, Director of the China Ethnic Library, at the workshop organized by Prof. Suzine Har-Nicolescu for the IFLA Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations. ♦

*Marie F. Zielinska, formerly Chief, Multilingual Service, National Library of Canada, is a trustee of the Ottawa Public Library (1995-98), and member of the Standing Committee, Library Services and Multicultural Populations, IFLA.*

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Reading over my memoir on Mr. E.C. Kyte as published in the last issue of *Ex Libris News*, I am left feeling disturbed by it, and I write to relieve this feeling.

The relationship between author and editor is not always an easy one - I have sat in both chairs. For one thing, each is moved by different considerations. For example, the author may be concerned with conveying information clearly, while the editor must be ever mindful of the constraints of available time and space. What ought to be understood by both parties is of course that the editor is the captain of the vessel. This, however, should impose upon the editor some obligation to communicate with his authors. The daily press hardly has time for this (so they tell us), whereas a semi-annual journal has more time. This communication should, I think, be tactful but firm, courteous but purposeful. We can agree on that? The author must try to understand the pressure placed upon the editor; and the editor, for his part, should try to avoid riding roughshod over the author's text. Editorial changes should be minimum, especially if they by necessity of time are made without consultation. Editorial omissions, compressions, restructuring, can easily change the author's intentions: the plan, emphasis, style and even the facts. This must surely be avoided.

There, I've unburdened myself! Now, in the present case your alterations to the Kyte article were quite substantial. For example, the compression and rearrangement of the preliminary passages destroys what I had intended to form the linkage, my presentation of the reason for the article. Part of that reason had already been removed when you were unable to publish the article in 1966 ... The article was time-sensitive, as referring to the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Bibliographical

Society of Canada.

That was a time problem: the present one, I presume, concerns space. But if you were overwhelmed with material for the last issue, and now had too much for the present issue, one wonders why you are appealing to your members for articles? If the oversupply is temporary, then would there be THAT much cost involved in adding another leaf to an issue, at least to the postage limit? (That's if every item is time-sensitive? And warning potential contributors that you are temporarily backed up with an oversupply of material?)

[.....] I do appreciate the problems of editing (especially volunteer unpaid editing), but articles do not write themselves either, and are also unpaid in this case too. May I suggest that good editing is a skill that should include a high level of diplomacy!

Very truly yours,

Bill Morley  
Kingston, Ontario  
ELA replies:

*The difficulties noted by Mr. Morley are real ones. We apologize that his article did not appear in 1996, as he wished. The theme of no. 20 (Autumn 1996) was the future of libraries (the topic of last year's annual meeting), and it seemed more appropriate to include the article on E.C. Kyte in the next issue, devoted to "the way we were." Space considerations -- the necessity to keep the mailing weight of our newsletter under 100 grams -- were also a factor. As a newsletter, we prefer that our longer articles not exceed 1,500 words. Some cuts were made to Mr. Morley's text for that reason, and we are sorry that he feels they distorted his intent. Normally the author is contacted so that editorial changes can be discussed; I regret that other obligations prevented me from doing this before Mr. Morley's article was published. We hope that he will accept our apology and continue to express his interest in *Ex Libris News* by sending us further contributions.*

Wendy Scott  
Editor, *Ex Libris News*

# ELA's Bookshelf

The National Library of Canada and Canadian Libraries: Essays in Honour of Guy Sylvestre = La Bibliothèque nationale du Canada et les bibliothèques canadiennes: Essais en l'honneur de Guy Sylvestre. Editors/rédacteurs: Jean-Rémi Brault, Gwynneth Evans, Richard Paré. [Ottawa]: CLA/ASTED, c1996. 211 pages; illus. (Dist. by CLA and ASTED)

The festschrift has long been the gift of choice to honour scholars, writers and others in similar professions during or after they have completed their distinguished careers. This collection of essays, two years in the making (and, I understand, somewhat longer in the planning), was published last year when both the Canadian Library Association and the Bibliographical Society of Canada were celebrating their fiftieth anniversaries, and thirteen years after the retirement of Guy Sylvestre as National Librarian.

Sylvestre was the second of three National Librarians of Canada - a reminder that this country was one of the last developed nations to have a national library. He was also its first full time director, as his predecessor W.

Kaye Lamb had to divide his time between the National Library and the Public (now the "National") Archives. He took office on June 1, 1968, one year after the Library moved from cramped, scattered locations to its massive new home on Wellington Street.

This collection of essays provides a history of the National Library and of other Canadian libraries during their most dynamic period of development. The unprecedented growth of universities and other cultural institutions between the late 1960s and mid 1980s provided both challenges and opportunities. During that period the Library grew from a small operation largely engaged in building upon its embryonic collection and creating a national union catalog to an organization of over 500 employees engaged in automated networking projects, information technology research, national collection rationalization and resource-sharing initiatives. Although Dr. Sylvestre's final report on the Library's future reflected the realization that national resources for library support were not infinite, he retired before the full impact of downsizing and government cutbacks were realized.

The contributors to this festschrift represent nearly all parts of Canada. Five of the essays trace the inter-reactions of National Library initiatives and library developments in their respective regions: Eric Swanick looks at the Atlantic Provinces, Guy Clouthier at Québec, Elizabeth Hulse at Ontario,

Ernie Ingles at Western Canada, and Aileen Tufts at B.C. The result is a useful, although occasionally repetitive summary of Canadian library history of this period.

Other aspects of those years are also examined. Frances Halpenny provides a highly informative account of the National Library's role in encouraging Canadian culture, especially of writing and publishing. Basil Stuart-Stubbs gives us a useful overview of National Library initiatives and their effect on Canadian library developments, and Hope Clement describes the Library's automation and networking activities. Of particular interest, perhaps, is a biographical essay by Jean-Rémi Brault, former Conservateur-en-chef (Directeur) of the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec. It traces Dr. Sylvestre's early development as a writer, critic and "littérateur" and his career in the Canadian government. A career history rather than portrait, it sheds interesting light on Dr. Sylvestre's mission of public service. It is a sympathetic portrayal, but a somewhat formal and distant one (there are no details on his private life or personality, for example). Other contributions include an examination of the Sylvestre "fonds" by archivist Marcel Caya, a bibliography of his writings by J.R. Brault, and short tributes to his role in IFLA by William Welsh and Herman Liebaers.

Librarians and cultural historians should find much material of interest in these essays. It is a collection to be dipped into rather than read, of course. Describing, as it does, Canadian library developments during their most dynamic and optimistic period, it illustrates the role that a major public institution can play in a country. The regional essays provide useful historical summaries and the discussion of technological changes could also be of interest to future historians. In this context, it is unfortunate that there is no back-of-the-book index.

The language of the publication varies. Three of the contributions are in French and the rest in English. Brault's biographical essay is bilingual. There are abstracts of every essay in both languages. ♦

## And from another reader

I picked up a copy of EX LIBRIS NEWS at CLA in Ottawa this year. Well done one and all!!! What a delight to read. It was marvelous seeing so many familiar names again! The articles are great. I have always felt that the small personal memories are what is missing in the passing of historic information from generation to generation. Such information makes history more human! I know that basically the association is for retired folks of our profession but I must say that for us still working it is just a great way to keep in touch with our colleagues who have left the formal

working rank and file.

Keep up the good work. I am eagerly looking forward to my next issue arriving at my home.

Dawn Monroe  
Manager, Library Services  
Citizen & Immigration Canada

*Thank you for your letters, whether they contain brickbats or bouquets! Please send them to: Wendy Scott, Editor, Ex Libris News, 4545 Walkley Ave., Apt. 508, Montreal, QC H4B 2K8.*

# Milestones

## Awards, Honours and Accomplishments

The Elaine Deluny Patient and Family Resource Library is the new name of the Cancer Centre collection in St. John's, Newfoundland. It was renamed in January to honour the late Head of Technical Services, Memorial University Health Sciences Library, who set up and developed the collection and was a patient at the Centre until her death Oct. 14, 1996.

MARY MORRISON MAYO has been honoured at Fredericton Public Library, where the Mary Morrison Mayo Folklore Collection has been opened to commemorate the former children's librarian who devoted 20 years to building up a children's collection and children's literacy initiatives.

MARKETA NEWMAN, retired librarian from the University of Saskatchewan, has been awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University in recognition of her contribution to the arts in Saskatchewan. She has also received the 1997 Melva J. Dwyer award by the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS) for her two-volume Biographical Dictionary of Saskatchewan Artists.

CLAUDE POTVIN has been recognized for 30 years of service to the Albert-Westmoreland-Kent Public Library. He has been overseeing the Chaleur Regional Library during the illness of its director. (The Board was disbanded recently after 40 years of operation.)

## Retirements

ROLANDE BLAIR retired March 7, 1997, after 16 years with the National Library of Canada and 23 with the Government of Canada. The federal government's Career Assignment Program (CAP) provided her with the opportunity to transfer from her position as head of linguistic services, Dept. of Customs and Excise, to become Assistant Director (Inter-lending) of NLC's Public Services Branch (1981-91). She was Acting Director of Public Services Branch and became Director of General Information Resource Management in 1994.

DONALD DAVIS, Provincial Archivist of Newfoundland, has taken early retirement.

ELIZABETH DUGGAN retired March 31 from the Library at the Grace Hospital, St. Johns, Newfoundland.

NORMA JEAN RICHARDS has retired from her position at the Legislative Library of Newfoundland.

DR. EILEEN TRAVIS retired after 37 years as Regional Librarian, St. John Free Public Library. On March 23 the library held an Open House to mark the event, and to announce the establishment of the Eileen Travis Trust for KidMedia Centres, administered through the St. John Public Library Board to provide funding for centres throughout the Fundy Region.

PRISCILLA YKELENSTAM has retired from the Provincial Library Service of Prince Edward Island after 25 years. She

was the librarian for the Western Regional Library and the Rotary Regional Library, Summerside.

## In Memoriam

JEAN F. BURNES, B.A., B.L.S. (U of T, '48), died July 27 at Carefree Lodge, North York. She began her career at the Reference Library, Toronto Public Library, then worked for the Oshawa Public Library, the Cape Breton Regional Library system, and finally as chief librarian, Ontario Ministry of Health Library. Organizational activities included a term as President of the Toronto Chapter, Special Libraries Association.

AGNES CAIN, one of the earliest graduates of the Library School, University of Toronto (1934), died in Toronto, Feb. 27, 1997.

MARY FREEMAN (BLS, Toronto, 1960) died March 18, 1997. The Mary Freeman Scholarship was set up in her name.

PAT MUTALA, head librarian of Portage Plains Regional Library since 1972, died of cancer, March 4, 1997.

DIANA PRIESTLY, 74, of cancer, in Victoria, March 27, 1997. She obtained a law degree at UBC after serving in the Canadian Navy during World War II and practiced in Nanaimo. Attracted to legal research, she studied legal librarianship at the University of Washington, then returned to UBC to be head of its law library and to teach on its law faculty. She became head of the law library and faculty member at University of Toronto in 1963, organized Osgoode Hall's new law library, became Director of Legal Research at the University of Western Ontario, and worked in Ottawa, in the federal Dept. of Justice. At 52, she became law librarian and full professor at the University of Victoria's new law school. The library she started there is named after her.

MARGARET MORENE (PEG) REYNOLDS, 82, former chief librarian, Agriculture Canada, died in Ottawa on March 21, 1997. A graduate of Dalhousie University and McGill (BLS 1938), she was honoured Nov. 7, 1996 at a ceremony marking the official opening of the Margaret Reynolds Archival Collection, Agriculture Canada Library. (See "Milestones", Spring 1997).

REV. GEORGE RICKERBY (BLS, Toronto, 1965), on April 20, 1997. He was a librarian at Toronto Public Library and Bishop's University. After language and theological studies in France and Quebec, he was ordained in Sherbrooke and served as priest in several Quebec parishes in the Eastern Townships.

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