



BCLTA

British Columbia
Library Trustees
Association

Annual Report

2018 / 2019

Representing and amplifying the voices of public library trustees to provincial, strategic, and partner initiatives

Supporting effective public library governance

Connecting with public library trustees to build their professional network and to share their priorities and stories with each other, with supporters, and with decision makers

Libraries... Looking Back, Looking Forward



Jerrilyn Schembri, BCLTA President.

When I was elected as President of BCLTA, it felt very surreal. There were many people who were much more knowledgeable that could lead BCLTA. I worried that I didn't have the knowledge to be effective.

But while there are some that are more knowledgeable, what I bring to the position is unmatched passion. Passion to make BCLTA a stronger, more effective group. Passion to see libraries remain not only sustainable but indispensable to our communities.

This past year has been filled with success and growth thanks to our amazing staff of two (both working only part time), and our dedicated and passionate board.

When I initially joined the board, it seemed we were a board trying to define itself. Over several years we spent much time trying to determine who we were and how we could be effective. I remember saying at a meeting three years ago “we need to quit naval gazing and looking at who we are and start looking outward and taking action”. Since then, we have done significant work with the BC Public Libraries Partners to move libraries forward in BC, signed a Letter of Understanding with BC School Trustees Association, and are getting BCLTA out there through the building of relationships with other organizations, thanks to the work of our executive director.

Working with others and building relationships brings value back to the BCLTA membership. After all, isn't that what Library boards and BCLTA are all about? This approach to BCLTA work is long overdue and gives us a collective voice when bringing ideas and issues to the provincial government, the Minister and the Libraries Branch. This past year along with there being BCLTA staff and Libraries Branch staff collaborations we have had governance to governance meetings with Deputy Minister Scott MacDonald and Minister Fleming. Never before have we had these types of regular meetings.

The other thing I want to mention, which focus on direct benefit to our membership are some of our new and updated services such as the Trustee Orientation Program, the website, and the monthly Bulletin. We are proud to offer these resources to our membership which we see as ways to deepen connections and provide trustees with responsive services and resources.

Overall the past two years were amazing and a time of growth as an association. Looking forward, what do we expect to see?

In the future, I see BCLTA continuing along this path, building stronger relationships with our membership, Library Partners and government. The thing that is different about our membership is that they are mostly volunteers or appointed elected officials, they are unpaid and many feel, as I did, ill-equipped to advocate, support, govern and protect this important institution called the public library.

While some public libraries in BC are adequately funded and thriving, others operate on very small budgets and worry every year about how to fund what the community needs from the library. Whichever library type you represent and wherever your library is in BC, you as a trustee have very important responsibilities; you work through budgets, you read agendas and make important decisions for the betterment of your library, you promote your library and staff, and most importantly, you care about what happens in your library and your community.

I personally want to thank you for the work you do in your local public library, for your years of unpaid service and time taken away from your friends and family to serve in this capacity. I want to tell you that I have personally spoken to the Minister and Deputy Minister and told them how valuable each of you are and how you are a provincial resource that is often under appreciated.

So here's to you!! Thank you for giving of yourself. You are an unsung hero!!

Jerrilyn Schembri
BCLTA President

BCLTA Board of Directors



Jerrilyn Schembri
President 2017-2019
Tumbler Ridge Public Library
On the BCLTA board since 2013



Mike Gagel
Vice President 2018-2020
Prince George Public Library
On the BCLTA board since 2016



Rhonda Sherwood
Treasurer 2018-2020
Vancouver Public Library
On the BCLTA board since 2018



Barry Avis
Director 2018-2019
Vancouver Island Regional Library
On the BCLTA board since 2018



Matthew Boyd
Director 2017-2019
Greater Victoria Public Library
On the BCLTA board since 2017



Ernie Ingles
Director 2017-2019
Penticton Public Library
On the BCLTA board since 2015



Austin Uzama
Director 2018-2020
Surrey Libraries
On the BCLTA board since 2018



Melanie Wilke
Director 2017-2019
Terrace Public Library
On the BCLTA board since 2017

BCLTA Membership

There are over 700 community leaders and local government officials who sit on public library boards across British Columbia.

They represent their communities and govern a cherished public institution with a commitment to fiduciary responsibility and with skills in organizational leadership and development, financial oversight and development, board process and governance, risk assessment, and problem solving.

For their communities, they are ambitious, creative, steadfast and determined; they are protectors of intellectual freedom, privacy, and equitable access; and they are champions of reconciliation, diversity and inclusivity, and life-long learning.

BC public library trustees are proud of their communities and the work of their libraries. Over the past year BCLTA has been proud to support their work and to share their stories through the monthly Bulletin.

#ProudTrustee

In 2018 BCLTA adopted the use of #ProudTrustee from Kyla Epstein, past VPL Board Chair and BCLTA Director. We recently asked Kyla about her #ProudTrustee moments.

I've had so many #ProudTrustee moments as a public library trustee that it would be hard to pick just a few. What unifies all those moments is that they were all times when I was humbled



Kyla Epstein, past VPL Board Chair and BCLTA Director with BC Premier Horgan.

to witness or serve as a champion for the amazing work of the people who work in libraries. As trustees we play an important role in stewarding and governing our libraries but it is all built upon the work of the staff; in every position throughout the library. It is an honour to be able to shine a light on some of that work!

The following are just a few of the #ProudTrustee stories that were shared in the BCLTA *Bulletin* over the past year.

Advancing Reconciliation



This event was part of VIRL's Reconciliation Canada Speaker Series and our commitment to advancing reconciliation in Canada. The talks are opportunities for people to come together to discuss some of the most pressing issues facing our country today in a safe and open environment.

Barry Avis, Vancouver Island Regional Library Board

Yvonne Rigsby-Jones, a member of the Snuneymuxw First Nation and Ambassador with Reconciliation Canada delivering the insightful and informative session, "What Reconciliation Is and What It Is Not" to almost 200 people in Duncan. *Photo Credit: VIRL*

Welcoming Spaces

I am proud of how the Surrey Libraries staff and community use the beautifully designed staircases at the Surrey Central Library. This reflects Surrey and the public library where everyone is welcome irrespective of where they come from.

Austin Uzama, Surrey Libraries Board



The City Centre Branch of Surrey Libraries.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity

In our 2018-2021 strategic plan, the Board adopted two goals that explicitly promote these values. Firstly, we seek to increase the diversity of our board, staff, and patrons. This goal builds on previous work. In 2017, we adopted an Employment Equity Policy, which attempts to redress the historic underrepresentation of Indigenous persons in our workforce. We also created an Indigenous Library Assistant Position. Finally, this year, we have already made successful efforts to recruit board members from a wider array of backgrounds.

Secondly, we seek to better service delivery to underserved groups. Again, this goal builds on our previous work and is in particular reflected by our programming. The Library hosts storytime for babies, Witsuwit'en language workshops, teen programs, summer reading programs, and more. It also offers individual computer tutoring for patrons. Furthermore, the Library has been proactive in ensuring our materials are relevant to all members of our community, including LGBTQ, Indigenous, and religious minorities.

Most recently, the Board is thrilled to announce that starting in January 2019, the Smithers Library will be “fine-free”, to reduce barriers to access our resources.

Lisa Feinberg, Smithers Public Library Board

Spokes 'N' Words

Spokes 'N' Words is a tricycle with an attached cabinet on the rear where users will be able to check-in and check-out library books and materials, get a library card, participate in storytime activities, and receive information about library programs and services. The book bike is a partnership program between the Library and the City of North Vancouver's Placemaking team, PLAY, an initiative designed to activate public city spaces.

North Vancouver City Library Board



The North Vancouver City Library Book Bike

55 Years and Proud!

The Invermere Public Library has officially extended its open hours by 10 more hours of service each week and is now open 48 hours/week. This milestone was celebrated during the week of June 5th, 2018 which also marks the library's 55th anniversary of public library service in the Columbia Valley.

Helen Kipp, Invermere Public Library Board



Celebration, community, and cake

City Council Library Tour

What a pleasure it was to take the new Vancouver City Council on a tour of VPL's Central Library. Libraries are vital for the health of a community as they are one of the only fee-free places left that allow for everyone to discover, create, and share ideas and information. Having the support of our City Council is essential.

Rhonda Sherwood, Vancouver Public Library Board

Pop up and Outreach in Prince George



Prince George Public Library staff, Angeline and Sherri at the Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Thanks to generous support from Prince George Ford, the Friends of the Prince George Public Library, and our donors, the library was able to purchase an outreach vehicle. Lovingly called 'Mobi' by our staff, this mobile library pops up at daycares, schools and community events!

Mike Gagel, Prince George Public Library Board

Year in Review

Since 1977, BCLTA has been convening, supporting, and representing trustees who govern public libraries of all shapes and sizes across BC. We have evolved with the changing needs of trustees.

The foundational and transformative work of the past year was signaled by a new logo, a new website, the updating of the Trustee Orientation Program, building partnerships with other organizations such as the BC School Trustees Association, and our groundbreaking advocacy work with the BC Public Library Partners (BCLTA, the Association of BC Public Library Directors, the BC Library Association, and the BC Libraries Cooperative).

2018 BC Libraries Conference, Awards Luncheon and the BCLTA Governance Forum



BCLTA 2018 Awards, (l-r) Wendy Wright (Library Director, Smithers Public Library accepting on behalf of her Board), Jerrilyn Schembri (BCLTA President), Kyla Epstein (Vancouver Public Library, Board Chair) and Barry Avis (Vancouver Island Regional Library, Board Chair)

In 2018 BCLTA joined in the BC Libraries Conference to co-host, with the Association of BC Public Library Directors, a full day of governance focused conference sessions. The sessions were full, the presenters covered an array of topics including financial oversight, human rights and the transgender community, welcoming spaces for newcomers, reconciliation, and the role of the Libraries Branch.

The BC Library Association generously invited BCLTA to be part of their Annual Awards Luncheon. It was a real honour for Jerrilyn Schembri, as BCLTA President, to present the BCLTA trustee awards in front of a large crowd from across the library community – what a way to showcase the work of boards and trustees!

TOP Refresh

On June 20th, with support from the Libraries Branch, Open School BC met with representatives from BCLTA, the Association of BC Public Library Directors, the Library Federations, the Libraries Branch, and the TOP facilitators for a day of TOP workbook review and recommendations. The recommendations, along with draft reviews and feedback from trustees, library directors, and TOP facilitators informed the updated TOP Workbook, activities, and program evaluation. More about the program and the TOP Workbook can be found at bclta.ca.



June 20th TOP workbook review with (l-r) Michael Burris (InterLINK ED), Babs Kelly (BCLTA ED), Dana Bergen (Chetwynd PL, board chair), Melanie Wilke (Terrace PL board chair, TOP facilitator, BCLTA board director), Joanne Richards (TOP facilitator), Elizabeth Tracy (Whistler PL, vice-chair of ABCPLD), Deb Hutchison Koep (North Vancouver City Library, library director), Mari Martin (Libraries Branch, Director), Kyla Epstein (VPL board chair, TOP facilitator), Jerrilyn Schembri (Tumbler Ridge PL, board chair, BCLTA president) and Denise McGeachy (Libraries Branch, Library Consultant).

BC Public Library Partners and the 2019 UBCM Convention

Over 70 elected officials and government staff attended the BC Public Library Partners' September 12th Union of BC Municipalities Convention event, **Future Focused: Public Libraries and British Columbia**.



UBCM 2018 and Future Focused Public Libraries. *Photo credit: FVRL*

The event took place at the Whistler Public Library and featured the Fraser Valley Regional Library Playground. Huge thanks to the boards and staff of both libraries for making the event a success!



Barry Avis (Vancouver Island Regional Library Board Chair and BCLTA Director) and Minister Fleming. *Photo credit: FVRL*

Minister Fleming, along with Deputy Minister MacDonald and Assistant Deputy Minister Squires, met with the BC Public Library Partners during the recent UBCM Convention. The Partner presentation was very well received and was followed by a substantive and forward moving discussion regarding public library values, reconciliation, digital literacy, and the significant and unique role of public libraries in achieving individual, community, and provincial goals.

BCLTA and BC School Trustees Association

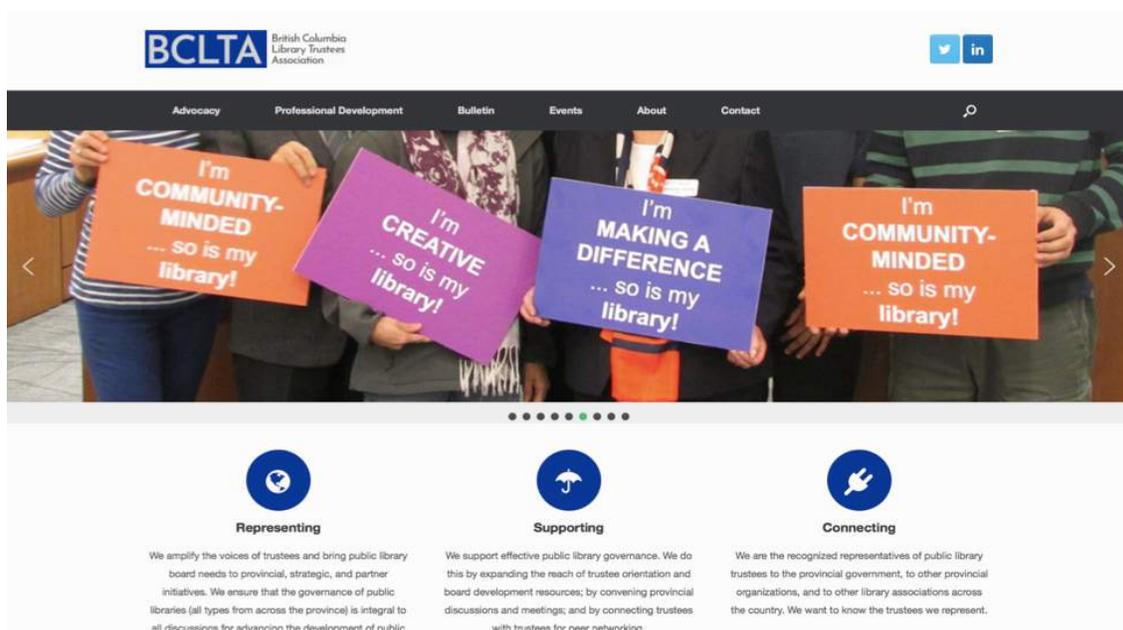


In November 2017 BCLTA and BCSTA signed a Letter of Understanding (available at bclta.ca) with the purpose of promoting collaborations between the two associations. We value this relationship with the BCSTA and the opportunities over the past year to connect, share information, learn from each other and finding ways to work together for the benefits of our memberships.

Gordon Swan, BCSTA President and
Jerrilyn Schembri, BCLTA President

Website and Resources

In the fall of 2018 we updated our website and moved to the BC Libraries Cooperative. New and updated resources available through our website include the monthly *Bulletin* (delivered to your inbox with a fee-free subscription), the TOP Workbook, the Trustee Orientation Checklist, the Advocacy and Influence Framework and the Board Discussion Starters.



BCLTA Strategic Framework to 2025

Since 1977, BCLTA has been convening, supporting, and representing trustees who govern public libraries of all shapes and sizes across BC. We have morphed and evolved as the needs of trustees and the resources of BCLTA have changed. Our Strategic Framework to 2025 provides BCLTA with steady direction and flexibility to meet membership needs, to build strong alliances and partnerships, and to make a difference to policy and funding decisions that impact public libraries.

The full BCLTA Strategic Framework to 2025, including goals and the foundations for BCLTA success can be found at bclta.ca

Strategic Focus #1: Supporting Trustee and Board Development

Outcomes

- Knowledgeable, confident, and effective public library boards and trustees.
- Exemplary public library governance practices across the province that reflect local needs.
- Province wide governance that embraces public library values and concretely supports public library efforts and initiatives for reconciliation, inclusivity and diversity, and equitable access to service.

Strategic Focus #2: Representing Trustees and Boards

Outcomes

- The BC Public Library Partners are successful in their advocacy efforts regarding provincial funding for public libraries, connectivity, and public library services for, by, and with First Nations improves across the province.
- The membership informs, and is informed of, BCLTA advocacy actions.
- BCLTA is known to the provincial government for effectively representing the needs and priorities of public library trustees and boards.
- BCLTA is known to provincial organizations for effectively representing the needs and priorities of public library trustees and boards.

Strategic Focus #3: Connecting with Trustees and Boards

Outcomes

- Trustees are engaged with their association, use its resources, and participate in the governance of the association.

- BCLTA knows the common issues of common concern across the province and is familiar with unique local issues.
- BCLTA is knowledgeable and confident in supporting and representing the needs of trustees and boards.

BCLTA Convictions

Over the fall of 2018 the BCLTA Board of Directors, with support from Kyla Epstein (former VPL Board Chair and BCLTA Director) developed a set of BCLTA convictions to convey BCLTA value and values.

Value is what BCLTA brings to its members through representation and support.

Values, specifically those that we share with the public library community, inform and guide the work that we do in representing and supporting our members.

These values are:

- Access and Equity
- Privacy
- Intellectual Freedom
- Reconciliation
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Accountability

These values are enduring and make public libraries the unique and cherished public fee-free spaces that they are and are the “why” to public library governance.

BCLTA Convictions can be found at bclta.ca

BCLTA Looking Forward

Ongoing and upcoming work for the BCLTA Board of Directors includes provincial advocacy with the Public Library Partners, board engagement and outreach with membership, and BCLTA policy renewal.

Staff work for 2019 includes the development of Governance at a Glance, a one pager about BC public library board work, more Board Discussion Starters (see bclta.ca), exploring ways to increase access to TOP, and continuing to connect with trustees and boards.

Make 2019 the year you get to know and get involved with BCLTA!

Email Babs Kelly, BCLTA Executive Director with any questions regarding the Annual Report or the work of BCLTA.

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