

# President's Report

Heather Buzzell

It has been an interesting and busy fall for the Association. On September 25th, I had the pleasure of representing BCLA at the Union of BC Municipalities Conference where I met with Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education, Rod Allen, Superintendent of the Learning Division, and Bev Shaw, Acting Provincial Librarian. This meeting also included Lisa Cameron representing BCLTA, Stephanie Hall representing ABCPLD, and Ben Hyman representing the BC Libraries Cooperative.



BCLA at the Union of BC Municipalities. From left to right: BC Libraries Co-op Executive Director, Ben Hyman, ABCPLD President Stephanie Hall, Minister Peter Fassbender, BCLTA Director Lisa Cameron, BCLA President Heather Buzzell, Acting Libraries Branch Director Beverley Shaw.

Of primary interest to library partners was the question of appointing a new and permanent Provincial Librarian. The Minister explained that the process had been delayed due to negotiations with the BC Teachers Federation but that the Ministry planned to make a decision regarding that position by the end of the year. Lisa Cameron, the BCLTA representative asked about library funding and the Minister confirmed that public library funding will not be reduced from its current level for the next few years. We asked how we, as library representatives, could be included in project and policy discussions at the

regional and provincial levels. As ABCPLD President Stephanie Hall pointed out, public libraries alone have 245 counter service points across the province, with more than 31 million visitors in these libraries. BC libraries should be natural partners for policy and project development at the Ministry level.

In response the Minister asked the library association partners to articulate the future role of libraries in their communities and in the Ministry. The Minister also asked the group to consider how libraries might be better integrated in to the educational sectors. All in all, I felt it was a positive and productive meeting.

The next day was the BCLA Board meeting. Michael Vonn, Policy Director with the BC Civil Liberties Association gave an interesting and informative presentation on how BCCLA advises on policy issues that may impact our civil liberties. She led a thought-provoking discussion on how libraries ensure the broadest information access while balancing the challenges of working within a shared public space. The Board had a lively conversation about training needs and policy assessments. BCLA will continue discussions with Micheal Vonn about Intellectual Freedom issues through a partnership with Public Library InterLink for "An Evening with Micheal Vonn" to be held late in November. Watch the BCLA list for more information.

Last but not least I wish to acknowledge the tremendous contribution that Myron Groover has made to BCLA over the past years. Myron served as a Director at Large on the BCLA Board for most of the past two years. He chaired the Information Policy Committee and has been active in the Intellectual Freedom Committee. I would like to thank Myron on behalf of the Association for all of his heartfelt and dedicated contributions and wish him the best in his new position at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

*Heather Buzzell is Chief Librarian at Penticton Public Library.*