



Words from the President

Happy New Year everyone.

It appears that the Y2K bug did not appear. Now, on to other bugs.

That "little" Hurononia initiative that began in the spring of 1999 as mainly a membership drive, has taken on a life of its own. At every meeting the issues seem to leap onto the table of their own accord. We toss 'em around the table for a while. We change the shape of 'em a little and then put 'em back into the box. We've gone from a search for new members to thinking of aligning ourselves with another group, and now we are restructuring OALT/ABO. Hurononia certainly is a creative (some say rebel) little group.

No one else had said much up to this point, but when our ideas hit the table (or in this case, the listserv), it seems that others then have the courage to voice the opinions they have been keeping to themselves. The provincial is now aware of Hurononia's thoughts on the subject, and more regions seem to be jumping on our wagon.

Hopefully the year 2000 will bring about the (re) solution we seek, and we can quickly regroup and move onward as a stronger, more productive provincial organization.

Once again, Happy 2000 everyone. See you in March, and don't forget...bring a friend.

Gale

Annual Meeting

Watch for details coming your way soon re the Annual Meeting in Collingwood on Saturday, March 18. Mark your calendars. Let Judy Koenig know if you can receive announcements and minutes by e-mail. Judy's e-mail address is gopack@bconnex.net.

If you have reports to give, remember to bring two copies one for the secretary and one for the newsletter editor. I hope many of you can attend.

"We are librarians, and therefore the elect of God. To read is human, to catalogue divine." --Dewey
Death by Charity Blackstock

Huronia Proposal

In November information about the *Huronia proposal* for possible re-organization of the association was posted on the listserv. Initially there was quite a bit of discussion but involving very few members. Since Christmas there has been very little discussion. I wonder if this is due to the fact that not very many members subscribe to the listserv or that very few members really care about this issue. I find the discussion results quite disheartening.

An open meeting for strategic planning is still scheduled for April. It is hoped that members from all regions will attend this meeting or at least present discussion via their director. There is no word yet if a time slot has been scheduled at the annual conference for a "town hall" type meeting for discussion of the proposal. It is

hoped that the proposal will be posted on the web site soon and that the proposal will also be published in the next provincial newsletter.

Please let your opinions be known either through the listserv or via Pat for the next meeting in February and the April meeting. The February meeting will be a teleconference so I am unsure at this time how much time, if any, will be allocated to the discussion. Please contact me with any comments, concerns or questions you may have.

Pat Henry, Director

Let Pat know before the end of January if you are planning to attend on April 1.



Internet connections

The following sites are an eclectic offering showing the diversity of what is available on the Internet. This site may not help you to become a contestant on "You want to be a Millionaire" or "Greed" but it will certainly increase your topics of conversation. Check out www.uselessknowledge.com. One of the great problems on this planet is hunger. To learn about this serious matter and perhaps even help alleviate the cause, check out www.thehungersite.com. The hunger problem is graphically shown on the map that illustrates where the problem is serious. Click on a special button (once a day only) and sponsors will contribute to help feed the hungry. This site asks that people do not spread the word of this by mass mailing. They don't want to be associated with spamming. For all of you book lovers who love a mystery set in a library check out this website — bibliomysteries. <http://www.bibliomysteries.com/dix.htm>. Take the list with you and make your selection or use this list to help set up a book display or create a book mark for patrons. The following site was brought to my attention by Gale Moreau — <http://tqjunior.thinkquest.org/5002/> "Do you really know Dewey?" This site was prepared by students in USA by a grade 5 and 6 class. Travelling by car especially in the states and need maps and instructions www.mapquest.com might help you out.

Update from William (Bill) Land

Greeting to the OALT/ABO members of the Huronia Regional Branch! Gale Moreau recently requested that I provide an update of my recent life activities for inclusion in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

As many readers will likely recall, I had lost my position with the Huronia Regional Centre Library in Orillia in March 1997. As a result of a ministry business decision the library would be closed and the position I held would no longer be needed.

After very careful consideration, I decided to take the quite generous severance package and explore employment opportunities outside the Ontario Public Service. Unfortunately, the library profession, like many other fields, had very little employment growth that year. I found that I was either too qualified or not qualified enough for many postings.

Exactly nine months to the day I received my lay-off notice, I was offered a position! Sadly, this job represented a fairly significant salary dollar loss and relocation to a more expensive city! Still, beggars can't be choosers! This offer had come from ARCH/InfoAbility in Toronto. I wasn't particularly adverse or eager to relocate to Toronto, but all employment avenues seemed to be leading to that large metropolis, aptly nicknamed the "Big Smoke!"

My move to Toronto has resulted in my becoming a member of my third OALT/ABO regional branch – TALTA. Previously, I had belonged to Huronia and, originally, Sudbury.

During my research about and two job interviews with ARCH/InfoAbility, I discovered that ARCH is a legal resource centre for persons with disabilities. This non-profit organization deals with legal representation in precedent setting cases for persons with disabilities. InfoAbility, an information and referral service for persons with disabilities and seniors, was a program of ARCH. (I used the past tense; InfoAbility no longer exists).

As Resource Technician, I was responsible for developing a resource centre for InfoAbility and maintain the ARCH law library. My duties were divided between both offices. Seventy per cent of my time was devoted to InfoAbility; the balance to ARCH.

This job was alternately exciting and challenging and overwhelming and frustrating! It certainly covered a wide range of emotion! As a library technician with work experience in various types of libraries, I found it very exciting and rewarding to solely create, implement, and monitor the services and growth of a resource centre. I provided research and information support to the Information Officers, those (generally) very capable individuals who staffed the telephones and provided information and referrals to callers.

For me, the position with ARCH was less than rewarding. I found the work to be very clerical and entry-level in nature. With almost 20 years experience in the profession, I had gone beyond this type of work so I was frequently extremely bored. Still the shelving, ordering, photocopying, and data entry must be done regularly even if the work is not particularly challenging to the individual responsible for performing these tasks!

Several years ago, I had attended a library workshop about computer applications in libraries. The facilitator had mentioned that "a lot of library work is like doing housework. If you don't keep up with it, you'll be buried in it!" I've never forgotten this statement because it's so true! My experiences at ARCH repeatedly hit this point home to me!

Additionally, few resources in terms of staffing, space, and budget were allocated to the law library. I felt a full-time library clerk would have been more effective to meet the library's service and technical needs than a library technician devoting 10.5 hours weekly to library responsibilities.

Throughout 1999, ARCH/InfoAbility staff began leaving the organization for various reasons, including exploring new employment opportunities. By summer, only a skeleton staff remained because only key positions; i.e., Information Officers, had been replaced. The organization was waiting for news of renewal of a two-year provincial government contract for InfoAbility that would expire on October 31st.

On August 30th, staff at InfoAbility learned the contract would not be renewed. However, the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation remains committed to continuing information services to vulnerable adults in Ontario and transferred relevant aspects of

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3 -- Update)

InfoAbility's service, which had been most successful as noted by two external evaluations, to the Ministry of Health's INFOLine. InfoAbility closed its doors on October 29th.

Without severance monies or the winnings from a lottery (only a small bonus), I knew I had to find a position relatively quickly! As a result of my volunteer experience, especially with OALT/ABO and a hobby club, I have developed many transferable skills. These proficiencies, and my experiences in my previous position, lead me to obtaining a six-month contract position as Information and Referral Coordinator with the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), Inc. with another slight salary drop! (Sound financial management practices tell me these are not good developments!)

I am responsible for providing information to callers around a variety of concerns related to persons with disabilities. Should CILT not be the most appropriate referral for the consumer, I research for an organization or organizations best suited to need the person's needs. CILT, as part of the independent living centres in Canada, teaches the disabled person the skills needed to live independently. The gravest concerns of most callers include social housing, attendant services, accessible transportation, and related topics.

In addition to responding to telephone calls, I am responsible for developing some print communications, including gathering materials the newsletter, operating the recorded telephone information service, and overseeing the library operation. Unfortunately, for me, the library is the lowest priority in this position. As a result, little time remains for me to develop it effectively.

As a library technician, I am using much of my training and skills in a non-traditional job. While I miss the dynamics of the traditional library setting full-time immensely, I realize that and am grateful for the wonderful opportunity CILT has granted to explore a new line of work!

The day that marked the end of my second month in this position came and went recently. The contact may or may not be renewed in May, depending on several factors. I can't believe this time has passed so quickly! Perhaps it has something to do with this "major learning curve" I'm riding and "busy people are never bored!" Personally, living in the "Big Smoke" has been both

wonderful and disappointing. It has been great to get to know a city that is rich in opportunity for many activities that I enjoy; i.e., shopping, dining, theatre, and book collecting! Toronto is a haven for the children's series books that I collect and read! (It's a good thing because my salary losses have meant that I rarely order materials from other collectors and dealers in the U.S. where many of the treasured collectibles are found!). I'm pleased that I've made many wonderful friends since moving here!

In less than positive developments, I'm finding it difficult to find suitable and affordable accommodation in the city! Currently, I am boarding with a family. Most of my household goods and beloved book collection are in storage. Some days this is a major issue!

However, I don't want to move from temporary quarters until I'm sure where I'll be working. I'm searching for employment inside and outside the Toronto area. Also, daily travel on the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is hard on persons with disabilities; I have cerebral palsy. Since September, 1999, I've been using a cane! The crowds, the stairs (the escalators are not always running) and the long distances to get somewhere can be challenging for me; i.e., home to work is 50 to 60 minutes.

For those who would like to send me an e-mail message, my address is williamland46@hotmail.com. When I created my hotmail account, I wondered who the other 45 William Lands were!

Like most people, I have my goals and dreams. At times, since moving to Toronto, I seem further away from them than I've ever been. Still, I realize that I am personally broadening many areas of my life and exploring many new professional and personal opportunities that wouldn't have been possible if I had remained in Northern Ontario.

I celebrated my fortieth birthday in December, 1999; I'm still wondering where my thirties went! Seriously, though, I'm looking forward life unfolding in the new millennium! The realization of many goals and dreams, of that I am certain.

January 25, 2000

Thanks Bill for bringing us up-to-date on what is happening in your life. Belated Happy Birthday!