



President's Message!

It has been an interesting and busy year for our organization and the months have gone by quickly. The Executive of OALT/ABO in Thunder Bay should feel proud of the schedule of workshops that was offered to our membership this year.

Our final workshop was held at Hillcrest High School Library on February 26, 1997. Rosalind Maki, a local author and editor, shared some of her work with us as well as some insight into her unique profession. It was a very interesting evening with a very colourful personality!

The Executive has decided to contribute to the Ontario Student Opportunity Program at Lakehead University. The Ontario government will match all private endowed donations pledged between May 1, 1996 and March 31, 1999 for student financial aid. We will make three equal payments once a year for 3 years - a total contribution of \$600 that will be directed to the Library and Information Studies Department. It is our chance to give something back to our University as well as our community.

At our Annual Dinner Meeting we will again have a suggestion box to help plan next year's workshops and information sessions. A new executive will begin meeting in April to ensure that relevant and interesting information will be made available to our members for 1997-98. Have a joyful spring.

Carol Young

Provincial Report



THE PROVINCIAL BOARD MEETING- REPORT --February 15, 1997:

The mid winter meeting of the provincial board and executive of OALT/ABO was held as a teleconference on Saturday, February 15th. Valerie Welsch, provincial secretary and I tuned in at the Lakehead Board office for approximately 3 hours.

The Internet Task Force reported that they are on track for unveiling the site at the May conference. The html is about 1/3 completed and they have decided to keep graphics to a minimum because of cost. The translating of the site is quite expensive at 17 cents a word.

Halton-Peel region has their own web page and will link to the OALT site.

The Executive Reports:

The responsibility of membership will be delegated back to the regions. This should ensure that the membership lists will be more accurate and that we receive receipts and membership cards on a more timely basis.

THE HEALING POWER OF HERBS



Late summer every year your executive meets to decide what types of workshops would be of interest to its member in the coming year. We try very hard to organize informative and educational workshops that will appeal to all our members. Not an easy feat! Our third workshop this year, although not our typical event, was well attended (even non members showed up) and provided us with a wealth of knowledge.

For those who couldn't attend the meeting, this is a quick summary of how Denise Perron (a holistic practitioner) led approximately 20 members on an experimental journey using alternative healing methods. The flyer described is as ... **The Healing Power of Herbs**. At the beginning of the meeting, Denise asked each of us if we had any questions about herbs or herbal medicinal qualities. Our questions ranged from what herbs could be used to help alleviate migraines, colds, and skin disorders ... to the ingredients needed when making homemade yoghurt.

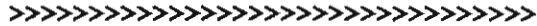
Questions were followed by a **relaxation exercise**. We were told to close our eyes, sit straight, keep both feet on the floor and take a moment to relax. She then instructed us to breathe in and out to the count of three. In a soothing voice she told us to imagine that it was a hot sunny day and we were walking on sand. This exercise helped to get rid of the day's tensions and feelings of stress.

After this relaxation technique and before people started to nod off, we were presented with a

basket of herbs individually wrapped. A tag on each, indicated the name of the herb and its medicinal qualities. Denise suggested that everyone should feel each ball of herbs and we would instinctively be drawn to the herb that was best suited for them. Funny thing ... a lot of people chose the herb which suited their particular need.

A lot of questions followed and I think most of us were amazed at her knowledge of herbal medicine and her ability to capture an audience for over an hour and a half. Denise provided herbal teas that she had picked and dried herself. I thoroughly enjoyed this event and would be very interested in going on a herbal walk with Denise in the summer where she identifies herbs growing in the Thunder Bay area. **Anyone else interested?**

By Kathy Crewdson



FROM THE HALLS OF LEARNING

Its hard to believe that the school term will be soon coming to an end. (Much to the relief of numerous Library & Information students). Good luck to you all on your up and coming exams.

But in the meantime ... let's sit back and enjoy the following report filed by Georgina Harron, Marsha Porter and Anita Smith.



WHIRLWIND TOUR OF OTTAWA

As part of a graduating class of Library and Information Studies, a field trip to major libraries in another city is required. Our planning began early in the fall semester. Of course, the first decision was where to go. Have you ever tried to get 14 people to agree to one location? After a few discussions and votes, we were *Ottawa bound*. Margot Ponder did a fabulous job with all the arrangements and kept a watchful eye on her flock throughout the weekend. We tip our collective hat to her.

The Thunder Bay airport at 6:30 a.m. Thursday was not a pretty sight. Last minute packing and anxious to be on our way, had taken over the need to sleep and it is visibly showed. Thankfully, the flight was uneventful and we were full of vim and vigour landing in Ottawa.

Our first tour was Thursday afternoon at the **Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)**. During the three hour tour we learned that the Institute works primarily with museums across Canada in identifying and preserving artifacts. CCI's policy is to stabilize the artifacts to prevent further deterioration, rather than to restore them to a "new" condition. CCI is divided into departments which include: Conservation Services, Conservation Research Services; Information and Extension Services, and Finance and Administration. It was a fascinating place to visit, but by the end of the tour, the travellers were showing signs of weariness. We returned to the hotel for our "free evening".

After a quick bite and a little exploring, some of us felt the need to relax in the hotel pool, sauna, steam room and whirlpool. Finding the pool was an adventure in itself. It was on the fifth floor and down a maze of corridors. Once we found the spa ... it was heaven!

Friday was another busy day. The group met in the hotel lobby at 8:45 a.m. Our morning tour was at the **National Library of Canada**. The energetic ones walked there, the rest of us took cabs in the hope of preserving our feet. The

National Library has many functions too numerous to list. To learn more about NLC check out their website at <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca>.

After a quick lunch in their 5th floor cafeteria, we were raring to go on to discover the **National Archives of Canada** (conveniently located in the same building). We were given a quick tour of the facilities, along with an understanding of the process of how to carry out in-depth research. From the Archives we walked (and cabbed) to the Parliament Buildings for a tour of the **Library of Parliament**. Clearing the security gates was a bit of a challenge for some (underwire garments, jewellery, keys and metal braces do show up on their metal detectors). Once that hurdle was passed, we were escorted to the Library and split into two groups. They must have found us overwhelming! The Library of Parliament in a word was *AWESOME*. Hundred year old, hand carved yellow pine is everywhere. Flexibility, accuracy and speed are the most important qualities and individual has to possess in order to work there. That, and the ability to stop staring at all the woodwork.

Friday night, we were back at the NLC for a dinner hosted by the Ottawa Chapter of OALT/ABO. This very friendly bunch made us feel welcome and gave us some tips on what not to miss seeing during our visit.

By Saturday, our official tours were completed and it was time to explore on our own. There is a lot to see and do in our Nation's capital. Rideau Centre shopping mall, By Ward Market, Chapters Book Store, National Gallery of Canada, National War Museum, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Winterlude, Royal Canadian Mint -- these are just a few of the sights that were enjoyed by the Thunder Bay contingent. If we were to classify by subject headings, the following are some terms we would choose: Mother Duck, Rideau Centre, Ice Sculptures, Architecture, Marble, "Don't Touch", Popcorn, "No Browsing", Art Galleries, Cabs, Beavertails, Skaters, Roomies, Shuttlebus.

It was a **wonderful experience** that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.



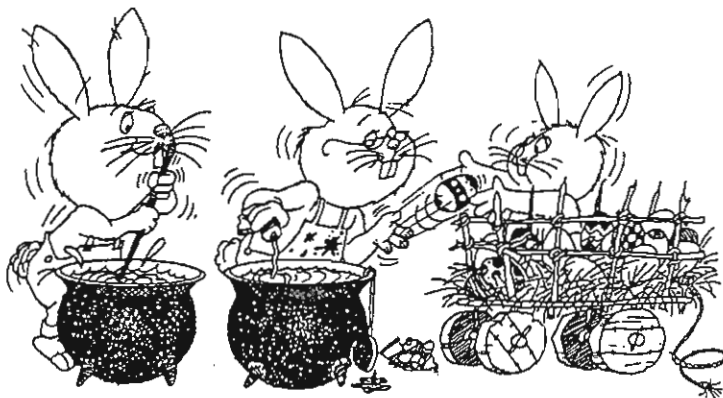
**A BOUQUET FOR THE OALT/ABO
OTTAWA BRANCH**

The second year Library & Information Studies students recently travelled to Ottawa for their field trip to visit various libraries. Fortunately for me, Margaret MacLean is on Sabbatical Leave this term, and I was to accompany the students. Before we left, I was contacted by Allison Johns, the Vice President of the Ottawa Regional Branch (who, by the way, is the only a first year Library Tech student!). She said she'd read about our upcoming trip in our Tech Talk newsletter, and was wondering if we'd be interested in getting together with their members for a potluck dinner. Needless to say, we were all delighted to accept their offer!

On Friday night, February 14th, we met at the National Library in their Auditorium foyer for a delicious meal. We contributed the wine! About twenty or twenty-five of us sat together and traded stories about our library technician courses at LU and Algonquin College, discussed what kinds of jobs were available in the Ottawa area, and listened to their accounts of the types of activities which they do in their present employment situations.

We would like to officially thank the OALT/ABO Ottawa Branch for taking time out from their busy schedules to provide such an enjoyable evening for us all.

Submitted by Margot Ponder



To read a book for the first time is to make an acquaintance with a new friend; to read it for a second time is to meet an old one!

-- Anonymous Chinese Saying

BOOK TALK ... with Linda Bukovy

**Evans, Nicholas. The Horse Whisperer.
New York : Delacorte Press, 1995.**

Two friends out riding their horses on a snowy winter morning, an icy embankment, a truck carrying two giant turbines to a pulp mill using an abandoned access road ... All of these come together in a disastrous, horrifying event in the first 23 pages of Nicholas Evans' book The Horse Whisperer.



Grace Maclean, the only child of separated parents, and her horse Pilgrim, are survivors, although at a cost; she loses a leg and Pilgrim suffers massive injuries, both physical and mental, which the veterinaries try to heal. As time goes by, Grace withdraws into her own world. Her mother Annie brings her to the boarding stable to see Pilgrim, only to find a starved, panic-crazed and maimed horse. At wits end, Annie begins to search for a cure and reads about a human phenomenon known as a horse whisperer: someone who can gentle savage horses which other people cannot approach without fear of injury or death. She finds him in the person of Tom Brooker, a horseman who gives clinics on horse behaviour, but he is unwilling to take care of Pilgrim until Annie packs up Grace and Pilgrim and travels by road from New York to his ranch in Montana. There, all four come to a point where **healing and redemption converge**.

Throughout the book, characters meet up with obstacles; Annie with Grace's silence and hostility, office politics back in New York and increasing interest in Tom Brooker; Grace with her amputation and subsequent unwillingness to trust and ride Pilgrim; and Tom with the gentling and gaining trust of an emotionally unstable horse, and also with his romantic interest towards Annie who is married. Even the horse is included. At one stopover during the trip to Montana, Annie is given a copy of Pilgrim's Progress, which is fitting since Pilgrim goes forth on his own journey of obstacles to overcome towards healing and trust.

The narrative is carried from the viewpoints of the different characters as the story unfolds. Situations are explained in a straight-forward manner as perceived by the individual characters. The characters are firmly based and all remain true throughout the book.

For me, this book was a real page-turner. I could not put it down; I began reading it at 8 p.m. and finished it around 2 a.m.



Shera's Two Laws of Cataloguing

LAW #1 No Cataloger will accept the work of any other cataloger.

LAW #2 No Cataloger will accept his/her own work six months after the cataloguing.

*JESSE SHERA, University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library Science
Occasional Paper #131, Dec. 1977*

"THE COMMON SENSE REVOLUTION"

On November 5, 1996, the full reality of the "Common Sense Revolution" had a direct impact on my life as a Library Technician. The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism (MEDITT) handed me my surplus notice. My position was no longer required at the largest fur trade post reconstruction in the world, Old Fort William.

Devastated? Absolutely. Surprised? No, not really, I guess. The writing on the wall was too large to be missed. Things had changed in this province. We all know that. But deep down, I guess I clung to the hope that one small tech, in one small, but perfect library in a far corner of Northwestern Ontario might be spared. I was wrong.

It was not because I was anything less than excellent. It was not because of any lack of skill. It was not because I had ceased to love my service to the Library. It was because numbers required it. If it can happen to me, it can happen to any one of you. Be prepared. But that being said, it's not all that bad.

It has taken two months' of reflection on my new situation. I had only been inside the government eight years. Not long enough to really forget that there was life before the government, and undeniably, there would be life after it. But, boy, has it changed out here.

When I worked for the government, the same isolation that I thought would protect me, actually froze my involvement with 20th century life. There was little staff development and certainly no commitment to technological advancement in the Old Fort Library. It has taken five years of steady pressure to merely get a laser printer for the library. There were no CD-ROMs, no Internet access.

The ironies in my new situation are numerous. Now, because of the severance

package, and the available tuition reimbursement, I can take courses again. Online information access and retrieval, a small business set-up course, Internet research courses -- there is so much I am interested in. And I can now quench this thirst at the expense of my former employer. Strange how life works out. I am meeting new people, networking with established friends and information professionals in the community. I am finding oddball little information collections in many corners of Thunder Bay. I feel like I am becoming a sort of itinerant information bag lady.

While I am not yet at the point where I can say with certainty that being deemed surplus from Old Fort William was the best thing that ever happened in my life, I suspect it may have been quite a gift in disguise. At my age (47), I am at the point of constructing a new life from the ashes of the old. What I want out of life has changed from when I was twenty. At that age, I took the expected path -- university, marriage, child, career, house, car, cats ... and I wondered sometimes why it felt as if life didn't exactly fit me so well.

The marriage is over, the child is grown and gone, parents have died, I no longer drive, and a job I loved and was good at, has likewise passed into history. The surplus has given me the opportunity to think more consciously about my life and where I want to go from here. A few things have been made very clear to me: I love Northwestern Ontario (Thunder Bay, in particular) and I want to stay, live and work here; and I love being in the information field; I love helping people find what they are looking for. The challenge is to be able to make a small living from it -- a living that will cover expenses and keep a roof over my head. Modest demands, really! I want to live a life with more job in it and less anxiety. And I think it is a "do-able" thing. A small, frugal life can be an eminently beautiful one, a sort of crazy quilt supporting you, put together from odd scraps of colourful pieces.

The strength of being a technician is that you are a generalist, one who is accustomed to dealing with, organizing large amounts of information. In the Information Age, this is a very valuable skill. And being a generalist, you are able to cross disciplines easily. This means you are marketable commodity. Too often, I got bogged down in thinking that I was a mere grunt doing work that was valued more highly for secretaries than it was for me. However, many years later, I can say that what I can do is provide service -- service to the flow of information in the world. I have facilitated information getting to those who really wanted it and who were really happy to receive it.

Because of my Tech skills, I have been able to give technical service (cataloguing, classifying, etc.) to a collection special beyond imagining. I received so much in return, most of it non-monetary. I can talk more easily to people; I have confidence in my skill base, even though it needs some widening; I can talk to larger audiences without catatonic fear; I have a highly unique, international network, and I have a lot of the magic from the site of Old Fort William firmly resident in my soul.

All this because 17 years ago I made a decision to take Library Technology at Lakehead University. A happy accident (there was little conscious planning there), that 17 years later continues to bear fruit. I guess I have learned that the really good things in life take time ... lots of it! And, if you are as lucky as I appear to have been, you get that time to grow into the realizations that if you really do what you love ... things turn out just fine.

Shawn J. Allaire
InfoTech Services



