

TECH TALK

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President's Message

The annual Dinner Meeting at the DaVinci Centre was a success with 31 members (both past and current) attending. Our guest speaker, Margaret MacLean, Chair, Dept. of Library and Information

Studies, provided us with a very inspirational talk about striving to meet new challenges throughout one's career. David Cassels was the recipient of the OALT/ABO Regional Branch award. Congratulations, David!

Valerie Welsch is Regional Director and Ron Walker is Treasurer as these positions were open for the next two year term. Both are very dedicated and enthusiastic OALT members and will do a great job for the association. Caron Naysmith is newsletter co-editor with Gwen Gamble as Kelly Maheu is going to tie the "matrimonial knot" and move to Southern Ontario. Welcome to the new executive members! Many thanks to the outgoing Regional Director, Valerie Barten and Treasurer, Georgina Harron who worked so enthusiastically for OALT during their two year terms.

In the fall, the executive will begin planning for a new season of meetings and workshops to help members keep abreast of current information in the library field.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy summer!

Helen Hyvarinen

Provincial Report



Perspectives 99

The 26th annual Business meeting of OALT/ABO took place Saturday May 15, 1999 in Sudbury. After the presentation and acceptance of the Executive, Director and Committee Reports, two new items were introduced and discussed.

Discussion concerning centralized membership and a standard fee schedule to be handled at the Provincial level took place. The current process that has evolved over the past 25 years has become quite cumbersome with delays in receiving memberships (both by the province and by the members), errors and a lot of duplication. Chris Carmichael, Provincial Treasurer, outlined the new procedure which would see the Province mail renewal forms to members. Members would verify that the information on the form was correct and return their forms and money to the Provincial Treasurer. The Provincial Treasurer would process the forms and

then once a month remit the regional portion of the fees along with a list of members. Regional Treasurers would have membership forms for new or prospective members. Standardized fees would make it easier to answer potential member's questions as each region would have the same fee schedule. After some discussion the motion to have a centralized membership and standardized fee structure was adopted.

The Mission of OALT/ABO is to advance our profession through: active membership; education and professional development; promotion and marketing; partnership and advocacy. This mission statement was presented to the membership. At the March meeting the Executive and Board of Directors took part in an exercise to write a mission statement for OALT/ABO. The membership felt this statement was a clear indication of what OALT/ABO was and stood for and it was accepted.

The Brainstorming session took place Sunday morning and several issues were presented and discussed

Discussions were held between OALT/ABO and OLA to discuss a possible merger. It was felt that a merger with OLA would not be beneficial to OALT/ABO. Our association has striven to create a professional group for technicians and this would be lost with a merger. Any merger should only be considered if the association is truly representative of our membership. Currently OLA does not meet our needs.

A report on a central telephone number

for OALT/ABO was presented. As our only public point of contact is through our web site, we are an association that is very hard to contact. A central telephone number serviced by voice mail would provide answers to commonly asked questions. Potential members could ask for an information package and unanswered questions could be left for individual regions to answer. A fax machine could be connected and new members could fax their membership forms. This system would present a unified and professional face to our association. It would qualify us for inclusion in print and online directories. It was suggested to try and get sponsorships (corporate, members, regions) to pay for the costs of such a system. Further discussion will take place at the September Board of Director's meeting.

The idea of corporate sponsorship was discussed. It was suggested that we approach sponsors with tangibles ie. our web site, directory, fax machine, central telephone number, etc. This will be discussed at the September meeting.

The possibility of establishing a mentoring program was discussed. An informal committee of experts would be established and members would be able to contact them for guidance, expertise and help. It was felt that this would be a viable idea and that it should be pursued.

Turning the Page will be the theme of the 2000 conference to be hosted by Ottawa.

*Valerie Barten
Regional Director*

Congratulations!

**Library and Information Studies
Grads 1999**

Bould, Yogi
Cassels, Dave (OALT/ABO Award)
Coady, Emma
Dekker, Anna (Dean Braun Medal)
Delarosbil, Stephanie
Gilbert, Jennifer
Nardo, Viviana
Nordlund, Kelly
Phillips, Nancy
Smith, Adrienne
Walker, Barbara



David Cassels, 1999 OALT/ABO Award Winner and President Helen Hyvarinen at the Annual Dinner Meeting.

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**10 YEAR OALT/ABO
MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**

In recognition of ten consecutive years of membership in the OALT/ABO the following members of OALT/ABO Thunder Bay Region were recognized at the Annual Business meeting held in Sudbury this past May. Congratulations to Ella Uremovich, Karen Cocks and Linda Bukovy!

THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE



Best wishes to *Penny Bower* who is recovering from a car accident. When we had that unexpected winter storm, Penny was driving into work and dropping her kids off at school when she hit black ice. Her car landed in the ditch, and although her children are okay, Penny will be off work until the fall.

Congratulations to *Jodie Cataldo*, IST at Whitefish, and her husband Danny on the arrival of Dylan Brian Michael Cataldo. Dylan was born on January 26, 1999.

Double the fun! *Gwen Gamble* became an aunt for the first and second time when her sister gave birth to Michaela and Elyssa on April 8th, 1999. Congratulations to parents Erin and Mike.

The Lakehead District School Board recently hired three new Library Technicians for their supply list. Congratulations to *Lynda Scarnati*, *Cathy Jessiman* and *Jill Knorr*. Lynda is presently supplying for Penny Bower at Forest Park and St. James Schools.

Gwen Gamble's indoor soccer team, Rattlers' Venom, claimed the regular season championship but unfortunately lost the playoff final 4-3. The team picked up their awards at the annual banquet and Gwen was surprised to receive the award for Top Goalie in the Women's Second Division!

Congratulations to *Jennifer Graf*, last years OALT/ABO Award Winner, who graduated from Lakehead University with her Bachelor of Education Degree.

My life as a Library Technician

Picture it Thunder Bay, 1992, a young girl named Josie Fiorenza accepted a position as student helper at the Thunder Bay Public Library little did she know her life would change forever... Josie worked in many libraries in Thunder Bay before receiving full time employment in December of 1998. She received employment as a Library Technician in Ottawa where she works for the Ottawa Roman Catholic School Board. She was a Supply Information Services Technician in Thunder Bay for the Lakehead Board of Education (Public) therefore she can offer a perspective of the differences and perhaps similarities.

The public school board in Ottawa has centralized cataloguing where the board office catalogues the books the school has purchased and then sends it to them. That is all the information I know about the public board.

I am a Library Technician between two schools. I work 75% at one school and 25% at the other. It all depends on the enrollment and there are only 4 at the most who are full time at one school. The major differences are the new report card. I have basically nothing to do with the report cards where as the IST's in Thunder Bay are almost the full technical support people. I have a computer lab in my library but there is a site administrator in the school who solely teaches computers and is in charge of trouble shooting and calling the technician if there are any problems.

Another major difference is that the computer library circulation systems are not consistent throughout the board. Some schools operate

using the Columbia System, others use different systems, currently they are in the process of giving each library a new computer with the Library Soft program loaded onto it. However, the schools will not be networked and you will not be able to search another schools database or add a copy of a book another library has- everyone has to do their own cataloguing.

The computers are generally networked although at my school no one has passwords and the majority of the computers are win 95 (they don't have the wonderful Novell-D Menu system). The computers currently have different programs they will be programing all the computers to have the same programs throughout the system this summer. Not all the libraries are automated so at my 25% school I am in the process of barcoding books and anxiously awaiting the new Library Soft computer.

There are two teacher resource media centers available to teachers. Novel sets, videos, films are usually the contents of these centres.

I feel that these are the major differences that I have noticed. I really enjoy living in Ottawa it's a beautiful city with lots of fun and interesting things to do. If you ever have a chance to influence someone into entering the Library and Information field do so for it is a satisfying career! If you want to contact me you can e-mail me at:

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I look forward to hearing from you!

Josie Fiorenza

ONTARIO SILVER BIRCH AWARDS

The Ontario Silver Birch Awards were founded in 1994 by the Ontario Library Association as part of its marketing and public relations campaign - Libraries Advance Ontario. The program has been a critical success from the beginning. Each year the program has grown and the regions of concentration have increased.

This year the grades 4-6 students at Five Mile Schools were invited to take part in the Silver Birch Reading Program. The Silver Birch Award is a beautiful plaque of a silver birch tree embossed in a raised design created by the CNIB. This was the first award in Canada which was selected by the children themselves. Twenty books, 10 fiction and 10 non-fiction have been nominated for this year's award. These books were chosen by a special task force of teacher-librarians who based their selections on their own reading, their own experience with the books and interviews with teachers and other librarians.

The project started in March, and 15 enthusiastic students were asked to read at least five of the fiction, and/or five of the non-fiction books. On May 14th, we held our official vote and each student voted for their favourite fiction and/or non-fiction book. The winners in the Five Mile vote were:

Dogstar by Beverley Wood and Chris Wood (fiction)

Safari by Robert Bateman (non-fiction)

At a special celebration, the students who took part in the program were congratulated and received certificates for their outstanding reading. Our results have now been sent to Toronto for the all across Ontario vote, to be announced in June.

Submitted by
Nancy Chovancak



LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES FIELD TRIP

This year, the Library and Information Science class went where no LIS class had gone before. Well, maybe some have been to Toronto, but not in quite the same way we did. Newlyweds Yogi and Maureen Bould, who experienced love at first sight in Cataloguing class under the scrutinous eye of Ian Dew and are now graduating, were gracious enough to invite us on their honeymoon/field trip so that we all could fulfill a graduation requirement.

The early Thursday morning plane ride was uneventful, as was the bus ride from Lester B. Pearson Airport to the Bond Head Hotel—by Toronto standards. For those of us accustomed to the traffic on the Thunder Bay Expressway and the Northern Ontario idea of what constitutes sufficient driving space, hurtling along at 100 km/hr two feet from a swaying semi was an adventure in itself.

Once we arrived at the hotel, we all rushed to claim our bed space (the 'adult learners' in our room figured that title gave them precedence for the single beds), and then regrouped in the lobby to form the 19-person chain that would wend its way to the first stop: the Ontario Legislative Library at Queen's Park. We were momentarily detained, however, while Yogi and Maureen convinced the clerk that yes, they would rather have a double bed than two singles.

We followed our fearless leader, Margaret Maclean, as she plunged across the Toronto streets and hustled us all to catch up to our planned itinerary. Once at Queen's Park we were escorted to the library lunch room, where we met with representatives from all of the departments managed by the library. There is a role for all types of library technicians, from those who want to come to work at 4:30 a.m. to clip newspaper articles and prepare booklets for the MPPs to those who want to use the highest communication technology and computers. All of the technicians who talked to us were encouraging and enthusiastic and loved their jobs at the Legislative Library. By noon, we had to leave the lunch room (the staff were nice, but not to the point of giving up their space at lunch time) so we finished off with a

tour of the holdings given by a graduate of the LIS program and Thunder Bay native. The collection included books, statutes, daily newspapers from all over Canada, periodicals of all sorts, and government materials gathered through their role as a depository for federal documents. Throughout the tour, our guide and other librarians explained the daily occurrences at the library, some mundane, but others that include dropping everything to do research for a desperate MPP who requires information to present in the House in 15 minutes. Although they are non-partisan, the librarians and technicians were excited by the fact that sometimes the results of their research are quoted in the political debates.

The next tour was at the Lillian H. Smith Branch of the Toronto Public Library where we met after lunching wherever our tastebuds fancied, from deli to Indian cuisine. The collection at Lillian H. Smith was representative of a public library, including foreign language and children's collections and a large computer room to meet the needs of the surrounding population. The building itself was an award winning design that simulated a modern version of a fairytale castle. The high points of this tour were the Judith Merrill donation, A Reference Collection of Speculative Fiction, and the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books. We toured both of these facilities that attract visitors and researchers from all over the world and specialize in the collection and preservation of their respective genres. The science fiction collection whose original number was 5,000 pieces, has now grown to 50,000 and includes graphic novels (a.k.a. comic books for adults), a collection of original science fiction art prints, and 'pulp,' science fiction books once viewed with disdain as trash, but that now can fetch a hefty sum as they are an integral part of the history of science fiction literature.

The Osborne Collection is also a non-circulating collection, and our guide showed us all manner of children's literature from throughout the centuries. It's hard to believe that Robert Munsch continues a tradition of children's writing that began with hornbooks and the Puritan tales of children who died joyfully to teach a lesson. The collection also featured an excellent display of winter books

and paraphernalia which included *Scrubs on Skates*—a childhood favourite of a few in the class.

For our last tour on Thursday we dragged our now tired selves to the Royal Ontario Museum, where we were revived by a fascinating collection that spanned all manner of natural and ancient history. The opportunities for organizing their archives are immense (is anyone feeling entrepreneurial?) and following the tour we were given free reign to view the displays in the museum itself. The museum closed at six, after which we all went our separate ways for the evening.

By Friday we had all found someone who claimed to know his or her way around Toronto, so we arrived at the first tour more independently, some of us the worse for the wear due to an unexpected display of Toronto weather that left us soggy and cold. At the John P. Robarts Library of the University of Toronto, we were taken through an astounding 11 floors of books, maps, digitization equipment, preservation, electronic resources and other holdings for students and researchers. The Director of Development and Public Relations met us and invited us to a board room to leave our coats, noting that he hoped mould, the perennial librarian's enemy, would not set in—a little library humour from a professor of preservation. We split into two groups, guided by former graduates of the University of Toronto who now volunteer for such occasions. The library is 26 years old, is visited by 10,000 people per day, and is now the subject of extensive renovations intended to improve the service and safety of the facility. Staffed by 300 people, 115 of which are librarians, it is one of the top five libraries in North America in terms of number of pieces in the collection, and is an official depository for the United Nations. The collection hovers around 11 million volumes, 2 million of which are threatened by brittleness, which has motivated an immense digitization initiative through which the necessary books are being digitized, rather than converted to microform. Of these, the most valuable and rare are given to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Collection, which we visited next by crossing the courtyard in the blustery wind.

Entering the Fisher Collection was like breaking into the twilight zone—the building is reminiscent of a cathedral with high ceilings, mezzanine floors, and low lighting to preserve the books. Standing in the centre of this is like looking on a shrine to knowledge that might otherwise be lost. It is a closed stack collection, but our guide allowed us a closer look at some of the gems of the library which included handwritten Bible manuscripts on vellum, a first edition of a James Audubon publication and papyrus fragments from ancient Egypt. One of the biggest draws of the collection is the donation by Margaret Atwood of her original handwritten and typewritten manuscripts. The library has augmented this by including first editions of all of her books in all the languages in which they were published. This unique collection is especially valuable for its rarity—many authors no longer touch a pen in their scribbles, preferring to enter everything into the computer, where previous versions may be lost so the development of the manuscript cannot be traced as it could before.

The afternoon was divided between the Metropolitan Toronto Central Reference Library and the Great Library at Osgoode Hall. At the Reference Library we all wandered around looking at those things which captured our interest—some of it so well that a purse was misplaced. A posse of searchers soon took care of that problem, but not before a few moments of panic for Janeen, who was just as happy to have a purse to give to the security guard that was searching all patrons on their way out the exit.

Elise Brunet met us at Osgoode Hall and gave us a tour not only of the library, but of the building itself, which has been the stronghold of the Upper Canada Law Society for over a century. The building itself is a beautiful architectural nightmare. The original building has been extended and renovated so many times that to get from one end of the building requires traversing miles of corridor space and three different elevator systems that cater to the off-kilter levels of the library. Although we had been in eery surroundings before, in the dusky light at the Fisher Library and the surreal mood of the science fiction collection, it was here that our mascot ghost first came to visit us. While

in the elite reception room solemnly christened the Bencher's Quarters (tell all of your lawyer friends you crossed that threshold!), windows rattled and curtains waved mysteriously until we respectfully took our leave. Another impressive room was the Reading Room, built in the 1860s with south facing windows that in the summertime convert it into what more accurately might be called the sleeping room for the snoozing lawyers. The holdings of this largest private law library in Canada are non-circulating except for roughly 200 volumes whose popularity can be guessed by its contents: a complete assortment of John Grisham books and other novels, and joke books about lawyers. Throughout the tour we saw how technology had seeped into even this traditional venue, from the advent of Quicklaw and the OPAC to the way in which the established seal of the Law Society had to be altered so that it could be faxed with dignity.

We finished the tour where we had started, in a lobby with marble pillars and a statue to honor war heroes. Here we went our separate ways for the rest of the weekend, amid threats of violence should we not be at the airport on time for our return flight. Some took this so seriously that the flight agents at Lester B. Pearson were met with the pleading looks of Thunder Bayites who wanted to get home early on Valentine's Day—was it the threats, true loves waiting, or just plain homesickness?? Whatever the means or reasons, we all arrived back in Thunder Bay on time to enjoy our Reading Week workload (essays, work placements, skiing . . .), complete with a whole set of new impressions of Toronto's libraries, and some of us with a few extra shopping bags in the overhead compartments.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

Please contact any member of
the OALT/ABO Executive.

No Dragons For Tea

Local author Jean Pendziwol has been writing all her life. Until recently she had been writing mainly for trade magazines but an incident close to home changed all that. The sudden ringing of a fire bell frightened her daughter Erin, and Jean became concerned about what would happen if a real fire occurred. Would her daughter panic and do the wrong things? Jean wanted to make sure that Erin and other children would know what to do.

The idea for a book took months to come to fruition. Jean literally "stewed" upon the idea and format and after countless revisions she submitted a manuscript to Kids Can Press. Her manuscript was accepted in October 1997 and two years later (and many, many, many rewrites later) **No Dragons For Tea** was available for purchase.

Jean's book is a delightful tale of a little girl who invites a dragon over for tea. When he sneezes and accidentally sets the table on fire there is no need to panic, because the little girl knows what to do. This brightly illustrated book in rhyming verse will help children know what to do if a fire happens. At the end of the book there is a fire-safety checklist which can help parents, teachers and children discuss fire safety. Also The Dragon's Fire-Safety Rhyme is a fun way to help children remember what to do if there is a fire.

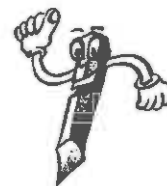
Jean visited Fourway School in April and read her book to the JK to grade 2 students. Following the reading Jean talked to the children about fire safety and then helped the children write their own rhyming verses. The children really enjoyed the book and were quite amazed at the long process involved in getting a piece of work published.

No Dragons For Tea is an excellent book for children and hopefully we will see more books by Jean in the future.

Submitted by
Valerie Barten

PHOTO UNAVAILABLE DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES
(Ask VB about her career as a photographer)

EDITORS' MESSAGE



We would like to thank everyone for their contributions to this edition of Tech Talk. Our next edition will be produced in September/October. If anyone has anything they'd like to share - job changes, summer vacation stories, book reviews, etc. , please contact us.

Have a GREAT SUMMER!

Gwen Gamble & Caron Naysmith.

