

# TECH TALK

Volume 27, No 2. September 1999



## *President's Message*

*Another summer has flown by and time to start planning for a busy season of workshops and meeting for members.*

*Our first general meeting was held on Thursday, Sept. 23rd at Westmount Public School. After the meeting Bev Proctor, Information Services Technician, gave a tour of the library.*

*Ron Walker and I welcomed the new students enrolled in the Library and Information Studies program on Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>. Students were encouraged to become members as there are many benefits to belonging to OALT/ABO. The membership price is a bargain for students!*

*Plans are underway for a Print Artist workshop to be held the third week of October. A General Meeting / Jingle Mingle has been tentatively scheduled for December 7<sup>th</sup>. Flyers will be sent to all members as soon as dates and locations are confirmed.*

*The Executive is working hard to provide interesting and information workshops for this season and look forward to meeting all members.*

*Hope everyone has a nice fall.*

*Helen Hyvarinen*



## *Provincial Report*



*The OALT/ABO Board of Directors and Executive held a teleconference on Saturday 25 September 1999.*

*Many items under discussion were deferred until the November meeting by which time we should have enough information to make a decision and/or have the proper people present.*

*The salary survey will be included with the fall issue of Newsletter/Nouvelles. A summer student from the Ontario Teacher's Pension Plan Board has compiled the results and Pam Casey, vice president, will provide comments in the newsletter and also the summary on the web site.*

*A new membership directory will be sent out in January. I will be verifying information with everyone at the next general meeting and then that verified information will go to print. This is your one and only chance to make sure*

*everything is correct! Along with the new directory will come your copy of the updated constitution - which will reflect the changes made at the ABM regarding centralized membership.*

*The remaining silver anniversary golf shirts are going on sale. The price will be \$10.00 if you let me know before 20 November 1999 and then I will bring them back with me from the meeting. Otherwise, the price will be \$12.50 to cover the cost of postage. If you want a shirt mailed to you please contact Pam Casey, 350 Camelot Crt, Burlington, Ontario, L7L 2G3, phone 905-639-5621, email pam1@home.com*

**Valerie Welsch**  
**Reginal Director**



**Treasurer's Report**  
**Statement as of August 31, 1999**

**Expenses:**

Postal Box Renewal           \$126.26  
                                  **Total :**           \$126.26

**Assets:**

Cash in Bank                   \$1444.44  
G.I.C.                            \$1900.00  
                                  **Total:**           \$3344.44

**Grand Total:**                   \$3218.18

**OALT/ABO REGIONAL EXECUTIVES**

**PRESIDENT**                   Helen Hyvarinen  
                                  H: 767-3679  
                                  W: 343-4351

**TREASURER**                   Ron Walker  
                                  H: 768-7810

**SECRETARY**                   Kathy Walkinshaw  
                                  H: 473-8074

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**           Linda Bukovy  
**COORDINATOR**               H: 577-5430

**NEWSLETTER**                   Gwen Gamble  
**EDITORS**                     H: 767-6124  
                                  W: 625-5146

Caron Naysmith  
H: 345-8827

**REGIONAL**                     Valerie Welsch  
**DIRECTOR**                   H: 767-2177  
                                  W: 625-5240

**ARCHIVIST**                   Helen Heerema  
                                  H: 767-4987

**MEET THE 1999-2000 EXECUTIVE**

Back for her second year as President is *Helen Hyvarinen*. Helen is a 1982 graduate of Lakehead University and is employed at Northwestern Regional Mental Health Library. In the past she has also served as OALT/ABO Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Regional Director.

*Kathy Walkinshaw* is married with two children and enjoys family life on her farm. Kathy works as a Records Management Analyst in the Transportation & Works Department with the City of Thunder Bay. This is Kathy's second term as secretary.

Archivist, *Helen Heerema* has occupied a number of Executive positions. She is employed by Confederation College where she works in the Challis Resource Centre.

*Gwen Gamble* has returned to the position of Newsletter Co-Editor. Gwen is the Central Cataloguer with the Lakehead District School Board. She enjoys traveling and spent a month in Australia this past summer. In her spare time she keeps busy playing soccer, going to aerobics, biking and cross country skiing.

*Caron Naysmith* is the new Newsletter Co-Editor. Caron is the IST at Gorham and Ware (close enough to Lappe for a quick ski after work) and Balsam schools. She enjoys traveling and spent the summer in Ottawa. Her favourite pastimes are skiing, roller blading and cycling with her daughter, Alexandra.

*Ron Walker*, our Treasurer, graduated from Lakehead University with a Library & Information Studies diploma and a Bachelor of Arts. He is working as a Library Technician at the Gender Issues Centre and for the Department of Library & Information Studies. Ron has just completed and received his Internet Specialist diploma in July 1999.

*Valerie Welsch* graduated with her Library Technician diploma in 1986 and has been a member of the association ever since. She has served regionally as Public Relations coordinator, Newsletter editor, President, and now as Regional Director. She was also provincial secretary for three years. Valerie works in the Instructional Materials Centre for the Lakehead District School Board and plays on the three municipal golf courses.

With computer mouse in one hand, and sculpting tool in the other, *Linda Bukovy* isn't really too sure whether one sculpts the public relations flyers or writes them in clay. She is busy covering a three month leave at Port Arthur Collegiate Institute after working all summer at the I.M.C. Tech Shop doing A.V. / Computer inventory at the highschoools.

## THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

There have been a few job changes among the Information Services and Library Technicians employed with Lakehead Public Schools.

*Karen Cocks* is happy to be working full-time at Agnew.

*Darlene Hachey-Bilmer* can now be found in the libraries at Algonquin and Sir John A. MacDonald schools.

*Kathy Deguns* is now responsible for three school libraries - McKellar Park, Kingsway & Hyde Park.

*Mary McKinstry* returned to a highschool and is the new Library Tech at Hammarskjold.

*Viviana Nardo* is now the IST at Oliver Road and Ecole Gron Morgan schools.

*Linda Bukovy* is working at PACI while Johanna Partnoy is on a three month leave.

*LaRae Moody* is back teaching Government Documents at LU this fall.

*Jane Burpee* is a new sessional this year, she is teaching LIS 3030 Information Access & Retrieval and assisting Margaret MacLean with LIS 2051- Research & the Internet.



## FOR AND AGAINST PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Two editorials, taken from Ottawa Citizen, Monday 23 August 1999.

Do we need public libraries?

Yes: Even Bill Gates agrees that libraries help communities.

Barbara Clubb, chief librarian at the Ottawa Public Library.  
Citizen Special

We live in a knowledge-based society. Knowing how to access information is key to learning and to success. Public libraries are ideal venues to access information. They are located in every community; in fact, there are more libraries in Canada than there are McDonald's restaurants (1,643 versus 1,080).

Public libraries are staffed by professionals who help people locate, use, and understand information. They provide equitable access to print, audio, video and electronic resources in a safe and supportive environment for all Canadians, whether they pass through the library's doors or visit its home page.

Public libraries are well-loved and well-used civic institutions. In Citizens First, a 1998 survey conducted by Erin Research for the federal government, five provincial governments (including Ontario) and Canada Post, libraries were judged by Canadians to be one of the best-performing public and private institutions, surpassed only by fire departments.

In fact, citizens are demonstrating their support by investing in new library facilities across Canada and the United States. And these facilities are busy. In 1998, large urban public libraries across Canada had more than 87 million visitors, answered more than 19 million questions and loaned more than 162 million items.

The private sector spends millions of dollars

for the kind of market penetration and satisfaction rates of Canada's public library system. Library use has never been better and keeps increasing.

Public libraries play a lead role as a social gathering place where life experiences are shared. One need only think of new parents who come to the library with their child to participate in their first story time and exchange stories with other care-givers. Here they discover the power of the written word and the magic that the world of books offers through the insightful reading recommendations provided by staff.

Public libraries are a place of life-long learning. Cuts to the education system mean that primary, secondary and post-secondary students rely even more on their public library.

The Ottawa Public Library recently collaborated with local school boards to create an award-winning Science and Technology Resource Kit. This kit, which supports the newly introduced curriculum for Grades One through Eight, was distributed to teachers and parents and is currently available on the OPL Web site.

Long after schools close, students flock to the public library to research their latest essay, meet friends and surf the Internet. Trained staff teach them to be savvy searchers, able to distinguish what is reliable and trustworthy information from what is not.

Entrepreneurs prepare business plans, research the latest market trends, identify niche markets and learn how to apply for patents. Genealogists trace their family trees. Job seekers prepare for their next job interview. Gardeners get tips on which perennials to plant and amateur chefs can find out the latest trend is nouvelle cuisine. All thanks to information they accessed at their local library.

New Canadians can be one with their past, their present, and indeed their future, at the

public library. Where else can they read newspapers from home, e-mail loved ones, borrow language-learning cassettes and consult resources to help them prepare for their citizenship test or the next job interview?

More and more, public libraries act as the on-ramp to the information highway. Though public libraries have always provided books and other information resources to help people of all ages and backgrounds lead better lives, today that information is just as likely to come from a computer terminal as it is from a book.

What better way to bridge the digital divide and eliminate the gap between the haves and have-nots than by accessing the Internet through public libraries? Government agencies such as Industry Canada and Human Resources Development Canada promote and fund public libraries as an electronic gateway connecting Canadians to government information and to the world.

Even Bill and Melinda Gates recognize the important role libraries play in our communities. Through the Gates Learning Foundation, they are investing nearly \$400 million in computer hardware and staff-training to develop a network of community Internet access points where librarians are guides to surfers of the Net.

The Gateses also understand that in this age of information and technology, books are the cornerstone of knowledge. While on the one hand they have invested heavily in public library connectivity, they are also known to make it a point to read to their daughter every night.

Governor General's Award-winner Jane Urquhart once said that libraries are like home. They will always let you in and you always have access to the ideas inside.

While public libraries ensure that Canadians are part of the globally oriented information age, they will still remain that special place mentioned in the oldest known library motto:

"a house of healing for the soul." Public libraries are needed now, more than ever.

Do we need public libraries?

No: They peddle the wrong products, to the wrong people.

Jason Brooks holds a Bachelor of Journalism degree from Carleton University.  
Citizen Special

The likely arrival of another super-bookstore in Ottawa's downtown core (Indigo Books and Music Inc. at the Daly site) raises an important question: How much longer must we pretend public libraries are an essential municipal service?

Anyone who has visited Indigo or Chapters, which has five Ottawa locations, knows the stores let you read without buying, sit in comfy chairs and drink trendy coffee. A Citizen reporter, writing on the popularity of these bookstores early this year, remarked they had become "the library of the common man."

Tax-funded public libraries have had to compete to draw back patrons. Some, including Ottawa's, have even introduced their own coffee shops. Why does the city of Ottawa still throw nearly \$12 million a year -- the equivalent of more than \$35 for every resident -- at this stale, atavistic institution?

None of the reasons that justified tax-funded city libraries when they began more than 100 years ago makes sense today. Governments (and private charities) began funding libraries because books were affordable only to the rich. A perusal of old books at the Ottawa Public Library shows book prices in the 1890s, when the library was founded, ranged from \$2 to \$5. That was the equivalent of more than a day's wage for most labourers (a tradesman in 1899 made 20 to 25 cents an hour). Few homes had book collections, and electronic

information sources didn't exist. Enlightened classes thought it wise to support libraries in order to civilize the lower classes.

Today, the limit on how much information even poor people consume is time, not money. New hardcovers on clearance at Chapters sell for as little as \$1.99. You can buy used books for less than the price of a cup of coffee (granted, coffee is now prohibitively expensive).

Many people have Internet access; 99 per cent of Canadian households have televisions and 98 per cent have radios.

Every public school has a library, university libraries are open to the public, and nearly every household has a small collection of books.

As Reason magazine's Nick Gillespie observes, "Relatively speaking, we're all aristocrats now." Why do we still need tax-funded public libraries?

Barbara Clubb, Ottawa's chief librarian, has defended public libraries to me in the past, calling them the "last bastion of democracy," meaning that anyone can go in and read.

But by this definition, there are many last bastions of democracy around town -- and some are even open weekends. At Chapters, I've taken my lunch into the store and eaten while researching from its collection. The well-stocked selection of magazines and foreign newspapers is always well-rifled by visitors who read but don't purchase.

The staff at bookstores is accommodating, not like at the library. As a university student, I have been denied borrowing privileges in Ottawa because my driver's licence has an out-of-town address, common for students who live here part of the year.

A librarian told me to go home and bring back a copy of my lease to prove residency. But I had no lease because I rent month-to-month. A phone bill? I didn't have one of those either.

I offered my VISA number, a cash deposit, and even pleaded with higher-ups but was refused.

If you want democracy, try a Chapters outlet, where to take out a book all you need is a few dollars, not a house.

Still, defenders of the public library say it's essential for the poor, "who don't have access to information sources that we as middle-class citizens might assume," as Elisabeth Arnold, an Ottawa city councillor and defender of the poor, put it.

In fact, however, studies show that the poor are the least likely to use the library. A survey last year by Ekos Research for the Canadian Association of Libraries shows library use and membership increases with income. Those who earn less than \$20,000 annually use the library least of any income group. Rather than helping the poor, in many cases libraries assist the wealthy.

Despite recent funding cuts, libraries have stealthily expanded over the years to include services that are a ludicrous waste of property taxes. At Ottawa's libraries, you can borrow Hollywood movies and pop music -- for as long as a week at no charge. Surely most people would object to city taxes propping up Blockbuster. So why do we run eight branches of what amounts to the Ottawa Public Video Store?

The first "public" library in Ontario, founded in 1800 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, actually got its money from charging user fees to people who borrowed its books. That's how libraries worked until government took over -- and how they would work if government stepped aside.

Sixty per cent of Ottawa's residents hold public library memberships, suggesting many find some value in the library. Ironically, if libraries were privatized, paying customers might force them to stop competing with coffee shops and video stores and focus on the niche they were designed to serve -- namely, renting out books.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL  
TIME!**

**Please contact any member of  
the OALT/ABO Executive.**

**General Meeting and a tour of  
Westmount School Library**

On September 23, OALT/ABO Thunder Bay Region held its general meeting in the library at Westmount Public School, followed by a talk by Beverly Proctor, the Information Services Technician.

ISTs work in the Lakehead District School Board's elementary schools while Library Technicians are found in the secondary schools. Bev explained that an IST's duties go far beyond the maintenance and running of the school library, they are also responsible for the computers located in the computer lab as well as computers located throughout the school. The ISTs install software such as CD-ROMs, add and delete users on the Network, monitor print and Internet accounts, make sure the computers are working, help teachers work through programs, communicate with teachers and parent groups and oversee student volunteers in addition to maintaining the library collection. The majority of ISTs alternate between two schools although there are a few ISTs who juggle three schools, and a couple with one school.

Finances are still being whittled away by provincial cutbacks, making it harder to keep library collections up to date. Fund-raising is through book fairs where books are supplied by companies such as Scholastic and Troll. Profits from the sale of these books are used by the library purchase materials that will

support the new curriculum being taught. Also, Bev credits the Parent/Teacher Councils of her schools for supporting her and purchasing new books for the library.

The duties of an IST have evolved in the past 2 ½ years. Bev and the ISTs are now integral parts of the education process.

Submitted by Linda Bukovy

**Library Jeopardy**

**Systems of Organization**

**Answer:**

*This hybrid schema draws upon Francis Bacon, Charles A. Cutter, and a founding father of the United States.*

**Select one question:**

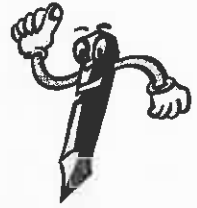
- a. What is the Library of Congress Classification?
- b. What is the bibliographic classification?
- c. What is Colon Classification?
- d. What is the Dewey Decimal Classification?

**ATTENTION GRADUATES OF  
THE LIS PROGRAM AT  
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**

The program is undergoing a program review this year, along with four other University departments. We are attempting to reach as many of the alumni as possible in order to get letters of response with comments on your views of the strength/weaknesses of the program, your personal success stories as to employment or career development, etc. Also there will be evaluators assigned to review the program and they will probably be speaking to graduates. Please let us know if you can be available to participate in this evaluation. Your response by letter or email would be greatly appreciated. Direct your responses to [mmaclean@sky.lakeheadu.ca](mailto:mmaclean@sky.lakeheadu.ca) or you can call Marsha Porter at 343-8420 for more information.

The correct Library Jeopardy answer is:

What is the Library of Congress Classification?



**EDITORS' MESSAGE**

The 1999/2000 Executive have planned a lot of great activities for the coming months! We look forward to letting you know what's happening and what's happened in each edition of Tech Talk which will be published four times a year.

If you have stories or information (library related or other) you'd like to share, please contact either one of us. We'd prefer if you sent any articles via Email to:

[ggamble@norlink.net](mailto:ggamble@norlink.net)  
[cnaysmit@flash.lakeheadu.ca](mailto:cnaysmit@flash.lakeheadu.ca)

We hope everyone had a terrific summer!

Gwen Gamble & Caron Naysmith