

TRUSTEE

*The Newsletter of the
Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association*

www.lib.sk.ca/slta

Spring 2007

What is SLTA?

The Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association (SLTA) is a voluntary association of library trustees from across the province who have joined together to help provide library services to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people and thereby improve their quality of life.

SLTA is incorporated under provincial non-profit corporations legislation. It has a board of directors, or Executive, consisting of one representative from each of the province's 10 library systems. Executive members bring to SLTA the knowledge, successes, concerns and issues of each library system in the province and together SLTA strives to develop plans of action that address issues of commonality and share collective successes.

SLTA's primary objective is to promote and foster the development of libraries and library services in the province. Through the exchange of ideas and experiences among library board members, through library conferences and publications, and through co-operation with associations of library trustees outside the province, SLTA endeavours to assist trustees to understand their responsibilities for libraries.

Through its annual brief to the Minister responsible for Libraries (currently Minister

of Learning, Deb Higgins), SLTA strives to seek improvement to and foster necessary changes in funding, provincial initiatives and legislation affecting libraries.

As an organization, SLTA has initiated or facilitated projects for the common good of public libraries, such as CommunityNet, letter campaign expressing concern over the postal rate, and lobbying for fair changes to the *Copyright Act*.

All library trustees in Saskatchewan have the opportunity to become members of SLTA. By joining SLTA, you can become part of the provincial voice advocating for public libraries in Saskatchewan.

More information about SLTA, and an individual membership application form, can be found on-line at www.lib.sk.ca/slta.

Your Current SLTA Executive

Elaine Kivisto, Regina, President,
Bev Dubois, Saskatoon, Vice-president
Donna Hartley, Southeast, Treasurer
Maureen McGirr, Wapiti
Vina Walker, Palliser
Gail Beuhler, Chinook
To be named, Lakeland
Sharon Armstrong, Parkland
Agnes Naytowhow, PNLS
Kae Campbell, Wheatland

2007-2008 Provincial Funding for Public Libraries

The recent provincial budget contained two significant items relating to the funding of public libraries:

- a 1.8% increase to resource-sharing grants;
- sustained funding for CommunityNet for public libraries costing about \$480,000 this year.

This is good news for libraries, and the public libraries of the province applaud this increase in provincial funding. The work of lobbying government for funding is not over, though. There are a whole host of issues of concern to the various library systems, and there is a critical need for a substantial increase in the general funding provided for libraries. The SLTA continues to work on behalf of libraries to secure these essential increases.

SLTA Executive Meeting with Library Directors and Board Chairs

On December 7, 2006, the SLTA Executive met with directors from the 10 public library systems and the chairs of the board of those systems to discuss a plan for getting libraries on the provincial funding agenda. The following four recommendations emerged:

Recommendation 1

That SLTA develop and circulate to the regions, a proposal for a paid position of “Library Advocate”. The focus of the position would be to support and strengthen the library system in Saskatchewan.

Recommendation 2

That the Provincial Library be asked to organize a provincial forum for spring 2007. The purpose will be to educate and increase the profile of public libraries to the provincial government.

Recommendation 3

That SLTA formulate a series of questions for candidates in the next election.

Recommendation 4

That SLTA develop and circulate to the regions, a proposal for a public awareness campaign. The campaign would focus on the present state of libraries – the services and challenges.

Provincial Library comes through

The Provincial Librarian, Joylene Campbell, has responded positively to the concept of a provincial library forum, although it quickly became clear that spring 2007 was an overly-optimistic time-frame. A library forum will be organized for 2008. Watch for more details as organization and planning continues.

The Provincial Library also responded positively to SLTA’s request for funding for a public awareness campaign. The SLTA has received a grant of \$10,000 for the purpose of making the public more aware of the public library system in Saskatchewan and the many resources it offers. More information will be forthcoming as this initiative is developed by SLTA.

Sustainable Funding for Public Libraries

Library Directors and Board Chairs as well as SLTA Executive members all agree that libraries are in critical need of increased funding. There is no one specific purpose for which this funding can be targeted, because each library system has responded in accordance with its own priorities to funding pressures. For example, some library systems have put other priorities on hold to replace worn-out infrastructure. Other systems have decided that infrastructure would take a backseat to improving salaries and working conditions of staff. All systems are in dire need of

increased funding, but for a variety of reasons. The consensus in the library community is that the funding pool should be increased generally, so that each system can target its own critical needs.

A Classic Catch-22

There is a general agreement that a Library Advocate is necessary to promote the value of libraries and to carry the message to senior governments that the public library system cannot survive at present funding levels. However, funding for such a position is difficult because of the lack of funding! How can libraries work together to provide the funds necessary to hire a provincial Library Advocate?

Some take the view that the short-term pain of providing funding for a full-time Library Advocate will be more than made up for in the positive results to be achieved by doing so. Others are unwilling to take the risk.

Proposal for Institutional SLTA Membership Fees

At the AGM on May 5, 2007, the SLTA Executive will be proposing a three-year phased-in increase to institutional levies for SLTA membership to provide funds for the purpose of hiring a provincial Library Advocate. At present, each library system pays a membership fee of \$5 per library board member plus 1 cent per capita of population served by that system. A one-half cent per capita increase results in about \$5,000 per year in increased revenue to SLTA.

The proposal will be to increase the per capita rate by one-half cent for each of 2008, 2009 and 2010, and the per board member fee by \$5 in 2008, so that by 2010 the revenues from membership fees will be increased by a total of about \$20,000 annually. By that time, the Library

Advocate will have achieved other increases to funding for libraries and for the SLTA to sustain the position thereafter.

Proposed Resolution

Come to the SLTA AGM prepared to discuss and vote on this important proposal. The following resolution will be presented:

Whereas all public library systems are in critical need of increased operating funds; and

Whereas municipalities have borne the greater part of the burden of increases in costs to libraries over the last 15 years; and

Whereas there is a significant provincial interest in ensuring the continued viability of the one-province library system in Saskatchewan as one aspect of providing for quality of life especially in rural and remote communities; and

Whereas library trustees are overwhelmed by the demands of running the public library system and accounting at the local level, and cannot as volunteers exert the continued and persistent pressure on the provincial government that is required to ensure that the public library system receives its attention;

Therefore be it resolved that the institutional membership fees paid by the library systems to the SLTA be increased:

(a) by one-half cent per capita with effect from each of January 1, 2008, January 1, 2009 and January 1, 2010; and

(b) from \$5 to \$10 per trustee with effect from January 1, 2008;

for the purpose of providing funding for the

hiring of a provincial Library Advocate to speak up for public libraries at the provincial level.

Saskatchewan Libraries Conference

May 3 to 5, 2007

“Just how literate are we? The new ABCs.”

This year's theme will explore literacy and its changing meanings and impact. As you know, literacy no longer refers only to the ability to read, but has grown to include topics like computer literacy, economic literacy, and e-literacy, among many others. Navigating through this world requires ever-greater levels of literacy, and we want to explore how libraries can better assist patrons on their way.

The Program Committee is pleased to offer a wide range of sessions of interest to all sectors of the Saskatchewan library community with an interesting array of local presenters. Award-winning author & futurist Robert J. Sawyer will speak as the Mary Donaldson Lecturer; librarian, storyteller, author and reviewer, Ken Settington, and AlouetteCanada Director Brian Bell, as Keynote Speakers; and Saskatoon Public Library's Writer-in-Residence, Curtis Peeteetuce, as the Endnote Speaker.

Saturday is the day for trustees at the Libraries Conference, featuring sessions designed especially for Trustees and the Annual General Meeting. Make sure to take in these two sessions which are hosted by SLTA :

S5 9:00-10:15 am

SLTA Trustee Forum: The Law and You Hear about the impact of changes to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* and the issue of mandatory retirement.

Presenter: Merrilee Rasmussen Q.C.

S8 10:45 am-12:00 pm

SLTA Trustee Forum: Advocacy and The Trustee

Learn more about advocacy practices that will assist you as a Trustee.

Presenter: J. Arthur Battiste

The SLTA Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday May 5th from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. The AGM will consider reports from the 10 library systems, financial statements and budget for the SLTA, as well as the election of the SLTA's President and Vice-President for 2007-2008.

Call for Resolutions

It is still possible to submit resolutions for consideration at the SLTA Annual General Meeting on May 5, 2007, but time is running out. Submit your proposed resolutions to the Resolutions Committee Chair, Sharon Armstrong, by email to town.office.wynyard@sasktel.net or to the SLTA Secretary at rasmussen@sasktel.net.

Conference Registration

Make sure to complete and send in the registration form to attend the Saskatchewan Libraries Conference May 3 to 5, 2007 inserted in this newsletter

A Book In Every Hand: Public Libraries in Saskatchewan

By Don Kerr

Limited numbers of copies of this history of Saskatchewan's public library system are available for \$19.95. Pick up your copy at the upcoming Saskatchewan Libraries Conference in Saskatoon or by contacting:

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