

**From the Basement to the First
Floor:
A Historical Review of the
ALBERTA LIBRARY TRUSTEES'
ASSOCIATION
1971-1985 by Ed Halina**

Dedicated to Fred Millican of Medicine Hat; First
President of the Alberta Library Trustees' Association

Forward (Long Forward)

IF you are a teacher of English you will need a good handful of ‘red marking pencils.’

IF you are a ‘writer’ of historical recitations of dates, names, places, documents, legalities, committees, executives, policies and regulations you will need to look elsewhere.

IF you visualize a ‘historical review’ as nothing more or less than a chronological documentation of events without editorial comment you are ‘out of your tree.’

IF you will be searching for areas where you can say, “They should have done ‘this’” or “they shouldn’t have done ‘that’,” you will find them.

HOWEVER,

IF you are prepared to ‘wade’ through a ‘rambling’ of recollections of the ALTA’s growth and development;

IF you are receptive to learning about the ‘whys’ and ‘how comes’ of the directions taken by the ALTA executives under the circumstances they found themselves in at the time,

IF you are prepared to learn from past experiences of the ALTA’s growth and are prepared to accept ‘one’ viewpoint on the successes of the ALTA, then read on!

This review attempts to present a reasonably objective assessment of a number of variables related to the growth and development of the ALTA. The variables were interesting and presented, on occasion, frustrating challenges to those participation in the structuring of the ALTA.

While one could concentrate on documenting the hundreds of separate ‘nuts and bolts’ challenges overcome by the association it might be better to assess the ALTA from three ‘bottom-line’ generalities (and, yes, the nuts and bolts will be found within these major generalities).

Examined, in retrospect, the association had these three major focuses:

Economic survival

Political realities

Homogenizing

Public libraries in rural Alberta were in a state of ‘organized confusion.’ Definitions of what a public library should or could be were as numerous as there were libraries (public, community, regional). Within each community, large or small, there were found a few individuals who ‘sensed’ the need for book establishment facilities from which people could ‘borrow’ books. A small store owner gathered ‘donated’ books and made them available for borrowing – nothing fancy – orange crates in a free corner space; a community hall, a village council basement room, space in or next to a fire hall (where one existed), an unused space in a school and/or even in a private home. Book stock was obtained through donations from individuals, service clubs and left over items from estates. Not too many books were ‘bought’ because there was very little money available for such purchases. Library card fees and overdue penalties were major sources of the library’s limited income. No, no, no, this isn’t intended to be a negative portrayal – it’s the way it was!

While the books ‘gathered’ by the ‘librarian’ may have been suspect in terms of usability, currency and need, they did, in fact, present a ‘book stock’ in the ‘library’! Books were rarely discarded, new titles were infrequently added! While there was a general feeling that libraries are ‘nice’ to have the ‘niceness’ need was not offered a great deal of municipal financial support. In essence the libraries in that period of time provided ‘hope’ for the future – whatever that may be!

Large urban libraries developed at a much higher level of ‘speed’ than did their rural counterparts.

Although the ‘numbers’ of library conscious people accounted for a very small percentage of the centre’s

population these individuals preserved and obtained financial assistance to preserve the 'record' of mankind. Through the years, then, large urban centres developed good, strong library facilities and offered programs and services of value and need. And, in short, brought 'focus' to what a public library could and should be providing.

Provincial funding support was all but non-existent! As late as the early 1980's, financial assistance to urban as well as rural libraries was suspect! Edmonton and Calgary Public library boards each received an annual provincial grant for operational purposes at the magnanimous level of \$25,000.00; smaller centres like Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge and others 'wept for joy' on receipt of their annual provincial grants of \$12,500.00. It's relatively easy to appreciate, then, that libraries and their existences were miracles or sorts. Miracles effected by a few individuals who knew that libraries were important, were needed, and should be the community's learning centre.

While one can point to many suspect forms of library functionings of the past one must be fair in assessing what they were able to do considering the circumstances they found themselves in. We can only but extend words of deep, deep appreciation to those earlier library people who nurtured a 'dream' no readily appreciated by everyone.

Politically, it was evident that politicians at the municipal and/or the provincial levels were a mix of unpredictable metal. Elected representatives at the municipal level of the larger urban centres appeared to be more receptive to the 'pleas' for library development than were provincially elected MLA's. The large urban municipal governments provided 'working' budgets which made it possible to provide facilities, staff and book stock. Limited levels, but there! And, because library boards have always been noted for their abilities to obtain better than maximum level of returns from their funds the libraries functioned well and provided a necessary service to library users.

Provincial funding support was at a level considerably lower than the 'lip service' offered by the province. One could easily conclude that roads, hospitals, liquor stores, provincial buildings and other highly visible projects provide better 'vote' returns come the next election. Now, that's not to suggest that these noted areas of endeavours weren't needed. They were and are! It just seems to suggest that attending to society's physical needs are regarded as being more important than attending to society's mental development. It is painfully evident, even today, that accessing provincial funding support for recreational facilities presents 'blocks' considerably less thick than are the blocks for accessing provincial funding for education and recreational development of the mind.

Early in the ALTA's growth we recognized that government(s) structures what is referred to as a priority 'wish' list. This list determines what areas will be 'first in line' for financial assistance when funds are unspent by whatever department and/or when an unexpected 'windfall' appears. On one occasion and Minister was asked, "Where do public libraries find themselves on your government's priority list?" The Minister replied, "Well, there is some good news and some bad news. The good news is that public libraries haven't lost their position on the priority list!" Well, at least we knew that we had nowhere to go but ON and UP on that list.

We also knew that public libraries needed, more than ever, a 'SPOKESBODY' if public libraries were to become the educational, recreational and community centres many of us dreamed they should be! Lobbying for public libraries had to be done by and through those people directly responsible for them. Who better than public library trustees to fulfil this need? No one! Other groups cannot present the same 'clout' that public library trustees can!

We learned of something else which was and continues to be of critical importance. The labour slogan "in unity there is strength" provided us with an important cornerstone. Where different associations present

their thinking and conduct their activities separately and from their own viewpoint they can be 'divided and conquered.' And, so it was with the various groups and individuals who spoke on behalf of public library needs for this province. To the credit of the ALTA and the LAA there was held a common belief and understanding that one group should not undermine the other. While both groups held the same 'end goals' they sometimes differed on how to get there. It was imperative that each association be aware of what the other was saying and/or doing. This inter-communication was accommodated for through having representatives from each of the associations attending the executive meetings of the other association. Further, both groups revealed the content of their presentation papers to government caucus committees BEFORE their presentations. Through these two exercises a 'united' face was presented to government. It is interesting to note that these exercises of intercommunication continue today. Great!

The joint 'unity of purpose' front worked well. ALTA members were most effective in presenting pragmatic solutions to existing challenges. Caucus committees accepted the ALTA as the 'lay' representatives for public libraries and 'listened' to them (what politician doesn't recognize another politician – and don't ever deny that you, as a trustee are not a politician!)! The LAA represented, in essence, the professional variable required for public library development. And the LAA did its work well!

This two pronged approach proved to be successful in 'restructuring' attitudes of municipal and provincial governing bodies related to public library development in Alberta.

We were, indeed, also most fortunate, that two Ministers responsible for public libraries went to 'bat' for them. Initial slight improvements in provincial funding were followed by stronger and continually improving levels of financial assistance. While the levels weren't and continue not to be at the levels we envisioned that they should be we need to recognize and appreciate the good, strong strides of improvement taken by both the provincial and municipal governing bodies. They dun good! The third very difficult challenge to the ALTA was what I refer to as the 'homogenizing' requirement. While the term may be suspect it has some credibility.

Philosophically, pragmatically and even politically, Albertans can be characterized as being somewhat conservative in their thinking and in their actions. And, we can be obstinate! We are independent 'prone' and more often than not prefer to 'go it alone!' We take pride in what we can do for ourselves and feel that others should take care of their own needs. An overabundance of thirst for 'sharing' is not always readily evident. And, so it was with public libraries throughout most of the province. The term 'Regional Library' was held suspect in most rural library centres. Although it was 'Library Act' possible to form a regional library from almost the time of the 'floating' of Noah's Ark only one area responded by forming a Regional Library some thirty or so years ago. Parkland Regional, headquartered in Lacombe, was a school jurisdictional endeavour. School boards of four jurisdictions pooled their funding to affect a process which they felt would be beneficial to their student populations. Almost as an aside and because the then ACT required it, public libraries in the area were made a part of the Regional Library. It took many years (12 or so) before a similarly structured Regional Library saw the light of day as they Yellowhead Regional Library, headquartered at Spruce Grove. Other areas in Alberta did, from time to time, display some interest and, even enthusiasm, for the concept but were stymied in their efforts for any one of a number of reasons – fear of loss of independence, cost, central control – you name it – something showed up!

The ALTS executives recognized that by retaining the 'isolated' approach to public library development we would continue to exist in a 'fractured' state of progress. Good development would be negligible and without seeming direction (particularly in the rural areas of Alberta). The apparent obvious route for Alberta was and continues to be the one that leads to rural regionalization. The ALTA executives believed, strongly, that through a 'pooling' of resources, financial holdings and efforts that all public

libraries would benefit through the upgrading of their stock, sharing of resources and centralizing developmental endeavours. This firm belief could only but require the ALTA executives to affect an extensive 'sell' program to offset the negatives associated with the term 'Regional Library.' A change in terminology from 'Regional Library' to 'Library System' may have helped in the 'sell.' Who knows? It's difficult to determine what variable had the greatest influence in a 'change in attitude' regarding regionalization. A new generation, countless numbers of meetings, hands-on visits to existing systems, a push by the ALB, ALS and the Minister, a loss of fear of the unknown, a strong desire to develop public library potential – perhaps a combination of part or all of these variables. Whatever did it there surfaced a desire to 'regionalize' the rural libraries throughout the province. This desire translated itself into taking the necessary steps to regionalize in the recommended geographical areas. And we had, fortunately, a host of excellent people in all areas of the province who were committed, dedicated and 'sold' on the regional concept and who held levels of influence to direct at governing bodies.

These three major areas of focus by the ALTA were difficult challenges but were met successfully. At this point and at this time let it never be forgotten that the ALTA executives were only as strong as the hundreds of individual hardworking trustees who 'slugged' it out at the local, home level. They, the library board trustees, took a while accepting the intent of the ALTA, however, once assured that the leadership was responsible and knowledgeable, their support was total. And, it is this support that made and will continue to ensure that the ALTA can be a viable entity.

The review, then, will 'flesh out' a good number of the challenges faced by the ALTA and will reveal the manner in which these challenged were met by the emerging Alberta Library Trustees' Association. It is a 'hope' of this review that some of the 'learnings' will stand you in a good stead. Political challenges are similar to the historical development of society in that 'history' often repeats itself. Bearing this in mind some of our past learnings can serve well in the future in that they are no longer 'unknowns.' Use them!

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The Seed

Setting: 1971 Spring Convention
Conference of Alberta School Superintendents
MacDonald Hotel – Edmonton, AB

In Between Sessions

“Pardon me, Ed. We haven’t met before physically but I believe that we’ve had phone discussions about placing some of your County’s students in our system. I am Jack Collett, Deputy Superintendent with the Calgary Public School Board. I wonder if I might impose on some of your time to talk about public libraries. I am presently chairman of the Calgary Public Library Board and understand that you are chairing the Parkland Regional Library Board – is that so?”

“Good to meet you Jack. Many thanks for the help you’ve given to the kids from our county. Yes, I am the chair of Parkland Regional but have only been so for a couple of months.”

“Good! I would like you to meet someone who, together with me, would like to explore some possibilities relative to Public Library improvement. By the way, he’s buying coffee”

“He’s buying? Let’s go meet him before he changes his mind.”

A short walk and:

“Ed, I would like you to meet Fred Millican. Fred is the Superintendent of Schools with the Medicine Hat School Board. He is also the chairman of the Medicine Hat Public Library Board. Fred, this is Ed Halina, Deputy Superintendent with the County of Mountain View and Chairman of the Parkland Regional Library Board.”

And that’s where and how the Alberta Library Trustees Association saw its first light!

Shortly after filing their cups Ed suggested that “we” sit down (you have to know that ‘educators’ are masters at ‘jockeying’ for position – Jack and Fred were of a height slightly in excess of six feet. At full stretch Ed can hit 5’ 8 ¼”. In a standing position, then, Ed was forced to ‘look up’ to the other two – but by sitting down all three were then on an even keel at eye level – think about it ‘shorties’; puts the little guy on an equal plane with the big guys!)

Once equality of stature was established it did not take long to do a ‘nuts and bolts’ discussion relative to the then status of public libraries in Alberta. While concern was expressed about the trials and tribulations of the large urban and regional libraries there was an agreement that rural libraries were in a very poor state and needed assistance desperately.

It did not take long, also, to conclude that public library trustees assumed that the Library Association of Alberta was the only group that could speak on their behalf. The Library Association of Alberta was and continues to be an “UMBRELLA” association; and umbrella under which all library related individuals and/or groups work together for library improvement.

Jack and Fred had some years of involvement in public libraries and had good familiarity of the role played by the LAA. Both felt that the LAA represented well the concerns of university, college, and special

libraries to provincial government authorities. However, public libraries did not appear to be receiving a much required exposure at the government level. Both felt that the public library trustees could and should become a strong lobbying group, apart from the LAA.

Because there appeared to be an interest in developing a trustee ‘lobbying’ group in Southern Alberta it was decided that we make an attempt to determine if, in fact, such an interest really existed.

Jack agreed to arrange for space at the Calgary Public Library for a meeting of interested Southern Alberta Library Trustees. All three agreed to contact and invite trustees from their respective areas to an exploratory meeting designed to set up the SOUTHERN ALBERTA LIBRARY TRUSTEES’ ASSOCIATION.

And, so it was done!

The Furrow

On May 1, 1971, a meeting of Southern Alberta Library Boards was held in the board room of the Calgary Public Library. It is interesting to note that there was a “NORTHERNER” in attendance – a Mrs B Caldwell from Grand Prairie – she had ‘heard’ about a ‘meeting’ and decided to see what it was all about.

Public Library boards represented at the meeting included the following:

Calgary Public
Grande Prairie
Lethbridge
Medicine Hat
Parkland Regional Library
Ralston
Redcliff
Red Deer

The meeting was somewhat ‘informal’ – basically, there was an attempt to come to some consensus relative to how trustees could affect an improvement in the status of Alberta’s Public Libraries. In essence the meeting felt that:

1. There existed an impression that representations to government were relative to professional library concerns;
2. There was a need for a trustee ‘voice’ to government;
3. There was a need for library trustees to be in contact among themselves and with the Alberta Trustees’ Association¹

Recognizing that ‘something’ had to be done to effect a voice for public libraries, the meeting wasted little time with preambles, whereas’, and therefore. A protem executives was chosen and included Fred Millican of Medicine Hat as President, Carol Wahl from Redcliff as secretary, Jack Collett of Calgary and W.S. Russel of Lethbridge as Vice President (South), B. Caldwell from Grande Prairie and Ed Halina

¹ An indicator of how little was known about what was in existence at the time was an ‘early’ learning that there was no Alberta Library Board

from Olds as Vice Presidents (North). As you will agree – this was a high powered, highly titled force to be reckoned with.

Russel from Lethbridge was a lawyer and was the obvious choice to ‘doctor’ up an application for incorporation. Whatever it was that he did was adequate to satisfy the bureaucratic gnomes up in Edmonton because we ‘chartered’ quickly.

To further satisfy meeting the sophisticated levels of operational acceptance the executive was directed to construct a constitution and to determine a fee structure.

It is interesting to recall how ONE voice can effect a change in direction for a group. Mrs Caldwell, a ‘northerner’ (or was she an infiltrator) brought with her a ray of sunshine to the southern climes. Yes, she brought the meeting’s attention to the fact that ALL public libraries in Alberta needed help! As a result of her presence the meeting accepted, without reservation, that we should go “ALL ALBERTA”! To this purpose and end a general organizational meeting of public library trustees in Alberta was called for September 24, 1971. The meeting was to be held at the Calgary Public Library.

It is also interesting to note that when Russel submitted an application for registration that either he or some desk sitting bureaucrat registered the group as the ALBERTA LIBRARY TRUSTEES’ ASSOCIATION. Interesting in that the Charter was issued on July 26, 1971 but the organizational meeting didn’t take place until September 25th of that same year. Now there is a positive thinking – but what the heck that has always been a trademark of the Alberta Library Trustees’ Association.

The Circumstances

It is believed by many that good things happen only when they are carefully thought out, planned, goaled, and then structured, timetabled, and subjected to continuous evaluation. Well, that may be the case in some situations. However, there is an element of doubt that all successful endeavours are the result of incorporating all of the ‘nice’ terms noted above!

Closer to the truth of how and why things happened as they do some to the fore when you examine the ‘circumstances’ of ‘when’ and ‘who’! Let’s carry this just a bit as we review the organizational meeting of September 21, 1971.

Well, the President of the Canadian Library Trustees’ Association, A.R. Pile, was in attendance. He offered congratulations, commendations and recommendations in a forthright, positive and inspirational manner.

Yes, Ted Wiltshire, the then Provincial Library Director, offered words of encouragement, wisdom and direction.

Yes, the first executive of the Alberta Library Trustees’ Association was put in place.

And, yes, the meeting moved with amazing speed relative to getting things in order. A budget committee was selected in the morning session presented a proposed budget which was accepted in the afternoon session. Amendments were made to the constitution structured at the May meeting. And, the executive was directed to make amendments to the library act. There wasn’t going to be any grass growing under the feet of this group. Heck, no!

And, yes, yes, yes, the association was PROVINCIAL! While the majority of the boards represented were from what is fondly referred to as Southern Alberta (Brooks, Calgary, Hanna, Medicine Hat, Redcliff, Taber, and Vauzhall), there was a ‘northern’ thrust from Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lacombe and Red Deer.

All of these variables were there and provided reason to believe that there was a possibility that the thing just might work. But, only time would tell. Certainly, concern, determination and enthusiasm were evident – but would it work?

The Circumstance: First, there was a felt need to do something. Second, there was a group of determined men and women who wanted to do something about it. But how and what and why needed to be spelled out. Where do we turn? Who do we need approach? And what do we approach them with? Truly a grab-bag of unknowns!

Into the CIRCUMSTANCE a somewhat rotund, smiling, enthusiastic politician made himself visible. His Bavarian accent didn’t reveal too much about his dedication to public library development. To those of us who had had little or no experience in ‘dealing’ with politicians at this level, let alone a Minister, Horst Schmid made a favourable impression. To those of us who had had some experience ‘fencing’ with politicians, including Ministers of the Crown, there was a searching of minds to assess the credibility of the ‘guy’ – was he for real or was he a vote gathering sandbagger?

It is fair to say that Horst Schmid was sincerely concerned about the weak state of Alberta’s Public libraries! And, it is fair, further, to say that his determined efforts to effect major improvements of the public library community bore fruit. As we review the development of the Alberta Library Trustees’ Association Horst Schmid’s role becomes evident and invisible.

And, thus the, the CIRCUMSTANCE!

A small group formed into an association at the time of arrival of politician who, in fact, meant what he said! How about them apples? Some planning, eh?

Sprouting Seed

Breaking ground for the ALTA required an understanding of what was in place and how we fitted into the community of ‘lobbyists’ (because that’s what we were and are)!

The ALTA’s executives recognized that we could not function in isolation. That in fact, we would need to work closely with the Library Association of Alberta. While we did not wish to be under the ‘umbrella’ of the LAA we did not want to function in opposition to it. We recognized that common goals and a unified front were mandatory requirements if we were to be success in effecting improvements in the public library community.

It is necessary to say, here, that although the LAA was not overly enthusiastic over the ‘breaking-way’ of the ALTA from its umbrella structure, it was supportive and cooperative.

To illustrate the LAA’s positive acceptance of the ALTA’s emergence it extended an open initiation to the association to attend the LAA’s annual conference in May of 1972. The invitation was significant in that the LAA knew that the Alta did not have funding of its own to sponsor a conference. The LAA offered its conference program to the ALTA members without cost. Any funds raised by the ALTA through registration fees of its members were to be retained by the ALTA.

In effect a free conference! And, it is, further, fair to recognize that the LAA continued this practice for a number of years. We do owe the LAA a vote of gratitude for its encouragement and assistance during the early years of the ALTA's growth.

The first joint ALTA/LAA 'lobbying' activity was experience when the presidents of both associations (Fred Millican, ALTA; John Wright, LAA) sought and received a meeting with Hon. Horst Schmid, Minister of Culture. It was an interesting meeting in that it brought an apology from the minister for an oversight on his part. The Minister's apology was related to an announced proposal to revise the Library Act. Fred and John voiced objection at the exclusion of the two associations from participating in the Act's revision (the objection was legitimate and based on the public announcement about the revision). What Fred and John did not know was that the Minister had advised municipal authorities that there were, in fact, no immediate plans to revise the Act. His apology, then, was offered for not having advised the two associations of his decision.

The meeting was productive in another area as well. The Minister requested that the ALTA and the LAA present, at the earliest possible time, a proposal for the type of library survey which the associations felt would be most productive in providing direction for a public library developmental program for Alberta.

The Minister's request was a good test for both associations! Good in that it assisted in determining if both associations could and would work together and good, in that the two groups were given an opportunity to prove themselves.

Immediately following the meeting with the Minister and LAA/ALTA joint meeting established a committee headed by Harry Newsom (professor and the University of Alberta Library School of Science), to construct a survey proposal for the media. To the credit of the committee it completed and presented a jointly prepared "STATEMENT ON LIBRARY SERVICE IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA" in record time. The proposal was presented to the Minister in July of 1972.

The above 'paper' was instrumental in bringing about the Downey Research Associates Survey. The Downey survey held meetings throughout the province where it received presentations and papers from library boards, individuals and institutions. In Just, 1973, the Downey Associates presented a summation of its findings and recommendations to the Minister through a report titled "The Right to Know."

During the same period of the Downey Survey the Alberta Library Services Branch received considerable assistance from public library trustees in its study of "RURAL LIBRARIES IN ALBERTA." This document was very detailed and particularly informative as it related to the 'nuts and bolts' challenged faced by the rural library community.

The title activities might lead one to believe that the ALTA was well structured and well on 'its way.' But, no, not so! The LAA annual conference of the 1973 at which the ALTA was to have held its annual meeting was somewhat non-productive. Non-productive in that the ALTA members didn't show up for the meeting! Confusion reigned supreme! Not too many trustees in attendance at the conference were members of the LAA and assumed that the LAA's annual meeting was their meeting. Fred and his executive were out in 'left field.' As a consequence and to establish the ALTA as a body separate from the LAA Fred and the few executives members who were presented at the conference decided to call a meeting of trustees in June of 1973. This meeting, held in Red Deer, discussed the future development of the ALTA. In effect, the ALTA had to determine if it was to continue its existence.

The fifteen member boards represented at the Red Deer meeting resolved that the ALTA should continue to function as the separate group from the LAA and its annual conference. All of those presents recognized that we had a 'selling' job to do.

Once that was settled the meeting assessed and approved the ALTA's presentation of position to the Downey survey.

The holding of a separate annual meeting for the Alta did not affect the liaison commitments with the LAA. Four trustees (Mrs Stonewall, Calgary Public, Mrs B. Lewis, Medicine Hat, Mrs B. Horney, Yellowhead Regional and Ed Halina, Parkland Regional) were appointed to the LAA Library Development Committee. This committee's responsibility was directed at provincial library development with emphasis on the public library community.

Recognition of the ALTA's existence was confirmed in that the ALTA was requested to appoint two representatives to the Advisory Committee to the Downey Research Survey. Ethel Taylor from Red Deer played a strong role on behalf of the ALTA on this committee. In addition she structured the ALTA's presentation to the survey from responses sought and received by her from public libraries throughout Alberta. Truly a heavy, time consuming task.

The ALTA's second representative on the committee was Eve Whitney. Eve's strong representations at the Advisory Committee level directed the committee's attention to the needs and requirements of Alberta's small rural public libraries.

To further identify the ALTA as an association separate from the LAA the 1973 annual meeting was held in Calgary and was attended by representatives from twelve library boards. Members in attendance were provided with information relative to structure, personnel, and conduct of the library survey to be conducted (Downey Research). Further information was provided the meeting relative to the progress of the RURAL LIBRARIES SURVEY which was to be completed in the fall of 1973.

"What about the ALTA's financial position in 1973?"

"Glad you asked!"

Well, the approved budget for the year called for \$1200.00 in revenues and \$1200.00 in expenditures – commonly referred to as a 'balanced budget.' The revenues were predicated in the belief that public library boards throughout Alberta would be 'falling over each other' in racing to take out membership.

The audited statement of operations for the year revealed some interesting readings:

1. Library boards were NOT rushing in to join the ALTA
2. The membership of 15 was only an improvement of 7 boards over the initial organizational meeting of September, 1971
3. We need other sources of revenue
4. In spite of the low level revenue of the ALTA executives displayed an ability to live within its limited means

The audited statement, then, for the 1972-73 year showed revenue receipts of \$663.50, expenditures of \$492.13, leaving the association with balance, in the black of some \$171.39.

Learnings from an assessment of the proposed and actual budget year revealed:

1. The anticipated \$500.00 grant from Alberta Library Services did not materialize
2. Members of the executive paid for their expenses out of their own pockets

One cannot leave 1973 without reference to Jack Collett Jack lost a battle but won a war that year.

Those who know Jack know him as a quiet spoken man whose educational background was very strong and who was very highly regarded in all educational communities in Calgary and throughout Alberta. He was patient, considerate, dedicated and a highly principled individual.

He brought all of these characteristics and his deep understanding of the role libraries should play to the Calgary Public Library Board of which he was chairman. We need to add that Jack is a very determined individual when he knows he is right.

During Jack's chairmanship year with the Calgary Public Board in 1972 he, together with the board and staff, developed plans for the renovation and enlargement of its downtown library. When his board's completed plans were submitted to City Council for approval Council directed that an underground parking arcade should be part of the structure. The details of the directed plan changes are unimportant here. What is of crucial importance is that Calgary Public Library Board's autonomy was undermined.

Jack would have no part of it and made his feelings known in very clear, concise and exact terms. He had the support of his board and because of his tenacity and determination relative to the board's autonomy was successful in his efforts. While he secured the board's autonomous position, he failed to be reappointed by City Council to the Public Library Board soon after.

The lesson to be learned here is one to which all ALTA members should pay very close attention. Library board trustees must guard, jealously and vigorously, the autonomous position they presently hold. Libraries cannot and must not become political toys! Thanks, Jack!

To be or not to be!

To suggest that the ALTA was experiencing a steady growth of membership or a concerned and concerted interest in the ALTA by public library boards in 1973-74 would be suspect. There was, literally, very little interest from public library boards. In fact there surfaced, in this year, a feeling of "Let's Pack It In"!

The ALTA executive suffered some setbacks in that:

- a) The minister suspended the Downey Survey Study because of severe internal differences in opinion among members of the Advisory Committee;
- b) The annual meeting attracted representation from only thirteen public library boards
- c) the revenues from the previous year's operations were not terribly encouraging, and,
- d) it appeared that public library boards were content to continue functioning as members under the LAA umbrella

In spite of the overwhelming evidence that directed at ensuring for suitable eulogies at the ALTA's burial the executive of that year redoubled its efforts to assure that ALTA's survival.

In retrospect there were two key elements which contributed to the resurgence of the ALTA as a viable entity:

1. Representations of the Minister (Horst Schmid) by the ALTA and the LAA relative to lifting the suspension of the Downey Study were successful. The study was reaffirmed and began its hearings;

2. The executive of the ALTA, headed by May Gardiner of Edmonton Public, initiated an exercise which, again in retrospect, proved to be a vital element to the ALTA's survival and growth. Yes, that was the first year of the ALTA 'sell' program through the structuring of informational workshops in various locations throughout the province. Subsequent years witnessed a continuation of these workshops. Over a period of years the workshops 'covered' the province.

The content of the workshops directed at four major components:

1. Purpose and function of the ALTA
2. Lobbying
3. Regionalization of rural libraries
4. Public library board trustee responsibility

We gained a number of needed learnings from the workshops and need, then, to credit them for the role they played in providing a strong base for the ALTA. While it is true that the workshops did not result in an immediate 'flooding' of applications for membership, they did, on a short and then over a long term period, influence, positively, the growth and development of the ALTA.

As participants in the workshops our executive members were able to fill in a lot of the 'gaps' which existed in their personal background knowledge about the facing the rural and urban library boards. The learnings from these workshops provided executive members with 'thousands and thousands' of legitimate reasons to substantiate the desperate financial and organizational needs of the public library community in Alberta. The backgrounding gained through these workshops made it possible for us to portray, effectively, the difficult circumstances of the public libraries. We were able, then, to present 'practical' solutions to challenges being faced rather than arguing on 'philosophical' viewpoints. The lessons to be learned here is that in lobbying with government(s) there is greater likelihood of receiving consideration and assistance IF THE SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES ARE PRESENTED AS PRAGMATICALLY POSSIBLE. PHILISOPHICAL PRESENTATIONS ARE GENERALLY RECEIVED AS 'PIE IN THE SKY' DREAMS! While philosophical discussions have their place there is a quicker understanding of 'immediate' problems and how to resolve them. In essence, then, governments appear to have 'short term' receptiveness to problem solutions. Long term solutions may be interesting to explore but they don't normally result in recruiting immediate 'voting' needs! As a aside permit me to suggest that philosophical presentations to government(s) elicit 'yawns' rather than a 'searching' or 'deep thinking.' Cruel but visible!

The workshop did, in fact, contribute substantially to the ALTA membership growth. They revealed that public library trustees are intelligent, determined and not in trusteeship for self-gain. They revealed, further, that public library boards understood that if they 'pooled' their efforts collectively we would be in a stronger position in seeking government(s) assistance. 'Paddling' in one's own canoe can only ensure downstream progress while heading upstream!

It needs to be said, here, that while there existed an element of doubt about this new baby (ALTA), and, while there existed an uncertainty about its viability it is to the credit of public library boards that they gave ALTA a 'fair' hearing! The numbers of trustees who attended the ALRA workshops was always pleasantly surprising – they far surpassed our fondest hopes. Again, the numbers in attendance were indicative of trustee preparedness to 'hear us out'!

Of further credit to the trustees who attended the workshops were their forthright, direct and penetrating questions directed at the directions this 'new guy' was proposing for public library development in Alberta.

To suggest that ALL trustees who attended the workshops were positive, constructive and supportive of the ALTA would be unfair. There were strongly voiced differences of opinion relative to the need for an association, the directions for development envisioned by the ALTA and the need for regionalization of rural libraries. The value of the negatives directed at the ALTA and its philosophical 'thinking' was that they provided your executive with 'known' pockets of challenges. The negatives were accepted without rancour. Rather, they were received and documented as areas requiring assessment and possible rethinking and restructuring of the philosophical and pragmatic directions espoused by the ALTA.

In summary, the workshops were constructive and influential in charting the ALTA's role in its leadership function. The backgrounding gained through these workshops made it possible for us to portray, effectively, and honestly, the difficult circumstances of the public library community. We were able, then, to present 'practical' solutions to challenges. Further, the workshops enunciated, graphically, the need for erecting and maintaining open lines of communication. AND, that these 'open' lines of communication were required to ensure that developmental directions were not determined by a relatively few individuals. You see, the failure of any association and/or group is assured when the 'table' thinkers forget what it's really like at the other end! One cannot overemphasize the need for executives to continually remind themselves that they cannot become 'gods' onto themselves; that, in fact, the 'sluggers' 'out there' can and do provide a wealth of intelligence that, more often than not, exceed yours!!!

A Couple of Firsts

A number of interesting exercises during May Gardiner's second term in the President's chair had a positive effect relative to the ALTA's eventual position of influence.

Membership in the ALTA did not show any level of exciting improvement. While lack of membership growth continued to be a concern your executive resolved to continue as if the association had its place in the sun.

An extended amount of time was directed to responding to the Downey Research study. In addition to formulating the ALTA's presentation through an assimilation of input from public library boards, executive members encouraged individual library boards to make presentations to the survey during its public hearings. It was agreed that the public library community had to take advantage of the opportunity presented it vis a vis exposing the plight of their libraries through the hearings. It was further deemed of considerable importance that through individual library's boards' presentations that the ALTA's presentation content would thus be affirmed. Well, the message was received and acted on by a number of individual boards. Some concern was expressed by the executive that only thirty public library boards (out of a possible 200+) submitted written and/or oral presentations to the survey. From a historical assessment, today, one needs to recall what existed during the period we're discussing now. Library boards were not well developed. Expertise in 'formal' presentations was not a 'known.' The greater majority of rural libraries were 'community' libraries and regrettable, libraries preferred to 'go it alone.' So, the fact that there were 30 library boards' presentations speaks well of them. A further variable which may have eliminated additional library board presentations was that of a poorly structured and poorly advertised itinerary of public hearing locations by the Survey Committee. They simply 'messed up'!

As a consequence to the suspect manner in which the locations, dates and times re: Downey hearings, was carried out a joint LAA/ALTA meeting was held in Red Deer on January 26, 1975. The meeting resulted in a BIG, BIG FIRST! Content of the meeting directed at the need for getting 'off our duffs' and taking the offensive re: public library development in Alberta. It is important to note, here, that the Library Association of Alberta had determined to extend considerable of its energies and finances directed to

PUBLIC LIBRARY development. As an association we need to recognize that the LAA's strong and concerted attention to Public Library development during this period was of invaluable assistance to the ALTA.

The Red Deer meeting gave birth to the "ACTION COMMITTEE." And, ACTIVE IT DID BECOME!!

The Action Committee, composed of six members from the ALTA and six members from the LAA, was given 'free rein' to affect an offensive strategy re: provincial public library development. NO ONE WAS TO BE SPARED! Local municipal authorizes, MLA's, members of the Provincial Cabinet and even the ethereal conclave of the Premier were 'targeted.' Letter writing, phone calls, literature, newspaper articles, personal arm twisting, and service club presentations – you name it – WE DID IT! And, it worked!

In reviewing the various and numerous avenues pursued by the Action Committee there are some interesting learnings which can, in fact, be held in one's computer memory bank for future use. When you mount an offensive as did the Action Committee you never really know which part produces the best results. It's really a battle of the 'unknowns.' However, if you try all kinds of things you learn that some work more effectively than others. All of the activities initiated by the committee contributed to the overall success of the exercise. We learned from several sources that the three most effective avenues, in terms of 'opening deaf ears' were:

1. The individual 'hand-written' letters which flooded the desks of MLA's, members of Cabinet and the office of the Premier were the ones most respected and read. (prepared printed 'form' letters fared poorly – they simply filled the office waste baskets)
2. One on one personal discussions with MLA's ranked high in terms of effectiveness (phone calls just indicated that there was a 'body' at the other end of the line – and, it couldn't see the 'yawn')
3. A pamphlet (cannot recall the name of the author) entitled "AND PHEASANTS DON'T EVEN READ' caused acute embarrassment at government levels. The pamphlet revealed that government grants to raise pheasants for hunter destruction were considerably greater than the total budget for the Alberta Library Services Branch. That one struck home!

Not out of the woods yet! But a surprise!

There continued to be an urgent need to improve membership numbers in the ALTA. Although the Action Committee had created a high level of interest in the public library needs we experienced considerable disappointment with the lethargic movements of public library boards towards joining the ALTA. Looking back it is now recognized that the ALTA workshops which, in time, contributed strongly to membership growth, were only in their infancy. Perhaps we expected too much, too soon!

Three major undertakings were structured to 'test' the level of real interest in the ALTA during Lorna Haddow's (Calgary Public) first year in the chair:

1. On August 2, 1975, a meeting was called to hear a presentation by the Saskatchewan Provincial Library Development board. The content of the presentation centred about the responsibilities of the various agencies associated with the Regional Library Concept. The presentation outlined the areas of responsibilities of the regional systems, government participation, trustees and their Provincial Library Development Board. The Saskatchewan group offered a good number of recommendations which, if acted on, would assist us in improving the public library status in Alberta.

2. Lorna's executive decided that it was time to 'bite the bullet'! We had to determine if the ALTA should continue to function or whether it should simply 'fold'! A SPECIAL MEETING was called for the 8th of November, 1975. The purpose of this meeting to be held in Red Deer was to:
 - a. Discuss library legislation
 - b. Hear presentations from BC and Saskatchewan personnel re: public library development in their respective provinces
 - c. Discuss the ALTA's future

Well, well, well. Some meeting!

There were 'bodies' all over the place! And they kept coming! And could you believe – they were public library trustees, all nearly 100 of them. Living, moving, talking, thinking, questioning, tall ones, short ones, males, female, energized, determined and 'gung-ho'. Hey, awwwwwwwwwwright!

Following the presentations of our sister provinces' representatives and discussion of the content of their messages the meeting directed the executives to prepare an ALTA POSITION PAPER ON ALBERTA'S LIBRARIES for presentations to the Minister of Culture.

The meeting, further, provided a 'resounding' vote of confidence in the need for the ALTA to exist to ensure that Alberta's Public libraries had a voice, a voice that would be listened to and 'heard'! The affirmation was a much needed tonic.

In reviewing the ALTA's historical development it is fair to suggest that it was this meeting that ensured the ALTA's future. The association was here to stay!

3. The third undertaking had a very strong influence vis a vis strengthening 'voices' on behalf of Alberta's Public Libraries. Following a very thorough discussion your executive decided that it was time was 'right' to join the LAA as an equal participating member of a joint LAA/ALTA Annual Conference. The executive felt that it was appropriate to join forced through a joint conference for several reasons:
 - a. While it was (and is) true that we held differing opinions on 'how' to develop Alberta's Public Libraries OUR GOALS WERE THE SAME;
 - b. A joint conference would make it possible for trustees to learn more about libraries through attending 'librarian' sessions. Similarly, librarians could learn about trustee responsibilities and viewpoints through attending 'trustee' sessions;
 - c. Both associations could affect financial 'savings' through attending the common conference costs on a sharing basis;
 - d. Through attendance at a joint conference there would be excellent opportunities to recognize that we were all in the same ball park. We would also learn that librarians are approachable and very dedicated to their craft. In return, librarians would recognize trustees as dedicated lay contributors to public library development;
 - e. A joint conference would, further, cement the need for presenting a united 'front' to government (s) agencies.

In retrospect the ALTA did, in fact, make a wise decision. And, to the credit of the LAA they, too, recognized the positive elements that would be in place through a jointly sponsored event.

If you assume that there was immediate success in effecting the joint conference concept then you are 'you of tree'! The expected larger turnout of trustees did not materialize (that took a while). Joint convention chair-people (one ALTA, one LAA) had a number of bridges to cross and sometimes the bridges broke down or were severely swayed. It can be said that while the executives accepted the

concept of a joint conference there were elements within both associations who weren't totally (if at all) receptive to their thinking. There was, however, recognition by both executives that time would overcome a number of challenges which would surface through holding a joint conference. And, so it came to pass. The concept is now established, accepted and functioning well.

While preparations were being made to combine the two associations' conferences the fifth annual Meeting of the ALTA was held in the Calgary Public Library facility on May 7th and 8th, 1976. In excess of forty library board representatives reviewed reports of the previous year's activities, discussed recruiting strategies for ALTA membership and learned of various public relations programs for the promotion of public libraries. Of interest, also, the meeting reaffirmed the need to continue providing ALL ALTA materials to non-member boards as well as to member boards. It was felt that ALL library boards needed to be informed of the progress being experienced in library development programs. There was a strong belief that through maintaining a line of communication with non-members that they would, in time, become members in recognition of the role the ALTA played on their behalf. And, this belief, was, in fact, confirmed as the years rolled on and membership grew and grew.

Another area that received careful attention and consideration at this annual meeting was the ALTA's position relative to the Regional Library concept. There was, in conclusion, unanimous agreement that the ALTA should continue its support position for regionalization of libraries throughout rural Alberta.

Signs of Things to Come

The 1976-77 operational years was, indeed, a most exciting and full one for Lorna and her executive. It was also a year when the Minister (Horst Schmid) again exhibited his strong interest in public library development beyond the 'verbal' level. Reference to Horst's contributions to the ALTA's development and growth need to be seen as a sincere expression of appreciation for this endeavours on our behalf (and, no, you don't have to go out and buy a membership to his political party). It is true that he was, is and will likely always be a politician, a breed held in suspect by many. Where he differed was that he had a sense of respect and understanding for the role of a public library could effect. And, further, he had a very strong personal appreciation of the assistance provided him through the open and free access to learning through library materials and facilities. Because of his almost fierce love for libraries he became one of a very few politicians who 'put their money where their mouths were' and he didn't always follow the rules.

During this year of the ALTA's development, the contributions made by the Minister were most interesting in that his measure of support extended beyond an annual grant for operational purposes. Let's look at what he made possible during this year:

1. The annual ALTA operating grant, initiated two years previous at a level of \$500.00 was now increased to \$6,400.00;
2. Because he held a strong belief that trustees would carry out their responsibilities more effectively if they were better backgrounded he offered an interesting proposal to the ALTA. To assist trustees and their boards to overcome the costs of attendance at the proposed joint LAA/ALTA annual conference he offered a trustee 'subsidy' grant to the ALTA. The grant was intended to be directed to trustees of rural public libraries. He placed five verbal conditions of the proposed subsidy grant:
 - a. That the grant accommodate for trustee registration fees;
 - b. That trustees receive a travel expense reimbursement;
 - c. That trustees be eligible for subsidization whether members of the ALTA OR non-members of the ALTA;

- d. That grant funds not required for registration fees and travel costs be directed towards accommodation costs at the Jasper Park Lodge;
- e. That the total grant be directed at subsidization for conference attendance by trustees from rural libraries.

We could not predict the number of trustees who would be in attendance at the conference and thus were unable to present a realistic subsidy grant requirement. Horst suggested that we use the figure \$7000.00 in our application grant. The grant was approved and we received the funds.

Your executive budget proposal to accommodate for the Minister's subsidy grant intent directed that:

1. Trustees representing a library serving population of under 20,000 be reimbursed their registration fees;
2. Trustees be granted 20 cents per mile subsidy.

The first few years of our joint conference the numbers of trustees registered was, in fact, rather low (41 at the 1977 conference). As a result the ALTA was able to direct subsidization to accommodate for all or most of the accommodation costs in addition to the registration fee and mileage allowance of the trustees in attendance. In following years the levels of subsidies were reduced as the numbers of trustees attending the conference increased. As the numbers of trustees attending the conference 'exploded' subsidization was limited to registration fees and mileage allowance.

Moving along to another exercise during this year we experienced a 'first' which was initiated by the LAA. The executive felt that a good impact would be made on the minister if he could see, at 'first hand', the challenges being faced by our northern public libraries. The LAA issued an invitation to the Minister to accompany them on a northern library tour. The Minister's response was an unexpected and interesting one. He not only accepted the invitation but offered to use government aircraft to accommodate for such a tour. He, further, requested that the President of the ALTA be a part of the touring group. And, so it was done!

But don't go away – there's more!

The Minister wanted well informed and well backgrounded ALTA and LAA people. He obviously recognized that there would be long term benefits to the public library community as well as to government if funding was directed at trustee and librarian personal backgrounding. Not all of the executive members were well informed on the 'nuts and bolts' of the regional library concept. They had no problem with the concept but grappled somewhat with the operation aspects of the library systems.

His proposed solution to improving regional library concept backgrounding was pragmatic in nature. He directed the Alberta Library Services to attend to details of arrangements for a visit to the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library System headquartered in Kamloops, BC. Four ALTA and four LAA executive members were invited to participate in a 'leaning' visit to Kamloops. Two government aircraft were access by him for the trip.

The opportunity to personally examine and study the Regional System's headquarters' organizational structure together with visits to branch libraries gave the ALTA and the LAA representatives an excellent overview of the operational challenges to a library system. The regional concept made sense and could well be one of the ways of improving library service in a relatively short period of time. A good learning was had!

While the Minister is being credited with providing the ALTA executive members an opportunity for some 'hands-on learning, some credit for this form of 'backgrounding' must be directed to Joe Forsyth,

Director of Alberta Library Services. There is no doubt, in my mind, that Joe had a hand in suggesting the visit to Kamloops. And, further, that he had a hand in suggesting a subsequent visit to Regina for a trustee and librarian exposure to the Saskatchewan model. Thanks, Joe!

Now, then, brushing aside for a few lines, the historical intent of this review – let me share with you some other elements of the Thompson-Nicola visit. It's fun time!

When we took to the air from Edmonton's Municipal airport we were not aware of the weather conditions in Kamloops. Those who have, for whatever reason, had the occasion to fly to Kamloops know that it is not always possible to land there because of the frequency of 'socking-in' of the landing strip. Yep, we learned, as we approached Kamloops that this was one of those days. Well, our pilots circled for a while hoping that the cloud cover would dissipate. No such luck! Decision time! Back to Edmonton as forget the visit? Horst's solution? "Let's go to Abbotsford, have lunch and, maybe by the time we're finished the cloud cover will dissipate." So done!

While attending to lunch at Abbotsford a couple of us tried to identify one of our group who appeared to be neither ALTA nor LAA. We assumed that she was one of Forsyth's Edmonton staff. When we asked Joe what area of responsibility the woman had in his office he answered, "She is not on my staff. She is a reporter with the Edmonton Journal and was invited to accompany us by Horst in the hope that there would be positive coverage of this tour". Well, sugar! Deep sugar! How did she caption her report? "Lunch for Minister and friends at Abbotsford", "Nice to eat out at the government's expense", "Government aircraft for Abbotsford Lunch." How to recover?

A couple of us who recognized the potential negative newspaper coverage took turns with the reporter. To our 'temporary' relief we learned that she was positive about the need for improved public library services in Alberta and was supportive of the intent of the visit. She further assured us that her article would be positive. Sigh of relief. As events unfolded for the remainder of the day all ended well.

Airborne, again, we approached Kamloops. Ground personnel advised that 'yes' there was a small opening in the cloud cover and the pilots could, if they wished, try for a landing. After some circling to 'find' the hole both aircraft 'popped' through and effected excellent landings. From that point on the Thompson-Nicola people 'did their thing' and did it well. The trip home? Uneventful. Pity!

This year's annual conference was successful. We were much encouraged by the improved trustee registrations. We now had 43 'paid up' member library boards plus the two Regional Systems (Parkland and Yellowhead). The conference drew 41 ALTA members – not great, but a beginning.

The annual meeting at the conference was directed that:

1. The surplus funds from the now disbanded Action Committee be placed in General Revenue;
2. The constitution be restructured for presentation and adoption at the 1978 annual meeting;
3. The fee structure be changed in principle and that the revised structure be presented for discussion at the 1978 annual meeting;
4. The ALTA conduct its annual conference in partnership with the LAA and, further, that the conference continued to be held at the Jasper Park Lodge.

There was considerable discussion about the location for the Annual Joint Conference. A feeling existed that the distances involved to the Jasper location would be a deterrent to trustee attendance. While this was a real concern the majority of trustees present saw a number of very positive reasons to locate at the lodge. The surroundings, the food, the accommodations and the service were excellent. A further variable of considerable importance was the removal of enticement for absenteeism. You got it – because of the 'isolation' of the lodge location attendance at sessions was full – and that was vital!

In recognition of the cost and location concerns the executive was directed to assess the viability of holding conference at other locations – Edmonton, Calgary, or Red Deer.

Both executives and conference planners did conduct a very thorough assessment of cost levels at the various locations suggested. And, no, this wasn't a 'one time' assessment. Location and costs were brought up annually through several conferences. All assessments conducted reached the same conclusion – costs for holding the conference at the Jasper Park Lodge were and are less costly than they would be at the other locations noted. The one remaining negative to the Jasper location was and continues to be that of travel distance.

Further to the Annual Meeting: an examination of the ALTA's financial circumstances gave cause for both satisfaction and some 'soul searching'. The satisfaction level was obvious and easily understood – revenues of \$9,419.97 reduced by expenditures of \$2,908.07 left a working bank balance of \$7,424.79. Is good, eh? Is good, yes, except that – should the association be 'squirreling' away reserved rather than applying those monies to developmental programs? Should the association be putting money away for a 'rainy day' or should it exhaust whatever reserved it has in a 'full-out' endeavour to assist public library and ALTA growth? The executive had to establish its priorities. It's fair to say that executives, in succeeding years, did shed, to a large extent, the 'squirreling' practice.

Let's look at a few other productive and positive exercises the association experienced in this banner year of its development.

The association responded to two new requests from the Minister. And, it also submitted its response to an earlier request from the Minister.

The Minister had earlier requested the ALTA to submit, for his benefit, a Position Paper of the ALTA. A Position Paper, in essence, spells out the desires, the directions and purposes of a group relative to 'whatever'. In our case we had to 'spell' out what we were all about and what we wanted done re: public library development for Alberta. So, then, we had to crystallize our thinking and 'map out' what we saw as needs for the public library community and to indicate how these needs could and/or should be met (financially, geographically and politically). Simple: "WHERE ARE YOU GOING? HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THERE?" Simple – the hell it was!

Arriving at the content of the ALTA's Position was not without disagreement. It was not an easy task since each individual involved in structuring our Position held strong convictions. And, this is as it should be! To the credit of those who participated in the structuring of the Paper compromises were made. Individuals withdrew from 'fixed' positions when they recognized that their stances were suspect. We received excellent assistance in structuring the content of the Position Paper from the LAA's then President, Aileen Wright. Her insight, her ability to 'cut' through verbal garbage, her dedication to the improvement of public library services and her tenacity to principle were much required and appreciated. While there were a number of 'heated' exchanges of opinion there was never a loss of respect for each other's point of view. That is a trademark of the ALTA members – don't ever lose it! One can choose to disagree with others but must always respect other individual's right to hold different opinions. Where you differ in opinion your task is to validate and 'sell' your thinking. If you are on good grounds you should be successful in your sell. If you are not on strong ground and/or your thinking is suspect then you need to reassess your thinking and accept someone else's better thinking.

The Position Paper was presented to the Minister in July of 1976. Shortly after having received it the Minister expressed a strong level of appreciation for its content. While he advised that he could not immediately accommodate for the developmental directions the Paper proposed he assured us that he

would bear them in mind as would respond positively when circumstances permitted (circumstances referred, of course, to the money levels that would be required to implement some or all of the recommendations offered in the submission).

The ALTA was able, also, to respond to the two other requests from the Minister:

1. An ALTA/LAA Development Paper on LIBRARY STANDARDS AND GRANT REGULATIONS FOR ALBERTA
2. An ALTA list of Nominees for appointment to the Alberta Library Board.

The Development Paper on Library Standards and Grant Structures provided an excellent opportunity for input in two very critical areas: Funding and Library Upgrading. Both areas were interesting and challenging!

A committee of three ALTA and three LAA representatives devoted a considerable amount of time to the Development Paper task. The committee presented its paper entitled "ALBERTA PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO 1980" to the minister in August of 1976 (it should be noted that both executives studied and approved the report prior to its presentation to the Minister).

The Minister expressed a strong level of appreciation for the content of the paper.

When you have an opportunity to study the content of the above noted paper you will recognize that a number of the recommendations were, in fact, and in time, implemented. You will also note that the ALTA's and LAA's positions have changed in a number of developmental proposals offered at the time. While it may be concluded that both associations were suspect in their thinking and offered 'pie in the sky' wishes and desires, that is not the case. Changes in positions taken or recommendations offered are, of necessity, modified, changed and/or even eliminated as more learnings take place relative to pragmatic solutions to challenges. As both associations grew and improved their backgrounds and were able to witness programs in other provinces and countries they saw better alternatives and simply adopted them. This ability to stay away from having 'goals' written in stone has and will continue to have a positive effect on Alberta's continuing library developmental directions. There is no 'one' way of achieving success! As library trustees, then, we must always bear in mind that 'changes in mid-stream' may better meet our challenges than holding 'firm' on suspect fixed positions. The world is a constantly changing one and we need to have a flexibility of thinking if we are to 'stay with the tide'. And, we need to retain the ALTA's ability to accept and adopt learnings from others who have found better solutions than we have to challenges facing us!

Your executive experienced no difficulty in submitting a list of nominees for the Minister's consideration vis a vis appointments to the about to be 'resurrected' Alberta Library Board. If memory serves me correctly some twelve names were submitted to the Minister. Interestingly enough a few of the names offered were of non-members of the ALTA. A few of the names submitted were of people we recognized as potentially strong contributors to public library development. We knew them as strong proponents of the role libraries can and should play in our societal setting. We further felt that they would add an external viewpoint which should be a component of the Alberta Library Board structure.

We experienced a good level of excitement when we received the Minister's request for nominations to the Alberta Library Board. Why? Well, many years back an Alberta Library Board was put in place to advise the then Minister responsible for public libraries on needs of the public library community. The appointed board was a good, strong board! It did its homework well and presented numerous, well thought out recommendations to the Minister for his attention and action. It took a while for the Board to recognize that the Minister was unable, uninterested and/or unconcerned about public library

development. None of the Board's recommendations saw the 'light of day'. Out of extreme disappointment, disgust, and disillusionment the Board resigned 'en masse.' This 'protest' stance taken by the board members did not have any status with the government of that period. The conclusion appears reasonable in that no attempt was made by the then government and/or Minister to either 'recall' the board or appoint a new board. A further reason for believing that public libraries were, in essence, a non-entity was that it was difficult to determine, from time to time, which Minister was responsible for public libraries. Public libraries were 'shunted' from one ministry to another and trying to determine which Minister was 'saddled' with this unwanted 'refugee' presented a challenge.

Eventually, and thankfully, public libraries found a 'home' with the Minister of Culture. How it got there remains a mystery to this day but it did! And, to our benefit, we inherited a couple of positive public library Ministers. Amen!

In the ALTA's beginning years we, together with the LAA, requested that the Alberta Library Board be reinstated because we felt, strongly, that an advisory Board to the Minister would be of particular value to the public library community. And, thus, the reason for the good level of excitement and satisfaction experienced on receiving the Minister's nomination list request. Like, hey dad, we got another voice!

Though it took a while, yet, the ALB appointments were announced and the ALBERTA LIBRARY BOARD was established in June, 1978. More about the Board further on in this review.

Heck, yes, there were other activities that took place during Lorna's second term as President of the ALTA. Where executive members found time to accommodate for their contributions is difficult to determine and, sometimes, to believe.

The trustee workshops became a 'corner stone' for the ALTA. Interest and participation were high in numbers. The content of the workshops was well received. A 'Northerner' trustee workshop convened in Edmonton drew in excess of 60 trustees; a similar workshop in Lethbridge drew in excess of 40 trustees; small rural centred workshops invariably drew trustees in the 30-35 numbers. Requests for workshops in areas not 'ticketed' for that year were received.

And, hey, we even held a 'Library Information' session for MLA's. The session, hosted by the ALTA and the LAA and held at the Edmonton Public Library drew, would you believe, 19 MLA's. Oh, yea, we went all out – wine and cheese, yet!

The informal MLA session was a rather interesting one. It was evident that most of the MLA's held little knowledge about the inadequacies of public libraries. The fact that they were there created an impression that they wanted to be better informed and, for that, they deserve to be commended. And they left better informed!

An assessment of the session revealed that we had a long, long road to travel to overcome the many 'pockets' of ignorance about public library service potential. We simply had to do a better job of 'selling' the function of our public libraries in terms of the educational and recreational avenues they should provide.

We also learned that we needed, also, to 'sell' the economic and cultural contributions offered through public library development; and the need for government(s) to understand the need for financial assistance at a level where libraries would become the focal point of every community. A long road!

The end of this year's executive activities and preparation for the following year ended and began in an uplifting manner.

Let the record show that for the ‘first’ time in the ALTA’s history we had more candidates nominated for executive positions than there were positions.

Hot damn! Campaign speeches and actually having to vote – WE HAVE ARRIVED!

Onward and Upward

The 1977-78 executive was led through a series of activities in ‘uncharted’ waters by Yellowhead Regional’s Jack Bland...*

Unchartered in that there were a number of moves made by the Alberta Library Services Branch that put us in a ballpark with a bat and ball but with little reference on how to play the game!

But let’s take a flight to Regina before we review the new ball games in which we tried to find our playing positions.

To experience another ‘hands-on’ assessment of regionalized library system the Minister, Horst Schmid, accompanied representatives from the ALTA and the LAA on a one day visit to Regina, Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan people, headed by Don Meadows, Provincial Librarian, orchestrated a one day orientation program on the ‘Saskatchewan Regional Model’. It was a very full day during which we were able to get a good ‘handle’ on their approach to public library services. AS with the previous year’s visit to the Thompson-Nicola Regional System in BC, we became more convinced than ever that regionalization was the best answer to Alberta’s public library needs. Again, as with the BC System we found many areas of operation acceptable and without reservation. We did, however, wrestle with some of the major variables in both approaches to regionalization. The ‘wrestling’ had to do with System Control. We had some reservations with the acceptability of their system control mechanism by Albertans. Permit me to elaborate.

The Thompson-Nicola System was totally controlled by its Regional Board and Staff. The Regional board and staff determined where libraries would be established; the library facility was built and/or bought by the system and managed by the system board; staff and all library service points were hired and placed by the System Board. Distribution, purchasing, delivery, services, programs and directions for development were controlled and directed by the System Board. Funding to the system was obtained from Provincial sources (government), almost totally. While the system was, to a large extent, autonomous vis a vis its operation and management it was almost totally dependent on provincial coffers for its financial existence. As trustees we like the system’s autonomy variable we had reservations about the overall total control of the regional’s library service points. We also held strong ‘whims’ of the provincial governments’ attitudes to libraries at any given point of their mandate (it can be noted here – now although we didn’t foresee it at the time of our visit our reservations re: provincial funding were well founded. A couple of years after our visit there was a change of government and one of the groups which suffered drastic reductions of provincial financial support were the regional systems – and, they had a ball trying to recover).

The Saskatchewan model added a further variable which gave us some concern. As in BC the major source of financial assistance was from provincial coffers. While individual regional systems had a measure of control the major areas of control and direction rested at the Provincial Library level. Discussion with Saskatchewan trustees attending our conferences revealed some disturbing elements vis a

vis financing. The trustees advised that their regional's level of financial contributions was determined by the Provincial Library and that they, the System Boards, had no alternative but to 'cough up'!

While there may have been and, perhaps, continue to be 'pockets' of misunderstanding, fully, the 'nuts and bolts' of the operational processes and funding realities of the Saskatchewan model there was enough of the a reading to cause some concern. We felt that Alberta's public library community would not be particularly receptive to external control – whether by a system board or by a provincial library board. Let's say it like it is – Albertans, certainly in the Public library community, want to be "masters in their own homes". The two systems which ere in existence in Alberta during this period provided "back-up" service to their library service points and did not direct individual library services and/or programs' individual libraries were 'free' to 'do their own thing'. This was and is understandable. The level of provincial funding support to systems was 'suspect' and the major source of revenue came from local governing authorities. That being the case 'control' was at the local library level – the system board offered recommendations and suggestions BUT the local board determined its priorities.

In summary, then, many good learnings were gained through the visits to Kamloops and Regina. Systems were observed, assessed and explored. Those learning assisted immeasurably toward formulating a regionalized approach which would be most acceptable to Albertans. And we are, indeed, most indebted to the openness and honesty of the presentations of the system forms in our sister provinces. They did their thing their way and we would have to do our thing our way. However, we held an advantage in that we could weigh the pros and cons of established systems of both provinces and our own and now knew of the manner of development of a number of system forms.

In concluding the review on the Regina visit I would be remiss if it was not noted, here, that transportation (one government and one chartered aircraft) was provided by Alberta Culture. Thanks again, Horst.

Following a late afternoon meal after the last part of the tour in an about Regina we had to pay our dues (you know, speeches). No, not negative about the 'speeches' exercise but you know what I mean. At any rate our Minister set all of us on our 'fannies' during his response to the Saskatchewan government people. While his words of appreciation were sincere and truly earned by the Saskatchewan people he used this occasion to 'impress' them by making this announcement:

1. The Alberta Government has initiated a bursary program to assist two library students and/or practicing librarians;
2. Alberta Library Services is pleased to announce that it is now establishing a Library Service for people with special needs;
3. Alberta Library Services is pleased to announce its Multi-Lingual Bibliographic Service.

To say that we were all caught with our 'shorts' at a precarious level would, in fact, be a most accurate statement. Pleased? You Bet! Very much so! But what the heck were these programs? At that point in time your guess would have been every bit as good as ours! What were they and how did they 'fit in' with public library usage? Darned if we knew! Well, whatever! We were now about to be recipients of two provincially funded programs. Sounded great! As events unfolded there is, now, no question that the two programs are excellent, well utilized and provided and additional focus on the importance and value of public library services.

Hang in there – there's more (let's look at some pictures first)

In addition to the Minister's announcements in Regina we now entered a Regional 'sell' period from an "ON-HANDS" exercise. Three areas came into play! And, although there was inter-relationship among

the three areas it might be better to look at each in isolation to examine their structures. The inter-relationship among the three areas will be readily seen and will not need elaboration.

1. NALDS and SALS: These two programs were intended to ‘show’ what a regional library system could provide in terms of service and programs.
 - a. NALDS – NORTHERN ALBERTA LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
 - b. SALS – SOUTHERN ALBERTA LIBRARY SERVICES

Geographically, NALDS was the area from Red Deer North; SALS looked after the area south of Red Deer. The major urban centres were not included as participants in these programs. In essence, there were rural programs.

From a trustee and ALTA point of view there were a good number of positives associated with the introduction and implementation of NALDS and SALS (both funded through Alberta Library Services). A review of the method of operation of both groups reveals that excellent seeds were planted vis a vis the advantages of the regional concept. While there were a great number of positives experienced it is my belief that some of the positives did not receive the recognition they deserved and I will refer to them as we move along in discussing NALDS and SALS.

Permit me, first, to review the operational procedures taken by NALDS and SALS. And, further, permit me to review them separately in view of the differing interpretations of the intent of the program – yes, each group took a somewhat different approach to the exercise. In looking back it is understandable that there were two interpretations of what was to take place – the programs were introduced in a ‘hurry’ and there existed an element of confusion with respect to their implementation and/or to the ‘how’s’, ‘why’s’ and ‘what for’s’ of the exercise. However, again looking back, both groups performed well and did an excellent ‘sell’ job re: regionalization. Just goes to show that there is no one method that works!

The NALDS program was co-ordinated by the Edmonton Public library but was directed by a NALDS structured committee. Representation on the NALDS committee was determined by the jurisdictions within its mandated area. Alberta Culture’s funding of the project was intended to benefit ALL public libraries, not all ALTA members alone.

To accommodate for equality of benefits within the NALDS area the operating committee developed a formula for fund distribution on the basis of population served by individual library service points. With this formula in place and the interpretations of the intent of NALDS, materials and equipment requirements were determined, essentially, by the committee and distributed equally among its members.

On the termination of the three year program period the committee apportioned its remaining funds among its area’s libraries’ to be utilized as each library felt in terms of its material and/or equipment needs.

Over the three year period of the program the Edmonton Public Library was responsible for monitoring the committee’s financial expenditures through its accounting department. Further, Edmonton Public agreed to provide space and personnel in its facility for NALDS operational requirements.

The expenditures of Culture’s grant by the NALDS made it possible for individual libraries to improve its stock and equipment. Because they were able to do so each of the individual library service points was able to present itself as a much improved library service point.

The Calgary Public Library centred SALS program differed some – what from the directions taken by NALDS. The direction taken by SALS was strongly influenced by the emergence of the MARIGOLD

REGIONAL SYSTEM movement (a movement that succeeded and which played a most important role vis a vis subsequent regional formations)

A professional librarian was hired to implement service programs, purchased materials, develop a circulating library package and to act as a 'consultant' to rural library service points

The operating committee took several directions but exhibited a 'flexibility' to make mid-stream changes.

1. The travelling consultant remained constant throughout the three year period. The service was regarded as too important a variable to withdraw;
2. Library materials purchased were, initially, distributed to all of the SALS area libraries. The intent, here, was to provide basic reference needs.
The Parkland Regional Library Board effected a decision which was indicative of its consulting interest for regional library development beyond its own area. Parkland's director advised his board that the SALS consultant was offering her assistance to library service points within Parkland and, further, that she was making permanent 'book deposits' in the system's libraries from SALS' budge

The Parkland Board, though its representative on the SALS' Steering Committee, advised SALS of the following

- a) Because Parkland Regional had adequate professional staff to offer consultative services to its library service points that the SALS' consultant use her 'Parkland' time in non-regionalized areas of SALS' mandate
- b) Because Parkland's library service points held book stock levels considerably higher than was visible in non-regionalized libraries in the SALS' area, and because Parkland's book allocation budget was adequate for the infusion of additional library book stock to its library service points that moneys allocated for book stock for Parkland's libraries be reallocated for distribution to non-regional libraries in the SALS' mandated area.
- c) If it is a mandated requirement that portions of SALS budget be allocated to Parkland Regional then that budget figure be utilized to hire a second professional consultant to provide additional assistance to non-regionalized areas within SALS.

Because the SALS' steering committee felt that a second consultant was not required it reallocated Parkland's 'share' to book stock for non-regionalized libraries. SALS, further, withdrew consultative services to Parkland's libraries.

On the termination of the three year program SALS' surplus funds were directed to the Marigold Organizing Committee. The steering committee, with agreement from their area mandated libraries, felt that the need for establishing the Marigold Library System held a much higher priority than 'piece-mealing' individual library service points' improvement. We needed the formation of a third regional library system in Alberta. In essence, the steering committee and its mandated area's libraries agreed that through directing the bulk of its surplus to the organizational needs of Marigold they were, together, making an investment for long term benefits.

In summary, then, NALDS and SALS were positive programs in that they:

- a) Provided an infusion of books, materials, and equipment sorely needed in most of Alberta's rural libraries;
- b) Provided a 'hands-on' regional concept experience;
- c) Assisted in 'upgrading' rural libraries;
- d) Encouraged co-operative endeavours between and among library service points;

- e) Contributed to an understanding of the benefits which could be enjoyed through the sharing of physical and financial resources
- f) Cemented the 'sharing' of library developmental needs as a 'whole' rather than in 'isolation'!

Of some interest relative to the 'demise' of NALDS and SALS it needs to be noted that there was not unanimous agreement that the two projects should cease to exist. The Alberta Library Board and Alberta's Director of Libraries was firm in their stance: "The projects were directed to be functional for a three year period. That period is now over. The projects will cease operating!" There was an expressed feeling by both groups noted that three years was long enough for libraries to experience the potential benefits to regionalization. The two groups felt, further, that an extension to the program could have negative effects on regional systems' establishments. Their theory was one which was based on the premise that rural libraries would 'like' what they were receiving through NALDS and SALS and would prefer to continue in that manner rather than becoming a part of a regionalized system.

The ALTA's, NALDS' and SALS' thinking was somewhat different. All three groups felt that the program should have been extended for two major reasons:

- a) The 'hurry-up' offence for NALDS and SALS did not allow for erecting a 'thought out' organizational and directional structure. In effect, the first six months of the program were a 'touch and feel' exercise;
- b) These groups wanted to 'cement' the regional concept at a stronger level than appeared to exist at the time.

Well, it didn't seem to matter what arguments were presented relative to a time extension for both programs – they were 'buried' without lengthy eulogies.

1. A second service added during this rather 'hurly-burly' period was the "ZENITH NUMBER". Its introduction, at this time, assisted the regional 'sell' thrust. AWWWWWWRIGHT! Used the phone – Alberta Library Services is pick up the tab. Once again, a hurried introduction produced misunderstandings and provided for some 'rectal' irritations!
As libraries recognized the value of the Zenith number they began to use it frequently – and why not – that's what it was for, wasn't it? Well, not quite! It seems that the Zenith Line was intended to be used for some very specific purposes – regrettably, its use and intent were not to clearly spelled out at the outset. And, because the cost to Alberta Library Services was considerably higher than had budgeted for there was a need to define its purpose and intended use. As a result a rather good level of confusion surfaced at the public library level and some of the initial excitement re: the Zenith line faded. In time, however, the situation was resolved and the program functioned and continues to function well. The irritations surfaced when cost sharing changes were effected mid-year – this caused 'headaches' at the local level in terms of budget modification. However, the Zenith line did, in fact, play a good role in complimenting the regional sells by NALDS and SALS.
2. Alberta Library Services added a third spoke to the wheel of the Regional 'sell' through its introduction of the inter-library loan network
A great deal of time and debate had taken place among member representatives of the ALTA, the LAA, ALS, The University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the major public libraries and the Department of Education in attempting to evolve some form of a provincial network. The horrendously high cost estimates, the incompatibilities of existing computer hardware and the differing levels of expectations and, then, the 'withdrawal' of provincial funding for continuing studies, appeared to place the 'library loan network' in 'limbo'!

Alberta Library Service embarked on a relatively simple form of library to library communication method and did, in fact, provide an avenue for inter-library loan possibilities. Although dubbed 'primitive' the method worked and with some refinements continues to function adequately. While the ALTA had had visions of a provincial library to which public libraries could 'tie' into it became evident that the funding requirements for such a library and its requirements to serve as a provincial resource centre were not likely to be accessed. Trustees and librarians accepted the Alberta Library Services Branch's approach and worked with the system in a positive manner. And, perhaps, that is the basic reason for the success of the present in-place inter-library loan network.

Alberta Library Services' rudimentary form of an inter-library loan network took the form of installing telex terminals in seven major centres – Ft McMurray, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Lacombe (Parkland Regional Headquarters), Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. In its second year of operation further terminals were installed in Red Deer and Spruce Grove (Yellowhead Regional Headquarters).

In practice, the requests for inter-library loan needs were initially directed to Alberta Library Services who, in turn, would transmit the request through the Telex system. The telex centres would then advise if they had a title or titles for borrowing and would forward the same to the requesting library. Simple? Yes, and relatively effective!

Combining, then, the three programs relative to regionalization (NALDS & SALS), the Zenith Line, the inter-library loans service with the two provincially funded programs of Library Services to the Developmentally Disabled and the Multi-Lingual Bibliographic (many languages books) service Alberta library trustees were kept 'hopping' just to stay abreast of what was happening.

A very strong measure of commendation needs to be directed to Alberta Library Services Branch for its outstanding contributions during this period of provincial public library development. The funding levels required for these programs were high and were provided through the Branch's budget. ALS's personnel were available 'on call' and provided immeasurable assistance throughout rural Alberta. Hey, u up dere – u dun good!

Now, then, while all of these 'goodies' were being experienced the ALTA's workshops were in 'full swing'! To illustrate the ALTA's provincial coverage of its workshop locations these areas hosted workshops in this year: Grande Prairie, Fairview, Sherwood Park, Hay Lakes, High River, Brooks, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Vermillion and Westlock. Representatives from the ALTA's executive were present at and participated in each of the workshop locations.

At its annual meeting in Jasper the ALTA executive presented a revised constitution for the Association. Following a thorough review and assessment of the content and intention of the new constitution the meeting approved its adoption (the association is now becoming somewhat sophisticated – there was a time when the only reason a constitution was structured was when it was required by some 'desk sitting' jockey up in Edmonton. Time wasn't expended in trying to determine what a particular word was 'intended' to mean – in fact, there were times when we had difficulty finding a copy of our constitution, let alone subscribing to it – ah, but well, things were different then).

A couple of interesting 'seeds' were planted at this annual meeting. The executive was directed to consider:

1. Publishing a regular newsletter;
2. Presenting public library trustee concerns to the Provincial Cabinet by the ALTA as separate from the LAA's annual presentation

Both of these recommendations did, in time, play interesting roles in the ALTA's further growth and development.

The "7's" Lined Up

Those of you who will have had occasion to 'pull the slot handles' (for scientific studies of, course) in Reno or Vegas will know that when the 7's line up across the board you have beaten the odds. No, no, no, Ed's executive of this year didn't 'launder' your association's cash surplus through the money machines in Reno or Vegas! Your association hit a 'jackpot' through Western Canada Lotteries. More about that just a bit further on.

Let's look, first, at a few other areas of the ALTA's activities during this year.

Some excellent groundwork was put in place relative to the Library Services to the disabled program. As noted, earlier, the program was initiated in a bit of a 'hurry' and there was a certain amount of confusion vis a vis its purpose and of its accessibility to disabled persons and, further, of who was included as participants in the program. The 'whereas's' and 'what for's' of the program appeared too restrictive in the eyes of the ALTA. Essentially the program appeared to be directed for use by those whose sight was impaired. There was a requirement for working closely with the CNIB in view of its agreements with publishers and authors re: utilization of reading materials by the visually impaired.

The ALTA's interpretation of the term 'disabled' included any and all physical and developmental disabilities. The ALTA was not, further, particularly happy with the need for 'users' to be required to present medical verification that they were in some way disabled. We felt that this was, in fact, a form of discrimination that would be degrading to this segment of the population. Your executive appointed June Crawford to serve as the ALTA's representative on the 'Advisory Committee for Library Services to the Disabled.' While she was not initially successful in 'opening up' the accessibility variable she persevered and, in time, persons with disabilities other than visual were able to access the 'talking books.' While this program is now more accessible to persons with physical disabilities there continues to be a restrictive element which needs to be removed. The question that comes to mind is one that asks, "why persons who have a developmental disability should be denied the opportunity to listen to literature in audio form?"

The Advisory Committee, Alberta Library Services Branch, public libraries, libraries and trustees extended considerable effort to publicize the program. The program 'got off' to a slow start. However, as word of mouth and less restrictive 'application' forms surfaced, the program began to move well. It continues to be an excellent program and when further 'loosening' of restrictive strings takes place many more will be able to benefit from it.

The Canadian Library Association Conference, held in Edmonton during this year, gave the ALTA an opportunity to provide a 'first' for the conference. The ALTA sponsored and conducted a "Trustee Reception", the first ever such held at a CLA conference. The reception was favourably received and provided those who attended an opportunity to meet as 'trustees' rather than appendages to other CLAS receptions! Is okay!

Back to 'field' work!

Your executive encouraged the Marigold Regional 'sell' which was then being 'crusaded' by one Gaye Ross from Drumheller. ALTA executive members attended meetings arranged by Gaye and participated wherever possible and whenever requested. What must be recognized here is that although ALTA

executive members were available for assistance and participation in the Marigold project they WERE NOT major keys to Marigold's eventual successful establishment. Marigold's success was brought about by the library minded people, trustees and librarians and municipal authorities from 'within' the Marigold proposed area. The ALTA's role was, in essence, a 'support' role WHEN REQUESTED. Gaye Ross and Lucille Doherty spearheaded the 'sell' and were assisted most capably by a large number of individuals in the Marigold geographical area.

As activities regarding regionalization surfaced in other areas of the province the ALTA's contributions were similar in nature to those offered to Marigold.

Assistance WHEN REQUESTED but refusal to DIRECT! And, the ALTA paid very close attention to NOT taking a dominant, directing role at the local level. I suspect that if the ALTA had taken a 'gung-ho, we know what's good for you' attitude into the areas designated for regionalization that the 'locals' would have viewed regionalization as something being 'pushed down their throats'! And, I further suspect that had the ALTA taken a 'pushy' position within the areas that the whole ball of wax could easily have 'gone down the tube'. There is no question in my mind that the primary reason for the excellent moves made regarding regionalization in all areas of the province is that the moves were made by the local people. That is the way it had to be and must continue to be. You can't force people into doing things they may not want to do. You can try to force and when you do you will not be successful. The local men and women are the ones who can affect something which will not only be successful but will have a long term life.

Moving on!

We had an opportunity to meet with the Alberta Library Board to discuss public library development for Alberta. The time had some to do some 'fence' mending with the ALB.

A good number of the ALTA executives and trustees throughout the province did not think too highly of the Alberta Library Board. The Board's presence at the previous year's conference is still referred to as the year of the 'Turkey Shoot'! The board presented itself at an open session to explain its purpose and function. When the session was open to questions from the audience it did not take long for words of criticism to be directed at the Board. What seemed to raise the 'hackles' of the trustees and librarians present was the Board's refusal to share its plan for public library development. Board members seemed to be saying that they invited 'input' but could not and would not share their individual and/or collective thinking relative to public library development with those present at the meeting. The Board chairman advised the meeting that it was an advisory committee which offered recommendations to the Minister and could not share its thinking with the library community. Well, all hell broke loose and it was many years before the ALB took an active part in the joint conference. Oh, yes, the board members continued to attend the conference but refused to hold ALB informational sessions – the Board simply avoided any additional possible 'Turkey Shoots'!

As trustees we did not recognise the political position of the ALB members. We simply assumed that the Board would be working with us, closely, and that our thinking together with its thinking would provide 'known' directions for public library development. We further assumed that 'Hey, guys, we're in the same ballpark (Blue Jays, of course) so let's get it together on who is pitching and who is catching!' The reality which we failed to recognize and accept was the process that was involved.

Because the Board was and continues to be an Advisory Board to the Minister it is not in a position to reveal its recommendations to the general public. If the board were to reveal its recommendations then the Minister becomes the 'bad' guy if he doesn't implement them. In effect, then, the Board, by releasing its recommendations to the public, before and/or after the Minister receives them, assumes a power it does

not legally hold. All Ministries operate in the same manner where advisory boards are in place now. Now, then, after the Board presents its recommendations to the Minister, he or she may act on some of them and announce them from ‘on high’ to earn ‘brownie’ points with the service community affected. No, this isn’t intended to be critical of the Ministers of the Crown – it’s simply recognition of how the system operates. And, while we may, individually and/or collectively, hold reservation about the process it is a fact of ‘political’ life that we must understand and function within. If your reservations are extremely strong then I would suggest that you form a new political party and set up your own ‘processes’. But if you can’t and won’t form a political force which can successfully ‘take over’ the legislature, then assess the ‘processes in place’ and capitalize on them when and where you can. As public library trustees we are ‘politicians’ and as ‘politicians’ we have the capability to ‘adapt’ to what’s in place. We may not like it but it’s how the game is played. ADAPT! ADAPT!

Your executive recognized that the ‘hostility’ toward the ALB was not to the benefit of the public library community. It decided to take some measures to effect a change of the attitude of the ALTA and, hopefully, of the ALB vis a vis leadership roles regarding public library development.

While discussions with the ALB did not immeasurably improve our knowledge relative to their ‘sense of direction’ we did recognize some positives. The ALB did confirm its positive support for the regionalization concept in rural Alberta. Its studies and visits to assess regional library structures led them to believe that regionalization was a direction worthy of strong consideration for implementation.

The Board, too, appeared to want to mend some ‘fences’. This was evidence through its invitation to the ALTA’s president to accompany them on a visit to Olympia, Washington, to examine and assess that state’s Library system. The State Library System had, within its structure, a regional library component which ‘might’ serve as a model for Alberta.

Although the ALB was not directly communicative with the ALTA relative to its recommendations to the Minister it was possible to determine its envisioned public library development through the various announcements made by the Minister. And, further, through activities pursued by Alberta Public Library Services Branch as well as information sought from libraries by it.

It became relatively evident that the ALB supported regionalization as a major direction for rural public library development. The Board was, obviously, strongly supportive of the Marigold project. It also became evident that the structure of a regional library system as envisioned by the Board and ALS was different from the structures of the two existing regional systems (Parkland and Yellowhead). Marigold was to become a public library oriented system as opposed to the public-school library structures of Parkland and Yellowhead.

To further evidence the ALB’ enthusiasm relative to regionalization particularly good levels of ALS funding were directed to assist in Marigold’s establishment and, subsequently, to its initial ...

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“Mister Chairman, when are WE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE ALTA NEWSLETTER that last year’s annual meeting requested?”

Well, some discussion took place – money, who had time to do it, what kind of content, what benefit, and, so on. Carrie shortened the discussion in her on inimical way: “We can beat around the bush all day and resolve nothing. So, if you accept that it won’t be fancy, and since no one else seems to have the time I will do it as cheaply as possible!” Unanimous agreement – and that’s how the ALTA’s Newsletter came into being. Thanks, Carrie!

Annual meetings or for that matter any meeting of a group of people can bring about challenges 'following' that meeting. The previous year's annual meeting did just that!

A motion directing that the following year's ALTA co-chairman of the conference be appointed at that time was carried. The name proposed for the meeting's consideration was that of a library trustee who was not a member of the ALTA executive. Carried. Simple enough! So it seemed. Well, not quite! There followed period of some confusion with respect to conference planning – your executive's role, the role of the planning co-chairman, responsibility of who to whom, lines of communication, etc. etc. In time the situation was resolved but not before some evidence of the developed hostilities and unnecessary confusion. While, in time, the circumstance was resolved it pointed out that division of authority and responsibility need careful considerations. An appointee at 'arms-length' from the executive presents space for confusion and confusion is one variable that needs to be avoided. Annual meeting resolutions should, by and large, be framed as 'recommendations' for consideration by the executive. No, not for 'sermons from the mount' purposes! But, rather, to provide an executive with an opportunity to assess the pros and cons of a meeting's recommendations in an unhurried and unspontaneous environment. What may sound 'good' may have implications not immediately recognizable.

Now, then, let's pull that slot machine handle!

The circumstances relating to the 'jackpot' of \$275,000 awarded to an LAA/ALTA trust fund was 'politically' fascinating! It was an exercise which exhibited a level of 'movement' required to capitalize on an opportunity presented. It was of those situations where 'time' was of the essence and where long term debates and discussions were to be avoided. What's the expression? Oh, yes, 'strike while the iron is hot'! (Will relate, later, where potential gains were lost as result of 'long term' discussions.)

A very late evening phone call to the president of the ALTA from the Minister of Culture asked when your president could come to Edmonton for a discussion relative to financial assistance to the ALTA. The meeting was arranged for the following day (hey, man, money's involved – get your butt in gear – now!!)

As closely as memory will allow for recall the conversation, on the following day, in the Minister's office, went something like this:

Minister: Do you work well with the LAA?

Answer: Yes. Although our methods are different, our end goals are the same

Minister: Can you guarantee me that the ALTA and the LAA will always work together in harmony towards public library improvement?

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Minister: Yesterday! Can you move fast?

Response: Yes!

Minister: Thank you for finding the time, on such short notice, to come in and speak with me.

Response: Think nothing of it. It was my pleasure!

The BALL, then, was in our court! AWWWWRIGHT! Not to worry!

Well, that same evening a telephone conversation between the Presidents determined areas of common and separate needs of both associations. Both Presidents agreed to think about the areas noted and to consider the dollar figures required.

The following afternoon agreement was reached regarding areas of funding needs and funding levels required. That evening a further discussion reaffirmed agreement.

The areas designated as areas of need included:

1. An executive assistant for each association
2. Operating fund levels for both associations
3. Rural trustee/librarian conference subsidizations
4. Funding for associations' workshops
5. Seminar, workshop speaker fees and honorariums
6. Newsletters
7. Special projects
8. Expenses of T/F committee (no honorariums)

The sum of moneys requested to accommodate for the above totalled \$275,000.

Within four days of the meeting with the Minister he had, in his possession, a signed and completed application for the above noted sum of money. It was either three or four days later that the president of the LAA received a phone call from the treasurer of the LAA advising him that she had just received a hand-delivered cheque in the amount of \$275,000 made out to the LAA/ALTA trust fund, a cheque issued by Western Canada Lotteries. And the treasurer's question: "what's this all about?"

The question was legitimate. What was it all about? How come? Why?

Well, there were a number of variables which came into play in attempting to answer the question 'How come'? Some of the variables were openly visible – some were subject to conjecture.

The visible variables:

1. The Minister wanted to see both associations in a position where finances were not a 'continuing' challenge to them. He wanted both groups to experience a 5 year funding assurance;
2. The Minister had full confidence that good progress in public library development would result from the joint efforts of the two groups;
3. The Minister was not 'happy' with the process which required both associations to come to him annually for 'bailing out' money;
4. The Minister was aware that the budget of Alberta Library Services could not accommodate for a rather heavy infusion of funds for 'field' work assistance required by both groups;
5. The Western Lotteries Fund Board was responsible to this Minister for its distribution of Lottery Fund surpluses;
6. The Minister wanted to move quickly

The not-so-visible but conjectured variables included:

1. An imminent provincial election;
2. A possible Ministerial 'change' in keeping with the Premier's 'one term' Ministerial policy (the present Minister was one of the very few in a second term in the same Minister);
3. A 'by-passing' of the 'cutting' and 'regulating' gnomes;

4. Ministerial influence over lottery fund distributions.

As it turned out a provincial election was, in fact, called not too long after we had the funds in our 'hot little hands'. In essence, then, we were secured financially for a five year period and would not be subject to an incoming Minister's whims!

When we learned that a 'Mrs Mary LeMessurier' was the new Minister we were exposed to an 'unknown'. We had no knowledge background about this lady's personal interests let alone her interests and/or enthusiasm about public libraries. But it didn't matter for we were secured financially. As events unfolded we found ourselves in the most fortunate position of not only being financial secured but we also had a minister who, in fact, was very much interested in and concerned about the poor state of public libraries in the province. So, we had the best of both worlds for the next number of years. As a result it was possible for both associations to perform well and confidently in their endeavours vis a vis public library development.

Acceptance of what the two presidents had done was not total. Concern was voiced relative to a decision made by them without prior consultation with their respective executives.

Both presidents recognized the legitimacy of the concern raised and offered explanatory apologies for their action.

The key element involved here is the 'political' element. Both presidents had a good understanding of how 'things' happen in the political arena. Both recognized that you 'capitalize' immediately on an opportunity that presents itself which will better the association (s). Like, man, you 'move' NOW – if you hesitate you just might find yourself 'on the outside looking in'. Both further recognized that endeavours to get a 'quick' gathering of both executives was wishful thinking. The time that would be required to gather the groups, discuss the 'whys' and 'wherefores' and the 'should we' or 'shouldn't we' aspects and to tie them in with grandiose philosophical runabouts could well have 'scotched' the opportunity for long term financial assurance.

Both executives, after due deliberation, endorsed the action taken by their respective presidents.

The guidelines for the uses of the Trust Fund were modified, clarified and altered, to some degrees, and were subsequently approved by the executives and the Minister.

The Annual Meeting greeted the news about the Trust Fund in a most positive manner. There were a few trustees who expressed concern about the source of funding. Their negative stance reflected their personal 'distaste' relative to accepting 'gambling' revenues for public library improvement. A bit of a dilemma! The larger majority of the meetings seemed to accept that whatever the source of money public libraries would be the beneficiaries and that's what it was all about!

In summary: The ALTA now found itself in the position of being able to plan its activities confidently and with definite purpose. The moneys were there and it was now the ALTA's responsibility to make maximum positive use of the now available funds.

While there were specific guidelines attached to the Trust Fund use there were some interesting interpretations given to those guidelines. The Minister was aware, at the outset, that interpretations by the Trust Fund committee and the two executives of the guidelines would be such that the public library community would benefit from those interpretations. In essence, both executives and the Trust Fund committee had free rein on the utilization of the fund.

Permit me to detail one area of modification of guidelines which the ALTA proposed and which was approved by the Trust Fund committee.

The submission for the Trust Fund noted a requirement by both associations for executive secretarial assistance – that is, the ‘hiring’ of someone to attend to areas of need which the executive could not attend to in view of their time limitations for association work. The LAA had a very strong need for such a person. The ALTA, on the other hand, did not have a sufficient number of projects which wouldn’t require a full time employee. Because the ALTA executive members were able to attend to their secretarial needs through their ‘employers’ staffs and materials, the executive decided to use ‘those’ allocated funded levels in a different manner. Those executive members who had taken on a responsibility which required ‘leg work’ to be done by someone authorized to bill the ALTA for such assistance. The ALTA would then accommodate for the payment to whomever for the services they rendered. However, the levels of funding required for such assistance were very low and as a consequence the ALTA found itself in the position of having to account for surplus funds in this one area. Because the ALTA was strongly supportive of the regional concept and because executive members were aware of the lack of funds in the various areas of the province to promote regionalization the executive offered this proposal to the Trust Fund committee for such purpose be directed as ‘seed’ money to regional organizing committees; a sum in the amount of \$5000 to each area exhibiting regionalization activities. The Trust Fund committee responded to the recommendation in a positive and approving manner. As a consequence the ‘seed’ money in the amount of \$5000 was received by the Peace, The Southeast, The Southwest (Oldman) and Shortgrass (the Northeast did not benefit as it did not come into existence until after the original trust fund was exhausted).

The ‘free rein’ that both associations and the Trust Fund committee had on the fund made it possible to ‘save time’ in getting things done! Can you envisage the time ‘loss’ that could have been experienced if the fund had regulated by someone other than the two associations? As an aside one might compare the ‘ease’ of access through the Alberta Foundation of Literary Arts presently in place. Just of bit of difference, I am afraid!

It is of some importance to note here that although the above may suggest that funding from the ALTA/LAA trust fund was a ‘piece of cake’ such was not the case. The two associations and the T/F committee were all very ‘watchful’ of how the moneys were intended to be and were, in fact, expended. Every proposal was carefully structured by each of the associations and then, thoroughly, assessed by the T/F committee to ensure that public library development was the full beneficiary from the expenditures of the T/F funds. And, yes, both associations presented detailed reports on expenditures of moneys received to the T/F committee, which, in turn, retained and submitted these documents to the Western Lottery Fund appointed auditing firm on completion of the five year span of the fund.

New Kid on the Block

The 1978-79 Annual Meeting received reports on association activities during the year, elected a new executive, digested the implications of the Trust Fund and offered recommendations for consideration by the executive. A positive reaction to the ALTA’s newsletter was evident through the meeting’s direction that the newsletter be continued and that its content be broadened. The ALTA delegate registration was an all-time high of 65.

The meeting, further, reaffirmed the need to continue pressing Alberta Culture to affect a Capital Building Program for Alberta’s public libraries.

The ALTA's audited financial statement revealed a revenue income of \$23,821 with disbursements of \$15,281.37, leaving the association with a 'black' balance of \$8,539.63. The next few years witnessed much improved revenue levels as accessed through the Trust Fund.

This same meeting experienced a 'Here We Go Again' exposure. Prior to the conference a provincial election had taken place and a new Minister of Culture had been appointed. Yes, the meeting had an opportunity to meet the 'new kid on the block'! Mary LeMessurier (Minister) offered greetings to the meeting and expressed her strong interest in improving public library services in Alberta. As in our introduction to the previous Minister (Schmid) a number of years back we found ourselves in a similar position of not really knowing the 'real' interests of the new Minister. Politics, politicians, political processes and the entire game of governing revolves around personal ambitions, personal ego and/or persona 'coat of armourings'. Yes, she expressed a strong concern about the weak state of Alberta's public libraries but would she provide the leadership and support required to effectively assist the public library community? We simply did not know! But we learned 'fast'!

Your Trust Fund committee sought and received 'time' with the Minister during her stay at the conference. This and an early subsequent meeting with the minister by the committee revealed a number of positive learnings about her. We'll discuss the learnings but first permit me to discuss political realities and the disruption they can sometime cause.

Any person appointed to a Ministerial position accepts with that appointment a very wide range of responsibilities. In many instances that individual had very little knowledge and/or understanding of all the variables already in place within that department. Now, a Minister may choose to depend, heavily, on his/her civil service support staff and accept, without question, its recommendations. Or, the Minister, on his/her personal 'ego' trip and/or in search of 'brownie' points with the premier may seek to alter, eliminate and/or discredit (diplomatically, of course) the programs already put in place by a previous Minister. This type of Minister wants to put his/her 'stamp' on the department involved! So, when a new Minister comes in out of the 'bullpen' the communities affected by that Ministry sit on 'pins and needles' while waiting to learn if their positions have been improved, maintained and/or God forbid, 'wiped out'! I guess that's why working with governments and the political unknowns can be frustrating, exhilarating, uncertain and certainly 'ulcerating'!

Well, what did we learn about our new Minister?

We learned, quickly, that she had, in the short period of her tenure, done a good amount of 'homework' relative to public library development in the province. She knew about and expressed deep concern over the inadequate provincial funding support to public libraries. We were given reason to believe that this would be her first priority for improvement through her department. We also learned that she had a level of appreciation of the importance of public libraries as did her predecessor. And, like her predecessor, she was determined to see strong improvements in the public library community. She was a staunch supporter of the Regional library concept and applauded the evident interest in regionalization throughout rural Alberta. She expressed a particularly high level of appreciation and commendation of both associations.

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No Shortage of Things to Do

Running through the 1979-80 operational year reveals several interesting trustee developmental processes and the branching out into unknown waters. And, capital funding!

Let's have a look, first, at the ALTA's financial circumstance. While money isn't everything it certainly presents possibilities if you have some. Right?

To this time of the ALTA's growth the accessing of funds presented interesting challenges. Membership fees were not a productive revenue source because the fees were kept intentionally low and regrettably the membership was also low in numbers. Annual pilgrimages to the Minister's office bailed us out in most years. It was, in essence, a hand-to-mouth existence.

The establishment of the Trust Fund gave us some freedom of movement in terms of doing things we knew had to be done.

Ed's executive of this year made some interesting moves because of the availability of funding. Here's what they did during the Trust Fund's first year:

1. Constructed an operating budget which now had an infusion of \$10,000.00 for operating purposes from the Trust Fund
2. Applied for and received approval from the Trust Fund committee to assemble, produce and distribute:
 - a. The Alberta Library Trustee's Handbook (to individual trustees)
 - b. The Alberta Library Trustee's Manual (to Library boards)
3. Applied for and received approval from the Trust Fund committee to direct \$5,000.00 to each of the Oldman and Peace Co-Operative Library organizing committees (in a subsequent year a similar grant of \$5000.00 was directed to the Shortgrass organizing committee)
4. Organized and subsidized a tour of libraries for trustees of boards planning new buildings
5. Attendance to two major trustee workshops in Lethbridge and St. Albert
6. An ALTA letter of commendation to the Minister for a number of positive initiatives taken by her on behalf of the public library community.

This executive took some pride in what it saw as major successful endeavours undertaken by it. These two activities – one in the Capital Funding domain and one in the lobbying arena – had far reaching positive achievements from the ALTA's perspective. The successes of these two activities produced particularly strong physical evidence of public library growth at the local library level.

An association we had, for a good number of years, extended considerable efforts seeking Capital Funding for individual libraries through the Department of Alberta Culture. We got nowhere!

Together with the Alberta Library Services we did some homework. The homework directed our attention to a possible source of Capital Funding we had overlooked.

A number of years previous our provincial government had introduced a 10 year Municipal Cultural & Recreation Grant Program. This program offered municipal jurisdictions a per capita allocation for Capital projects on a matching basis. One of the conditions of the MCR program was that a minimum of 25% of the total Capital Grant potential had to be directed to cultural facilities. Our homework revealed that public libraries were classified as cultural. Well, now, how about them apples?

This knowledge, coupled with the approaching termination date of the MCR program, gave the ALTA an opportunity to get into high gear. The ALTA did, in fact, jump on this opening and public libraries responded immediately to tapping this funding source. The timing couldn't have been better than if we had planned it! Our boards knew that any MCR funds that were unexpended were lost. Our boards further recognized that municipal jurisdictions did not like losing funds, so...

The results of the ALTA's and the ALS's homework is now visible in many, many parts of Alberta in the form of new, enlarged and/or renovated public library facilities. Trustees at the local level capitalized well on the opportunity presented them and are to be highly commended for their successful endeavours.

On the termination of the MCR program, the government introduced a new program, which was similar in many ways to the MCR program, but there were some modifications. To our regret the level of provincial funding grants was somewhat lower than in the MCR program. However, there was a positive which some of our library boards were able to capitalize on. The condition relative to the percentage of the total funding available for cultural facilities was changed. It now read that a minimum of 25% of the total allocation was to be directed towards cultural facilities – this provided an additional opportunity to boards, which had not capitalized on the earlier program.

The aggressiveness displayed by trustees in accessing Capital funding through the MCR program continued to be directed at the CRC program. Boards found their matching funds through their own reserves, their municipal governments, service clubs, fund drives, personal donations and even through bank loans. Very few stones were left unturned in trustee determination to make their library the focal point in their community.

NOW: AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Alberta Library Services Branch has often been freely bashed about by the ALTA- let's say it like it was! And we weren't always immediate in expressing appreciation to that staff and it's Director for assistance given us in any number of ways. It needs to be noted, here, that Alberta Library Services did, in fact, do a good amount of the homework for us in the area of capitalizing on the Capital grants available through the MCR and CRC programs. A result of its homework made it possible for us to learn that most of the MCR funding, particularly, for cultural purposes was untapped and further we learned of the amounts of moneys available for accessing in municipal jurisdictions in terms of local library boards knowing that the funds were there. The trustees did the rest.

Thanks, Alberta Library Services!

Let's run the SECOND move!

The ALTA made its first presentation to government through the 'Health and Social Services Caucus Committee'. We only learning a number of 'do's' and a number of 'don'ts' about presentations; we also effected an identity with government beyond the Department of Culture.

The response to our letter of request to meet with the Caucus Committee advised of the day and time that we were scheduled to make our presentation. So far, so good. We advised the LAA of our appointment time and date and inquired about the LAA's schedule date and time. From that exchange we learned that both groups were scheduled for the same time and on the same day. Ah, so!

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A television possibility. He offered to prepare and produce several 30-second public service announcements for television if the ALTA could fund the preparation of these announcements. With agreement from the Trust Fund Committee re: funding requirements Cliff 'did his thing'! His successful efforts of production and dogged determination to accessing 'free' television time resulted in excellent publicity for Alberta's Public libraries. U dun good, Cliff!

The real Biggie of the 1980-81 ALTA year was, without a doubt, the official establishment on January 1, 1981, of the Marigold Co-operative Library System, headquartered at Strathmore. The aspirations, hopes and dreams of the many public library trustees in the Marigold region were realized.

Of critical importance to the ALTA of the Marigold establishment was the incentive it provided to other areas of the province that were in various stages of regionalization sell. The Marigold library trustees showed that it could be done!

While the Marigold people were pleased with their achievement it was very evident that all public library trustees in Alberta shared their pride.

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...participation at the National level of trusteeship (Canadian Library Trustees Association or CLTA). To this time of our development our participation at the national level was less than token. As an association we imposed on Calgary and Edmonton Public Library trustees to act as our representatives during their attendance at the CLTA Conferences (the CLTA is a member of the CLA umbrella structure). The ALTA did not have sufficient funds to accommodate for executive representation at the CLA and thus the imposition on the Calgary and/or Edmonton public library trustees!

Your executive discussed the benefits of further levels of participation at the national level. There were two schools of thoughts around the executive table. Some felt that we should participate actively at the national level while others felt that we should spend all or most of our energies in solidifying our own association before extending ourselves nationally.

We decided to concentrate our efforts provincially. We further decided that an ALTA representative would participate at the CLTA level and would be our spokesperson there but that we would not become involved in national activities at this time.

As a step toward some interaction among the four western provinces we extended conference invitations to the presidents of the B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba Trustees Associations. The invitations were accepted and the four presidents had opportunities to discuss library development levels in each of the provinces. While there were good exchanges of thought, philosophy and pragmatic solutions to challenges there did not emerge a felt need or urgency to unite the provincial associations. In essence there was recognition that the variables affecting library development in each of the provinces were so different that we could be productive by ourselves for ourselves.

For a number of years and continuing even today inter visits among our respective provincial conferences appears to be a satisfactory form of communication between and among there provincial trustee associations.

YOU THINK WE DON'T GOT PROBLEMS?

Howard Platt's first term in the President's chair was not only an interesting one in terms of the associations' improvements. It also presented him and his executive with some very real concerns. We'll get to the concerns but let's have a look at some of the areas of continuing improvements first.

The ALTA membership level had in earlier years been one of our major concerns. For a long period of time we did not seem to be able to attract library boards to our association. The growth was frustratingly slow!

It was now obvious that we had turned the corner and turned it well in this period of the ALTA's growth. We now had 192 paid up library board members. There were at this time some 263 library boards in the province (this number includes community libraries). While the two figures (192 vs. 263) would appear to suggest that the ALTA had yet some distance to travel, re: memberships, the appearance is a bit deceiving. The 192 boards who were not members of the ALTA represent 95% of the library population in the province. The remaining 5% of the population was being served by very small public and/or community libraries. Most of the many community libraries were somewhat loosely governed and were not required to function as municipal libraries through the Act and Regulation requirements. Communication with these community libraries was difficult to establish because of the ever-changing volunteer personnel variable. As more and more of them became established as municipal, libraries sought membership in the ALTA. From an ALTA viewpoint we had reached an excellent level of our objective to 'provincialize' the association. It has taken a while but we had finally arrived!

It seems that in each year of the ALTA's growth there surfaced a number of firsts for the association. This year was no exception.

Your executive determined, after good discussion, that the time had come to consider awarding Honorary Life Memberships in the ALTA. The trustee chosen to be the first recipient of the ALTA's highest award was Caroline (Carrie) Graham of Vulcan. Carrie had well-earned this level of association recognition for

a number of reasons. She had expended a great deal of time and energy in her attempts to provide her community with a good public library facility. In addition to her concern about her own community she was forefront in promoting the regional concept in her geographical area. She recognized the ALTA's potential influence on the public library development provincially and wanted to be a part of the force which would contribute to that development. She sought and successfully found her way to becoming a member of the ALTA executive. Because she recognized the importance of having a line of communication with trustees she assumed the responsibility of editing, printing and distributing the ALTA's first newsletter and further held this responsibility for a number of years. Her no nonsense pragmatic solutions to challenges facing the ALTA were needed and much appreciated.

The executive's nomination presented at the annual meeting was well received and unanimously approved.

In the area of Public Relations the association was receiving good levels of commendation from other provincial trustee associations. The ALTA's trustee handbook was particularly well received throughout Canada.

Efforts were made to extend the content of the Trustee Manual; however, movements in this area were somewhat lethargic. It's possible that there were just too many plates on ALTA's table and the Manual did not receive the attention it required. And, regrettably, the Manual, to this writing, is not fulfilling the intent behind its structure.

We were now receiving good TV exposure through the Public Service announcements structured by Cliff Dacre. Other provincial trustee associations were seeking copies of same for possible use in their provinces. What success they had with their utilization we don't really know. However, the fact that they requested permission to use the ALTA's product was most satisfying.

Alright, let's now have a look at some of the very real concerns this executive had to address. The concerns were several in number:

1. The new Library Act and Regulation appeared, to a number of boards and trustees, to present more problems than solutions. There was a good level of belief that the Act and Regulation did not accurately reflect the felt needs of boards; that, in fact, the documents reflected 'foreign' thinking. The documents were seen as overbearing control mechanism and were overly directive. Alberta Library Services was seen as having too much authority in too many areas. There was, further, strong resentment from ALTA members and library boards for not having been given an opportunity to respond to the final draft of the Alberta Library Board's presentation to the Minister. There surfaces, again, a rather strong negative attitude toward the Alberta Library Board. The ALB was seen as a body which appeared to have informed many of the carefully, well thought out trustee presentations. Like, "What in hell was the point of going through this exercise if so little regard was given to the stated pragmatic needs for public library development in Alberta?" Not a good situation.

Rightly or wrongly, boards resented the imposed requirements as set out in the Act and Regulation (By-law, Statements of Policy, Goals and Objective, board compositions, Needs Assessment). The resentment stemmed from the lack of improved provincial grants to assist in

covering the costs that these mandated requirements would impose on boards. The fact that Alberta Library Services could withhold provincial grants from boards who were unable to meet the timelines demanded did not sit well with boards and trustees. While boards agreed that there was need to affect a better organization structures at their levels, they felt that the costs should not be totally absorbed from their budgets alone. There was also a suspicion that ALS was using the local library funds to accommodate their own needs. Not a good situation!

2. Liaison and unity of purpose between the ALTA and the LAA was being tested. It wasn't intentional 0 just one of those things that happens when associations appear to be well fed! Very much like a family, when things are tough, members of a family have tendency to pull together; when conditions improve family members display a tendency to go their own way. That appeared to be happening with the ALTA and the LAA

The LAA had, in the previous year, established a "Task Force on Public Library Governance". The intent of the Task Force was to assess the status of public libraries in Alberta and to determine improvement needs. The ALTA executive was advised by the LAA of which trustees would serve on the Task Force and requested the ALTA's approval of the LAA's choice of trustees. The ALTA executive was not negative to the trustees selected by the LAA but was somewhat chagrined at the manner in which it had been done.

An invitation from the LAA for ALTA members to attend a special LAA meeting to receive, discuss and approve the Task Force Committee's recommendations was well received by the ALTA's executive. That is, it was until a closer study of the invitation revealed this gem: "MEMBERS OF THE AFFILIATE ASSOCIATIONS HAVE BEEN INVITED TO ATTEND THE MEETING THEY WILL HAVE VOICE BUT NO VOTE ON ANY RESOLUTION INTRODUCED." Didn't go over too well. Not too well, at all!

At any rate, after the LAA held its meeting it prepared a draft report, presented it at the LAA's annual meeting, requested feedback from its members for revision before presenting it to the Minister of Culture. It would be a singularly LAA submission. Again, not too well received by ALTA members .Why was the ALTA on the outside, looking in on a matter of considerable importance and concern to it?

The ALTA executive studied the draft and offered this response to the LAA executive: "THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE COMMITTEE PROVIDES INSUFFICIENT MEAT FOR SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTER. THE SAME PRINCIPLES AND THE SAME RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WERE MADE 10 YEARS AGO PROVIDE NO NEW FOCUS ON FUTURE LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN ALBERTA". The ALTA's response was not a 'sour grapes' response! Its response was arrived at following a close examination of the Task Force Committee's recommendations and comparing them with the recommendations offered in the jointly (ALTA/LAA) structured paper entitled "ALBERTA'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO 1980" and presented to the Minister in August of 1976. From this comparative assessment it was evident that the recommendations offered by the Task Force Committee were a regurgitation of those offered in the 1976 paper. As a consequence the ALTA executive did not experience any great level of excitement re: the LAA's proposed Ministerial submission.

3. A further source of irritation between the ALTA and the LAA surfaced in the Trust Fund circumstance.

BACKGROUND

The Trust Fund, initiated in 1979, was providing for the financial needs of the ALTA and the LAA at a good level. The evident value of the Fund was visible to the new Minister who expressed a desire to secure both associations on the expiration of the current fund through the establishment of a second similar fund.

In the latter part of 1981 the Minister asked the Trust Fund Committee to present her with a proposal for a second Trust Fund Allocation. She requested that the proposal be submitted to her as soon as possible to enable her to have time to secure the proposed required levels of money

The Trust Fund Committee moved quickly! Before the end of the same calendar year it presented the Minister with a projected 5-year financial requirements. On receipt of the proposal and following an early assessment of it she forwarded the proposal to the executives of the ALTA and the LAA. She requested that both associations assess the proposal and offer recommendations relative to its approval by them and/or submissions for modifications as SOON AS POSSIBLE.

The ALTA executive assessed the proposal and found satisfaction with its content. The concern was such that it would permit the ALTA to maintain its current programs and services and would provide for initiation of a considerable number of activities. The proposed funding, if the Minister approved, would have been at a level of \$850,000.00. A motion of approval of the proposal was carried unanimously and the Minister was immediately informed of the ALTA's acceptance of the proposal.

The LAA executive, for whatever reasons, chose to follow a different route. It objected, strongly, to not having been requested to participate in the proposals construction and advised the Minister that the LAA would submit its own proposal.

The, for whatever reasons, the LAA delayed in submitting its proposal for almost an entire year. Eventually the Minister, in a polite manner, requested that the LAA GET ON WITH IT. The LAA then sought meetings with the ALTA for assistance in structuring a new joint submission. The ALTA executive was not terribly excited over presenting a new submission in view of its satisfaction with the content of the Trust Fund Committee's proposal. However, in consideration of the time variable and the urgency of the Minister's request, a joint proposal was structured and subsequently submitted to the Minister (sad to say but the new proposal was, in essence, no different from the proposal offered by the Trust Fund Committee a year earlier and positively received by the Minister).

Well it is now evident that in spite of the ALTA's participation in structuring the proposal both associations found themselves in the position of having arrived at the airport only to learn that their place had since departed. A blown opportunity!

It's difficult, however, to guess at what the Minister had in mind relative to securing the ALTA's and the LAA's needs. It appeared that she had intended to structure a second Trust Fund grant. It is also possible that it was her intent to provide both association with financial assistance through AFLA (Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts). It is also possible that the delay of response to the Trust Fund Committee's proposal by the LAA was perceived, by her, as a fracturing element between the two associations. It is then possible to guess that she was pressed for time and made a decision which would provide an access for financial assistance to both associations through the AFLA foundation. Your guess is as good as mine!

The key learning here is that groups such as ours need to understand that you respond immediately to a circumstance, which is to our benefit. Our first concern must be for the association and not personality markings. Argue and disagree all you want and at whatever lengths – but do so after the money is in the bank!

It is my opinion that the Minister was prepared to structure a second Trust Fund grant to be operated in a manner similar to the first such grant. While the level of money awarded may not have been at the level proposed it is my belief that a substantial level of funding would have been made available.

It is to the credit of the Minister (Mary LeMessurier) that she included both associations as potential recipients of funding support through the AFLA foundation put in place by her. And for this, we owe her a good level of appreciation!

4. Howard's executive had to direct its attention to an internal fracturing situation which surfaced. It never rains but what it pours – right?

The ALTA was the spokesbody to government on behalf of the public library community be they public, community and/or regional systems. That position had, over the years, been nicely determined and was accepted by government (Minister and Caucus Committees).

The Caucus Committees received the ALTA presentations well and exhibited appreciation for the numerous pragmatic solutions to challenges faced by the public library community. The Minister of Culture received good support from the Caucus Committees relative to improvement programs for Alberta's public libraries. The ALTA, then, was accepted as a provincial lobbying group, lobbying equally well on behalf of all forms of public libraries in Alberta. Evident agreement was visible at the Caucus Committee level vis-à-vis the regionalization concept and the committees were supportive of this direction of development. It was important to note here that the ALTA presentations did not focus on individual libraries and/or systems – the ALTA represents a global (provincial) need – IT COULD NOT ACT OR REPRESENT IN ANY OTHER WAY.

The ALTA, together with regionalized and non-regionalized areas throughout the province was positively supportive of the Marigold development and extended good energies of support to its endeavours. Some members of the executive expressed concern over the high levels of financial support from Alberta Library services to Marigold and, as a consequence, the much reduced levels of financial support to other organizing areas. It was apparent that Marigold had to succeed and it was evident that considerable funds were being directed to Marigold prior to and immediately after its establishment. And, although the executive was well aware of the funding levels to Marigold it agreed that Marigold's successful establishment would have long-term benefits in terms of provincial regionalization. We would simply have to live with lower support grants to other organizing areas until Marigold was well on its way.

Marigold, in its enthusiasm, not only accepted the strong levels of provincial funding support, but went further. It took onto itself a lobbying role directly with the Minister, annually; in search of even further funding levels.

The executive recognized two critical 'no, no's':

1. Marigold was not exhibiting too high a level of concern for the needs of the other developing regional areas. It appeared not to understand that the ALS budget was not without limits. It did not, further, appear to appreciate that if it was successful in accessing additional funding in excess of what it was entitled to by Regulation that this accessing would be at the expense of other developing regional systems.
2. Marigold's petitioning of the Minister directly was undermining, to a degree, the ALTA's endeavours on their other systems behalves. In essence, Marigold was fracturing the association, knowingly or unknowingly. And regrettably, Marigold was placing too high an emphasis on its perceived Special status as a regional model. And regrettably further, Marigold, in its submission, was faulting ALS and the Minister for its financial difficulties.

Your executive found itself in a bit of a dilemma. It recognized the need for Marigold's development to serve as an incentive to other areas of the province; it recognized the limitations of the ALS budget; it recognized the right of Marigold to petition the Minister of anyone else on its own behalf; and IT RECOGNIZED THAT SHOULD MARIGOLD CONTINUE ITS CHOSEN LOBBYING POSITION THAT THE ALTA AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY WOULD BE RIGHT BACK TO WHERE IT WAS BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED. EACH MAN FOR HIMSELF!

A Jim Dandy situation, eh?

Your executive with assistance of the two established regional systems (Parkland and Yellowhead) encouraged Marigold to give fair consideration to the effects their demanded additional funding requests were having on other developing regional systems. Marigold was further encouraged to assess its real needs and to view its growth and development on a long-term basis rather than trying to have it all immediately. Further, Marigold was encouraged to concentrate on system membership growth within its

region as a source of additional financial assistance rather than leaning on Alberta Library Services and the Minister.

So, what else could cause headaches during this year? Heck, lend an ear and we'll fill it for you!

How about a letter from the LAA? Yes, we got one! Viewed in retrospect that latter can now be seen as a blessing in disguise. At the time of its receipt however it caused a bit of a stir. A big bit!

The letter advised that the 1982 annual conference suffered a deficit and that the ALTA's share of the deficit was in the amount of some \$300.00. Well that broke it open! The \$300.00 figure? No, not at all. What surfaced was recurring frustrations of not really holding equal status in the conduct of the annual conference. The treasurer for the 1982 conference just happened to have been a member of the ALTA's executive and in his view we were being had. Bills submitted to him by LAA members for items that were not in the conference budget (receptions, entertainment of speakers, etc, etc). The blessing in disguise of this letter was that it precipitated a re-assessment of the responsibilities of the conference planning committee, the conference itself and the procedures for accommodation for conference coasts. The assessment cleared a lot of air (hot and otherwise) and we saw the development of a new attitude by both associations as related to joint sponsorship of the conference. Amen!

One might conclude that when all of these concerns surfaced that the association was about to self-destruct. No, not really – far from it! The ALTA executive accepted these challenges as nothing more than normal, on-going bridge crossings. There was a good confidence that, in time, the solutions could and would be found to any and all of the challenges that surfaced from time to time.

While all of these “runarounds” were taking place, the executive found time to target other groups for cultivating vis-à-vis financial support to public libraries.

The executive sought and received an invitation to make a presentation at the annual conference of the Alberta Municipal and County Councils. And why not? That's where the action is, isn't it? We needed to establish a profile at the provincial level of as many governing bodies as possible. The word is VISIBILITY!

In summarizing this interesting year, we find that the executive attended well to internal and affiliate “burrs.” It was critically important that these burrs be eliminated if the public library developmental process was to continue in a positive climate. Differences of opinion needed to be resolved from a public library need rather than on personality post markings! Critical! Unity of purpose and unity of voice had to be maintained – and your executive “dun good!”

More Fun Time!

Howard Platt's second term as President of the Association provided him and his executive time to heal some wounds. At the same time they attended to a couple of new barnacles that had surfaced. There were a couple of steps taken in the national arena, too.

The association's concern relative to the cracks that were beginning to show between and among the various groups associated with public library development received good attention.

To enunciate and reaffirm the need for combined and unified positions re: public library development, there was held a meeting of three major players – the Alberta Library Board, the Library Association of Alberta, and the Alberta Library Trustees' Association. The meeting provided the three groups an opportunity to discuss, for clarification purposes, a number of important issues.

The groups assessed and identified the perceived roles and responsibilities of the groups both separately and in concert. There was a good level of "clearing the air" and an acceptable resolution of differences of opinion between and among the groups. There was further agreement that there was a need for a closer co-operative stance between and among them. In addition, the groups re-recognized the political importance of avoiding a fractured approach to public library development in Alberta. This same meeting emphatically underlined the need for closer and more continuous lines of communication between and among themselves. The message was well planted and we began to witness a renewed development of unity and strong co-operative endeavours in the next number of years.

The fourth major player in this "game," not present at the meeting noted above, was and continues to be Alberta Library Services.

Alberta Library Services was perceived, for perhaps too long, by trustees, library boards, and the ALTA as an interfering, self-serving bureaucratic entity. Another bridge to cross!

It is difficult to present a black and white, specific event or activity that resolve differences of opinions between groups like the ALTA and ALS. I would think that a combination of influences brings about a resolution to any challenge. There were probably several contributing factors that assisted in crossing this particular bridge.

Of some critical importance it is now evident that the ALTA did not have a clear understanding of the role played by ALS. We were not as well attuned as we should have been vis-à-vis the political position that ALS occupied. We were also never fully aware of the inner workings of ALS within the Department of Culture maze. And we couldn't understand why many of the pragmatic solutions we offered for implementation never saw the light of day. Members of this executive, some more than others, did some homework in this area and made good contributions toward effecting a closer, more positive relationship with ALS. While the results of their endeavours were not immediately visible, they did, in time, contribute to a better working relationship between the two groups. In retrospect, it now becomes a learning experience that needs to be continually reinforced because of its importance.

The learning experience is a very simple one, strangely enough. Snags, appear, not over end goals, but in how to get there. There is no question that there is common agreement and understanding among all of the major players relative to affecting the best possible of public library services. That is a given! Where we differ in opinion is determined by groups and/or individual assessments of directions to follow (here's where politics, politicians, financial resources and leadership come into play). It has been said that this world would be a great place if it weren't for the people in it – that's basically a reflection on differences of thinking of the various elements within our society. And that is where a good number of our frustrations are coming from.

There was good progress made relative to combining our efforts, expertise, and experience from the common good. The Capital Funding homework of both groups is an excellent example of the kind of benefits that can be experienced through joint pooling of thought and endeavour.

Another illustration of the value of pooling thought, effort, and alertness during this year bears out the benefits possible through working together!

ALS drew our attention to the proposal being considered by the Department of Municipal Affairs relative to provincial grant allocations to municipal authorities. The proposal being offered had potential serious implications to public library boards in this province. The proposal was forwarded as a means of streamlining provincial grants to municipal jurisdictions and for providing municipal jurisdictions a greater flexibility vis-à-vis the utilization of provincial support grants.

The proposal seemed simple enough: ALL PROVINCIAL GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES WOULD BE PLACED IN MUNICIPAL HANDS AS A BLOCK GRANT RATHER THAN AS SEPARATE, DESIGNATED GRANTS.

There was merit to this proposal from a municipal government point of view in that the municipal authority would now be able to use grant moneys where they were needed rather than being compelled to expend them in provincially designated areas. It provided a flexibility variable that municipal governments would appreciate in that it would be possible for them to better use the funding grants made to them.

The ALS branch and the ALTA saw a potential danger for public library boards because the block grant proposal would direct ALS public library grants to become part of the block grant. To this time, ALS operating grants to libraries were directed to and received by public library boards. As such the boards had autonomous and complete control over the use of the ALS operating grants. If the ALS grants were to be included in the block grant, the public library boards would then be totally dependent on their municipal authorities for their operating funding needs. The obvious is there, isn't it?

Your executive moved quickly. It immediately directed its concerns re: the block grants to the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Moreover, your executive immediately advised all public library boards of the implication of the block grant proposal to them and sought their letter writing assistance.

To the credit of the vast majority of library boards, the response to Howard's letter was immediate and in heavy quantities. Letters, phone calls, one-on-one discussions with MLAs did the trick! The proposal was modified to read that ALS grants to public libraries would not be a part of the Department of Municipal Affairs block grant program.

Another area that had financial implications to library boards surfaced at about this time.

We now had an opportunity to experience the effects of one of the clauses of the new regulation. The clause (cannot recall the number) was inserted into the regulation as a protective financial safeguard for public library boards. The content of the clause directed that if the municipal jurisdiction reduced its level of grant to its municipal library the ALS support grant would be reduced by an equal percentage of the local reduction. Through this clause, then, public library boards had a lever with which they could

discourage municipal grant reductions. And this was a positive! Regrettably, at the time of inclusion of this protective clause, there was no thought given to population movements resulting from economic downturns. Many communities were adversely affected as a result of the economic bust at this time. One of the effects was, of course, a loss of population as a families left areas in search of employment. In a number of municipalities, public library board grants were determined on a per capita basis. As a consequence, the level of municipal grants in these jurisdictions was reduced as the population decreased.

ALS held firm on its regulation application as directed to its operating grants and did, in fact, reduce their grants to boards that had their municipal grants reduced due to the lower levels of population. This is an area that, perhaps, ALS might have handled in a different manner. Where ALS saw itself protecting the library boards' local revenues, it failed to recognize the intent of the clause. The intent was very simple! There was a fear that municipal authorities would reduce their grants by the amounts of increased ALS grants. And there was good reason to believe that municipal jurisdictions could and would reduce their support grants if ALS grants showed good improvement. In the situation that came to the fore at this time, the municipal jurisdictions were operating in good faith – they were providing support grants on the basis of an agreed upon per capita formula. They were not reducing grants to save money.

As local library boards experienced a reduction in their ALS grants (as a result of decreasing populations) they appealed to the ALTA for assistance toward rectifying the situation. Well, the ALTA went to bar for them, but did not experience immediate success because ALS held firm to the regulation. It is regrettable that, for some time, ALS was not more pragmatic in application of this particular clause. It would seem that ALS took too firm a protective stance at the wrong time and for the wrong reason. The position taken by ALS at this time did not help either, in terms of Act and Regulation acceptance by library board trustees.

In fairness to ALS, it needs to be noted here that the ALTA executive was fully aware and in agreement with the inclusion of the above referred to protective clause. And together, with others, it is also fair to note that ALTA did not foresee the population decrease possibility. Can't be perfect (but it's fun trying)!

Your executive turned its attention to a new initiative relative to Public Relations during this period. A meeting of representatives from the ALB, the LAA, and the ALTA explored possible joining PR programs. The jointly formed "Publicity and Information Committee started out well and there was reason to believe that a good program could be executed. Regrettably, the committee fell apart as funding for same dried up. 'Nough said!

In the area of regionalization progress, we experienced deep disappointment when it became evident that the Oldman project was about to fold. We had some advance warning from executive members from that area that all was not going well. We had hoped that the challenges they were facing would be resolved, but such was not to be. It's somewhat difficult to pinpoint the reason(s) for the failure. It's likely that were a number of reason among which we would have found:

- 1) A resistance by municipal jurisdictions to accept the levels of funding required,
- 2) A system designed for needs far beyond what was required at the time,
- 3) An over-visibility of ALS participation,
- 4) An area not quite ready to share.

Well, onward and upward!

The year was not much different from other years – some ups, some downs, some repairs, some explorations.

An area for exploration was the Canadian Library Trustees' Association. For many years the ALTA stayed clear of the CLTA as it directed its attention to its own immediate needs. Howard, however, was a strong proponent of national development. As the ALTA's representative at CLTA, he was instrumental in bringing about some structural changes at the CLTA level. One of the results of his hammering at that level gave the ALTA's membership an opportunity to make some assessments of the CLTA through the Canadian Library Association's newspaper *Feliciter*. Howard was able to convince the "powers that be" at the CLTA level that, if it wanted to experience membership growth from Alberta's trustees, it had a selling job to do. As a result there was agreement that all trustees in Alberta would receive, without cost, regular issues of the *Feliciter*. Whether this exercise assisted in increasing Alberta trustee membership in the CLTA or not, it did provide CLTA exposure in a concrete form. Well done, Howard.

No Time To Stagnate

Of, for the quiet, undisturbed, leisurely atmosphere of a library! The ALTA certainly threw a number of wrenches into the "don't make waves" environment of earlier public library eras! But it was and continues to be fun!

The third term of Howard's chair-sitting did not see a lessening of time needs or a reduction of activities or a withdrawal from new endeavours and/or a disappearance of challenges.

How were we doing money-wise? Glad you asked!

The audited statement for January-December 1983 reveals that the ALTA had received revenues of \$40,170.16 and expenditures of \$18,674.22. After attending to a bank overdraft of some \$1,653.81, the association found itself in the black in the amount of \$32,346.10, and improvement of some \$21,496.39 over the previous year's balance. Not a bad circumstance! Not bad at all! How come?

While it is true that increased membership and conference surpluses contributed to this happy circumstance, most of the credit must go to the Trust Fund program. That's where the bulk of the ALTA's money came from.

And just what levels of moneys were made available to the ALTA and the LAA from the Trust Fund?

A study of the Trust Fund Committee's financial statement of earnings and disbursements of the fund reveals that the original grant was \$275,000.00. The Committee's investments of the Trust Funds earned interest in the amount of \$84,196.53. In total, then, the Trust Fund provided the ALTA and the LAA combined, a total of \$359,196.53 over its five-year period of existence.

Both associations used these moneys wisely and carefully. It's fair to conclude that without that level of funding assistance we would not have been able to move public library development so quickly in so short a period of time. We need, again, then, to express appreciation to Horst Schmid, the orchestrator of the fund.

Papers, papers, papers, research, positions, more papers! For a while there, it seemed that all the ALTA was doing was responding to papers or participating in the construction of them. One often wonders why we need to confirm and then reconfirm that which we already know – what a sad waste of time and talent and energy!

At any rate, a major provincial government paper entitled “Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985-1889” was submitted to government for assessment (do not recall who created the paper). The paper was highly publicized and people were encouraged to study it and respond to it. And the ALTA was people! The thing was referred to as the White paper. The content of the paper, I am told, was quite interesting. It was written, however, in highly technical and scientific terminology and lost most of us quickly. Fortunately for the ALTA, we had Howard Platt. He not only read it – he understood it! Howard took on the difficult task of formulating an ALTA response. To his credit, he summarized the paper for us in understandable terms and as a result we gained some familiarity of the directions spelled out for Albertans through this paper. His (our) response directed at the implications of the White paper to public library service agencies and the need to make adequate accommodations for the role libraries would play in the White paper's vision. Now that I'm reminded of this particular paper – what ever happened to it and to its recommended proposals and directions?

There was another paper entitled “Policy Guidelines, Procedures and Standards for School Libraries in Alberta” issued by the Department of Education, which caught our interest. The content of this paper revealed the rather sorry state of school libraries in Alberta. It effectively pointed to the need for the Department of Education to get its act together re: school libraries. Their consistent hit-and-miss approach to school libraries was well known by educators in Alberta's classroom.

Although the ALTA's primary responsibility was in the public library domain, we assessed the paper and responded to it. These were our kids and they were eventual public library users. The principal areas of concern re: school libraries as expressed by the ALTA included:

- 1) There is an urgent need for our schools to adequately train students in effective utilization of library resources,
- 2) There is an urgent need to accommodate for effective library use training in the hands of professionally trained librarians,
- 3) There is a desperate need to create centres of information in our schools to assist students in their studies,
- 4) There is an urgent need for the provision of adequate funding to ensure that school library centres maintain currency of information,
- 5) There is a strong need to ensure that all school jurisdictions be held accountable for provision of the highest levels of quality library services.

Oh, yes, we went further than that! We recommend, most strongly, that the Departments of Education, Advanced Education, and Culture pool their resources and expertise toward developing an overall provincial library program. We expressed our concern over the needless duplication of costs re: library improvements through each department operating in isolation of the other departments and in erecting their own hierarchies.

We don't know whether it was our recommendation relative to the pooling of departmental resources, which triggered an attempt to dovetail the efforts of the three departments. We like to think (believe) that we contribute to the then-erected inter-departmental study re: library services. Well, it doesn't really matter who or how and/or why. We got a touch excited when we learned that personnel from the three departments noted were to meet to determine how best to pool their resources and levels of expertise. We experienced an even higher level of excitement when we learned that a number of meetings had been held and that there appeared to be reason to believe that a breakthrough had occurred. I suppose some of us should have known better as we had been through this mill before. The meetings continued, but at more infrequent intervals and, in time, faded away. Perhaps, then, it is true that breaking through the self-protective, bureaucratic jungle is an insurmountable challenge! Pity!

As participants in the ALTA, we learned that, next to papers, there are more committees structured than one can believe. "Got a question?" – Strike a committee! "What time is it?" – Strike a committee! "Who was that blonde you were with last night?" – Strike a committee!

Well, the ALB struck another committee – this one titled Education Committee. This committee's primary function was to assess the viability of library education through television programming offered by and through ACCESS. The thinking and initial implementation of the idea was good. In fact, darn good!

Three series of television programs were targeted for experimentation in this way: bibliographic lists were compiled by LAA members and a hired librarian. These lists noted library books that were available and were pertinent to the content of the programs televised. Copies of bibliographies were printed in larger numbers and distributed throughout the province's libraries as free materials to library users. The television program advised viewers of the existence and location of the bibliographic lists and of availability of books in public libraries.

There was a reasonable positive response from viewers, however, it wasn't overwhelming. The second program did not appear to elicit the response level anticipated.

In view of the perceived lack of interest by television viewers and the limited level of funding available for this exploratory project was dropped. It's regrettable that the money ran out! The idea was good!

During this year, and certainly out of the blue, an unknown, unheralded, several-leaved newspaper sprang out at us. Bold black and red print proclaimed it as "WILD ROSE RISING!" Content, style, and presentation could not but fail to favourably impress the reader.

But – who put it out? And why? And who was paying for it? (Only a trustee would think to ask the last question).

It's a pity that the ALTA could not take credit for the publication because it was a beautiful communication gem!

Its intent was designed to provide progress information to developing regional systems and to serve as a tie between and among established and establishing regional system areas. In succeeding issues, contributions to content were submitted from all regional areas, the Alberta Library Board, the ALTA, and ALS. Challenges and solutions to challenges relative to establishing a system were dealt with in a very pragmatic manner.

The initiators of "Wild Rose Rising" were those remarkably fine people in the Peace Regional area. Hey, guys, you "dun good." Funding? Oh, that was accommodated for through the supportive regional development grants received from Alberta Library Services.

The ALTA's contributions to communication line provision between and among developing and established regional systems came in the form of coordinating and participating in meetings of representatives from all regional areas. While the ALTA's arrangements served as a reasonably good vehicle for an exchange of ideas, thinking and coordinated planning there is no doubt, no doubt whatsoever, that Wild Rose Rising was a superior wide-coverage vehicle. In effect, Wild Rose Rising became the information basket for trustees grappling with the sell of the concept of regionalization.

A further pleasant regionalizing endeavour revealed itself during this year. Trustees in the north-east designated area made their move! A beginning!

And, oh hey, there was a big birthday party in what is fondly referred to as Central Alberta this year (Fall 1984). Alberta's first Regional Library System (Parkland Regional) put on its best bib and tucker and blew out the candles celebrating its 25th year of existence. The Parkland folks were particularly pleased with the turnout of trustees and librarians from all corners of the province. A good evening was had by all!

With regionalization activities throughout the non-regionalized areas becoming very visible, the public library community was receiving a good share of attention. This noticeable attention, together with the beginnings of improving library services, appeared to be an appropriate time to canvas public opinion relative to the library service needs in Alberta.

The Alberta Library Board now determined to conduct a major conference directing at future library development needs for Albertans. The ALTA's president was invited to participate on the planning committee for the conference. Planning for the conference, which was to be held in the following year, was detailed and carefully constructed. Particular care was given to the selection of participants in the conference, which, incidentally, was identified as "LIBRARIES 2000."

The LIBRARIES 2000 conference was successful in that for some three full days public library purposes and functions were probed, dissected, dismantled, and restructured. A summary of the conferences was gathered and published in booklet form. The booklet summary was distributed widely throughout the province and to numerous locations in Canada. There was good national interest re: the intent and purpose of the conference and, subsequently, in the summary findings.

The ALB's attachment to the importance of this form of conference was very evident in that it absorbed the total costs of the conference and delegate expenses. No honorariums were offered, however, participants were not out-of-pocket in respect to accommodation, travel, and meal requirements.

Evidence of the ALTA's growing interest in public library development and in providing educational opportunities for its members came to light at the 1985 annual conference the Canadian Library Association, which was scheduled to be held in Calgary.

Several of the ALTA's executive members had either attended or had information about a program for trustees called the WILL Program (Workshop In Library Leadership). This program was geared for trustees. It explored, in detail, the numerous areas of trustee performance and responsibilities and, in addition, assessed legal implications for trustees, management, and personnel selection. Your executive felt that the program could be of invaluable benefit to Alberta library trustees. The executive further recognized that because the conference was being held in Calgary, that trustees would likely attend it in good numbers. Funding to assist the offering of the WILL Program at the Calgary conference was accessed through the Trust Fund and, in this manner, the ALTA was able to contribute \$7,500 toward its cost.

The trustee attendance at the WILL Program was high and the content of the program was particularly well received. It was a good ALTA investment!

As we examining the ALTA's development, the constant that appears and reappears is the almost permanent learning position for its members. So, yet another learning situation was thrust at the ALTA at this juncture of its development. With the establishment of AFLA (our new bank), your executive was required to learn new procedures relative to accessing funding through AFLA (Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts). Initial forays presented levels of frustration because the guidelines for AFLA were somewhat loose. There was a lack of knowledge, on our part, of AFLA's timelines, application requirements, levels of funding accessibility to the ALTA, and approval procedures.

As the AFLA came to grips with its intended mandate, it made good informational distributions to all segments of the public library community. Their information releases outlined all of the required elements for the accessing of funds. As the ALTA became better informed on the AFLA's procedures the frustrations disappeared and a feeling of confidence in the AFLA was restored.

While attending to papers, conferences, planning of activities, exploring new fields of endeavour and, whatever, this executive faced head-on a problem that the ALTA faced each year – a physical problem! Our seat of operation changed with almost each new installation of executive members. Records, minutes, papers, etc. were shunted and shuffled to many corners of Alberta. Considering all of the moves we are, indeed, most fortunate to have a relatively strong accumulation of records of the ALTA. Not by design, just good fortune and strong shoeboxes! This term's executive decided we simply could not go on in this way and that a decision relative to a permanent home had to be made. It set, then, in motion our initial search for a home for the ALTA. Subsequent executives carried on in the search until a home was established.

Let's Shape Up

The newly installed ALTA executive, led by Sandra Weidner, attended well to the continuation of and improvement in programs already in place. Like all previous executives, this group also branched out into unknown waters. Is there no end to what the ALTA can do? Doubt it!

As we review and assess the ALTA activities during this year, it becomes very evident that this executive directed good attention to putting the ALTA's house in order – and that it did!

It was an obvious concern of Sandra's group that the ALTA needed to define what it was, where it was going, and how it was going to get there more clearly and specifically. Simple as that! And yes, it was an appropriate time to do some housecleaning and to state clearly the new directions for the now aging ALTA.

Time, good effort, and careful deliberation were given by this executive to develop a mission statement and to the construction of a comprehensive set of goals and objectives for the association.

Having set out the goals and objectives, the executives then participated in a number of exercises, which place the ALTA on a firmer, more efficient, and more effective base.

Over the years executive members experienced interesting levels of frustration in carrying out self-chosen or delegated responsibilities. Time was always in short supply! Too often there wasn't time to do truly detailed studies of assigned tasks and flying by the seat of your pants was too often the case. In essence, the legwork wasn't adequately done. But what else is new?

The time had now arrived for the provision of secretarial services on an assured permanent basis, a search was conducted and the ALTA hired its first Executive Secretary.

The move was positive in that executive members now had someone who could attend to their secretarial requirements and a person who could do some of the legwork required in research areas. An addition to acquiring an executive secretary, all executive member undertakings were now funnelled through one sorting centre. As a consequence, your president was able to have a good handle on where everything was and what areas needed prodding prior to rather than at an executive meeting.

Another housecleaning area attended to by this executive was the association's constitution. It was updated, revised, and modified.

In accommodating for the educational goal needs the following programs were offered for trustee participation:

- 1) A Workshop Leadership Seminar was held to provide for a bank of workshop leaders,
- 2) A Board Development Program was made available to library boards desiring same,
- 3) Workshops include ALS presentations to clarify the intent and required content of the mandated "Needs and Assessment" submissions.

A further educational endeavour the ALTA learned about was endorsed and strongly recommended to rural public library boards and librarians. The executive was most supportive of a program introduced by the Grant MacEwan Community College and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. The Rural Library Training Project provided a basic level of training for those personnel who work in a small rural public or school library but who have minimal or no formal training in library practices. The ALTA saw this program as a means of assisting rural volunteer librarians in providing a better level of library service. It is rewarding to note that the participating numbers in this program have been good and that there is a continuing interest in its offerings.

Attending to one of the objectives of its communication goals the ALTA assumed responsibility for the financial requirements in providing for regular and on-going meetings of representatives of regional systems. The meetings were scheduled to take place in conjunction with regular executive meetings to enable executive members to participate in and learn from the discussions.

In its search for a permanent home, a temporary solution was arrived at through sharing office space in the Writers' Guild Offices in Edmonton. At the same time, there were on-going discussions with the Alberta Government representatives re: the Land Titles Building. The ALTA, together with a number of literary groups, presented its case well and was, eventually, successful in its quest.

On [blank], the ALTA officially opened its home!

The LAA, the Canadian Authors' Association, the Alberta Publishers' Association, the Periodical Writers' Association, and the Writers' Guild are also housed in the same building now identified as Wordworks.

Turning to these executive endeavours in Public Relations arena we note these initiatives:

- 1) Assessed the need for a travelling exhibit in a continuing ALTA sell program (the result of this assessment appeared in the form of a folding, bulletin-board display. The display experienced visibility at the annual conference and in a number of public libraries in the province. The display met with an unfortunate demise – lost in a fire!)
- 2) Requested library boards throughout Alberta to submit historical reviews of their libraries. These reviews would be gathered, assimilated, edited, and, in time, put into print form as permanent record for future reference purposes.
- 3) Determined to recognize individual trustees for meritorious achievements through the awarding of Certificates of Appreciation.
- 4) Took initial steps toward acquisition for provision of symbolic ALTA identification items such as pens, pins, and decals.

The annual meeting gave its approval to the recommended changes, modifications, and updates to the constitution.

The annual meeting also gave unanimous approval to the executive's recommendation that Honorary Life Memberships be awarded to Ed Halina, Howard Platt, and Loro Shane.

The annual conference in this year witnessed a very much needed variable. And, yes, this has to do with Alberta Library Board.

The Alberta Library Board, under Sue Dutton's chairmanship, introduced its sponsored "potpourri" session. It was a measure taken by the Board to become a contributor to the conference as opposed to its previous observer only status.

Its sponsored "potpourri" session was an immediate success and, in subsequent years, became one of the gems of the conference.

Trustees showed good appreciation for the session and individual libraries made excellent presentations. Equally and perhaps more important, trustees were very pleased to see the board as part of the convention.

REFLECTIONS

Constructing this review of the ALTA's growth and development from 1971 to 1987 has provided this scribbler with a goodly number of hours of very satisfying and pleasant recollections. Reading through the collection of meeting minutes, ALTA papers, ALTA newsletters, caucus presentation contents, memos and publications, could not but cause him to ask, "Did we really do all of those things? Where did the trustees find the time to accommodate for all the activities in which they became involved? What drove them? What were they looking for? Did they envision the successes that the ALTA enjoyed?"

In recalling the years of growth of the ALTA, some images are more vivid than others – probably because of their particular importance at the time of their occurrence. People constituted the most important variable when an idea is to be sold, rejected, and/or promoted.

What compelled Collett, Millican, and Halina to set the ALTA into motion? How was Gardiner able to think positively about the ALTA when very few others appeared to be interested? What directed Haddow to use outside help so effectively? Where did Bland, in his quiet way, find time to accommodate for what was an extremely hectic year? What held Halina in the association for as long as it did? Where did Taylor draw her energies from to spur the Action Committee and the Downey Research Study? Why did Jean Lewis travel several hundred miles just to attend executive meetings? Why did Baker offer his managerial skills to the ALTA? Where did Graham find the time to put out a newsletter, act on the ALTA executive and provide a driving force for regionalization? Why did Platt sacrifice his medical practice to promote public library development? What motivated Gaye Ross to lead in the organizing of Marigold, serve on the ALTA executive, and on the Alberta Library Board? And the list goes on and on.

Then why?

I suspect that if you asked each of the people mentioned and/or any one of hundreds of other trustees of public libraries that you would receive a host of varied reasons – each one did his/her thing for his/her own reason. I would like to believe that do that underlying each and every response you might get to the "Why?" that you will find a desire to assist others to become better informed and a better educated

person. And what better avenue to provide for self-improvement, self-education than a free and accessible public library?

One of the most heartening learnings from participating as a public library trustee was and is that all participants promoting public library improvement did so at no personal monetary gain to themselves. That says it all about the library board trustees – serving the interests of the whole without thought on personal monetary gain! I like that!

One could, if so inclined, draw an analytical assessment of the association in terms of what I would call developmental phases. The association has nicely progressed through two developmental stages and is currently moving through a third stage, which will be interesting to review a few years hence – it's too early to assess the current period.

The supporting executives during the tenures of Millican, Gardiner, Haddow, Bland, and Halina has the task of selling an idea, creating an identity, bringing focus to the sorry state of our public libraries, developing acceptable pragmatic solutions to immediate challenges, encouraging regionalization, and securing the ALTA's financial circumstance.

These executives were faced with a good number of situations that were foreign to them. Foreign in the sense that knowledge about them was, in fact, very weak. The interest, dedication, and determination variables were there but a working knowledge of the how's and whys where, too often, conspicuous by their absence. A further real difficulty that they experienced was in searching for and finding common grounds of agreement among the many-directioned thinkings of trustees throughout the province.

These executives had a number of very strong positives, which assisted them in attending, well, to the structures they were putting in place. Among these positives, we find:

1. The association had a vast body of trustees who were knowledgeable about political realities. Further this body of trustees was not without intelligence! As unknowns surfaced we tapped the pool of trustees available to us and were always able to find someone to address the challenge, which came to our attention. Trustees, individually and collectively gave of their time and ability both freely and often.
2. The large urban library boards were consistent and insistent in their stance relative to the priorities they felt that the association should set for itself. Without equivocation they demanded that the ALTA's primary focus be directed at rural library development. These same boards recognized that rural libraries would improve their circumstances through the regionalization concept and offered their support and assistance through the use of their personnel and facilities
3. The emergence of two very supportive Ministers of Culture (Horst Schmid and Mary LeMessurier) during this phase of development provided levels of concrete assistance.
4. There were good levels of cooperation between the ALTA and LAA associations
5. Alberta has experienced boom times. Because this was the case we were in the right place at the right time and shared in that economic wellbeing.

The aforementioned executives did, to a large degree, accommodate for the provision of a relatively firmly based association. The membership level which started out lethargically seemed to explode in that latter part of this first phase of development. The association had a good funding anchor. Programs and trustee services were in place. AND a level of confidence in the ALTA's leadership viability had been established among the constituent membership.

The next phase of the ALTA growth development occurred during the three-year period of executives led by Howard Platt. It was interesting and in fact, exciting, to participate in the new directions and thinking done and taken during this period.

Recognizing that the ALTA was relatively well structure to meet pragmatic requirements these executive gave time to philosophical concepts envisioned for public library service. Why do libraries exist? What should be our goals? Where do libraries fit in our societal setting? What will the role of libraries be 10, 20, 30 years hence? What are the educational responsibilities of public libraries? Who is ultimately responsible for library funding needs? Are we in tune with the needs of library users? Can we function as an isolated island in Canada?

It is fair to recognize that answers weren't easily arrived at – in fact, there will be need for continued studies and assessments to find the answers to the directional and philosophical questions raised during this phase of development.

The philosophical probing led to closer and more positive relationships' between and among the ALTA, the Alberta Library Board and Alberta Library Services. While there were still some areas of disagreement they were fewer in number and expressed at considerably lower levels of hostility.

While this developmental phase was very short in terms of years it marked a new path for the ALTA to follow. It is a path which, when combined with the presently developed structure of the ALTA, will provide interesting challenges to executives in the years to come.

The phase the ALTA is now entering will certainly be a most interesting one to witness and reflect on a few years from now. It is just a touch early to assess this period.

What can be noted, at this writing, is the manner in which Sandra Weidner and her executive have responded to the new directions envisioned for the ALTA.

This group has attempted to crystallize the ALTA's purpose in today's setting and to structure, more specifically, the manner through the ALTA can follow-up on the directions envisioned during the ALTA's second phase of growth.

Through the effectment of a mission statement and the setting of very specific goals and objectives the association may now perform in a more objective and better organized manner. We have gone through a long search and find period and now find ourselves in the position of being well informed, more knowledgeable politically better attuned and in a position to provide strong leadership through that ALTA.

The knowledge, expertise, experience together with a good level of funding bode well for continued, positive development of the public libraries of Alberta.

Permit me to conclude this review through sharing, with you, an experience which will remain with me as the most memorable one through the number of years of association with public library trustees. There are many, many interesting exciting and satisfying recollections however, this one stands out front and centre.

As members of the Alberta Library Board we participated in a wine-and-cheese reception for us on the evening prior to meeting with the Peace Regional Organizing committee in Peace River, mid-winter. The reception was intended to provide an hour or so for informal introductions to library people from the Peace River area. The hour passed by very quickly and in fact, was extended by some time as we, each of us, was pigeon holed for information, suggestions and recommendations. And we were pleased that we were able to offer levels of assistance to the various questions posed.

Near the end of the reception period a man of average stature approached me and said, "I know that you have had a busy day and that you will be meeting with our Regional Development Committee tomorrow morning but could I impose on you for a few minutes more?"

Well, we talked for more than just a few minutes. While the content of questions and responses provided for a good exchange of thought and opinion I learned of a number of incidentals.

This man, a library promoted, had travelled over 3 ½ hours on the off chance that he might have an opportunity to learn something which might assist him and his community to improve its public library service. Because he had to be at his place of employment at 8:00am the following morning he would ,following the reception, travel in excess of another 3 ½ hours to get home. And because his library board was not able to do so he bore the cost of travel, means and other costs by himself. No, he did not bring these incidentals to my attention deliberately; they were simply part of our conversation. They were just one of the things that one didn't spend a great deal of time on.

Learning? Message?

Yes, simple and direct! This man typifies Alberta Library Trustees, male or female. It was and is this manner of trustee dedication and determination, which has brought about the exciting changes in the public library community in Alberta! They dun good!

Awards and Recognition

Alberta Library Trustees Association

The ALTA provides for two levels of recognition to individual trustees for contributions made by them relative to the growth and development of the association.

Certificates of Merit are awarded to members who have made outstanding levels of contributions in any one of a number of specific areas of endeavour.

Honorary Life Memberships, the association's highest level of recognition, are awarded to individual trustees who have given outstanding and long-term contributions to the growth and development of the ALTA.

The Government of Alberta

The province of Alberta awards *Certificates of Achievement* annually to individual Albertans who have made outstanding contribution in the service category. The recipients of this award will have made significant and outstanding contributions in a particular service area for a period of no less than ten years.

Canadian Library Trustees Association

The CLTA's highest level of award is its *Certificate of Merit*. This award is granted to individual library trustees who have made outstanding and significant contributions to National Library Trusteeship.

ALBERTA LIBRARY TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

1981 – CAROLINE GRAHAM

1985 – ED HALINA

HOWARD PLATT

LORO SHANE

1986 – SANDRA WEIDNER

1987 – MICHAEL PRIOR

CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

1987 – IRENE ARNOLD

1988 – ANNE HUNT

MARY LOU ROSE

OWEN SNYDER

GLENN WALMSLEY

1989 – ANN BRADSHAW

EILEEN MASON

ALLEN SHAMPAIGN

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

1980 – CAROLINE GRAHAM

1986 – ED HALINA

HAROLD DAWE

1987 – HOWARD PLATT

1988 – SANDRA WEIDNER

CANADIAN LIBRARY TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

1987 – HOWARD PLATT

ALBERTA LIBRARY TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE LISTINGS

1971-1989

PROTEM EXECUTIVE – MAY 1, 1971 – SEPTEMBER 25, 1971

PRESIDENT	FRED MACMILLAN, MEDICINE HAT
SECRETARY	CAROL WAHL, REDCLIFF
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	JACK COLLETT, CALGARY
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	W.S. RUSSELL, LETHBRIDGE
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	B. CALDWELL, GRANDE PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	ED HALINA, OLDS

SEPTEMBER 26, 1971 – JUNE 17, 1972

PRESIDENT	FRED MACMILLAN, MEDICINE HAT
1 ST VICE PRESIDENT	ETHEL TAYLOR, RED DEER
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	MAY GARDINER, EDMONTON
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	JACK COLLETT, CALGARY
SECRETARY	CAROL WAHL, REDCLIFF
TREASURER	ALICE AVERY, TABER
DIRECTOR	B. CALDWELL, GRANDE PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR	W.S. RUSSELL, LETHBRIDGE
DIRECTOR	ED HALINA, OLDS
DIRECTOR	GERTRUDE CRERAR, BROOKS

JUNE 18, 1972 – MAY 5, 1973

PRESIDENT	FRED MACMILLAN, MEDICINE HAT
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1 ST VICE PRESIDENT	ETHEL TAYLOR, RED DEER
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	MAY GARDINER, EDMONTON
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	JOHN WATSON, CALGARY
SECRETARY	HAZEL MCKENZIE, MEDICINE HAT
TREASURER	ALICE AVERY, TABER
DIRECTOR	EVE WHITNEY, PEACE RIVER
DIRECTOR	WILLIAM BUSHKO, VEGREVILLE
DIRECTOR	ED HALINA, OLDS
DIRECTOR	GERTRUDE CRERAR, BROOKS

MAY 6, 1973 – MAY 4, 1974

PRESIDENT	MAY GARDINER, EDMONTON
VICE PRESIDENT	ETHEL TAYLOR, RED DEER
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	WILLIAM BUSHKO, VEGREVILLE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	J.S. WATSON, CALGARY
SECRETARY	did without
TREASURER	ALICE AVERY, TABER
DIRECTOR	ED HALINA, OLDS
DIRECTOR	FAY HINMAN, CARDSTON
DIRECTOR	EVE WHITNEY, PEACE RIVER
DIRECTOR	THELMA PRICE, LLOYDMINSTER
PAST PRESIDENT	FRED MACMILLAN, MEDICINE HAT

MAY 5, 1974 – MAY 3, 1975

PRESIDENT	MAY GARDINER, EDMONTON
VICE PRESIDENT	ETHEL TAYLOR, RED DEER

VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH) WILLIAM BUSHKO, VEGREVILLE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH) J.S. WATSON, CALGARY
SECRETARY- TREASURER ROGER LUFKIN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR ED HALINA, OLDS
DIRECTOR FAY HINMAN, CARDSTON
DIRECTOR EVE WHITNEY, PEACE RIVER
DIRECTOR JEANNETTE LANDRY, HIGH RIVER
PAST PRESIDENT FRED MACMILLAN, MEDICINE HAT

MAY 4, 1975 – MAY 8, 1976

PRESIDENT LORNA HADDOW, CALGARY
VICE PRESIDENT ETHEL TAYLOR, RED DEER
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH) FRANK PERRY, EDMONTON
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH) KAY PRATT, MEDICINE HAT
SECRETARY- TREASURER MARY CARPENTER, CALGARY
DIRECTOR ED HALINA, OLDS
DIRECTOR MATTIE MCCULLOUGH, RED DEER
DIRECTOR GARY FOLKERTS, REDCLIFF
PAST PRESIDENT MAY GARDINER, EDMONTON

MAY 9, 1976 – APRIL 29, 1977

PRESIDENT LORNA HADDOW, CALGARY
VICE PRESIDENT JACK BLAND, LEDUC
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH) BILL MARSHALL, SHERWOOD PARK
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH) HAROLD TICHENOR, LETHBRIDGE
SECRETARY- TREASURER LURA STOBO, CALGARY

DIRECTOR	ED HALINA, OLDS
DIRECTOR	ALICE LEE, SHERWOOD PARK
DIRECTOR	CAROLINE GRAHAM, VULCAN
DIRECTOR	MAY NORTON, LAC LA BICHE
PAST PRESIDENT	MAY GARDINER, EDMONTON

APRIL 30, 1977 – MAY 5, 1978

PRESIDENT	JACK BLAND, LEDUC
VICE PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	DONNA SHORES, GRANDE PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	HAROLD TICHENOR, LETHBRIDGE
SECRETARY	GAYE ROSS, DRUMHELLER
TREASURER	TOM BAKER, EVANSBURG
DIRECTOR	BILL MARSHALL, SHERWOOD PARK
DIRECTOR	CAROLINE GRAHAM, VULCAN
DIRECTOR	JOAN EVANS, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	ALLAN SHELDON, CALGARY
PAST PRESIDENT	LORNA HADDOW, CALGARY

MAY 6, 1978 – MAY 11, 1979

PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS
VICE PRESIDENT	BILL MARSHALL, SHERWOOD PARK
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	DONNA SHORES, GRANDE PRAIRIE (JIM BRACKENBURY, GRANDE PRAIRIE; REPLACEMENT FOR SHORES)
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	CAROLINE GRAHAM, VULCAN
SECRETARY	GAYE ROSS, DRUMHELLER

TREASURER	TOM BAKER, EVANSBURG
DIRECTOR	GERRY LAING, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	MARILYN ROBIN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	JEAN MEYER, LLOYDMINSTER
DIRECTOR	JUNE CRAWFORD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
DIRECTOR	DARRY MASEY, LETHBRIDGE
DIRECTOR	PAT RYAN, EDMONTON
PAST PRESIDENT	JACK BLAND, LEDUC

MAY 12, 1979 – MAY 2, 1980

PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS
VICE PRESIDENT	BILL MARSHALL, SHERWOOD PARK
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	JIM BRACKENBURY, GRANDE PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	CAROLINE GRAHAM, VULCAN
SECRETARY	GAYE ROSS, DRUMHELLER
TREASURER	MARILYN ROBIN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	TERRY LAING, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	REBECCA AIZENMAN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	JEAN LEWIS, HIGH PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR	JUNE CRAWFORD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
DIRECTOR	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE
DIRECTOR	CLIFF DACRE, REDCLIFF

MAY 3, 1980 – APRIL 26, 1981

PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS
VICE PRESIDENT	BILL MARSHALL, SHERWOOD PARK

VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	JEAN LEWIS, HIGH PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	CAROLINE GRAHAM, VULCAN
SECRETARY	JUNE CRAWFORD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
TREASURER	ROGER LUFKIN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	PAT RYAN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	ANTHONY PULLMAN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	EUNICE EASTON, GRANDE PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR	JEAN D. SCHMITT, MILK RIVER
DIRECTOR	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE
PAST PRESIDENT	JACK BLAND, LEDUC

APRIL 27, 1981 – APRIL 22, 1982

PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS
VICE PRESIDENT	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	JEAN LEWIS, HIGH PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	PALMER HUCKLE, MEDICINE HAT
SECRETARY	JUNE CRAWFORD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
TREASURER	ROGER LUFKIN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	PAT RYAN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	JOHN ROBERTSON, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	CLIFF DACRE, REDCLIFF
DIRECTOR	JEAN D. SCHMITT, MILK RIVER
DIRECTOR	PAT FLETTE, GRANDE PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR	JOHN NORMINTON, VULCAN
PAST PRESIDENT	JACK BLAND, LEDUC

APRIL 23, 1982 – APRIL 29, 1983

PRESIDENT	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE
VICE PRESIDENT	PALMER HUCKLE, MEDICINE HAT
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	PAULINE BISH, EDMONTON
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	JOHN NORMINTON, VULCAN
SECRETARY	JUNE CRAWFORD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
TREASURER	ROGER LUFKIN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	PAT RYAN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	ELAINE ANGLIN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	CLIFF DACRE, REDCLIFF
DIRECTOR	IRENE ARNOLD, GRANDE CENTRE
DIRECTOR	LORO SHANE, BANFF
DIRECTOR	SANDRA WEIDNER, LACOMBE
PAST PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS

APRIL 30, 1983 – MAY 3, 1984

PRESIDENT	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE
VICE PRESIDENT	LORO SHANE, BANFF
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	MIKE POULTER, HIGH PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	CLIFF DACRE, REDCLIFF
SECRETARY	JUNE CRAWFORD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
TREASURER	WARREN WILDE, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	ROGER LUFKIN, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	BETTY PRICE, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	GARY KIRBY, STRATHMORE
DIRECTOR	IRENE ARNOLD, GRANDE CENTRE

DIRECTOR	JOHN NORMINTON, VULCAN
DIRECTOR	SANDRA WEIDNER, LACOMBE
PAST PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS

MAY 4, 1984 – MAY 3, 1985

PRESIDENT	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE
VICE PRESIDENT	SANDRA WEIDNER, LACOMBE
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	MIKE POULTER, HIGH PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	CLIFF DACRE, REDCLIFF
SECRETARY	DOREEN ARMSTRONG, LEDUC
TREASURER	LILY ANDERSON, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	JEAN MUCHA, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	GUNILLA MUNGAN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	DOREEN LEWIS, GRAND PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR	IRENE ARNOLD, GRANDE CENTRE
DIRECTOR	MICHAEL PRIOR, VEGREVILLE
DIRECTOR	ANN BRADSHAW, LETHBRIDGE
PAST PRESIDENT	ED HALINA, OLDS

MAY 4, 1985 – MAY 3, 1986

PRESIDENT	SANDRA WEIDNER, LACOMBE
VICE PRESIDENT	MICHAEL PRIOR, VEGREVILLE
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	MIKE POULTER, HIGH PRAIRIE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	ANN BRADSHAW, LETHBRIDGE
SECRETARY	ANN HUNT, LACOMBE
TREASURER	LILY ANDERSON, EDMONTON

DIRECTOR	JEAN MUCHA, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	GUNILLA MUNGAN, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	OWEN SNYDER, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	IRENE ARNOLD, GRANDE CENTRE
DIRECTOR	TERRY WILSON, DUCHESS
DIRECTOR	GLEN WALMSLEY, HIGH LEVEL
PAST PRESIDENT	HOWARD PLATT, SPRUCE GROVE

MAY 4, 1986 – MAY 5, 1987

PRESIDENT	MICHAEL PRIOR, VEGREVILLE
VICE PRESIDENT	ANN BRADSHAW, LETHBRIDGE
VICE PRESIDENT (NORTH)	IRENE ARNOLD, GRANDE CENTRE
VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)	TERRY WILSON, DUCHESS
SECRETARY	ANN HUNT, LACOMBE
TREASURER	OWEN SNYDER, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	JEAN MUCHA, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	BOB LIGHTFOOT, CALGARY
DIRECTOR	WILMA BIURCHILL, LOUGHEED
DIRECTOR	ALVIN GROSS, BARRHEAD
DIRECTOR	GLEN WALMSLEY, HIGH LEVEL
PAST PRESIDENT	SANDRA WEIDNER, LACOMBE

MAY 6, 1987 – MAY 3, 1988

PRESIDENT	ANN BRADSHAW, LETHBRIDGE
VICE PRESIDENT	TERRY WILSON, DUCHESS
SECRETARY-TREASURER	OWEN SNYDER, CALGARY

DIRECTOR	JEAN MUCHA, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	BOB LIGHTFOOT, CALGARY
DIRECTOR – AREA 1	GLEN WALMSLEY, HIGH LEVEL
DIRECTOR – AREA 2	ALVIN GROSS, BARRHEAD
DIRECTOR – AREA 3	WILMA BURCHILL, LOUGHEED
DIRECTOR – AREA 4	RENEE SCHLEUSSING, COCHRANE
DIRECTOR – AREA 5	EILEEN MASON, FORT MCLEOD
DIRECTOR – AREA 6	KEN REEDER, MEDICINE HAT
DIRECTOR – AREA 7	ARLENE DUTCHAK, SHERWOOD PARK
DIRECTOR – AREA 8	DOREEN BEAN, ST. PAUL
DIRECTOR – AREA 9	ANDREA PHEASEY
PAST PRESIDENT	MICHAEL PRIOR, VEGREVILLE

MAY 4, 1988 – MAY 3, 1989

PRESIDENT	WILMA BURCHILL, LOUGHEED
VICE PRESIDENT	ARLENE DUTCHAK, SHERWOOD PARK
SECRETARY-TREASURER	MAUREEN MCLEOD
DIRECTOR	JEAN MUCHA, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	BOB LIGHTFOOT, CALGARY
DIRECTOR – AREA 1	MORAG MOCHAN, GRANDE PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR – AREA 2	DEBBIE MARDY, MILLET
DIRECTOR – AREA 3	MARY LOU ROSE, LACOMBE
DIRECTOR – AREA 4	RENEE SCHLEUSSING, COCHRANE
DIRECTOR – AREA 5	EILEEN MASON, FORT MCLEOD
DIRECTOR – AREA 6	KEN REEDER, MEDICINE HAT
DIRECTOR – AREA 7	JOHN PRAST, TOFIELD

DIRECTOR – AREA 8	DOREEN BEAN, ST. PAUL
DIRECTOR – AREA 9	ALLEN SHAMPAIGN, FORT MCMURRY
PAST PRESIDENT	ANN BRADSHAW, LETHBRIDGE

MAY 4, 1989 – MAY 1990

PRESIDENT	ARLENE DUTCHAK, SHERWOOD PARK
VICE PRESIDENT	KEN REEDER, MEDICINE HAT
SECRETARY-TREASURER	MAUREEN MCLEOD
DIRECTOR	NICK SPILLIOS, EDMONTON
DIRECTOR	BOB LIGHTFOOT, CALGARY
DIRECTOR – AREA 1	MORAG MOCHAN, GRANDE PRAIRIE
DIRECTOR – AREA 2	DEBBIE MARDY, MILLET
DIRECTOR – AREA 3	JACK LAYTON, PONOKA
DIRECTOR – AREA 4	RENEE SCHLEUSSING, COCHRANE
DIRECTOR – AREA 5	IRIS ENGLISH
DIRECTOR – AREA 6	MARGUERITE SEITZ
DIRECTOR – AREA 7	JOHN PRAST, TOFIELD
DIRECTOR – AREA 8	DOREEN BEAN, ST. PAUL
DIRECTOR – AREA 9	ANNE LETAIN
PAST PRESIDENT	WILMA BURCHILL, LOUGHEED