

From the President's Desk



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"What good are professional Library associations? What do they do?"

This is a question that has been put to me a lot over the last year when I say that I am the president of Atlantic Provinces Library Association. I must admit to some amazement at this question. However, the question motivated me to think very seriously about this person's mind set and to conceptualize the benefits of being involved with APLA as a professional association.

Currently many people, and not just librarians, get their professional development and networking opportunities from online webinars, streaming video and social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. All of these make "traditional" professional associations like APLA seem outdated. Nevertheless, I believe that social networking and online tools are not at odds with, or a replacement, for traditional associations. APLA runs both an active Facebook page and twitter account and it continues to provide continuing education webinars through its strong involvement with the Partnership.

Following are five important ways that APLA contributes as an association to the profession of librarianship.

1. Scholarships, awards and job opportunities.

APLA awards the Somers scholarship every year to an Atlantic Canadian who is entering the profession. It also gives several awards, the Merit, Advocacy, Games at the Library, Memorial, Conference First Timers and the General Activities Fund awards. APLA continues to have a listserv where libraries in the Atlantic Provinces looking to hire can post jobs or internships.

2. Conferences.

Once a year APLA holds an educational conference where librarians share **their** best practices, research, and projects that contribute to the library and information profession in Atlantic Canada.

3. Best practices.

APLA distributes a bulletin that keeps us informed about best practices in the field. If you haven't already picked up that credibility and trustworthiness are essential as a practitioner in a field, you will after having joined a professional association. It's vital to understand what is considered best practice and what is accepted in the library profession.

4. Advocacy.

APLA continues to advocate for the library profession both regionally and federally. This year, APLA continued its advocacy campaign both for Nova Scotian and Newfoundland public library services.

5. Updates on policies.

It's amazing how much one piece of legislation can impact a profession. This past year has been filled, for many librarians, with the INDU Committee hearings on the statutory review of the Canadian Copyright Act. APLA endorsed the brief that The Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) presented before the INDU Committee.

So what good are professional associations? APLA provides both an online and face-to-face experience for professional enrichment and engagement. Joining APLA provides members with a competitive advantage because they become active, informed members of the library community.