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Email Message to: Gillian Mason
From: Meyer Brownstone
Sent: Monday, April 7, 2003 12:26 PM
Subject: OLBA

Here is my brief report to the Board on the OLBA Council meeting last week-end.

1. First, I should note that interest was shown in some of the practices at TPL which are currently prominent at OLBA. The two main areas were the performance criteria, measures and reports which I referred to at our last Board meeting; (I have arranged for all OLBA Council members to receive the material which was approved by our Board) and the way in which we have approached the issues precipitated by changes in the Library and Municipal Act regarding Library Board composition and Selection. Again, after I reviewed our experience, a request was made for circulation of our discussion and decisions, with the rider that we were part of a larger review of Toronto ABC's now being conducted which would be considering our proposals. I assumed that there would be no objection to circulating our discussion and decisions to the OLBA Council, and have asked Nancy to do so. More on this issue later.

2. Our decisions re block membership and advocacy were well received, but those questions have some distance to go within the OLBA (and the OLA) before much happens, as there does not appear to be a basic relevant inventory on boards and staff on which to base some planning on block membership.

On advocacy, there remains the basic questions of "on what", "how", and "with what support constituencies-boards? officers? staff? users?". There was discussion of interventions in municipal elections and operation of a booth at the AMO convention in Toronto - August 17-20, and activity around Ontario Public Library Week 2003 - October 20-26 using the theme "Communities Alive @ your Library" (an activity in which I assume we engage). I reported briefly on our public information/advocacy upcoming forum on GATS.

3. On the question of the new legislation, there is a body of opinion on the OLBA that sees in the amendments not so much greater flexibility, but a more problematic attempt towards degeneration of library boards through downscaling and encouragement of minimal public participation. This is linked to the larger longer term agenda of the current government. On this point I reported that although our decision was to reduce our size, we did make an effort to avoid excessive reductions and to maintain a strong citizen presence while paying attention to the need for continued council links.

4. Helping smaller libraries was discussed as a general issue. One of the suggestions that came forward was the enhancement of collections in smaller libraries through sending materials that were being taken out of the collections of the larger libraries; there may be further work done on surveying and designing this form of assistance.
5. There was discussion of planning the next Super Conference and lists of workshop titles are being assembled via Joyce Smith at marjoyholdings@sympatico.ca