



SSLA President's Report

Donna DesRoches – SSLA President

Winter 2009

Professional Learning Opportunities Abound!

Your SSLA executive is very excited about the new professional learning opportunities we are offering our membership this year.

First, we are reconsidering our publication strategy and you will see the beginnings of that strategy in the offerings provided on our web site. There has been an effort to connect you with Saskatchewan bloggers, to keep you informed of national and international issues and trends affecting school libraries, and bring to your attention new and notable books.

Check the web site frequently because there will be more happening on the site in the near future.

The Medium has gone online and because of this venture, the article, *50 Ways to Love Your Library* by Carlene Walter, received international recognition and will be republished in *Teacher-Librarian*.

This issue of *The Medium* is focusing on reading comprehension strategies which is an effort on the part of the editors to tie directly to the online professional development opportunity being offered this year.

I am very pleased to say that our first venture into virtual learning was a resounding success. Forty-four people from across the province joined Sharon Grimes, author of *Reading is our Business* in an online session in Elluminate. During her presentation Sharon provided a background of the reading comprehension strategies, addressed the role of the teacher-librarian, gave many practical suggestions which could be used in the library and classroom and introduced some web 2.0 tools showing how they can be used to teach the strategies.

The conversation via virtual chat was animated and on-topic and Sharon continued well past the suggested end time to answer questions posed by the participants.

I am looking forward to the next two virtual sessions with Sharon Grimes – especially the one in January when I will be able to attend from the comfort of my home or in the division office board room in the company of our division teacher-librarians. Can you imagine... no winter driving and three sessions for only \$30.00!

These virtual presentations are not our only new initiative in providing professional learning opportunities to our membership this year. We have also entered into a partnership with the Saskatchewan Educational Technology Consortium to provide a joint conference that will meet the needs of teacher-librarians across the province.

Our joint funding has enabled us to contract the SPDU to plan and organize the conference thus reducing the work required on the part of our organization. Yes, we recognize that we will not have the profits that we normally have from our annual conference but very frugal past executives have left a legacy that enable us to participate in this inspiring event.

Jamie McKenzie, David Warlick, the individuals from *Telling the New Story* (Dean Shareski, Clarence Fisher, Darren Kuropatwa, and Kathy Cassidy), displays, networking, a variety of sessions... all promises of a conference to remember.

Last year we heard that having an SSLA pre-conference followed by the IT Summit was just too expensive and required too much time away from school. A joint conference should alleviate some of these issues and provide many opportunities for learning and networking. We also believe that being a partner reflects the collaborative nature of teacher-librarianship as well as highlighting our role within the school.

Carlene Walter and I represent SSLA on the planning committee and we are working to ensure that teacher-librarian learning needs are met. And, because we heard that it is often too expensive to attend a two-day conference we will schedule sessions most applicable to teacher-librarians on the Monday. Note that there will **NOT** be a reduced conference fee for only attending one day. The AGM will be held on Monday from 4:00 – 6:00 so please plan to attend and participate in the business of your organization.

We also have a very active 50th Birthday Committee planning a celebration to mark this moment in the history of organization. Further information will be released shortly with the details of the event.

This is a very exciting year with many different opportunities provided for you to network and learn from each other. I hope that you will join us in these endeavors.

Donna DesRoches
SSLA President