

## Let's Celebrate our Successes!

**F**or the past several issues I've talked about affiliations, volunteering, collaboration and strategic planning. The last 18 months have been a most challenging time for Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA) and its members. We've dealt with a volatile Canadian dollar that rose and fell more swiftly than anyone could keep up with; this caused considerable tension between booksellers and suppliers with everyone trying to service their customers and still stay in business. A few bookstores have closed in the past year; and we have also seen closures or consolidation of services in the pub-

lishing and distribution side of the industry. All that aside, there are numerous success stories that we should celebrate as we look forward.

### **Spring book sales are UP**

As the economy slowed, customers held back on their discretionary spending for many non-essential items; however, BookNet Canada reported that book sales in Canada have increased slightly from last year. Books, especially children's books, have lasting value and are considered a good investment that can be enjoyed over and over. BookManager sales reports confirm BNC's stats that book sales in independent stores were up in the first quarter of the year. Several new bookstores have opened, or relocated and we have welcomed into membership a number of individuals who are planning to open bookstores.

### **CBA lobbies Ontario government against HST on books**

When the Ontario government announced it would introduce harmonization of federal and provincial sales taxes, CBA immediately lobbied the government to ensure that books would not be included in any harmonization. Shortly thereafter, it was announced that

### **Ontario booksellers report record sales to elementary public schools**

In Ontario, CBA's work on behalf of its members with the Ontario Ministry of Education helped ensure that our members were fully informed on the funding requirements and Request for Qualification propos-

als they needed to submit in order to be eligible to sell to Ontario elementary public schools who this year received about \$15 million in additional funding from the Ontario government for the purchase of books. We have heard from many of our members who reported record sales with the schools this spring, thanking CBA for its efforts to keep them up to date and on target.

We know that the last two issues mentioned only affected Ontario members; however, what we learned from those experiences can be used should these issues come up in any other province. We understand that BC has considered harmonization of taxes. We also know that Ministries are always looking for ways to standardize processes and the MERX system, which qualifies vendors who then become the only agents that government agencies may purchase from, is in use in many provinces for other items. Ontario is the first to use this system for books but most certainly will not be the last.

### **CBA forms Strategic Alliance with RCC**

In an effort to bring increased value to CBA members, we have formed a strategic alliance with Retail Council of Canada. The first member benefit to be introduced was a


reduction in credit and debit merchant rates through Chase Paymentech Services. More than half our members are already enjoying reduced fees. Other benefits will be rolled out this summer and fall.

### **Reed closes the door on BookExpo Canada ... CBA Summer Conference is born**

When Reed announced its decision to cancel BEC 2009 and terminate its tradeshow agreement with CBA, our Board sprung into action immediately. On very short notice, with little budget and staff resources, we have planned a two-day Conference. Professional development sessions, networking opportunities, publisher, author and sales rep interaction, and CBA Member Forum and AGM will take place June 20-21, 2009 at the Radisson Admiral Hotel in Toronto. We've turned a loss into an opportunity to redevelop a conference that meets the changing needs of our members. This is just the start. We wish to thank publishers, suppliers and booksellers for supporting our efforts this year.

### **Celebrate the Best in the Business at CBA Libris Awards**

Our celebrations would not be complete without acknowledging the many individuals and organizations who make our industry unique. CBA Libris Awards Reception and Presentation celebrates the successes of a number of key contributors and announces the winners of more than a dozen Libris Awards. This is a year we should all celebrate—and what better way to do it than by attending CBA Libris Awards. While there are no awards for your dedicated Board of Directors, this event will afford you a chance to thank them personally for their commitment to supporting your interests above their own.

A personal note of thanks to CBA's Board of Directors 2008-9: Nancy Frater, President; Stephen Cribar, Vice-President; Michael Hare, Treasurer; Eleanor LeFave, Immediate Past President; Michael Neill, Ellen Pickle and Christopher Smith, Trade Directors; and Mark Adams, Amber Clark and Mark Lefebvre, Campus Directors, for their support and guidance throughout a challenging year. 

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