

Editor's Desk

Emily Sinkins



A student called me up last week who was conducting research about how to succeed as an independent literary press in Canada. While I offered her suggestions of groups that might benefit a publisher like the one she described, I also talked about the affinity that exists between Canadian publishers and Canadian booksellers. We advocate on behalf of the latter group—our active members—while acknowledging that their prosperity is inextricably linked to that of their publishing partners.

Canadian booksellers and their suppliers are deeply invested—not just financially but ideologically and emotionally—in maintaining and growing our country's rich literary resources. No one wants to see our literary culture—a source of pride for Canadians—diluted or devalued out of existence. It's a struggle to keep that from happening amidst the pressures of cutthroat pricing on traditional and electronic books. Publishers and booksellers respond by relentlessly promoting the real value of the book and by finding new ways to enrich the buying and reading experience (many of which you'll read about in this issue's conference coverage). These objectives are always best achieved when undertaken in tandem.

At CBA's recent Member Forum a lot of lively discussion took place regarding the need for the industry to evolve in order to protect the future of the book and maintain a diverse indigenous publishing program. This evolution, many booksellers argued, is predicated on bookseller, supplier and author collaboration—something CBA plans to promote this year by creating new 'relations' committees and by soliciting the feedback of our industry partners in all major initiatives, including our advocacy efforts, educational programs and marketing initiatives.

The generous supplier sponsorship of CBA's National Conference was not only a show of customer appreciation or a relationship-building effort; it was a contribution to the strength of the independent bookselling community. With informed, educated and forward-looking bookstore staff, comes the promise of a long life for Independents—who comprise a much-needed distribution channel for the kinds of books that, while not often found on bestseller lists, contribute depth and brilliance to publishers' lists and consumers' reading experience.

The Member Forum made clear that while approaches may diverge, publishers and booksellers share the same overarching goal for the industry. This issue of the magazine—and the conference it covers—is a testament to the industry's great promise: new retail approaches, new promotional tools, new bookselling talent. Hopefully, the ideas offered will inspire some innovative bookselling initiatives and some truly creative and constructive collaboration. **CBA**

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