

# A [brief] history of librarian activism

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CAUT Librarians and Archivists Conference: From Talk to Action – building successful  
campaigns

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# A [brief] history of librarian activism

- 1920s': Introduction of vocational reading material
- 1927: Creation of the Canadian Depository Services Program
- 1931: ALA Junior Members Round Table
- 1937: Progressive Librarians Council
- 1943: "War Information Desks"
- 1948: ALA Library Bill of Rights
- 1953\*: Freedom to read

# A [brief] history of librarian activism

- 1969: ALA Round Table on Social Responsibilities of Libraries
- 1990: Progressive Librarians Guild
- 2001: US Patriot Act
- 2011: Canada's Action Plan on Open Government
- 2012: Budget 2012: Jobs, Growth, and Long Term Prosperity
- Canada's Past Matters
- Statements on Intellectual Freedom:
  - ACRL, CLA, IFLA

**The FBI  
has not  
been here**

*[watch very closely for the removal of this sign]*

# Association of Canadian Archivists

- Advocacy
- Communications
- Governance
- Outreach
- Professional Development



# CAUT Librarians Committee

The Librarians' and Archivists' Committee is a Standing Committee of CAUT Council with responsibility for:

- Representing the interests of librarians and archivists to Council and to the CAUT membership at large.
- Making recommendations to Council on matters with which it is concerned.
- Acting as advocate for the academic librarian and archivist and for the well-being of academic librarianship and archival practice.

# Mission, Values, & Operating Principles

About CLA

**Mission, Values,  
& Operating  
Principles**

**History**

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## Our Mission

CLA is the national voice for Canada's library communities. As members, we:

- champion library values and the value of libraries
- influence public policy impacting libraries
- inspire and support member learning
- collaborate to strengthen the library community

## Our Values

- intellectual freedom
- diversity
- transparency and open communication
- accountability
- universal access to library service
- member voices and contributions
- collaboration

## Our Operating Principles

- An active and engaged membership is crucial to our success.
- CLA will have a governance structure that meets member needs.
- CLA will be efficiently run, fiscally responsible and financially stable.
- CLA facilitates the many diverse opinions and ideas about libraries and library issues.
- CLA will work closely with networks and other library associations to promote libraries, learning and advocacy opportunities.

# Association of Research Libraries

- Open and equitable access to information is a fundamental tenet to society
- We complement and build on the strengths of other organizations.
- We promote and advocate barrier-free access to research and educational information resources.
- We build relationships with other higher education societies and associations that share our common goals.

“Unions are the premier institution of a free, democratic society, promoting democracy in the workplace, as well as economic and social justice, and equality. They have this role because they are instruments of transformation of members and of society at large. In this wonderful transformation rests the real power of unions.”

Bernard, Elaine. “State of US Labor & Building Union Power”  
*Democratic Left*, 36 fall 2008, p.6.



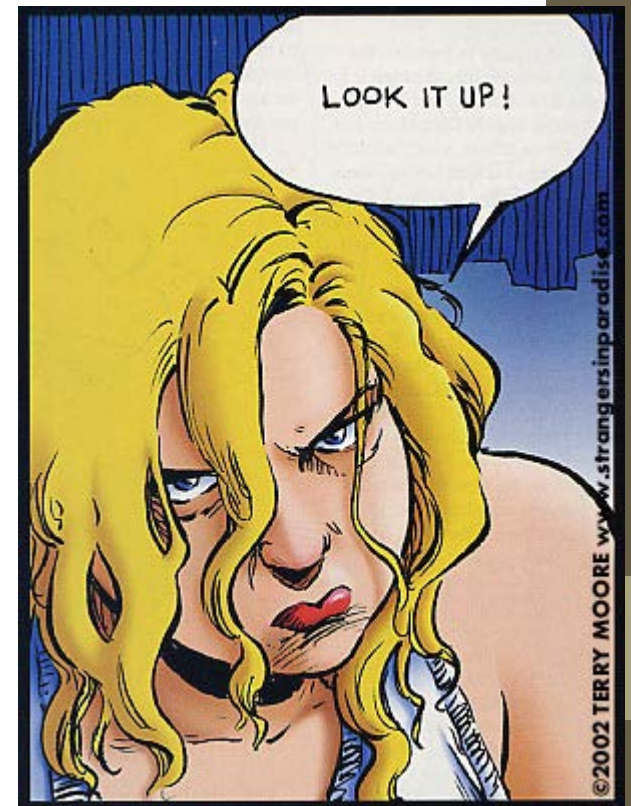
# Mind the Gap

- “Birds of a feather”
- Occupational hazard
- Professional tension
- Stereotypical perceptions
- Competing demands/interests



# Taking the Plunge

- Identity
- Social Justice
- Bridging
- Professional Confidence
- Perceptions of other librarians



As archivists, as members of the larger information profession, and as citizens of democratic societies, we have a definite stake in working to restore and expand open access to government information as a means of protecting our fragile democracies.

Thomas Connors, "The Bush Administration," in *Political Pressure*, 208.

# C(c)ampaigns

- Copyright
- Access to government information
  - Save Library and Archives Canada
  - Canada's Past Matters
- Academic Freedom,



# Resolutions

The following are resolutions put forward by the Information Policy Committee and passed at the BCLA Annual General Meeting. 2008 resolutions on "Canwest and Free Speech", "Network (Net) Neutrality", and "TILMA and AIT" are below.

- [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement \(TILMA\) \(2007\)](#)
- [Libraries and Media Concentration \(2007\)](#)
- [Little Sisters Bookstore \(with the Intellectual Freedom Committee\) \(2007\)](#)
- [Childcare Resource and Referral Centres \(2007\)](#)
- [Open Government \(2006\)](#)
- [WIPO Draft Treaty on Webcasts \(2006\)](#)
- [Community Access Program \(CAP\) \(2005\)](#)
- [Community TV \(2005\)](#)
- [Lawful Access \(2005\)](#)
- [Legal Services Society Cutbacks \(2005\)](#)
- [WIPO \(World Intellectual Property Organization\) \(2005\)](#)
- [Access to Government Information \(2004\)](#)

“I have only two proposals for archivists: One, that they engage in a campaign to open all government documents to the public. If there are rare exceptions, let the burden of proof be on those who claim them, not as now on the citizen who wants information.

And two, that they take the trouble to compile a whole new world of documentary material, ~bout the lives, desires, needs, of ordinary people. Both of these proposals are in keeping with the spirit of democracy, which demands that the population know what the government is doing, and that the condition, the grievances. the will of the underclasses become a force in the nation.”

Howard Zinn:

Speech, Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting,  
1970.

# Thank you

## Organizations Who Have Not Stopped By This Week

1. Red Cross
2. Boy Scouts
3. United Way
- ~~4. FBI~~
5. Rotary Club