Dear Colleagues,

It’s Freedom to Read Week (FTRW) while I write this. I have been seeing some really great FTRW campaigns going on in libraries across Saskatchewan – well done, you! It is easy for people to forget the rights that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees them. Positive and insightful campaigns like the ones you are running now are important for the cultural fabric of our communities. I got a call from a reporter with the Humboldt Journal, and we had a great talk about Freedom to Read Week, intellectual freedom, access to ideas and information, and all those good things. I hope I represented you well in that discussion. We shall see.

The Board and Office are busy at work with writing annual reports, preparing our financial books for the auditor, choosing a new auditor, and getting ready for the SLA Conference in May. We are looking forward to hosting guest speaker, Gloria DeSantis, from the Social Policy Research Unit of the University of Regina, at our March Board meeting. She is going to help us to learn more about organizations with charitable status, and how that interplays with advocacy activities.

It is also a time to seek nominations for the SLA Board for next year. Nominations just closed this week, and we have a full slate of officers!! I am really impressed with all of you – those running for the Board now, those thinking about running in future, and all the people who contribute through committee work. All of this moves us forward, and builds our capacity to give back to our members and our communities. I have much confidence in next year’s team; you guys are going to do great!

Last week, I got to be a part of the committee that doled out Continuing Education Grants to members. It was very gratifying. Since we had not spent all the money we budgeted for last year, we were able to carry some forward and give out more grants this time than we usually do. Everyone with a complete application got a grant to pursue their continuing education needs. The next application deadline is mid-August – mark it in your calendars, and start to plan your own learning journey.

At our March Board meeting, we are going to try to finalize a list of SLA 75th Anniversary ideas that we can put into motion for 2017, our anniversary year. If you have an idea for how we can celebrate SLA’s platinum anniversary, please send it to Judy in the office (slaexdir@sasktel.net) before March 11th. We are kicking around many groovy ideas, and would like to kick around yours too!

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Schmidt

2014-2016 President