Profile: Barbara Kelly
Vancouver Public Library
British Columbia
Role on the editorial board: Section Editor, Professional Development

Describe your role on the Partnership editorial board.

I encourage, and hunt for, potential authors who are creating, participating in, dreaming about, or being critical of the professional development opportunities that are happening, or not happening, in our Canadian library world.

What prompted you to become involved with Partnership?

As the President of the Saskatchewan Library Association I had the opportunity to work with The Partnership www.thepartnership.ca (Canada’s national network of provincial and territorial library associations) and experienced an ever changing, but consistently committed, group of people who were working together on library community engagement, member development, and sustainability strategies for associations that support and advocate for library services across the country. I wanted to continue being connected with ideas and people outside of whatever organizations I may work for, and most importantly, I was looking for an opportunity where I could support and facilitate others to connect and be involved – and so I applied to become the Section Editor, Professional Development.

Where do you think Partnership is headed?

To be honest, I am not quite sure. There are a variety of possible futures for Partnership when it comes to format, content, workflows, and marketing. What I do think about for
the journal, and for our profession and organizations, is that we need to be clear on our purpose, able to respond effectively and efficiently to our stakeholders, and facilitate a creative, aspiring, and supportive environment for us to work and lead in. This is easy to say, and it’s fairly easy to copy and paste off of a blog or a book review, but not so easy to make real.

What was your first job?

Once I knew that I was destined for greater things than chopping kindling and wringing duck necks, I sought out the glamorous opportunity of learning how to make that little swirl on top of a Dairy Queen soft serve cone. Not a great fit for a pissy-attitude-vegetarian-lactose-intolerant-Joan Jett-wanna-be teen, and they weren’t impressed with the modifications that a girlfriend and I did on my brown polyester uniform. But the job paid the rent and made me seriously think that maybe school did have something to offer.

If you didn’t work in a library, what would you do for a living? Explain why.

I would continue doing what I do, whether it would be with an internal focus in building organizational capacity, or with a more external community focus, what it is that I do in the library – expanding and deepening the creation of, access to, and understanding of ideas, information, and knowledge. Only, in this other career, I would be doing it with fewer rules and constraints than what we have created, as librarians, for our organizations.

What issues do you think will have a big impact on libraries in the next few years?

This biggest issue – the one that we need to address so that we can face all other issues – is organizational health. By organizational health, I mean the state of our leadership, resiliency, creativity, our ability to usefully and purposefully transform, manage change, and support and develop staff.