

COORDINATOR'S REPORT 2022

People and books, books and people! One thing that never changes at PAL...we're all about people and books. And so I'd like to start off this evening thanking our people...thank you to our volunteers, clients and board members for your roles in helping us to fulfill PAL's mission of creating accessible audiobooks.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and pay tribute to a few people who are no longer with us. We heard earlier of the passing of John Rae who had been a client for over 40 years. In late 2021 we discovered that Bill Hildebrand and Edith Gear also passed away. Edith and Bill, who were both educators, volunteered until their very late 80s, and had been with PAL for over 25 years. And finally, in January I learned through former PAL employee Christine Duncan of the death of my friend Lucy Carrick, who had been a volunteer narrator for over 10 years. Had it not been for severe scoliosis, she would probably still be volunteering today. John, Edith, Bill and Lucy had all served on the PAL board of directors, and John was an active board member at the time of his passing. Their loss is deeply felt by those who knew them.

A few years ago we took on the important process of creating governance documents that clearly define who we are and what we do as an organization. This undertaking inevitably led us to the surprising realization that we were without a formal recording policy; we all understand exactly what we do here at PAL, so the necessity of having it in print simply didn't occur to us until recently. I'm happy to report that PAL now has a clearly-defined and comprehensive policy describing the core work we do, making it much easier for a new person to familiarize themselves with us. And although the original reason for the creation of these documents had nothing to do with ONCA, it has effectively paved the way for those upcoming changes, as Danielle mentioned in her report. I'm quite sure you'll hear more about this at next year's AGM, so stay tuned!

Later this evening we'll honour Sarah Clarke for her volunteer service. Sarah, who has a PhD in linguistics, appeared on the scene 10 years ago, at a time when PAL desperately required her expertise to record university-level linguistics textbooks, and thanks to her three more linguists subsequently joined our volunteer team. Over the years Sarah has become a dear friend and, dare I say, amateur psychotherapist. Thank you so much Doctor Clarke, and we look forward to doing this again at 20 years!

...which leads very nicely into my closing quote by Emma Thompson, who said "I think books are like people, in the sense that they'll turn up in your life when you need them most."