



## **CIBA 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT**

April 1, 2020-March 31, 2021

# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As Canadians, we are deeply indebted to past and present Indigenous peoples.

We encourage our members to acknowledge the traditional territory upon which they reside, to educate themselves on the history and treatment of Indigenous peoples in this country, and to reflect on their relationship with Indigenous communities today.

Our active work toward reconciliation includes celebrating the depth and breadth of the work of Indigenous writers. It is our honour and responsibility to support Indigenous literature in this country, and we aim to do so through learning opportunities, partnerships, and community building.

# CREATING YOUR ASSOCIATION

## History

- Exploratory committee
- Survey
- Mandate and vision
- Framework and funding
- Operations

## 2020-21 Board of Directors

Chris Hall  
*President*  
McNally Robinson

Susan Chamberlain  
The Book Keeper

Jessica Walker  
*Vice President*  
Munro's Books

Cathy Jesson  
Black Bond Books

Ben Minett  
*Treasurer*  
The Bookshelf

Heather Kuipers  
Ella Minnow Books

Lori Cheverie  
*Secretary*  
Bookmark

Shelley Macbeth  
Blue Heron Books

Michael Neill  
Mosaic Books



# CREATING YOUR ASSOCIATION

Creating the Canadian Independent Booksellers Association (CIBA) has been a team effort.

A committee was struck in 2018 following conversation amongst booksellers about the services and benefits that could be offered by an association. After several formal discussions, a strategic survey was sent to booksellers across Canada in 2020, the results of which helped create the foundation for the organization.

Soon after that, the founding Board of Directors was assembled. These booksellers helped form the mandate and vision of the association and began advocacy efforts with the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH). We secured funding to help build the association over two years. CIBA began public operations in January 2021.

Doug Minett agreed to step down from the board and into the role of Executive Director before hiring a team of independent contractors to help create and manage programs.

# BUILDING YOUR ASSOCIATION

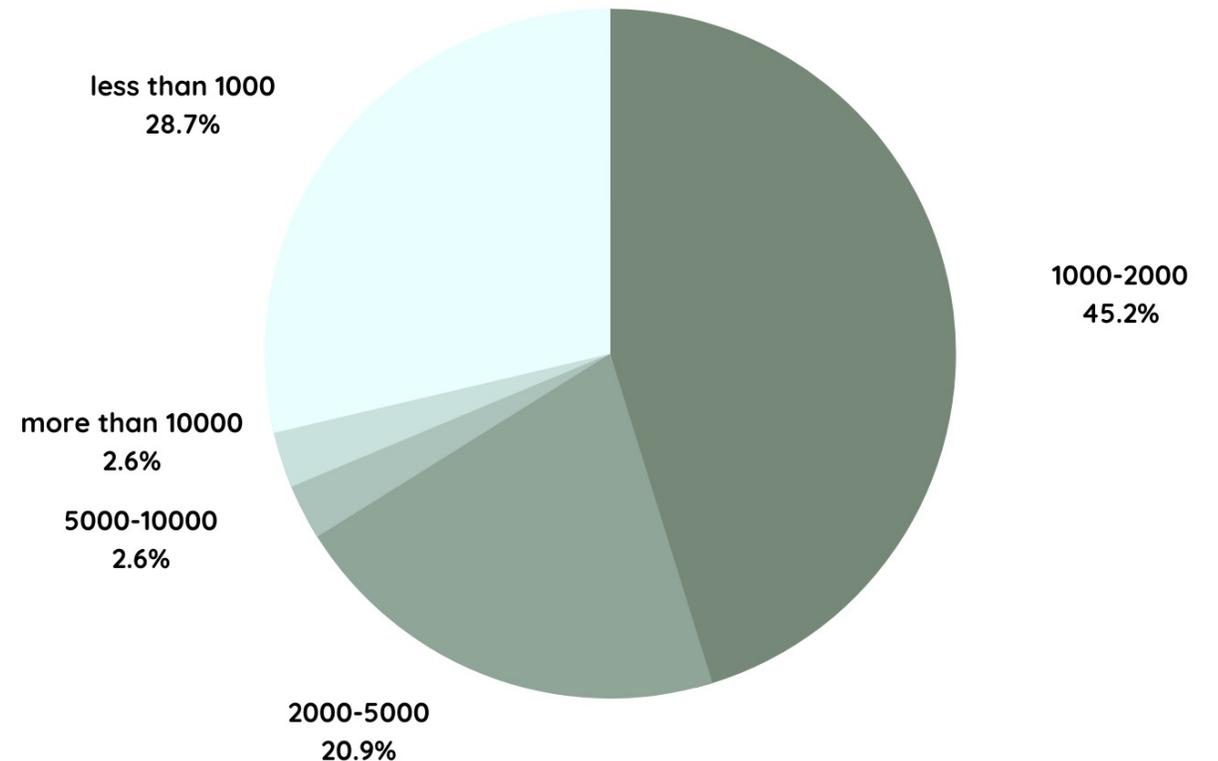
## Member Development

- 117 Booksellers
- 58 Associates
- 15 Affiliates

## How have members engaged in CIBA's work?

- Event participation
- Marketing activities
- Survey participation
- Continuous feedback

BOOKSELLER MEMBER BREAKDOWN: STORE SIZE (SQ. FT)



# BUILDING YOUR ASSOCIATION

CIBA has accomplished so much in its first year, and we received incredible buy-in from booksellers as well as publishers, distributors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the outset. Our goal was to bring 50 Bookseller Members on board in our first year. We now have 117 ranging in size, location, and specialties, as well as 58 Associates and 15 Affiliates! Our large and diverse community is beneficial to everyone and vital to our success.

CIBA is a membership-led organization. Feedback from Bookseller Members, Associates, and Affiliates helps inform our work daily. Insights from our members help us serve them better.

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

Member Portal

## Your place to find:

- Resources
- Event recordings
- Graphics
- Directory
- Professional forum
- Ask and Answer forum
- B2B blog
- *and more to come!*

**SHOP LOCAL**  
READ LOCAL

Canadian Independent  
Booksellers Association

**SHOP CANADIAN**  
READ CANADIAN

Canadian Independent  
Booksellers Association

**SHOP LOCAL**  
READ THE WORLD

Canadian Independent  
Booksellers Association

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Member Portal

We began building out our official member portal in January. Our vision is to create a comprehensive hub for members – a one-stop shop for tools, networking opportunities, and more.

Today, members can utilize the resource bank to access COVID-19 supports, event recordings, and graphics. In the professional forum, they learn about industry opportunities and news, and the Ask and Answer forum allows them to crowd-source answers from their peers. Our member- and public-facing directory boasts business information and an easy-to-use contact service. And our B2B blog provides informative posts and exclusive interviews.

It was important to us to create a member portal that facilitates communication, knowledge sharing, and relationship building. And we're just getting started – we have resources in development and will continue to build out the portal as the association grows.

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Partnerships

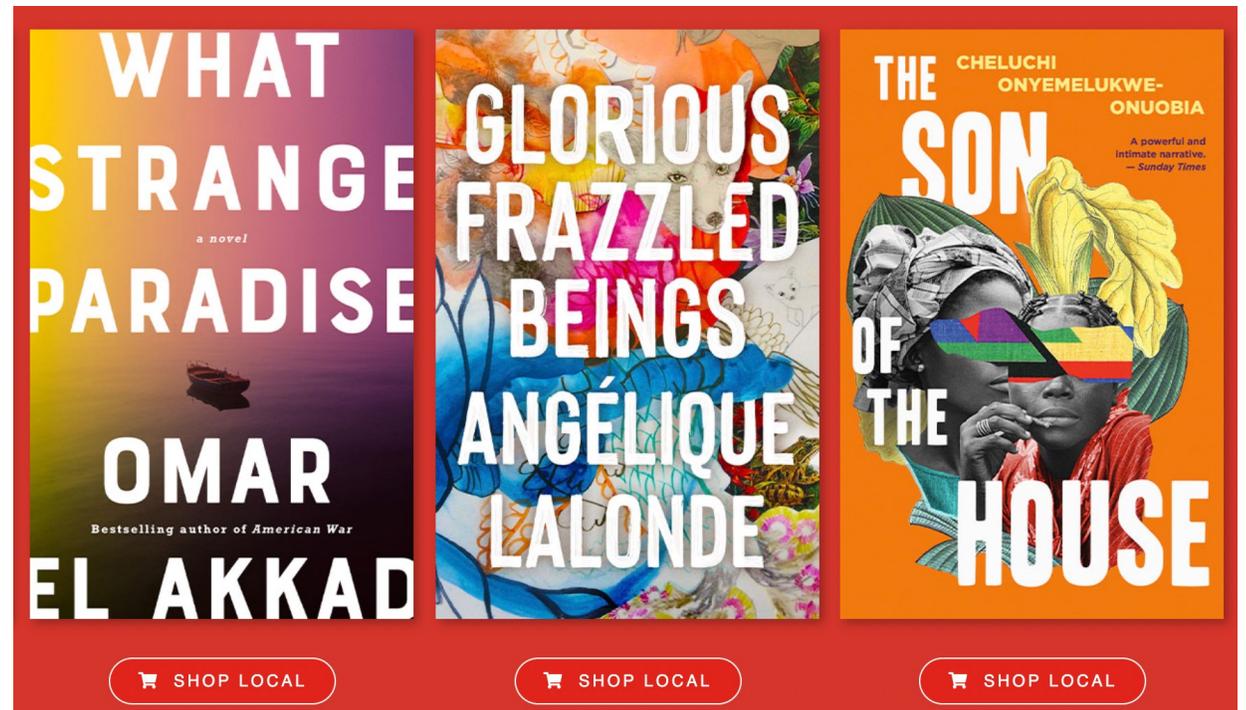
### Our partners include:

- Publishers
- Distributors
- NGOs
- Authors and illustrators
- Literary prizes
- Arts service organizations



LIQ & ALQ ↗

↖ Bookmanager



Scotiabank Giller Prize ↗

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Partnerships

We are working closely with many publishers and distributors, as well as with authors, illustrators, and industry professionals who are champions of a thriving bookselling landscape. There are several wonderful non-governmental and service organizations that also support our work.

In year one, we worked closely with some of these organizations on exciting and important projects:

- We supported Bookmanager with the creation and launch of the Shop Local API
- We collaborated with BookNet Canada on their State of Bookselling survey and other research
- We joined forces with Les librairies indépendantes du Québec (LIQ) and L'Association des libraires du Québec (ALQ) to advocate for increased support for indies from the federal government

We've built relationships and partnerships with other organizations – including organizers of the Governor General's Book Awards and the Scotiabank Giller Prize – to advocate for use of the Shop Local API and engage in coordinated cross-marketing efforts. These relationships help strengthen our position in the industry and increase awareness about the impact our members have on Canada's literary ecosystem.

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

Advocacy

## Strategy

- Research
- Relationship building
- Collective voice
- Key priorities

## Key Projects

- CIBA's creation
- Distribution program
- Pre-budget policy submission (book rate proposal)

Up to  
**\$180,000**

Commitment from the Department of Canadian Heritage, over two years, for the creation of CIBA

**92%**

Percentage of booksellers that were aware of the Support for Distribution Program and utilized it

**\$32.1  
million**

Commitment from the federal government, over two years, to support online bookselling

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Advocacy

In year one we focused on researching the current landscape, identifying priorities, and deepening our relationships with industry players and government stakeholders in the Department of Finance Canada and the Department of Small Business, in addition to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Our first key project: the creation of CIBA, of course! We advocated to DCH, with support from industry players, that this association would have meaningful impacts on the entire industry. We also consulted on the creation and continuation of the Support for Distribution Program and engaged in advocacy at the provincial level during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Our largest project was our pre-budget policy submission to the federal government. Through research and collaboration with our partners, we successfully conveyed the most pressing structural barriers that keep indies from competing with e-commerce heavyweights – most notably, the costs associated with online orders. We are proud that our proposal was a key factor in the federal government's commitment to provide \$32.1 million in funding to support online bookselling for Canadian bookstores. Since the announcement, we have been at the table with the Department of Canadian Heritage to help shape the program. The recent election intervened in finalizing the framework, but we look forward to completing the activation of this program.

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Learning & Networking

### Lectures

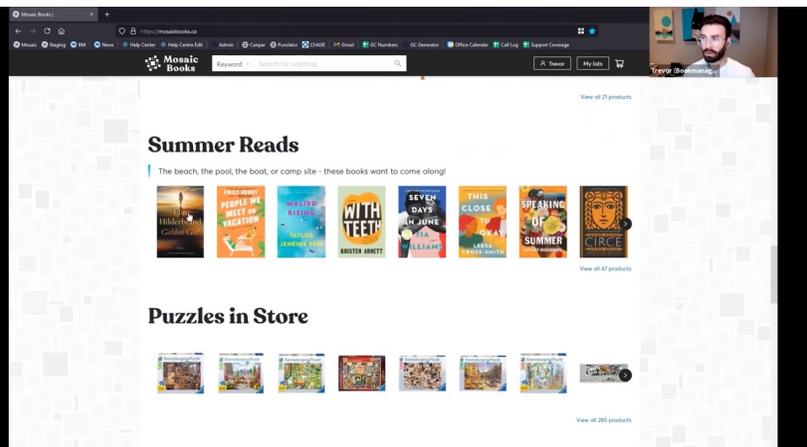
- Presentations/panels
- Recorded for anytime access
- Resources

### Labs

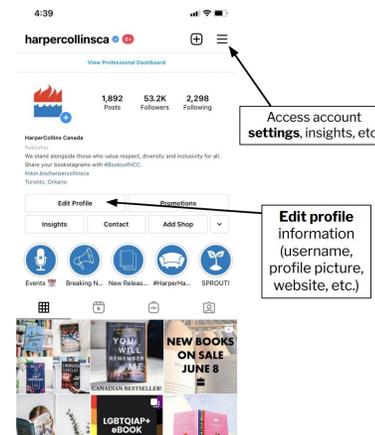
- Workshops
- Group discussions

### Sample topics covered:

- Online retail
- Inventory management
- Consumer habits
- Instagram marketing
- Children's bookselling
- Pitching local media



## Using Instagram: Your Profile



# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Learning & Networking

The CIBA team has prioritized providing members with learning and networking opportunities that are valuable in both the short- and long-terms. So far in 2021, we've delivered 24 events through our Lectures & Labs program.

Our lectures are presentations on topics that are important to members. The lectures themselves are often recorded for subsequent access and accompanied by additional resources. Speakers have included booksellers from across the country, publishers, distributors, authors, and NGOs. Topics we covered in year one included:

- Online retailing
- Consumer analytics
- Effective social media marketing

We also ran a handful of labs in our first year. These are meant as idea-sharing sessions, where booksellers and participants take an active role in asking questions and sharing expertise. Topics covered included:

- Tourism
- Children's bookselling
- Pitching local media

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Marketing & Communications

### Monthly Newsletter

- Industry news
- Opportunities and resources
- CIBA updates
- Curated and original content

### Social Media

- Public-facing for readers and consumers
- Indie bookseller promotion
- Marketing campaigns
- Unique, shareable content

**600+**

Monthly  
newsletter  
readership

**81%**

Average  
community  
growth across  
social channels

**600K**

Impressions  
across social  
channels since  
January 2021

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Marketing & Communications

The goals for our marketing and communications efforts are straightforward: engage our members and keep them informed, raise the profile of indie booksellers, and develop new customers for indie bookstores.

Our monthly newsletter has been our key connection to members. Newsletter content is strategically created to ensure members feel informed about CIBA, their colleagues and peers, and their partners. It helps keep us connected to all aspects of the industry, ensures our members informed and up to date on our work, and provides access to special opportunities and resources.

Our social media channels are public facing and our content is tailored to the book-buying public. The benefits of this strategy are twofold. Firstly, it gives us a bigger platform on which we can promote indie bookstores and encourage people to direct their consumer dollars to indies. Secondly, by creating original and shareable content that appeals to readers, we can support members with their own social media marketing.

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

Canadian Independent Bookstore Day

## Goals

- Celebrating indie contributions to Canadian culture
- Raising awareness online
- Incentivizing sales
- Encouraging media coverage

**8.1%**

Sales increase over previous week according to BookNet Canada

**1,800**

Contest entries received from across Canada

**24 million**

Approximate people reached via media coverage

## Campaign included:

Contest for Book Lovers

Media outreach

Advertising

Author engagement

Bookseller activities

Graphic design

Promotional content

Swag

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Canadian Independent Bookstore Day (CIBD)

Our goal with the CIBD 2021 campaign was to celebrate the contributions of indie booksellers to Canadian culture. Although CIBD is just one day, we focused on evergreen messages throughout the campaign.

Highlights of the campaign included our Contest for Book Lovers and our successful publicity efforts. We also created a portfolio of shareable social content, invested in advertising, worked with authors to celebrate indies, created a resource bank full of digital assets, and coordinated the creation and distribution of “Instagram-able” swag. We were thrilled with how many booksellers, publishers, and partners participated. Anyone who loves books could feel the energy that weekend. In the end, BookNet reported an 8.1% sales increase for indies over the previous week (almost 3x better than the rest of the market).

CIBD is poised to be one of our key marketing initiatives moving forward. With CIBA at the wheel, it is an opportunity to raise the profile of indie booksellers and everything they have to offer. With this campaign, we can:

- Incentivize sales to indie bookstores
- Promote our message directly to the book-buying public (and beyond)
- Strengthen our relationships with publishers and partners

# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Auditor Report

### Overview

- Financial period: June 23, 2020 to March 31, 2021
- \$62,000 in assets – *primarily cash*
- \$87,000 in liabilities – *primarily deferred membership revenue*
- \$129,000 in total revenue – *incl. \$80,000 in grant revenue*
- \$154,000 in total expenses
- Net deficit of \$25,000 for the year

Prepared by Tracy Capstick, CPA, CA, LPA  
Founding Partner, Capstick McCollum & Associates



# 2020-21 IN REVIEW

## Auditor Report

CIBA's audited financial statements for the period ending March 31, 2021 were audited by Capstick McCollum & Associates prior to the 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Management is responsible for preparing the statements, overseeing the reporting process, developing and maintaining a system of internal controls, and assessing the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. As auditors, Capstick McCollum & Associates is responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement and to issue an auditors' report stating that opinion. They also identify the risk of material misstatements and perform procedures to address those risks, obtain an understanding of internal controls, evaluate accounting policies and estimates, conclude on management's use of the going concern basis of accounting, and evaluate the overall presentation and disclosures in the financial statements.

Based on the audit work performed, Capstick McCollum & Associates determined that the financial statements present fairly based on Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

You can access CIBA's audited financial statements for 2020-21 [here](#).

# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

## Bookselling Course & Advocacy

### Bookselling Course

- Loretta Rose
- Phased curriculum
- Topics will include strategy, finance, HR, and more

### Advocacy

- Relationship building
- Research on structural imbalances
- Federal funding commitment



# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

## Bookselling Course & Advocacy

In year two, we will continue to offer our core programs and services in addition to new and expanded initiatives. One such initiative is the development of our Bookselling in Canada course. We are working with highly regarded consultant Loretta Rose to design the course as a phased curriculum with a modular structure. We will provide course materials covering a range of topics for both seasoned and new-to-the-industry booksellers. We look forward to sharing more details with members soon!

Advocacy is another key area of growth for the association. Our collective voice will ensure we have a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect our businesses. In terms of government relations, we will:

- Increase awareness about the importance of indie booksellers as cultural contributors
- Invest in research on issues important to booksellers including predatory pricing and structural imbalances
- Strengthen our relationships with the federal government, provincial governments, and our partners

Our initial funding from DCH was for two years, and we are in the process of finalizing our application for 2022-24, which will be submitted in October of this year. We intend to renew and expand on the initial grant agreement based on what we've learned in our first remarkable months of operation.

# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

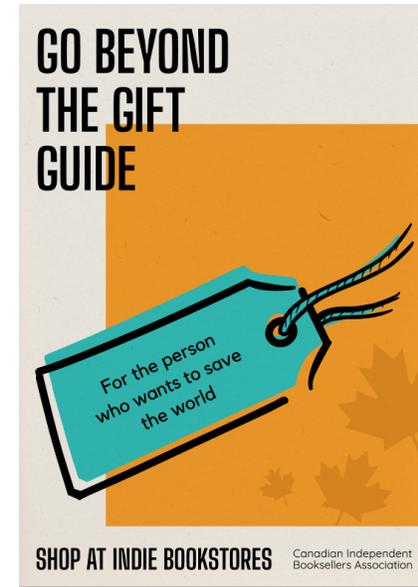
## Key Campaigns

### Holiday Campaign:

- Celebrating indie bookseller expertise
- Resources, original content, and advertising

### CIBD 2022:

- April 30, 2022
- Building on the success of 2021
- Product exclusives, contest, swag, resources, media outreach, and more!



# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

## Key Campaigns

We are currently focused on our holiday marketing campaign. We know the importance of steering shoppers towards indies at this time of year, but we also wanted to take the opportunity to promote another evergreen message about independent bookstores: their expertise and unmatched customer service.

Our campaign encourages people to go beyond the classic “gifts for mom”-esque shopping guide and rely on indie booksellers for personalized recommendations. The tone and visuals are fun, playful, and a little bit cheeky – a winning combination for engagement. Members will have access to graphic assets and CIBA has also planned a portfolio of content that members can share to their own feeds.

We also plan to build on our success for Canadian Independent Bookstore Day, which is taking place on April 30. For 2022, publishers and partners will also create book and product exclusives and launch some of their most anticipated spring books on the big day. One again, we’ll provide graphic assets and shareable content and we’ll run a revamped version of our contest. We’ll also run an advertising campaign, create a compelling media outreach strategy, and work with authors to help champion the shop local message. Our CIBD campaign exists to celebrate indie booksellers, raise the public profile of indie bookstores, and drive sales to bookstores. It’s going to be fun!

# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

## Supplier Relations

### Committee

- Lori Cheverie, Chair, Bookmark
- Chris Hall, McNally Robinson
- Cathy Jesson, Black Bond Books
- Shelley Macbeth, Blue Heron Books
- Dan MacDonald, Bookmark
- Kelly McKinnon, Kidsbooks

### Strategy

- Bookseller survey
- Assessment
- Prioritization
- Outreach



# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

## Supplier Relations

Supplier relations is an important part of why CIBA was created. With one successful year under our belt and stronger relationships developing at all levels of the supply chain, now is the right time for our committee of booksellers to start this work.

To ensure we're representing the needs of our members, we recently sent out a survey to booksellers to help us assess where advocacy is most needed. It is very important that we hear from as many members as possible to ensure we are speaking effectively on behalf of a wide range of stores. The committee is now scheduling meetings with our largest publishers to discuss supply chain, shipping times, and terms to help booksellers handle what promises to be a busy fall and winter season. In the New Year, we will begin to address some of the more detailed findings from the survey.

Our approach to this work will be guided by collaboration, respect, and honesty. We aim to act as a strong voice for our members and ensure that the terms and benefits extended to indie bookstores are reflective of what they offer as business owners, salespeople, and community members.

# CIBA BUSINESS

## Results of the 2021 AGM

Our first Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday, September 21 via Zoom. As per our bylaws, administrators of Canadian Independent Bookseller Memberships were invited and voted on three motions:

- To approve the CIBA bylaws
- To approve Tracy Capstick, Capstick, McCollum & Associates as the 2021-22 auditor
- To elect Hilary Atleo (Iron Dog Books) and Lucy Hoblyn (Brome Lake Books) to the Board of Directors

All three motions were duly passed during the AGM. We are grateful to the voting members in attendance.

# 2021-22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Hall, President  
McNally Robinson  
Winnipeg, MB/Saskatoon, SK

Jessica Walker, Vice President  
Munro's Books  
Victoria, BC

Ben Minett, Treasurer  
The Bookshelf  
Guelph, ON

Lori Cheverie, Secretary  
Bookmark  
Charlottetown, PE

Hilary Atleo  
Iron Dog Books  
Vancouver, BC

Susan Chamberlain  
The Book Keeper  
Sarnia, ON

Lucy Hoblyn  
Brome Lake Books  
Knowlton, QC

Cathy Jesson  
Black Bond Books  
Surrey, BC

Heather Kuipers  
Ella Minnow Books  
Toronto, ON

Shelley Macbeth  
Blue Heron Books  
Uxbridge, ON

## ABOUT CIBA

Founded in 2020, the Canadian Independent Booksellers Association offers programs and services to Canadian independent booksellers and advocates to support the strengthening of the independent bookselling sector. We believe that independent booksellers are an invaluable part of Canadian culture and our literary ecosystem.

We are very grateful to our members and supporters for helping make our first year a success. If you have any questions about this report or wish to share feedback about your experience with CIBA, please [get in touch](#).

We look forward to celebrating more accomplishments at the 2022 AGM!

[www.cibabooks.ca](http://www.cibabooks.ca)



**THANK YOU**

For helping make our first year a success!