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Thriving on Change... Embrace the Possibilities

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Thriving on Change ... Embrace the Possibilities

When I started thinking about my upcoming year serving as your OLA president, I mulled over what it meant and what my thoughts were on librarianship, libraries and OLA. What kept coming back to me was that we are in pivotal times in this profession. Technology is making sweeping revisions in our daily work. The people we serve are looking at libraries in different ways. Will the library that has served for 100 years, still make sense to the young people growing up today with I-Pods and the Internet? What will they expect a library to be? Can we keep up with those changes? Can we even be ahead of the curve? How do we continue to serve our communities?

Change, a word that strikes fear in some and excitement in others. It seldom is without effect and many times the effect is mitigated by ones attitude about change even more than the change itself. I was recently looking at a booklet I received when I'd attended a workshop on dealing with change. You know, a one day, Rah Rah, and then what do you do with it? Well, this one has stuck with me and this quote really hit home. To me, this is something to always keep in mind:

Develop a greater tolerance for constant changes in the game plan. Allow a little more confu-

sion in your life. Think of your job as having movable walls—flex to fit the immediate demands of the situation, instead of struggling to make the job adapt to you.

(A Survival Guide to The Stress of Organizational Change by Price Pritchett & Ron Pound, Pritchett Publishing, Dallas, TX)

I especially like the metaphor of the moveable walls. It seems to fit me as I've always been open to change both in activities and surroundings. One former co-worker jokingly warned the staff at Newberg Library when I started here 13 years ago, "Watch out, she'll be moving the furniture soon!" And yes, I was. But not just to move the furniture, but to adapt to the changes in our service and to make the space more inviting and usable to the community. I've moved shelves to make space for a new Young Adult area and just recently rearranged the Reference and audio-video area to expand our Latino Services Area. We're getting ready to move even more as we remodel our Children's Library. So I guess the concept of moveable walls really does fit.

As I planned for this issue, I thought about the changes our profession and some of my colleagues have

gone through. The people I asked to contribute to this issue have been change agents in their own lives and have experienced a variety of shifts in their lives. I think you'll enjoy their stories.

Maureen "Mo" Cole gives us the humorous view that helped her leapfrog into the presidency of OLA, without being vice-president first, and recently to take on the directorship of the Kellenberger Library at Northwest Christian College.

Tobe Porter moved to a small town in the southern Oregon Coast Range and was the "change-agent" to move that town from being satisfied with a tiny library to supporting the construction of a beautiful new facility. She's now changed jobs and is working on a similar transformation of the library in her new community.

Molly Raphael, came from the nation's capital to direct the Multnomah County Library and stepped into the middle of an Internet filtering controversy. The process MCL went through to decide on their policy is an interesting one.

Sara Charlton has rebuilt the libraries of Tillamook County, from small branches to the current ground breaking for a new central library. The process of going from defeat of a bond issue to passage required a change in philosophy as well as a per-



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Mary Frances Isom, Multnomah County Librarian (2nd from left) and Cornelia Marvin, Oregon State Librarian (4th from left) and two colleagues at Silver Falls, 1908.



OLA leadership retreat at Silver Falls, August 2005.

sonal decision on what her role would be in the process.

Mike Smith has been a public librarian, systems librarian, vendor sales representative and now, back to a public library. His story of moving a library through a change of integrated library systems was especially interesting to me as we've just migrated from DYNIX to III in the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service (CCRLS).

Jim Tindall, OEMA's new president has been in the trenches with school libraries and his own job is with a newly consolidated school district, which brought changes to everyone and everything.

We celebrate with the stories of three Oregon libraries that have transitioned into their 2nd century of service. Multnomah County Library, the Oregon State Library and Eugene Public Library have each been serving their constituents for a 100+ years and the changes in those libraries are tremendous. In the next decade many more Oregon libraries will reach that milestone, including mine, Newberg Public Library. It makes you think about what our libraries were like in the beginning, where they are today and most importantly what changes will occur in the next 100 years of service!

Change, it's a great word.
Embrace it.

—Leah Griffith, *Guest Editor, OLA President and Director of the Newberg Public Library, and one who has had her own personal journey of change over the last two years.*

