
Volume 12
Number 3
Burnout (Fall 2006)

July 2014

Introduction

Rachel Mendez
Pacific Northwest College of Art

Recommended Citation

Mendez, R. (2014). Introduction. *OLA Quarterly*, 12(3), 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.1119>

© 2014 by the author(s).

OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

Introduction

I am so lucky: I have the perfect job. As an art librarian, I get to use my master of fine arts, as well as my MLS. I get to be around other artists all day, and, as library director, get to initiate and lead exciting projects. My job is both intellectually and socially stimulating. On top of that, I work for an institution I admire, believe in, and feel proud of.

I was surprised, then, last year, to feel some symptoms of burnout. Nothing changed at work to cause these feelings, but I started to hate Sunday nights because they meant the workweek was starting again. I started longing, every weekday, for Friday afternoon to arrive. Committee work started to feel like a strain, rather than an opportunity to collaborate. I started eyeing lottery tickets at the grocery store counter, and wondering just how bad the odds of winning really are. I actively reminded myself, every day, that I love my job, and that I am fortunate to have it. Those reminders helped, but it helped even more to research literature on librarians and burnout.

Turns out, there is a lot written on the subject, especially in regard to

academic librarians, such as myself. Unfortunately, less is written pertaining to support staff. Although the public may perceive our jobs as easy and fun, we, like many people in helping professions, are not immune to burnout.

My burnout experience and subsequent research inspired me to suggest the topic for this issue of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly*. What do Oregon library workers have to say about burnout on the job?

Faye Chadwell and Deborah B. Dancik both look to literature on the subject of burnout to present thoughtful essays examining the problem.

Two contributors, Rita Jimenez and Perri Parise, share their unusual career routes, letting us see that one way to avoid burnout is to explore alternatives to the traditional. On the flip side, Jane Corry and I interviewed a panel of librarians who burned out in previous careers and have found welcome refuge in the world of libraries.

MLS student Alicia Salaz contrasts the fresh perspective of one new to the career with her mother's perspective as long-term support staff. Roberta Richards, who has worked as support

staff and is a recent MLS graduate, reaches back to her time teaching world religion to look at librarianship through the lens of Buddhist thought.

Joanne Halgren offers readers a list of practical tips for dealing with burnout based on her experience at the University of Oregon Knight Library.

Finally, a lighter side of burnout rounds out the issue with Phyllis McCracken's rhyming poem and a farcical, spy-fi look at life in the library, written by a Portland area artist and writer who works under the pen name of "R. Toady."

I'm happy to report that my own burnout has burned itself out. Perhaps I cured myself by reading so many articles on burnout. Perhaps it is the relief of finally finishing off the *Quarterly*. Whatever the cure, it is good to know that burnout can pass, even without taking a single yoga class or even a vacation.

Rachel Mendez
Director of Library Services
Pacific Northwest College of Art
Guest Editor

O L A Q
