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*New Voices/New Views: The Next Wave of Librarians (Spring 2007)*

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## **New Voices/New Views: The Next Wave of Librarians**

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# New Voices/New Views: The Next Wave of Librarians

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Last summer, we asked OLA's new and aspiring librarians to share their ideas and opinions about "what our libraries could be doing, where we should be going with services and collections, and how we should get there." With no limits on topics, content, or point of view, we were eagerly anticipating what the next generation of librarians would have to say. We were not disappointed by the results: a wonderfully diverse collection of voices and perspectives.

As we read first drafts, and conversed with the authors about their ideas, we were both struck by how important it is that we all help strengthen the new voices in our profession. As a new member of a community, it is difficult to speak with authority about where things should go. It is very easy to think, "I don't really have anything new to say." Our seven essays show clearly that the next wave of librarians has a lot to say. In our profession, the pace of change continues to accelerate. We need to encourage these new librarians to raise their voices now and become part of the conversations about issues that will shape the future of libraries.

In "Finding My Library Niche: Making Jello Without a Mold," 2006

Emporia graduate Sue Phelps echoes our call for engagement. She urges her peers to get involved in organizations like OLA, to speak up and to be positive forces in how the profession addresses serious issues like employment. Phelps' essay describes how many new graduates can feel disconnected from the profession as they struggle to find permanent employment in libraries. Despite this, she believes that new librarians "can make an impact on what libraries and librarians will look like down the road if we are involved in library organizations, the community, and the institutions that support our libraries."

Roberta Richards looks at where today's new librarians might be a few years down the road. In "A New Librarian Prepares for the Future (Or, Reflections on Right Livelihood)," this 2006 Emporia State graduate applies the Buddhist tradition of Right Livelihood to librarianship. In this ancient tradition, she finds a way that new librarians can maintain their passion for their chosen profession in the face of the day-to-day challenges all librarians face.

We expected to see new librarians focused on the future of our profession, and we were not disappointed. It is

very striking, though, that while these new librarians are looking forward, they remain very powerfully connected to the values and practices of the past. Current Emporia State students Nancy Lynn Peate, Melissa Ludeman and April Younglove all grapple directly with the question of change.

In "Danielle Steel, Splinters and the End of Reading," Peate considers the current divide between the pre-post-Google generations of librarians in light of past divides. Her interviews with librarians illuminate the consistency of change and our common resistance to it.

Melissa Ludeman goes a step further in "Librarians and Books: Value Beyond Content." She argues forcefully that librarians must think of books as more than information receptacles. She worries that by focusing on information and information technologies, librarianship might lose an important connection with the past, not only of our profession, but also of our culture.

Younglove's essay, "Cataloging Today: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" looks for ways that libraries can strike a balance between locally-focused practices of the past, and the efficiencies made possible by the cooperative regional, national and even global



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relationships that shape cataloging in the twenty-first century. Talking to several catalogers from Oregon libraries, Younglove looks to both the past and the future, identifying the value of our individual practices and describing the technologies that might help libraries preserve that value in an increasingly networked world.

We also heard a call for new approaches and refreshed commitment to library services and users. Sue Kunda and Monique Lloyd encourage us to consider new collaborations and different ideas.

Kunda, an Emporia MLS student, examines the importance of collaboration and cooperation in today's libraries in her essay, "What's a Second Grader Doing in the University's Special Collections?" She urges us to take a holistic view of information literacy, arguing that it can not be seen as the purview of one group of librarians: school, academic or public. To give Oregon's students what they need to be successful students and lifelong learners, cooperative partnerships between all of these libraries are needed with particular attention to the potential leadership role of academic libraries.

Lloyd, also an Emporia MLS student, describes her recent path to librarianship as a Baby Boomer and uses her experience to chide our thinking on the profile of our staffs and our users. In "Perspectives of a Baby Boomer: What Boomers Will Do To and For Oregon Libraries," she suggests that the tension between the Boomer Generation as both library staff and library users is an important considering for the future of library services, spaces and resources.

Listening to the new voices reminds us that we too were new to the profession at one time. It is work to find your voice and your place in librarianship. But, it is worth it. That is what we told our authors as they struggled to get their thoughts and ideas into words that would communicate their vision and respect for their chosen path. 

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