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What's in it for you?: Or why join OLA, ACRL, etc.?

Connie Anderson
ACRL President

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Thanks to the hard work of the Oregon Information Highway Project Task Force, and the work that we expect to see from these working groups, Oregon is well on its way to meeting the *Vision 2000* goal of giving every Oregonian the ability to utilize the kind of top-quality information services that our libraries, collectively, can provide. Oregon has always been a leader in effective library resource sharing. Our highly successful regional cooperatives, and projects like PORTALS and Orbis are proof of that. The Oregon Information Highway Project points the way to combining and leveraging these past successes to achieve an even higher standard of information service for all Oregonians.

What's in it for you?

Or why join OLA, ACRL, etc.?

by *Connie Anderson, ACRL President*

It seems that we're all connected these days through the Internet. We subscribe to listservs and connect to colleagues we've never met on a national or international basis. Many critics of the personal computer phenomenon foresee a day when we don't interact with each other directly. They suggest that we'll all be so absorbed by what is on our computer screens that we won't need or want to talk with one another face-to-face. I hope they are wrong, but I wonder if they have a point ... Computers have made a huge impact on our working conditions in the past decade. Even if we aren't glued to the screen reading listservs, we are struggling with their impact in all areas of our libraries. I've often heard from my colleagues that they used to have plenty of time to put together subject bibliographies, read professional literature, and get involved in library associations. No more. Certainly, computers are just one change in our working environments, but it is true that we all seem very busy, harried and stressed out.

Unfortunately, what that has meant for the Oregon Chapter of the Association for Research Libraries and the Oregon Library Association is that fewer and fewer people are joining the organization and that a small group of people do a lot of work to organize the annual conference and keep the organization running. I've already suggested that computers and overwork may prevent you from getting involved, but you may not have consid-

ered the rewards that are there for you efforts.

When I moved to the state seven years ago, I knew one or two people outside of my immediate library. When I attended the annual OLA conference I felt that I was an outsider. Everyone else seemed to know each other. I didn't have a clue as to how to get involved. When OLA met in Ashland in 1991, I was asked to be in charge of local arrangements. I agreed. Little did I know all the work that was ahead of me... Lot's of work, but also lots of fun. And, something I hadn't considered, I now was friends with all the committee members who came from all parts of the state. We worked hard, we bonded, and we came away with a tremendous feeling of accomplishment.

Since that conference, I've helped to found two new OLA Roundtables—one for Business and one for Library Instruction. I realized that if I waited around for someone to sponsor programs that were of interest to me, it wasn't going to happen. I have since gotten involved with ACRL, first as a board member and this year as president. I no longer go to conferences and feel like an outsider. My best friend are my colleagues at Linfield and Willamette, OSU, U of O ... I don't hesitate to get on the phone to call them to ask for their help on a tricky reference question. In fact, two of them will be coming to SOSOC to do a workshop for us on teaching techniques in the near future. My life and library are considerably richer for having gotten involved in ACRL and OLA. It disturbs me when I hear that some libraries have only one or two members in OLA. Yes, money is always an issue, but I believe the rewards can be much greater than the investment. They certainly have been for me.

I challenge you to join if you aren't already a member and look for an opportunity to get involved. If you are already a member, volunteer for a committee. And, if you are involved to the max, photocopy this article and give it to a colleague and urge them to get involved. Believe me, it beats sitting in front of your computer any day.