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## From the president: A year of challenges & opportunities

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From the President

# A Year of Challenges & Opportunities

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When I left the OLA Conference at Sunriver last year, I had just been handed the gavel, five months early. I wasn't particularly concerned, because my impression was that after conference the president's major responsibilities were at an end. Little did I know.

The issue of *Oregon Library News* which arrived immediately after the conference contained the resignation not only of the editor, but also of the rest of the news staff.

I tried to find an editor for *Oregon Library News*, but everyone rightfully perceived it to be an overwhelming job, with some factors built in that almost guaranteed the membership's dissatisfaction.

One day I had a revelation: Yes, this is a crisis, but it's not my crisis, it's our crisis. So I talked the *Oregon Library News* staff into doing just one more issue, met with them to gather their recommendations, and made publications the focus of the Leadership Retreat in August. The result, of which I am very proud, is the *OLA Hotline*, which you have been receiving twice a month since October, and the *OLA Quarterly*, the first issue of which arrived in April. It has taken a while for the membership, and the leaders, to communicate quickly with OLA members. But with every *Hotline's* timely arrival there has been an increasing sense of confidence: it keeps coming, twice a month, and if something is sent in by the deadline (the first and the fifteenth of each month), it appears in the next issue, which arrives two weeks later.

I would like to give a special thanks to those who have made *Hotline* happen: Carolyn Peake and Ruth Kratochvil, who struggled with the initial design and produced the first two issues; Aletha Bonebrake and Colleen Bell, who are alternating as editors; and Jan Gorden, who is our proofreader par excellence.

I have to admit that when people in Southern Oregon asked me that first week how it was to be president, I used a bad word: I said, "Well, I already have my first crisis."

A week later, riding up in the elevator to Senator Hatfield's office in Washington D.C. on National Library Legislative Day, my second "crisis" was revealed. Ginnie Cooper and I were just becoming acquainted, and she said, "Isn't it wonderful that PLA is coming to Portland in '96?" "Yes," I

answered, "I marked my calendar in May, but what are the exact dates?" "March 26 through 30," she answered blithely. "No," I moaned. "That's when OLA will be at Seaside. We just signed the contract." Thanks to the phenomenal abilities (why was I surprised?) of Deborah Jacobs, we bowed out of our contract with Seaside without disgrace. We redesigned our usual conference format in order to take maximum advantage of the opportunity to attend PLA's national conference here in our own state and recruited Kit Dusky to chair the 1996 Conference Committee.

After the second crisis "emerged," I realized I was going to have to change my attitude and vocabulary. "Crisis" surely has some negative connotations and creates a mindset that actually damages efforts at successful resolution. I quickly determined that we do not have "crises." Instead, we have "challenges and opportunities."

Another major challenge this year has been our legislative agenda. House Bill 2172 passed both houses and was signed by the governor. The sunset clause has been repealed. We owe an enormous thanks to Deborah Jacobs, chair of the Legislation and Development Committee; to our lobbyist, Nan Heim, and her associates, Jody Fischer and John Donovan; to our state librarian, Jim Schepke; and to all who testified, wrote letters, and made phone calls to our legislators.

House Bill 2172, publications, and the 1996 conference are but three of the activities which have taken OLA's time and attention this year. Each of the OLA committees has worked hard to achieve its goals. For example, the Resource Sharing Committee, chaired by Lynn Chmelir, utilizing a thorough and exhaustive process, crafted guidelines for implementing net lender interlibrary loan reimbursement. These guidelines were approved by the OLA board and forwarded to the State Library as recommendations to assist the State Library in developing administrative rules.

At the 1995 Conference's First General Session, I asked everyone who currently had a formal role in OLA to stand and remain standing. I then asked everyone who had ever had a formal role in OLA to stand. Most of the room was standing. Perhaps my most important realization this year is that it takes many people, all of the members of OLA in fact, to create the accomplishments of OLA. ♀

Anne Billeter