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The year ahead

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Albany Public Library

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Sometimes I find it frustrating trying to keep up with the changes in the world of librarianship and information science. I admit it would be nice simply to close the door and have things stay the same for more than a few months, but reality has a way of whacking me on the head and making me move on with the times.

Keeping pace with the constantly changing world is as essential for the Oregon Library Association as it is for our lives and our libraries, and that's exactly

what OLA will do: shepherd appropriate change in response to the needs of OLA and its members. At the annual planning retreat in July, which more than 30 OLA executive board members, division heads, committee chairs, and round table chairs attended, we discussed numerous issues and challenges that helped map out the new directions OLA must take.

The Year Ahead

A Message from the President

by Ed House

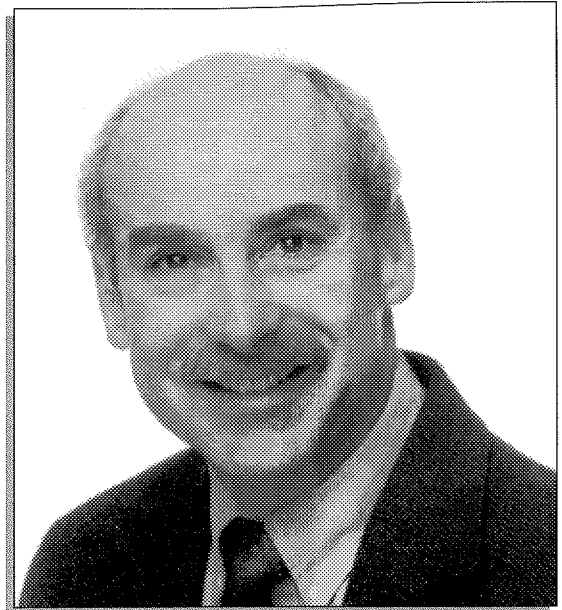
Library Director

Albany Public Library

Technological advances offer OLA and its members tools that may be used to respond reasonably to many challenges we face. One such tool is the Internet. A special Internet committee will be appointed to look into a number of issues, including providing the *OLA Hotline* to the membership electronically. (Hard copy would be sent to those unable to access the Internet.) OLA would contract with an Internet provider, enabling us to establish a Web address and plenty of space to mount a Web page. A "Web Master" would oversee the construction of the Web page, manage the e-mail lists, provide electronic delivery of the *Hotline*, maintain an accurate membership directory with sub-directories, establish bookmarks and links, and more. This would provide a better and more responsive communication tool for the membership and save money by minimizing the number of newsletters and other mailings having to be printed and mailed.

Another challenge we face this year is our response to ballot measures that will affect libraries: Measure 31, which narrows the free expression rights of Oregonians; Measure 46, which counts non-votes the same as "no" votes; and Measure 47, which rolls back property taxes and puts a 3% annual limit on the increase of property taxes. In addition to the ballot measures, there will be legislative issues needing OLA's attention. The increase in the "Ready to Read Grant" from \$0.50 to \$1.00 per child is one upon which we are currently working. We will be keeping an eye on developments at the statewide telecommunications meetings with the intent of negotiating for the development of a statewide infrastructure for technology to benefit libraries and allow them to receive preferential rates.

Continuing education is another area OLA will address. We want to ensure that all library workers have opportunities to excel in their vocation. Topics that workshops and conference programs may cover



Ed House, OLA president

include refocusing on the customer, library ethics, library employees as leaders in their communities, changing demographics, and diversity of service. (Can libraries play new roles in their communities?) Continuing education opportunities, including scholarships for all levels of staff, will be publicized on the OLA Web page along with a master calendar of events. (We'll finally have a single calendar that lists all OLA activities, including division, round table and committee events!)

The Executive Board will examine the organization's effectiveness with input from a special committee. We hope to improve the contract with our management services provider to include services we are seeking but not yet receiving. We would like to address a number of issues: better accounting systems, better financial statements, and mailing lists that can be tailored to our needs. We will also consider the possibility of contracting with a professional conference planner, who would work with the Conference Committee to negotiate the lowest cost for facilities, equipment, meals, etc., and enable the organization to maximize profits.

Membership has shown healthy growth over the last few years, however, large segments of the library community still are not OLA members. Community college library staff, library support staff, trustees and friends, and libraries as institutions must be encouraged to join OLA. Institutions have received great benefits from OLA's work. The Reference Link program and the Net Lender Reimbursement program have saved or repaid institutions a considerable sum of money. Whether an institution or an individual, simply joining OLA is not enough. Membership is a responsibility. Members must become involved and participate at some level. Divisions, round tables,

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the goal of increasing understanding of current social problems and issues

- To act as a stimulus to the association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs
- To present programs, arrange exhibits, and carry out other appropriate activities consistent with its other goals

Jos Anemaet of Oregon State University's Valley Library is chair of SRRT.

Technical Services Round Table (TSRT)

TSRT's general objective is to provide a framework for information sharing, continuing education, and moral support for library workers currently engaged in technical services activities. Specifically, the group has three aims:

- To provide for the exchange of ideas on technical services and automation processes, systems, and policies
- To provide a medium for the exploration of new ideas and technologies
- To foster cooperation among all Oregon libraries in the areas of technical services and automation and to increase an awareness in the library community of the roles of technical and automation services.

TSRT is chaired by Cherie Rusk, Information Services Department, at Oregon State University's Valley Library. ☐

The Year Ahead

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and committees cover areas and interests throughout the library landscape, whether it be reference, support staff, outreach, public relations, or technical services. After goals and objectives are set and work is done, the resulting benefits extend to all. Having input and assistance from a larger and a more diverse membership can only help make the organization stronger and more successful.

While achieving all the goals set forth above will not be easy, it will be rewarding to know that we gave it our best shot. If we receive a few whacks on the side of the head during the course of the year, we'll just shrug them off. What the hell, we'll just call them "knowledge bumps!" ☐

Past Year

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tors, and vendors. This past year, OLA tried another experiment with the annual conference. The annual event was planned to take advantage of the Public Library Association's decision to meet in Portland at the same time as OLA. Rather than reschedule OLA, the Executive Board encouraged the Conference Committee to use its creative energy to organize a completely different conference. The planning was complicated, and there was plenty of uncharted territory to explore. The board was prepared for a "non-profit" year because of uncertainties regarding costs and attendance. But the OLA Conference turned out to be a bigger success than anyone had anticipated. Under the leadership of Kit Dusky, the committee emerged triumphant. The lessons learned from this experiment will help OLA deal with future planning challenges and unexpected scheduling problems.

OLA is an exceptionally strong organization with a long history of success. This past year we were able to add to that list of accomplishments through good planning, creative initiative, hard work, and dedication to the principles behind library service. Being OLA president may not be at the top of everyone's to-do list, but I urge our members to consider the possibility in a new light. It is a chance to associate with a winning team of people, to take on important challenges that affect libraries throughout the state, and to learn a great deal from informed colleagues. The benefits outweigh any costs. ☐

Kappy

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seen continuing education and training opportunities become increasingly available.

Kappy Eaton's professional life is an example of the difference one committed individual can make to any endeavor in which she believes. It is as good an answer as any to the OLA member who questions the value of getting involved. ☐