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Lobbyist Nan Heim: A profile

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(S) Bio

Lobbyist Nan Heim: A Profile

by Carolyn Peake
Lake Oswego Public Library

When Nan Heim was a little girl growing up in Washington, D.C., her parents often took her to watch the U.S. Congress in action. She grew up with a fascination for government and its inner workings. Nan's father was a member of the Eisenhower administration and her mother was President of the Northern Virginia Republican Women. Her parents were strong proponents of school integration and firm believers that all children, black and white, deserved a first rate education.

As a young woman out of college, Nan worked in the Washington office of Oregon Congressman John Dellenback. It was as a member of his staff that she came to Oregon for the first time. She was charmed by the state and the independent nature of the way government worked. So, when she was offered a job heading up the Public Affairs Section of the Oregon Department of Education, she took it.

Working in the bureaucracy did not turn out to be Nan's cup of tea, but she was still in love with the Oregon legislative process – the "citizen" legislature with its openness, citizen involvement, and the feel of people all working together. That was what prompted her to go to work for Roger Martin's new lobbying firm in 1978, working on the campaign to defeat Oregon's first property tax limitation measure. Oregon Library Association was one of Nan's first clients as a lobbyist and getting the legislature to pass per capita state aid for libraries was the goal.

In 1982, Nan went into business for herself in what was to become Nan Heim/Associates: Communications and Public Affairs. Jody Fischer, an attorney and mother of six, has been with her for the past eight years, and OLA members have come to know and respect Jody's shrewd intellect and wry sense of humor. But it is Nan who has become known in legislative circles as "the library lady" and has held our hands, and urged us on, and pepped us up, and kept at us not to let up on the effort to become more politicized professionals. Nan has guided us through numerous legislative battles – some even felt like sieges – to achieve (and just as hard, keep) per capita, get LSCA money out of the State Library budget and into local library programs, create Special District legislation, support confidentiality of library records, and fight and win many, many censorship battles.

Nan always preaches visibility and communication. "We all have to do a better job communicating with the public in positive and honest ways," she says. "Librarians are better than just about anyone at communicating – it is a professional strength." She hopes that the passage of Ballot measure 47 in November will be a call for leadership.

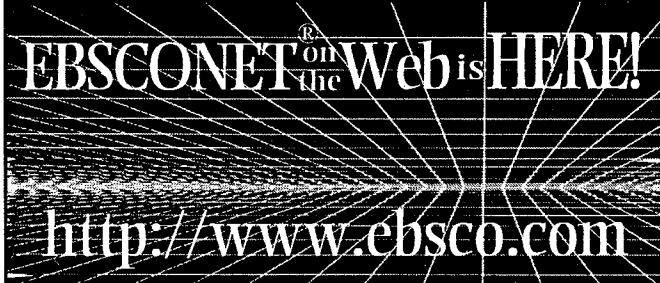
why do it?

"Our best hope is that responsible leaders in both parties will come up with something to address legislative issues regarding taxation and find a middle ground." Nan still loves what she does and the political process and says she always looks at the glass as half full rather than half empty. She has just finished a term as President of the Capitol Club, whose members are the 400 professional lobbyists in Oregon.

Here are some thoughts she shared with OLA members following the passing of Measure 47:

- Ballot Measure 47 has passed, putting library services throughout Oregon in peril. It's so important during this time of uncertainty that we communicate with each other and support one another.
- It's equally important that we communicate what's going on to boards, friends, patrons, local

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elected officials, and legislators. Do not assume that people know about the potential impacts of Measure 47 on your library!

- This is a good time to ask your patrons, perhaps through a survey, what kind of service they want. It's also an excellent time for a story in your local newspaper.
- To communicate to others, you need to know what's going on. OLA's Legislative Committee will make an extra effort in the months ahead to keep you informed. At the same time, you need to keep on top of what's happening in your community and share it with us. Good news or bad, let us know, so we can share the information with others and use it to build a case for library revenue.
- The narrow passage of Measure 47 is not a mandate for anything except perhaps property tax relief. It is most certainly not a mandate for wholesale cuts in library services! ❏

OLA Legislators of the Year

OLA has always seen the wisdom of acknowledging our friends. The Legislative and Development Committee selects legislators who have been particularly supportive of OLA's legislative agenda. Listed below are members of Congress who helped Oregon's as well as the nation's libraries and members of the Oregon Legislature who have protected freedom of speech, championed new ways of financing library services, and improved the quality of library services for Oregonians.

Edith Green*	Wayne Morse*
Mark Hatfield*	Stan Bunn
Joyce Cohen	Darlene Hooley
Denny Jones	Bob Pickard
Frank Roberts	Cliff Trow

**Honorary Life Members*

Agenda

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Equitable Access

Electronic Information: OLA will actively participate in information public policy discussions taking place within the state in order to assure equitable access to electronic information.

Government Information: OLA will continue to support the state government's obligation to create and disseminate easy-to-use government information, readily available at no or low cost to the public, and outside the exclusive control of private interests.

STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

Resource Sharing: While continuing to support funding and development of Reference Referral Centers and Net Lender Reimbursement, OLA will work to secure funds for direct loan reimbursement.

Information Highway: OLA will seek ways, through legislation or other means, to enable even the poorest and most isolated libraries to connect to Internet

services. The goal is making every library an interconnected, information access point for the widest range of information seekers, particularly those who have no other way onto the information super-highway.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

State Library Funding: OLA will continue to support adequate funding for operation of the Oregon State Library.

Additional State Aid: OLA will continue to work towards increased state support of all types of libraries, including school, public and higher education libraries, in addition to supporting "Ready to Read" grants.

Other Legislative Initiatives: OLA will study and respond to any legislative initiatives that affect the ability of Oregon libraries to follow the Guiding Principles. ❏