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Table of Contents

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OLA QUARTERLY

Oregon Library Partnerships

I accepted the task of editing this issue of the *OLA Quarterly* because Oregon library partnerships have been a special interest of mine from the first day I lived in Oregon. Literally. Arriving in my new home state one course shy of my MLS, I had made arrangements with my advisor to spend the summer working on an independent study to finish up my degree. My topic? "Oregon and the Challenge of Library Cooperation." What better way, I thought, to learn about the library landscape where I planned to spend my career? A few days ago I went on an excavation into the back of my closet and found that paper. It confirmed my recollection that library partnerships were already an important feature of Oregon library service more than two decades ago. Now, on the cusp of a new millennium with access to transforming technologies, those library partnerships are proliferating and thriving more vibrantly than ever before.

The articles in this issue showcase a mere sampling of library partnerships in Oregon. They illustrate projects that take advantage of cooperation and economies of scale to provide better library services to Oregonians. One describes WCCLS, a cooperative venture that's been around for a long time. Others describe new regional partnerships, one in Southern Oregon that has just begun and another in Eastern Oregon that is still on the horizon. Several articles describe projects that involve a great many libraries like ORULS, the Statewide Database Licensing Project, and the Pony Express Courier. Others describe outreach into the K-12 schools and the business community. Orbis and PORTALS are two partnerships that were formed to take special advantage of new library technologies that support collaboration.

Partnerships succeed because the people who create them are interested in cooperation and have learned to trust each other. That's the common thread that runs through these articles. Oregonians are self-reliant, but they are also pragmatic. When it's clear that cooperation improves service, Oregon's library community turns to partnerships again and again.

Lynn Chmelir,
Linfield College Libraries
Guest Editor

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2

ORBIS: Grassroots Academic Partnership
Sue A. Burkholder

5

Cooperative Is Our Middle Name: Why the
Washington County Cooperative Library
Services Works
Eva Calcagno

7

Statewide Database Licensing the Oregon Way
Deborah Carver

8

Orbis Courier Service: The Resurrection
of a Collaborative Success
John F. Helmer

11

Multnomah County Library Connects with Kids
Kate Houston

12

Thirty Years of Union Listing in Oregon—
Reflections on ORULS and its Predecessors
Deanna Iltis

14

PORTALS Planning: Revisiting the Future
(and Past) of the Virtual Library
James J. Kopp and Leslie Wykoff

17

Corporate Partnerships: The Art of the Deal
Leo MacLeod

19

Southern Oregon University and Rogue
Community College Libraries: Partners in Access
Teresa Montgomery and Deborah Cook

20

Cooperation out on the Eastern Oregon Frontier
Ken Reading

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WINTER 1999 1