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Editorial

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Editorial

“History” is not “events from another place or time.” The tragedy of September 11, 2001, brought home to all of us the reality that history is a continuous process, one in which we are more active participants than we might have imagined.

At any moment in time, we are living in someone’s future and in someone else’s past. We are the culmination of the past’s dreams, and the beginning of the future’s history. That is why this issue of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* offers a look back and a look forward. Guest editor Anna Grzeszkiewicz has assembled an important collection of timely and reflective articles that constitute essential reading for Oregon librarians.

Whenever I look at a movie or read a book, I find myself checking to see if the work was created before or after September 11, 2001. Plots, ideas, even individual words have different meanings depending on their place in time. Some of our fundamental professional concepts as librarians—freedom of information, access, and privacy—likewise have pre- and post-September 11 contexts. And yet, history again shows us that we are not in wholly uncharted waters. Ted Smith’s subtitle to the opening article, *Security versus Freedom of Information*, reminds us that this is indeed an enduring conflict in federal information policy.

Immense though the tragedy of September 11 was, there was still a majesty in the universality of our response—as Americans, as librarians, and as human beings. I wanted my article on examples of Oregon libraries’ responses to the tragedy to give readers a sense of the scope of activities. Large or small, public or academic, all libraries had staff that rose to the occasion and demonstrated their professionalism. The article does not list all activities of Oregon libraries by any means; it is intended more as an example of the breadth of our work.

Many of us talk about working “on the front line,” but Patricia Wand’s article gives genuine meaning to that phrase. *Library Life in the Shadow of the Pentagon* is a personal and professional testimony about the experience of September 11.

Patrick Hagen’s article, *Impacts of 9/11 on Counterintelligence*, is an important perspective on the new world we all live in. He offers the perspective of an experienced insider, giving us an inside look at both counterintelligence and at the issues we must each answer.

Which inevitably leads us to the “big one,” in the words of the late Redd Foxx. Suddenly, e-mail “In” boxes are stuffed with information about the USA PATRIOT Act (and please remember, it’s an acronym: no political party has exclusive use of the word “patriot” or “patriotism,” regardless of what you’re told). Robert Truman leads us into our new “now” with his article, *Life with the USA PATRIOT Act*. His article offers perspective and an understanding of how the rules have changed on critical professional issues concerning client privacy. Knowing when the PATRIOT Act does not apply is as important (maybe more so) than knowing when it does apply.

Read this issue of *OLAQ* for historical information, and for assistance in future decision-making. We are in a new era, but our principles remain firm.

Be sure to read the online version of the *Quarterly*, coming in March 2003, for additional information on this important subject.

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