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## Editorial

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# Editorial

“Welcome to Oregon, now let me figure out a way to put you to good use!” That’s pretty much how Fred Reenstjerna greeted me at last year’s Oregon/Washington Library Association Conference. I think that was because, after the initial introductions, Fred and I discovered that we both shared a passion for libraries as well as a determination that technical services managers use their wealth of human resources in the most cost-effective manner. From our shared history on the front lines of a cataloging unit, as filtered through our different employment perspectives, we think we have put together a remarkable release for the Spring 2003 issue.

All of the authors are people with whom I’ve had personal contact in my professional activities. Each of them made such a positive impression on me that I could hardly wait to challenge them to share their views about the changing nature of the cataloging process. In fact, out of the twenty-three prospective contributors I contacted last August, we are overjoyed with thirteen completed articles. I view it as a remarkable testament to the ability of busy people to get the job done!

One of the busiest people I know is Nelia Wurangian-Caan. At many library events she is the center of organizational action—yet her thought-provoking essay shows she has time to imagine a public catalog that can “walk or talk or sing.” I am proud to introduce Bessie Mayes, who shared her vision of creating a conference for library paraprofessionals in San Diego back in the early 1990s and is now, in her role in a

military library, cataloging “the essence of volumetric technology ... (as in) one submarine looking at another submarine hiding behind an iceberg.” Let me welcome Richard Jackson, who once challenged me to articulate the value of PromptCat to a library school class and is now the Catalog Librarian/Database Manager at the prestigious Huntington Library. Then there is Lloyd Jansen who writes eloquently about his struggle to carry on his mentor’s high cataloging standards while coping within current economic realities.

How could we not include a spokesperson from a bibliographic utility in this theme issue? Gary Houk and Alane Wilson, whom I know from her years as OCLC’s library consultant in the northwest, provides an authoritative look at its past and future plans. Mary Kalnin shares how she takes advantage of OCLC’s more sophisticated interfaces at the University of Washington. Since I know Mary as the listowner of LIBSUP-L, an electronic discussion list for library support staff, I would expect no less from this early-adopter of new technology. I know Deborah Fritz as an excellent cataloging instructor traveling throughout the U.S. as well as a small businesswoman who has invented new employment opportunities for librarians. She begs us not to forget the training component in our rush to embrace technology and increase productivity.

As a bonus, the electronic version of this issue of OLAQ will present six additional articles that simply would not fit within the limitations of this print journal. “Maggie” Horn, whose career I have followed from California, to

Arizona, to New York, implores us not to give up on standards in our haste to give the “average Joe/Jane” what s/he wants. And my favorite Canadian colleague, Trina Grover, insists the craft of cataloging can live in harmony with the technological tools that ease the process. Daniel CannCasciato, a NACO trainer, insists we really belong in “public” or “patron,” rather than “technical” services. Two librarians I met in my own seminars have unique perspectives about technical services from their managerial point of view. Sharon Walbridge sees cataloging as a hybrid activity—“part productivity and part intellectual process,” Felicia Uhden believes there could be something more. The woman who once told me she considered the MARC record the “finest creation of human beings” takes us into the future with an OPAC that blends the “art” with the “science,” and maybe even a bit of “magic.” Finally, Oregon’s own outspoken public librarian, Fred Reenstjerna, insists, “There’s no magic in the drinking water in Dublin, Ohio, that turns people into Super Librarians.” Fred’s lively commentary asks why managers have turned technical services “into a pre-industrial cottage industry” rather than Eli Whitney’s “American factory system.” You won’t want to miss any of it!

We hope you will enjoy these stimulating essays, in print and on the Web, at <http://www.olaweb.org/quarterly>

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