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Oregon Libraries: Ideas at Work

Oregon is an inspiration. Whether you come to it, or are born to it, you become entranced by our state's beauty, the opportunity she affords, and the independent spirit of her citizens.

—TOM MCCALL, Governor of Oregon from 1967 to 1975

Oregon is known for its natural beauty, its friendly people and their innovative ideas. The New York Times frequently writes about the state's music, art and food scene, especially Oregon's Pinots and Portland's food carts. Oregon State University recently patented a strain of dulce seaweed that tastes like bacon (Oregon State University, 2015). Nike shoes and Intel computer processors are known worldwide. There was even a Keep Portland Weird festival in Paris, France in 2012 (Moroz, 2012). State policy concepts such as Governor Oswald West's plan in 1913 to designate the entire Oregon Coast as public property are concepts which Oregonians are thankful for today (Blakely, 2013).

The uniqueness of these wonderful ideas naturally leads to wondering about the conditions that made them possible. One of my favorite examples from Oregon history regards the Civilian Public Service Camp near Waldport on the Oregon Coast that housed conscientious objectors during World War II. Many were writers and artists, so they organized art classes and theater productions to pass the time. Some of their writings and paintings have been saved in the Special Collections of the Watzek Library at Lewis & Clark College (<http://digitalcollections.lclark.edu/exhibits/show/civilian-public-service-collec/archival-collections>). After the war many camp occupants went to San Francisco and started the counter-culture movement; they were the original beatniks (Kirkland, 2005). Oregon Poet Laureate William Stafford spent time in Civilian Public Service camps as well, but in Arkansas and California (Poetry Foundation, 2015).

Another example of Oregon innovation began when radio engineers Howard Vollum and Jack Murdock returned from World War II. Together they started Tektronix, an electronics company that produced the world's finest oscilloscopes, critical for technological developments in telecommunications, computers, semiconductors, medicine, aviation and space exploration. To encourage experimentation and product invention, Tektronix allowed every employee access to spare parts. Many Tektronix employees started their own companies, which led to a technology cluster in Oregon called the Silicon Forest. In addition to treating women as equals in this egalitarian company, Vollum and Murdock created a new management style based on trust, creativity and hard work which inspired their employees to invent products that would change the world (OPB, 2010). These values are similar to those espoused in the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics>).

Can Oregon libraries create conditions that would similarly empower their employees to develop new ideas to serve their patrons? What kind of ideas will Oregonians have as a result of visiting their local libraries? These are questions that will continue to be answered by librarians long after this issue is published.

This issue of the OLAQ is intended to be a summer potluck, except instead of food, librarians have brought their latest ideas to share with colleagues around our beautiful state. Many of these ideas were born in response to challenges these libraries face, challenges that may be similar to issues that your library is working to resolve. The following five articles candidly describe the authors' experiences implementing their ideas, including practicalities and pitfalls they faced. These stories may help oth-

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ers save time, money and effort while providing inspiration from their successes. Molly Gunderson and Turner Masland describe an electronic document delivery service they developed for Portland State University to reduce the time and effort expended to fulfill article requests from students and faculty. Kelly Peterson-Fairchild and Aja Bettencourt-McCarthy discuss their use of a general education review at Oregon Tech as an opportunity to advocate for, and implement more Information Literacy instruction throughout the curriculum. Lydia Harlan and Miriam Rigby detail the complex process of the University of Oregon Libraries' response to student interest in the development of a comprehensive Popular Reading Collection. Stephanie Chase, Karen Muller and Erin Sharwell report on exciting and innovative new developments at the Hillsboro Public Library, including reorganizing children's books by subject matter for easier access, creating new ways of getting books to the public via book vending machines and mobile collections, and expanding their "library of things" collection to include kitchen gadgets, programmable robots, and outdoor recreation equipment. Heather McNeil rounds out the issue with wonderful news regarding the creation of early learning spaces in Deschutes County Public Libraries, where the community has come together to support children's early learning through creative play, discovery and exploration.

We hope you find the Summer 2015 issue of the OLAQ useful and interesting. Please enjoy the rest of your summer!



—CHARLES WOOD
OLAQ Guest Editor
 Volunteer Librarian
 Aloha Community Library
 Drexel University, MSLIS 2010

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