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Introduction

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Introduction

When I first threw my hat in the ring to guest edit this OLAQ issue, I already knew what I wanted the theme to be: advocacy. But then, I've always been one to get mouthy about issues I care about. I have a newspaper clipping of my friends and me when we were in high school, standing on the side of the road with homemade signs in front of a row of historic trees as we protested their proposed removal. It was a win-win situation; we felt cool and rebellious by protesting something, and the trees, thanks in part to our efforts, were saved.

Not everyone is as gung-ho about advocacy as I am. When I told a colleague about the advocacy theme, she scrunched up her face and said that advocacy left a bad taste in her mouth because it sometimes gets as rah-rah as, well, a bunch of teenagers holding signs on the side of a road. While there is a place for bold, in-your-face advocacy efforts, library advocacy is so much more than that. It can also be quiet and subtle. Library advocacy looks like so many different things: relationship building, collaborative brainstorming, phone calls, sound bites, discussions, letter-writing, lobbying, e-mails, research, resource sharing, innovating, presentations, union bargaining, blogging, taking chances, outreach, images, legislators reading children's books, and yes, sign holding.

The authors in this issue talk about all of these things and more. They discuss both long-term preemptive advocacy efforts and short-term advocacy called for by crisis situations. Penny Hummel inspires us to take action in her battle cry, *Library Advocacy in Hard Times*. Michele Burke and Laura Zeigen provide a detailed blueprint for advocating for information literacy across Oregon's K-20 curriculum. In *Libraries are Obsolete*, R. David Lankes relates his experience playing devil's advocate at Harvard and raises some very thought-provoking questions. Both Teresa Hazen and Pam North share the details of their wrenching experiences fighting for their jobs. Nan Heim, Abigail Elder, and George Bell let us in on their advocacy conversation between lobbyist, library director, and library supporter. Elaine Gass Hirsch describes every library advocate's/sign holder's dream job, her position as Library Advancement Coordinator. Finally, in *The Issues that Find You and Refine You*, Jane Scott and Anne-Marie Deitering talk about the ACRL-OR board's developing role in local library advocacy efforts.

This issue is just what I hoped it would be. If there's an enduring message in these eight articles, I hope it's that we are stronger in our advocacy efforts when we work together: by sharing resources, ideas, and experiences; by building alliances; by talking boldly both about what's working and what isn't; and by speaking out for each other. Ultimately, we hold the potential to build quite a loud collective voice. That might sound a little too rah-rah for some, but I'm not holding up signs on the side of the road. Yet.

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