

My thanks to John Webb for the invitation to write a brief column for *ITAL*. I appreciate the opportunity. I'm writing this at the end of August so my term as president has really just begun. I've been told by Tom Wilson and Colby Riggs that this year will pass more quickly than I could ever imagine.

The more I've come to understand the expectations for me in my role as your president, the more I appreciate the contribution that other LITA presidents before me have made. It makes me a bit nervous. While those before me are giants in the profession, I don't necessarily stand on the shoulders of giants. I'm not sure I am really standing at all. At the ALA inaugural dinner in Chicago in June, we gathered together six past LITA presidents: Mitch Freedman, Michael Gorman, Barbra Higginbotham, Tom Leonhardt, Colby Riggs, and Sherrrie Schmidt. It was a true pleasure to be among them.

Perhaps I'm reflecting more on the past now than I normally might because I will be LITA president during an important moment in our history. In 2006, LITA will mark its fortieth anniversary. In January 1966, ALA Council approved the formation of the Information Science and Automation Division, and on July 14, 1966 (Bastille Day!), the new division's organizational meeting was held during the ALA Annual Conference in New York.

In 1993, in *ITAL*, Stephen R. Salmon wrote "LITA's First Twenty-five Years: A Brief History" (available online at www.lita.org/ala/lita/aboutlita/org/1st25years.htm). If you have a chance, I would encourage you to read this article. Take a look at the world our predecessors faced. Reflect on the issues before them and the vision to which they aspired. We have made great progress and yet some of the issues then are the same ones as now. The concept of open source software was there, for instance, if not the term.

I am old enough to remember 1966. I graduated from high school that June and went away to college that fall (please don't do the math). *The Sound of Music* won the Academy Award as Best Picture in April 1966. Surveyor 1, the first lunar lander in the American Surveyor pro-

gram, landed on the moon on June 2, 1966, to begin its explorations. The first episode of *Star Trek* debuted. *The Fugitive* won an Emmy for Outstanding Dramatic Series. Baltimore won the World Series. Most importantly, of course, Notre Dame won the national championship in college football despite the 10-10 tie with Michigan State that fall in East Lansing.

While I was beginning my freshman year in college, our early leaders were focused on such items as a clearinghouse for information about library automation projects, the development of computer programs and a library programming language, library access to machine-readable data, the development of standards, regional training opportunities, indexing vocabularies, and, of course, a way to share knowledge through a newsletter or journal. You are now reading the descendant of those efforts.

We benefit from the work of those who have gone before us and we are also called to advance the profession in our day, facing our challenges and moving forward to help achieve the vision we share of effectively using technology in libraries to benefit our users.

While I have dwelt on the past here, I do want us, as an association, to celebrate our accomplishments, our members, and our history. More importantly I want us to renew our commitment to that vision and to look ahead, beyond the horizon.

We are in the process of planning some special activities to celebrate LITA's fortieth anniversary. I hope we can have some fun as well as look ahead. Watch for updates from the LITA office and on lita-l. If you don't subscribe to lita-l, I hope you will (visit www.lita.org/ala/lita/litamembership/litaldisclists/litalotherdiscussion.htm for more information). Under John Webb's guidance, *ITAL* will be celebrating this milestone as well. I'm looking forward to the 2006 issues that he is planning.

We have tough acts to follow! Last year, as vice president, I learned to appreciate how truly great the LITA membership is. In attending meetings and in calling for volunteers for various appointments, I was always met with enthusiasm from knowledgeable members who care very much about the profession and service to users. I will do my best this year to honor the legacy of those who have served as our LITA president in previous years. Please let me know how you think I can best serve in that tradition.

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