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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

*Richard Hopkins*

Just by chance the authors of many of the articles in this issue are librarians. The lead article is by co-authors Professor Judith Saltman and Dr. Gail Edwards. Both have their library degrees from UBC and Professor Saltman also has an M.A. in Children's Literature from Simmons College in Boston. Dr. Edwards has a PhD in history from the University of B.C.

Two of the other authors are at the other end of the experience scale. Both Kiera Miller and Susan Redmond are current students in the Master of Library and Information Studies program at UBC.

Perhaps the veteran of the group is Guy Robertson, librarian, disaster planner, lecturer on the history of the book and many other library topics. Guy holds a regular teaching position in the library technician program at Langara College in Vancouver.

What do this very disparate group of librarians have in common? Simply put they love books and they love to read. They all attended library school mainly due to their passion for books and reading. Isn't that true of all librarians? Alas, not in any sense of the word. Many librarians now attend library school and enter the profession spurred on by a love for computers and/or management. Not for them the course in children's literature, the history of the book or adult popular reading. They opt for courses in knowledge management, information policy and information retrieval. Thank goodness for colleagues like Judi, Gail and Guy and thank the heavens even more for students like Kiera and Susan.

I think a quote by Harvey Miles from his book *The Island of Lost Maps*, sent to me by an acquaintance David Lowe, suits very well here: "What a vapid title our culture gives to those honorable laborers the ancient Egyptians and Sumerians variously called Men of the Magic Library, Scribes of the Double House of Life, Mistresses of the House of Books, or Ordainers of the Universe. *Librarian* – that mouth-contorting, graceless grind of a word, that dry gulch in the dictionary between *libido* and *licentious* – it practically begs you to envision a stoop-shouldered loser, socks mismatched, eyes locked in a permanent squint from reading too much microfiche. If it were up to me, I would abolish the word entirely and turn back to the lexicological wisdom of the ancients, who saw librarians not as feeble sorters and shelvees but as heroic guardians. In Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian cultures alike, those who toiled at the shelves were often bestowed with a proud, even soldierly, title: Keepers of the Books."