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Chapter's End

Director Anne Haley retires from Valley's library system after five productive years

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HERALD-REPUBLIC

Dick Ostrander and James Hovis love to argue with each other. On Anne Haley's contributions to the Yakima Valley Regional Library, however, the two longtime friends and library colleagues scramble to agree.

In Haley's five years as director of the Yakima Valley Regional Library, she has taken the library and its area branches to greater heights.

With a knack for finding money (more than \$640,000 in grants in five years), Haley has brought the boom of computer technology to a library system facing ever greater demands.

As online data system and upgrades in customer services and a circulation system have led to a "change of culture"

at the library, Haley said.

"We have moved from being warehousemen of books to guides and trainers of people seeking information," she said.

BUT HALEY, who came to Yakima in 1987 from Walla Walla after nearly 20 years as a library director there, is moving on. Her 32-year career with public libraries ends June 30 with her retirement.

Ostrander, Haley's predecessor, and Hovis, a longtime library board member, can't say enough good things about the job Haley has done.

Haley is "one of the best people in the profession," said Ostrander who, upon retiring in January 1987 after a 26-year career as the library's director, quickly recommended Haley as his successor.

Haley was more than happy to follow

her friend of 25 years, whom she calls "a wonderful mentor."

She cites a wish to travel with her husband, Jim Shepley, a Whitman College economics professor, as a key reason in her decision to retire.

"My husband and I want to see the world while we're still able," said the 55-year-old.

Tiring weekend commutes to her Walla Walla home — she racks up more than \$260 miles a month on her car — as well as waging legislative battles in Olympia to protect libraries, haven't assuaged the spark in her eyes.

Haley could have retired two years ago and started writing the biography she's planned, but she felt her work in Yakima wasn't finished.

The library system must be equipped to flow with the Yakima Valley's changing

demographics, particularly a growing number of Spanish-speaking immigrants, and a changing ecology.

WITH THE YAKIMA VALLEY's high rates of poverty and illiteracy, the library has never been more needed, she said.

"Our challenge is to teach, figuratively, each person who lives in this county and also to ensure our products and services are relevant and used," she said.

Ostrander already misses her. "I hate to see her leave," he said. "I certainly had hoped she'd stay longer, but I think she's given the library her all. She's leaving it in great shape."

Hovis didn't think the board could ever find anyone as good as Ostrander

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Anne Haley is retiring as director of the Yakima Valley Regional Library. Haley said much has changed since she started working in libraries more than 20 years ago. She helped bring the electronic catalog and research tools to the library. The old card catalog is history, she said.

HALEY/Internet Access Tumult

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when it went looking for a new director five years ago. Haley quickly closed the book on that fear, however.

"She's been fabulous," he said. "There isn't anybody on the board who has one inch of a complaint about her."

Haley guided the library through a tumultuous debate over Internet pornography filters and found technology grants as tax initiatives and a stamping tax have created a swirl of funding uncertainties, Hovis said.

"She kept her head through all the B.S. over Internet filters," he said. "And, boy, has she brought in the dough."

Haley praised her staff for helping sort through citizens demands for Internet filters — a difficult balancing of First Amendment and educational freedoms and the rights of parents.

The library now requires parents to have a signed consent form from parents to use unfiltered computer terminals.

It's a workable solution, she said, but filters block "free access" for those too poor to own computers to information essential to education and citizen participation in government — "to make decisions particu-

"She's been fabulous."

DICK OSTRANDER
Predecessor

larly in public debates that are the bedrock of democracy."

Haley, however, sees no compromising on securing the library's role in the community at large.

She hopes the public weighs that role in deciding tax measures. The grants she and her staff have secured have proved critical, but the system cannot survive on grants alone.

"Financing technology is among the biggest challenges," she said. "Without the grants, we wouldn't do it."

Haley's career also includes working as extension coordinator for the Port Vancouver Regional Library in Vancouver, Wash., libraries in the Pierce County Library in Tacoma and as a library trustee at the San Diego Public Library.

A old instructor, she also has served on the state library Commission.

She is a granddaughter of J. Clifford Haley, founder of Brown & Haley Candles, and also of Wenatchee World newspaper founder Rafas Woods.

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