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Editorial

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Editorials are written on a rotating basis by the Editor-in-Chief, the Design Editor and the Consulting Editor.

The first TCL issue of the new year is now under my belt. As the new Design Editor, the January 2000 TCL was a labor of love. It was also one of trial and error. I learned how to logically arrange the pages and articles within the issue. I experimented with various graphical changes but tried to keep a recognizable style in the grand TCL tradition.

I was amazed at how vital each TCL Editor is to the process of publishing a journal. Each has duties and functions that are essential. If one slips, we all fall. I know I could not have done it without the help of all the Editorial Team and my colleagues at Liberty University, who withstood constant questions from me and who consented to innumerable proof-readings. I know that together we produced a great representation of the Association of Christian Librarians.

Another challenge I ventured into in the month of January was to research and publish my first article -- in TCL, no less -- and the topic, Internet filtering? I felt hopelessly out of my comfort zone. But I did my homework. I researched pros and cons of Internet filtering. I read about the kinds of filters and how they work. And, amazingly, I had deep conversations with colleagues.

The topic of Internet filters provoked passion discussions. My questions encouraged others to catch up on the debate. One librarian even compiled a huge notebook of reference articles on filtering for his own purpose of formulating an opinion. I talked to the Dean of Library Services and Reference Librarians who daily make decisions to block or unblock websites. I discovered policies and procedures

were already in place and had been working well for months.

I ventured out of the library and interviewed our Information Technology staff. I asked questions. I discovered who made the decisions in selecting the Internet filtering vendor we use on campus -- and the basis on which those decisions were made. I learned the names of real people who keep our campus network functioning. I learned of real scenarios where large groups of students have requested that

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an entertainment site be unblocked, yet after review, the decision was made by IT staff to keep it banned -- not by personal prejudice, but in accordance with written

campus policy.

It was a challenge. I learned an enormous amount of information about Internet filtering. And I learned a lot about our library and one of our most valuable resources. I was disturbed to find in my survey results that many librarians were unsatisfied with their campus Internet filters mainly because they had been left out of the decision-making process. Some did not even know what software was in filtering!

Step out of your comfort zone. Write an article or review for TCL. It will stretch you in many ways, both personally and professionally.

I whole-heartedly agree with Gregory Smith's article in this issue on "A Philosophy of Christian Librarianship". In it he challenges us all. "While it may be unreasonable to expect every Christian librarian to write for publication, it seems certain that more should be doing so. There is no better way for librarians to persuade students of the importance of Christian scholarship than for them to be involved in it."

Amen.

Diane Sullivan,
 Design Editor