

Our Future Is Now

DAVID B. GRACY II

HISTORY IS MOST COMPELLING WHEN IT UNFOLDS OCCASIONS during which the pace of developments closed in on the future; when people recognized that if they did not make history they would vanish from it; when determined actions changed for the better the familiar, accepted patterns of events. Archives often have appeared at these flash points of destiny. We quickly recall the French Revolution, when creation of the first modern national archives opened the records of government to public inspection as one of the brave manifestations of the people's ascendancy over government. But search history and you will find no more dramatic case of a small band of people taking their destiny into their hands through control of archives than the stand of Angelina Eberly and the citizens of Austin, Texas, 142 years ago this coming December.

The day was not very unlike today, just colder. Eberly followed her normal routine at the boarding house until near

noon, when she noticed a large number of wagons, and men working around them, a couple of hundred yards away at the land office. Instantly she knew what was happening. Sam Houston, president of the infant Republic of Texas, had sent a force to seize the national archives. Houston never had appreciated the referendum that had moved the national capital two years earlier to the exposed and isolated, rude, frontier town of Austin.

Austin was no city beautiful in 1842, no center of culture. As late as 1837, it had been nothing more than a landing for the ferry crossing the Colorado River. The place boasted no building of more substantial construction than wood. But what it did have in full measure was proud people. Count Alphonse of Saligny learned it. The French chargé d'affaires had broken diplomatic relations with the Republic of Texas after one citizen had settled a score by sending his hogs to trample

David B. Gracy II is state archivist of Texas and served as president of the Society of American Archivists in 1983-84. This article is his presidential address delivered at the 48th annual meeting of SAA, 31 August 1984, in Washington, D.C. The author wishes to express his appreciation to Carolyn V. Majewski, Michael R. Green, Alan Ives, and Christopher LaPlante for their thoughtful critiques of the manuscript.

Saligny's herb garden. A few of the zealous swine even penetrated Saligny's inner chamber and, I regret to report to you, ate some of his papers.

These same proud people, who took direct action when it was called for, also understood the value of archives. Public records constituted the ultimate and most enduring symbol of public authority. The offices of government already had been removed from Austin, and Sam Houston was outspoken in his preference for his namesake city as the site of the national government. If the president's men succeeded in removing the archives, Austin would remain the capital in name only, and probably not for long.

Angelina Eberly dropped her chores and ran two blocks to the center of town where the citizens kept a three-pounder cannon loaded and ready for Indian attack. She wheeled the gun around, ignited the charge, and sent a round of grapeshot in the direction of the land office. The men finished their work in short order, clambered into the wagons, and urged their ox teams onto the road that led out of town past the capitol building.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Austin, jolted by the explosion, gathered to learn the cause of it and then to decide what action to take. Their resolve was clear. They must go after the records.

The next morning, when Houston's men awoke, they found themselves unable to move, surrounded by Austinites brandishing pistols, rifles, and their trusty three-pounder cannon. Without a fuss, the president's men capitulated and returned the records to Austin.

The Archives War of Texas, as the incident became known, insured that

Austin, to which the government finally returned some four years later, remained the capital of the Republic, and later of the State, of Texas.

Like the Austinites of 1842, the archival community of the United States in 1984 has reached the point that its back is to the wall. The archival service to society—the obtaining, preserving, and making available of the permanently valuable records and papers of our institutions and our people—has fallen to its saddest condition since modern archival institutions took root in this country fifty years ago with the founding of our National Archives. All one has to do to confirm the devastating, demoralizing fact is to read the results of the State Needs Assessment Grants summarized in *Documenting America*.¹ Ed Bridges, author of one of the reports in the publication, said it succinctly when he wrote that state archives in our time are “unable to provide adequate care for their records”—unable to provide *adequate care* for their records. Worse, he continued, state archives, like most other repositories, are “trapped in a cycle of poverty.” Without adequate budgets, the repositories produce programs unworthy of greater resources.² So completely is the American archival community gripped in this sickening vortex, that we have adopted the “cycle of poverty” theory as explanation of our inability to develop the kinds of archival programs needed, and deserved, by the citizenry in general and by researchers in particular.

As a profession, we are losing our ability to sustain archival endeavor in this country. An old Chinese proverb sums up our situation all too well. “If we don’t change direction,” it says, “we

¹Lisa B. Weber, ed., *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States* (Atlanta: National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, 1983).

²Edwin C. Bridges, “Consultant Report,” in Lisa B. Weber, ed., *Documentary America*, 1, 8.

are likely to end up where we are headed." The reports in *Documenting America* paint a bleak picture and show with chilling clarity that we very nearly have reached the end towards which we are headed. Truly, we stand at a fork in the road, a turning point in our history. Do we just continue as we are on the familiar road, or will we strive to change our course? We must choose.

Archivists have trouble with forks in the road, partly because we come upon so many of them. Dilemmas are characteristic of the work life of archivists more so than of many, probably most, other occupations. The fundamental cause of our difficulty with forks in the road, though, is more than a matter of numbers: the dilemmas present perplexing contradictions which, no matter what choice we make, are unresolvable. No matter what choice we make, the paradoxes we confront have no satisfying resolution, no universal resolution at all. Day by day by day, case by case by case we search for a happy medium.

Consider the paradox of appraisal. Our job is to preserve the permanently valuable records of our own and former times. Preservation is the core of our business. A record once gone is irretrievable. Moreover, enterprising researchers have shown that many records of marginal value by all objective measures can be worked to yield important data. The ultimate solution is to save everything. But we cannot. There simply is not space sufficient to house all the records that *might* have value, or that have marginal value. The system of appraisal is our practical effort to bridge the contradiction. It is, of course, one of the sterling contributions of the National Archives of the United States to dealing responsibly with the records of the twentieth century. The paradox is striking, however: to save records, we must systematically dispose of them.

There is the paradox of use. The use of materials justifies their preservation; but use is also a principal destroyer of the materials. The very handling of paper, the running of machine-readable tapes and disks, and the exposure of photographic materials to light all weaken, diminish, and fade the materials making more problematical their use by future generations.

Future generations—there is the paradox of our clientele. Many archivists consider their greatest contribution to be the saving of permanently valuable information for future researchers. As one archivist wrote to me, responding to my letter of December 1983 to the membership, "Archives serve not only contemporary (often transient) needs but also the possible needs of researchers in the far-distant future. The archivist who is proudest of his 'image' thinks of those users along with those of the present." That sentiment is noble. Closely focused on it, however, we often lose sight of the fact that it is our contemporaries, not users yet unborn, who support our work. We must demonstrate to our contemporaries why archival services are fundamental to social cohesion now and in the future. Without their interest and concern, archival services gradually will cease to exist, and so preservation of materials for the future will terminate as well.

There is the paradox of technology. Technology is part of the solution but also part of the problem. We must preserve the permanently valuable information of our age in whatever medium it comes to us. Information has a use and a vitality in the medium in which it is recorded, both of which it usually loses when crystalized in paper copy. Yet the technology of media is changing so fast that the media, and their systems of organizing knowledge, are impermanent. There hardly is a more stark para-

dox than the situation that information has lasting value in a form that will not last. Coupled with this, a glance at the history of technological development shows clearly that every advance in media for recording information—microphotography, audio tape, videotape, machine-readable material—exhibits progressively less tolerance than paper to atmospheric variation, magnetic distortion, heat, and water. The preservation of each new medium involves more costly, more exacting, more laborious work than that required by its predecessor. Perhaps the video optical disk etched by laser will combine the cheap reproduction of the photocopy machine, the space saving of microfilm, the manipulability of machine-readable material, and the pristine fidelity of good audio tape. But history should make us wary of the claims.

Our treatment of history has to be one of the most baffling paradoxes of archivists. We guard everyone's history religiously and disregard that of our own field cavalierly. What do we know of the development of means and patterns of communication, which govern the nature, content, and methods of setting down the information we strive to save, not to mention where we look for the information and how we find it? What knowledge have we of the historical development of archival techniques in Europe, the cradle of modern archival administration? Precious little indeed.

Coupled with the paradox of our treatment of history is the paradox of education. We come into this field with academic credentials. Few institutions open professional positions to persons lacking an undergraduate degree. Most and ever increasing numbers of archivists in North America have earned at

least one master's degree. Yet once in the field, we find educational offerings confined to professional literature, workshops, and annual meetings. Academic courses, along with the workshops, are geared primarily to the novice. Curious it is that we need substantial education to get in, but not to stay in, our profession.

The most perplexing paradox must be the fact that the public values records but not keepers of records. The public can hardly have a brave vision of us, treated as it is to a steady diet of drivel about archivists and archives. Jean Waggener in Tennessee still flinches at the memory of the time she was presented as the State Argyle. Then there was the article in *Parade* magazine that introduced readers to the second most powerful man in the Vatican. Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, it says, "began his career in the Vatican 41 years ago as a lowly archivist."³ Recently one university journal printed an article on a historian specializing in hunting German war criminals. "Historians don't all sit in dark, dusty archives," the professor concluded his interview. "But that's where we're the happiest."⁴ Hogwash! How many historians, or researchers of any kind—how many, I ask you—come in looking for dark and dust, and grin from ear to ear if immersed in it? And what kind of figure do they expect to be caring for the dusty records in dark repositories?—"Pig Pen," the character in the "Peanuts" comic strip? Lowly archivist, dark and dust are stereotypes repeated without thought. That is exactly the problem; that is precisely what makes contending with this paradox so difficult. It is perpetuated by the absence, not the presence, of thought.

There is the paradox of commitment.

³*Parade*, September 20, 1981.

⁴Barbara Burke, "Professor Assists Government in War Criminal Deportation Case," *The Magazine of the University of Texas at Arlington*, 6 (July, 1984): 5.

The less society around us appreciates archival endeavor, the more dedicated and intense we individual archivists become about our work. Career planners recognize it. Listen to career summary S-265—"The Archivist"—prepared by one of them:

Persons interested in this career field should possess intellectual and historical curiosity, a keen imagination, resourcefulness, organizational ability, self-reliance, and common sense. Accuracy is an extremely important attribute. Aspirants should also have the ability to express themselves well, both orally and in writing. Above all, this work requires persons with a great deal of perseverance and a real interest in studying the past through records and documents.

These are fine words, and when I see how much archivists with these qualities accomplish in the face of the cycle of poverty, I cannot help recalling the lines of the wag who said we have reached the point where "We have done so much for so long with so little, we are now qualified to do anything with nothing." On the other hand, the characteristics in the career summary conspire against us. These sterling qualities serve to deepen the frustration felt by that majority of archivists who work for organizations whose business is not archives. The frustration grows out of a feeling of impotence brought on by the cycle of poverty, the impotence to effect the changes and develop the activities essential to accomplishing the duties entrusted to archivists. Asked one public records archivist: "If the archival product is so obviously valuable to the people on the inside [that is, to archivists], why won't the public pay for it?"

The answer lies partly in the paradox of permanent value. In saying that we preserve "permanently valuable" papers and records, we stress the humanist arguments supporting, justifying, and

explaining our work. We remind people that the past is prologue, and that all—governments, organizations, and individuals alike—must know where they have been before they can know where they are going. The materials we gather, preserve, and provide to patrons make it possible for each generation to discover its roots and its place in time and progress. Often we recall to our listeners the patriotic argument that the permanently valuable papers and records are the documentary heritage of us all and thus are the epoxy in the common bond we have as a society. Both the humanist and the patriotic arguments are valid and indisputable. The paradox in the concept of permanent value is that nothing is permanent. People and society know no absolute—no permanent—value. The interests, aspirations, foundations, and values of society are constantly shifting, constantly developing, constantly changing.

Herein is the primary reason we archivists feel ourselves adrift in 1984, denied adequate resources to do our job. It is the paradox of role. Because public interests have changed, archival work seems to be out of phase with them. We work to save, in an age that prizes disposability and impermanence. We build research collections that the patron uses by reading, in an age that prizes information presented in video form. We work for, or at least are identified with, history, in a fast-paced age focused on the present and the future. Our vocabulary does not help either. We use the term "noncurrent," thereby defining the material we work with in a negative frame. "Old" seems almost better than "noncurrent." At least it is a positive concept.

The paradox of role has another side: the public knows that records are of value but not why or for what. Until the "why" and "for what" are settled, the

priority of records keeping, and hence the value of the records keeper, are up in the air. Many, I would wager most, contemporary archivists consider economy and efficiency to be of greater moment than history in our society. Increasingly as a profession we are playing down our recognized and formerly strong role of historian/scholar in favor of our role as administrator. This ascending role is best described by Wilbur Kurtz, former archivist of the Coca-Cola Company, who wrote that archivists in repositories holding the records of their parent institutions fill three vital functions in their organizations: offense, defense, and exploitation. In offense, they support their organizations in promoting the organizations, for example, by providing grist for public relations mills. In defense, they help their organizations use the material to protect the rights of the organizations and of the individuals dependent upon them. Finally, archivists assist their organizations' hierarchies in utilizing—"exploiting," Kurtz called it—the information in the records for making decisions. The paradox in switching roles from historian/scholar to administrator is that we are finding ourselves falling instead into the lesser role of valet fetching old information. The Office of Personnel Management of the federal government and personnel offices in more than one state have moved within the last few years to lower both requirements for entry into and compensation for archival work, because they perceive it to be more technical than professional. We lack the business orientation we need to gain the administrator rank for which we strive.

The culmination has to be the paradox of archival work itself. Archival work no longer is archival work. Gathering, appraising, arranging, describing, preserving, and making available no longer are *the* basic duties of the archivist. To increase our service to society, indeed,

just to maintain it—just to survive in the highly competitive, fast-changing world of our times—we spend increasing portions of our day reminding our various publics how archival endeavor contributes to their lives. Promotion/marketing / outreach—call it what you will—this now is as essential an activity of archival enterprise as gathering, appraising, and so on through the litany, ever were. In an increasingly complex and financially uncertain world, we must continually sell our service. Without promotion / marketing / outreach, we jeopardize our existence, our opportunity to do those uniquely archival activities that alone used to constitute "archival work."

If archival work no longer is archival work, what business are we in? One former state archivist, who answered my letter of December 1983, suggests it is the information business. He argued that the shrewd archivist markets the services of the archives "not by providing a convenient dump for records that may not be destroyed [and] not by providing cheap shrinkage for bulky files[, but rather] . . . by stressing the benefits of 'time depth' statistics to business and government." The information business includes librarians, records managers, information managers, data processors—all those whose jobs involve the gathering, organizing, and servicing of information in some way, at some stage of information use. Its practitioners, while maintaining their specializations, devote energy to building alliances among information handlers. We archivists, on the other hand, have prided ourselves in recent years on the uniqueness of our enterprise. We behave as if archives, which are special, I agree, are nevertheless more than just one source of knowledge for an information-conscious age. The effects are evident. At the same time that we industriously distinguish

ourselves from all others who handle information, we cannot command the resources necessary to accomplish adequately the work we do with data.

Complicating our definition of the business we are in is the fact that we have not shed our former identification as historian. The public clings to the notion that we are in the scholarship/historian business. Yet ever fewer of us live by study and contemplation than by statistics, accountability, economy, and efficiency. While greater and greater numbers of us stress our administrative function, though, our predominant clientele remains researchers, not institutional personnel at all. Something is dissonant in 1984 with traditional archival enterprise. It is more than what it used to be; archival work no longer is simply archival work.

With these eleven paradoxes inherent in archival enterprise, the clearest characteristic of archivists in 1984 is that we do live on the horns of dilemmas. This life is not, and never will be, comfortable. For too long, however, we have let it intimidate us into indecision. Dilemmas are paralyzing only so long as we shrink from facing them, from weighing consequences and making decisions. The time has come to meet the challenge of the paradoxes and to make our way through the several forks in the road. The situation of the archival service to society is at its nadir. The future predicted by the reports in *Documenting America* is bleak. We can afford to vacillate no longer.

In meeting the challenge of the paradoxes, we must recognize and come to grips with two realities. First, our independent, lone-arranger, proud-of-my-unique-system tradition is not a strength, but an Achilles' heel. Diversity is important and inevitable. Fragmentation, on the other hand, will be our undoing. Second, the image of the archival services to society, held in the minds of

all our publics, specific and general, is our primary key to unlocking the resources we must have to provide these services.

The most complex problems, though, often prove to have simple, straightforward solutions. I did not say "easy." I said "simple," because attending to both these realities—how we view ourselves and how we present ourselves—is up to us. Moreover, we have the foundation and the tools we need to work on them: a service essential to social cohesion, a dedicated group of colleagues, and a strong and vibrant national professional society. Most impressive of all, the activities we need to pursue are no mystery and require no radical departure. What we must do, we are capable of doing and have it in our power to do right now. Listen to your colleagues. Last December I wrote to you of my concern for the image we archivists are projecting to non-archivists, of the damage it does to us, and of the steps the Society of American Archivists is taking to deal with the situation through the Task Force on Archives and Society. The responses the task force and I received were rich, interesting, telling, and full, few shorter than two pages in length.

On the question of how we view ourselves, writer after writer echoed the conviction that we must put behind us the divisiveness one archivist referred to as "the prevalent 'everything is unique here so there's no feasible way I can operate like other repositories' attitude which eliminates common practices among institutions and escalates their mystique to the general public." "The individual archivist can be sustained by a well-defined profession," stated a second. "The existence of standards can help generate the respect of others."

The call for standards—considered standards of vocabulary and methodology—sounded repeatedly through the

replies. It is a sound of community, of communication, of cooperation, of common action and common agreement. Some suggest inaugurating an "adopt an archives" program. The plan would bring better established institutions into direct contact with smaller repositories operated by less highly trained staffs to give assistance in planning, organizing, developing, and understanding archival work. As a variation, others suggest we pursue a "sister archives" program that would couple an institution in this country with an archives abroad for an exchange of information on methodology, procedures, and professional activities. This would be an important and long-overdue step on the part of American archivists to broaden our narrow horizon on archival development and activity elsewhere in the world. We are stifflingly provincial in believing that we have nothing to learn from industrious, striving archivists in other countries.

Tied intimately to work on standardization in the minds of several writers is a program of certification of archivists. "When are we going to realize that accreditation and certification are words that elicit respect from the population at large?" asked one respondent. "If I could say 'I am an accredited archivist,' they might not know what I do but they would know that I [had] had to do something special to get there!" "It is going to be difficult to change the image of the archivist in the minds of the public," declared another, "when we ourselves are not at all sure what we are. I see no answer but the certification of archivists through a national exam and internships," he concluded.

Council responded to this mushrooming interest by devoting a major portion of its Spring meeting to certification. As reported in the July *Newsletter*, Council voted to pursue the matter further by asking the Committee on Education and

Professional Development "to study and report on a program of certification for individual archivists which would require qualifications in the three major areas of education and other competencies, experience, and written examination, and which would, in addition, include periodic recertification."

Many writers focused upon archival education, particularly upon the lack of opportunities for advanced work and upon the effect on the profession of having academic credentials for American archivists given only in schools and departments oriented toward other professions. The message in the letters was that we must strengthen our academic associations. We need opportunities for broader education at an advanced level. We need opportunities for the study of the few, who at this point can take the time off for it, to reach the rest of us and thereby bring about useful upgrading in the profession. The program at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan to study archival problems and report the results of those findings to the profession at large is an excellent first step.

We need, too, a central point for developing, coordinating, and offering continuing education at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. After some years in gestation in the SAA's Education and Professional Development Committee and in Council, an SAA Office of Education is nearly a reality. At its May meeting, Council appropriated money to establish a position within the headquarters office to review present educational opportunities for the profession, to identify the gaps, and to establish and offer needed courses. Moreover, recognizing that the SAA is the major publisher in the archival field, the Education Officer will work also to coordinate the Society's educational and publications activities to further strengthen the educational opportunities

available to the profession.

As we work on particular programs to meet specific needs, we must maintain a broad view of the archival profession. Here, too, the tools are at hand, and the work is initiated in the report of the Task Force on Goals and Priorities. You have received a copy of the draft document of GAP, as the task force has been tagged. The structure of this annual meeting reflects the GAP organization of our professional world. Review the draft. Consider the views and thoughts presented in it from a variety of perspectives: as an individual archivist, as an employee of your institution, and as a member of the SAA and the other associations that represent portions of our profession. The GAP document provides us a valuable platform for looking at both the forest and the trees of our profession and for setting priorities on the basis of collective consensus rather than on individual speculation.

The other challenge we must take up is that of our image. Last summer we established the Task Force on Archives and Society to lead and coordinate the work of the SAA and the profession, first in analyzing and then in taking steps to change the image of archival endeavor, of archives and archivists in the service of our institutions in particular and of our society in general. The task force was charged to draft a statement, that all of us can use, on the importance of archives to and in society. That statement appeared in the May *Newsletter*, and we have received many good and thoughtful responses. The task force this fall will have as its first priority the task of polishing the statement for publication.

Second, the task force was to propose ways and means that we—as individuals, as professionals in our societies, and as employees of our institutions—can use to raise public awareness, appreciation,

understanding, and support of archival work. Several responses focused on the importance of working with the education community—teachers and students from junior high school through college graduate programs. In addition to the obvious harvest of knowledge and appreciation we gain from these two groups, we reach yet a third. “Every parent in this country,” one archivist wrote fervently, “sees the work of the schools and virtually every parent wants a better education for [his or her] child than . . . [the child] is currently receiving. If the professional archivist can develop ways of aiding the school teachers in the presentation of American and local history, the message that archives are important reaches not just the teacher and the pupil, but the parents as well.” Moreover, the writer concluded, “the archivist shows a concern for the future of his community, not just its past.” Turned around, that is my definition of outreach: making archives interesting and inviting, and showing people that the records of enduring value touch and enrich their lives in a meaningful way. We must show every group that it has an interest, indeed a stake, in archives. To change the present situation, outreach must be far more than just floating a message “To whom it may concern.”

A religious archivist wrote about the lack of appreciation of history as a root cause of our inappropriate image. Archives follow in the wake of history, he said. When history is unappreciated or underappreciated, as it is now, archives suffer. For the present low regard of history he blamed boring history teachers. “Maybe a good starting point,” he concluded remorselessly, “would be to shoot all teachers who have dull history classes.” An archivist from a charitable organization proposed the most original means of commanding the attention of the public at large: have

a box printed on the 1040 individual income tax form for the American taxpayer to make a contribution of \$1 for the sustenance of archives.

The majority of the replies to the letter of December 1983, however, pointed plainly to administrators one, two, and three rungs above us in the organizational frameworks of our institutions as the "public" we need most to influence. These individuals hold the power of decision and the power of the purse over us, and they frequently deal with archivists not as individuals, but only indirectly and on the basis of stereotypes and images. Your responses to the letter made the point so forcefully that the task force recommended to Council that the Society retain a specialist in marketing, both to ascertain what these administrators really do believe about the value and usefulness of archival services and to recommend actions we can take to improve our image in their mind. Council listened. At our Spring budget meeting we appropriated money for the project. The work is under way. We anticipate that by early in 1985 the report and recommendations will be in our hands for dissemination to all members and for action.

Third, the Task Force on Archives and Society was to propose two or three national projects for the SAA to undertake over the next few years. In answer to our call for ideas, we received a host of good suggestions, including: making use of anniversaries—such as the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution—as occasions for television specials on archives; distributing news releases nationally on issues of concern to the profession; and creating a national symbol or logo to identify all things archival.

Fourth, and finally, the task force was to serve as a clearinghouse of information and ideas. We look forward to expanding this role as more organizations follow the New England and the Southwest societies of archivists and establish

groups of their own to work on Archives and Society.

"Can we really influence the public's thinking?" I have been asked frequently. "What will be our future if we do not try?" I used to respond. Now I point to the campaign to liberate our National Archives and Records Service from the grasp of the General Services Administration. They said it could not be done; but we, shoulder to shoulder with many interested allied groups, worked for it long and hard, in the limelight and behind the scenes. Today, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the National Archives, we stand on the brink of success. We lack only final action by Congress and the signature of the president to accomplish the goal. The lesson is happy and clear: change can be affected if we believe in it and work for it hard enough.

In the tradition of the Austinites of 1842, we archivists of 1984 have seen a brave future for the National Archives and are virtually in possession of it. We cannot stop here, however, resting on our laurels. The archival service to society needs equal attention. Setting the stage for strengthening it will take all the stamina, dedication, and concerted action we can give it. We have shown that we have the capacity to achieve our goal; we have proven that we have the tools to accomplish our work; and we even have seen ourselves take the first steps. The only questions remaining are: will we carry through? Do we have the will to use the machinery of our profession in this way and for as long as it takes, or will we continue fragmenting with each individual group going its own way, oblivious to the work of others, blind to the needs of the profession beyond the vision of the specific focus of the group? We stand at the most important fork we have yet faced in the road. We either make history or take the very real risk of vanishing from it. We must choose.

Our future is now.