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A Closer Look at Issues

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Against the Grain

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A Look at Issues

From Your Editor

It's hard to believe that it's another year. I remember way back when — when I wondered if I would make it to the year 2000 because I would be so OLD then! Oh well. Time marches on. In the meantime, here are some of the issues that have been consuming us over the past few months.

Robert Maxwell — Goodbye to all WHAT? Well, it seems like it would be impossible for us to go to press without saying ANYTHING about Robert Maxwell. After all, he died on November 6, 1991, and he was an era for us in acquisitions and collection development. When I heard about his death, I ran out and bought EVERY newspaper I could find (in Charleston) that talked about Maxwell. *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Charleston Post and Courier*.

It was right at the beginning of the Charleston Conference (November 7-9) and we had a minute of silence, posted the newspaper clippings, etc., etc. The death seemed mysterious. For a novelist like myself, rife with plot lines. We were all curious. What had happened? Life truly seemed like fiction.

Then, as I was vainly trying to follow all the articles written about Maxwell, we all heard about Maxwell's finances. The fact that his empire was crumbling. Ian and Kevin Maxwell both having to step down maybe with jail in store. Pension funds. Newspapers. Tape recordings. The Mossad.

Robert Maxwell remains a legend as enigmatic in death as he was in life. However, I can't help but wonder if Mr. Maxwell deliberately left as his legacy Pergamon Press, his flagship company, untouched. We'll probably never know, but one thing's for sure Robert Maxwell is a man most of us will remember for a very, very long time.

May he rest in peace.

Next issue. **Popcorn.** Harrassowitz packed their books coming from Germany in popcorn, causing much comment from everyone. It wasn't edible popcorn or anything like that; it was something synthetic, but the bits would dissolve if put under water. In fact, one of my assistants came into my office brandishing the popcorn happily.

He said it was wonderful that they cared about the environment. But many did not agree and Harrassowitz has discontinued packing materials in popcorn. Some of the reasons that people were upset were that the popcorn was messy; and some said it was oily. This was a big topic of discussion on Christian Boissonnas' ACQNET.

On to — **Oxford University Press.** Glen Secor (Legally speaking, this issue, page 6) tells us about some issues relating to the First Amendment and the Son of Sam Law. On another front, not long ago Oxford University Press recalled a book because of "copyright problems." Librarians do not know what to do about returning the book. As any trade publisher will tell you, there's nothing like controversy to sell copies and many libraries are not returning their copies because their patrons want to see the book. A lot of ether was expended on ACQNET over this issue, too.

And we certainly can't leave out the famous interchange(s) between **Michael Boswood and Donald Koepf**, University Librarian at Princeton University. In November, 1991, Koepf wrote Boswood regarding pricing of Pergamon journals for 1992. Pergamon had increased 1992 prices to "eliminate differential pricing, which in the past was favourable to customers in the USA," according to Boswood. This move towards a "worldwide" price amounted to significant in-

creases in the prices of some Pergamon journals Koepf is suggesting that libraries consider canceling titles based on who the publisher is and, also, that libraries not pay journal subscriptions until they are sure of the price that they will pay for a journal in a specific year. Marcia Tuttle's electronic *Newsletter on Serials Pricing* has been full of this issue. It looks like some things may change because of this.

Baker & Taylor. It was announced at the Charleston Conference (following an article in the *New York Times*) that Baker & Taylor would be sold. And B&T has been sold even as we speak. Time will tell what will happen next.

Publishing in the Soviet Union. This is still obviously up in the air. I even got a letter from Edwin Shelock who is in and out of Russia all of the time. He said that there's no point in writing down anything because the climate is changing so fast. Of course, there are valiant people out there trying to keep a handle on what's happening, not the least of which are Harrassowitz, Faxon and Collet's and others. To be continued.

And last but definitely not least, contributions are being taken up for **Lyman Newlin** by Academic Book Center; 5600 N.E. Hassalo St.; Portland, OR 97213. (800)547-7704. We figure we'll have a housewarming in New York once Lyman's house is rebuilt. You know who'd be the life of the party. Lyman is INCREDIBLE!

Call for Abstracts

**The 1992 Charleston Conference
November 5-7, 1992 Charleston, SC**

We are interested in abstracts in all areas of acquisitions, collection development, and scholarly publishing. We are especially interested in innovations, trends, and state-of-the art.

Send abstracts (100 words), papers, ideas, etc., by June 1, 1992, to: Judy Webster; Head, Acquisitions Dept.; Univ. of Tennessee Library; 1015 Volunteer Blvd.; Knoxville, TN 37996-1000. (615) 974-4431 (phone); FAX(615) 974-2708; Webster@UTKLIB.LIB.UTK.EDU