Letters to the Editor

Editor
Hi, Editor,

In the new ATG [November, 1994] there are some references to responses to the NII Copyright Working Group, a national discussion now in active swing.
You might want to also refer readers to ARL resources on the Net. I'll forward two gopher menus for you. The one that follows is from the ARL gopher:

your prompt> gopher arl.cni.org
Menu: Intellectual Property Issues

Readers who delve down will be connected to other sites where responses from other library and industry groups are to be found as well.

Cheers,

Ann Okerson
(ARL)

Scholarly Communications, then Copyright Issues.

Copyright
-> 1. 1986 ALA Model Policy: Copyrighted Videotapes & Computer Software
2. Copyright Law and the Doctoral Dissertation by Kenneth D. Crews
3. Copyright Law, Fair Use & Libraries/
4. EDUCOM Software Policy
5. University of Texas — Copyright & the University Community
6. Wellesley College Copyright Policy/
7. The University of Georgia
Copyright Policy

Dear Editor,

Re: Meeting Reviews [mentioned in ATG, November 1994]
Keep em. A case in point being the SSP Conference [June 1993] I missed but was able to cover by Sever Bordeann's review in this month's issue.

Larry F. Buckland
(Inforonics)

Dear Editor,

I just read Eleanor Cook's excellent and entertaining article about Tabloids and Listservs [November, 1994]. My question is: To what extent should rumors become part and parcel of the permanent history of a person, event, or organization?

For example, I have a great interest in the British Royal Family. I am always interested in the way writers deal with the issue of the Duke of Clarence and Jack the Ripper. The Duke of Clarence was a grandchild of Queen Victoria and second in line to the throne. All biographers agree on his "dissipation" — a quaint euphemism which can mean anything from — "He was listless and dumb." to "He may have been Jack the Ripper!" I have read books that "prove" he could not have been Jack the Ripper. Yet in almost every book that discusses him and every book or documentary about Jack the Ripper, he is listed as a possible suspect. The "fact" of the rumor has become attached to his biography.

Then there is that tiresome couple, The Prince and Princess of Wales. All through the 80s, the tabloids fed us a steady stream of the most outrageous rumors. "She is on some weird diet!" "They never spend any time together!" "The marriage is in big trouble!" "He is seeing someone else!" "She is seeing someone else!" Each rumor was dismissed by Buckingham Palace as ridiculous. But it turns out that most of the rumors were true!

What about "facts" that are wrong and "rumors" that are right. The "fact" that Susan Smith relayed to the police was that a black man took her car and two kids. The "rumor" was that she herself was involved in the disappearance of her children. We now know the dreadful truth. And whenever the story is recounted her fabrication and the subsequent rumors and confirmation about her own involvement will be part of the story. A lie and the truth which Susan Smith insisted were the truth and a lie.

I think the problem with our modern continued on page 8
Letters to the Editor
from page 7

society in the search to separate truth from rumor is that the "legitimate" forms of information, mainstream newspapers, magazines and television programs, have begun to delve breathlessly into tabloid subjects. I cannot image Walter Cronkite following around Tonya Harding like a puppy dog, the way that Connie Chung did. That particular circus points to the origin of many of the sensationalized stories today: It started with something undeniably real. In this case, Nancy Kerrigan was whacked on the leg. Or in the case of OJ, Nicole Simpson and Ronald Goldman were brutally murdered. Or in the case of Susan Smith, her children were undoubtedly missing. Or in the case of Faxon, the company was going through big changes.

Human curiosity then reasonably asks, "What is the truth behind this?" How does one then separate truth from rumors? Do "Inside Edition" and "Hard Copy" offer less truth than "Primetime"? Should we trust those intriguing "unidentified LAPD sources" who babble on about a bloody glove? Should we sympathize when a weeping mother pleads for the safe return of her children even though we have heard the rumor that she is involved in the crime?

I seem to have drifted from my main thesis. In any case, I salut the crew of SERIALIST> in their decision to behave responsibly and not trade in rumors. But I think the human desire for sensationalism will keep the rumor-mill alive in many forums for a long time to come.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Peterson
(Academic Book Center)

Dear Editor:

I just wanted to let you know how helpful Syracuse University has found the "Library Profiles" column [edited by Barbara Dean]!

The library is currently embarking on TQM (called SUIQ - Syracuse University Improving Quality). As the Bibliographic Services Department was exploring issues which we felt could be applied to SUIQ, we of course, began to focus on our day-to-day procedures. One staff member finally asked "how do others do it?" The first thing I thought about was the "Library Profiles" column in Against the Grain describing exactly how other technical service operations were organized. I photocopied all of the articles back to 1991, and routed it among the department.

Thanks — what a wonderful tool! My staff and I thank you!

Rosann Bazirjian
(Syracuse University)

Dear Editor:

Hurray for Jack Montgomery! I thoroughly enjoyed reading his "Op-Ed" column in the November, 1994 issue of ATG. I have thought for some time that we as librarians spend too much time worrying about our image and discussing whether we are a profession like doctors and lawyers.

I am a librarian and more specifically, an acquisitions librarian, because I like the work. I am challenged and stimulated by my responsibilities, and do the best I can. That is what really matters to me.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara C. Dean
(Fairfax County (VA) Public Library)

Rumors
from page 1

in international and strategic business marketing from Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

Karen Schmidt (U. of Illinois, Urbana Champaign) wrote to say that she lost the election but she got 30% of the vote! We think that’s pretty good and Karen says her political career may not be over! She also said that she received several campaign contributions as well as refrigerator magnets from many of you who read her interview in ATG, v.6 no.4. Cool!

As we go to press, we have received the sad news that Jolanda von Hagen, once President and CEO of Springer Verlag died on December 29, 1994. She was an incredible woman and we are so very sorry to have this news.

Well, the 1994 Charleston Conference went off without a hitch. Read Janet Flowers report of the conference, this issue, page 42. The weather was beautiful and the papers were even better. Many of the papers which were delivered at the Charleston Conference will be published in an upcoming issue of Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory. Thanks to all of you who came! See you next year! The 1995 Charleston Conference is November 2-4 and the call for papers is in this issue, page 43! Plan to come! and present!

Heard from John Archer (UC-San Diego) right after the 1994 CC. He said he felt like coming to the conference every year was like coming home. Plus he sent in a summary of the Innopac Users Group meeting at the CC on Friday, 4 November. Read about what happened in this issue, page 36.

In early December, I visited with Sandy Paul in New York. And you might think it’s a big city, but not to SKF, no siree! Everywhere we walked between her house and her office, she knew everybody we ran into. Wow! It was like small town USA. One of the people we ran into was the president of Henry Holt whose parent company has just bought Farrar Strauss and Giroux. And it was quite an experience meeting Sandy’s adorable cats — Todd and Alice.

Jill Braaten (AAP) was at the 1994 Dora Biblarz (Arizona State University) is in Key West en route to the Dry Tortugas, the western-most of the Keys, located 70 miles away. She is in her 34-foot trawler, which has twin diesel engines (not a sailboat as some have rumored). She writes that she and Mike have lived aboard for about 3 months now, and they still enjoy it — and each other’s company. In between attending ALA and IFLA (and learning all about boating, the weather and navigating) Dora is also working on a history of the Richard Abel Company and translating the WLN Conspexus into Spanish as her Sabbatical projects. She even sent us a fascinating report on IFLA in Havana this summer. Look for it in this issue. If you don’t see it, that means we did not have room to print it, so look for it in April! Ah, the perils of publishing!

And did you hear that Prentice Hall Law & Business has been bought by Aspen Publishers? This according to the law librarians’ listserv on the Net.

continued on page 10