Adventures in Librarianship -- Self Improvement

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The new interest in downloading songs from the Internet is bringing statutory damages under a spotlight. In BMG v. Gonzales, 233 F. Supp. 2d 434 (S.D.N.Y. 2002), the court awarded Mr. Gonzales statutory damages of $100 for each song he had downloaded. The court held that, under the Copyright Act of 1976, Congress intended statutory damages to be the “default judgment” for copyright infringement. The court noted that statutory damages are intended to deter future infringement, and that the amount of damages is intended to be commensurate with the willful nature of the infringement.

Adventures in Librarianship — Self Improvement

by Ned Kraft (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

“Good evening, class. Welcome to ‘Self Improvement for Librarians.’ I’m your instructor, Mary Marshall. Our first lesson is probably our most exciting, and I suspect it’s the reason most of you signed up for the class. Who hasn’t fantasized about being able to impress your bosses, your colleagues, and your friends by using insightful quotes from Melvil Dewey? Certainly we can do no better than to cite a man so prescient as to accurately predict that the turn of the last century would be known to historians as the ‘Library Age.’”

“I’ve distributed several essays by Mr. Dewey and I’d like to start by going around the room and asking each of you to say how you might use a quote in a social or business situation. Please make sure your nametags are visible. Miss Sartre?”

“Yes, I think I know exactly what you mean. For instance, if I was a hostess at a small party and I forgot to get any food or drinks, I could tell people as they walked in the door ‘If any such omission occurs, it is unintentional.’”

“Well, that’s perhaps not quite the best use of a Dewey phrase. Mr.... Ranjaksiminee, can you think of something?”

“Well, ah. Okay, if... if you were maybe talking to your boss about a raise or something you might say ‘We live now not in the age of the reservoir but in the age of the fountain.’”

“Alright. And by that you would mean...”

“Well, like, maybe, give me more money.”

“Okay. Okay. That might work, but let’s try someone else. Miss Billingsworth?”

“Sure! Let’s say I’m with my boyfriend and we are once again for the zillionth time discussing our so-called engagement while sitting in his car outside my apartment building. I might turn to him with a real ‘don’t-mess-with-me’ look and say, ‘The solution of our difficulties lies in recognition by the State that public libraries are not only good things, but that they are an absolutely necessary part of our educational system.’”

“Right. And by that you would mean...”

“Mr. Franklin, care to contribute?”

“Yes?”

“Yes, Mr. Franklin. Don’t be shy.”

“Alright, well, if... let’s say that maybe I didn’t pick up her dry cleaning on the way home from work and my mother... let’s say my mother was angry about that and wouldn’t stop talking about it every day maybe I could say to her ‘Let’s dwell on what has been well done, not on what has been omitted,’ or, or something like that.”

“Excellent, Mr. Franklin! Yes, Miss Sartre?”

“I think I get it now. If I was at a party and I met an astrological scientist or something and I wanted to make a good impression, I might say ‘Space is the only requisite and if the shelf room is exhausted, the floor space is equally good, except for the inconvenience of stooping.’”

“Well, that’s not quite...”

“Or if I met someone who talked a different language, I could say ‘Translations are classed with their originals.’”

“Class, why don’t we take a short break and gather our thoughts.”

Rumors from page 58

formation on books, conferences, and journals.

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Also received another gem in the mail, this time a small booklet called On Literary Biography: Twenty-one Statements (DLB, 2005), published by Bruccoli Clark Layman. A charming little compilation. My favorite so far is: “Literary biography requires no justification. It stems from basic interests and basic needs. Literature is about people, and it appeals to readers who wish to know about people, their values, their motivations, their backgrounds and their interactions...” Richard Layman (p.11)