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ATG Interviews Bill Cohen

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief, The Haworth Press, Inc. www.HaworthPress.com

The Taylor & Francis Acquisition of Haworth Press: One Year Later

by **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: Bill, it's been a whole year (hard to believe!) since the merger of Haworth Press into the Taylor & Francis Group. How has the transition been from your point of view? From T&F's point of view?

BC: The anniversary of the merger forges ahead with most positive feelings. Some of Haworth's 200 academic journal editors were of course initially nervous. However, these sentiments quickly changed. The Taylor & Francis Group is an "acquisitive" company and was well-versed with all details involved with an acquisition like this. Their executive staff swiftly took charge, with sensitivity and supportive insight. In addition, a number of key Haworth editors were hired by Taylor & Francis and moved to Philadelphia, where their primary North American journal office is located. Senior Haworth personnel included Kathy Rutz, Dr. Ushai Singh, Dr. Shrikrishna (Krish) Singh, Sean Bepler, and more.

Taylor & Francis greatly increased their office space at their handsome main headquarters at 325 Chestnut Street to accommodate the increased workload.

I hope librarians at all levels and in all departments will understand the enormous amount of effort and coordination involved from the technical side. Any interruptions in Internet service were tackled with utmost possible speed. This is no easy feat, as the Haworth computer system bore little relationship to the Taylor & Francis computer system. Our 200 journals were also twice the number of the previous large journal acquisitions by Taylor & Francis, that of Larry Earlbau Publishers. At one point, the Haworth computer was "tweaked" so that it operated at something like 40 times its previous speed. I tried this myself. It worked.

ATG: You seem to be actively involved in the operation of Haworth despite the merger. Tell us what your role has been and what it will be. Where are you located?

BC: Taylor & Francis indicated we should "carry on as if nothing is happening" during the first several weeks of the merger planning. Thereafter, however, it was Kevin Bradley, the powerhouse President of the Taylor & Francis North American operations, who undertook all managerial roles, and delegated the responsibilities. During the first six months my role was to caretake just the 32 library and information science journals, while the others were split up amongst various specialty editors. A number of medical and pharmaceutical titles went to Informa Health, a separate division of T&F in New York City, while others were segmented appropriately in different departments in Philadelphia. Jill

Millard is Publisher, Routledge US Journals Program, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Arts & Humanities & Education, while directly under her is Concetta Seminara, Associate Editor, Business, Economics & Sociocultural Studies. Both executives deserve the highest praise one can formulate for their broad understanding of scholarly and academic journal publishing, and the editorial management skills required. Several months later, Stacy Stanislaw came on board to take over responsibility as Managing Editor, *Information Science*. She was fantastic in all respects. I met too briefly Ed Cilurso, Production Manager, who overwhelms one with his profound knowledge of every nuance involved in production science, from manuscript to print/Web publication. Dr. David Green, Publishing Director from the UK, also presented himself, and presided over several meetings with most rare efficiency and facilitative wit. I met up also with Bev Acreman, who has taken up an important new leadership role within the UKSG, involving both their Marketing and Education Committees.

I am leaving out too many of the huge number of other leaders of the great Taylor & Francis team in the United States and the United Kingdom. Let me just say I have never seen such a multitude of people power invested with such talent, creativity, and vigor.

Relating to my own role: it is mainly to facilitate where possible, adapt as required, advise where necessary ... and also just sit back quietly and learn. I am still working from my home office in lower Manhattan. When any Haworth journal editor or book author hits a "snag," they might usually contact me for advice and help, and I do my best to help veer them in the right direction. Within the area of librarianship, one major development that might come about — if not now, then possibly in a later year — could be the official adoption of our flagship journal, *The Serials Librarian*, by NASIG. Negotiations on this potentially historic event may be taking place as this interview is being provided, so it would not be appropriate for me to expand upon this, with the exception that I do hope that this comes about. *SL* was the first peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of serials librarianship, and indeed the first journal if you don't count the older newsletter-type publication, *Serials Slants*.

Taylor & Francis is also now the largest publisher of peer-reviewed journals in library and information science, in terms of numbers, eclipsing Elsevier. It is appropriate that formal ties with leading library organizations be identified, discussed, and hopefully considered. T&F now has a library journal relating to almost every library function — ranging from administration (*Journal of Library Adminis-*

tration) to cataloging (*Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*) to electronic resources management (*Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship*) to reference (*The Reference Librarian*) and more than 30 more. The opportunities almost beg for action.

ATG: The title of the journal *Acquisitions Librarian* has been changed to the *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship*, and there is a new Editor. Can you tell us about this publication?

BC: This title change was planned before Haworth was acquired by Taylor & Francis. Post-acquisition, I learned that T&F was ever so much more cautious and conservative in regard to serials title changes than Haworth. In a nutshell, of course, all publishers aim to avoid title changes. They don't want to lose the momentum built up by a journal's historic growth. Yet some title changes are unavoidable, even other desirable, and librarians have established precise rules for dealing with these. On the ordering and record-keeping side, many librarians abhor title changes because they disrupt a neat and tidy bibliographic record. Some years ago, a newsletter called *Title Varies* kept up with changing serials titles. About 8 to 12 annual awards were given to title changes which struck a particular nerve, or else were unintentionally funny or seemingly illogical. Going back now to the above-mentioned question: *The Acquisitions Librarian* was launched under the Founding Editorship of Dr. Bill Katz, author of the bestselling textbook on acquisitions in his day, and a lion in the field. He died tragically after a long struggle with brain cancer. We attempted to find a successor editor, but two fell by the wayside. Why? We were entering the Age of Digitization, and libraries were not so much "acquiring" as they were "licensing." There were no longer a sufficient number of manuscripts to support a journal in this area. We had to "go with the flow," and this flow was an electronic one. We approached Bonnie Tijerina, Digital Collections Services Librarian at UCLA, and also Conference Organizer for the yearly "Electronic Resources & Libraries" event at ALA, proposing that she take over the journal under the new title, *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship*. We were ecstatic when she agreed to come on board. The journal has now just issued its 2nd number, with the 3rd and 4th on their way. It covers the gamut of electronic resources practice, theory and research, ranging from faculty vs. librarian involvement in electronic resources licensing, to standardized reporting and assessment requirements for institutional repositories, to budgeting and management of large bundles or aggregated product offerings. From the get-go there was an understanding

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that electronic resources management was not simply serials librarianship re-named. It is, in so many ways, the new librarianship in practice.

ATG: *What other new journal publications are in the works? Books?*

BC: I am not really privy to new journal launches at this point in time. Book publishing is carried out by entirely separate divisions.

ATG: *What predictions do you have for the future of Haworth? Will you continue to be a separate imprint of Taylor & Francis?*

BC: Haworth's journals should grow and prosper. I anticipate they may advantageously be folded into a broader, **Routledge/Taylor & Francis** imprimatur. By far and away, one of the most immediate advantages is that the publication lag time (defined here as meaning the time from receipt of final copy in the publisher's office, to final print/Web publication) has already been cut from six months to three months. That time reduction will be a magnet for highly cited authors. In addition, **Taylor & Francis** promotes on both sides of the Atlantic, and maintains a 15-member sales force for "Big Deals" and other types of journal packages. Other factors include **T&F's** participation in low-cost journal programs for libraries in most of Africa; technological improvements to make the **Haworth** journals Counter compliant; and once again the vast advantages of *informaworld*, the **Taylor & Francis** platform, which is so extraordinarily robust.

ATG: *Do you regret your decision to sell Haworth Press to Taylor & Francis?*

BC: No, not at all. At this time in my life, I could not go it alone. More importantly, I see the journal business as changing radically on many fronts. There is a unique paradox facing us. On the one hand, the Internet allows anyone to distribute information globally with the greatest of ease. In addition, costs of typography are decreasing rapidly. This makes a new journal launch duck soup from one angle. Yet simultaneously many libraries are in a period of punishing budgetary stress. The planets, one could say, are out of alignment. However, I believe new strategies of competition will be found on a number of fronts, with the aim of providing the best possible services for scholarly, academic, and professional end-users. But I have utmost confidence in the people of **Taylor & Francis**. Although it has indeed been only a year since the acquisition of **Haworth** by **Taylor & Francis**, it feels ever so much longer. **Taylor & Francis** was founded in the City of London in 1798, and it is unique in structure as it is in history. Many companies courted **Haworth** when it first appeared on the market. It took however but one meeting with their principle contacts, **Roger Horton**, Chief Executive from London, and **Kevin Bradley**, to ascertain that this would be our preferred and rightful home. 🐾

against the grain people profile

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BORN & LIVED: Born: Potsdam, NY. Lived most of my life (so far) in Upstate NY.

EARLY LIFE: Canton, Buffalo, Olean, Ithaca, Syracuse (brief stint on PA's Main Line).

FAMILY: Married to **Karleen Karlson** (35 yrs), one dog, two cats.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: **Union, RPI, Sage;** 19 years member of local library consortium's board, 11 as president; founding member, local credit union, board member 20+ years, three years president; treasurer, local town festival.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Garden, golf, pool.

FAVORITE BOOKS: **Baseball Encyclopedia**, *Niagara 1814*, *Field of Glory*, the *First Summer People*.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Disorganized library faculty — librarians are supposed to be organized!

PHILOSOPHY: Keep your commitments.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Standing ovation at my retirement from the library consortium board.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Being able to play enough golf to regularly shoot par.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: The struggle will continue for libraries to maintain whatever relevance they have for their constituents; technological innovations will be adopted to enhance that relevance; collections will continue their migration to electronic; institutional repositories will become major players in scholarly communication, putting pressure on publishers. 🐾

From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Sage's Encyclopedia of Stem Cell Research (2008, 978-1412959087, \$225) deals with a controversial topic that evokes heartfelt responses from both those in favor and those opposed. The editors of this set, **Clive N. Svendsen** and **Allison D. Ebert** acknowledge this in their introduction and point to the development of induced pluripotent stem cells in place of the destruction of embryonic stem cells as possibly deflating the ethical controversy surrounding stem cell research. Nonetheless, they admit that concerns and confusion still exist. Fortunately for them, this only enhances the value of their serious treatment of this difficult issue in terms a layman can understand and appreciate.

These two volumes attempt to provide an overview of stem cell research that both explains the science behind the research as well as addresses its history, ethical complexity and legal and political ramifications. The value of this work lies in its success in offering a synthesis of these interweaving threads. The editors wisely provide a Reader's Guide

grouping related articles in broad categories allowing users to get a sense of the scope of coverage as well as specific areas of concern. In addition, there are "see also" references after each entry. A number of articles discuss relevant biology as well as clinical trials of stem cells on individual diseases. Others report on the institutions, organizations, and people making significant contributions while others address the historic, political, ethical and religious perspectives. In addition, there are articles that highlight research activity in a number of countries throughout the world and within individual states in the U.S. Each entry provides a brief bibliography of relevant sources from both the popular and academic literature as well as the Web. There is also a glossary of terms, a resource list including books, Websites, journals, and reports as well as the names and affiliations of hundreds of scientists currently involved in stem cell research. Appendices add more insight by including a CRS report for **Congress** on federal funding

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