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From Your Editor

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Against the Grain

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From Your Editor

I used to consider myself a relatively calm person who enjoyed a little chaos now and then. That was before *Against the Grain*. The things that can go wrong are legion. Thank all of you for your patience as you continue to support *ATG* and subscribe to it. This is a thank you to everyone — subscribers, advertisers, printers, typesetters, and last but definitely not least — the writers who send in articles and columns like clockwork. Thank you all!

Anyway, here is another fabulously packed issue. We have a couple of new columns — *Acquiring Minds* by **Joyce Ogburn** (Yale) and *Mourning Serial* by **Phil Greene** (EBSCO). Joyce shares another perspective on plagiarism with us and Phil talks to us about (guess what?) serials pricing. **Barbara Dean** has also encouraged some great

interaction in her featured piece — Toward a Code of Ethics for Acquisitions Librarians. **Karen Schmidt** (Univ. of Illinois Champaign-Urbana), pregnant and waiting, and probably delivered by the time you read this, still took the time to react to Barbara's ground-breaking Code as did **Joe Barker** (Univ. of California, Berkeley) and even an old acquisitions librarian type turned vendor type, **Gary Shirk** (Yankee Book Peddler). The third and last part of **Dora Biblarz's** (Arizona State University) interview with **Richard Abel** is also featured in this issue. And **Charles Germain** (Gauthier-Villars) shares a foreign monetary perspective. We also have a company profile from Collets and a publisher's profile from **Prentice Hall**. And **Barry Fast**, **Dan Halloran**, and **Lyman Newlin** weren't too busy to share some of their Frankfurt Book Fair

experiences. Nor were **Sandy Paul** or **Marilyn Geller** about *LITA*. This is just some of what's in this issue.

I do want to mention that **Edna Laughrey** (Laughrey Associates) who we all knew as the cracker jack Acquisitions Librarian at the University of Michigan for many years has agreed to be Ads Manager for *Against the Grain* beginning with this issue. You will notice the new look and the fact that Edna has forced us to set deadlines which we will try to do better (maybe) at adhering to.

Of course, I love *Against the Grain* and think that it is full of tons of useful information. I know all of you do, too. Now you finally have something to read. Get to it!

Your Editor

A Look At Issues

Union of Confederacies. It seems to be a time of unions. We have heard about **Reed Publishing** and **Elsevier**, about **CARL Systems, Inc.** and **Blackwells**, about **Baker & Taylor** and **Farries**, and **R.R. Bowker** and **Whitakers**. Though these are all different types of unions for different reasons, it seems to signal a trend in our interlocking, global, networked environment.

Document Delivery. The document delivery/access-ownership debate/trend continues. What does it mean for libraries? For myself, I am bothered about the treatment of information as a "commodity." I find myself wondering if we will see a split in the profession between those who want to archive and preserve information for posterity and those who want to deliver information to specific patrons at a specific time (the present). I think that we are seeing a contrast between what used to be parallel roles for libraries — as depositories of information and the second traditional role of libraries as a server of current patrons. In a paper ("Foreign Acquisitions in North American Research Libraries") he presented at the annual meeting of the Center for Re-

search Libraries in Chicago (April 24, 1992) Michael Keller (Yale) speaks to some of these issues. I can't help but agree with most of what he says. "There is an absolute decline in the rate of growth of North American research libraries' collections in a time when research and development in the useful and philosophical arts and sciences is more needed than ever before . . ." Keller calls for a national collection policy and the development of what he dubs "mega-collections" partly funded by public monies "to insure, without question, the kind of research and development" which is only possible with exhaustive collection development.

ALCTS reorganization. In a related vein, Arnold Hirshon (see page 55, this issue) talks to us about the new move to reorganize ALCTS. Whereas ALCTS (and the old RTSD) have made some valuable contributions to the profession, there seems to be a growing sense of the inadequacy of our existing organizational structure to deal with many of the issues which confront us. It is to the leaders of ALCTS credit that they are trying to deal with this perceived deficiency. As professional librarians, we all need to inform our-

selves more about the issues and to become actively involved in shaping the reorganization. I, personally, am frustrated by the prospects because my crystal ball doesn't see that far and it is difficult to have 20/20 foresight. It seems that ALCTS must design a more flexible organization which will be capable of responding to shifts in the profession quickly. A flattened, less bureaucratic structure seems desirable. Too often, we become bogged down in the day-to-day issues, but this seems to be a time when we need to take a broader perspective. Acqnet is loaded with ongoing discussions of this.

Global Warning. You may think that this is a typo, but it is deliberate. More and more at least this fall and summer, we regular lower-down types have found ourselves thinking about international issues, especially international pricing. What will the foreign exchange rate do to our purchase of goods? What will the EC do to our ability to buy foreign publications? Will we be able to buy any foreign publications over the next decade?

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