November 1992

A Look At Issues

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Against the Grain

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Recommended Citation

Strauch, Katina (1992) "A Look At Issues," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 4: Iss. 5, Article 7.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1280>

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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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promotional efforts, and this is an area where we are working together. There is a sense that the old antagonisms between us are diminishing, and the realities of a new, more difficult business environment are encouraging publishers and booksellers to recognize the value that each brings to the marketing and distribution of books to libraries.

Eastern Europe is beginning to emerge as a growing market for American books. Publishers are opening editorial and sales offices, especially in relatively stable countries like Hungary and Poland. Inflation is hurting this investment; there is certainly no gold rush mentality. But there are a variety of joint ventures beginning, where primarily British and German publishers are forging relationships with distributors and small presses in these countries. Our company is also finding opportunities to supply American books to these new private companies as the old state book distributors, like Kultura in Hungary and Sklandnleska Knidja in Poland collapse or settle into a slow decline.

The Eastern Europeans are optimistic, despite their serious economic problems. They are making the transition from the old bureaucracy to a new, capitalistic mentality with apparent ease. For instance, one evening Barry dined with the president of the Hungarian Publishers and Booksellers Association, the owner of a new Hungarian art book distribution house, the new Eastern Europe sales representative of Random House, and the owner of a new Polish library distributor. All of these people, friends for many years, used to be in the old state run publishing houses or book distribution companies. Now each of them expressed a new sense of freedom about their lives and work, and, without meaning to sound ethnocentric, an attitude toward the future that can only be described as American.

Librarians would find a few days at the Frankfurt Book Fair a real adventure. They would find, as we did, that interacting with publishers and book people from many countries adds to our knowledge of the book business and broadens us professionally. ☞

Acquiring Minds

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and the values which form the backbone of the copyright laws?

At ALA I talked about the specifics of the case to a small number of people who are involved with selection in this subject. They all felt that librarians should know about what happened and that they collectively should demand that the publisher replace their copies of the original book with the new edition.

Do librarians have a right to know that they have in their collections [is] a plagiarized work? If so, how are they to be informed? What further action should then be taken by librarians?

As a footnote, let me mention that I am acquainted with the other author only through telephone conversations which occurred during the composition of his book; we have never met face to face. What an interesting encounter that would be now. It's a small world — it's bound to happen some day. I wonder whose heart and stomach will go plunging into the gut on that occasion. . . ☞

Group Therapy

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paperback version is never published or published by a press other than the one which issued the cloth version? Further, should an on-hand cloth edition be returned when librarians learn that there is a paperback available or "announced"? Will the marketplace accept a different discount schedule on paperbacks as has traditionally been the practice?

The bottom line — at least to this librarian/bookseller — is service, service to my customers and to the librarians. In general, I recommend buying the first available issue — usually cloth — of a title when it is central to the library's collection and using subsequent paperback editions for added copies and to expand peripheral areas where cloth editions would be outside the budget. Real costs are related, not only to the item purchased, but also to the expenses incurred in making the purchase. Searching for a less-expensive edition and controlling its acquisitions may, in fact, be "more expensive" than buying a title just once in its life cycle. A successful product (read service for this discussion), begins with a good purchase. ☞

Off the Wall

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(1) *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials*; *Science* (insert card); *Science* reprints. (2) Includes employment ads in a special section on *Women in Science*. (3) Includes ads in section called *Technical Marketplace*. (4) *Journal of Biological Chemistry* on CD; *The Scientist*. (5) *Chemtech*; *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry*; *J. Chemical and Engineering Data*. ☞

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Service Charges and Buying Direct. We are seeing a trend of many publishers to try to entice libraries to buy direct. This enticement is coming through deeper discounts to libraries that purchase direct and, in many cases, telemarketing directly to librarians. At the same time, publishers have reduced discounts to some of our service providers like subscription agents. Most of us agree that we need a central source to process our orders rather than working through a myriad of publishers at different times of the year. But, will we be forced to "put our money where our mouth is"? That is, will we have to pay service charges or increased service charges in order to garner this service? As monies dry up all around, unfortunately this seems more and more likely.

Have a good Thanksgiving and vacation season. Things always seem better after a vacation. And Happy New Year! ☞