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Letters to the Editor

Katina Strauch
Against the Grain

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Letters

Those who hesitate [to write] are lost... And you even have the Internet now...

In the rush of summing up and saying goodbye at the Charleston Conference, we forgot to take note of the record attendance by publishers this year. We think that's due in large part to the fine write-up we got last year in *Publishers Weekly* by Mark Sexton and the promotion letter he wrote to his publisher friends this fall. This came quite naturally to Mark who has long been an ardent missionary in the cause of improving communication between publishers and libraries. (Right on, Mark!) He's been detailing the sales opportunities for publishers in libraries for several years through seminars, articles in *Publishers Weekly*, *Scholarly Publishing* and elsewhere, and through consulting help for many individual publishers.

We would also like to thank Lyman Newlin, whose constant support and help with the location of speakers and publishers is greatly appreciated.

Dear Editor:

Congratulations to *ATG* and Dora Biblarz for the excellent three-part interview with Richard Abel. Most of us don't realize that the way libraries purchased books changed dramatically in the 1960's. There is a real need for more articles and interviews with booksellers and librarians who led this change. I fear that we know more about bookselling in 18th century England than we do about the topic in post-World War II America.

Dora's interviews begin to change that; I hope you will promote more such oral histories.

Bill Schenck
(Library of Congress)

Dear Editor:

It has been almost five years since you began publishing *ATG*, and I have eagerly looked forward to reading each issue with great anticipation.

Over the course of this past year,

Dora Biblarz and *ATG* have published an in-depth interview with Richard Abel. I took these interviews for what they were worth, some parts interesting, mostly humorous, and found few issues with which I agreed. Mr. Abel's opinions are his own and he is certainly entitled to state them as he sees fits.

The final question that Ms. Biblarz asks Mr. Abel is: "At this point do you see anybody who could be in that position, to make that analysis and continue this work?" To which Mr. Abel simply and in a rather condescending manner discounts all other library wholesalers by calling us "bean counters", "their principal concern is the bottom line" and today's crop will not do things that "can't make money", and finally "library booksellers are simply pedaling in place."

I am not one of Richard Abel's disciples, never worked with him, but I have been in library bookselling for over 34 years. In addition to myself, there are at least a half dozen entrepreneurs and CEO's of library bookselling operations that I truly admire and respect, several with more years of service than myself. For Mr. Abel to simply categorize this entire group of professionals, whose knowledge of libraries, knowledge of publishers, and real knowledge of how libraries think and operate, as simply being "bean counters" is truly offensive.

Leonard Schrift
(Pres., Ballen Booksellers)

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Deadlines for 1993

(can you believe it?)

Courtesy of Edna Laughrey
(Laughrey Associates) and
Ads Manager for *ATG* !!

Issue #	Month	Deadline
2	Apr.	Mar. 17
3	Jun.	May 19
4	Sep.	Aug. 11
5	Nov.	Sep. 29

Against the Grain

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Legally Speaking

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of the FTA was one attempt to preserve Canadian culture in the free trade context. A majority of Canadians voted for the FTA in a national referendum, but it is not clear that it would have passed without the cultural industries exemption.

To U.S. officials, the cultural industries exemption is antithetical to free market principles and to the objectives of the FTA and NAFTA. Further, the U.S. negotiating position attempts to treat cultural products as informational products, and to link culture with such issues as the free flow of information, technologic transfer, trade in services, and the protection of intellectual property. This approach is consistent with certain U.S. economic and foreign policy objectives, namely the stimulation of world trade in services, where we enjoy significant competitive advantages, and the promotion of democracy throughout the world.

In this context, the FTA and NAFTA are important to the U.S. not so much in terms of actual trade with Canada and Mexico, but rather as models for other multilateral trade agreements, including the mother of all such treaties, the GATT. The stakes are somewhat high for the U.S. here, since we probably cannot expect the rest of the world to accept our rules for international trade if we cannot get our largest trading partner, and closest neighbor, to go along with us. The cultural industries exemption is sticking in the collective craw of U.S. policy makers because it may set a precedent for others, especially the members of the European Community, to discriminate against American music, entertainment and publishing companies.

Most Americans are undoubtedly unaware of the disagreement with Canada over cultural industries (heck, a Macleans poll in 1987 showed that only 57% of Americans knew that we had even entered into the FTA, and only 12% knew that Canada was our biggest trading partner, versus 97% and 83% of Canadians, respectively). Canadians, on the other hand, are keenly aware of the issue. Cultural preservation is closely linked with national identity in Canada, and is thus the subject of intense interest. When U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills, prior

to commencement of NAFTA negotiations, made an off-the-cuff remark about the FTA's cultural exemption being on the table for NAFTA, a firestorm ensued in Canada. Blistering editorials appeared in the Canadian press, and the Canadian government responded forcefully that cultural industries were not on the table. As the NAFTA text indicates, the U.S. backed off quickly.

As we debate the future of the book, as we discuss the role of electronics in scholarship and reading generally, as we talk increasingly about information products, and as we describe ourselves with some phrase beginning with "information" (and ending with "provider," "broker," "manager," etc.), it is interesting to note how "information" is being treated in the international trade context. Culture is not information, and cultures should be preserved. Cor-

Letters

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Dear Editor:

The last two issues of *ATG* have been especially good and just chock-full of information. *ATG* is really wonderful for those of us without other acquisitions/collection development professionals at our institutions with whom to share ideas.

Well, it is beautiful up here in western Michigan, so I only occasionally miss going to the Virginia, N.C. and S.C. coasts. The sand dunes of Lake Michigan are beautiful, and the water is the color of the Caribbean (just a lot cooler). I still yearn for the Charleston Conference again, but it's hard to wrangle money for travel. Still, Charleston or bust...

Marcie Kingsley
(Western Michigan University)

Dear Editor:

In the "thank you" department, I don't want to forget Dorinda and Dana who gave me more cooperation at the Charleston Conference than I deserved.

Lyman Newlin
(Book Trade Counsellor)☞

rectly or not, Canada has determined that the cultural industries exemption is necessary for the preservation of Canadian culture.

While U.S. concerns about the potentially damaging precedent established by the cultural industry exemption of the FTA are legitimate, do they rank with Canadian fears about completely losing their cultural identity? I think not, especially in light of the huge shares of the Canadian cultural markets that American companies already control. For U.S. trade officials to continue to insist otherwise is to say that too much is not enough.☞

And They Were There

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Ms. Backlund provided a generous assortment of handouts and brochures. Members then had the choice of touring either the UT Fine Arts Library or the UT Visual Resources Collection.

Following lunch, participants were treated to a tour of the studio of Austin fine printer **W. Thomas Taylor**. Mr. Taylor, a former rare book dealer, is now principally a designer who works with a master printer in the production of books, brochures, posters and other publications. He gave an informal talk on different fine printing technologies, with an emphasis on his current use of photo-polymer printing plates which incorporate the use of negatives produced with the Macintosh.

The annual meeting was a success, as ARLIS members learned about the wonderful resources in Austin, and established or renewed contacts with other Texas art and visual resources librarians. As one member put it, "We only meet once a year because people are so widely dispersed throughout Texas, but we do know how to put on a great conference."☞

Sibling Rivalry

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and the Association of American University Presses provide the kind of forum that allows publishers, librarians, and in some cases vendors, consultants and academics to mingle and to debate the issues of mutual interest and concern that prove once again that we are all truly in the same family. ☞