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On the Road

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New Feature!! On the Road

A glimpse at "Life in the Trenches" — "On the road again/ Just can't wait to get on the road again...."

Column Editor, **Michael Markwith** (The Faxon Company)

It is fitting and just that this inaugural column is being written at about 33,000 feet up enroute from Richmond to Boston on a Sunday evening. At least it seems fitting to the author.

I will be editing a regular feature of stories, events, and whatever any of you want to share about being on the road in the library/vendor/publisher world we all inhabit. This is a call for participation! Send me your war stories. You can contact me with text in writing c/o Faxon, by fax 804-320-2213, or by e-mail: markwith@faxon.com.

On the Road by **Mike Markwith**

This is a true story. It is probably the most embarrassing moment I have had in my 20 years of book and journal peddling. I'll set the tone for honesty and self-deprecation.

The story:

My appointment was for a June

Monday morning, some June Monday in 1981, at Appalachian State University. I was coaching my daughter's softball team on Sunday afternoon in Atlanta, so I packed my bag and briefcase and headed to the game. For an experienced traveler like myself, it would be an easy five-hour drive up to Boone, N.C. from Atlanta after the ball game. As many of you probably know, summer softball in the South requires a standard uniform: team t-shirt, cutoffs, flip/flops (I was the coach, not a player).

My daughter's team won the game (they had a great coach). After brief festivities with the kids, I drove to Boone. Hours later, in the motel, I began the unpacking ritual. Summer softball seemed far away.

"That's strange," I thought after I had finished unpacking everything. "I must have left my shoes on the back seat of the car."

Going back to the car, however, and ransacking it everywhere, I could locate

no shoes. I did find a variety of objects I had been missing for some time. But no shoes.

No shoes. No Problem, I thought.

Actually, I told myself not to panic. I had noticed that there was a shoe factory next to the motel. I assumed I could buy a pair of shoes first thing in the morning. By the way, my appointment was at 8:30 A.M. and involved a rather extensive Approval Plan Profile review. No problem, I continued telling myself, I'll call and change the appointment for just after 10 when the shoe store opens.

Morning dawned bright and clear. Still no shoes. It was not a bad dream. It was reality. I called my friends in the library, explained that I was delayed. Could I arrive a little later? A simple request, right?

But my script changed suddenly. "Sorry," the library said. "We can't change the meeting. Everything is set

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Acquiring Minds

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the end of this column is a bibliography of sources which may help illuminate the problem of the paradigm.

Read a few and then ask these questions of yourself:

- ... Can we reconcile Kuhn's vision

Chaos

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system? Do they have to build interfaces to the various VANs with their mixed bag of requests? OR, can they simply provide the basic business data elements that work with any one of the many off-the-shelf translation software packages libraries can buy?

Realizing that the ILS vendors, book wholesalers and serials subscription agents are the key to implementing EDI — BISAC and SISAC are holding a hands-on, invitation-only workshop for those folks at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, June 25th in New Orleans. Invitations are going out to those on our lists; if you are in one of these categories and don't receive one, please call me at 212-929-1393. We hope that this frank discussion of alternatives will provide a better understanding of the possibilities and expedite the implementation of EDI in the library community as a whole.

CONCLUSION

In the ever-chaotic world of standards, I hope that this article provided you with some insights into the problems so that you may help find the solutions. If you have ideas or suggestions stimulated by the Chaos described here, and want to air your concerns publicly, send a letter to Katina. Or, you can call me at 212-675-7804 or fax me at 212-989-7542. If you want to participate in a listserv devoted to the Quasi-SICI and other implications of publication patterns, contact Joyce McDonough, Chair of SISAC's Great Expectations Subcommittee at Internet — jm86@cunifx.cc.columbia.edu. Bitnet — jm86@cunifx. Voice (if you have a problem getting through) — 212-854-4764. As always, it won't work without your participation! Thanks.☺

with the practice of librarianship?

- ... What if we conceded that librarianship, as a social science, an applied field and service profession, could have a paradigm?
- ... What might the paradigm look like and how would it operate?
- ... Are changes in librarianship truly paradigmatic, or changes along a continuum?

The Kuhnian concept is so compelling that it begs to be read in the original works and this condensation does not do it justice. I urge you to read his works and then decide yourself. You may choose to reject Kuhn's definition of a paradigm and apply the paradigm concept to explain general changes and philosophies in librarianship. But ask yourself whether by rejecting Kuhn's concept we have gained or lost something in the process and whether

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up and people are waiting for you to arrive."

Maybe I gulped. Maybe I sweated. Maybe my voice went up an octave. I don't remember. What I do remember is that then and there I had a problem. I had to go to the meeting as scheduled and I had no shoes. Talk about caught between a bare foot and a library.

So what happened? What did I do?

The final result was (to my best guess) the first ever extensive Approval Plan Profile review done by a salesperson wearing a blue pin-stripe suit, white button-down shirt, burgundy tie, blue sox, and — flip/flops. True story. No kidding. You heard it here.

There are hundreds (nay thousands; what? millions) of stories to be shared by the readers of *Against the Grain*. If I don't receive any I'll have to either continue telling tales on myself or resort to sharing something else. Readers, you really don't want that to happen. Write me ☺

our power of explanation has been magnified or diminished.

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Book Pricing Update

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press title. A true bargain, though, must be wanted or needed, and at most academic libraries, these books are neither.

If titles don't sell, publishers cannot afford to produce them. In the February 24, 1993, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Harald Bakken and Mischa Richter have a cartoon depicting the rejection of a manuscript. Says the publisher to the hapless author, "Basically, we feel that it's too popular a treatment for the university presses and too scholarly a treatment for the mainstream presses. Our suggestion is that you add a little sex and violence and try Hollywood." Failing that, university presses may swing back toward the traditional scholarly monograph, for the traditional scholarly market.☺