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And They Were There

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings

Column Editors: **Sever Bordeianu** (U. of New Mexico) and **Julia Gelfand** (UC, Irvine)

American Library Association
Annual Conference — 1993

Report on Preservation of Library Materials Meetings

by **Frances C. Wilkinson**
(University of New Mexico
General Library)

I attended the 112th Annual Conference of the American Library Association (ALA) held from June 26-July 1, 1993, in New Orleans, Louisiana. This year's theme was "Empowering People Through Libraries." There is always so much to do, see, and experience at ALA. This year due to my recent appointment as Preservation Committee Chair and Conservation Officer at the library where I work, I concentrated on preservation meetings. They were held by the various committees of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, Preservation of Library Materials Section (ALCTS-PLMS).

The ALCTS-PLMS Education Committee presented "Preservation Issues in Small to Mid-Sized Libraries Discussion Group." **Marty Hanson** from Syracuse University, the present PLMS Education Committee Chair, stated that this new (reconstituted) discussion group reports to the Education Committee. She was pleased to see so many librarians and several vendors attend. The group discussed defining the role of small and mid-sized libraries in the national preservation effort. It considered common concerns including defining appropriate programs and components, project management — how to "do preservation" without additional funding and staff, and staff training. The question of how to identify preservation projects and find money to fund them through grants was raised. The idea of cooperative approaches to microfilming and mass decodification to save on the cost of materials and share experiences was mentioned. Perhaps the most exciting part of the meeting was the creation of

an Internet/Bitnet Distribution List on which to share information and common concerns.

The ALCTS-PLMS Library Binding Discussion Group met to discuss amendments and to give reports on a variety of issues regarding the Library Binding Institute (LBI) standards; report on the Automation Vendor Information and Advisory Committee on specifications for an interface to link automated library systems with binding systems; and an update on the LOS German Binding system. A number of persons spoke on these topics. I found two presentations especially useful. **Greg Campbell** stated that the LBI standard is a living document and that its purpose is to "Guide binders to maintain quality products while keeping pace with the ever-changing technology of today." The proposed LBI amendments concern the question of a single spine lining and new materials suitable for book covers. The new buckram bookcover material is a poly/cotton blend that is lighter weight, lies flat, and is easier to work with. It would replace the previous all-cotton buckram. **Sally Grauer** gave an informative report on the planning and progress of the ALCTS Institute on Library Binding projected for Fall 1994, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The ALCTS-PLMS Preservation Program Management Committee presented a 3-1/2-hour program entitled "Taking Charge: Managing Preservation Projects." Its original working title was "The Big Headache." The lively presenters of this program succeeded in making preservation NOT seem like a big headache. The program targeted librarians with little or no preservation project experience and offered information to those interested in organizing and implementing a project. Introductory remarks were offered by **Cynthia Clark** from the University of California at Irvine. **Marty Hanson** outlined the importance of identifying the following — the needs of the collection, priorities, needs not met by the institution, those

unmet needs that need reallocation, and the space and staff to do the project. **Carol Mandel**, from Columbia University, discussed planning and cost modeling for preservation projects. Case studies were presented, including preservation implications of a barcoding project at a small library (**Charlotte Brown**, University of California at Los Angeles, and **Robin Wagner**, Franklin and Marshall College), a preservation microfilming project at a large library (**Marcia Watt**, Emory), and a collection development view (**Eugene Wiemers**, Northwestern University). **Nancy Elkington**, from Research Libraries Group, and **Barbara Berger**, from Cornell University stressed the importance of documentation and accountability when dealing with a preservation grant project. **Janet Gertz**, from Columbia University, dealt with coping with change and the people and program impact. **Carla Montori** from the University of Michigan, concluded by saying, "Plan your work and work your plan." Handouts and a useful bibliography were provided.

In addition to the meetings I attended, there were several poster sessions dealing with preservation issues, including the one I presented, during Poster Session III, "The Collectors: Poster Sessions on Indexing and Abstracting, Collection Development, Government Documents, Conservation and Preservation, and Special Collections".

Although wonderfully useful information was presented in the meetings and poster sessions, perhaps one of the most useful parts of the conference was the informal networking with colleagues working in the preservation area. After attending several meetings, you begin to recognize people and talk with them. Since there are so many levels of expertise, there's always someone you can learn from or share information with.

The Annual ALA Conference in Miami, Florida next year will offer more informative ALCTS-PLMS meetings, and, as I understand it, a preconference

on "Fund Raising for Preservation," an important topic for most libraries.

Conference Report: American Association of Law Libraries

by Jack G. Montgomery
(University of Cincinnati,
College of Law Library)

The 86th annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) was held July 10-15 in Boston, Massachusetts. The theme of this year's meeting was "Law Libraries: The Next Generation." The meeting was focused on preparing law librarians to meet the challenges of new environments, new formats, and new ways of providing for our patrons' research and resource needs.

As always, topical workshops, committee meetings, and the conference of newer law librarians (CONNELL) were held Saturday. These day-long workshops were focused on topics as diverse as institutional space planning, Total Quality Management, and legal records management.

On Sunday the entire day is set aside for committee meetings. AALL has a broad-based committee structure centered around such factors as institutional environment, job specialization, or subject, social, and professional interest. This busy day always concludes with the Opening Reception which was held in Boston's Museum of Science.

Monday morning began with the presentation of the formal educational programs. Most educational programs are presented by the membership with sponsorship by one or more of the special interest sections or committees. Topics are chosen to appeal to different groups within the organization and most address the theme of the conference in some way. As an example, the Technical Services Special Interest Section (TS SIS) presented a program on MARC format integration and their adoption by vendors with all the accompanying issues this trend implies. TS SIS also sponsored programs on a range of topics from materials, vendors, and database access to European Community information, to how to restructure your collection and organization to be able to effectively re-

spond to environmental changes.

Other conference programs dealt with topics such as the issues and problems surrounding copyright within the electronic environment, developing a "strategic vision" in planning for the future of your institutional and professional life, and securing "grants as alternative funding sources." One additional type of program was sponsored by the Committee on Relations with Information Vendors (CRIV) and consisted of an open forum discussion with the chief executive officers of two major legal publishers. Members of the audience were encouraged to critique and comment on any aspect of a publisher's operation. This year we focused on two companies of the Thompson Corporation: Clark Boardman Callaghan and Warren, Gorham and Lamont. As expected, the discussions were spirited, yet productive.

As all work and no play is not only dull, but exhausting, the planning committees for the 86th annual meeting rounded out the conference experience with library tours, receptions, and even excursions to various local attractions

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ranging from a visit to Lexington and Concord, to an evening at the theater. By the end of the conference, almost everyone was exhausted, yet informed, inspired, and ready to begin planning next year's meeting in Seattle, Washington.

Business of Acquisitions Institute
Richmond Virginia, June 3-4, 1993

by **Janet L. Flowers**
(UNC-CH)

The recent "Business of Acquisitions Institute" highlighted a vital but often not appreciated role in the Library. Acquisitions librarians, especially those in ARL libraries, are responsible for enormous library materials budgets. While it may seem too business-like for some, acquisitions librarians are truly purchasing agents. We are buying specialized materials, to be sure, but our basic power is that to spend dollars. Because of this power, acquisitions librarians are accountable in ways that other librarians may not be. In particular, they are held responsible for the efficient and effective expenditure of these budgets.

To do this, acquisitions librarians must have many business-related skills. These skills relate first to the management of budgets. They must be familiar with standard accounting practices (such as audit trails), licensing agreements, and contracts. They must set up reliable procedures to track encumbrances and expenditures. They must gain knowledge of how to project future costs, especially for serials. The skills also relate to the relationships with external suppliers. They must learn the economics of publishing and vendoring so they can negotiate terms with vendors (whether there is a formal contract or not) that are fair for both parties; they must know the advantages, disadvantages and implications of various procurement methods, such as firm orders, approval plans, subscriptions. When placing firm orders, they must be aware of the issues involved in choice of vendors. Decisions in this area affect not only how much the Library pays for this material but how quickly it is received, a not insignificant role.

Acquisitions librarians, of course, do not practice these skills in a vacuum. The acquisitions librarian, while managing the budget and working with vendors, also must manage the internal resources. These resources include the staff

to perform the tasks required for the purchasing function. Here, extensive managerial and supervisory skills are essential. Finally, acquisitions librarians must assess what they are doing and what changes need to be made to do the function(s) more efficiently or effectively. For example, they must gather vendor performance data that is reliable so that they can draw fair conclusions from it.

The Business of Acquisitions Institute was two full days of the basics of doing the business. The institute deliberately focused on the core activities of an acquisitions function and was aimed toward those with little experience. Because many topics were brushed over while others, such as automation, were almost completely ignored, leads me to believe that there is a "body of knowledge," which must be known for acquisitions work. While it may not have the theoretical or principles base considered necessary to be part of the library school's curriculum, it is of a professional nature because it derives its concepts from other professional fields such as accounting and management. In addition, it is practiced within a context, that of collection management, that is a primary way in which libraries are defined. (Collection management, by the way, soon will no longer be defined by what we own but by what we can provide.)

With the increasing pressure upon library budgets, there appears to be a shift toward "just in time" rather than "just in case" purchasing. This movement toward document delivery rather than ownership, has implications for all areas of the Library, including acquisitions. Librarians must prepare themselves and their staffs for these changes. One way to do this is to take advantage of continuing education opportunities to make certain that you are providing your services within a solid framework of understanding. Stepping back from the day-to-day hassles and defining what it is that we do and why is a good step toward developing the "core curriculum" needed for performing acquisitions work at a professional level. It is fortunate that ALA recognizes the need for continuing education in this area. Let's tell ALCTS that there is the need for an advanced institute that would delve deeper into the many decisions facing acquisitions librarians every day and the skills required to make them intelligently. ☛