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On the Road

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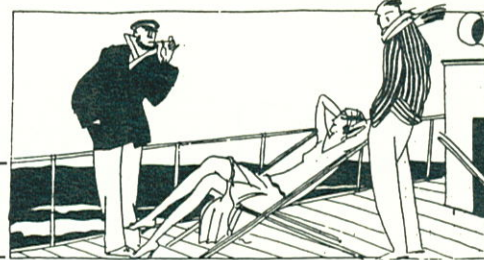
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On the Road

A glimpse at "Life in the Trenches"
Column Editor: **Don Jaeger** (Alfred Jaeger, Inc.)



All stories, all anecdotes, all shared experiences are welcomed. Fax them to 516-543-1537, or mail to Don's attention at Alfred Jaeger, Inc., 66 Austin Blvd., Commack, NY 11725-9009. — DJ

This Trick Was No Treat

by **Don Jaeger**

The following story was told to me a few months ago, but the individual involved didn't submit the story as of this deadline. I thought it was humorous enough to recreate here.

A salesman for a major subscription agency years ago attended a regional library conference. The vendor checked into the convention hotel and went to the exhibit hall to set up the literature and display for the upcoming meeting. Upon entering the hall, he found his display in crates and proceeded to set it up in preparation for the exhibit opening the following morning. All the appropriate literature was laid out meticulously on the shelves in the display and the booth furniture was strategically placed when he left the exhibit hall that night before closing time.

The next morning he awoke and walked in anticipation to the exhibit hall to meet and greet customers and start the conference. Upon entering the exhibit hall, he went to the area where his booth was set up to find . . . nothing! He then walked around to another aisle thinking that maybe he was in the wrong place, but still no display and no booth!

After a few more minutes had gone by, one of the other

vendors told him to check the men's room. So the salesman dutifully went into the men's room. To his surprise, he found his entire exhibit and literature laid out against the wall in the men's bathroom, exactly as it had been displayed in the exhibit hall! As you can imagine, it took quite awhile for him to dismantle the exhibit and truck it out onto the floor where he had to reassemble and arrange the booth. He still believes it was a few vendors that were playing tricks on him, and he's sure he's paid them back over the years.

The Unfortunate Honeymoon

by **Jim Boyer**

At one time in my travels in the Miami area, I decided rather than cross Alligator Alley to the west coast of Florida late at night, I would stay at a very nice motel. But it was tourist season and I started to walk away when I heard the high rates. Thank heavens the clerk had a change of heart. He said it was the last room and I could have it at half price. Needless to say I took it.

It was late at night and I was exhausted, so upon entering the room, I put my bags down, turned on the bathroom light, set the alarm for seven a.m. and went directly to bed. When the alarm went off in the morning, I awoke to find myself in the honeymoon suite surrounded by mirrors on the walls and ceiling where I spied myself in the buff. I remember thinking how unfortunate it was that I had no companion to share this exotic and sexy room with. ☞

And They Were There

continued from page 33

alternative methods of vendor pricing which are: Standard type based on the classification of each book; Volume of annual sales and discount based on Order Mix. Regardless of the method, the average price is the bottom line that should concern the librarian. Dana also listed some of the vendor costs that will be paid out of the vendor's net discount. These costs include: personnel, acquisition function, sales, sales support, customer service, marketing, finance, technical services processing, data processing, supplies, paper, boxes, tape, labels and mailing costs, hardware and equipment, telephone, physical plant, attendance at conventions and contributions. Dana stated the importance of a good order mix which allows the vendor to offer the library a higher discount and still leave enough publisher margin to

cover the vendors cost.

Larry Nagel cited *Melcher on Acquisitions* as the bible of librarian and vendor acquisitions and noted Melcher also recommends the best order mix generates the best discount. Larry reminded us that until the mid 1950's, libraries purchased most of their books directly from publishers and from bookstores. He spoke of the discount types that include either flat or a sliding scale. The flat discount would reduce the price of each title from the publisher's list price, but could result in a questionable fill-rate by the vendor on those titles offering a low publisher discount. The sliding scale discount schedule is based on the publisher's discount to the jobber with the optimal discount on a title by title basis. He also felt the chance of a higher fill-rate was more likely. In either method, the vendor will be monitoring the mix of orders from the library. Using the sliding scale, the vendor is able to

insure a minimal amount of margin will be received for each title that is delivered. He also points out that the vendor's discount schedule offers incentives for the preferred types of titles. Larry also explained the meaning of "net priced" books from the publisher. These are the titles in BIP without a price, but a "contact publisher for price" instruction. Larry told us that on these titles the vendor will establish a selling price by marking up the publisher's cost.

Tom Leonhardt defined the flat discount as a set percentage of price reduction regardless of the order mix. He also expressed concern about the blind pursuit of the "Principles of Acquisitions Ethics", specifically, # 1, which "gives first consideration to the objectives and policies of his or her library;" and # 2, "strives to obtain the maximum ultimate value for each dollar of expenditure," as

continued on page 82