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Plus ca Change/ The Library Book Club

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TEXT. When you get your catalog you will be able to read the excerpt from *Snake* and two (count them) poems from the Ahsakta (it is Mandan for Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep) Press: "Kudzu," by Katherine Coles and "The Divide" (about Bozeman) by Sandra Altcosser. There is much more, too. Serendipity to be sure.

My favorite cover, for sentimental reasons, is from the University of California Press catalog for Fall 1993: "Valley Fruit Box Labels, California State Library," from The Great Central Valley. Some of those fruit pickers are returning to Oklahoma. Inside, there are tidbits of trivia or knowledge, depending on the context and company, that grace all such catalogs. I learned, for example, that Nicholas Ray directed *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Johnny Guitar* (I prefer the latter — it did not star James Dean), that Ray's wife, Susan was also his collaborator, and that Ray, who died in 1979, wrote a book called *I Was Interrupted*,

now available from the UC press for \$25.00 cloth.

Short Notes on other Fall 1993 Catalogs

- Fodor's has a book called *Walt Disney World For Adults*. It has been promoted in *Parade*, *Bride's*, *Mature Outlook*, and *Travel Holiday* and makes me glad that I am not an adult but older than 21 and thus ineligible to visit any of the Disney communities.
- Be warned, Villard has yet another Robert Fulghum book coming out but it they are also making the antidote available: Lewis Grizzard's new book called *Pushin' Fifty Is Exercise Enough*.
- Elster Verlag has a series called *Reisefuehrer fuer Frauen* or *Guidebooks For Women*. I don't know when they began but in one brochure Elster

mentions that the Thailand Tourist Bureau proclaimed 1992 the Year of the Woman Traveler (literally "female tourist" from the German Touristinnen. The German word is just fine but it needs softening when translated into English.)

There are guidebooks for Athens (brutally modern but still the cradle of Western culture), Bangkok (skyscrapers as in New York, bargains as in Milan or Hong Kong, restaurants as in Paris, and anarchic traffic as in Rome), Barcelona (art & culture, luxury & fashion, food & drink, bars & discos), Frankfurt, Florence, Hamburg (auction houses, harbor restaurants, and English gardens), London (shopping & sightseeing), Madrid, Munich, Paris, Prague, Rome, Vienna, and Zurich. Elster also has a series of *Kriminalromane* (Krimis) that they cast as either dark (schwarz) or sunny (sonnig). Might we do the same? For you Krimi Leser (mystery readers, auf Englisch) can you suggest those that are dark and those that are sunny? Bill Crider, Sara Paretsky, Amanda Cross, Simon Brett and Sue Grafton are sunny? And the dark ones are Elmore Leonard, Jonathan Gash, Robert B. Parker? Send me your lists and I will combine and summarize.

Plus Ça Change

The Library Book Club

Column Editor: **Karen Schmidt** (U. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

Long before approval plans, blanket orders or cooperative collection development were part of the mainstream of modern libraries, the concept of the library book club was widely discussed. In 1938, the *Wilson Library Bulletin* suggested that libraries unite their purchasing power to form a consumers' buying unit, a library book club, that would canalize the buying wealth of our libraries and convert it into power. Publishers would be asked to submit books, before their publication, to a committee of librarians for review and approval. Once published, the books would come immediately to the libraries, in library bindings, and fully catalogued. The plan envisaged a discount of 25% on trade and 10% on texts, with a possible further distribution of any profits. Libraries could subscribe to different levels of service, so that larger libraries would receive more books. One of the first results the *Bulletin* suggested, would be to insure the publication of valuable works of a serious or scholarly nature that are now regarded as publishers' risks and too unprofitable to print.

Not surprisingly, negative commentary on this idea was received through an editorial in *Publishers Weekly* and from the American Booksellers Association. Among the many faults found with this plan — from the publishers' standpoint, at least — was the notion that there could be extra discounts or profits to be had for the libraries, that publishers could easily handle single large purchases without adding any extra staff (and thus, overhead), and that most of a library's budget could be spent on trade publications.

Still, maybe this will spark one of our more entrepreneurial readers to consider a library consumer union, perhaps with serials included. Does anyone know where Ralph Nader is working these days? ☞

Publishers' catalogs can be sources of amusement, learning, style, and pure information. Before you toss that next catalog, take a look inside and you might be glad you did. ☞

Media Minder from page 14

is formed with a supplier who specializes in AV.

A library should expect that the jobber would perform the bibliographic verification and supply not only for the readily available and widely reviewed titles, but also for the more specialized materials such as educational and curriculum-related videos, laser discs, and import labels. Automated systems that allow electronic transmission of orders should be a requirement. The availability of full MARC or enhanced cataloging records for all items purchased and the processing of all materials ordered are highly desired options. The reward will be timely delivery and a high fill rate that keeps the faculty and general public happy. ☞