June 1994

Librarian/Publisher Interview-Marcia Tuttle

Judy Luther
The Faxon Company

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Luther, Judy (1994) "Librarian/Publisher Interview-Marcia Tuttle," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 6: Iss. 3, Article 12.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1545>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Librarian/ Publisher Interview — Marcia Tuttle

by **Judy Luther** (The Faxon Company)

Marcia took time from her busy schedule as Head of Serials at UNC, Editor of the electronic Newsletter on Serials Pricing Issues, and Lecturer at the School of Information and Library Science at UNC-Chapel Hill, for this interview before her class that evening. It's not often that we have the fun of discussing serials for several hours in a classroom setting.

ATG: *How did you get started?*

MT: My parents said they always knew I was going to be a librarian since I put call numbers and checkout slips in my books when I was growing up. Then I worked in the library in junior high and again when I was at Duke University.

ATG: *Where did you go to library school? How did you come to UNC-Chapel Hill?*

MT: I began with a major in religion at Duke before I went to library school at Emory University. So it was natural for me to go to work at Princeton Theological Seminary, as a cataloger. For one hour a week I worked at the reference desk; however, when a position came open for a reference librarian, I was not considered, as I was a woman. Remember, this was 30 years ago!

Princeton University *would* let me be a reference librarian, so I moved there for two years. Part of the time I worked at the catalog reference desk. Often there wasn't enough to do, so I was bored. I left there to be Head of Reference at the University of Vermont, and I found out it was a lot more fun to be a reference librarian than a head of reference. They got to do the fun stuff! I've never particularly enjoyed management or been very good at it; I want to *do*. That's one of the reasons I've stayed in my present job so long; I would be miserable as an AUL and so would those I managed.

After a second winter in Vermont, this one with a record-setting 5 straight days below zero, I began writing letters — to Duke, UNC, and Emory. When

spring break came, I drove down to visit my parents and interview at Duke and UNC. My father had been a member of the first Duke football team and is a big Duke fan, so I have been brainwashed, anti-Carolina all my life.

The Duke job was Reference Librarian on East Campus, but the job at UNC was Head of the Interlibrary Service Center: interlibrary loan, which I had done at both Princeton and Vermont, and Head of the North Carolina Union Catalog. It also paid a few thousand dollars more.

I went on up to the mountains to visit my folks and told them that if UNC offered me the job, I would take it. My dad still denies he said this, but he looked at me and said slowly, "I don't know if I can stand to have a daughter of mine over at Carolina or not." I was offered both jobs and took the one at UNC.

Several months later they created a serials department and asked me to head it. That was 25 years ago — May 1969. Prior to that, serials were part of acquisitions and the current journals were in the reference departments. There was no general periodicals reading room as there is now. When they built the undergraduate library, that freed up some space.

ATG: *Is there a job that might be*

interesting enough to lure you away from serials?

MT: I can retire in three years, and I've been threatening to go down to Harris Teeter and be a grocery checkout clerk to show them that it can be done well! I've also threatened to work for Waldenbooks so I can get more off the books I buy. Actually, I would like to do some travel and some consulting. Last fall I was able to spend some time working on a new edition of my book on serials management, which should be published in 1995. While I was working on this project, I discovered a life outside of the traditional work environment.

ATG: *You've played a significant role in the serials profession, winning the Bowker/Ulrich's award and editing the Newsletter on Serials Pricing Issues. How did this come about? How can folks subscribe?*

MT: It was probably my book *Introduction to Serials Management*, published by JAI Press in 1983, that earned me the Bowker Award, presented at the ALA annual conference in Chicago in 1985.

The newsletter began in 1989 while I was Chair of the Committee on Serials Pricing Issues, actually a subcommittee of PVL (Publisher/Vendor Library Relations). The mission was to eliminate duplicate effort about information on journal pricing. I had just begun to use BITNET and had previously used Courier, Faxon's email system.

Caroline Early of the National Agricultural Library, PVL chair, and I brainstormed the newsletter idea and the committee began the project. **Julia Blixrud** (National Serials Data Project) "invited" us to apply for an ISSN. We neglected to go through the ALCTS Publishing Committee, which caused difficulties later on and resulted eventually in the newsletter being published by me, rather than ALA.

I have begun work on a five year index and plan to make all issues avail-

able on disk. We've done a business plan and now have more than 1700 subscribers worldwide. Ours was probably the first electronic newsletter for librarians and predates slightly PACS-L, ACQNET, and SERIALST.

The current editorial board is: **Deana Astle** from Clemson, **Jerry Curtis** from Springer-Verlag, **Janet Fisher** from MIT Press, **Fred Friend** from University College London, **Chuck Hamaker** from LSU, **Daniel Jones** from the University of Texas Health Science Center, **Jim Mouw** from the University of Chicago, and **Heather Steele** from Blackwell's Periodicals Division.

To subscribe to the newsletter on the Internet, send a message to LISTSERV@GIBBS.OIT.UNC.EDU saying SUBSCRIBE PRICES [Your Name]. It is also available from Blackwell's CONNECT, Readmore's ROSS, and EBSCO in paper. The Newsletter is indexed in *Citations for Serial Literature*.

ATG: Where do you come down in the access vs. ownership dichotomy? Is UNC offering document delivery as a service? If so, is the library footing the cost?

MT: Right in the middle! Last year the library canceled 24 high-priced low-use journals and will pay for article copies from them via commercial document delivery. At the same time, we are conducting a journal prioritization project in the hope of canceling low-use periodi-

cals and adding new titles that better fit the needs of our users. We do make UnCover available for patrons to order and pay for their own articles.

ATG: What trends do you think are important in serials librarianship. What do you think the future holds?

MT: Serials librarians are an endangered species. But serials are far more complex than monographs and, I believe, require a serials specialist. However, the trend is to organize by function rather than form, so we're seeing lots of serials departments being merged into acquisitions. The UNC Serials Department is still organized into acquisitions, binding/reading room, and holdings.

Technology offers us other options, and paper will continue to coexist as the standards shake down for electronic publications. There are, of course, the Red Sage and TULIP projects currently under development. We're going to go through a period of turmoil, excitement, and frustration. But it still makes sense to buy what one needs.

ATG: Lots has happened in serials in the last 10 years. If you had to pick the most significant things, what would they be?

MT: Technology has changed how we work in several ways. Tasks take less time and effort. Integrated library systems allow us to automate what we do

and often result in reorganization of the workplace.

Exciting technology like email changes what we do. Electronic databases and document delivery via fax machines offer new options in terms of serials acquisitions and access.

Communication in the serials industry has grown, as evidenced by NASIG.

The electronic *Newsletter on Serials Pricing Issues* is another landmark event as the first of its kind. It originated to address a crisis but its continued growth indicates that the crisis has become a part of life.

ATG: What do you do for fun?

MT: Well, I'm an avid Duke basketball fan. I like to read books and write books, knit sweaters, travel and exercise (at 6 am!). I also share my house with two cats: Babyface (who is white and fluffy) and Brunhilde (a short hair tortoise). ☺

Ed note: Judy and I jockeyed about which one of us would get to interview the inimitable Marcia Tuttle. I have to tell you all that Marcia is one of my mentors and she was an early developer of the Charleston Conference and many of its characteristics. She is a "wow" person. Everything she does is like Wow! Thanks to both Marcia and Judy for this wonderful interview of one of the leading lights in librarianship. — KS

The 1994 (14th) Charleston Conference

Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition: The Savage Marketplace

November 3-5, 1994, Charleston, SC

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jerry Campbell, Duke University

CALL FOR IDEAS/SPEAKERS/ETC.

The 1994 Charleston Conference will deal with issues regarding acquisitions, collection development and technical services, scholarly publishing and selection of print, electronic and other materials, vending of materials, standards, and issues which impact the world of publishing, vending and acquiring and accessing materials in the library environment. Many new features were instituted at the 1993 Charleston Conference including shorter hours, simulation rooms, and lively lunches. The 1994 Charleston Conference will carry on these traditions as well as some old ones and some new ones.

If you are interested in leading a discussion, acting as a moderator, or would like to make sure that we discuss a particular topic, please let us know. The Charleston Conference prides itself on creativity, innovation, flexibility and informality. If there is something you are interested in doing, please try it out on us. We'll probably like it . . .

Send ideas by **June 30, 1994** to: **Judy Webster**, Head, Acquisitions and Processing Team; University of Tennessee Library; 1015 Volunteer Blvd.; Knoxville, TN 37996-1000. Phone (615)974-4431; FAX(615)974-2708; Internet: Webster@UTKLIB.LIB.UTK.EDU ☺