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Papa Lyman Remembers
Women in Book Publishing and Selling
by Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counsellor)<ebroadwater@ag.net>

Emily Schlossberger was an early director of the university presses of Nebraska and Notre Dame. I recall a tepid argument with her concerning a pet peeve of mine: the comparatively high cost ratio of cloth bound to paper bound u.p. books. I still remember her Teutonic-accented reply to the effect that the higher income from hard bound to libraries was used to subsidize lower priced paperbacks for students ... Leone Stein at Massachusetts I remember for introducing me to Indian pudding as we discussed her fledgling press over lunch. I believe Ann (Relinke) Strong got her start with Leone ... From Harding, Schlossberger and Stein I progress to Patrica Fitch who steered Ohio University Press to the acquisition of Swallow Press; to my knowledge the first (and only?) merger of a university press and a commercial publishing enterprise.

Directories of twenty years ago listed very few women as directors of university presses. By my count the 1994-95 Association of American University Presses DIRECTORY names about twenty female directors. This includes Wendy J. Strothman of Beacon Press (yes, Beacon is a member of AAUP) who has recently joined Houghton Mifflin as trade vice president. The list does not include Marlie Wasserman as director of Rutgers, Marlie, a product of the University of Chicago Press, who had for several years been the number two person at Rutgers. After a brief hiatus as an editor at Routledge, she returned recently to R.U. P. as director ... I have followed Nancy Essig from Columbus, Johns Hopkins and Virginia as a marketing expert. I was delighted when Virginia made her its director ... Audrey Livernos, was a great choice to succeed Hillary Marshall as marketing director of U. Toronto Press. About the only argument we ever had was whether Canada and the United States should merge under one government. I'll let the reader decide who took which side ... Penelope Kaiserlian came from her native Scotland via Pergamon to the University of Chicago Press where she is now associate director. I have always been amazed at the powerful marketing program engineered by this soft-spoken, laid-back lady. It goes to prove the contention that you don't have to yell to get things done. (Will you ever learn, Lyman?) ... Unfortunately I have not been as active in dealing with university presses as I once was so I have not had the privilege of working with Barbara Colson since she became the marketing manager of Cambridge University Press, New York. I had enough experience, however, to applaud her appointment to director of Cambridge, USA — the first woman to head a U.K.-style press in the USA.

Commercial publishing firms have laged far behind universities in utilizing the brains, temperament and judgment so prevalent in...womankind and so needed in the handling of knowledge. I don't pretend to be an expert in behaviorism but I had not been in the book industry very long before I began to wonder why the "people" columns of Publishers Weekly and other media covering books devoted so little space to women. I soon came to the conclusion that the sex with the best qualifications was being overlooked. Well, the university presses must have agreed — going from two or three to twenty or more directors in twenty years if and when you look at the number two positions in the AAUP listings you will soon agree that the next twenty years will see more women on behalf of a career who was in the highest jobs in u.p. publishing.

I don't have much space left for mentioning women in commercial publishing, but the history of head of firm women in this field is not crowded with names. I can think of few who could be grouped with Ms. Disney as heads of really large commercial publishers. There's Phyllis Gann, CEO of The Putnam Berkley Group, some of whose companies were of great importance to me in my early years as a bookseller. I wrote previously of how I was Follett's choice to become manager of the Putnam Book Store at 2 West 45th Street, New York, when Putnam was headed by the great Melville Minton who would have sold the store to Wilcox & Follett had not the Womrath chain made a last minute higher bid. Grosset & Dunlap was one of the top suppliers of books acceptable to school library buyers of Follett Book Company. Ditto Platt & Monk ... Mrs. Helen Meyer was, to my recollection, the first president of a top-line trade publisher. When George T. Delacorte was the principal of Dell Publishing, Dial Publishing and several other publishers; Helen was his chief operating officer. I have just now learned, from research in Who's Who in America, 1972-73, that she also served on the board for Dunellan Press which had been founded by Eugene H. Nellen. I don't believe she was on board when I did some consulting work for Dunellen in the mid seventies. I say this because the great lady and I had a bit of a misunderstanding when I appeared to have convinced her that I was in need of additional capital for his company. I had been led to understand that Mr. Delacorte had scads of money to invest in promising book industry enterprises. The Dell/Dial offices were in the brand spanking new Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. After overcoming the awe inspired by my first visit to this building, I was ushered into Mrs. Meyer's quite large imposing private office. With seconds of our exchange of introductions she pressed a bell button at the side of her desk and...

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You Gotta Go to School for That?

Library Uniforms & Nifty Accessories

by Jerry Seay (College of Charleston) <seayt@cofc.edu>

The groundswell of ideas and excitement is staggering. I am, of course, talking about the library uniform concept for members of our august profession. Nearly all of the four people who read this column have sent in ideas for a uniform. As I indicated in my last diatribe, there is a vital necessity for such an identifying garment. I for one am getting tired of having to answer the question, “do you work here” with, “what? do you think they let just anybody sleep at the reference desk?” So, in response to my call, you, my public, have responded.

Jey Wann, Acquisitions Coordinator at Oregon State Library, who, by the way, is wearing a nice sweater, a nice wool skirt, and a beat-up pair of Birkenstocks considers the multi-tiered approach. She writes, “I can’t come up with an official uniform suggestion, but it reminds me of a former employee here who was concerned that patrons have trouble telling who’s on the staff and who’s not. Her suggestion was a 3-tiered uniform system: librarians would wear blazers, paraprofessionals would wear (think) vests, and pages would wear beanies. Whether or not the beanie should include propellers, I don’t know. The person who suggested this was a former Army band member, and perhaps that accounts for her coming up with the idea in the first place.”

Now this has possibilities, I mean, besides the great propeller idea. Why not distinguish different staff positions by particular dress code or color? Hey, just think of Star Trek. Why do all ideas eventually go back to Star Trek? Remember? Scotty and all the engineering crew wore red uniforms. Most officers wore gold, and medical personnel wore blue. Of course, Spock wore blue as well and that was because... er... well, no one really knows. But, with just a glance you always knew how the various folks fit in to the grand scheme of things. Imagine such a system in a library... “No Sir, I’m sorry, but we here at circulation wear green uniforms and that question is obviously one for a blue uniformed reference librarian. Please direct your question appropriately or I shall be forced tobeam you out.”

Though I grant that the idea of sleek librarians strutting around the library in tight fitting nylon coveralls of various colors is enough to drive one wild, I submit that sensible shoes and a well-placed hair bun would give this ensemble just the right balance of sexy professionalism. Of course, this assumes that one is trying for sexy professionalism. Alas, not everyone is comfortable with such bold assertions of raw librarian power. Note that this suggestion came from a former employee. Great minds are rarely appreciated.

So, for those seeking a more down to earth look, if somewhat less flashy, Joan Bartram of Salve Regina University Library in Newport, Rhode Island gives us this idea. She writes, “In the summer of 1968 I received my first appointment as a Collection Development Librarian, I was at the time working at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. My boss was an Englishman, superb bookman, and exemplary eccentric named John Robert Turner Ettlinger. Based on his experience as a rare book librarian at Brown he set up an exhaustive training program for me. The first three parts of this training program included work on preservation (his hobby -- we fermented anything and everything), abandoned schoolhouses in Nova Scotia (he collected them), and the designing of a library uniform.

Joan goes on to say that Mr. Ettlinger put her in charge of designing a library uniform. “The brief he gave me to design the uniforms must be put in further cultural context,” she writes. “The man was an old Etonian and graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford who had one dozen Eaton ties which he wore in rotation with his three identical navy blue suits. Further, he had been in the RAF during World War II. Predictably, the Public Services Uniform echoed the British school girl look -- white shirt, grey flannel skirt, and “old school tie.” The Technical Services uniform was reminiscent of the RAF's coveralls with the institutional crest emblazoned on the front and the weavers name and position on the back.” In the end, disagreement on the right colors to use “torpedoed the entire project,” writes Joan. “I continued to wear my Mary Quant minidresses to work and the Reference Department never looked like Victoria Station with its alligators of schoolgirls. Over two decades later I’m still not sure if I’d rather look like a grey poupon bottle, as you suggest, or an English school girl as my mentor envisioned?” Well, though, I would tend to think twice before donning English school girl attire, I must admit that the “RAF coveralls” look does hold a certain appeal to those of us who consider speed-in-dressing when choosing our wardrobe. You can get into and out of those things in seconds, even while wearing sensible shoes. It would combine practical fashion and identifiability for the librarian on the go.

While the above uniform ideas address the problems of librarian and position identification, there is still the problem of our uniform getting across what we do and who we are. Construction workers wear hard-hats and firemen have big boots. These garments are readily identifiable trademarks of their profession. What about librarians?

Erik N. Anderson, Director of Hanford Technical Library at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory has come up with a uniform that goes far toward addressing this dilemma. Erik writes, “We know that the age of specialization is gone; we are all generalists. Therefore, to hold our profession together, I propose the Good Librarian’s Uniform, Eclectic (GLUE). It starts off with smartly tailored khaki pants to express our down-to-business attitude. Add a European cut linen shirt in startling red, reminding one of overseas journal prices. Round off with a corduroy blazer (with elbow patches, of course), demonstrating our strong academic foundation. To tie our rich history to the electronic age, it’s topped off with a green eye shade that disguises a 3-D virtual reality headset, which allows us to look into cyberspace and find those non-catalogued electronic-only serials. All unisex, of course.”

Eric brings up a great point: accessories! What a great way to round out our uniform: a librarian utility belt. On this utility belt we would attach all the stuff that we need in our day-to-day librarian work — things like keys (for digging paper out of printers), and paper clips (for digging keys out of printers), and a flashlight (to see to dig keys and paper out of printers). Just add a handheld computer, a coin changer and, presto, each librarian is self-sufficient, fully mobile, and action-packed. Of course, we librarians are already self-sufficient, fully mobile, and action-packed; but who among us has a nifty utility belt? Now, that, I think you will agree, is reason enough to have a library uniform.

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immediately two men entered the room from a side door. One was bearing a large ledger, the other a sheaf of correspondence. One of these gentlemen was presented as head bookkeeper, the other as credit and collection manager. These boys soon destroyed all hopes of help. The trouble was that I had not explained the purpose of my call when I made the appointment. Business woman that she was Mrs. Meyer had assumed that I was coming to arrange to pay a rather sizable delinquent account. I believe that Mrs. Meyer learned something from me: don’t be too optimistic when making appointments. I learned that George Delacorte had other places for his money besides struggling publishers. Didn’t he contribute substantially to the creation of stationary, fountains and amphitheaters in Central Park for the enjoyment of children...

Shirley Lambert was secretary to Edward Maguire, sales manager of G.K. Hall and I was assistant to Richard Abel when we met during a Chicago Midwinter ALA ses-
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sitions, URL address maintenance, and preservation functions. Our shelves may be digital, but the work of filling them and keeping them filled continues to be complicated and important. Job security for the information professional is assured.

Lest any of this be interpreted as negative toward the brave new digital world or that I am pining for the good old days when books were books and journals were a fiscal disaster, that is not my intent. I am enthused about the superior access that will be afforded by digital monographs and periodicals, by the whole new educational opportunities that multimedia will provide, and by the expanded use our special collections will receive. My purpose is to simply point out that from the vantage point of someone who is already involved in a fairly significant degree in the acquisition of digital materials, this new paradigm does not do away with the need for librarians — it demands them.

On the other hand, while our future is assured, we can’t just expect to do everything the same. We have to focus on the enduring nature of the functions librarians have always performed: selection from the universe of publication that which is useful and affordable, working with information providers to secure access to the needed material, providing bibliographic access so that you can find what you want when you want it, providing the setting where materials can be used effectively, training people how to find what they need and how to use it when they find it, preserving today’s acquisitions for tomorrow’s researchers, planning and budgeting, and dealing with the politics of the supporting institutions so that capital, material, and personnel resources are available to make all of this work. We have work before us. Break up your funeral flower arrangements into nice bouquets for your desks and get back to work.

Bibliography


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