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And They Were There

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS VISITS CALIFORNIA
OR, EAST MEETS WEST

by *Meta Nissley*, Head of Acquisitions and Collection Management California State University, Chico

Dr. James Billington, Librarian of Congress and noted Sovietologist, visited California State University, Chico, March 21-23. He was invited through the program for Distinguished Visiting Professors and was sponsored by Information Resources which includes the Library, the Computer Center and the Instructional Media Center. During his stay he met with students, faculty and library staff. His major themes for lectures and discussions centered on the current events in the Soviet Union and

Eastern Europe, the Library of Congress and information technology. He also participated in a teleconference, "Information, Freedom of Access and Perestroika," which was broadcast to 247 sites in the U.S. and Canada.

Billington began the teleconference by talking about Glasnost and the new era of openness. He said that in the Soviet Union today there was, "little food on the table, but lots to talk about." Another member of the panel described Eastern Europe as providing more access to information but that there is no guarantee of the quality of information. He cited problems related to more media to contend

with, along with untrained and unprofessional journalists, and suggested that systems of mass media need to be reconstructed. Billington also mentioned that since Glasnost, there are 400 new serial publications available which the Moscow branch of the Library of Congress is trying to collect. Fred Ryan, an Information Resources Administrator of CSU, Chico, noted that the channels of communication and technical infrastructure are not yet in place in the Soviet Union. A wide gap exists between East and West technologically. As an example, the ratio of computers from West to East is 100:1. Telecommunications is still very undeveloped. There are still many

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issues to be resolved with copyright; piracy for software products is apparently commonplace. He suggested that there have to be meaningful economic reforms in the Soviet Union and removal of U. S. export controls before the situation can be improved.

In his public address, "Information-Knowledge-Wisdom," he focused on what he believes to be the problems technology creates in a democratic society; namely, the issue of control of technology by the dominant institution and the cultural transformations technology may cause. Historically, print culture began as an elite-based system of communication used by those educationally advantaged, but eventually provided a means of shared values among a much larger

community. Print media requires a certain amount of interactivity on the part of the reader, even if it's just turning the pages. Television technology, on the other hand, has created newly leisured masses, captured by image, incantation and emotion. Television and computers are very powerful but tend to serve utilitarian needs rather than transmitting knowledge, and television viewers tend to be inactive (couch potatoes). That is to say, it is the elite-based, those with technological proficiency, who will best be able to take advantage of new technologies. According to Billington, the book remains the most portable, affordable and accessible tool for learning.

The Library of Congress has approximately 38 million items in cataloging arrearages, which

increases daily from the 31,000 items received per day. Billington has proposed to cut the backlog to a mere 10 million items within three years if provided funding for the project. Estimates from LC are that 77,000 books, papers, etc., are lost per year as a consequence of brittle paper. He sees the mission of the Library of Congress as collecting universally, today being the "largest artifactual library in the world." He indicated that 3/4 of the collection is in languages other than English.

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What do you say to your faculty colleagues when they ask about a title they ordered a few months ago and it still has not arrived?

"Well," you reply, "we ordered it right away. Since it had been published recently, we expected it to arrive. Instead, it was reported 'out of print' or 'out of stock indefinitely,' I don't recall which."

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Then you go on to explain that you will have it searched, but the reality is that very little time is available to work with these desiderata and such "new" titles won't end up in the book trade for some time.

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Currently there is support for six or seven branch offices around the world to collect and catalog local materials. Plans for the future include a new office site based in Mexico, which would also include a collection of Central American materials. (They are still looking for staff if anyone is interested). There are plans to create a national science and technology library. When asked about "free vs. fee" access to materials in the future, he commented that traditional services would likely continue on a free basis, but that new services may be fee-based. He cited as examples, the science and technology library could charge R & D fees, and fees could be charged for translations and law resource material which typically receive disproportionate use by some users (e.g. law firms). By charging, he stated, the utility of new services would be dramatized. He had little to say about the MARC licensing issue except, "These characters (vendors and utilities) repackage our records and do nothing to contribute." The American Memory project, which is an optical-based system for recording unique LC titles with images and text (e.g. Presidential papers, etc), is an example of the technological direction the Library of Congress is taking.

Hearing Billington's comments first-hand was a good experience for the campus community at CSU, Chico. I believe, however, there were also questions raised about his qualifications to direct the Library of Congress, the future of LC's mission of collecting and managing materials, the "free vs. fee" issue

and its impact on access to information, and although he adamantly claims to be apolitical, his statement is difficult to accept considering he is a Reagan political appointee.

There was a meeting of the **Association of Big Eight Universities Library Deans and CAO's** in Lawrence, Kansas, on April 12, 1990, which we should all know about. The meeting, centered on the **Delivery of Research Information in the 1990's**, areas for potential cooperation, barriers to resource sharing, and future topics for discussion. Among the speakers were Ann Okerson (ARL), Nancy Eaton (Dean of Libraries, Iowa State University), and Kent Hendrickson (Dean of Libraries, University of Nebraska-Lincoln). Present were most library directors and chief academic officers from Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Kansas, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Oklahoma and Linda Hall Library. The Executive Director of the Association of Big Eight Universities, Owen Cylke, was also present. The Universities of Wyoming and Colorado State are also members, but were unable to send representatives to the Lawrence meeting.

Apparently, a group of librarians from this area have been meeting for several years and three years ago they began to look at serials pricing issues, including building a database of titles over \$200 for

coordination of resource sharing and cuts of titles. This time the group was expanded to include chief academic officers and had a bit of a short term agenda: to develop a union list of serials holdings for the group; to evaluate an "Uncover" (CARL) type of database for resource sharing; and to upgrade document delivery through telefax.

The meeting was so successful that the academic deans have committed themselves to the short term agenda and wish to move beyond that to a long term agenda. At the same time, the decision was made to attempt to influence the NASULGC membership (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges) regarding issues of copyright, intellectual property, and promotion and tenure.

Here are some of the questions/issues raised.

1) Should congressional pressure be applied to eliminate the process of copyrighting publications supported by federal funds?

2) If a university pays page charges, should ownership stay with the university?

3) When universities provide faculty with resources (secretarial help, laboratories, etc.), shouldn't ownership remain with the university?

4) Should journal copyright be reduced to five years?

5) Should university presses assume more responsibility for scholarly publishing of journals?

6) Perhaps universities should modify requirements for tenure/promotion and recruitment. The best five publications should be required instead of long lists.

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Based on this highly successful informal meeting, Ann Okerson felt that a "template" meeting could be put together which could be used by other institutions or groups around the country. Time will tell . . .

Reported by **Katina Strauch** from notes and conversation with **Kent Hendrickson**

Acquisitions in the West by **Joe Barker** (University of California, Berkeley)

Picture a Sierra-Nevada resort/lodge nestled among tall pines, fragrant brush, slopes of a gold course . . . Massive stone fireplaces, antique lamps, pinewood floors, and homemade food, lovingly served .

. . . Crackling fires, good conversation, and time for Ping-pong, jogging, golf, horseshoes, beer, wine, and fortune-telling . . . Sleeping in small, rustic chalets off in the hills, and awakening to sunlight filtered through pine boughs and warm rain.

In such a setting — the Feather River Institute (operated by the University of the Pacific), located above Lake Tahoe — held the first "Acquisitions in the West" conference on May 18-20, 1990. Forty-six library acquisitions and collections pros, including several library directors with acquisitions roots, and reps from most major U.S. vendors engaged in talks with titles like "Lonesome Dove," "How the West was Won," and "Young Guns." Beneath these fanciful

names was "true grit" substance that made up a superb, "laid-back" conference.

Speakers (Bob Schatz, Adrian Alexander, Marcia Anderson, Dana D'Andraia, Steve Pugh) concurred that doing business in the West is much like business elsewhere. But Noreen Alldredge described the impact of "Boom" and "Bust" economics on many libraries in the West, and identified a unique Western-library approach, scale, and spirit. Three speakers described the largely Western challenge of starting libraries from scratch nowadays. Melvin Voigt, founding University Librarian of UC San Diego, traced UCSD's conception and evolution. Marilyn Myers, Head of

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Book Pricing Update

by *Celia Wagner* (Blackwell North America)

Librarians often inquire whether there are publishing "seasons" reflected in Blackwell's New Titles coverage — predictably heavy or light times. This question assumes particular importance whenever a library is expending its annual budget much more quickly, or much more slowly, than anticipated.

We looked back into the Blackwell New Titles database and asked what percentage of each year's total coverage occurred in each quarter. Following are a chart, and a graph, illustrating the percentage of titles covered in each quarter of the past six fiscal years. We chose the most

common library fiscal year, July through June, as our standard.

As the graph demonstrates, the line throughout the course of all six years was relatively smooth. There were no terribly "big" seasons. The

and in five out of six years, spring was the largest quarter for coverage.

At mid-year, the percentage of titles treated has varied from 48% to 52% — right around the half-way

mark. We know there are variations in publishing output from week to week, and possibly even from month to month. But libraries finding themselves significantly

Cumulated Percentages of Titles per Quarter 1984 to 1989

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Summer	24%	23%	22%	22%	22%	25%
Fall	50%	48%	48%	49%	52%	46%
Winter	73%	71%	71%	72%	73%	73%
Spring	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

summer and winter quarters tended to be lower than average, while spring and fall tended to be higher. The percentage of titles covered in the spring quarter, April through June, was always more than 25%,

cantly under- or over-spent at the midpoint of the fiscal year need to institute compensatory profile revisions, rather than hoping for a seasonal surge, or lull, to even out expenditures. 🐘

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Bibliographic Services at Arizona State West, described the growth of this satellite campus and its current dilemmas. Marion Reid, Interim Director of the not-yet-built library of the new San Marcos California State University, revealed the surprises and rewards of starting with no office, no staff, and being involved in the earliest planning of a new campus library.

Henry Yapple, director at Whitman College, had everyone

laughing about the alliance and tension between acquisitions and collection development. Bill Fisher, Associate Professor at San Jose State University, described the need for, and current dearth of, formal training in acquisitions today. And Frank D'Andraia, from UC Riverside, provided "The Last Round-Up."

Rarely have I attended a meeting where so much experience was exchanged so candidly. All participants—directors, department heads, staff, and vendors—set aside

their roles and positions, openly talked and freely laughed, joked, and played amidst the serious presentations and discussions. We all thanked Tom Leonhardt who hosted and organized this convivial event. Tom plans in 1991 to hold the Second Annual "Acquisitions in the West" conference next spring. Plan now to attend this adventure!! 🐘