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Bet You Missed It

Mike Markwith
Yankee Book Peddler

Katins Strauch
Against the Grain

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Bet You Missed It

Compiled by *Mike Markwith* (Yankee Book Peddler)
and *Katina Strauch* (College of Charleston)

Just Say 'Cheese'! "Famous Publishers of History." by Paul H. Rohmann in *Scholarly Publishing*, July, 1990, pages 222-232.

This article is by the director emeritus of Kent State University Press and it shows that publishers do, indeed, contrary to some popular opinion, have a sense of humor. This piece contains stories that publishers in the past might tell, "when they meet at the great remainder sale in the sky." Included are tidbits from Isaac Jaggard, Partner and Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, Printers, London, England, publisher of the First Folio of Shakespeare; Jos. Wingthrow Prop., Ye Olde Speedie Printers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Colony, Publisher of *The Declaration of Independence*; Jean de Gruyere, Editions Fromage, Bayeux, France, Publisher of the Bayeux Tapestry, and others. It's impossible to paraphrase this, but its enlightening and fun to read.

Mike Markwith (Yankee Book Peddler)

Frencher is Better?? "Hachette Backs Magazines in Wake of Aides' Departures," in *The Wall Street Journal* for Tuesday, October 9, 1990, p.B6.

This report originated at the American Magazine Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona. Hachette S.A., a mega French publisher, has "purged" the name of Peter Diamandis from Diamandis

Communications, Inc., and renamed it Hachette Magazines, Inc. Hachette bought Diamandis Communications from Diamandis in 1988 for a reported \$712 million. However, times have changed. Ad page sales are down in some of its magazines (*American Photo*, *Car and Driver*, *Road and Track*, *Woman's Day*) (ad pages are up for *Elle* slightly and also for *Popular Photography*) and they even tried to sell *Woman's Day* for a span of several months. Some are skeptical about what success Hachette will have in the United

States, especially in light of the departure of Diamandis who has been called "an icon in the business." One executive is quoted as saying: "he is very well known and very well liked. The French are almost the opposite. Magazines are very much an American business." But Hachette "says it will not retreat from American soil." They are working on building up confidence in Hachette in America and concentrating on getting additional ad pages.

Rick Heldrich (College of Charleston)

Time Will Tell—"Refereeing" by Jane Smith in *Learned Publishing*, vol.3#1 for January, 1990, pages 19-25.

I have had the January, 1990 issue (v.3#1) of *Learned Publishing* (journal of the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers) on my desk for months and I finally opened it the other night. Boy is it full of interesting articles. The most interesting is on "Refereeing," by Jane Smith, Managing Editor of the *British Medical Journal*. Giving a brief history of peer review back to the 1660s and the *Journal des Savans* in France and the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, Smith talks about one of the most notable papers that was rejected, Edward Jenner's "account of the first vaccination against smallpox, which was rejected on the advice of Sir Everard Home on the grounds that it was a single case." In discussing aims and functions of peer review, editorial relations, duplicate publication and blind refereeing, Smith distills many of the familiar problems succinctly. In ending, she quotes from Thomas Park, editor of *Ecology* in a letter which he wrote accepting a revised manuscript for publication in the face of opposition by some referees. "Time is a great solace in these matters and it alone will judge the questions." I guess the same can be said for us.

Katina Strauch (College of Charleston)

What It Was, Was Maxwell—"The Ego Has Landed," by Peter Conrad, in *Observer Magazine* for June 24, 1990.

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If any of you want a glimpse of Robert Maxwell, here it is. I feel inadequate to produce the gist of the article totally — some of it is the fact that it's very cleverly written, the other is that Maxwell himself is — well, different — or at least not like anyone I have ever encountered. Taking a trip to give a check from the Maxwell Foundation to a European laboratory for cancer research in Brussels (Pergamon publishes the journal) was the occasion. "Mr. Maxwell will wait for no one," seems to sum up the man of action. "Action is what matters," Maxwell told Peter Conrad, "I suffer no slings and arrows. I just sail on. That's the secret of success in life." Remember, you read it here!

Katina Strauch (College of Charleston)

Yes, Publishers, There is a Copier — "Xerox Announces Device Linking Computers, Copiers," Associated Press release, October 3, 1990.

According to Xerox Corp. offset printing presses will one day soon be replaced by desktop computers hooked to new copying machine equipment, called DocuTech. "College professors, for example, could make up their class outline on their personal computer, then push a button and have bound copies of the outline spew out of the new machine at the campus bookstore." And also, "companies can print just as many forms or booklets as needed saving on storage costs and the expense of throwing out old forms when they need revision." Xerox is now calling itself "the document company." Is this the stuff that publishers' nightmares are made of?

Zelma Palestrant (The Citadel)

Sour Recession — Money for old Rope? The Rise and Rise of the Brand-Name Author in *The Economist* for July 21, 1990, page 91.

"If there are signs of recession," reads this article, "it does not seem to have reached the book trade." Well now, Ken Follett (*Eye of the Needle*, *Key to Rebecca*, etc.) reportedly recently received a huge advance from Dell and Jeffrey Archer (*Cain and Abel*, etc.), negotiating the deal himself, got even more from Harper Collins, the global publishing house owned by Rupert Murdoch. And some say that the advances are too high, while others say the grumbles are "industry sour grapes." "Publishers need best-selling authors to enhance their status in the book industry and to gain shelf-space in the

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nation's bookshops. But by paying them so much, they may well be getting into a bind."

Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counselor)

The Grand Illusion? — "With Debt to Match its Global Ambitions, News Corp Squirms: Murdoch tries Renegotiating the Loans that Bought TV Guide, Fox, Harper: Little Aid from the Simpsons," in *The Wall Street Journal* (Eastern edition) for Friday, October 19, 1990, p. 1.

"Few borrowers have juggled so much debt so skillfully as Rupert Murdoch, the Australian-born publisher." Apparently, Mr. Murdoch's media business must now "confront the perils of leverage" when \$2.25 billion in short-term borrowing is due to come due in "several months." While some people are dubious, many are willing to "back the man," who Viktor Shvets (Baring Securities, Ltd., Sydney) says is "one of the intangible [assets]." However, "Mr. Murdoch's grand vision of a global media empire, ever-expanding, fully integrated and interconnected, could remain on hold for a long time." Obviously there's difference of opinion, but it makes for good copy. Stay tuned.

Mike Markwith (Yankee Book Peddler)

The Perils of Publication — A look through some recent issues of *The Scientist*, *The Newspaper for the Science Professional*," by **Rick Heldrich** (College of Charleston)

(September 17, 1990) — "Taming Information Technology: A Call for Infrastructure." This opinion piece was taken from *Information Technology and the*

Conduct of Research: The User's View (1989, National Academy Press). Libraries and librarians have an "infrastructure" that facilitates use and research, this excerpt points out, but "on the whole, information technology is inadequately supported by current infrastructures." The lack of such an infrastructure has impeded researchers from adequately evaluating and using computer technology to the best advantage. But there are moves to change this and, for one, EDUCOM "has recently announced its support of a peer-review process for certain kinds of academic software." One of the options for developing this infrastructure is integration of information science departments with computer centers and libraries.

(October 1, 1990) — "Supreme Court Ruling Could Stifle Open Debate in Journals." Apparently, in a June 21 decision, *Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.*, the Supreme Court ruled 7-2, and their ruling calls into question an assumption that editors have long operated under "that statements of opinion are virtually immune from libel suits." This case was about "criticism of a wrestling coach by a sports columnist for an Ohio newspaper," but effects of other sorts of publishing are unknown. For example, this case "is expected to have a direct impact on the outcome of a prolonged battle involving Moor-Jankowski, the director of the Laboratory for Experimental Medicine and Surgery in Primates at the New York University Medical Center. . . [who] is the sole remaining defendant in a suit brought six years ago by Immuno A.G., a multinational firm based in Vienna, Austria, that manufactures biologic products derived from blood plasma." Apparently, the suit is over a letter which appeared in December 1983 in the *Journal of Medical Primatology* of which

Moor-Jankowski was the editor. Though the New York Court of Appeals ruled in Moor-Jankowski's favor in December of 1989, it is now being asked to reconsider the case. Truly, the perils of publication seem to be increasing.

The Jungle Magazines: A Brief Look at Some Popular Magazines by Ruth Armstrong (Orlando, Florida)

Over the past few months, I've collected some articles.

(From the *Chicago Tribune*) "What's hot in magazines: under the covers, sex is selling (again)," by James Warren, appeared in the *Orlando Sentinel* for May 18, 1990, pages E1 and E2.

(From the *Los Angeles Daily News*) "Specialty magazines multiply: For every interest, there is a publication," by Paula Monarex, appeared in the *Seminole County Sentinel Sampler* for January 18, 1990, page 3.

"More magazine madness: Best new magazines of 1988," by Bill Katz in *Library Journal* for April 1, 1989, pages 59-64.

The first pair of articles points to one of many selection aids for our jungle of magazines. *Guide to New Magazines* (\$50) by Samir Husni of the University of Mississippi, Department of Journalism details 584 new titles for 1990 in 247 pages. He's a

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consultant for the Meredith Corp., who frequents "his region's best newsstand." He says that sex, and low-quality quick-published serials are the biggest increasers in new-starts, followed by metropolitan and regional titles. Decliners were about automobiles and children. "They say we're returning to the family, yet only five magazines dealt with parenting." I wonder how far his sample universe extends? And I'm reminded of a "Shoe" (Jeff MacNelly) cartoon from the Chicago Tribune Media Services (March 17, 1990): isn't it screwy that there are so many magazines for brides, but not one for divorcees!

I was pleased to see (praised in Husni's "Cheap Imitators" category) *Sports Illustrated for Kids* since I'd chosen it for my fifth grade nephew, who we hope to give reasons to read. Based solely on its title (found during a game of publishers-prize-sweepstakes stamp-searching) I ordered it. My subsequent trip to the public library for a hands on preview matched both my hopes, and Bill Katz' opinion. In his article, Katz goes on to say that the strength in these 1988 serials was in appearance, rather than content. Not much else had changed; Katz, Husni, and Robert Kenyon, executive director of the American Society of Magazine Editors all seem to agree: articles remain ephemeral, and few new journals even become classics.

My prize, *SI4Kids*, is second cited among Katz' 1988 choice "Magic 14." First-listed is "the most controversial of the lot," *Sassy*. It seems Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority dislikes the sex education pieces, which Katz adds: come through it all with "some pretty conventional wisdom and the authors are scrupulously accurate when the reader may be

in harm's way." I wonder how the "December 1990" issue will look? There's a contest for its readers (monthly circulation, 550,000) to choose several teens to spend the month of August producing it. Will their creation be different than what we have seen from the present publishing staff, aged late twenties? This is clearly publishing on the other side of the tracks!

Bet You Missed It Minis

"Scholarly Publishing in the NREN," by Ann Okerson in the *ARLBimonthly Newsletter of Research Library Issues and Actions*, no.151,

July 4, 1990. This article is the text of a speech by Ann at the Coalition for Networked Information Meeting. It is worth reproducing word for word as it is vintage Okerson—pithy, on point and astute. Try to get a copy. It's worth a read.

"The NEA and Censorship I and II, by William F. Buckley, Jr., in the *National Review*, July 9, 1990, pages 62-63. This is another opinion on the National Endowment for the Arts, Mapplethorpe, Serrano, etc.

From the *Newsletter on Serials Pricing* September 10, 1990

Regarding Commercial Strategies of Scientific Journal Publishing, James Thompson (University of California, Riverside, Thompson@UCRVM.S.BITNET) calls our attention to an unusually frank

discussion of the commercial strategies of scientific journal publishing which appeared in "The Impact of CD-ROM on Library Operations and Universal Availability of Information," Proceedings of the 11th International Essen Symposium, 1988, published by the Universitätsbibliothek Essen, Essen, West Germany, 1989.

From the *Newsletter on Serials Pricing*, October 1, 1991, we understand that there will be a AAAS Symposium regarding the feasibility of replacing printed material with electronic information systems. The Symposium, "Can electronic publishing solve the science library crisis?" will be held at the 1991 Washington Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on Monday morning, February 18, 1991. Dr. Henry Barschall will preside. The speakers and their topics are: "Electronic Publishing from a Publisher's Point of View" Martin J. Dillon, OCLC; "Research and Development in Electronic Publishing" Malcolm Getz, Director, Vanderbilt University Library; "Electronic Publishing: An Economic View" and Stewart C. Loken, Lawrence Berkely Laboratory, University of California, "When will electronic information systems replace printed journals?"

Also from the *Newsletter on Serials Pricing* October 1, 1990 (this is the full text)

Hamaker's Haymakers
Chuck Hamaker, Louisiana State University; NOTCAH@LSUVM.BITNET

A quick discussion with Chris Schneider of Gordon & Breach indicates that due to the dollar's weakness worldwide, G & B is revising their 1991 price list for

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Instead of the ten percent increase projected from the last check I made with Chris, G & B titles will generally go up about 20 percent. Some exceptions are being made, and he felt that the 20 percent increase would be a maximum with several titles below that. G & B will be issuing a second catalog for 1991 with a date of September 15, reflecting the increase.

Another publisher has been added to their list: Craftsman House, from Australia specializing in Australian artists and their works. The company was acquired in December of last year.

Also, we note with some dismay that Swets and Zeitlinger, sole European distributor for Gordon & Breach, is now offering a 15 percent discount to American libraries for ordering G & B titles from them. That is a 10 percent SIP (Subscriber Incentive Plan) enrollment, plus 5 percent for ordering "direct" from Swets. In addition, this offer includes a provision for an additional 5 percent discount from list for G & B titles in the second subscription year, for a total of 20 percent in the second year. The general offer most of us have seen is "no service charge" for American libraries ordering G & B titles through Swets, but the new offer was made to a west coast library the first week of September. In past years, G & B prices to the rest of the world have been significantly higher than U. S. list prices. Has this changed for 1991? How many "list" prices are there for G & B worldwide???

In the meantime, some vendors, who don't want to damage their relationship with G & B any more than it is already, have reported off the record that they are having problems getting the SIP discount for libraries that believed they had a right to it. Rumor has it that the SIP plan option will be offered again on open enrollment very soon. Oh, what tangled webs we weave...

Some of you will note that even the *LJ Hotline* picked up on MCB University Press, Inc.'s "freebie" for faculty who coerce libraries into subscribing (reported in the last issue of the *Newsletter*).

The September issue of the Canadian Library Association's newspaper *Feliciter* carries two articles that U.S. Librarians should read with care. First, ALA should become involved, if it is not already, in a July 8 proposal by the Canadian Department of Communications. The proposal would amend the Canadian Copyright Act to protect exclusive distribution rights, "thus making it illegal for anyone other than the publisher/agent, who has exclusive market/distribution rights to import or distribute specific titles; it would close the border to books imported by others than those licensed to do so: wholesalers could import only those titles not licensed to publisher/agents." (See President's message, page 2). I wonder if Canadians have looked at what exclusive distribution and sale rights have done to the cost of books in Australia, and what blocking "buying around" means for controlling journal subscription price gouging techniques. Put simply, by limiting access to worldwide markets for books and journals, prices go up (way up!) and access goes down. It is a sure recipe for an information impoverished economy. If anyone in Canada wants sources providing both these propositions, Pergamon

published an excellent book describing the Australian situation, a situation the Aussies are now trying to correct (recent Publications of the Australian Library Association detail that debate succinctly) and, of course, Deana Astle and I have detailed differential pricing excesses publishers are capable of. The recent IFLA Acquisitions Committee Workshop this past summer also documented what happens worldwide with differential pricing. Are American libraries being outmaneuvered because Publisher Associations maintain high visibility lobbying associations? Why can't libraries lobby for economic "goods" packages as effectively as publishers?

Another "Canadian" issue is international implications and is covered in the same September issue of *Feliciter*. The President of the Canadian Recording Industry Association sounds a bit like Nicholas Veliotos of the AAP. In an April interview, Mr. Brian Robertson, President of CRIA, argued that lending compact disks was depriving the recording industry of hundreds of millions of dollars. Since in many people's opinions, a CD constitutes a "master recording," patrons borrowing library cds must be copying them — right!! That is, there is a direct correlation between lending, copying, and "drop" in sales. In Canada, the sale of cds went from 1.3 million units in 1985 to about 9 million in 1988. If library sales "hurt" the industry, resulting in a "drop" in sales, it ain't evident from those numbers. Mr. Robertson wanted "listening rooms" in libraries to be the only legal use of cds. The correlate for print materials would be in-house only use (no circulation) and, of course, making it illegal for there to be copying machines in libraries. ☛