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Something to Think About -- Mixing It Up Charleston Style!

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Something to Think About — Mixing It Up Charleston Style!



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Wow! It was a great conference as usual! I spent so much time preparing for the event, that I scarcely focused on the results. What happened? Who did I meet? How important has this conference become? You never know who will be there. I see older co-workers from other universities, beginners in our profession, those from near, those from far away, those you wish you had known for years, and some who really open your eyes to new possibilities.

I have aged and find it harder to last all day in sessions. I find it very interesting to hang out in the sitting areas between sessions and meet many wonderful people. We have a lot in common and can discuss communal problems in the field. It's where I pick up the little problems and understand how everyone is continuing in their own ways. How many people did you meet? What happened to you to improve your condition in the field? I never fail to find people that are most encouraging. I am closer to beginning to write a grant for preserving our older materials. I was able to meet people and discuss the nitty gritty of the project. Most encouraging! I have identified some pertinent facts that need to be explored.

As for the presentations, I was pleased with the deliveries and the acceptances of them. The questions are always good to hone future sessions and to identify some new subjects of interest to others in the field. One thing I learned this year, was that there is still a need to understand the basics of handling special collections and formats even though the digital technology steals the limelight. So much of the time was spent on collection management and digital collections, but the principles of handling microfilm collections and the worries about the respect and management of people in libraries is still alive. Perhaps one of the vital

results from the conference was the knowledge that I needed to spend more time with our consortium giving some "how-to" lectures. You never quite know where you can be most effective and useful. I think a local venue would be an excellent place to put my efforts. There appears to be a strong need for pertinent information for those who have been given responsibilities without information in a time where there are few people and few answers to get them started. If a consortium can give these people a starting place and enough information to get the work done, libraries can finally head in the right direction on aborted projects and seemingly unworkable situations.

After my return, I found that I was asked to give a number of lectures in the spring and summer for our consortium. They need some help on the ULS presentation, a repeat on "writing for children," a workshop on how to manage a serials collection, how to deal with a microfilm collection and a few others. I'm seeing a trend where the economy has frozen the hiring, people are retiring and slots are empty by the droves. There won't be replacements for awhile until the economy heals. People who have never handled smaller specific areas, like serials, media, microfilm, and leisure are being given those responsibilities without formal in-house training. We are expecting a great deal from them. I think many of us have had these experiences before and found them uncomfortable. A consortium can fill that gap in learning by providing help to many of the stranded workers. I believe this can be a lifesaver in a troubled time. What do you think? Is this a consideration we should put into action? Can you share a few hours of your time to help others in the field? Perhaps it is something to think about? 🌱