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Introduction-Voices from the Twentieth Century- From Your Guest Editor

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Voices from the Twentieth Century

Guest Editor: **Lucretia W. McClure** (Librarian Emerita, Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center) <lucretiaru@earthlink.net>

The Millennium Issue of *Against the Grain* is a special one designed to entertain as well as instruct the reader, depending upon the length of your experience in the profession of librarianship. For those who are new to the profession, the items will introduce you to past practices that will surprise, or perhaps horrify, you. For example, you may never have heard of electric erasers making holes in catalog cards or filing above the rod. Many of us with long experience knew well those time-consuming and tedious ways of librarianship in a manual environment. The value of those practices was that you learned your craft by doing the entire process by hand.

For those with years of experience, these writings will bring forth memories, fond or otherwise, of the way it used to be. The issue includes a number of "Millennium Minutes," brief reminiscences of practices as well as longer articles outlining a variety of the issues and practices of the 20th century. Today's technologies are emerging and changing so rapidly that we scarcely have time to learn the new. There is value in reviewing our past, in thinking about how we arrived at this electronic world. Both worlds, the electronic and the manual, have contributed to the profession of librarianship and the following pieces make up a poupourri of delightful reading.

As Guest Editor, I am taking this opportunity to begin with something from our *ATG* Editor, **Katina Strauch**. She recently presented a paper at a Conference in South Africa. Katina, founder and coordinator of the **Charleston Conferences** and founder and editor of *Against the Grain*, outlined both old assumptions/myths/firm ground of the past along with new myths/assumptions/firm ground 2000 in her lecture. First, some of her old as-

sumptions, considered the **solid tenets of acquisitions librarianship when she began back in 1972:**

Never duplicate what you already have. This is bad fiscal management.

Partial runs of periodicals are no good. Always acquire and keep the full run.

Select for the long term. Core material is the best.

Faculty/end users do not know what is the best to buy: librarians are trained to do this and, like father, know best.

Ownership is better than access. With access you are dependent upon others to supply what you need.

Title by title selection is best.

Know what you are ordering. Never order when you cannot verify availability.

Be careful what you discard. It is better to keep than throw out.

During the past five years especially, the electronic environment has changed our thinking. She pointed to these **new assumptions, the solid ground of today:**

It is okay to duplicate or even not know how much of an electronic resource is a duplicate. Print and electronic resources are used differently.

Partial runs of periodicals are okay.

We should buy what the end user wants.

It is okay to discard print if an electronic resource is available.

Buying by "lot" (database or aggregator) is okay. Give access to the broadest and richest environment because this encourages use.

Librarianship today is about access, not ownership.

It is okay to buy a resource that you do not fully understand. It can always be cancelled later.

It is okay to discard material in paper if you have it electronically.

She concluded this paper with some **important points for Acquisitions and Collection Development Librarians**. Some of them, she declared, are against the grain.

Here are a few that strike at the heart of our profession:

Keep the vision of the library as an archive firmly in sight.

Libraries will be needed in the future: they have the budgetary resources and the infrastructure to acquire all types of materials that individuals cannot.

The printed record is currently the most stable method of archiving.

Acquisition departments want to do one-stop shopping and with the advent of the ONIX standard, library catalogs will become more sophisticated and user-friendly.

Competition among vendors, publishers, aggregators will continue to be more and more aggressive. Acquisitions librarians need to take advantage of this in their selections.

As information expands, the need for filtering and peer review becomes paramount.

In the future, books, articles, and even journals will be assembled and formatted on demand with the end user, library, and/or publisher choosing the format. Libraries will facilitate this access.

With these words of wisdom we offer the Millennium Issue of *Against the Grain*.

Enjoy!

From your (awed) Editor

Y'all! The reaction to the **Call for Millennium Memories** for *ATG* has been awesome! overwhelming! wonderful! Thank all of you! As you will see, this issue is chock-a-block full of all sorts of reminiscences, anecdotes, people, everything! Besides regular columnists like **Tom Leonhardt**, **Papa Lyman** and **Tony Ferguson**, others have written their memories like **Heather Miller**, **Karen Hunter**, **George Needham**, and I could go on and on. It was such fun to read this issue and watch it take shape. Special thanks go to the wonderful, energetic, and always ready to jump in and help, **Lucretia McClure**! I have never met her, but I am looking doubly forward to meeting her when she comes through Charleston in April. So, there will be a **new column** of *ATG* instituted in 2001! This will be the **Millennium Memories** column because we are unable to print all that we got for this

issue in this particular issue. So, for those of you who have memories and didn't have a chance to write them down, it's not too late to do so ...

Anyway, besides the Millennium Memories in this issue, we have tons of great columns and articles. **Lynda Fuller Clendenning** has written a great article about selectors ordering online (who would have believed?) right now just to keep us in touch with the real world. We have interviews with **Simon Inger** and profiles of **Adrian Alexander**, **Joe Reynolds**, and **Dan Arbour**, a publisher profile from **John Benjamins Publishing Company**, and more and more and more.

Right now, it's freezing in Charleston; in fact, they are calling for snow tonight! Gulp! So I am looking forward to curling up with the Millennium Issue and reading it some more! Happy Holidays and much love to all of you, our readers, who make *Against the Grain* possible! — **Yr. Ed.**