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Reminiscence at Retirement

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MILLENNIUM

Minutes continued

Remember the days of submitting o.p. searches by mail and waiting for a month for your first reply and then tabulating all of the postcard quotes from all over the country? Certainly the mystery of o.p. searching has gone out of the business with the rise of o.p. Websites. But the trade off for speed and selection has certainly been worth it.

The fun of searching through dusty old bookstores looking for a long lost book is gone as well. Now that every little bookstore is on the Web we have arrived at national market pricing for just about every o.p. book. There are no more surprise bargains at the bottom of a stack of books piled on the floor in the back of some out of the way bookshop.

Thanks for all the great years, Jake.

— by **John Riley**
(Eastern Book Company)

When I started grad school for my MLS, I asked my husband for a new state of the art electric typewriter—that was 1988. I told him nobody is going to mess around with a silly computer but the business world!

— by **Linda Rousseau**
(LeMoyné-Owen College)

Prior to OCLC, staff in Acquisitions and Cataloging at Colorado State remember how we used to spend hours filing “proof slips” from the Library of Congress. When we ordered books, we checked the proof slip drawers to see if we had received a proof slip that matched the book. Then Cataloging staff made the necessary copies of the proof slip for the public catalog. When there was not a proof slip for a book, staff had to wrestle with the huge, unwieldy NUC volumes and search for copy to photocopy. Now it is a quick online search in OCLC for copy cataloging.

The alphabetical sorters we used to alphabetize the proof slips before filing are the only thing that survived. We still use them today to alphabetize. Staff also remember the hours spent

standing at the public catalog drawers filing. New staff had to “file above the rod” so their work could be reviewed. A card misfiled was lost forever. Dropping a drawer was a major catastrophe — it was an art to scoop up spilled cards in the right order.

— by **Patricia Smith**
(Colorado State University)
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started in Acquisitions in 1976. Almost my entire job was typing orders on forms with five carbon copies, and filing. With that number of copies, even if I had had a self-correcting typewriter, it would not have done any good. Of course, all the repetitive information, like the vendor and purchase order number, had to be keyed in for every title ordered. The big innovation was when we switched from carbon paper to NCR paper.

For pre-order verification, we used Library of Congress proof slips, which gave the verifier sore feet. Then we switched to the Blackwell title fiche, which gave the verifier motion sickness and a stiff neck. When we finally got OCLC, we had one terminal for all of Tech Services, and no automated acquisitions system, so we still had to write down all the information and then give it to the typist to type.

We used a ten-key calculator to total up the amount encumbered in each order. I remember that \$8.95 was the most common price for a trade, hard-bound book; it seemed that I keyed it in constantly. We had an annual sort of ceremony: the tossing of the oldest year’s “orders received” file at the end of every fiscal year.

I shudder at the thought of having to function that way now: no OPAC and Internet at my desk, no automated system with its built-in report writing and fund accounting. But I sometimes wonder if, in our work life anyway, we have lost the ability to do it right the first time!

— by **Jey Wann**
(Oregon State Library)

Reminiscence at Retirement January 15, 2000

There was a young woman of five and twenty
Who was offered a job at 80 Barre.
'Twas at the end of a turbulent time,
Could the year have been 1969??

Mentored by Bird and Ebert both
Eager to put “med bib” to work
At least for two years, for so we were taught,
Less than two is all for naught.

Directing “Tech Processing” was the focus then:
Cataloging, filing, and classification,
Union catalog print needing 5X magnification,
Card production and filing revision,
Over and over ... ad infinitum.

In 1970 we made the move
To Library/Admin and never believed
We'd ever fill up such enormous space
Not realizing we'd soon outgrow this place.

With the advent of MEDLINE in '72
We sampled the beginning of the equipment “zoo”
Access seemed limitless, there was no prediction
'Twas the iceberg's tip of electronic information.

The position became, in '75,
Associate Director, I felt I'd arrived
At some sort of pinnacle (or was I impaled?)
With management, budget, and more personnel...

Two years later we added a floor
To support education with AV's galore
The hardware and software of '77
Lingers today in our electronic haven.

In the mid '80's we went online
Removed that card catalog, celebrated big time
We lost space, then gained it, reused and remodeled
We shifted, we weeded, gave away and recycled.

More acronyms and abbreviations appeared
The linguistic nightmare we all had feared
An alphabet soup that became quite perplexing
Some were intelligible, others quite vexing.

NUC, NLM, MARC, and LC
CATLINE, SERLINE, MESH, OCLC,
SOLINET, SERMLP, OPAC, and MUSCLS,
LIS, BRS, CALC and CONBLS.
AHEC, SCHIN, SACS, JCAHO,
LCME, IPEDS, AASHLD, and ARCO???
Pixels and protocols, PCs and MACS,
Email and Snailmail, HTML, HVAC???

Yes the building is bursting in ways old and new,
Collections have grown, equipment has, too,
Somewhere, somehow, during continuous change,
Two years became 30 — it now seems so strange.
How quick it all happened, what a ride it's been,
A wonderful journey, perhaps a whirlwind?

This career was my second, and the longest by far,
But the millennium beckons, I must follow that star.
So now is the time to bid all adieu
As Y2K arrives, new challenges do, too.
It's the folks I'll miss most, who shared all those miles,
For it's the company that makes the journey worthwhile.

— by **Anne Kabler Robichaux**
Professor Emerita, Medical University of S.C.