November 2013

From Your (spring cleaning in winter) Editor

Katina Strauch
College of Charleston, kstrauch@comcast.net

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg
Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Strauch, Katina (1998) "From Your (spring cleaning in winter) Editor," Against the Grain: Vol. 10: Iss. 1, Article 4.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3283

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
Letters to the Editor

Send Letters to <strauch@cofc.edu>, phone or fax 803-723-3536, or snail mail: Against the Grain, 209 Richardson Ave., MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the ATG Homepage at  <http://www.against-the-grain.com>

Dear Editor:

As a followup to the article Bruce Heterick and I wrote for ATG in 1996 ("The Year 2000 is Coming ... Are Your Data Coming With It?", v.8/3, June 1996, pp. 1, 17-19), I thought your readers might be interested in a couple of items regarding the Year 2000 problem that I ran across recently.

Last Fall I got to wondering what it would be like trying to get my money out of my bank if it (the bank) were not Year 2000 compliant. So I got on their Web Page and sent a message asking about this, subtly hinting that unless the bank could assuage my fears on this subject, I would close my account. (I live by the motto: "Never be the last one to try to withdraw your money from your bank because of the Year 2000 problem.")

To my amazement, I got not one but two telephone messages from the bank. To my recollection, this is the first time they have acknowledged my existence, unless you count overdraft account notices. Even more amazing was the detailed explanation I got that, although the bank itself is compliant, not all its vendors are, and therefore they could not issue ATM cards with dates of 2000 and beyond (it was the "99" on my ATM cards that had gotten me all worked up in the first place). Last week they sent me a new ATM card — and it's dated "01," Whew.

The other item is the publication of Stephen Jay Gould's Questioning the Millennium: a Rationalist's Guide to a Precisely Arbitrary Countdown. This is a treatment of the millennium issues, written from a scientist's point of view. Gould doesn't much like computers, so there is not much on the Year 2000 problem. There were two highlights, however. The first is an explanation of how the debate over 2000 vs. 2001 as the first year of the new millenium got started. I had known that Dionysius Exiguus ("Dennis the Short"), the 6th century monk who devised the "B.C./A.D." business, had not included a year 0 in his calculations. Therefore, in order for the First Century to be 100 years long, it has to include the year 100, and the Second Century begins with January 1, 101. However, the thought "Why was D the E so stupid as to not include 0?" never occurred to me, the non-mathematician. The answer is a good one: in the 6th Century, no one, not even the Hindus, had yet invented it.

The other gem has to do with the spelling of "millennium," which Gould maintains has to have two N's because it is composed of "mille" ("One thousand") and "annus" ("year"). Spelled with one N, it would mean one thousand circles ("anus" = "circle") or one thousand.... well, you get my drift.

Keep up the good work at ATG.

Sincerely yours,
David R. Fritsch
(Senior Manager, Business Development,
The Faxon Company, 1295 King George Blvd., Ann Arbor MI 48108
734/677-3530; fax 734/677-0955)
<fritsch@faxon.com>
<http://www.faxon.com>

Dear Editor:

Is a "rare bookseller" (ATG, November 1997, p. 72) different from a "rare book seller"?

Another great issue.

Warm good wishes,
Michael Gorman
Dean of Library Services, CSU-Fresno
<michael_gorman@csufresno.edu>