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Adventures in Librarianship -- New Dumster Collegiate

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for the company, is **Franklin's** willingness to step up to that challenge. Entering the approval plan market, for instance, was a bold move. What other smaller booksellers have developed comprehensive approval plans in the last ten years? When **Nova Southeastern University** approached us to help them acquire a shelf-ready opening day collection for a new library, we created a tech services department to handle their needs. That department now serves a growing number of our customers for whom we provide processing and cataloging, including original cataloging. As a company, **Franklin** has a history of boldness, of trying new approaches. That makes it much easier to compete with big companies.

ATG: *What would your say is the greatest challenge facing the small book vendor today?*

BS: Losing your enthusiasm. This business is tougher than most, because of the very low margins and a lack of significant economies of scale; each transaction requires a lot of handling to be done right. Over time, especially in trying economic conditions, the world can get pretty discouraging for companies that are failing to find ways to grow. That discouragement can seep into the fabric of the company and affect quality of service and relations with customers. That's where the downward spiral begins. I'm fortunate to be working in a place that energizes me, personally and professionally. I almost feel guilty (almost) telling people how much fun I have in my work. For me, working at **Franklin Book Company** is a great way to be both a librarian and a bookseller, but I'm not sure all my colleagues on the vendor side of things are having as much fun as I am. That's not to say we don't have challenges. All businesses do. We're just doing our level-best to turn them into opportunities.

ATG: *I've seen your Website and it looks great and navigates smoothly! What do you envision for the future of your online ordering/ interactive Website?*

BS: We're looking to add more content, so the information is of even better use to our customers. We're also constantly looking at the flow of processes on the Website, in order to keep its use as efficient as possible. There's always room for improvement. Even if those improvements are measured in individual keystrokes, incrementally those add up to have a positive impact to our customers.

ATG: *How many staff do you currently employ and how is Franklin generally organized?*

BS: There's a certain seasonality to this business. On average, our staff numbers around fifty, and we're growing. We're experiencing growth in all our service areas, though standing orders have really taken off in the last year, so we've added staff to handle the increased volume. We recently added staff in customer service and approvals as well. Especially in a down market, it is really gratifying to welcome new employees. As a measure of success, providing jobs can be a very rewarding experience.

ATG: *Do you see Franklin taking a position in the whole e-books trade? Do you envision making e-books a part of your inventory?*

BS: We're not opposed to the idea. Personally, I don't know why eBook producers would need companies like **Franklin** to market their wares. If they come up with a model that welcomes our involvement, and is financially viable, we'd be open to exploration.

ATG: *Where do you see Franklin going within five years? What directions have you considered taking?*

BS: I hope we go firmly into the past in the next five years. By that, I mean that li-

braries are as in need as ever for companies that understand good, old-fashioned bookselling. I remember a time when booksellers were valued as much for their knowledge of books and publishing as for their turnaround time. In the last 15 years, I think a warehousing kind of mentality has overtaken the industry. While some efficiencies have resulted, at least on paper, I think the overall quality of what booksellers provide libraries has eroded. Our goal is to maintain the best of the past while continuing to modernize our systems and procedures. If the science of bookselling leaves no room for the older art and craft of bookselling, libraries and their users will be the ultimate losers. Our task is to make sure the best parts of the past are included in the future we offer the libraries we serve.

ATG: *Where do you find your greatest sense of professional accomplishment?*

BS: I love libraries, and I love selling books. The combination provides me with a great sense of challenge and accomplishment. While I don't think I'm suited to just any business, I've found a meaningful home in bookselling to libraries. Helping a company like **Franklin Book** grow and better serve its customers is very rewarding. If we can continue to compete effectively against the big companies, and I'm convinced we can, then watching **Franklin** grow will bring a great sense of accomplishment.

ATG: *Finally, what do you do with your "copious free time?"*

BS: Visit my home (I'm on the road a lot), read, go to movies, worry about the future of America, watch our daughter turn into a delightful and interesting adult.

ATG: *Bob, thank you so much for your time. Is there anything else you'd like to add?*

BS: Just thanks for giving me the opportunity to share the **Franklin** story. I'm honored. 🐶

Adventures in Librarianship — New Dumster Collegiate

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

Preface

Dumster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 12th edition, builds on the scholarship of past editions and corrects nearly half of the mistakes in the 11th. For instance, readers will be pleased to see that we have changed the citation of "ploural" to the technically more correct "plural." And where the phrase "new trality" may once have been, for a very short time, acceptable, we have settled on the more broadly prescribed: neutrality.

In a daring move, our editors have broken with tradition and overthrown the tyranny of "alphabetical order." Dumster's 12th has been organized by a "length of word" standard de-

veloped by our editorial engineers. This puts shorter words such as "a" and "t" toward the front, and mightily long words such as "quantumization" and "individulosity" toward the back. The editors feel that this approach is not only more cost effective, but will add a certain serendipity to the dictionary experience. With a nod to democracy in action, our lexicographers have added to the 12th edition new words selected by a reader referendum. These new words plug obvious holes in our language and will be useful to students and laymen alike. For instance, we can now call a small apartment a "condominimum." An annoying young person is now a "juvenirritant." And we can feel

both correct and well read when using "thebutant" to describe an uninformed theatergoer.

For the 12th edition, Dumster chose contemporary usage over archaic whenever faced with disputed definitions. Guidance for much of contemporary usage came by way of Mr. Anthony Soprano, a charming character who goes by "Snoop Dog," and my niece, Amber. Consequently, "ax" has to do with questioning, not the chopping of wood. "Baked" has much to do with intoxication and little to do with bread. "Nephews" are no longer related to you by blood. And "bomb," which was once a very bad thing, is now a very good thing. We believe these changes will help increase essay exam scores in our nation's high schools and community colleges.

The use of pictorial illustration has been
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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Robert Scott Small Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Under the able direction of editor-in-chief **Joel Mokyr**, **Oxford University Press** has produced another valuable set that should have particular appeal to academic libraries. Firmly based on recent scholarship, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History* (2003, 0195170946, \$695) reflects the interplay between economic practices and society throughout world history. While the arrangement of articles is alphabetical, conceptually the encyclopedia is organized into broad categories. Articles fit within topics like geography (by countries, regions and cities), as well as demography, agriculture, labor, and natural resources. In addition, other broad categories include money, banking and finance; production systems, business history and technology; and macroeconomics and international economics. There are also over 125 individual and family biographies ranging from bankers to inventors and labor leaders to entrepreneurs. Nearly 900 separate articles, and sub articles, make up the set's five volumes and fill out the broad categories mentioned above. They cover topics as diverse as crop rotation, black markets, free trade, public housing, smuggling, financial panics, pest control,

labor mobility, the clothing trades and the computer industry.

The articles are accessible and not overly technical. Nonetheless they are intended for a scholarly audience. Each is well researched and has a selected bibliography containing primary sources and important works. The editors have also provided a 16-page listing of relevant Internet sites current as of Spring 2003, "See also" references link related articles and there is a thorough index to the entire set in the last volume. Importantly, for an encyclopedia covering such an interdisciplinary subject, there is a "Topical Outline of Articles" giving the reader a useful overview of the range and relationship of the topics covered.

Although the contents could still be seen as "western-centric," authors were asked to include non-western economics whenever relevant, and two members of the editorial board are specialists in non-western economies. This concern is most obvious in the individual articles on the specific geographic entities ranging from Hong Kong to Pakistan and ancient Japan to the Ottoman Empire, but it is also interwoven in articles covering broader topics like the agricultural revolution, money and coinage and urbanization.

The *Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History* is a set that will take a well-deserved place on a number of academic library shelves. Employing their usual high standards of scholarship, Oxford University Press has produced a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to the history of the "dismal science" not available elsewhere. Most academic libraries should give it strong consideration.

The *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* (2003, 0816045399, \$65) centers on a unique chapter in African American history. Resulting from the Great Migration of black Americans from the

rural South to Northern and Midwestern cities, a cultural consciousness and artistic outpouring found its focus in Harlem during the 1920's and 1930's. This one volume encyclopedia informs this development with articles on key movements like Black Nationalism and the Pan-African Congress, important organizations like the **National Urban League** and the **NAACP** and influential publications like the *Amsterdam News* and *Crisis*. There are also articles on major art forms like jazz and folk art, events like the Harlem Riots and the Scottsboro trial and specific issues like interracial interaction and the Jim Crow laws. Another major feature of this book is the coverage of the artists, musicians, writers, and thinkers who fueled the Harlem Renaissance. Numerous individual biographies, as well as articles on specific works run throughout this work. The arrangement of articles is alphabetical and there is a general index as well as a list of entries by topic. There are also a number of useful appendices including a glossary of Harlem Renaissance slang, a chronology, a map section, and a list of further readings, above and beyond the brief bibliographies at the end of each entry.

The more one examines the *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, the more one is impressed. It is a fascinating and carefully considered work on a pivotal time in African American history. This book will be useful for high school students and undergraduates, as well as the general reader, and should find a home in all types of libraries. Depending on need, it is appropriate for reference or circulation. (A paperback edition is available from Checkmark Books, 0816045402, \$21.95.)

Sage Reference has also released a one-volume encyclopedia that will find an avid audience in a variety of libraries. *The Encyclopedia of Murder and Violent Crime* (2003, 076192437X, \$125), edited by **Dr. Eric Hickey**, contains more than 200 articles that range from those on theories of aggression, to ones centered on organized crime to others dealing with various forms of violent behavior. Written by more than 100 qualified scholars and practitioners, these articles are serious and informed, being both descriptive and fact filled. Aside from the broad topics mentioned above, other articles in the encyclopedia center on criminal investigation techniques and forensic science, family violence, juvenile crime and gangs, homicide, serial and mass murder, terrorism, psychological theories, and victimology. Also given space in this book are specific crimes like the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, atrocities like the ethnic cleansing in Serbia, and infamous offenders like the Boston Strangler, Albert DeSalvo. Access to the information in the encyclopedia is provided by a solid general index, an alphabetical list of entries and a "Reader's Guide" of entries classified by related topics. Additional

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expanded in the 12th edition. Kudos to our illustrator, Andrew Grabson, for creating miniature woodblock renditions of such difficult subjects as "parsimony," "atmosphere," and "skulk."

Because of the recent departure of our Etymologist, Dr. Howard Kanker, the dates of first usage, bracketed at the end of each definition, are "guesstimates" based on editorial fancy and back-room dice tossing. Though the dates should not be cited as fully "accurate," we believe they will be of interest to scholars, numerologists, and doctoral candidates in the field of chaos theory.

Close readers will notice that this edition has dropped the words "catena," "kittle," and "supinate." A poll of our office staff revealed that not one of us had ever used those words. Subsequently, our editors decided that they were just "clogging up the works." We suggest that our readers, should they come across those words in conversation or in text, simply frown and look the other way.

Finally, we have added to our back matter with the 12th edition. Along with the standard sections for biographical entries, geographical names, and casino addresses, we have added sections for cable channel conversion and Serbian slang. We believe that these, along with all the changes in *Dumster's 12th*, will serve our reader well and continue our 50-year tradition of excellence.