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And They Were There -- Reports of Meetings -- Annual Conference of the Professional/Scholarly Publishing (PSP) Division of the American Association of Publishers (AAP)

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was found in an old stack room under some collapsed wooden shelving and the death was thought to be an accident. Tony does not believe the death is an accident, but believes she actually had been struck on the head by "a great heavy book, calf-bound with brass edges," a pedantic detail appreciated by Mrs. Malory. As we learn more about Gwen, we discover she was a rather despicable woman, irascible, mean spirited, hated by many (including her sister), and was quite possibly blackmailing more than one individual, including Tony's fiancé. Fortunately, these descriptors are unusual when one reads about librarians, except for that word spinster! But there appear to be several suspects in her mysterious death.

When Mrs. Malory questions Tony on why he has not shared his suspicions that Gwen's death was not an accident, Tony admits he hasn't told the police his suspicions because of the tabloid press, and adverse publicity for the Bodleian. He did not want to read a possible head line noting "The Body in the Library" (The Body in the Bodley?).

The narrator of the story, Mrs. Malory, is a writer of literary criticism who lives in the English seaside village of Taviscombe. She is temporarily staying in Oxford to research her current project. She admits that she has always "loved working in libraries," especially the Bodleian. She observes that the atmosphere of "accumulated centuries of learning had seemed almost a tangible thing, the cloak of history thrown round my shoulders." She enjoys inhaling that "marvelous library smell that seems to be equally composed of dust, books, and central heating." She provides further descriptions of both old and new parts of the Library, presenting an appealing picture of one of the Great Libraries and an unusual setting for a murder. Mrs. Malory is also a likeable, if sometimes bumbling, amateur sleuth, who eventually pieces together the mystery. Her sleuthing leads to delving into the past, including a painful reexamination of her own happy college days at Oxford, and the diaries of Gwen Richmond from WW II which evoke tragic memories of England during the war.

I sampled another Holt book and read *Mrs. Malory Wonders Why* (1995). While this story is not based in a library nor has librarians as

characters, the Taviscombe public library is mentioned in one chapter. A science fiction writer (a friend of Mrs. Malory's son) has been invited to give a talk in the library. Mrs. Malory has invited the speaker to spend the night with them, as the library staff member who arranged the talk had made reservations for him in a "notoriously uncomfortable hotel with vile food and a surly staff." Probably speaks to the lack of funds in the library's budget for sponsoring these events. But on the positive side, the library is shown to be a respectable place where the speaker won't be at his usual panel in a smoke-filled room, with a less than sober audience, "where the amber liquid's been flowing pretty well nonstop all day." As he was told in a comforting tone, "there won't be anything like that in Taviscombe Library!" Perhaps more's the pity!

According to her Website (www.hazelholt.co.uk/), **Hazel Holt** began writing fiction at the age of sixty and has averaged one a year since. Specializing in crime fiction, her primary character is *Sheila Malory* and *The Cruellest Month* is the second title in this series.

And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — Annual Conference of the Professional/Scholarly Publishing (PSP) Division of the American Association of Publishers (AAP)

Column Editor: **Sever Bordeianu** (University of Mexico) <sbordeia@unm.edu>

Annual Conference of the Professional/Scholarly Publishing (PSP) Division of the American Association of Publishers (AAP)
Washington, DC., February 2004.

Reported by **Judy Luther, MLS, MBA** (Informed Strategies;
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Open Access — Publisher Perspectives

Given the passion of those committed to open access, it can be challenging to achieve a balanced view that looks at the variables and options without being caught up in the moralistic fervor. The underlying question is where in the information chain should the costs be accommodated — at point of acquisition (by the library), point of use (by the user) or further up the chain by the author (at the point where it enters the distribution chain)?

Evidence at this early stage is anecdotal and opinions are based more on preferences and beliefs than real working models. The **Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)**, a UK based organization) just commissioned a report to analyze and document experiences of publishers that have tried open access systems.

In February, the *Annual Conference of the Professional/Scholarly Publishing (PSP) Division of the American Association of Publishers (AAP)* was held in Washington, DC. Approximately 200 attendees from a mix of large society and commercial publishers focused on the topic of "Value in a Culture of Open Access."

The tone was one of inquiry with some loyalty to and defense of

existing subscription models that are an integral part of the financial health of some societies and core to their mission.

According to **Don King**, Research Professor at the School of Information at the **University of Pittsburg**, the decline in individual print subscriptions can be attributed in part to electronic access provided by the library. **Tom Sanville**, Executive Director of **Ohiolink**, felt that a print archive was only needed if the print version was different than the online version. These trends require that many societies reengineer their publishing processes, creating the electronic version as the primary with print as a by product.

Usage Based

Author of *Information Rules*, **Hal Varian**, who has a joint faculty appointment in the Schools of Information Management as well as Business at **UC Berkeley**, recognized that "information is costly to produce but cheap to reproduce." With high fixed costs and low variable costs, **Hal** concluded that information should be priced on its value rather than its costs.

Although the price of electronic journals is based on access, many agreed with **Karen Hunter**, Senior VP of Strategy at **Elsevier**, who

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stated that usage determines value. Usage of **Science Direct** has doubled each year and currently is at 400,000 downloads/year which averages 67/ uses/article and 44% from current year titles. However, **Karen** noted that libraries don't want use based pricing that doesn't have a cap and **Tom Sanville** added that publishers also need a firm revenue base.

Howard Ratner, CTO of **Nature**, looked at different ways to increase usage including indexing by **Google**, **TOC** alerts and reference linking, in addition to the more traditional abstracting and indexing services. Looking forward **Howard** believes the future lies in **RSS** (really simple syndication) which is currently being used by news aggregators to keep readers up-to-date on the latest Weblogs. Potential applications of **RSS** are numerous and exciting but it's not yet widely adopted.

Publisher Concerns

While discussing different approaches to **Open Access**, some publishers voiced their concerns that new models could work well. **John Ewing**, Executive Director of the **American Mathematical Society**, pointed out his reservations.

- Relying on grants to underwrite the cost of publishing could give the sciences an edge since social science and humanities typically lack the strong grant funding.
- Scholars in developing nations can't afford the equivalent of page charges and will be at a disadvantage.
- It is likely that more papers will be published if driven by author charges.

Michael Jensen, Director of Publishing Technologies at the **National Academy of Sciences (NAS)**, stated their goal to recover their costs while achieving the widest possible dissemination. **NAS** achieved early success years ago by putting a less than optimal version of the full text of their books on the Web in **HTML** which effectively increased their book sales. However, an experiment they conducted recently indicated that if potential buyers had access to a downloadable pdf version, book sales would fall by 44%.

Conclusion

The sole academic librarian attending this meeting, **Doug Jones**, is from the science and engineering team at the **University of Arizona**. He found the program dealt with congruent issues similar to those facing librarians. The leading question is how can we leverage access to the scholarly record in ways that serve the end user with constrained resources?

Publishers are experiencing many of the same stresses that affect librarians as their users expect (and are receiving) easy access to more content. More than a tool, technology becomes a driver, enabling new levels of service and requiring new business models. We must all adapt.

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Leaving the Books Behind

by **Mary E. (Tinker) Massey** (MLS Student, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC) <MMassey@gwm.sc.edu>

From the late 70's to mid 90's, I was wedded to serials in a number of unusual ways. I began as a copy cataloger in a new serials unit where we were responsible for cataloging in all languages and for all subject areas. It was a challenge and a great excitement in my life. Our unit head erased many of the lines that divided librarians from copy catalogers in those days. She taught us well, then had us **CONSER** trained, authority trained, and exposed to any and all of the **OCLC** and **SOLINET** serials courses possible. I found myself helping to set up the subject formats for the **Florida Newspaper Project** and handling all of the microform cataloging for serials. Each day I had a passion to learn more about serials and do better cataloging. Suddenly, I was asked to handle all of the serials problems in a new maintenance unit, where I did serial reclassification, withdrawals for all system cohorts, and coordinated solutions for many of the online problems that involved faculty complaints of poor access. Those days were so busy, that I never dreamed of being able to go back to school. Now, after the loss of two husbands, retirement, and a small stroke, I am working in two different li-

braries and in school working on that elusive **MLS**. The new opportunity to discuss library trends and problems and explore new solutions has given impetus to my life.

In November 2003, our serials class was required to attend the **Charleston Conference**. Between **Heidi Hoermann**, our teacher, and **Katina Strauch**, who cordially invited us, we were merged into the full process of that conference. We not only attended the vendor's room, we helped at the registration desk and other directional activities, while arranging to go to separate sessions and report on the presentations. The doors were opened and we marched through like a half blind army, but we learned. We learned, of course, about serials, but we also learned about conferences and mentoring and the importance of making contacts in this profession. No lesson in a classroom could have been clearer to us. We took away the physical paraphernalia of the vendor's

room, the information dispersed by real professionals, the problems that face the profession, possible solutions and compromises, and the motivational spirit to get involved on any level of

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