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Letters to the Editor

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From Your (traveling) Editor:

The February issue of *ATG* is late because I have been gone from home more than I have been here this year. Still, *ATG*'s staff has been working away to produce the fantastic issue that you are holding in your hand! We have a series of article snippets collected by our guest editor, **Kirstin Steele**, about special personal collections of materials, from rocks and tractors, to china and rabbits, to books on the **Civil War** and **Nancy Drew**. There's an **ATG Special Report** from **Barbara M. Coopey** and **Ann M. Snowman** entitled "ILL Purchase Express" which is about **Penn State's** pilot project to convert interlibrary loans to rush order acquisition. We have a fascinating interview with **Matthew Bruccoli**, the dean of the **Dictionary of Literary Biography**. As well as an interview with the new **EBSCO CEO, Dixon Brooke**. And **John Riley** has interviewed **Gregory Desilet**, self-published author of *Our Faith in Evil*. **Maria Silva Kuhn** is our profile encouraged for this issue and our **Biz of Acq** author. Check out her article "How to Select a Vendor for an Approval Plan: Through Friendship, Personality or an RFP?" on page 50.

Ramune Kubilius and all her *ATG* reporters attended the **2005 Charleston Conference** and have submitted reports galore! So if you missed it, you can catch-up here, see pages 53-72. And there

are plenty of reviews in this issue too, including **Ellen Finnie Duranceau's** review of *Ambient Findability: What We Find Changes Who We Become* by **Peter Morville**. **Anne Robichaux** tells us about the Librarian of Basra, a true story from Iraq, about a very courageous chief librarian and **Debbie Vaughn** has brought us **Phillip Powell's** reviews of battlegrounds and bridges. Of course, **Tom Gilson** has been hard at work providing us with many reviews of reference titles like: *A to Zoo Subject access to Children's Picture Books*, that you won't want to miss.

Also, we have **Cris Ferguson** who tells us what in the **WorldCat OCLC** is up to, while **Kristen DeVoe** fills us in on podcasts and podcasting. And don't miss **Cynthia Hodgson's** standards article on the **NISO Metasearch Initiative**. Plus there's lots more.

Well, gotta run. I am heading off to Burbank, California. Sounds like a **Raymond Chandler** novel.

Cheers, **Yr. Ed.** 



Letters to the Editor

Send letters to <kstrauch@comcast.net>, phone or fax 843-723-3536, or snail mail: *Against the Grain*, 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:

Mark Herring ("OpEd: Giving Thanks" — *ATG* Dec/Jan 2006 issue) has a very different idea of gratitude than I do. His case for "gratitude" is built on comparing the US to other nations in order to prove a case of greatness on every front — freedoms, economy, power.

Gratitude, in my mind, is a quality of humble appreciation for gifts received, not a boastful and competitive pride; gratitude contains compassion for



those struggling with less auspicious circumstances, and in its pure form is not compatible with an assertion of superiority. Thesaurus.com offers these words as synonyms of "gratitude:" appreciativeness, grace, honor, indebtedness, obligation, praise, recognition." These words

support a sense that gratitude is about

feeling indebted, obligated, as a result of having received, not a feeling of winning when others are losing, or being right when others are wrong.

In place of the competitive nationalism that emerged when I read **Herring's** piece, I'd like to quote **Lloyd Stone**, whose words for "This is My Song" have been put to music: "This is my home, the country where my heart is, here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; but other hearts in other lands are beating, with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine. My country's skies are bluer than the ocean, and sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine; but other lands have sunlight too, and clover, and skies everywhere as blue as mine." He closes by saying his is a "song of peace for their land and for mine."

Our world needs unity, not divisive comparisons that purport to show US superiority under a guise of "gratitude."

And aside from my personal disagreement with this OpEd piece, I'd like to see politics kept out of the pages of our professional literature, unless directly related to a professional topic (e.g., government policies related to open access etc.) The blatant support for particular political leaders and against a particular political party — without any professional context — that is stated in this piece does not, I don't think, belong in the pages of *ATG* or any other professional journal.

Ellen Duranceau
(speaking for myself, employed in MIT Libraries)
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AGAINST THE GRAIN DEADLINES VOLUME 18 — 2006-2007

<u>2006 Events</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Ad Reservation</u>	<u>Camera-Ready</u>
MLA, SLA, Book Expo	April 2006	02/22/06	03/08/06
ALA Annual	June 2006	04/26/06	05/10/06
Reference Publishing	September 2006	07/26/06	08/09/06
Charleston Conference	November 2006	09/20/06	10/04/06
ALA Midwinter	Dec. 06/Jan. 07	11/22/06	12/06/06

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