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Something to Think About -- Preparing for November

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Media Minder
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invited to participate in a discussion of evolving access and licensing models for digital video (streamed video-on-demand) in light of current institutional needs, and current technological and market realities.

Ambassador: Are there any plans to make those discussions available in a print version for instance for those that may not be able to attend?

US: I am certain there will be documents, blogs or wikis. Information will be posted on the NMM Website as plans are evolving.

Ambassador: I see that there is now a Best in Show awarded to the film that the attendees like best. How did that come about?

US: It was intended to be an opportunity for distributors to highlight a couple of new or special titles and to encourage buyers to visit all exhibitors and get audience reaction.

Ambassador: As you look into your crystal ball, what role do you see the market playing in collection development over the next ten years?

US: Collections are important to librarians and media specialists, especially relevant, standards-based content. The use of technology in the classroom may increase the need for content, but things are happening so fast that it is difficult for me to guess where we are heading. I do see a need for some kind of "Market." The time buyers set aside to spend looking at new programming without interruptions is invaluable. The Market is usually the only time most buyers meet with their company representatives, and the chance to form personal relationships is very important to them now and I imagine will be in the future. Networking with colleagues to exchange ideas and share strategies is another reason media professionals will keep coming back.

Ambassador: Thanks for your time. Have a great 30th market and hopefully 30 more!

Something to Think About — Preparing for November

Column Editor: **Mary E. (Tinker) Massey** (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Jack R. Hunt Library) <masse36e@erau.edu>

In July, I begin preparing for the **Charleston Conference**. I tend to push myself to add more meat to the workshop on coping with change. Finding new materials always seems to be a challenge, but answers and new material comes from strange places. This year, I was ravaging the **Barnes and Noble** shelves for mysteries when I suddenly saw a section of books for a dollar apiece. Being a little leery of the quality, I began reading the titles. Wow! I found four books new to me, but intriguing in their concepts on coping with change. There wasn't much listed on the Internet that I hadn't either read or scanned. This is a rare find. Now I'm off and running on a new slant for the presentation.

I had an email from a specialist at **UMI** who is interested in me giving some historical information for his presentation on indexing microfilm. I wasn't sure how I could help, but a short phone call elaborated on how I could be a solution for his needs in the presentation. I can add a slant that will be somewhat different and perhaps offer the attendees some new thoughts on the subject and set him up to present something very new and exciting. I tend to get really charged when there is new technology being presented. There is an opening of doors to creative ideas and that means the solving of problems. Perhaps I will hear just the right words that will begin a new path of solutions.

My other presentation will be on microfilm as primary and secondary sources for our journal collection. I think this will be fun. All I need is a couple more good articles or books that will cement the logical thought process in the speech. I look forward to the discussions we have at the end of the presentation, because I never fail to learn something new. Finding information — researching the topic is the essential step in producing an interesting speech. Ordering that information into a logical outline is also a must, but it is the way in which a topic is presented that makes it

good or just so-so. I look for the best handouts or make them based on my research and try to provide visuals that will keep people awake. The other feature I find necessary is to give the speech the feeling of a one-on-one conversation with each person in the room. Each person hears and interprets your speech according to his/her own experiential background, so don't be surprised to find you've made a point you don't remember saying. It's a little weird, but if it works for them, it works for me too.

The rest of the conference is involved with a great deal of preparation. Whether you learn about the sessions before you arrive or upon receipt of the program, you must sit down and examine all the topics and mark which ones you are interested in hearing. I hear people say, "If only I had known..." and I wonder why that happens. Preparation is most important! I usually make a schedule out each day with primary events to attend and back-ups if I get too tired or hungry to meet the schedule. Sometimes it is good to establish a few niches of down time so that you do not get burned out or worn out. You want to keep your energy high and keep storing that energy for your return home. Measure out the absorption of the conference energies and begin to assign them to various activities and tasks on the home front. This assures you of not becoming overloaded. Sometimes I spend time mentoring newcomers and get them to the right rooms on time. "Try it, you'll like it!" I find that I talk to a lot of people I have never met before and collect business cards as a simple hobby during the conference. The activity is fun and it's surprising who turns up in your collection. One year I sat in the large banquet room waiting for a presentation and found myself next to a person who was from California. It turns out that she knew me from **Listserv** communications and published articles and was delighted to finally meet me. You never

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Papa Abel Remembers — The Tale of A Band of Booksellers, Fasicle 7: Life After Reed College

by **Richard Abel** (Aged Independent Learner) <rael@easystreet.net>

After severing ties with **Reed College**, July 1960 found our small band as a now fully independent enterprise located in our new, off-campus home and business setting — exhilarating, but simultaneously, a daunting prospect!

Under **Tom Martin's** management, the Los Angeles office of **Richard Abel, Bookseller**, was rolled into the parent company shortly after our departure from **Reed**. Although still independently managed by **Tom**, no effort was made to establish it as an independent profit center because this would continue to involve complicated and costly accounting and recordkeeping procedures. In this new environment, we focused all efforts on keeping costs down and service standards high, standards that were intrinsically higher than the more limited services offered by competing wholesalers.

In the early days of every branch office opening, we tracked the level of imputed profitability to ensure that we never ran a money-losing office to the detriment of the overall firm. This new and more stringent operating environment also forced us to cast aside our notions of remaining a small, regional scholarly bookseller to a geographically restricted set of academic and research libraries. We now had to look further afield to a larger group of libraries. Our earliest vision calls to mind that famous cartoon of a United States map showing only the outline of New York State or Washington, D.C., with the immediately adjoining states vaguely outlined on their western periphery, fading off into a far and featureless Midwest and West Coast. That amusing depiction was not dissimilar to the vision held by us. But our view showed the mirror image, with the Eastern states fading off into a hazy vision somewhere just beyond the Rocky Mountain states. The need to generate larger sales and to support new costs encountered by the firm dictated this expanded service area.

Consequently, I spent a good deal of time on the road visiting not only our established library accounts but also soliciting new libraries. Some of the latter were psychologically daunting prospects for a tiny and scarcely known firm. **Stanford University** and the **University of California, Berkeley**, were two examples of libraries that I approached with considerable trepidation. Both were noted for their extensive collec-

tions, particularly knowledgeable staffs, and an elevated institutional stature. What was a small crew of young booksellers represented by this hardly-dry-behind-the-ears whippersnapper doing in such elevated precincts?

We received a warm reception at **Stanford** from **Elmer Grieder**, the acquisitions librarian, and **Edith Falconer**, the order librarian. **Elmer** was one of those very widely read, book-loving librarians who were such an ornament to the world of books. **Edith**, too, was very knowledgeable and an extraordinarily pleasant woman. Trial orders soon appeared. In due time, **Stanford University Library** and staff became good and enjoyable friends.

Dorothy Keller, the acquisitions librarian for the **UC-Berkeley Library**, was a very tough-minded bookwoman, who had manifestly learned in the school of hard knocks. She was more deliberate about testing us. Rather than send any trial orders for books needed by the library, she introduced us to a very engaging and bright young understudy, **Anne Lipow**, who was responsible for book acquisitions of the departmental libraries. We were not put off by this tactic but rather welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate what we could do. The departmental orders carried a significant number of “grey literature” and association publications, as might be expected. This was clearly planned as a trial by fire. We apparently performed adequately, and trial orders for the library began to appear in due course.

In the meantime, it became clear that the growth in accounts receivables and library accounts, as well as the growing accounting complexities associated therewith, exceeded the capacities of the bookkeeper hired the previous year. So, after a somewhat less than amicable parting of the ways, our outside accountant put us in touch with **Paul Sibley**. The change in the firm's accounting practices and reports soon made it evident that **Paul** was going to be a stalwart member of the team. Not only was he clearly the master of the accounts and their growing complexities but a font of good common-sense thinking, which proved over the years a substantial contribution to the planning required for the future.

Late in 1962, about a year after **Paul's** arrival, we had the good fortune of welcoming **Don Stave** aboard. **Don** was the acquisitions librarian in the research library of the **Hanford Atomic Works** outside Richland, Washington. He had become a good friend after we started working with that library and had volunteered much useful advice thereafter. We knew that we were going to need additional book and library strength in light of my frequent absences to visit libraries, the increased technical support requested by libraries, and **Fred Gullette's** imminent departure. Fortunately, **Don** decided to leave **Hanford** for a variety of personal reasons and selected our firm as his next and (as time would tell) lifelong place.

As noted, the overture to **Don** was based partly on the decision to open a San Francisco branch office to better serve the libraries in northern California, Nevada, and Colorado. One of the reasons for this gradual expansion eastward was because some of the librarians we had become acquainted with on the West Coast moved on to positions beyond our initial stomping grounds. In addition, we had to augment the numbers of libraries served to satisfy the exigencies of our new business setting. **Fred** agreed to open and manage that office, a venture undertaken in early 1963.

When not on the road, my job included marketing and selling; managing the firm; advance purchases of all suitable forthcoming titles from the publishers' seasonal advance catalogs; and inventory management, including picking books from our inventory and replacing that inventory as needed, managing the twice-weekly purchasing cycle to obtain ordered titles not in our inventory, and replenishing the in-house inventory in Portland. **Tom Martin** had the responsibility for picking books from the Los Angeles office inventory and managing that inventory. All orders to replenish his inventory came to Portland, with fulfillment either from the Portland inventory or through the mechanism of the Portland ordering procedure. **Lorene Dortch** assisted me in Portland, and dispatched the publishers' orders and organized the multi-part, 3"x5" publisher forms. The receiving staff matched these forms to the daily shipment receipts. This pattern of branch-central office ordering/inventory control was replicated as the company expanded geographically. I ordered all forthcoming titles for the Los Angeles office. These titles were delivered to the Portland office and reshipped to the Los Angeles office, coupled with the multi-part, 3"x5" publisher forms. All accounting, including accounts receivable management, was performed in the Portland office under **Paul Sibley's** control. When I was on the road, **Fred** assumed the inventory-control/ordering functions. With his departure, a trained bookperson had to be aboard to perform these functions, one of the reasons for bringing someone of **Don Stave's** stature aboard.

So, in early 1963 **Fred** was off to establish the second branch office for the firm in San Francisco. We sent no in-house backup person, as **Fred** believed he could find someone to handle those functions as well as the inventory management whenever he was on the road. The operating relationships remained the same as those we had established in connection with the conversion of the Los Angeles office to a branch office.

The complexities incident to the operation of three widely separated offices were increasing. Much of the firm's management and business was done over the phone. Such personal exchanges, marked by very useful input from the branch offices and the branch managers, helped maintain the sense of the common integrity and cohesiveness of the firm. Additionally, the two branch managers, both of whom also constituted the board, traveled to Portland on a regular schedule

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know who will be sitting next to you! Enjoy everyone and everything and try to ease yourself through the crowds of over 1000 people and umpteen presentations. It's like being plugged into a wall socket! Thanks to **Katina** and all the rest of the crew who give so many hours to ensure our access of knowledge and entertainment! 🌿