Letter from Oklahoma

About Book Reviews

by Tom Leonhardt (University of Oklahoma) <tom@libadm.lib.uoknor.edu>

"About Books" is a C-Span program about books and authors. Recently, I happened to catch part of a discussion about book reviewing. The most interesting person on the show and the one who had the most to say was Anne Truitt, an artist and author who became a book reviewer, too. She spoke about how much work it was to review art books, more time and effort than she was paid for. But she enjoyed it, even though reviewing, she said, "is being thrust into a procrastinate bed." She added that it is easier, as a reviewer, to mock than to critique and that it is easier to criticize than to create.

Those may seem like obvious observations but it is helpful from time to time, to state the obvious if only to oneself. The reviewer and the reader of reviews need to be aware of these perils and they also need to be conscious of the reviewer's right to hurt but while being "fair, generous in information about the book, and involved."

Truitt thinks that a reviewer's take on a book is crucial and is the very heart of a good review. Her favorite reviewer, who always has a good take on a book, is John Updike. He is an ideal model, but there is only one Updike. Nevertheless, ideals are useful even if we never achieve them.

As a sometimes reviewer, I take the job seriously, but am always in a quandary when I find something about a book that I don't like. In the world of librarianship it is not uncommon to know an author either personally or by reputation. That is fine as long as you are just a reader. You can dismiss the book as so much clap-trap with impunity as long as you don't do it publicly. But what if you are reviewing a book for publication? Then you must be on your best behavior. You can't write the first thing that comes to mind or if you do, you must take care to edit it so that your words are fair, accurate, and about the book. Book reviewers need not tell us how smart they are, how erudite and witty and above the nonsense that they have been forced to read for the sake of a review.

The book reviewer should give the book review reader a good take on the book, as Anne Truitt suggests. What is the book about, what did the author set out to do, how well was the goal achieved? A good review will almost substitute for the book itself and will allow the reader to know if the book is worth reading at all, worth reading immediately, worth reading at another time, or not worth the time of day.

Although the reviewer should not insinuate himself into the review — it is about the book and the author's craftsmanship — it is important that the reviewer know what he is writing about. In Deadline For a Critic, by William X. Kienzle, several victims of a reviewer, wish him dead. Somewhere in the book a character suggests that reviewers ought to be licensed and that license ought to be revoked the first time the reviewer pans something he knows nothing about.

Book review editors don't issue actual licenses but they do serve as gatekeepers and should have some sense of a reviewer's qualifications. There may be no license to pull, but the editor can stop sending books to a reviewer who demonstrates either a lack of knowledge, personally attacks the author, or who fails to give the reader a take on the book.

Personal attacks have no business in a book review but when a book is not up to snuff, the reviewer has an obligation to say so, but in a way that gives credit for the effort that went into the book. No matter how bad, a lot of effort went into the book. A little charity goes a long way.

What if you know the author? Should you automatically decline to review a book by a friend or acquaintance? Some would say yes because to go ahead and review a friend's book is a conflict of interest. While honesty may be the best policy, in the interests of friendship some things should not be said. Return the book if it is not going to get an enthusiastic review. But if the review is too enthusiastic? That won't cost a friendship but it could result in a loss of credibility if the review is not honest. One does not incontrovertible lose one's critical judgment just because an author is a friend or acquaintance, but if the point of view, the take on the book, is clouded by personal feelings, the review should be someone else's responsibility.

Worse than giving a friend an undeserved good review is panning the work of someone you don't like. There is no excuse for accepting a book by someone you will not be able to treat fairly. Even if you think that your personal feelings can be set aside and an honest reading of the book can follow, you should not review the book. Or review the book, have it certified as a miracle, and you will be on your way to sainthood. I don't think so.

A well-written review is its own reward — and you get to keep the book, too.
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Review by Cecelia Brown, Ph.D. (U. of Oklahoma, Bizzell Memorial Library, 401 W. Brooks, Norman, OK 73019-0528 <cbrown@aarvard.ukcs.ou.edu>

Perhaps the greatest public-health concern of the late 20th century, HIV/AIDS knows no limits and touches the lives of a great many people. HIV/AIDS still lacks a cure; therefore, it is imperative that everyone, from the general public to high school teachers and to health care professionals, be armed with our only defense to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS — information. Dedicated to all individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, Huber and Gillaspy’s book, HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge, is designed to meet this crucial information need by providing a vocabulary to assist in the "creation, collection, organization, management, and dissemination of HIV/AIDS related information."

The authors generously acknowledge that several existing organizational schemes including Library of Congress Subject Headings, the National Library of Medicine’s Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), and Sears Subject Headings, provide terminology for organizing HIV/AIDS information. In fact, the authors take a deep bow to MeSH by significantly incorporating MeSH terms into their vocabulary. However, despite the great utility of these controlled vocabularies, Huber and Gillaspy contend that no existing controlled vocabulary truly addresses the multifaceted nature of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The need for a cross-disciplinary organizational scheme is realized by Huber and Gillaspy in their book HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge which is readily evident when one compares the MeSH and the new system. HIV/AIDS information which encompasses not only the biomedical sciences, but also addresses psychological, religious, economic, and social concerns.

HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-Related Terminology: A Means of Organizing the Body of Knowledge provides an excellent introduction as well as thorough instructions for use. The volume is divided into two indexes: the hierarchically arranged “Domains and Main Headings” which contains 10 major “domain” headings that are further subdivided into “main headings”; and the easily accessible “Alphabetical Index of HIV/AIDS” which encompasses not only the biomedical sciences, but also addresses psychological, religious, economic, and social concerns.

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Book Pricing Update

The Slowing Train: Ten Years of Monographic Price Increases

by Celia Scher Wagner (Blackwell) <WAGNER@BNAMF.BLACKWELL.COM>

It’s hard to know when a fluke turns into a trend, but I will go out on a limb this time and suggest that we have an actual trend in book pricing. Price rises are tapering off.

The long chart below tells the story of list prices over the past ten years. For monographs in all subject categories, the average price in 1985/86 was $32.48. By 1995/96, it had risen to $54.32, a 67% increase overall. You can find that 67% in the lower righthand corner of the chart.

Compound interest is mysterious even to many of us with retirement plans, but the fact is: if prices go up just a hair more than 5% next year, then at the end of 10 years, they will have gone up about 67% in all.

The bottom line of the first chart shows how much prices did rise, from year to year. From 1986 to 1987, prices jumped 16%. The next year, they jumped about 5.6%. And so on. Starting in 1992, price rises slowed down, and the rate of increase has stayed low.

To the far right of the chart are two columns showing price change over long stretches. The furthest right column shows the increase over the entire decade. The column second to the right shows the increase over the first five years of that decade. As you can see, in every case, prices rose much faster during the first half of the decade than they did over the whole time period studied. In Humanities and the Arts, for instance, prices went up 58% over ten years. More than two-thirds of the increase took place before 1992.

(Another mathematical puzzle occurs in computing percentage increases. From 1986 to 1996, as stated above, prices as a whole rose 67%. Between 1986 and 1991 (the first five years), they rose 43%. How much did they rise during the second five years? They rose 17%. Adding 43% and 17%, as you may already have noticed, gives a total of only 60%, not 67%. Why? Because to calculate the second five years, we moved the "base year" from 1986 to 1991. For this reason, because the figures are confusing, I’ve left the second-five-years off the chart. The conclusions remain the same: prices rose quickly at the beginning of the past decade and have risen much more slowly in recent years.)

The numbers in this first chart were not adjusted for inflation. In other words, if the list price on the book’s cover was $34.59, this chart shows $34.59.

In the smaller chart, however, the prices have been adjusted. The figures under column "85/86A" show what books would have cost in 1986, adjusted for inflation. Again, the righthand columns show the first five years of the decade, and the entire decade.

On the chart, the story is a bit different. If inflation is taken into account, then the big nominal price rises in the first five years of the decade weren’t really that big — from 1986 to 1991, everything was going up in price pretty quickly. Book prices went up faster than average, but not that much faster. For the entire decade, again, books went up faster than inflation. But as inflation slowed, so did the increase in book prices.

Are books getting less expensive? Not yet. But they are, by and large, getting more expensive more slowly than they used to — good news for those of us with shrinking, or static, book budgets.

### Average Book Prices in Humanities, Social Science, and S/T/M

**New titles only (reprints excluded)**

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<td>85/86</td>
<td>90/91A</td>
<td>95/96</td>
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<td><strong>Humanities/Arts</strong></td>
<td>$34.45</td>
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<td><strong>Social Science</strong></td>
<td>$36.59</td>
<td>$42.27</td>
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<td><strong>Sci/Tech/Med</strong></td>
<td>$60.91</td>
<td>$76.07</td>
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<td><strong>All titles</strong></td>
<td>$43.95</td>
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**Percent Increase**

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### Average Book Prices in Humanities, Social Science, and S/T/M

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<td><strong>Nominal list prices</strong></td>
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<td>85/86</td>
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<td><strong>Humanities/Arts</strong></td>
<td>$25.46</td>
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<td><strong>Social Science</strong></td>
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<td>$43.02</td>
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<td><strong>All titles</strong></td>
<td>$32.48</td>
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**Percent Increase**

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16.04% 5.62% 6.13% 4.80% 4.54% 12.51% 1.73% 1.64% 0.37% 0.50%
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Kathleen Kettermann (Univ. of North Carolina Press) <kjketter@email.unc.edu>

Founded in 1940, but only recently (1993) admitted to the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), Vanderbilt has 92 titles currently in print. With a staff of four, they publish approximately nine books per year. Located in the heart of country music land, they have a co-publishing program with the Country Music Foundation and also publish books in a wide range of subjects including, humanities, Latin American studies and philosophy to name a few.

Vanderbilt Univ. Press Best-Kept Secret

According to their Marketing Manager, Laurie Parker, Vanderbilt’s best-kept-secret is Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship by Robert Craft. This book is based on the detailed diary Craft kept for 25 years and is impressive in the author’s powers of observation and characterization covering the last decades of Stravinsky’s life. The book provides much primary material on twentieth-century cultural and intellectual history and is a standard biographical source on the composer’s life. The Washington Post Book World named it one of the best books of 1994, saying it was “...a little bit naughty, but very, very nice ... hours of witty, civilized entertainment.”

Vanderbilt Univ. Press Bestsellers

The all time bestseller for Vanderbilt is a sister’s account of her brother’s battle with AIDS, called Season of Grief and Grace: A Sister’s Story of AIDS by Susan Ford Wiltshire. Published in 1994, sales have approached 5,000 copies to date.

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Ashgate has long been a highly regarded international publisher in the humanities and social sciences. The company is renowned for producing high quality, specialized scholarly monographs and collected essays under the academic imprints — Avebury, Dartmouth, Scolar, and Variorum.

This year, the company is consolidating its academic imprints under the name Ashgate. This is the first step in a series of changes in the company’s far reaching international operation. By consolidating the extensive marketing and editorial departments of its academic imprints, Ashgate is able to increase its efficiency and better serve academics and libraries worldwide. Quality remains paramount.

Ashgate will continue to publish its library science, business, management, and professional and books under its Gower imprint. The professional publishing program includes Gower’s Chemical Reference Series which provides sophisticated sources of information for chemical research in both book and electronic format. Customers can expect Gower products to meet the same high standard of quality as always, and an even higher level of customer service.

As part of its new growth, Ashgate is making major technological upgrades to increase the speed of communication and reduce costs for customers. The first step has been the recent addition of a full-service World Wide Web site to complement the company’s extensive global marketing network. The Web site features a continually updated online catalog. It also includes sections presenting news and information of special interest to librarians, and a section on Ashgate’s newest books.

Ashgate plans to add other advanced electronic services to increase the efficiency and timeliness of communication with customers. This will include increased email capability and greater use of the Internet as an information tool through electronic brochures, newsletters, and press releases.

Ashgate is expanding its high quality scholarship by publishing worldwide. Special areas of development are North America and the Asia-Pacific region.

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Latin America in the Age of Multimedia: Librarians Participate in the Forty-First Annual Meeting of SALALM

Report by Claire-Lise Benaud & Sharon A. Mynahan
(Catalog Department, General Library, U. of New Mexico)

New York University was the site of the 1996 meeting of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). This year’s conference theme was SALALM in the Age of Multimedia: Technological Challenge and Social Change. Multimedia, was defined as anything from the traditional non-print forms (microforms, film, audio and video tape) to CD-ROMs, databases and computer networks. Panels addressed not only the formats and their uses but also the impact of these media on society and culture. Emerging technologies have had a tremendous impact on the methods and extent of communications throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (as they have elsewhere) and have posed tough questions of access, availability, and government control.

Highlighting the issues of legislation and government intervention, corporate control, and use of the airwaves and the Internet, was the keynote address by Robert McChesney of the University of Wisconsin. He compared today’s halting approach to possible government control or standards for the Internet to the fumbling and uncertain attempts to legislate standards for radio and television in the early days of mass media. He pointed to similarities in the acceptance of new technologies, the scrambling by various interests to harness the power of the new communications, and compared the past and present scenarios to their counterparts in Canada and Europe.

In contrast, Jose Soriano, Peruvian director of the Red Cientifica Peruana (RCP) described the reality of the Internet in Peru. He expressed the difficulties of accessing information in Peru: telephones, faxes, and even regular mail, which are taken for granted in the United States, but can still be a challenge in Peru. Telecommunication costs and computer costs are also much higher in Peru than in the US, adding to the challenge of bringing Internet resources to Peru. Soriano built RCP, a non-profit organization, to bring Internet resources to Peru.

His objectives are 1) to “peruanize” the Internet in order to have a network reflecting Peruvian life, language, culture, and 2) to allow all Peruvians to have easy access to RCP through community centers and libraries across Peru. He feels that RCP is a tool for democratization and hopes for independence of the network but also recognizes that armed Peruvian groups have been using email to carry out guerrilla warfare. RCP receives no funding from the Peruvian government. Soriano convinced Peruvian institutions to support the idea and to pay some 3,000 institutions involved in building the RCP network. He is now working with Peruvian small businesses to encourage their participation in RCP. He concluded by saying that there will be different levels of the Internet worldwide: the “super Internet” available in the United States, funded by the US government and delivering information in a very speedy way, and a second-class Internet, slower, with few Web pages, which may be viable for Peru.

The “Song, Dance, Screen and Stage: Collecting in the Performing Arts” session gave Salalmists the opportunity to be introduced to the Lincoln Center Collections.

The Center houses extensive media collections, since for dance, theatre, film, and music, media is as central as print. Peter Manuel in his presentation “Latin American Music” addressed recent trends in Latin American and Caribbean pop music. He described the representation of gender in both regions. Both the music industry and pop groups are male-dominated and reflect social attitudes. The common themes are love, violence and machismo with a strong anti-women bias. Latin American pop groups emphasize romance while lyrics from the Caribbean region have no sentimentality. Even though women are seen as sex objects in song lyrics, women are entering the field of pop music. The next speaker, Madeline Nichols, from the New York Public Performing Arts Library, described the American Exchange Program for Dance. Established in 1989, the program promotes the exchange of videotapes, exhibitions, and research. It is unusual in the fact that it has no staff and utilizes existing people and organizations. Most of its activities take place in Mexico. Lastly, Jerry Carlson, spoke on the importance of film for understanding modern Latin American culture. He noted that print and audiovisual cultures are intertwined in Latin America. Most “boom” writers produced literature under the influence of film and many recent Latin American novels were also made into movies. Unfortunately, Latin American films are not easily accessible in the United States and are even less accessible within Latin America itself. Latin American movies which end up in the United States are often redistributed in Latin America, but it still remains very difficult to see, for example, a Peruvian movie in Argentina.

An exciting panel entitled “Organizing, Protest, and Activism on the Web” looked at current events and the Internet in Latin America and the United States. Columbia University political scientist Douglas Chalmers discussed the new structure of civil society and the role of NGOs in forming public opinion and action via the Internet. New Mexico State’s Molly Molloy gave a firsthand account of the Zapatista movement’s use of the Internet to reach past attempts at government control of information and pointed out some of the pitfalls of accepting some Internet accounts at face value. She discussed issues of factual verification and the desire of all sides to reach the hearts and minds of the international community. The same panel included an account by South Dakota State University’s Susan Shaw of Native American libraries’ and the acceptance and use of Internet communications by traditional cultures.

Other panels discussed the Internet in library research and scholarship; collecting, using, preserving media (film, digital files, sound, etc.) and the impact of these activities on library budgets and procedures. In a discussion of the “Virtual Library in Theory and Practice,” panelists pointed out the need for maintenance, backup, migration to new systems, and database and benefits of the online library. Issues such as the integrity of the information through file migration, easily edited files, and aging technology pose new challenges to researchers wishing to document their information and sources.

Workshops and committees addressed outsourcing by catalog departments, the use of vendor cataloging records, cooperative acquisitions and processing, and standards for Latin American collections. Exhibitors from throughout the Americas and Europe provided a look at the wonderful array of print, media and services available. Everyone enjoyed the receptions, the chance to meet old and new friends, and those of us...
from the Southwest marveled at the huge rainstorm which dumped record amounts of water on the city.

**ASIS Midwinter Meeting**

Report by Julia Gelfand (UC, Irvine)
<jgelfand@orion.oac.uci.edu>

The “Midwinter Meeting” of the *American Society of Information Science (ASIS)* took place in San Diego May 20-23 with the theme “The Digital Revolution.” This was the first national ASIS meeting I have attended, but after reading issues of *JASIS* this past year devoted to issues and themes related to digital libraries, initiatives and projects, I was convinced this would be a good conference. The organizing committee could not be all bad with Clifford Lynch as this year’s ASIS President and Josie Marie Griffiths as chair of the technical organizing committee. I was not disappointed; rather I found the tracks of conference papers very good. Attendance at this conference was confirmed at nearly 500 persons, representing academic information scientists, computer scientists, practicing librarians in academic, government and corporate libraries, graduate students, consultants, publishers and information producers.

The keynote session was delivered by Dr. Sherry Turkle from MIT, known as the “Cybershink.” She spoke about her recent research “Reshaping Life in Cyberspace,” and her new book, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. It was a captivating talk, highly animated and contained anecdotes about her interviews with people who have had a great presence on the net and her studies of the intersection of the real and virtual worlds they enter and exit from. She interpreted how such people have a virtual “persona” and what a MUD (multi-user domain) is and how it functions. Other plenary sessions had Jeff Rulifson, from SUN Microsystems, and Dr. William Snyder, Chancellor of the University of Tennessee.

The contributed sessions were multi-tracked, and I rotated from listening to papers in the “Social Impact, Educational Impact” and “Digital Library” tracks. I found interesting sessions to cover such topics as “Electronic Scientific Publications: Role of Gatekeepers,” “Internal Web Pages: How Corporate and Academic Research Environments are Managing Information Access and Flow Internally Using World Wide Web Technology,” and a session by the librarians at the *Center for Scholarly Technology* at the Leavey Library at USC on “Teaching During the Revolution: The Implications of Digital Curricula.” One of the most charged sessions was a set of papers on research projects analyzing different aspects of Information Transfer. Prof. Stephen Harter from Indiana Univ. and his student reported on the impact of electronic journals on scholarly communication using citation method and found that there really has not been a significant impact to date, probably due to the multiple forms in which scholars cite e-journals, the accuracy and completeness of citations to such titles and the practical difficulties readers have in accessing articles published in e-journals. All four papers in this session tackled difficult issues in studying the impact of Web-based journals, proceedings, using homepages and finding information on the WWW. The annual meeting of ASIS will be in Baltimore in late October and next year’s midwinter meeting will again be in the southwest, in Scottsdale in early June. Lots of friends from the *Charleston Conferences* seemed to like ASIS as much as I did.

**IATUL '96**

Report by Julia Gelfand (UC, Irvine)
<jgelfand@orion.oac.uci.edu>

For the second time in its 42-year history, the *International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL)* continued on page 68

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HAZARDOUS MATERIALS HANDBOOK by Richard P. Pohanish and Stanley A. Greene

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And They Were There
from page 65

convened its annual meeting in North America. The 1996 conference was held June 24-28, 1996 at the University of California, Irvine, with its new integrated science & medical library as one of the main attractions to visit. 130 conference delegates came from 26 countries to share in the theme of “Networks, Networking and Implications for Digital Libraries.” Dr. Clifford Lynch, Director of Library Automation at the University of California delivered the keynote address with the response given by Paul Evan Peters, Executive Director of the Coalition of Networked Information (CNI). 65 presentations explored different topics related to the themes. Fifteen major sponsors offered product reviews and updates and contributed to the discussions of the conference. Field trips were made to Caltech, Huntington Library, University of Southern California’s Leavey Library, Los Angeles Public Library and Newport Beach Public Library. Julie Wilcock from the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, was the recipient of the Best Essay Prize for a paper delivered by a non-library director and non-commercially affiliated participant. Full Conference Proceedings are expected to be published at the end of the year. The IATUL 1997 will be held June 30—July 4 in Trondheim, Norway.

PSP/AAP — Professional/Scholarly Publishing Division of the Association of American Publishers

Report by Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counsellor)

The theme of this meeting held in March in Washington, DC, was “Do You Know Where Your Customers Are?” In spite of the unanswerable question posed (what’s a symposium without a catchy, if often cur- sory, “theme”?) there were several sessions pertaining to matters that directly or indirectly affect libraries. Especially interesting was a session captioned: “The Virtual Jobber: The Evolving Role of the Wholesaler in Bookstores & Libraries,” moderated by Harry McCullough, ex-sales manager of Macmillan, (pre Simon & Schuster) and paneled by Marcia Romanansky, Blackwell No. Am. and Glen Secor, Yankee Book Peddler, both of whom are well known to ATG readers. The third panelist was John Bohman who holds the recently coined (at least to my knowledge) title of “Vendor of Record.” Ingram Book Co. I can’t help commenting here that we can leave it to Ingram to come up with a position to deal with Virtual Jobbers. One of the participants let it be known that the title of “jobber” was not pleasing. No mention of “virtual.” As for me, I like to be called a jobber — especially a virtual jobber. From this session I took away one new bit of information: A “virtual” wholesaler (Ingram) was seeking better business terms from publishers so that he might be able to better deal with “virtual” library booksellers. Another session was entitled “New Media In The Business Marketplace.” It was chaired by Ted Nardin of McGraw Hill and paneled by several librarians. Another one-time Macmillan VP, Charles Smith, moderated a panel: “What Are the Think Tanks Thinking?” Charlie was for years head of Macmillan/Scribner reference book marketing which has seldom if ever dispensed of its wares through booksellers. In spite of this I have always respected him and came away from his session satisfied that it was one of the best. For details of this session refer to the AAP Newsletter on Website http://www.pub-lishers.org/div/psp/newsletter.html/.

Canadian Library Association

Report by Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counsellor)

In June, 1996, the Canadian Library Association was celebrating its 50th anniversary in Halifax, NS. I had the pleasure of attending with Fred Guilette (Book News). Because of a confusion in scheduling, I was unable to attend any sessions. But it was pleasing to visit with Norman Horrocks, a long-time senior editor of Scarecrow Press, who has returned to his native health and

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Spider and the Fly
by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This is an article about what is being developed in the world of Web spiders. Businesses are seeking to create the smarter spider; one which can be custom tailored to a browser's needs and set priorities based on a customer profile. One company called Agents Inc., has developed a creation they call "Firefly," which they feel is an intelligent agent able to navigate the Web more efficiently than traditional Web spiders. The author claims that smart agents may ease online gridlock "simply by making customers much more discriminating." See — "Spider's Helper by Nikhil Huthesis. Forbes, vol. 158 (1) (July 1, 1996), p. 79.

Mediocrity
by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article is based on the premise that software is, at best, mediocre because it is difficult to understand and falls on a predictable basis. The author, Stewart Alsop, then cites examples of software which he feels are poorly designed. Alsop cites four reasons for this: 1) computers change too quickly and software is unable to keep up 2) wiring software is extremely difficult 3) people who write software are "inherently less social" than others and 4) consumers do not really require that software work perfectly, i.e., they tolerate mediocrity. See — "The Trouble With Software is ... by Stewart Alsop, Fortune, vol. 133(11) (June 10, 1996), p. 100-101.

Very Important Tree
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Maddison brothers David and Wayne have planted the Tree of Life (TOL) on the Web, a vast endeavor that will ultimately include the genetic and evolutionary relationships, photographs, and life histories of every type of living organism. The sapling of only 20 months already has grown to more than 1000 pages of data on organisms in 7500 taxa branching across 10 computers on two continents. The online advantages are enormous, and in time it will include a peer-reviewed electronic journal. For now, scientists are elated at the ability to trace evolution, easily see masses of information not easily available elsewhere, and to share previously isolated work with colleagues across the globe. See http://phylogeny.arizona.edu/tree/phylogeny.html. See — "Web-Crawling Up the Tree of Life" by Virginia Morel, Science, vol. 273 (August 2, 1996), p. 568-570.

Take This Out for a Spin
by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article describes a service dubbed "TestDrive." The service provides what is described as an "electronic shrink wrap." The consumer may download a program from the publisher's electronic storefront located on a Web site. TestDrive allows that individual to use the product free of charge based on a set period of time chosen by the publisher. When their time is up, they are asked to either purchase the software or have the software automatically deleted from their hard drive. TestDrive has earned $1.6 million this year. Their chief executive, Edward Launing, would like to license this technology to CompuServe, Bababage and other large commercial ventures. See — "Try It, You'll Like It" by Nikhil Huthesis. Forbes, vol. 158 (1) (July 1, 1996), p. 78.

Software Success
by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article is about software economics, and spotlights a business called 1D Software, which has somehow "mastered the peculiar economics of the software industry." They understand the need of getting a firm foothold on the market. That foothold can "morph into a fortress." The article contains a detailed analysis of the economics of the software industry, from its high-fixed-cost/low-variable-cost nature to the philosophy behind success. See — "Give It Away and Get Rich" by James Aley, Fortune, vol. 133(11) (June 10, 1996), p. 90-98.

Research and Education: A Profitable Combination
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Most educators are enthusiastic about the National Science Foundation's (NSF) new Recognition Awards for the Integration of Research and Education (RAIRE) being offered to research intensive universities to help publicize innovative, campus-based efforts that integrate research and education at all levels. NSF is also looking for models that will help expand existing programs that promote these twin missions. Three-page applications due July 5 must be submitted electronically (see http://www/nsf.gov/od/osti). See — "Awards Mark Research-Learning Links" by Jeffrey John Hartung's book review of Kevin MacDonald's 'A People That Shall Dwell Alone ..., published in the journal of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES), led to allegations of censorship against Elsevier, and resulted in a new publishing contract guaranteeing editorial independence as well as modification of an HBES Internet discussion group to ban "insensitive" and "irrelevant" postings. See — "Publisher Draws Censorship Charge" by Constance Holden, Science, vol. 273 (July 12, 1996), p. 177.

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Publication Canceled
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

After Christopher Brand’s The G Factor was canceled on the eve of publication, Arthur Jensen’s tome on the “general intelligence” factor was also rejected by Wiley who concluded that they were “not the right publisher...”


Web Citations
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)


Survival and the Local Newspaper
by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)


Library Web Pages Spotlighted
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

This month the Cyberlibrarian column of IW highlights some of the Web pages created by librarians in the U.S. and Canada. Worth looking at for some specialized resources that may help in our work. See — “Look to the Librarians,” Internet World, August 1996, p. 28-30.

Filtering Access
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

IW Labs reviews seven currently available programs that filter Internet access. In the wake of the defeat of the Communications Decency Act, these filtering programs could be the answer parents, educators and others are looking for. See — “Safe Computing,” Internet World, September 1996, p. 49.

London Literary Scene
by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)


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Frenzy on the Net
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The National Science Foundation's NSF vBNS (very high-speed Backbone Network Service) connecting five supercomputer centers is in a merger frenzy as it links up with other specialized research networks. NSF also has 13 awards available under a program to fund links to vBNS from universities. See — "Research Agencies Cast a Wider Internet," edited by Jocelyn Kaiser in ScienceScope section, Science, vol. 273 (August 23, 1996), p. 1035.

Plug and Play
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

IWH Labs reviews four new plug-and-play servers that can save time and money in getting a Web site up and running: WebWorx 1 (Beyond 2000 Inc.); ProLiant 1500, Model 5-123 (Compaq Corp.); InterServe Web 30 (Intergraph); and WebCube Model 1200-133 (Pacific Internet). These new products provide an "instant" Web server without the hassle normally involved in setting one up. See — "Plug-and-Play Web Servers," Internet World, August 1996, p. 72.

Performance Speed
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

This article reports on IRAM, the latest brainchild of Dave Patterson, the computer science professor at UC Berkeley who pioneered RISC & RAID. IRAM, "intelligent RAM"—involves attempting to put a microprocessor into a memory chip, which would radically improve computer performance by improving memory speed. Explaining "why" gets a bit technical, but the bottom line is that combining RAM and microprocessor in one chip would eliminate the bottleneck presented by the "wiring" that connects memory to a processor in today's machines. See — "Intelligent RAM," Wired, August 1996, p. 72.

A Happy Union?
by Philip Dankert (Cornell University)

In this point of view article the author, who has been both a book review editor as well as editor of a print journal, expresses the belief that print and electronic book reviewing can coexist if both media evolve. "Each medium will do best by building on its strengths while recognizing those of the other." In concluding he notes that sometimes duplication creates not redundancy but additional possibilities. It may even happen, in the future, that scholars may wonder how they ever got along without the existence of both forms of publishing. See — "Print and Electronic Book Reviewing Can Peacefully Coexist," by Christopher L. Tomlins, Chronicle of Higher Education, August 9, 1996, p. A40.

Copy Service Blues
by Sarah Tusa (Lamar University)

The copy service that started as a private enterprise "with one copier in a converted taco stand" has announced plans to sell thirty percent of its stock to the New York buyout firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice Inc. Nanette Byrnes reveals the story behind the decision to go public and the growing pains involved. See — "Kinko's Goes Corporate" in Business Week, no. 3489, August 19, 1996, p.58-59.

Bioinformatics
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The annual special issue on computers links bioinformatics and the Internet, two boom areas in computer science. News stories include Internet congestion, software matchmakers helping to make sense of sequences, an article on Java, and on the new high-speed network which will link Russia's far-flung universities. There are also articles on mapping the protein universe, and the use of four-dimensional imaging to visualize movements within living systems. Full text with links to related resources can be found at http://www.sciencemag.org/science/scripts/display/full/273/5275/ 585.htm. See — "Computers '96" special section in Science, vol. 273 (August 2, 1996), p. 559-603.

Preprint Archive
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The American Physical Society (APS) has decided that the way to beat the Los Alamos National Laboratory electronic preprint archives extolled by physicists is to imitate it. APS now has its own prototype preprint server at http://publish.aps.org/preprint/, which will not only serve as a repository of preprints, but also the point from which articles are submitted to any APS journal. Differences from the Los Alamos site include a broader range of word processing formats.
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(Submitted by Norman Desmarais,
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charges on most titles. One way to compare
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and when those apply. You can ask to have
charges show up as a separate line on your
invoice so you can keep track of them.

To get back to the question of why you
use a vendor, your case is a perfect example.
The cost of going direct on your three-vol.
set has to include time spent processing an
individual invoice, having to deal with a
separate customer service dept. if there are
problems, perhaps paying exorbitant ship-
ning and handling charges, and finally cut-
ting a check (with its concomitant book-
keeping and auditing, which coincidently,
I have heard quoted at $40 for an individual
check, try $400 for the federal government).

In most cases, using your book jobber
saves you money, time and effort, but there
are still cases where it may save you a little
money to go direct. The best advice I have is
to stay in communication with your vendors
about discounts and service charges and
don’t be afraid to negotiate. Service charges,
just like discounts, can be negotiable.

And now that I have managed to ag-
crease my serial jobbing friends and open a
can of worms for my bookelling colleagues
I should end. I hope this has been helpful.

PUBLISHER RESPONSE:
(Submitted by John Tagler,
Director,
Corporate Communications,
Elsevier Science):

Your request for a response to an ATG
“Group Therapy” column query about mon-
ographic standing order prices has been for-
carded to me.

At Elsevier Science, the pricing of books
and book series — through vendors vs. Di-
rect from the publisher — is somewhat
that I feel we can contribute to substantially
in a dialogue. Our basic philosophy re: book
and book series pricing is that the librarian
should order from whomever provides the
best price, service and/or convenience.

We are not competing with booksellers
or agents on our pricing and we don’t really
monitor what they are charging for books,
unless we’re aware of egregious practices
(which hasn’t been the case in North America
late). Ordering directly from us is a con-
venience — if it’s wanted — but there is no
sense of price competition on our part.

Our position is pretty simple as stated
above and reading more into it would be
inappropriate.

SUBSCRIPTION AGENT
RESPONSE:
(Submitted by Adrian Alexander,
Senior Manager, Strategic
Development/Academic Market,
The Faxon Company, Inc. and
David R. Fritsch,
Senior Manager, Sales
Development,
The Faxon Company, Inc.):

Continuations/standing orders represent
the part of the serials world that poses many
of the most difficult problems faced by li-
braries and vendors alike. Variations abound
in terms of pricing and ordering policies
from publishers, so ensuring reliable fulfill-
ment of these titles is an ongoing challenge
for vendors.

Vendors typically handle continuations
in one of two ways:

1. On a “drop-ship” basis as with peri-
odical subscriptions; the volume or piece
is shipped directly from the publisher to the
library and is billed separately by the ven-
dor;

2. On a “re-ship” basis where the vol-
ume or piece is shipped first to the vendor
and then re-shipped to the library along with
the invoice.

Subscription agents employ Option 1
more often because their computer systems
typically are better suited for that, but some
agents can have used Option 2 as well.

As with all products and services, a li-
brary’s decision on whether to order con-
tinuations through a subscription agent, a
book jobber, or direct from the publisher
depends on the specific needs of the library.
Consolidating continuations with periodicals
from a single vendor can be advantageous,
for example, when comprehensive manage-
ment reports are needed and the libraries’
ILS cannot meet that need. Integrated li-
brary systems certainly have made tremen-
dous strides in that area, but their capabili-
ties are by no means standardized.

Other libraries have reported a prefer-
ence for using a subscription agent because
they went billing for both continuations and
periodicals consolidated, especially if their
materials’ budget is set up to segregate books
from serials. Type of publisher involved has
also been given as a reason for using a sub-
continued on page 75

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
subscription agent for continuations. For example, one large academic librarian reported a preference several years ago for Faxon over its book jobber in fulfilling orders for standing orders from European publishers. The library felt that the subscription agent had a better working relationship with the publishers in question than did the book jobber.

Another factor that plays into this is whether or not the library prefers a full service agent. In the jargon of the trade, most of the major subscription agencies are referred to as "full service catalog agents." The "full service" part means that the agent will accept and process an order for any serial title for which the publisher will accept the order and payment from an agent, regardless of whether or not the publisher grants the agent a discount.

Book distributors, on the other hand, sometimes specialize by type of material, or subject area (e.g., medical books), and so are not like the subscription agents in this sense. Sometimes book jobbers also do not deal with "net" (no discount) publishers and are not "full service" in this sense.

A large academic research library might well order sufficient numbers of continuations so that it makes sense to have multiple vendors for this type of material. A smaller library may not wish to establish more than one account for this type of material, and, if its subscription agent gives good service on continuations, may well find that ordering everything through the subscription agent is the best solution.

As with most things in the business, there is no single right or wrong answer to this question. The library's decision should be based on its specific needs and the capabilities of its particular vendors. Continuations and standing orders are a problem for all vendors, but subscription agents can boast their fair share of satisfied customers.

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And They Were There

from page 68

now acts as consulting editor for Scarecrow (See ATG, v.7#4, September 1995, p. 14). I also enjoyed talking again to Holly Melanson, acquisitions librarian at Dalhousie University. I rely on Holly to make suggestions as to where best I can trace the footsteps of the Acadians whose history has long been a favorite study of mine. I have a letter dated September 16 from Beverly Patacar, Meetings Manager, announcing "Reinventing Libraries," the theme for CLA's June 18-22, 1997 meeting in Ottawa. The conference program and trade show will be housed in the Ottawa Congress Centre and the Westin Hotel. For more information: Canadian Library Association, 200 Elgin St., Suite 602, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L5. Phone 613-232-9625. Fax 613-563-9895.

American Booksellers Association

Report by Lyman Newlin
(Book Trade Counsellor)

I don't like to run down an organization of which I have been a member for nearly half a century, especially when the annual meeting was held in my favorite big city, Chicago in June, 1996. In spite of the hype in PW and other media, I think ABA is trying to outsize the Frankfurt Book Fair and I think that's a horrible mistake. I don't think that foreign publishers come to ABA to sell or buy rights as they do at Frankfurt. There are too many stands hawking special writing or other kinds of quirky tools; T-shirt peddlers abounded. Add this to the fact that ABA is deadlocked at law with a large publisher which was not in attendance. Other biggies were absent or threatening to absent themselves. I'm happy that some librarians found the special librarian's enclave a haven of rest. But there was only one for librarians and one for booksellers. Both were far from the madding crowd. Until McCormick Place emulates Frankfurt with moving sidewalks and lots of jinettes, attendees had better be prepared for two and a half days of fatigue. Perhaps that's why ABA via Reed's Association and Exposition Services lobbed a day from the time-honored half week sessions! Postscript — Now Reed owns all of it! Here's a quote from Bookselling this Week, the ABA newsletter, continued on page 92
That’s right, it is time to stop the promotion of libraries. You have won. Al Gore and Bill Gates and Ameritech and IBM and Apple and thousands of companies and donors have gotten the message that libraries are critical to our social fabric. Real Estate agents still take newcomers by the library and point with pride at the wonderful facility. American taxpayers have invested billions of dollars in libraries during the past decade and they love their libraries. But, as I said in a speech nearly twenty years ago, “people love their libraries but they don’t know anything about their LIBRARIANS.”

It is not just my humble opinion that we need to move on and address the anonymity of librarians. Just as it took him two decades to grudgingly acknowledge that marketing has a role in library management, no less than John Berry of Library Journal in the September 1 issue of LJ, editorializes that “It is time to advocate librarians.” I know how painful it is for him to use the marketing terms, but it is not time to advocate librarians, it is time to shout out from the streets, it is time to be aggressive and forceful and proud and to promote, sell, market so that the public gives the same respect to the librarians who create and run those highly revered institutions. Advocate is such a passive and wimpy word that it hardly reeks of commitment or fire in the belly but then John signs his editorials with his title, Editor in Chief, but doesn’t seem proud enough of his MLS to add that he also is a librarian.

John then goes on to find somewhere to place the blame for this failure to promote the value of librarians. He is critical of ALA (easy enough to do in any case), the library schools and then the profession and in particular, the administrators. Well, John, you are missing the point with your well-intentioned editorial. When I first started selling books back in 1972, even as a dumb salesman I knew that libraries didn’t buy books, librarians did and if I didn’t know any librarians I wasn’t going to make any money. That being the case, it isn’t too great a leap to conclude that a library wouldn’t have anything inside if there weren’t any librarians. I told my friends what I did for a living and they were amazed to find out that librarians actually bought books. They knew that schools bought textbooks and that fire departments bought fire trucks so why the great mystery about librarians and book buying? Whose fault is it that this is such a secret? ALA? Library schools? No, it is the fault of the local librarian.

The Washington Post recently ran a story about institutions that invent new ways to serve the public. The lead off paragraph was about the Forsythe County Library in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and a great service they provide, but it didn’t mention the name of a single librarian. Bill Roberts, the director, is not only an old and dear friend and a man who helped me get started in this business, but he is also one of the most dedicated librarians I have ever met. He chose this profession after he started law school and opted for a career of service rather than profit. He stood up and got counted and was on network news when he took the position that even the KKK had the right to have an exhibit at the library. He is nationally prominent in Kiwanis, has served on ALA council and was a candidate for treasurer a few years ago. Still, even with his visibility, he couldn’t get a mention in the Post article. Once again, the value is placed on the library and not the librarian. In part, I’m sure, this is because Bill is also a modest man who gives credit to his staff first and then to the community that supports his library, but it is time to come out from under the bushel basket and give librarians credit where credit is due. If there are great libraries, then there also must be great librarians because great libraries don’t happen by accident.

Unlike Berry, I suggest that it is time to make sure that every press release you send out, every piece of literature, every promotion and event have a librarian’s name attached. It is time to personalize your service and to hand out business cards with your name and remind your customers that you are proud to be a librarian of service to them. It is too late for the library schools to help and ALA can’t keep an executive director long enough to take up the cause. The ALA board needs to stop spending money on lavish parties and limousines and the Council needs to stop spending its time on Bosnia and China. But that is unlikely to change, so it is up to you in your library to make sure at least one person each day knows the name and face of a librarian. No one else is going to do this for you. If you want some real good reasons to take some personal action right now then read Charlie Robinson’s comments in Library Administrators Digest September issue. Charlie is the editor as well as the first class marketer of libraries and library services. Robinson and Berry couldn’t be more apart. Robinson addresses the issues of the future and provokes thought rather than blase on faceless institutions. You will be inspired.

Timbuctu and Tony Too

I will miss the Charleston Conference this year, but at least I will be somewhere equally as interesting. My new bride, Patti, and I will be on our way to Timbuctu in West Africa. Patti and I met last year while I was on a cruise following the IFLA conference in Istanbul. She has worked on cruise ships for twelve years and been almost everywhere so a honeymoon in a unique place became a real challenge. This will be my third trip to Africa and we need to go in November when the Niger river is high enough to allow the very unreliable river steamers to make it from Bamako to Timbuctu. So, if anyone asks where I am this year, you could say, for all I know I could be in Timbuctu.
My plans for this issue of ATG were to paint some thumbnail sketches of eminent publishers I have known. I will continue that project as far as space in this issue allows after I write about some great ornithologists, authors, and bird painters I have known. This is by way of my paying tribute to Roger Tory Peterson, who died July 28 and for whom a memorial service was held October 12 in Jamestown, NY, his birthplace and boyhood hometown. He accepted Jamestown as home and made frequent visits, especially before and after he founded Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History in 1986. On August 29, 1993, it was our family's privilege to attend the dedication of the Institute's newly completed building on its own grounds near the Jamestown Community College campus. In his remarks on that occasion, Roger pointed to the nearby wooded surroundings and attributed his interest in nature to his boyhood wanderings in them as he studied birds, butterflies, and foliage.

My interest in birds goes back to a youth in which I spent much time out of doors in my several midwestern home states. The matter of identifying and learning more about birds I encountered was no easy matter. There was a little pocket-sized book with flexible cover which I cannot seem to locate by searching Wilson's Cumulative Index, 1928-1981. My memory says the book was entitled something like Guide to Water and Land Birds. Whatever its name was, it wasn't much good. I was raised in the land of dickcissel (spiza americana) whose Latin name indicates that it is the American sparrow, but I didn't know its name until years later when I purchased A Field Guide to the Birds by Roger Tory Peterson soon after I began in the book business. A Kansas boy in the city had no time (or money) for hunting. Golf was never for me so I took up bird watching in the Chicago parks and perhaps a couple of field trips to the Illinois or Indiana sand dunes. On an early field trip to the Indiana dunes, I saw and heard this "tiny meadow lark" which sat on fences or phone wires and sang or whistled his name over and over. I opened my new Field Guide and learned the name and essential facts about the dickcissel. Before that, I, like millions of Americans, admired most of the birds we saw, but never knew what they were named. Not until Roger Tory Peterson's Field Guide was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1934 did I have a workable guide for identification. Nor did I have anything to teach us that we had been wantonly destroying many useful birds by gun or trap or nest robbing.

All of the above is by way of gratefully acknowledging the life and work of a man whose heritage was to leave the publishing industry and the library profession with a greatly enlarged and enriched addition to their "Q" classification holdings. When I first began using the Field Guide the user had some difficulty connecting Peterson's very unique color illustrations to corresponding text. Houghton Mifflin and the author needed very little prodding by me and a couple of staff members of Chicago's Field Museum to correct this situation so that by the end of the nineteen forties the color plates contained corresponding page number alongside each figure. As I write this, I have received word from Harry Foster, his editor, that the combined sales of Peterson Guides have exceeded 18 million.

I had several opportunities to visit with RTP — the last of which was at the dedication of the Institute building. About the only...
error I ever found in any of his writing was that in an introduction to a book about Francis Lee Jaques, he wrote that Lee and his wife, Florence, had retired to Wisconsin instead of Minnesota.

"Francis Lee Jaques was the first bird artist I ever knew," writes Roger Tory Peterson in his forward to Francis Lee Jaques, Artist/Naturalist by Luce and Andrews, U. Minnesota Press, 1982. I can say the same thing. I met Lee and Florence Jaques in 1944 when I first arrived in Minneapolis. During my management of Follett's Minnesota Bookstore, we staged two one-man exhibits from which several sales were made. One of his canvases on the Canada goose which sold for $500 at our store has recently fetched over $30,000 at auction! Lee (as he was known by friends and associates) and I had several things in common besides birds: we were born in adjoining Illinois counties; his birthday was 8 months after my father's in 1887; we both spent a good part of our youth in Minnesota; we both moved to Minnesota. I founded Broadwater Books in the county adjacent to the one in which Lee began seriously to practice drawing and painting but earned his living as a taxidermist. Another early job he had was as a railroad fireman and he was a train buff (especially inter-urban trains) all his life. Lee seriously took up painting as a career after informally studying art in Duluth with Clarence Rosenkranz, whom he acknowledged as his most influential teacher. It is probable that Rosenkranz was responsible for Lee's mastery of the diorama background, many of which may be seen in the American Museum of Natural History, New York; the University of Minnesota Natural History Museum, Minneapolis; and the Milwaukee Public Museum. Here is how I came to know him. Early in 1963 Oscar Shoenfeld, whose new book I have mentioned elsewhere in this issue of ATG (page 12), sat in my Kroch's and Brentano's office selling me the fall list of the University of Wisconsin Press. I noticed that he flipped past a page on which I glimpsed a bird picture. I said something like "Whoa, Oscar, didn't I see 'yes,'" he replied, "but this book is about Wisconsin birds." I quickly reminded him that birds were ignorant of state lines and didn't know if they were in Illinois or Wisconsin. Whereupon he backpacked to Gromme's book and we bought a hundred copies of his forthcoming book, Birds of Wisconsin, Madison, 1963. I tell this on Oscar with his permission as I do not intend to ridicule one of the best book peddlers I've ever known. Owen Gromme frequently visited K&B's main store and we had many good discussions of his work. He wrote a generous note with his autograph in my copy of his book and then wrote warm autographs for my two nieces who live in Wisconsin. Another great ornithologist/author who visited Kroch's & Brentano's on several occasions was H. Albert Hochbaum, Director of Delta Waterfowl Research Station, Manitoba. His book Canvasback on a Prairie Marsh, Washington, 1944, is a classic and a milestone in waterfowl individual species monographs. His 1955 Travels and Traditions of Waterfowl, U. of Minnesota Press is a very important contribution to the ongoing study of waterfowl migration. It is profusely illustrated with the author's scratchboard etchings reminiscent of the work of F.L. Jaques. Here I want to mention working with Charles Scribner III and Jackie Galaska (when Scribner was Scribner and not Macmillan or Simon & Schuster) to whom I made some suggestions for reprinting some of Scribner's best bird books. Some of my suggestions were followed and in 1978 they reprinted The Bobwhite Quail by Herbert L. Stoddard, the first (1931) edition of which had become a collector's item (and now, even the 1978 is becoming scarce). Scribner also reprinted at my suggestion in the late seventies New England Grouse Shooting by William Harnden Foster (1942). I don't know why the publisher was coy in displaying reprint data. Their code on title page verso is B-371 (MZ). I don't know where in Simon & Schuster I could find what that means.

I had intended to include additional publisher sketches in this article, but the birds kept on flying and I could see no reason to stop since this article will be published in Charleston, South Carolina, where John James Audubon spent much time in the nineteenth century. John Bachman (pronounced in Charleston "Backman") pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church (where I worship when I'm in the city) during the middle of the nineteenth century. Audubon's two sons married Dr. Bachman's two daughters. I've never thought to inquire as to existence of heirs — a project for my next visit to St. John's. Other well-known early ornithologists spent time in South Carolina, including Alexander Wilson, the "father" of American ornithology, Mark Catesby (called the "Colonial Audubon" by some writers) and William Brewster. So now you know why the birds got out of hand herein.

Bibliography


Op-Ed — Opinions and Editorials

Hey y'all! I am talking to YOU and YOU and YOU. Express your opinion right here. — KS

Approval Plans: A Response
by Barry Fast

Writing in the September issue of Against the Grain (vol 8, No. 4, p. 25) John Perry Smith castigates approval plans (as well as bookellers, librarians and publishers) in his article entitled, “A Voice of Disapproval. “I think he is serious, so I respond in kind.

Some of his allegations are true. His recognition of the need for businesses to make a profit is profound. His recognition of the role of libraries to “cherish and nurture” a collection, though a bit overblown, is valid. Calling publishers “intellectual vampires,” though colorful, may apply to a few (one of whom took a long dive off a short boat), but most publishers are just as nice as you or I. By implication, a close reading of his article may lead some to believe that librarians who utilize approval plans are “lazy” and booksellers who promote them are “cynically” exploiting this character defect. Most librarians I know wish they had time to be lazy, and my bookseller colleagues are cynical mainly about politics or getting older.

Terminating approval plans an “insurmountable conflict of interest,” Smith tries to prove this assertion by demonstrating his ignorance. He believes that collection managers have “hours” to spend pouring over publisher catalogs, reading reviews, and meeting with faculty to “craft the best possible collection from a limited budget.” The last time I checked, most libraries’ collection development librarians were working the reference desk during the hours they used to have to peruse catalogs and read reviews, while at the same time begging faculty to tear themselves away from outside consulting or grant writing so that they can grab a few minutes a day to talk about their unexpended or overspent book budget.

Smith weeps for the “small and uncooperative publisher,” though “vampires” they may be, as they “skulk through professional meetings” and “troll the night of authorial despair” looking for “product,” their “important” books excluded from approval plans. Instead of trashing approval vendors for not dealing with these folks, why not make reasonable suggestions that will enable vendors to handle them, suggestions like allowing returns. If publishers don’t allow returns, a hard-nosed capitalist like Mr. Smith ought to recognize that we customers have a right to choose not to include them on approvals. If our aim is to “lock up the lion’s share of the monographic budget,” why in the world would we want to limit the publishers we handle. The more publishers we handle, the more we “lock up.” Publishers who prevent us from working with them on approvals by denying returns (remember Mr. Smith, an approval plan means the ability to return unwanted books) can have their books included in approval plans in a heartbeat by simply allowing returns.

We do not, indeed cannot, “gravitate to those publishing programs that present the highest discounts, the lowest cost of shipping, the easiest returns policies, and the most generous credit terms.” This, according to Mr. Smith, is how approval plans “corrupt” booksellers. We remain uncorrupted because our customers quite reasonably expect us to handle virtually all publishers on a combination of approval plans.

continued on page 80

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Op-Ed
from page 79

and firm orders. Those of us who offer approval plans agree ahead of time with our customers which publishers will be covered, and then we guarantee coverage, whether or not the publisher is sweet and kind, or nasty and difficult. Mr. Smith's nirvana of approval publishers does not exist. I can name names, but won't in a family magazine such as this. Our customers tell us who to cover, and that is how things keep a company uncorrupted more effectively than customers who can't be fooled.

Mr. Smith laments the loss of librarians as "gatekeepers" of the collection. Making their way into your collection through the "trapdoor of your approval plan" are books that are "too trivial ... too shallow ... too stupid ... too boring ... too evil." Too evil? From your approval plan??

In fact, approval plans empower librarians as gatekeepers. Being able to actually look at a book, read the table of contents, the jacket cover description, the introduction, or just flipping through pages, librarians can make a more informed decision. Instead of wasting hours wading through different publishers' catalogs looking for the books in the subjects they manage, collection development librarians have their books right on a shelf for easy access. Keep or reject decisions are made with full, unfiltered knowledge, unhyped by those "vampires" -- publicity.

Does Mr. Smith really believe approval plans "inject a serum of banality into major research collections"? Does he really think that librarians who use approval plans "establish the notion that book selection is really just a commodity?" How can he predict that the use of approval plans will contribute to an environment where "unconventional and revolutionary voices are trivialized and driven out of the mainstream"? (By definition, they never have been in the mainstream.)

Approval plans, in fact, are supposed to deliver to the library the books the library would buy anyway through the more costly firm order process. The approval plan will deliver as banal or revolutionary a core collection as the library managers desire. They alone reject what they don't want. They alone look at vendor selections and decide if they meet library collection standards. Experienced librarians know quite soon whether a plan is missing the types of books they want. Approval plans do not operate in a vacuum, like some robotic commodity selection gizmo. They are managed by the vendors and within the libraries, and vendors compete quite vigorously on the quality of selections. That's why returns matter, why they are analyzed, and why profiles are fine tuned.

There probably is some basic sameness to core collections at peer universities. Librarians should strive to make available to their patrons the books that would commonly be found in a large, medium or small academic library. That's service. Approval plans insure that those books are available on or around their publication day. They are an efficient method of obtaining those commonly held books quickly. Core collections that resemble each other are not banal; they reflect academic institutions that resemble each other. If biology is taught comprehensively at 200 American universities, those 200 library biology collections ought to have many of the same books.

Approval plans are evaluated in terms of collection policies by analyzing circulation records (see Marcie Kingley's article in the same ATG issue v.8 #4, p.1), by statistical analyses among peer libraries, by feedback from library users, and by the experience of librarians who feel a profound professional interest in building a fine collection. By using approval plans for core collections, librarians can use the rest of their limited time to find the monographs that will make their collections unique and responsive to their teaching programs, the research needs of faculty and students, their traditions, and their cooperative resource-sharing responsibilities with other libraries.

Perhaps Mr. Smith's most egregiously false accusation is that somehow approval plans contribute to the stifling of unconventional and provocative views. He describes an "uniformed self interest" of (approval plan) booksellers, publishers and publishing faculty, as if there is some "invisible" type of conspiracy. Or perhaps he means that the approval plan process, in combination with approval participating publishers, creates an environment that is hostile to unpopular and/or revolutionary ideas. But what evidence is there for this? Has scholarly publishing become more banal, less provocative? Maybe, but it seems to me that our whole society has. If there is any evidence that scholarly publishing is more plain vanilla, more conventional, it seems reasonable that this reflects the state of scholarship instead of a bookseller/publisher cabal.

We approve vendors sell what's published. Libraries buy what's published. Publishers like diverse and provocative books; it brings attention and revenue. The real enemy of revolutionary or provocative ideas are reviewed who lose interest in ignoring these books or reviewing them unfairly or scare publishers into not considering this material for publication. Approval plans remove the reviewer as arbiter (or the non-reviewer), placing the buying decisions directly into the hands of professional collection managers. They too have their prejudices and blank spots, but still I'd rather see thousands of librarians making buying decisions with the books in their hands, with their ethical underpinnings of the free and open dissemination of all sorts of ideas.

Approval plans free librarians to make better collection management decisions. They enable publishers to publish more diverse because they know the intended audience will actually see their books. Approval plan booksellers, disciplined by an intellectual and professional group of customers, have to deliver quality. Arguments such as Mr. Smith's distort the intent and the results of approval plans. Sophistry went out with Aristotle, or at least it should have.

"I Have A Nightmare. That One Day ..."
by F.J. Heldrich (Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, College of Charleston) <heldrichr@cofc.edu>

Margaret had worked diligently all through high school in order to gain admissions to illustrious Grant & Foster University. Grant & Foster was listed on the October pages of the North American News Monitor Service as one of the top ten comprehensive Universities. Margaret did have high grades from high school, ranked 8th out of her class of 357, and had what she had hoped would be the recommendations from her work service with both "Feed the Hungry" and "Save the Parks". Margaret's international ranking in the 93rd percentile, based on her Score of Cognitive Assessment Marks (SCAM) results, did not hurt either. Still, Grant & Foster was highly competitive and she had not been certain that she would be accepted when the semester opened. But here she was, eager and ready to begin what her parents referred to as her "college education." Margaret scoffed at her parents expression, but not openly. After all, they had agreed to foot the bill for her work over the next three years. Both of her parents had gone to Emory University, but Margaret had wanted something different. She had picked Grant & Foster. And why not. After all, the Monitor Service listed Emory University as the only traditional institution ranked as highly as Grant & Foster. But even if she had wanted to go to Emory, Margaret knew that she'd never have been able to afford it. One semester's tuition at Emory cost more than the three-year program at Grant & Foster. And that did not even include room & board. Her parents knew how expensive it was to live in Atlanta, even as a student. Margaret felt sure that her parents were pleased with her decision. Margaret opened her campus map and tried to orient herself. It was an intimidating campus. But the map, at least, gave her the confidence to explore what would be her home for the next three years. In a few days, she would not have to refer to the map to find her way around the campus, but now she looked at all the building icons and was overwhelmed by the size of the campus. She counted over 150 academic buildings clustered in pods. Each pod focused on a different...
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ent learning strategy. There was an Auditory pod, a Visual pod, a Kinetic pod, a Writing pod, and the newest pod of all, which was unique to Grant & Foster, called simply the Reflective pod. Margaret had heard about the Reflective pod, but she doubted that she'd ever have occasion to enter it. The Monitor report had described it as a "bland collection of facts and figures which only the truly gifted intellect would find captivating, and then, only for a very short while." Grant & Foster described the Reflective pod as a unique opportunity for patient discovery and personal growth. Margaret thought that it sounded more like a way to keep you enrolled in Grant & Foster for an extra year. There were a couple of non-academic buildings on the map. Margaret quickly noticed the social center, the fitness center, the health center, and the advising center, the intercampus communication center, and the special events center.

Margaret had taken a battery of tests to evaluate her learning skills. She was free to utilize any of the pods, but her tests had revealed what she already knew to be true about herself — she was going to spend a lot of time in the Visual and Kinetic pods. Grant & Foster profiling had recommended she spend about 50% of her time in each of these pods, and she figured that is what she would do. And so Margaret called up her courage, looked up from her map and selected the Chemistry Building in the Visual pod. She clicked on the CHEM icon and entered her ID code, which had been posted to her account yesterday. After Grant & Foster had deposited her three-year tuition check. The screen flashed once, and darkened. The theme song from the "Warrior Ant" played as the image on her screen slowly coalesced and the words "Welcome, Margaret, to Chemistry I" appeared on the chalkboard in the center of her screen. Margaret took a deep breath and got ready to watch as her "college education" began.

There you have it. The nightmare that I have been living with for about a year now. Ever since reading the article by Eli M. Noam on pages 247—249 in Science, Vol. 270, October 13, 1995 called "Electronics and the Dim Future of the University."

Tenured college professors, even when tenure is being redefined, are supposed to be secured from the fear of the evaporating job. We take less money in exchange for that sense of security. With increasing years in service, the ability to change careers (say from chemistry teacher to industrial chemist) seem to diminish. Why should this dream and the article that inspires it be of concern to the book lovers and protectors who read Against the Grain? Well, perhaps you did not notice, but Grant & Foster University had no library. No books, no journals, no buildings either for that matter. This might seem all dream without even a hint of reality, but I encourage you to read Noam's article before you discount the notion entirely.

The library has been the focal point of academic communities for over two thousand years. But longevity is no guarantor of survival. Ask T. Rex if you have any doubts. If books become museum pieces and journals become LP's or 8-Track tapes of the year 2034, then my nightmare might become yours. But the advent of electronic information technologies is not the sum of my fears. Coupled with this, we are in the throes of a synergistic development in the study of learning. Psychologists, who have made great strides in the development of behavioral, learning and personality studies, have developed an understanding of human learning that is being exploited by talented, charismatic capitalists, disguised as motivational speakers. These people, and their marketers, know how to effectively communicate with a large audience by using a dynamic mix of kinetic, verbal, visual and literary means. And they are making millions.

Noam imagines universities with Broadway-like appeal and investment. How about Disney, AT&T or Paramount? Similarly, universities could become the province of moguls like Bill Gates, with learning materials developed by the motivational crowd and psychologists. Chemists and librarians would be needed, but as technical consultants, not educators.

But I must be wrong in my fears. I have a history of being wrong about many things and this is has been a constant source of delight. After all, civilization did not disappear in a mushroom cloud of Armageddon, thanks be to President Reagan. My colleagues, who have read the same article, are not afraid. And obviously the Board of Trustees of universities who are planning to build new libraries (even when they are fearful of building new laboratories and classrooms) have not read or do not believe the Noam article. But then, neither of these entities heard the spokesman from the National Science Foundation, Directorate for Science Education, tell a diverse national faculty gathered at the 6th National Conference on Undergraduate Research that the Noam article was a must read.

The redemption for the university model, as we now conceive it, might well rest in the non-academic development of the student body. Noam cites one-on-one mentoring and humanistic attributes of the current university model as its saving grace. But we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that personal development is best when provided on college campuses or in fraternities and sororities. If we adopt a national requirement for a year or more of public service after high school (armed forces or otherwise), then much of the social maturation and development of the 18-20 year old set will occur off campus, opening the door for educational vehicles such as Grant & Foster. Perhaps the only hope of survival of the campus-based institution is the exceptionally expensive, individualized instruction that comes from faculty-student mentoring in tutorials, special projects and research. But how can this be made cost effective? After the three year experience at Grant & Foster?

As the library's importance as a storehouse of knowledge declines and as adequate alternatives for personal development are manifested outside the confines of the campus seclusion, then we (educators and librarians) become increasingly at risk. There is already strong evidence that students can access more information from their personal computers than any library can afford to provide. Political climate or economic change and required public service could become a nationality reality in America as it already is in many other countries. Interactive electronic media seems ever closer to satisfying the need for personal attention. There would seem to be sufficient cause for you to share my nightmare. Are you afraid? 

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
Against the Grain Annual Report Survey

Dear Against the Grain Reader:

ATG is conducting a survey to gather information about librarians’ concerns for our first Annual Report issue, to be published in February, 1997. In order for this project to be successful, we need your help. Please complete and mail back your survey to: Lowcountry Target Mailing Service, 3430 Buffalo Ave Ste H, Charleston, SC 29418-9904 as soon as possible, but no later than November 30, 1996. If you prefer working electronically, please visit the ATG homepage at <http://www.against-the-grain.com>. Thank you very much.

Sincerely
Katina Strauch
Editor

1) What functions has your library been outsourcing?
   [] cataloging  [] approval plan  [] acquisitions
   [] other: please specify __________________________

2) Has your library been downsized in the past two years?
   [] yes  [] no  If yes, please supply some specifics:
   [] professional staff decrease
   [] paraprofessional staff decrease
   [] teams implementation
   [] merge with cataloging
   [] other: please specify __________________________

3) What have the effects been? Tell us in a few sentences.
   [] positive  [] negative
   [] other ________________________________________

4) Has your materials budget [] increased  [] decreased?

5) Has your materials budget for books [] increased
   [] decreased? ____________________ approximate percentage

6) Has your materials budget for journals [] increased
   [] decreased? ____________________ approximate percentage

7) Has your materials budget for electronic resources
   [] increased  [] decreased? ____________________ approximate percentage

8) Does your library use a subscription agency? [] yes  [] no

9) Have you switched subscription agencies within the past five
    years? [] yes  [] no

10) What percentage of your total materials budget this year (1996/97) is going to
     books _____ journals _____ electronic serials _____
     online resources (gateways) _____ cd-roms _____
     other (please specify) __________________________

11) Are you concerned with copyright as it affects the publishing
    industry? [] yes  [] no

11a) Please elaborate on your answer to 11 above.
     ________________________________________________

12) Do you have a homepage? [] yes  [] no

12a) What is your homepage address?
     ________________________________________________

13) How have you incorporated the Internet into your acquisitions
    service?
    ________________________________________________

13a) How have you incorporated the Internet into your collection
    development service?
    ________________________________________________

13b) How have you incorporated the Internet into your reference
    service?
    ________________________________________________

13c) Is the Internet making a difference in how you do collection
    development? [] yes  [] no
    How? ____________________________________________

14) Does your library use commercial document delivery to meet
    ILLs? [] yes  [] no
    Please specify percentage of total operating budget or actual
    dollars budgeted to document delivery ____________

15) Please rate your library’s document delivery operation on the
    continuum below:
    very effective _______ not very effective _______

16) Do you use ILLs as a concrete factor in collection purchasing
    decisions, i.e., do you purchase books and journals based on ILL
    statistics? [] yes  [] no

17) Does your library provide training for your Library Technical
    Assistants? [] yes  [] no

17a) What type?
    [] inhouse classes by existing staff
    [] continuing education inhouse
    (with experts from outside the library)
    [] satellite transmissions
    [] fund travel to conferences, workshops, etc.
    [] fund credit courses
    [] other (please specify) __________________________

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18) How are you dealing with more resources and more demands?  
[ ] absorbing the work into current workflow  
[ ] provide essential services only  
[ ] teach end user to do research on his/her own  
[ ] send user to another library  
[ ] other (please specify) ____________________________

19) Have you implemented paperback only approval plans, ie. do you get paperbacks on approval instead of hardcover?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no  [ ] do not have approval plan

20) Have you implemented paperback only for firm orders?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no

21) Have you canceled paper subscriptions in favor of electronic subscriptions to journals?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no

22) If your answer to 21 above is yes, how are you dealing with the issue of archiving the information?  
[ ] some other library will worry about this  
[ ] We will keep electronic information in whatever format we acquire it  
[ ] We are keeping paper for the present  
[ ] other (please specify) ____________________________

23) Are you charging patrons for printing resources off the Internet or the World Wide Web?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no  [ ] allow downloading to floppy disc.

24) Do you have workstations in your work area?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no
   If yes, please describe ____________________________

25) Does your institution offer distance education?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no

25a) Does the library support distance education?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no
   Please elaborate ____________________________

26) Is your library merged with your computer center?  
[ ] yes  [ ] no

27) What type of librarian are you? (check all that apply)  
[ ] special  
[ ] public  
[ ] academic  
[ ] government  
[ ] reference  
[ ] technical services

28) What library publications do you read?  
[xx] Against the Grain  
[ ] Library Journal  
[ ] Choice  
[ ] Special Libraries  
[ ] Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory  
[ ] C&RL  
[ ] Information Technology in Libraries  
[ ] Internet World  
[ ] Publishers Weekly  
[ ] Wired  
[ ] Other

29) How many years have you been a librarian?  
______________

30) What are the top five things that you are most concerned about in our industry as we approach the 21st century?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

31) What do you envision as the future of the library in the 21st century?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Please complete and mail back your survey to:  
Lowcountry Target Mailing Service, 3430 Buffalo Ave Ste H,  
Charleston, SC 29418-9904 as soon as possible but no later than November 30, 1996.

If you prefer working electronically, please visit the ATG homepage at <http://www.against-the-grain.com>. Thank you very much!
Have You Heard?

Ameritech Library Services has announced their current progress on the new Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery System (ILL/DDL). The scope of this project includes re-engineering the ILL/DD process, and developing technology to make the process less labor-intensive and more responsive to your patrons. The ILL System is a comprehensive, standalone ILL management solution that delivers information from outside providers to patrons in a timely and cost-effective way. The first release of the product is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 1996. Librarians can manage all of their library’s ILL activity on one database with the ILL System. The software automates the borrowing and lending activity within a library by providing linkage to local systems, remote library catalogs, messaging utilities, and commercial document suppliers using a seamless interface. Also, the architecture allows librarians to configure the system to uniquely fit each facility’s requirements. The system accepts patron-initiated requests from a variety of search tools and sources, and allows libraries using a different ILL system to communicate regardless of the ILL software or hardware used. The system provides ease-of-use for library staff by utilizing a Windows 95 workstation. Sources from which patrons can initiate requests include the following: WebPAC and other locally developed World Wide Web forms, Horizon, LMS, Dynix, OCLC ILL, Docline, WLN, RLIN, and standard Internet email. The ILL system saves staff’s time by providing tools that allow patrons to track their own requests without requiring staff assistance. Patrons can identify their own specific requirements for requests such as the date an item is needed, how to notify the patron when the item is available, and in what format to deliver the information. The ILL system reduces the library’s costs of filling an ILL request by allowing the system to select the most cost-effective provider to fill requests. Reports for tracking and usage statistics assist librarians in making purchase acquisitions and support funding decisions. As well, paper files can be eliminated by using the relational database for requests and statistics. Requests can be transmitted to a lending partner in the format required by that lending institution. The system is flexible, supports many different electronic transmission formats and is expandable to include custom interfaces to support any format that is required by lending partners. The ILL System requires a Windows 95 or Windows NT version 3.51 or above. Hardware requirements include the following: Intel 486 or above processor, 8Mb RAM, 200 meg. fixed disk, network interface card, VGA adapter monitor and adapter.

Ameritech Library Services has also announced the release of NetConnect 2.0, its integrated hardware and software package for libraries that want to introduce Internet access to patrons. NetConnect combines the leading-technologies of Ameritech Library Services and Sun Microsystems Computer Company. NetConnect allows libraries to add Internet services not only to PCs, but also to existing character-cell terminals. Patrons will instantly have access to Internet services such as the World Wide Web (WWW) and email. Librarians can also publish and design their own WWW pages with NetConnect. Security liability is reduced by allowing the database host to remain isolated from the load incurred by Internet server functions. Networked security software is contained within the system.

And this just in! Ameritech Library Services and RoweCom announced September 3 a joint marketing agreement for Subscribe97, an Internet-based library subscription service created by RoweCom. Under the agreement, both companies have developed software and a systems interface that enable users to link NOTIS, with Subscribe97 smoothly and with minimal effort. The University of Pittsburgh will be the first library to use the new NOTIS/Subscribe interface.

CAS and OCLC Online Computer Library Center announced plans to launch FirstSearch CA Student Edition, a new information product customized to serve the chemical information needs of undergraduate students. Expected to be available later in 1996, the new CAS information product will be accessible via OCLC’s FirstSearch, an end-user online information service in use in more than 6,200 libraries worldwide. It will enable students throughout the world to access CAS information from the most commonly-held journals at academic libraries plus 200,000 dissertations. It will be offered to all FirstSearch sites at a low annual subscription rate and with a special rate for Chemical Abstracts (CA) subscribers. FirstSearch CA Student Edition content is based on core scientific journal holdings at universities, which were identified with the help of OCLC. These holdings amount to more than 200 titles, including American Chemical Society journals, that are covered by CA and are also readily available in the universities. Students will be able to access indexing information as well as bibliographic data and CA abstracts for more that 1.4 million CAS records dating back to 1967.

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CAS expects the product to meet the research requirements of most undergraduate institutions.

In other news from the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), SciFinder Release 2.0, an easy-to-use research tool is now available to SciFinder customers worldwide. The new version introduces features permitting scientists to search for reactions, find commercial source information for chemical substances, order documents from CAS and much more. SciFinder can now execute a substructure search, which reviews more than 1.2 million single-step reactions from 1985 to the present. Chemical availability, prices and quantities for more than 370,000 products from a variety of North American and European suppliers’ chemical catalogs are now available. Customers also have a direct link to the CAS Document Detective Service (DDS).

The Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) has announced that it will be providing a new, full-service document delivery service. ISI Document Solution will offer comprehensive “one-stop-shopping” library and extensive customer support to inform- nation professionals and end-users. It will be available in late 1996. ISI Document Solution will provide full-text articles from virtually any publication within or outside the vast ISI database, at no extra cost; high-quality output with 24-hour-or-less turnaround; competitive, up-front pricing; uniform process fees for fax, Ariel, or mail delivery; extended customer service and support; and centralized copyright management. ISI Document Solution is built upon The Genuine Article (TGA), the document delivery service that ISI provided for nearly forty years. Like TGA, the new service will provide guaranteed copyright clearance, and convenient ordering and delivery options. And as with TGA, links to the service will be found in all ISI databases in the form of ISI accession numbers.

ISI and the Ohio Library & Information Network (OhioLINK) announced the first major implementation of a statewide release of SciSearch, Social SciSearch, and Arts & Humanities Search Citation Databases. OhioLINK users will be able to access the files via a World Wide Web browser interface designed by ISI. As a result, hundreds of thousands of librarians, information specialists, researchers, and students throughout Ohio’s state universities will have access to complete bibliographic data, full-length author abstracts, and cited references from more than 8,000 science, social sciences, and arts and humanities journals and will be able to conduct cited reference searches across the combined database going back to 1992.

In response to needs expressed by its customers, SIRSI has launched a family of online Digital Archive Products that may be configured to fit a variety of system requirements. Conceived as a general purpose repository for information, the Digital Archive will hold electronic representations of information from paper, film, audio, video, and other media sources. The Digital Archive will support both the search and retrieval needs of the user, while simultaneously protecting the integrity of information entrusted to it. The Digital Archive can be implemented as a standalone system or a subsystem of SIRSI’s UNICORN Collection Management System. As a standalone product, the Digital Archive offers a complete citation-based online media repository. Used as a subsystem, UNICORN’s library automation and collection management facilities are expanded to include online access to digital information which is linked to the OPAC. A number of customer-configurable options will be available.

SwetScan, Swets’ electronic table of contents service, is now accessible via the World Wide Web. SwetScan covers more than 13,000 key scholarly journals, giving up-to-the-minute details of the contents page information of key titles across a broad range of subjects and countries of publication. Searching options include journal titles, authors, article keywords, as well as combined possibilities. Both Netscape and Mosaic browsers can be used. Customers are able to access the full database, or selected individual titles, at a fixed annual subscription price. A guest login is available to allow prospective users to test the service. Go to the SwetScan Home Page on the Web for a trial: <http://www.swets.nl>.

News from Data Trek about their new World Wide Web browsing tool, called WorldPAC. WorldPAC enables a library to place its online public access catalog on the Internet, allowing it to be searched by any graphical Web browser such as Netscape or Mosaic. WorldPAC wraps MARC records with an HTML (Hypertext markup language) script and then creates the WorldPAC interface. No programming knowledge is required by the library staff; WorldPAC handles all of the HTML scripting automatically.

Professional Media Service Corp. (PMSC) and WLN have signed an agreement that will permit WLN to make PMSC’s original media cataloging data available to libraries online and through CD-ROM products produced by WLN. PMSC is a leading wholesale distributor of audio-visual materials to libraries, providing cataloging for all material it distributes. As part of that effort, PMSC has originally cataloged over 150,000 items using AACR2 rules and LC subject and name authorities. It currently produces original cataloging for 2-3,000 items per month. All of these original cataloging records were available to WLN and its customers beginning August, 1996.

WLN has also announced that it has joined the Library of Congress, OCLC, RLIN and the British Library as an active participating member in NACO, NACO is the Name Authority Cooperative Project of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC). WLN’s new status will enable WLN members to contribute new and change existing name, series and uniform title headings to the Library of Congress master file using the WLN Online Input/Edit Subsystem.

EBSCO Subscription Services is pleased to announce that the EBSCOONET Online Subscription Service now has a World Wide Web interface. The initial release allows customers to order subscriptions, claim issues, and search EBSCO’s database of title listings and publisher information by title, publisher name, keyword, ISSN, or EBSCO title number. The next release, due in the third quarter of this year, will allow customers to use the system in any of six languages: Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, English, or Italian. The final release, due by the end of the year, will include all functionality available when EBSCOONET is accessed via direct connection or the Internet. EBSCOONET on the Web will also provide electronic links to several integrated library system vendors, document delivery service and EBSCO’s reference databases with indexing, abstracts and full-text articles. Most importantly, customers who use EBSCOONET to conduct subscription transactions electronically still receive full attention from the customer service staffs of EBSCO’s offices worldwide. Customers need an account number and password to use EBSCOONET on the Web. These can be secured from any EBSCO Regional Office.

And have you heard of these announcements from EBSCO Publishing? With the release of EBSCOHost version 1.1 in July, access to EBSCOHost data became possible for libraries using WinPAC from Ameritech Library Services and GeoPac from Geac Computers, Inc. EBSCOHost is a 24x7,50-compliant client/server periodical fulltext and indexing access system which is now fully compatible with these clients. EBSCO Publishing has also announced a new, free service to librarians worldwide with the introduction of the Library Reference Center. The Library reference Center is a database consisting of indexing and abstracts from over 30 important library science publications accessible via EBSCO Publishing’s homepage at <http://www.epnet.com>.

An increase in coverage of Primary Search, the first periodical database created specifically for the elementary school library has also been announced by EBSCO Publishing. Effective in October, 1996, Primary Search will include fulltext for 31 titles, indexing and abstracts for 115 titles and EBSCO’s Encyclopedia of Animals.

A final note from EBSCO Publishing tells us that they and Innovative Interfaces Inc. have entered into an agreement whereby Innovative Interfaces will offer EBSCO Publishing’s general reference, business and health periodical databases to INNOPAC customers via INN-View. The EBSCO databases will be the featured databases on INN-View, Innovative’s host system, and can be easily accessed by patrons of the INNOPAC.
EDIFACT: Developing International Standards for Electronic Trading in Books and Serials

by David Martin (consultant to EDHEUR on EDI message development, and the compiler of the first issue of the EDHEUR Manual, published 1995)

In the USA and Canada, ANSI X12 is today's standard for electronic trading in books and serials. In the UK, the national EDI standard, TRADACOMS, has been implemented by Book Industry Communication (BIC), and there is now a critical mass of large publishers, wholesalers, booksellers and libraries trading electronically in this format. In a number of proprietary systems and message formats have been adopted for national trade ordering networks.

But the information industry — of which books and journals are self-evidently part — is now so international that its trading communications require an international messaging standard; and EDIFACT is the international standard for EDI. In 1992 a group of interested parties from a number of European countries, representing all levels of the book supply chain from publishers to libraries, met in Amsterdam, and agreed to set up EDHEUR as a forum to develop EDIFACT standards for the international book trade.

Today EDHEUR is established as a membership-based organisation sponsored or endorsed by the European federations of publishers, booksellers and library associations and by the International Publishers Association, and with a permanent secretariat provided by BIC in London. It has members from a number of countries outside Europe, including the USA and Japan. In 1995 EDHEUR published a first set of EDIFACT specifications and implementation guidelines for book publishers, booksellers and libraries. Currently, this work is being extended by the addition of further messages, and by the revisions which inevitably arise as pioneer users confront the practical issues of EDI application.

In May 1996, EDHEUR, working with a group of individual "sponsors" — journal publishers, subscription agents, libraries, and system suppliers — and in collaboration with ICEDIS and SISAC, is part way through the process of mapping into EDIFACT the functionality covered in existing ANSI X12 EDI messages for serials trading. Just a few years ago it would have been reasonable to question the stability and usability of EDIFACT. The syntax and data structures were changing too much and too often. Now the standard has reached a level of maturity we can invest in the EDIFACT-based systems without the risk that they will be made obsolete by next year's version.

But EDIFACT is a very wide-ranging and complex framework of message standards, from which it is necessary to select and document a subset which is appropriate to the business cycle in a particular industry. EDHEUR has chosen to work within the EANCOM subset, which is documented and maintained by EAN International in Brussels. EANCOM is supported and used worldwide, particularly by those industries in which distribution is a key element. EAN is at the heart of a network of national agencies which administer product numbering, location numbering and barcoding systems, all fundamental to EDI.

EDHEUR's task is to take the cross-industry message specifications maintained by EAN and to develop implementation guidelines for particular book- and serials-related applications. This may also entail developing industry-specific code lists, or adding existing industry lists to the EDI message specification. For this purpose, EDHEUR is formally recognised as an agency responsible for the allocation of industry codes. The initial set of messages included in the 1995 EDHEUR Manual for book-related transactions consists of QUOTES, ORDERS, ORDRSP (Purchase Order Response), ORDCHG (Purchase Order Change) and INVOICE (Invoice/Credit Note). The manual was compiled in association with the EDILIBE project, a Europe-wide development linking a group of academic libraries, international booksellers and library networks. Consequently some aspects of the first issue are more fully worked out in relation to library supply than to more general trade practice. Work during 1996 will redress this imbalance and provide detailed implementation notes for the publisher/bookseller trading cycle, and will add several further messages, including (at the very least) DESADV (Despatch Advice), RECEADV (Receiving Advice), Oستان (Order Status Enquiry), OSTRPT (Order Status Report) and RQJOTE (Request for Quotation).

For serials, the initial set of messages will parallel the X12 set on which SISAC and ICEDIS have collaborated, so that in EDIFACT terms it will include Purchase Order, Purchase Order Response, Invoice/Credit Note, Despatch Advice, Order Status Enquiry and Order Status Report. The remaining priority in EDHEUR's current work programme relates to bibliographic and product information for both books and serials. It is expected that there will be EDHEUR implementations of the EDIFACT Price Sales Catalogue and Product Data messages; and, through Book Industry Communication (BIC) in the UK, some very interesting work is being done on using SGML to carry much more extensive descriptions of book and serial contents lists.

BIC has already resolved that all new message development for the UK book trade will use EDIFACT. Central Bookhuis, the Netherlands book trade network, recently went live with an international EDI trading application using EDHEUR guidelines. The German national book trade network and the major German wholesalers are implementing EDIFACT. The Scandinavian countries are committed to EDIFACT for book trade communication. And the list could go on and on... An increasing number of countries now have national groups which are coordinating book trade EDI developments. The future of EDHEUR is most probably as a federation of such groups, with individual membership coming mainly from countries where no national group exists. In this context, EDHEUR has maintained very close liaison with BISAC and SISAC since its beginnings, and looks forward to an increasingly strong and positive input as EDIFACT is brought into use for trading with, and within, the USA.

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Drinking From the Firehose

Is the Internet Going to Collapse Under Its Own Weight?

By Eleanor I. Cook (Serials Specialist, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608) <cookei@appstate.edu>

There is a series of articles in the latest Internet World (October, 1996) about whether or not the Internet is going to give in to the mad rush of activity straining its bandwidth. Super highway gridlock, as it were.

On my own tiny piece of the pavement, I’ve been wondering about this on a personal level. Everybody wants to be on the Internet now. I cannot keep up with my email, with the list I moderate, with new developments and new sites on the World Wide Web, not to mention the good old U.S. snail mail and professional (print) reading. This is a common lament for many of us, I suppose. I suspect the computer geeks and gurus have simply given up monitoring *any* listserves or bulletin boards except perhaps a chosen few. Some people manage by having multiple accounts to handle different types of communication traffic. The privileged have “unlisted” email addresses. And so it goes.

This is where some of us start to long for the “good old days.” Of course, I hardly qualify as an old-timer in this realm, but I suppose I might be considered an middle-aged net user for sake of argument. In the same issue of Internet World referred to above, there was an announcement of a list devoted to the history of the Internet. (To subscribe, send to: Listserv@epsr.org a message that says: subscribe epsr-history Your Name.) The list owner is David Bunnaham, self-appointed historian of the Internet. (Internet World, October 1996, p.28)

That got me to reminiscing. The first time I heard of electronic mail was around 1980. I was working as a library assistant at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and working on my MLS. A friend of mine who worked at the computer center on that campus rescued an ailing ADSL terminal that was being sent to state surplus or the trash heap and resuscitated it at home. Because he was one of those savvy, self-taught computer whizzes, he managed to hook it up to his university account and was able to send and receive email from his apartment. He showed off this marvel to his less technologically sophisticated friends and we were impressed, but also puzzled. Why would you want to type little messages to people on a computer screen? Just call the guy, right? The answer was, well, because you CAN. Having enough exposure to technology from my experiences with using OCLC and other computer-related projects in my library science program (This was before word processing, even), I knew better than to question him further.

Computers were the wave of the future. So what if it took thousands of hours of programming to produce printed catalog cards that fast typists could whip out in minutes. This was progress! My next exposure to email, in its more modern form, was at North Carolina State University. By the mid-80’s lots of people on university campuses knew about email, though mostly only techies were using it. It hardly seemed worth the trouble to type through the laborious, clunky login procedures to get to the campus mainframe, plus if you succeeded, to whom would you send a message? However, by 1989 all that changed. We were being encouraged to learn to use email, both internally and to the outside world. Things developed very quickly. In 1990, when I moved to Appalachian State University, setting up my email account was almost as important as signing up for health insurance. In those days, traffic conditions were still at a small town pace in comparison to today.

So let me digress to the topic of small town traffic. In Boone, as in other small towns, we have occasionally, predictable, isolated and intensely focused types of traffic problems. Like when a truck carrying logs or some other delightful substance (like lacquer, which happened recently), spills all over the highway and blocks traffic for hours or days. Or an annual event, such as the Highland Games at Grandfather Mountain or the Gospel Sing at the county fairgrounds backs traffic up on a major highway from one end of town to the Tennessee border. These are traffic jams, all right, but the kind you can circumvent if you know enough short cuts. The Internet is like that too. It’s amazingly flexible and cooperative in its ability to cope with annoying logjams along the way. But what happens when mega-traffic, like that found in metropolitan Washington, D.C., New York City, etc. comes to the Internet? There are no shortcuts, and if there are, they aren’t short. It reminds me of when I used to commute between Chapel Hill and Raleigh before the interstate highway was completed and my car pool partner and I knew every back road in Durham county. It still took us an hour to get home and we often went 15 miles out of our way, but at least we were *moving*. There is divergence of opinion about whether the Internet will experience a major crash. I suspect there will be some scares. Any time there is a natural disaster, for instance, there is major down time in a given region. We just suffered from Hurricane Fran, the biggest Hurricane in our state since 1954’s Hurricane Hazel. Worse than Hugo, which ATG readers know decimated Charleston in 1989. But the first thing to come up in times of disaster is the continued on page 92
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The Promise of PDF — Portable Document Format

by Nancy K. Dennis (Interim Director, Library Technology Dept., University of New Mexico General Library). Phone: 505-277-2585. Fax 505-277-1788 <ndennis@unm.edu>

What do you think of when you see SGML, HTML, DTD, PDF, ASCII, WYSIWYG? These are abbreviations for terms associated with files and documents that are produced and/or distributed electronically. For producers of academic, scientific and federal government information, these terms are equivalent to the tools (ink and bindings) of the paper publishing paradigm. From the library-as-information-distributor point of view, these emerging document types will help deliver the growing digital collections to the consumer's desktop.

Adobe Acrobat's Portable Document Format, or the more familiar PDF, has been proclaimed in computer trade magazines as the de facto leading open standard format for electronically published and transmitted documents. There is evidence of its dominance within library circles, as well. Visit the IRS' Web site for tax forms (http://www.irs.ustreas.gov) or the Institute of Physics' (http://www.iop.org) fulltext electronic journal collection or the American Mathematical Society's (http://www.ams.org) MathSciNet electronic collections for a sampling of PDF documents. Elsevier Science (http://www.elsevier.nl) has selected PDF and HTML formats for its fulltext electronic product, ScienceDirect. PDF enables these publishers to electronically deliver documents and files that look identical to the print versions including all fonts, charts, illustrations and diagrams to the desktop of the user.

If you have not yet viewed PDF documents, take a look. They are quite impressive, especially when compared to their text-based ASCII cousins. Some make the analogy that PDF is to ASCII what Windows is to DOS or Web is to the gopher. The latest versions of PDF producing or writing software facilitate the adding of multimedia objects within PDF documents, so expect audio, video and animations to appear soon.

Both the producer and consumer of PDF files find the format easy to work with. PDF, based on the PostScript language, is relatively easy to produce or convert using a variety of readily available Adobe Acrobat tools. The read-only format protects the content from being edited and can be transmitted via email, LANs, WANS, cable, satellite, CD-ROM, floppy disks; any way that ASCII/binary files are transmitted. All text, fonts, graphical images and illustrations are distributed and displayed as a single document. They remain independent of the platform upon which they are produced, e.g. a PDF can be created within a Windows application and displayed on a MAC. Hypertext links can be embedded within the document.

Consumers of PDF documents find several features useful. Displayed and printed PDF documents have the look and feel of the print original. The Acrobat Reader program, required to view or print PDF documents (with the .pdf extension designation), is free and available for Windows, MAC, UNIX and DOS platforms. As a helper application, the Reader is readily configured within most Web browsers. Text within a PDF document can be searched, and zoomed in and out (displayed larger or smaller). Informative FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) are available at the Adobe Web site, http://www.adobe.com/acrobat/acrobat-faq.html.

Despite the glowing and deserved praise, there are some important limitations to PDF. It was designed for the user to view and print documents, not to replace word processor programs where text can be downloaded or edited. The Windows version of the Reader does allow for some cut-and-paste functionality, but it is only practical with short sections of text containing no images or graphics.

Adobe's recommended minimum hardware platform to run just the Reader is very optimistic. A real-world test of an Intel-connected 486 Windows 3.1 PC, running Netscape 2.02 with 4 MB RAM did not have enough system resources to even open the DOS version of the Reader program. To run the Acrobat software within a Web environment with low frustration and high resolution, plan on using a Pentium PC or Power MAC with at least 16 MB RAM, 1 MB video RAM and 15" color monitor. Any PostScript laser printer should print PDF documents quite well. Unfortunately, low-end inkjet and most dot matrix printers are not supported by the Acrobat software. However, patient testing of printer drivers may prove successful. The term "killer application" will take on new meaning for libraries that are planning to offer PDF-like electronic journal collections to their users. It will kill-off the ASCII text-based/DOS or "dumb terminal" hardware platforms as a continued on page 93

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
You Gotta Go to School for That?
Hours into Minutes
by Jerry Seay (College of Charleston) <seayt@cofc.edu>

During my recent 10 year "purging of the files" (an event not unlike the "running of the bulls" but with much less goring), I came across a copy of the minutes of a business meeting I was obliged to record in 1993. The thing about business meeting minutes is that they are universally dry, boring, and hardly ever capture the true spirit of the meeting which they are supposed to record. That is why no one really wants to be the minute taker in a meeting. It is dull.

As it happened, I was elected to the secretary/treasurer of the local SOLINET user's group. How I came to this august elected office I do not quite recall, except to say that I'm sure my campaign promises were probably vastly exaggerated and, hopefully, unfulfilled. In actuality I believe I was "volunteered" as the new kid on the block. In any case, one of my duties was to take the minutes of our annual meeting, which, as it turned out, was our only meeting that year. I, being the breaker of tradition that I was born to be (I can't help it, please understand), was determined the minutes of this meeting would not be boring. I would capture the truly exciting banter of our spirited business encounter.

Unfortunately, as I jotted down notes during the meeting, I came to the realization that has struck minutes takers since the stone tablet: meeting minutes are boring because, for the most part, business meetings are boring. Though our gathering did have its light and witty moments (librarians, after all, were involved), I was faced with an event that, if I stuck straight to the facts (as minutes are supposed to be), would certainly hold little interest to the casual reader. Dullsville.

Resolved that this must not be, I remembered what every good writer knows: it is not the facts themselves that are interesting, it is how those facts are told. Therefore, I wrote my minutes of the meeting as I saw them, with only the slightest of exaggeration for poetic license. Below, then are the exact minutes I submitted for the South Carolina SOLINET User's Group meeting on December 1993.

"A meeting of the S.C. SOLINET User's Group was held on December 9, 1993 at 11:00am during SCLA's 1993 Annual Conference at the Omni Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina. Katie Bielsky, outgoing Chair, called the meeting to order and eventually the scuffling in the aisles abated, and the meeting began. Jerry Seay, outgoing Secretary/Treasurer, read the minutes of last year's meeting (dated October 21, 1992). Despite last minute calls from the back row that the minutes be sung to the tune of "Danny Boy," such action was not allowed, and the minutes were approved as submitted. The treasurer's report indicated that there was $813.51 in the Group's account with no outstanding bills. It further indicated that despite allegations to the contrary, Katie Bielsky had, in fact, not invested group funds in junk bonds tied to Lithuanian investments in bungee jumping portfolios. A review of old business revealed that it was no one's business what business this business was. Thus, there was no old business. New business included an announcement by Ellen Crosby, Professor of Library Science at the University of South Carolina, that she would be sending students out to search OCLC terminals in libraries throughout South Carolina and Bosnia-Hercegovena. She said she would be writing scratch-n-sniff letters to inform the various library directors. Immediately the group broke out into discussions of the proper kind of stationary to use in such a situation and then quickly turned to discussing favorite cuisinart recipes. After several minutes of confused milling about, Katie Bielsky was able to bring the meeting back to order with a minimum of small arms fire. Other new business was the election of new officers for 1993-1994. Martha Feltz was elected Chair and at once decided that she would like to be a sofa instead. Lisa Bodenheimer was elected Vice-Chair and assumed the traditional title "Our Lady of the User Group." Alis Whit was not at this meeting, so she was elected Secretary/Treasurer for 1993-1994. A spokesperson for Alis indicated that, although she had no idea what she was getting into, Alis would be proud to assume these monetary duties until such time as she could stick some other poor unsuspecting soul with them. Martha Richarson of SOLINET then treated the hushed crowd to new and upcoming delights on SOLINET and then sang the SOLINET them song "We've Got You in our Net" to the tune of "I've Got You Under My Skin." After a thunderous standing ovation the meeting was adjourned. Respectfully submitted (as best I can remember), Jerry Seay, Sec/Treas for 1992-1993."

Though I believed my rendition of the minutes was spirited good reading, it is worthy to note that I was never again asked to be Secretary/Treasurer of the group, nor have I since been asked to record the minutes for this or any other business meeting. I guess the world is just not yet ready for witty minutes. Alas, I suppose some things must forever remain dry, boring, and uninspiring to be useful. Good thing librarians are not like that.

Hey! Another snicker from you publishers, and I'll thump you with my hair bun!
And They Were There
from page 75

September 16, 1996: “ABA last week sold its remaining 51 percent equity in the ABA Convention and Trade Exhibit to Association Exposition and Services, which had purchased a 49 percent interest in the event in 1993.” AE & S, a division of Reed Exhibition Companies, said it will rename the event Book Expo America. The story goes on with more Madison Avenue hype, but I am wondering how the old-time members will take to this renaming of a nearly hundred-year-old institution. As a minor member of ABA, I’m wondering how the membership (5,000 plus) would have voted if they had been polled. Kinda risky, I’d say, with several large publishers and hundreds of bookstore owners reporting better results, at much lower costs, with the regional bookstore associations, of which there are nine by my count.

Drinking From the Firehose
from page 88

Internet. UNC-Chapel Hill even has a Web page with pictures of the devastation on campus. (http://sunsite.unc.edu/maggot/fran/) Unfortunately, the Web site is so heavily graphic that the images choke on a standard Web browser. What a perfect example of the mixed state of this technology.

If the Internet does crash, I will write about it here, safe in the pages of a printed source. But if it does, I guess I will have to send Katrina my copy via fax or U.S. mail!
Two Hours in the Parking Deck
by Forrest E. Link
(Northeastern Regional Manager, Midwest Library Service, 800-325-8833) <link@midwestsls.com>

In a kinder and gentler time before madmen parked bomb-laden Rider trucks beneath landmarks, I made one of my regular day-trips to New York City. This was in the fall of 1990, shortly after the birth of my twins, and my father-in-law had traveled from Poland to attend their baptism. He had never been to New York.

Since he would be with us for a month or so, and I had business to do in the City, my wife and I devised a plan whereby she and her father would come along to do tourist things and meet up with me at the end of the day. And so it went, I dropped them off at Washington Square Park and they oohed and ahed their way up Fifth Avenue while I visited libraries.

Late that afternoon, we met at (where else?) the lions at New York Public and I drove them down to the World Trade Center for more gawking and a five-dollar beer. When I arrived, I realized anew how hard it is to park in lower Manhattan and, with visions of my day’s wages sailing away, turned reluctantly into the parking deck below the Trade Center.

I was pleasantly surprised, as I drove down the ramp, to see a police officer directing me into a spot. “Great security,” I thought.

About a half-hour later, our appetites for overpriced drinks and hors-d’oeuvres sated, (and remembering, too late, that most of the time New York is too hazy for the view to be very good), we came back down the elevator to the parking deck only to find my car in the middle of several others behind a yellow CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS ribbon. I found a nearby police officer (there were several around) and inquired as to the nature of my discomfiture. In typically laconic New York fashion, he pointed me to a line of people. “Talk to the detective,” he said.

I excused myself from my visibly anoyed wife and nonplussed father-in-law and joined the well-dressed queue. There, in speaking with the man behind of me, I learned that a body had been discovered in a car parked just a few spots away from mine. The stiff in question had been a Long Island contractor who had somehow run afoul of local organized crime. Apparently, he had been rather neatly murdered elsewhere, driven to the City, and left in the parking deck behind the wheel of his new Cadillac. The detective wanted to see our tickets from the machine at the entrance to the deck, presumably to question those who arrived before the victim. I hadn’t, which explained the directions I received at my entry.

As I left the detective, I overheard the man I had spoken with in line respond to the detective’s question with a classic example of New York sangfroid: “I saw him when I came in, but I didn’t think anything of it. I thought he was sleeping.”

Coming home that evening, we looked for our adventure on the New York television news, as if seeing it would make the story more real and less fantastic. The coverage lasted maybe 15 seconds and was told in “other news of the day.”

In the end, I was somewhat embarrassed that my guest’s first exposure to New York had confirmed all of the worst stereotypes. My wife relayed this to her father who was remarkably philosophical about the whole thing. “It happens in Warsaw, too,” he told her.

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Nouvelle Cuisine
from page 90

primary information delivery tool. If access to resources on the Web did not initiate major hardware upgrades, then these formatted document types will.

Just as the Web browser wars are being waged, PDF versus other document formats (SGML and HTML for example) are being debated. The consumer can expect to benefit from the battles as the best features of each will be incorporated into standard desktop tools. Wishful thinking? Absolutely! Reflect on the improvements that have been made in word processing programs over the last 5 years or so. It is not unrealistic to expect that a PDF reader/viewer and editor could be bundled into a desktop software suite in the not-too-distant future.

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
Back Talk

Business Not as Usual

by Tony Ferguson (Associate University Librarian, Columbia University)
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It’s presidential election time and we are once again treated to the opportunity to vote for the candidate who will not conduct “business as usual.” Insider politicians, since they are not businessmen, we are told, can’t be trusted to understand the simple truth that you can’t spend more than you collect in taxes. Outsider candidates, on the other hand, can be trusted.

Our current slate of “outsider” candidates will include an incumbent President who is really just a Arkansas governor intent on battling a beltway Congress made up of professional (read: deceitful) politicians; a crusty but lovable, if we could only get to know him, old soldier who has sacrificed his life in the Senate to battle the tax-and-spend liberals; and a billionaire businessman who because he is an engineer understands that all you have to do is define the problem, brainstorm solutions, and debug what you decide to implement. They all claim to have a monopoly on the ability to keep an eye on the bottom line and not lead us into debt and ruin. They all portray their job to be making choices between good and evil.

In libraries, we sometimes fall prey to the same simplistic thinking. We are information decision-makers who make choices between good and dumber (read: other points of view). We focus on the bottom line and, when needed, downsize, cut serials, sacrifice content continuity to meet current customer needs, sacrifice current and future needs to back in the legitimacy of the digital library and technology’s bleeding edge, etc. We make decisions. The buck stops here! Isn’t life wonderful?

Scientific periodicals (fewer and fewer books published since they don’t make money) publishers, whether they report to an owner, shareholder, or society of scholars, pull at the legs, wings, necks, etc., of the library geese who lay golden eggs, and deny any share of guilt for the bloodied and broken carcasses that remain on the battlefield.

Like librarians, their eyes are on the bottom line. Unlike librarians, they must not only balance the books, but make increased profits annually.

Book and serial vendors are different. They claim there is no right or wrong. They take money from customers and suppliers alike. Publishers are right. Customers are right. Both are conspired. Both pay.

Business is business we are told. It’s not personal. So information professionals are forced to downsize, cut serials, gut collections, charge outrageous prices, take money from publishers and customers alike, all in the name of nurturing the bottom line.

Is this any way to run a business?

Since “Back Talk” is the name for this column, I sometimes start out thinking what back talk do I want to dish out. After all, how often does anyone get a chance to lash out at the injustices of the world, to vent about what is “bugging” them? I have vented. I feel a little better. But there are other things that make me feel better about some of the issues discussed above.

First of all, apparently even in business there is recognition that by focusing solely on today’s bottom line, tomorrow’s success is imperiled. On page B1 of the September 27, 1996 Wall Street Journal, is an article entitled “Some Companies Try to Rebuild Loyalty” by Joseph B. White and Joann S. Lublin. They note: “Corporate attitudes are changing in part because employers realize that talented employees can easily jump ship in today’s relatively tight job market. Although corporate layoffs haven’t stopped, job creation is far outstripping jobs eliminated.” They go on to detail a variety of job enrichment opportunities being given employees and job security guarantees.

Since libraries tend to mimic business on a time-lag basis, we will all probably experience some of these benefits as well. University librarians have always received free tuition and some have tenure, but these are the exception. Numerically, most librarians lack these benefits. One wonders if publishers and vendors will take steps to nurture company loyalty. If so, the gossip about who is switching to which competitor in Against the Grain will become much less interesting.

Treating employees as important factors in a business or library’s long-term success is critical. For librarians who feel stretched between the public service, collection development, processing, learning about the Internet and how to become a Web-masters, and serving on countless committees, they need reassurance that their work is of value, that they are not just widgets that can be added or deleted according to the whims of the people who pay the bills.

A second manifestation of the good things happening, relates to the development of policies in libraries to govern how we treat each other and our patrons. At Columbia, we developed a Human Resources philosophy statement that declares we are all committed to:

- work together with skill, dedication, and creativity.
- treat each person with dignity and respect.
- encourage individual development of skills and knowledge.
- articulate the expectations of the workplace.
- value individual contributions and experiences.
- understand how functions of the library and academic computing contribute to the larger community.
- have understanding and compassion for people experiencing exceptional personal crises.
- practice fair and equitable treatment of all individuals throughout the University.
- support the University statement on nondiscriminatory policies.
- maintain open and clear channels for communication.

We are not singular in the development of such statements. Many libraries preceded us. All such statements, when implemented, make information work more enjoyable and productive.

Finally, I was cheered (read: awestruck and shaken) this past week when I was told by a representative of the major European scientific periodicals publisher that they were offering digital and print journals (yes, I know this goes against one of the commandments laid down in my last column) for only 3% more than print alone and they throw in guaranteed annual increases of less than 10% in exchange for a no cancellation agreement (yes, I understand they are scared about the future but I don’t reject Christmas presents just because it makes Santa feel good). While the suggested increase level is still above the percentage our budget will increase, the concept is definitely headed in the right direction. This comes on the heals of an offer from a major American medical sciences publisher to discuss guaranteed print journal price increases. November 5th will come and go. We will have a new old President. Life will go on. We will continue to face challenges. Let’s all try and remember that if we work together, we can all win. If not, there will be short term winners and losers, but we will all lose in the long run.
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