ATG Deadlines

Editor

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For the ninth consecutive year ATG dedi-
cates our September issue to the vagary and
variety of reference publishing. As they
have done since we started, Fran Wilkinson
and Linda Lewis kick things off with a group inter-
view they have entitled “Reference eBooks:
Does an eBook on the Screen Beat One on the
Shelf?” Once again Fran and Linda elicited
fascinating and informed responses from a panel
of librarian experts. This time the topics under
discussion include the ways that electronic refer-
ence books are being selected, purchased,
and budgeted, as well as how they are being
promoted and how patrons and librarians are
reacting to them.

Keeping the focus on electronic collections
we also have an interview with Diane Kovacs,
consultant and author who has been a pioneer in
collecting for reference. Her book, the Kovalcs
Guide to Electronic Library Collection
Development: Essential Core Subject Collec-
tions, Criteria, and Guidelines, is well
known to collection development and refer-
ence librarians alike.

Our other lead interview is with Erin
McKean, nationally known and respected lexi-
cographer, and editor of the New Oxford Ameri-
can Dictionary. Erin had been profiled in the
New York Times and interviewed on NPR and
we are delighted that she shares her insights
about the creation and publishing of this stan-
dard reference work. Her enthusiasm for, and
love of, dictionary making is obvious in every
answer she gives.

Naturally, we have a couple of articles that
focus on reference publishing from the busi-
ness side. Karen Christensen, co-founder of Berk-
shire Publishing follows up last year’s piece on
quality in reference publishing with Making Re-
ference: the Business Behind the Books. Karen
guides us on a “soup to nuts” tour of how a pub-
lisher arrives at quality reference work. She skill-
fully combines explanation of profit and loss
statements with discussions of the creativity and
collaboration required for publishing success.
And, drawing on her 20 years of editorial expe-
rience, Sylvia K. Miller, discusses an essential
part of any reference work. Her article Index
Appreciation: a Publisher’s Brief Guide high-
lights the nitty-gritty of what goes into making a
good index. Sylvia also contends that the indexer’s skill is needed more than ever in navi-
gating the massive amounts of information avail-
able electronically. She insists that “without the
analytical choices made by indexes, full text
searching is often no more than a promising
mishmash.”

We are also honored to have another article
from Dave Tyckoson, the 2005 RUSA Isadore
Gilbert Mudge-R.R. Bowker Award winner. Dave
goes into the memory bank and pulls out a list of “Reference Classics that were ahead of
their time.” Dave’s nominees range from “the
famous (or infamous) Britannica 3rd” to my per-
soral favorite, the Magazine Index viewable us-
ing COM readers, cutting edge technology of the
1970’s. More than a nostalgia trip, Dave’s ar-
ticle reminds us where we have been, and how
far we have come. For those of us who have
been around for awhile, it has been an amaz-
ing journey and one that few of us could have
imagined.

We hope that after reading through these
amazing interviews and stimulating articles, you
feel as good about this issue as we do. My usual
dvice still applies — sit back with your favorite
iced beverage and enjoy.

Letters to the Editor

Send letters to <kstrauch@comcast.net>, phone or fax 843-723-3536, or snail mail:
Against the Grain, MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send
a letter to the editor from the ATG Homepage at http://www.against-the-grain.com.

Dear Editor:

Permit a reference book publisher to con-
gratulate you on Against the Grain. I learn
from it.

The “Legally Speaking” article in the cur-
rent issue (v.17, no.2, p.58) is splendid.

Cordially,
Matthew J. Brucolli, President
Brucolli Clark Layman, Inc.
2006 Sumter St., Columbia, SC 29201-2157
http://www.bcl-manly.com

AGAINST THE GRAIN DEADLINES
VOLUME 17 & 18 — 2005-2006

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