

Why?

Several weeks ago an eight year old and I were discussing a mutual writing experience about a blue crayon. She had written a story about a blue crayon and what it felt like to be a blue crayon. To end the story she had the crayon jump out the window. I suggested that once the crayon was out the window she created a new opportunity for writing more because she created thereby a new sequence according to the old maxim of reporters, "who, what, when, where, and why."

The *why* is extremely important. Its import lies in two directions. First, from the maxim noted from the fourth estate, the *why* provides an interpretation or explanation of the action. Some would charge that this led to the problems now being dealt with by the press, they had been doing more interpreting than reporting who-what-when-and-where. Second, however, is the interrogative *why*. WHY? Some people spend their lives asking "WHY?" and others spend part of their time answering their own *whys*.

Librarians are a breed who have the unique opportunity to face a lot of *whys*. This is the stock-in-trade of the reference librarian who may not know all the answers, but who knows where to look for some answers. Daily faced with the *whys* of other people, daily supplying interpretations to those *whys* is the role many librarians play. Some librarians dare to ask *why*, and then find themselves spending time working out some of the responses to their own *whys*. Even, then, however, we are professionally equipped to do the research necessary to answer the *whys* we raise.

When was the last time you took several hours just to think about the tasks you perform each day, reflect on them, and ask yourself

- a. *why* do I do this?
- b. *why* do I do it this way?
- c. *why* shouldn't I consider doing it some other way?

These are three *whys* which can lead to a totally different perspective about the tasks of librarianship. Your own *why* applied to your daily tasks can lead to a different set of working experiences.

There are the larger professional *whys*, also. Some of you need to raise those *whys*, and you need to respond to the *why* with a reasoned treatise for the rest of your colleagues to read, respond to, and benefit from. Two articles in this issue could be looked at from the perspective of the professional *why*. Joe Hewitt is providing an answer to the professional *whys* of decisions made about AACR II and the catalog at UNC-CH. Dee Brockmann raises another sort of professional *why* by suggesting that there ought to be a way to do book security and circulation.

One of my secret *whys* is "why isn't historical fiction provided subject tracings?" I am afraid that people will lose George Eliot's *Romola*, Charles Mee's *White Robe*, *Black Robe*, Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*, and a host of others. If I were to take the time to research and answer my own *why*, I might have the meat for a good article.

Why is an important word in all our vocabularies. I hope you will take both the interrogative *why* and the interpretative *why*, combine them, and produce a product which you think should be shared with your colleagues. Research it, write it out, review it, and send it to me or to one of the section editors. Your *why* might wind up in print!

JONATHAN A. LINDSEY

NCLA MEMBERS TO RECEIVE TAR HEEL LIBRARIES

The NCLA Executive Board voted on March 30 to provide funds for a joint project between *North Carolina Libraries* and *Tar Heel Libraries*, which will provide all members of NCLA and subscribers to *NCL* with copies of *THL*. The editors of *NCL* and *THL* will be working together to provide the best kind of coverage of people, events, workshops, news items, etc., so that through both publications you will be able to maintain a current awareness of library activities in North Carolina.

In *THL* you will find routine listings about personnel changes, upcoming events, calendar of library activities in North Carolina, and other items of interest from the State Library. *NCL* will continue to provide articles of interest, substantive reports of the content of workshops, significant personnel achievements, and other types of North Carolina library news which should be preserved as a permanent record of the "state of the profession." *NCL* will continue to be indexed annually.

ELLEN WINSTON NAMED 1978 RAY MOORE AWARD RECIPIENT

Ellen Winston was named the recipient of the Ray Moore Award for the best article about public libraries published in *North Carolina Libraries* during 1978. This award honors the late Ray Moore and carries a stipend of \$100. Miss Winston's article, "How Libraries Serve Older Adults," appeared in the Fall 1978 issue.

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