

north carolina libraries

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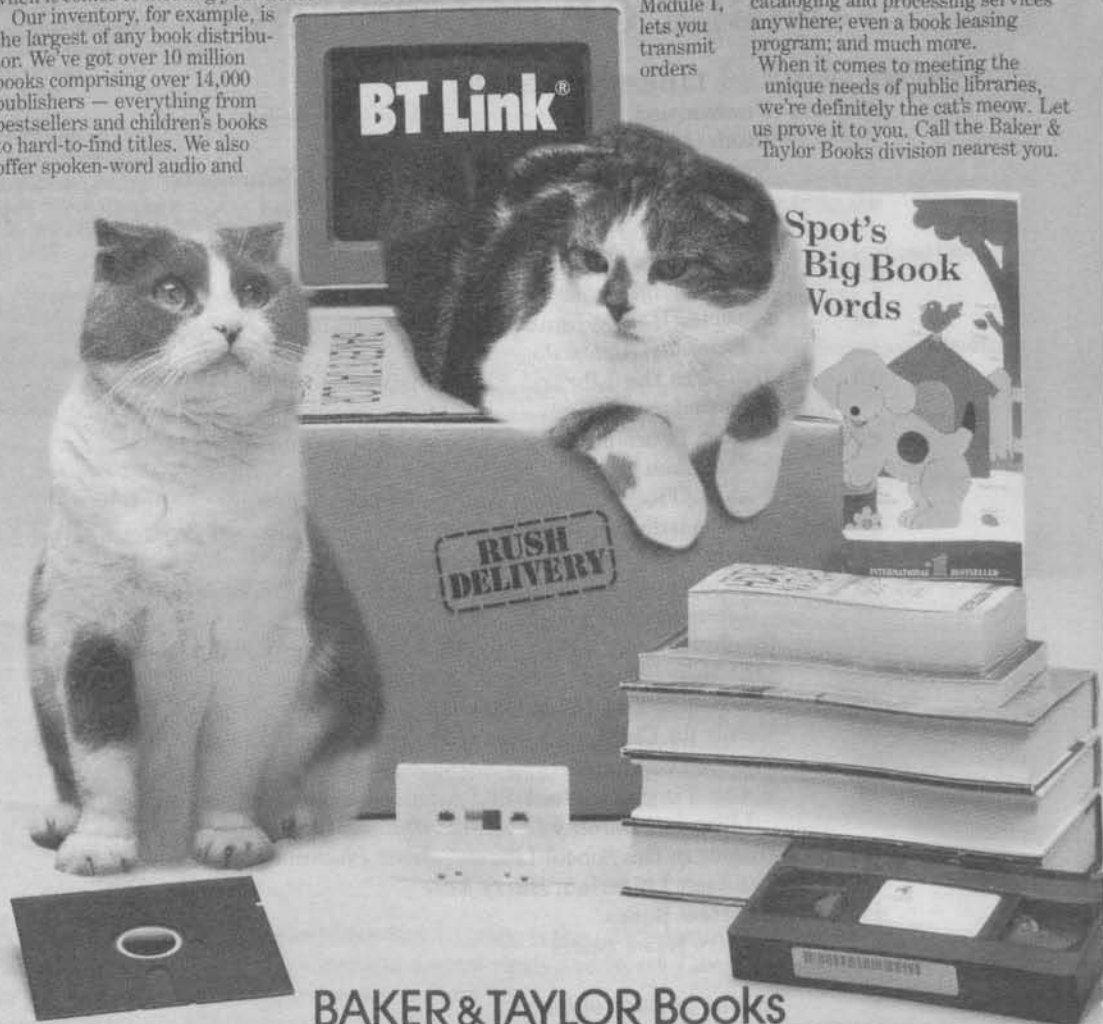
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Forewarned

Rose Simon and David Fergusson, Guest Editors

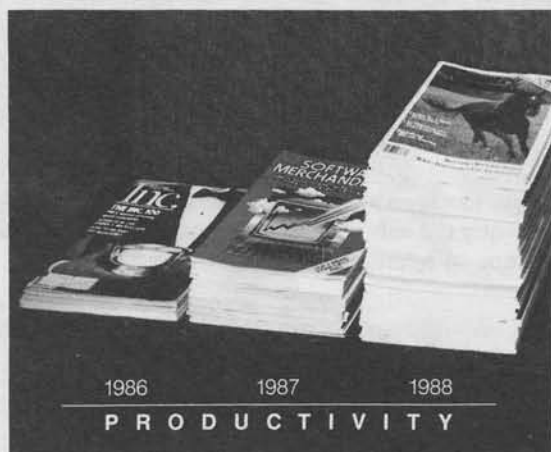
What do librarians think is funny about their work? Do catalogers and reference librarians laugh at the same things? Do directors laugh at all? These and similar musings led to the effort to produce this collection of (mostly) homegrown North Carolina library humor. It is an assortment of anecdotes, parodies, short stories, and drawings that reflect our own vision of incongruity, inconsistency, and absurdity in a microcosm dedicated to order, preservation, and intellectual excellence. Humor in the library enlivens and enriches what could otherwise be a lengthy series of singularly routine workdays.

Gathering this collection of humor has been a surprisingly challenging task. Apparently the only profession less likely than librarians to admit

publicly that they can make light of their work is the clergy. Not all of the material received and reviewed has been included. The most surprising discovery, or rediscovery, has been that regardless of one's type of library or job title, we do not all agree on what is or is not funny. Submissions that sent some into convulsions of mirth left others as stone-faced as the denizens of Easter Island. Some of the least funny (hence, rejected) material was produced by ourselves. Items selected for inclusion in this issue were approved by a consensus of chuckles. We hope that you will find most, if not all, of them to your taste, and that you thoroughly enjoy this outlandish portrayal of our professional encounters with chaos, madness, and plain bad karma. ■



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From the President

Libraries

This will be my last president's column for *North Carolina Libraries* and I am sure that after you have read this issue, you will say "good riddance". It has been a year of triumph and heart-break for the association and certainly a year when the phrase "what if ..." looms large. As those of you who have had the pleasure of serving with me on the Executive Board during the triennium are aware, had we been awarded the prestigious Morton Watson Grant, the association would be facing NO SHORTAGE of money, and we could dictate our future, moulding minds, building information highways, and dressing pretty well, destined to change libraries throughout the next decade. What if ...

Also, now that we have survived the three recounts, we are announcing the officers for the next ennium. Although most of you have doubtless not heard of the candidates that have been declared winners, the method of settling the disputed election (see *North Carolina Libraries*, Spring-Fall 1990) seemed the least divisive and rather unusual! All fourteen of the co-officers are introduced in this issue.

Prepare now to attend the conference next year! The theme I have chosen is "Libraries ... and Seafood!" As you know, the conference will be held in New Bern. Our friends with the New Bern Chamber of Commerce made the highest bid for the conference and not only will the association be substantially richer, but the IBM PS 6000 donated for the association offices and the stuffed marlin for the wall will be welcome additions. Once again, Dr. Park will be our keynote speaker and has bid \$325.00 to make his usual interesting speech. We almost had Charlie Robinson, but he only bid \$200.00. I know, What if ...

Finally, I commend to you the articles in this issue. They are some of the most insightful we have featured in many years and will not only make you think about your profession (and it is a true profession), but will make you think. I know I had to. Thank you for the wonderful year and the "Fry Baby". I know the association is in good hands, but I am not sure whose. See you in New Bern!

for the 90's

Virginia Dare: Our First Librarian

Mark Schumacher

In the winter of 1989, a candidate for a library science faculty position at UNC-Greensboro spoke on the role of serendipity in biographical library research. Little did I realize at the time that serendipity would lead me to make a major discovery in the area of U.S. library history: that Virginia Dare, the first English child born in North America, was among the first librarians in the American colonies, and probably the first public librarian in North Carolina.

I came across the lucky clue which led to this startling revelation while filing away a stack of old issues of *Tar Heel Libraries* in my attic. The house has been in my family for generations, and a number of my forebears, including Louis Round Schumacher and Peter Francisco Schumacher, were librarians in North Carolina before me. The house is full of library memorabilia. In a dark corner of the attic, I came upon some tattered, badly deteriorated copies of what seemed to be a magazine called *American Colonies Libraries*. They were crumbling, and very fragile, but I could just make out the date of September 1615 on one of them. The cover, half-eaten by silverfish, proclaimed what at first seemed to be an exhortation to our profession, or perhaps the theme of the 1616 ACLA (American Colonies Library Association) midwinter conference—held, even in those days, in Chicago.¹ Instead, as I was to learn, it was announcing a simple, historic, and yet long-forgotten fact. It said

Dare to be a Librarian

Of course, it has long been assumed that the settlers of Roanoke Island, and among them Virginia Dare, perished mysteriously in the late 1580's. Although rumors and legends continue to this day concerning these first English colonists, no conclusive evidence has ever surfaced to explain their fate. Yet here was news, a quarter of a century after their disappearance, that Virginia Dare has decided to become a librarian! From the crumbling pages, I learned only that Virginia had

given up her study of medieval French literature and the semiotics of archaic Greek philosophy to pursue a career in librarianship. (The early 1600s, it appears, were as tough on folks in the humanities as the 1970s were.) No other details were provided in the ACL article, but excited by what I had discovered, I decided to devote as much energy as I could to uncovering more about Virginia's library work. In the months that followed, I tracked down every lead I could find. Unfortunately, due to arcane concerns over **National Security**, many sources and some of the existing information about Ms. Dare were not available to me. For example, it seems that the CBI (Colonial Bureau of Investigation) had a program for many years to monitor the reading patterns of all individuals known to be supportive of the so-called "Independence Movement." And although it is known that CBI agents of the "Library Alert Program" contacted Virginia in 1622 and again in the 1640's, no documents concerning these meetings are yet available to the public! Nevertheless, some elements of a tentative biography do emerge.

Education

In the days before information science, educational media, LANs and hypertext, library education was a far simpler proposition. In fact, the only ACLA-accredited library schools in North America in the early seventeenth century were at the branches of LP (Library of Parliament) in Boston and Annapolis. Students were recommended for admission by members of the House of Lords or by the colonial governors; the GREs were totally optional. Virginia attended classes in Annapolis, studying the standard library subjects of the day: preservation of incunabula, history of royal libraries, hand-press operation: graphic media for the library; and (a relatively new course), cataloging of non-manuscript materials. She specialized in rural librarianship, there being little else for librarians in North Carolina. Her academic record was excellent; her transcript shows that she received eleven grades of "passed" and only one "failed," which allowed her to be nominated and elected to Bee Eff Em, a library honor society

Mark Schumacher is a Reference Librarian at Jackson Library, UNC Greensboro

founded in 1528 by Henry VIII to commemorate several of his wives, who had been librarians before they married. Her graduating class (1618) was, in fact, the last to operate as a thirty-six-hour program. The following year, all LP library schools throughout the empire adopted a two-year, forty-eight-hour curriculum, as mandated by King James I. As a report to the king stated, it was felt that

*"Beginning librarians shoulde be trained not only in the basicke concepts of the librarie arts, but in the application of these concepts as welle. They must be taughte the latest technologies: the booke catalogue, the printing presse, and mucche moore. A longer programme of study is there fore necessarie to mould these younge peple into the outstanding proffessionals we neede today."*²

Unfortunately, while the evolution of colonial library education is most fascinating, it must remain the subject of another study.

Early Career

Following the completion of her studies at LP, Virginia Dare returned to Edenton, North Carolina. She was forced to work for several months as a part-time semiotician, at minimum wage, before being appointed Adult Services Coordinator of the Edenton and the Surrounding Area Public Library. (North Carolina was much less administratively compartmentalized in 1619 than it is today.) It was in this position that Virginia developed a number of significant outreach programs. These were aimed both at minority groups, in particular white Europeans (with whom Virginia had, of course, a natural affinity) and, more importantly, to the large native American clientele of the region. Her writings on outreach, originally published in *ACL* and *Southeastern Colonies Librarian*, were gathered together in *How! We do it Right! A Guide to Library-Community Relations in the New World*.³ The only extant copy of this work was discovered in the basement of Tryon Palace in the 1940s (and immediately reprinted by Kraus in their "Classics of Colonial American Librarianship" series.) The title of this volume, in fact, with a slight change of punctuation, has spawned a whole *genre* of writing about the library profession.

After six years in Edenton, Virginia moved on to a branch of the Outer Banks Regional Library System, working in the now-defunct coastal vil-

lage of Goose, only a few miles north of her birthplace in Roanoke Island. As the only professional in a small and rather isolated library, she was in charge of all aspects of the unit's operation. It was here in Goose that she began her now legendary work in preservation of library materials.

Because of its location too near the shore, and inadequate colony funding to provide a more modern building elsewhere, the library in Goose suffered a great deal of weather-related damage.⁴ Storms and high tides caused by hurricanes battered the thin-walled building mercilessly. Following the back-to-back ravages, in 1630, of Hurricane 1 and Hurricane 2 (the current naming system not yet being in place), scores of volumes were badly damaged by sea water. Virginia and her colleagues realized that something had to be done immediately if any of the volumes were to be saved. Despite working with inadequate ACSI (American Colonial Standards Institute) guidelines for book preservation, she managed to devise a box into which the books could be placed, and which, by a process involving ionized, distilled water, greatly alleviated the damage caused by the corrosive salt in the sea water. Later the books were carefully dried, using techniques shown to her by her Native American coworkers. In fact, the contributions of one particular Indian, named Paskwo, were honored by Ms. Dare when she applied for a Royal Patent for her preservation device in 1634. She called it a Paskwo Tank, a term still found widely in northeastern North Carolina.

The Harvard Connection

Her work in various areas of librarianship brought her ever-growing attention from the profession. In fact, in the fall of 1638, she was invited by the governors of Harvard College to apply for the position of Head Librarian at the fledgling institution. Records which I recently discovered in the College archives indicate that the interview, lasting two days in November, went very well, (considering that it had taken Virginia over six weeks just to get to Cambridge). Her presentation to the search committee, "Resource Networking in the Multiversity: the Role of the Library," was truly visionary, if perhaps slightly inappropriate. However, she seemed to have all the qualifications that the college was looking for, and was certainly interested in the position. As she wrote to Paskwo, "There is mucche to be saide for this Yankee institution and its loftie goales of educating this lands younge men." However, when she was offered the post, she found that the salary was much inferior to that of the other faculty, all of whom were men.

She therefore turned down the offer, writing to Nathaniel Eaton in part, "I am much aggrieved that, despite the comparable value which I would bring to the College, you have found it reasonable to offer me a relative pittance, when contrasted to the salaries you give to your (male) professors. Under these circumstances, I can but refuse the position, and seek employment elsewhere."⁵ Thus Virginia Dare became one of the first to recognize the inherent inequities of salary which arise in predominately female professions.

Building Early Networks

The final chapter of Virginia Dare's professional career was spent at the University of the North Coast, at Castle Hayne (just north of Wilmington), a small private school which closed about 1710, following years of financial difficulties. UNC-CH, as it was known, was one of the earliest institutions of higher learning in Eastern North Carolina, and prided itself on the quality of its library. In her several years as "Dean" of Libraries there, Virginia introduced a number of important innovations, particularly in the areas of networking. Her work with the Tidewater Regional Library Network, amplifying earlier efforts with the Ocracoke-Croatan Library Clubs (OCLC), spearheaded multi-type library resource sharing in this part of the New World. And although it was not implemented during her tenure at UNC-CH (innumerable glitches kept cropping up), Dare worked with an Irish library consulting firm, based in Dublin, to develop a highly mechanized "integral system" to be known as LS/1700.

The Later Years

By this time Virginia, now almost sixty, was beginning to think about retirement. Her judicious investments in the Colonial Retired Educators Fund (CREF) assured her a fairly comfortable existence without financial worries. She decided to settle near Beaufort, where she opened one of the first bed and breakfast inns on the Carolina coast. Perched above the beach, it was appropriately named "Overdune." She died in Beaufort about 1660 (again some information remains sketchy), and although the location of her grave site remains highly classified, I did manage to obtain the text of her epitaph. This final note is in fact the most curious aspect of my entire Virginia Dare investigation. For in the brief inscription there appear eerie reference to the names of four future giants of the library world. I close with the simple text:

*"Do we know how life's travailles did cut her?
Few were as strong and wise as she. He who would
seek to best her, manages it not!"*⁶

References

1. Chicago: from the Algonquian, meaning "frigid winter meeting place."
2. Royal Academy for Library Study and Education (RALISE). *Annual Report*. London: The Academy (Distributed by HMSO), 1617.
3. Dare, Virginia. *HOW! We Do It Right! A Guide to Library-Community Relations in the New World*. New Bern, N.C.: Farland Publishing, 1650.
4. Ironically, construction of one of the last libraries to be funded by the Carnegie Corporation was in the final stages of completion when the killer hurricane of April 1924 destroyed most of Goose, causing the entire population to resettle in an area called Duck Estates North.
5. Dare Collection, Harvard College Archives. (1/2 linear foot).
6. Personal communication from the Deputy Assistant Director for Colonial Affairs, Federal Bureau of Investigation, May 14, 1989.



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Revolutionary Research Report

Patsy Hansel

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For many years now I have pondered the problem of peripherals in picking personnel. We all know that every applicant takes certain characteristics, primarily physical characteristics, into a job interview, and that these characteristics, whether they are likely to affect job performance or not, affect whether or not the applicant is hired for the position. I have been concerned that these peripherals, as they will henceforth be known universally, have not been given serious treatment in the literature of management and, more importantly, librarianship. What I have longed for is a definitive guide to how much weight ("value") various peripherals carry in the typical library manager's search for the typical library position. Failing in my own search for such a guide, I have rectified the situation through my own rigorous research.

For the past forty-seven years, I have been interviewing library managers (17,492 in all) from all types of libraries. These obliging managers have discussed with me in depth their approach to interviewing applicants for positions and what criteria they use in making their own personnel selection decisions. As a group, these managers have filled 271,276 positions in their collective time. I have myself unobtrusively observed over 70,000 of the interviews conducted for these positions. I then correlated the characteristics of those applicants chosen to fill positions with those of the applicants who were in fact the applicants who would have been able to do the jobs best (overlap rate: 7%). The results of my investigations have been distilled into The Peripherals Index Quotient Index (PIQI), a meaty tome available in return for a cashier's check from anybody mailed to me in the

amount of \$275.00. For the purposes of this article, I have compiled a chart of the characteristics which the mass of librarians can be expected to find most interesting. [The complete PIQI includes, in 1,576 pages, 72,133 characteristics and their relevant arcane permutations for every library position which has ever existed in the United States (the international edition is scheduled for publication in 1992) with exact values for each.]

The PIQ Index assumes as basic that males have a head start of 5. After that, values for various attributes turn out not to be as predictable as one might, on facile reflection, assume. Comments about anything in the chart or in the complete PIQI, as well as recommendations for additional characteristics to be included in the first PIQI revision, are welcome. Quibbling with assigned PIQ values is not worth your time or mine, 'cause *these are the facts*.



Patsy Hansel served as Assistant Director at the Cumberland County Public Library and Information Center in Fayetteville, NC and as President of NCLA in 1987-89. She is now Director of the Williamsburg Regional Library in Williamsburg, Virginia. "Revolutionary Research Report" was first published in *MsManagement*; A publication of the NCLA Round Table on the Status of Women in Librarianship; v. 1, no. 5 (August 1983).

**Values for the Peripherals Index Quotient
(PIQ, pronounced "pick") from the
Peripherals Index Quotient Index (PIQI)**

Sex of Applicant Peripherals	Male (+5) Value	Female Value
"young"	-2	-5
child-bearing years	+4	-4
"old"	-2	-2
*Married	+4	+2 to -2
*with children	+4	neutral to -2
Single	-3	-1
Deep voice	+4	+2
soft voice	-4	-1
"Masculine"	+2	-2
"Feminine"	-16	-2
short	-2	neutral
very short	-6	-3
tall	+4	+2
very tall	+2	-4
Dressed for Success	+2	+2
dressed better than interviewer	-1	-1
attractive	+4	+3
homely	neutral	-1
stunning	+4	-2
long hair	-2	neutral
worn in bun	-16	+2
basic Yankee		
accent in South	-1	-1
basic Southern		
accent in North	-5	-7
Brooklyn		
accent anywhere but Brooklyn	-16	-16
overweight	-1	-4
skinny	neutral	-1
just right	+2	+2
pregnant	N/A	-21
spouse pregnant	+4	-21

*These are so incredibly complicated that you'll just have to get hold of the complete PIQI to figure it out.

Negative Library Growth

Norman D. Stevens

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This paper, which appeared originally in the *Un*a*b*a*s*h*e*d Librarian* (Number 13, Fall 1974, p. 6), was inspired by an ad in *Library Journal*, although problems with remote book return boxes at the University of Connecticut Library also contributed to the approach to helping control library growth described here.

* * *

Drastic problems sometimes require radical solutions. While zero library growth now is receiving much attention, The Molesworth Institute has been engaged for several years in research designed to help libraries achieve negative library growth. This research was undertaken in response to a request from a major research library faced with severe space problems, stabilizing budgets, an inadequate circulation system, a book drop system that simply didn't work, as well as a host of other problems.

After much study of conventional solutions which proved either too expensive or too complex, we recommended a simple, inexpensive solution which soon proved to have dramatic impact. At a total cost of under \$5,000, three paper disintegrators manufactured by the Security Engineered Machinery Co., Inc. (see *Library Journal* 96:1951, 1971) were installed in place of the conventional book return collection points. Two were installed initially as remote location collection points and one within the library. They proved so effective, however, that within a year the one in the library was moved to another remote location and a larger model was installed in the library.

By reducing all books being returned to "a mass of tiny, confetti-like particles," this system has had truly startling effects. Negative library growth has been accomplished; the collections have been reduced from 1,495,327 volumes to

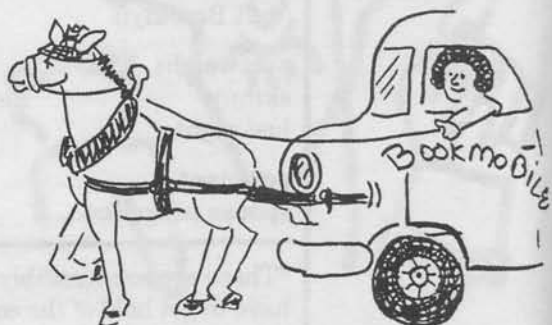
1,233,608.5 volumes in less than three years. Space problems have been reduced and plans for a new building have been abandoned at a saving of at least \$15 million. Rather than being forced to install an expensive computerbased circulation system, the library has been able to totally abandon its circulation system at an annual savings of at least \$75,000. Cataloging has been abandoned as well and books are simply shelved alphabetically by author at an annual savings of at least \$400,000. Weeding is automatic, users are insured of getting more new and valuable material and less old and outdated material since all savings have been put into the book fund.

Most importantly, however, this new approach has entirely eliminated the rubbish-picking activities of the curious which, in the past, had created serious litter and public relations problems for the library. It also, of course, represents a major contribution to paper recycling efforts.

A few faculty members are unhappy over the loss of their favorite texts but administrators and students alike are extremely pleased since faculty members are now forced to update their readings, and their thinking, constantly. Some traditionalists feel that the library has lost its research potential but that is a small price to pay for the enormous savings that have been achieved.

A complete 10-page report on this major study entitled *Negative Library Growth; How We Run Our Library Excellent* (Storrs, Connecticut, 1974) is available for \$50 from The Molesworth Institute.

Norman Stevens is Director of the University of Connecticut Library in Storrs, CT. He is best known in library circles as the Director of the Molesworth Institute. His humorous articles have appeared in numerous library publications, many of them collected in his *Archives of Library Research from the Molesworth Institute* (Haworth Press, 1978).



Top Ten Reasons to End Bookmobile Service

(Not Seen on "Late Night with David Letterman")

David Fergusson

10. A panel of three guys on "Oprah" agreed that bookmobiles offer the "best possible method of service."

9. With gas and insurance prices going up, it's cheaper to pay for their gas and let people drive to the damn library!

8. New federal law mandating "Non-Smoking" sections on all bookmobiles carrying over 2,000 volumes.

7. Once the patrons have read all the books, why bother?

David Fergusson is the Assistant Director, Headquarters of the Forsyth County Public Library in Winston-Salem, NC. He is also Chair of the Governmental Relations Committee of NCLA.

6. The computer terminal goes down on one of these babies—you're not going to call Mr. Goodwrench.

5. When the outside paint fades, you get really tired of kids stopping you and trying to buy a Mr. Softee.

4. *Playboy* air fresheners that hang from rear view mirrors no longer on state contract.

3. Overwhelming success of the TRUMP-mobile. Who can compete?

2. Since they outlawed student schoolbus drivers in North Carolina, there's no one left who'll play chicken.

1. You can't get the ladies who drive 'em to put the chains on when it snows.

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Hubris, Heresy, and Hearsay

An Irreverent Look at (Perhaps) the Oldest Profession,
or (as Eve said to Adam):

"Tell me again where you got that . . . I may want to use it later."

Gayle Ann Fishel, ENFP
and
Plummer Alston Jones, Jr., INFJ

The last decade has witnessed a growing national fascination for "understanding ourselves." Personality inventories and type indicators abound. Certainly librarians, with their passion for knowing, are not immune to the allure of these instruments, but thus far, science has failed to provide us with a model by which we can accurately gauge our professional temperaments.

Recognizing this shameful lacuna in the literature, we set about the arduous task of collecting data to support our *a priori* assumptions; this took longer than anticipated. We polled tens of subjects and devoted two dinners and a brunch to the careful tabulation of results. So, with apologies to Freud, Jung, and Isabel Briggs Myers, we offer here our own exposition of librarian personality types.

The Scholar

(Library Director/Ph.D. Candidate)

"Dewey . . . or don't we?"

Synopsis:

The most innocuous and inconspicuous of librarian types, these sage and solemn few are often mistaken for patrons and, consequently, ignored by the staffs they are appointed to administer. Believing that every setting is an opportunity for research, these scions of the insignificant work diligently to infuse their subordinates with enthusiasm for the world of ideas. Unfortunately for the scholar, most of the other, more pragmatic members of the staff are too busy dealing with issues like what to do with the library's thirty-fourth complete set of *Harvard Classics*, just donated by

the nephew of a trustee—or the fact that someone keeps throwing dead fish into the auto-book return on Friday nights.

Scholars lead lives of quiet dissipation. The first priority of the morning is uncovering the next page on their "Dissertation Abstract of the Day" desk calendar. No one calls. No one writes. Pinkerton does not return.

These undaunted drones are uniquely capable of dispatching burgeoning amounts of even the most tedious paper work with Herculean ease—but are often stymied by having to make the simplest decisions. As a case in point, Herman Glick, head librarian at the Arkansas *Extremely Technical Research Institute* (AETRI), *not* affiliated with the Arkansas *Extremely Technical Community College* (AETCC) system, was renowned for his ability to polish off the exhaustive HEGIS report over coffee and crullers. But, ten years ago, the indefatigable Glick was reduced to a quivering mass of gelatin when his library was offered first refusal on the Butterfly McQueen Papers. (At last report, Miss McQueen was still awaiting Glick's decision.)

Because he is married to his research endeavors, this Sisyphean monk notices little difference between his days at work and his evenings at home. His happiest hours are spent in the company of his portable microfiche lap reader, perusing his complete personal set of *The National Union Catalog of Pre-1956 Imprints*, while listening to a compact disc recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* on constant repeat.

Collateral Professions:

- Preparer of family-group sheets for the dramatis personae in Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*
- Translator of Marcel Proust into Urdu . . . or intelligible French
- Toll collector on the New Jersey Turnpike

Gayle Ann Fishel (closet librarian) is an award-winning graphic designer and Director of Publications at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Plummer Alston Jones, Jr. (ambivalent administrator) is Head Librarian/Director of Learning Resources at Elon College in Elon College, North Carolina.

The Anal Retentive

(Cataloger)

"Oh, sweet mystery of life—at last I've filed you!"

Synopsis:

This is no Cutter-and-run librarian. Introspective, brooding and intense, these individuals burn with a need for fastidiousness that is unparalleled by any other professionals—save yoga instructors and certain Peugeot mechanics. They are driven to classify, quantify and qualify.

Even the most banal of items is not immune to the rites of copious categorization. Legend has it that one lonely cataloger in Bozeman, Montana, filled a warehouse four times the size of the New York City Port Authority Building with subject cards for a *Time-Life Books* guide to regrouting bathroom tile.

Catalogers live with the constant fear that some tic or aberration in their characters will cause them to err in the classification of an item, wholly disrupting the order and harmony of the universe. They are consequently jumpy and meticulous individuals, entirely committed to their belief that the mystery of existence can be plainly resolved on one side of a 3 x 5 card.

This proclivity for superfluous repetition makes catalog librarians the most desired of partners for games like whist and Trivial Pursuit, but the least desired partners at any social function other than a bris or a bone marrow transplant. They are profoundly interested in the minutiae of almost anything. A cataloger will always be the one most likely to know absorbing bits of information like what "One-Hour Martinizing" actually means, or how many polyps Ronald Reagan had removed from his colon during his presidency (*nota bene*: 15).

These biblio-lemurs are so ardent in their pursuit of in-depth subject analysis that they are frequently oblivious to significant changes in their work environments. One such librarian in Flint, Michigan, was so absorbed by his delineation of relevant subject headings for twenty-eight new volumes of incunabula, that he failed to notice his midtown library branch had been closed and converted into a Chicken Delight franchise. (Patrons of this branch, by the way, were later heard to comment on the remarkable similarity between the incunabula and the cole slaw served there.) A sleepless cataloger doesn't simply count sheep, he classifies them; for example, "one Merino lamb, two Karakul rams, three Romney March ewes, etc., etc.". "Thankfully," according to one insom-

niac, "there are over four hundred breeds with sufficient information to promote their classification according to distinctive productive traits. It's a comfort to know that we can all confront sleeplessness with impunity."

Collateral Professions:

- Seam-ripper
- Quality Assurance Supervisor in a tortellini factory
- Bassoonist (or proficient on any double-reed family instrument)

Catalogers pursue infinite accessibility with the same fervor and zeal employed by knights tracking the Holy Grail.

The Omniscient Prognosticator

(Circulation Librarian)

"Les gens n'ont pas de pain . . . and we need the numbers."

Synopsis:

In an era of budget cuts and fiscal restraint, many libraries owe their very existence to these titans of tabulation. Pragmatic and prophetic, these "Cassandras of Circulation" forge ahead with their dogged determination to anticipate the inchoate needs of the people. Some carry this to unusual extremes. One inner-city Los Angeles librarian was so intent on her mission to make the collection relevant to the needs of the community that she bought large quantities of rubber hose and bicycle chain at discount prices, and later, cut these into serviceable lengths upon patron request.

With their deep-seated conviction that a hearty dose of social responsibility can easily translate into user statistics, Omniscient Prognosticators are responsible for the development of landmark innovations in outreach programming. Sybil Ornstein, a circulation librarian in Duluth, Minnesota, noticed that her city boasted a large population of persons suffering from multiple personality dysfunction. "I found that by extending special borrowing privileges to this group," reported Ornstein, "that I could issue as many as twelve library cards to a single patron." In the same vein, inventive librarians in urban centers with large numbers of homeless residents have installed Murphy beds in the aisles of the least

trafficked ranges of their collections, such as the 020.92's or the Z720's (biographical sketches of librarians), bound backfiles of *Chemical Abstracts*, or the collected works of Theodore Dreiser.

Collateral Professions:

- College admissions director
- Sunday School bus-ministry driver
- Merchandising magnate for BIG LOTS stores

The Commandant

(Reference/Special Collections Librarians)

"Lassen Sie ihnen Kuchen essen . . . but not in the library."

Synopsis:

The ideological antithesis of the Omniscient Prognosticator, . . . Frequently sporting volatile dispositions, these librarians have been known to resort to quasi-military methods to safeguard their inviolate arsenals of volumes deemed worthy of the designation: "REFERENCE."

. . . the Commandant is less concerned with user satisfaction than with the integrity of the collection.

We are reminded of the strange case of Helga Hildebrandt of (where else?) Berlin, Pennsylvania. When asked by a patron for information regarding the organization and preservation of a monstrous home-video collection, Hildebrandt reached immediately for her dog-eared desk copy of *Archival Moving Image Materials: A Cataloging Manual*, only to find that "some untutored Philistine" had not only permitted its circulation, but had actually allowed the volume to leave the premises "subject to call." Frau Hildebrandt, in a fit of righteous indignation, held the entire circulation staff at gunpoint until the name, Social Security number, and address of nearest living relative of the borrower were revealed.

The Commandant has her spiritual counterpart in that most mercurial of mercenaries: the Special Collections Librarian. Bred to embrace the axiom that every item, no matter how farcical or inutile, has intrinsic, archival merit, these guardians of garish gestalt patrol their whited sepulchres with maniacal fervor and intensity. Nothing illustrates this penchant for preservation more plainly than the celebrated crusade of Iowa librarian, Homer Skridlow.

When the Donna del Lago Chapter of the East Dubuque Knights of Columbus donated a rare collection of fiberglass baptismal fonts to its founding public library system, officials there were faced with the unhappy prospect of refusing the gift because of "space and staffing limitations." These impediments notwithstanding, special collections librarian Skridlow pledged himself to champion the homeless artifacts. Converting his modest Winnebago into an archival annex, Skridlow retrieved the items and created the world's first mobile special collection. Every afternoon (and on alternate Saturdays), East Dubuque residents were permitted to board the tiny coach and, after a thorough sterility gown-up, view the fonts in all their backlit splendor.

This kind of unselfish dedication to the preservation of *un-memorabilia* is the credo of the Commandant. Addressing a recent summit of special collections and reference librarians at their Center for Tactics and Retaliatory Practices in Bucharest, Boris Boesendorfer, chairman of the Subcommittee on User Containment, summarized the mission of the group: "Let there be no misunderstanding. We are no milk-and-water librarians! Our purpose is not to give the people what they want—it is to give them what they *deserve!*"

Collateral Professions:

- Telephone dominatrix (all major credit cards accepted)
- Division of Motor Vehicles clerk
- Coach of a Japanese women's volleyball team

The Entrepreneur

(Acquisitions Librarian)

"Ask, send cash, check or purchase order, and it shall be given unto you."

Synopsis:

Energetic, punctilious, and always eager to meet a challenge head on, these impresarios of inventory leave no stone unturned in their quest to satisfy the eclectic and often unreasonable requests of their user groups. Since they are responsible for locating and purchasing such a tremendous variety of items, these prima donnas of purchasing will frequently resort to unorthodox methods of locating suppliers. One acquisitions librarian in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was so devoted to the pursuit of competitive pricing that she programmed her VCR constantly to monitor the cable shop-at-home network.

Each evening after work, she would fast-forward through the day's wares, keeping a keen eye

out for bargains. "You'd be surprised at what you can pick up if you're religious about watching those shows," she pointed out. "Once I nabbed a mint condition set of the 1768-71 *Britannica*, reduced for quick sale along with two sets of steak knives and a black velvet painting of Elvis. I got the whole lot for \$22.95—and arranged for delayed billing!"

An equally zealous purchasing agent for a small, conservatively budgeted library system in Bangor, Maine, required all suppliers to complete exhaustive 846-page vendor surveys and required annual urinalysis and polygraph tests for sales representatives. This same servant of Cerberus admonished serial librarians to stop ordering any periodicals whose titles begin "Journal of" or "American Journal of" because, "we have a plethora of these already, and it does not behoove us to endorse the publisher's want of creativity in assigning titles."

Because business acumen and fiscal finesse are their stock-in-trade, Entrepreneurs are sometimes guilty of translating their successes into personal profits. Elsie Horvath, an acquisitions librarian in Carrington, North Dakota, was so exasperated by wholesalers constantly returning her order forms with notes reading: "Contact us when you all get a paved road, hear?"—that she took matters into her own capable hands. Horvath enrolled in a nearby Ryder Truck Driving Academy, and was soon piloting her own rig across the Great Northern Plains en route to the untapped treasures of Ann Arbor and Englewood Cliffs. It didn't stop there . . .

The enterprising Horvath, who soon realized that other small libraries in her state shared the same concerns about the expense and timeliness of shipments, resolved to market her customized, overnight freight service to the residents of Fargo, Minot, Grand Forks, and Bismarck. Soon Horvath was able to retire from her library job altogether, and today, the legends "Hire a Horvath" and "Elsie Delivers" are emblazoned on barns throughout the tri-state area.

Collateral Professions:

- Strip miner
- Spiritual advisor
- Bookie

The Missionary

(*Children's/Outreach Librarians*)

"Suffer the little children to come unto me . . . but quietly, and in groups of manageable size."

Synopsis:

While most of us live out our lives trying to put as much distance as possible between ourselves and our childhoods, there is a select group of professionals who dedicate themselves to helping others preserve, prolong, and cherish their youth. Believing that the home lives of the youngsters they serve are every bit as steeped in harsh

Because of their professional and mental myopia, children's librarians have much in common with their counterparts in Outreach and Media Services.

reality as last week's episode of *The Cosby Show*, these paragons of prepubescence can usually be found in some brightly colored corner of the library, busily creating bulletin boards on proper dental hygiene, or directing quiet, monosyllabic admonitions toward the vagrant who has just urinated into the aquarium.

Among the most highly trained and versatile of all librarians, the Missionary is accomplished in areas as wide ranging as storytelling, puppeteering, playing the autoharp, and organizing street gangs into basketball teams. Unfortunately, these pert and plucky Pollyannas are not always esteemed by their caustic colleagues. When Ginnie Mae Bond of Blounts Creek, North Carolina, was invited by the library board to make a report on the dramatic success of her pilot project to extend storyhour services to serial killers, she responded enthusiastically by delivering a six and one-half hour flannel-board presentation.

Five hours into her report, four of the board members had hurled themselves from windows of the eighth-floor meeting room, while two hysterical others threatened to hold Ginnie Mae down and force her to drink grape Kool-Aid laced with cyanide if she continued. Refusing to be dismayed and quite used to disruption, Ginnie Mae calmly

ignored their puerile complaints and proceeded with her presentation. Only when she had concluded her report and invited the audience to join with her in singing a rousing chorus of "We Are the World" did Ginnie Mae notice that the remaining board members had taken the cyanide themselves, and now lay scattered about the room on crushed piles of vanilla wafers.

All of these types share an impassioned belief in the universal relevance of the services they offer, and all are persuaded that their ventures combine to improve the overall quality of life on the planet. Only the most brutish among us would deign to suggest that driving sixty-five miles to deliver the large-print edition of recipes from the kitchen of Jim Valvano is anything less than an appropriate use of tax dollars, or that libraries *should* invest in laserdisc copies of such hallmarks of American cinema as *Teenwolf* and *Shanghai Surprise*. Fortunately, these arbiters of kitsch will ensure that the needs of the community are always anticipated by the libraries that serve them.

Collateral Professions:

- Float designer for the "Tournament of Roses" parades
- Cruise director
- Vice President, The

For more information about personality types (coming soon to a library near you), and your complimentary "sterility gown-up" tee shirt, send a SASE and a twenty-five dollar non-refundable processing fee to the authors. Allow six to eight months for delivery, slightly longer in New Jersey.

Southern Harmony

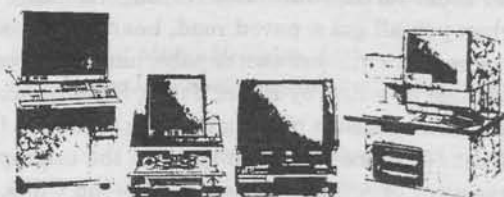
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Drugs in the Library: Any Substance to Rumors?

Peter Schledorn

Originally published in the UNC Library Staff Newsletter, No. 158 (July 1989). Reprinted with permission.

Mandatory drug testing is one of the most divisive issues in the modern workplace. Given the current interest in this issue, it might be instructive to examine the experiences of a university library in another state with its pilot drug-testing program.

By executive order the governor of a large southeastern state instituted a policy that subjected all public employees to periodic, mandatory drug-screening tests. In his announcement the governor promised that the tests used would be the most scientifically advanced and accurate tests available, although budgetary restraints dictated a cost limit of \$1.47 per test. Drug tests usually cost between five and forty dollars each, depending on their reliability. However, one laboratory (Early Detection Systems, Inc., or EDS) agreed to provide the tests at the required price.

Approximately one hundred fifty library employees were subjected to urinalysis, resulting in thirty-six positive test results. The tests revealed the presence of a number of different substances, including poppy seed residue, ethylene glycol (automotive antifreeze), various popular antihistamines, methylene chloride (printer's deglazing solvent), tri-betafrustratase (a chemical found in the bodies of people who answer repetitive questions at reference desks), and 2,3,4-ditotene (copying machine fluid). Scientists and laboratory technicians could not explain why such a number and variety of solvents were detected in the samples but say they are working on the problem and hope to find a solution soon.

In the interest of fairness, employees testing positive were given the opportunity to have the tests repeated at their own expense. All thirty-six employees opted to take advantage of the seventy-five-dollar retest. Only one of the retests yielded

an identical result, although thirty-one of the tests did report positive for different substances, including isopropanol, creosote, contact cement and chocolate mousse. As a result, one library employee was summarily fired for smelling fresh ditto copies. All of the other employees are required to attend counseling sessions featuring aversion therapy.

Administrators and officials of the state in question were reportedly disappointed that more terminal personnel actions were not justified. They specifically criticized what they called the inaccuracy of the retesting program. As a result, one legislator proposed that the state take more direct action to combat drug use among state workers, including required searches of the homes of all job applicants (in order for the act to be "revenue neutral," the searches would be paid for by the applicant). Another filed a bill describing behavior that would be taken as presumptive evidence of drug use. Under this provision, an employee would be subject to disciplinary action for yawning, inattention during meetings, or any indication of an out-of-body experience on the job. Legislature watchers dubbed this bill the "Yawn Law" but dropped the name when they realized how many bills could be described by the phrase.

Meanwhile, the issue has been complicated by the discovery that book dust can mimic many different substances in the urine. Among these are beta-carotene, novocaine, and overripe brie. Only exposure to early Cheech and Chong movies is known to have a greater effect on urinalysis results. Reactions to this news are mixed—researchers are trying to develop more foolproof tests, with a goal of thirty percent accuracy by 1995, while a group of legislators are spearheading a drive to have book dust declared a controlled substance.

[Satire Alert: the author wishes it to be known that he takes no responsibility for any consequences that might result from this report being taken too seriously. If ingested, this article will cause you to test positive for wintergreen Life Savers and Type F automatic transmission fluid.]

Peter Schledorn is Library Technical Assistant in Collection Development at Davis Library at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Guess You Had To Be There

Lisa Dalton and Laura Davidson

Dragnet Fan

Anyone in the community may use the library's telefacsimile machine for a fee. Before I could ask the unsmiling police officer who walked in how I could help him, he intoned, "Just the fax, ma'am."

Then he grinned, "I always wanted to say that!"

Speaking of Dragnet

This downtown library is sometimes frequented by a rough clientele, and the library staff tries to watch patrons whose behavior seems suspicious. For example, the staff was alerted to watch one man who appeared to be selling drugs to children in the library. After surreptitiously following him about the library, one of the staff members saw the suspect head for the locked restrooms. All suspicions were confirmed when he pulled out his *own key* to the men's room and went in.

The police, next door, were summoned. They waited outside the restroom for the criminal to emerge. The door opened...and out walked the undercover cop detailed to watch the suspicious characters frequenting the library.

Too Obvious

The young man was completing a magazine's literary quiz and came into the library for help with the last two questions. He asked the librarian for the books that would answer number four and number six. Question four, "Who was Peter Pan's enemy?," listed a) Captain Kidd, b) Captain Hook, and c) Captain Courageous as possible responses. Believing that everyone knows the story of Peter Pan, the librarian named Captain Hook.

Question six read, "The ship *Bounty* was famous for a) its strawberry cheesecake, b) its

shuffleboard deck, or c) its mutiny." Feeling a little guilty for answering the first question outright, the librarian hesitated.

"I'll tell you the title of the book, but you figure out the answer."

The man agreed.

"The title is *Mutiny on the Bounty*."

The fellow considered, then said doubtfully, "Well, it's either the mutiny or the shuffleboard deck. Let me see the book."

Zoo Animals

When the library staff introduced automated circulation to the community in 1983, they printed date due slips with pictures of zebras, whose black and white stripes are analogous to bar code patterns. These distinctive date due slips continue to be useful.

One of our library assistants checks out books for an elderly neighbor, and returns the books when the neighbor has finished reading them. Once when the books came back late, the lady apologized, "I couldn't find the giraffe."

Beg Your Pardon?

The library was unusually noisy as the gentleman stood at the reference desk quietly asking for the book on cholesterol by a Dr. Arthur Lean. Amused by the appropriate surname, I turned to the online catalog to identify the title. Author searches—Lean, Leen, Lien, Lene—were unsuccessful, so the patron reluctantly agreed to look at other books on his subject.

The first book we found was *Count Out Cholesterol* by Dr. Art Ulene.

"That's the one," the gentleman whispered happily.

It's a Calling

"I have a question. If somebody is a professor of library science, what does that mean?"

"It probably means he teaches library science in a university."

"Yes, but what is library science?"

"Well, it's the study of librarianship."

Laura Davidson is Reference Coordinator at the Rockingham County Public Library in Eden, N. C. Lisa Dalton is Reference Librarian at the Rockingham County Public Library and a member of the North Carolina Libraries editorial board.

"You mean, people study how to make *index cards*???"

"Not exactly. It's the study of the history of libraries, of how to select and buy books that will really be used, and how to answer questions."

"Why...who would want to study *that*?!?"

Muddling along

All aspiring librarians are taught that there is an art to the reference interview, that many times the patron has garbled information and they, as high practitioners of the art, must not only find the right answer, but the true question.

The woman before me appeared to demonstrate a classic case of the garbled question. She had a note from her daughter with "King Fernando of Castile" written on it. After a preliminary search in biographical sources, I realized that we were looking for information on Ferdinand, Isabella's husband. The biography I found about Ferdinand confirmed my hunch. "No," the mother said as she rejected the book, "My daughter wants a book on this man—Fernando—not 'Ferdinand.'"

I was floored—all that brilliant deduction and no appreciation at all. Worse, she announced that she had to leave, but would return for the information on the *right* king later.

Mother and daughter returned at five. Ignoring me, she approached a second reference librarian, perhaps hoping for a more reasonable assistant. Since my colleague and I had discussed the encounter earlier, she was forewarned. Patiently going through much the same process, she explained to the child that Fernando and Ferdinand were the same king, showing how they lived at the same time and in the same place, and discussing the American habit of Anglicising foreign names.

The little girl seemed to accept the concept, but the mother was unconvinced—and growing angrier. "Well," she threatened, "I guess I'll just have to call the principal tonight and tell him that my daughter can't do her assignment because no one in the library will give her any information on King Fernando."

We protested, but what could we do? The library was closing; nobody was satisfied. Cowed, we realized that library school had let us down. You may ungarble the garbled question, but you labor in vain to unmuddle muddled mothers.

Tax Transformation

Much of the year, Mr. Colley is a troublesome but fairly harmless drunk, known to library staff as the man who mixes drinks in the water fountain. He is regularly ejected for disruptive behavior—being very loud, bothering other patrons, passing out in the restroom....

But from February to mid-April, Mr. Colley sobers up and, wearing a red knit cap, stakes out a table in the back of the library where he conducts his tax assistance service. The change is complete. Not only does he not drink, but he is very quiet, even when working with a "client." And his customers are notable for their normalcy, just average citizens. Tax season, which usually brings out the worst in us, positively transforms Mr. Colley.

But She Isn't There...

Like many college libraries, the Averett College library is named for an early benefactor of the college—Mary Blount, in this instance. The library shares a parking lot with a girl's dorm. Recently the spaces nearest the library were set aside for library patrons only. Battle was engaged, since the girls regard the entire lot as theirs. The library's biggest weapon, towing, resulted in a stream of angry young women heading for the director's office.

Recently, an irate coed marched to the circulation desk. With fire in her eye, she *demand*ed to see Mary Blount. Calmly nodding toward the director's office, the student assistant said, "Second door on the right."

Hatching Out

The call came in the middle of the after school rush. The lady phoning in wanted to know the temperature and length of time needed to incubate an ostrich egg because she wanted to hatch the one she had just been given. After much searching, I found a wildlife encyclopedia which explained the process, and I relayed that information to her and returned to the clamoring hordes of students.

About six weeks later, long after the question had been forgotten, the lady called back. "Well," she said, "the egg just hatched—now, what do you feed baby ostriches?" I was unable to find information about the care and feeding of baby ostriches, and referred the patron to the North Carolina Zoo. I heard later that the ostrich died.

I'm Nobody. Who are You?

In some libraries, the distinction between professionals and support staff may be overemphasized.

The paraprofessional in the Documents Department answered the phone. The caller identified himself as a librarian from the Reference

Department and asked, "Is anybody there?"

"Well," the employee replied, "I'm here, and Nancy's here, and Joy, Lucy, and Richard are here."

"No, I mean, is anybody there?"

Just as politely, the paraprofessional repeated the litany of who was available.

"No!" exploded the exasperated librarian. "I need to talk to a professional—isn't anybody there?!"



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Fun at O'Kelly Library

Mae L. Rodney

The groundbreaking for the C.G. O'Kelly addition and renovation—which will double the size of the university's library—took place over a year before the construction project began. The wait built up anticipation and excitement for the project. The construction company kept the interest level high by having a construction truck plunge nose first over a small hill and into the site. That was certainly an eye opener for the staff as they arrived at work at 7:55 a.m. And, as if to say, "If you like that, watch this": on TWO separate occasions a large crane tumbled forward into the future academic hub of the campus.

Optimism flows through the veins of librarians who must work in a library under siege by a construction project. Although the architect forewarned us of some inconveniences, he observed that they should all be announced and coordinated. For the first six months, all inconveniences were greeted with, "This is only temporary; just think of the beautiful building we will have." Not even the simultaneous appearance of the campus telecommunications director and the project superintendent caused any extra heartbeats:

"Where are the library computer lines?" asked the telecommunications director.

"I do not know..."—and before the complete answer could be given, the Catalog/Automation Librarian appeared saying that ALL the automated services were disconnected, including the online catalog and the OCLC cataloging terminals. With one lucky strike, a backhoe had demolished automation. THE LIBRARY WAS DEAD! The blackened terminals haunted us for two days. After the systems were knocked out another two times, the director's favorite words became, "I don't-care-how-you-fix-it, but fix it NOW!" However, the students proved that they very much like the online catalog, for on all three occasions they preferred waiting for its restoration to using the old card catalog.

During one of the few cold days of the 1988-89 winter, the plumbers left the pipes to the old

library exposed and there was NO water the next morning! Having to cross the street to use the bathroom was bad enough, but NO COFFEE....!!!

Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head

Working in a building that is being joined to another is one thing; but working in a building that has only one-half of the roof during the rainy season is quite another. (Parts of the roof were blown off three times between May 5 and November 10, 1988). When the sun was shining, there was the unpredictable rhythm of air drills and the workers dumping supplies on the roof. On other days, the rain provided a constant pitter-patter on the plastic that protected the furniture or in the many rain buckets.

But in the End

One November afternoon a student asked, "Where are the books?" (The book collection had been moved to the new building in August.) The director smiled and said that the library had had a big yard sale and it was a little more successful than anticipated...all of the books had been sold.



Bibliotherapy taken perhaps too far.

Mae L. Rodney is Director of Library Services for O'Kelly Library, Winston Salem State University, Winston-Salem.

Rereclassification at a Semipublic Library

Arnold Ziffel

We have found it advantageous in our facility to change the old and cumbersome Library of Congress system into a rationalized, user-friendly system that greatly eases patron stress.

Studies have shown (Geraldo, last Tuesday) that patron blood pressure can rise up to a hundred points when faced with the frightening prospect of asking a librarian for help in finding a book. In the Boston area alone, twenty-eight patrons dropped dead in front of a reference librarian (or assistant) in the first six months of 1989—up thirty-two percent from 1988.

In order to end this senseless slaughter, we did an extensive eight-hour study of the techniques patrons use to find books. Here are the results our study (adjusted for statistical anomalies):

Catalog: 1% (thought it was little tiny bookshelves)

Shelver: 4% (looked pretty harmless, but spoke no English)

Big, red book near the end of that shelf on the left with the mustard stain on the floor next to it under the picture of that old guy: 95%

One patron not included in the above statistics became lost in the stacks and was found two weeks later suffering from exposure and malnutrition in the back area of the Urdu and Swahili Rooms.

As a result of this study (supported by NIH Grant 919-555-1212), we undertook an extensive rereclassification of our entire collection. Although the SCG (Size-Color-Graphics) system is subtle and difficult to grasp as a gestalt, its basic outlines can be simply described. Books are placed in the following categories:

Size

- RB:** Real big
- Ta:** Tall
- LTa:** A Littler Taller than Average
- R:** Regular
- Sm:** Small
- RS:** Real Small

Sk: Skinny

Th: Thick

>Th: Very thick

LI: Like, immense

Color

R: Red

Bk: Black

D: Dirty

Gn: Green

OP: Old Paper

Bl: Bluish

LG: Light gray

G: Gray

DG: Dark gray

CcO: Cellophane coming off

Graphics

NP: No pictures

SP: Some pictures

OBW: Only black and white pictures

POG: Pictures of old geezers nobody has ever heard of

G: Graphs

SB: Sketches of bugs

PBC-G: Photographs of bugs, in color, totally gross

L#: Lots of numbers

PP/L: Pictures of people in loincloths

CAD: Cute animal drawings

???: Equations

PfL: Pictures of paintings of fat ladies

PB&S: Pictures of paintings of blobs and stuff

A little thought will convince you that from its SCG (Size-Color-Graphics) classification any volume whatever (or one just as good) can be found quickly and easily, particularly if staff members desist from moving the books from where the patrons left them.

Since we completed rereclass, not a single patron has suffered so much as a mild coronary. Moreover, the time saved by staff members has permitted them to carry out more ambitious and progressive projects than they had dreamed of a few short months ago.

Arnold Ziffel is Librarian Second Class at the Hawgmyre Library in Fort Zondo, N C.

The List of Oliver Quantrell

Dan Horn

As he drove to work on Monday morning, Oliver Quantrell, head of the Reference Department at Tarheel County Public Library felt better than he had in months. It was a breathtakingly gorgeous spring morning, as rare and perfect as a flawless diamond. Oliver yearned to melt into the golden, green, and blue light that filled the atmosphere and he felt as fully a part of life as God surely had intended for mankind. He decided to try to absorb into his being Spring's promise of renewal, to somehow carry that promise in his heart throughout the day, and to accomplish his many tasks with joy and cheerful determination. How could anything possibly go wrong on a day like this? How could he not, with the very power of nature filling every cell and fiber of his being, reach the very pinnacle of his capabilities? These were the thoughts that ran through Oliver Quantrell's mind as he pulled, smiling dreamily, into his parking space at precisely 7:55 a.m.

Then Oliver walked in the back door. The fluorescent light and controlled forced air contrasted sharply with the glory he had left outside. Still smiling, he cheerfully greeted his coworkers as he strode with confidence toward his office. "Nothing can ruin my good mood", thought Oliver to himself. He settled in at his desk and consulted his list which he had dutifully made out on his desk calendar before he left work on Friday. He had once read a book on time management and about all he could remember was that making lists was a basic requirement of efficiency. Since that time he had made one for each day. His list for today contained these items:

1. Redo reference schedule
2. Work on procedures manual
3. Write humor article
4. Schedule employee evaluations
5. Evaluate loose-leaf services and make recommendations for cancellations
6. Weed 700's in reference collection
7. Work on collection development of circulation 300's

8. Finish great books bibliography, send to printer
9. Avoid salesmen
10. Work on budget requests for next fiscal year
11. Evaluate CD-ROM magazine indexes; make recommendation for purchase
12. Work on business reference seminar
13. Make list for tomorrow

No problem! With fierce concentration and unswerving application of dynamic volition anything can be achieved! If nature can take a little acorn and transform it into a massive oak, surely the items on this list can be dispatched and crossed off one by one. Today the accomplishment of Oliver Quantrell will rival the feats of creation itself!

"Oh, Mr. Quantrell, are you there?" Oliver shook himself from his reverie and replied to the voice coming over the intercom, "Yes, Agatha, I'm here, isn't it wonderful?"

"Anything you say, Mr. Quantrell," replied Agatha with a tone of suspicion. "Are you O.K. this morning?"

"Couldn't possibly be better, Agatha. What can I do for you?"

"Several of your staff members have called in this morning to say they won't be in today. Michelle's cat is throwing up and acting weird, and you know how she is about that cat. James is requesting, as he called it, a mental health day; Bert is having some sort of trouble with Ernie; and Tracy has the flu. Can I be of any help?"

"No, that's all right, Agatha," responded Oliver, a touch of dismay creeping into his voice. "I'll just have to make do with what I have."

"Very well, sir. Oh, by the way, Mr. Cravy has called a department heads meeting for 9:00. He says he has some important matters to go over that can't wait. You'll find the agenda in your box."

"Thank you, Agatha," he muttered more to himself than her as he hung up the phone.

Rubbing his eyes, Oliver thought over his staffing problems. The three librarians that wouldn't be in represented his entire available staff. One other was on vacation hiking some-

Dan Horn is Head of Reference at the New Hanover County Public Library in Wilmington, N C.

where in Nepal and another was visiting a great aunt in Buffalo who was bedridden with an unspecified ailment. "Well, I guess that leaves just me. I'll have to talk to Mr. Cravy and see if he can reschedule that meeting," thought Oliver uncertainly. "Surely he'll understand." Oliver picked up the phone and dialed Mr. Cravy's extension. "Yes, what is it," said an annoyed sounding voice. "Make it fast, I'm very busy with some extremely important matters."

"Mr. Cravy, this is Oliver. Do you think we could reschedule that meeting for tomorrow? I've got some staffing problems today and I'll need to spend a lot of time on the reference desk."

"It's no concern of mine, Oliver. When I schedule an important meeting, I expect you to be there. See if you can get someone from circulation to cover the desk. I'll see you at 9:00 sharp. Oh, by the way, it's your turn to take the minutes."

Oliver began talking it over to himself, "Circulation! Nobody in circulation knows anything about reference. Granted, at Mr. Cravy's insistence, I just conducted that in-house workshop on reference services for the support staff, but. . . Oh well. Let's see, Mary has taken a few college classes and she was the only one to stay awake through the workshop. Perhaps she'll be able to fill in. It's not too busy in the morning and any questions that are too difficult, she can write down and I'll get to them later. Yes, that's the solution."

After making all the arrangements with the head of circulation, Oliver went to his box to get the agenda for the big meeting which he found under a huge stack of essential mail which included advertisements for CCH's "indispensable" *Guide to Soviet Taxes*, Gale's new *Compendium of Everything We've Already Published*, and a pre-publication offer (save \$75!) for a topographical atlas of Tristen da Cunha. The items Oliver perused on the agenda were as follows:

1. Mileage rate increased .05/mile.
2. Purchase of gift for retiring custodian
3. Possibility of a new branch in 1998
4. 3 year plans
5. 5 year plans
6. 10 year plans

Oliver sighed deeply and walked upstairs to the staff conference room. It was just 9:00, but the others were already there brimming with enthusiasm for the upcoming discussion of "important matters." He closed the door, took his seat, and prepared to take notes in great detail.

When the meeting adjourned three hours later, Oliver leapt from his seat and ran down-

stairs to the reference desk. He had had difficulty concentrating on his note taking; visions of disaster at the reference desk kept stealing his attention. He knew how reference could, at times of peak activity, tax the limits of ability of the most experienced and capable reference librarians. Was Mary lying sobbing on the floor unable to cope with the insatiable demands of the public for information? Was the library's phone ringing off-the-hook with calls complaining about the incompetence of the reference staff? His palms had sweated, his pulse rate had skyrocketed, he had had to loosen the choking piece of haberdashery he had dutifully tied around his neck that morning. Repeatedly he had needed to ask for points to be clarified; everyone else had seemed to follow the flow of the meeting effortlessly. At one point, Mr. Cravy had remarked sarcastically and with maddening pomposity that, "Oliver's mind seems to be on the beautiful weather and absent from these important proceedings. Perhaps he needs to take the afternoon off and go for a walk in the country." He had waited after this pronouncement for sycophantic laughter which he was pleased to hear forthcoming.

"Hi, Mr. Quantrell," sang Mary as Oliver came to a screeching halt beside the reference desk. "Gee, you sure look hassled. I thought you'd be all rested after your nice relaxing meeting."

"Never mind about that, Mary, how'd it go this morning. I'm sorry the meeting took so long, but there was no way I could leave to give you a hand."

"Oh, that's O.K., Mr. Quantrell, everything went just fine. No sweat. Reference is a lot easier than it looks." Mary handed Oliver about forty bits of paper with what appeared to be scribbling with phone numbers. At first glance, Oliver felt faintly nauseated at the combination of misspellings and cute round handwriting, *i's* dotted with little hearts. "I did just what you said and wrote down the patron's names and phone numbers for all the questions I couldn't answer and told them you'd get back to them this afternoon. Everyone was so nice and patient with me when I explained I had never worked on a reference desk before. Well, it's all yours, I'm off to lunch." Mary bounced away leaving Oliver alone and dismayed. His stomach growled like a hungry caged beast. He had forgotten about food until Mary had so cheerfully brought up the subject. Now he was faced with the prospect of a long afternoon of famine as he manned the reference desk alone. Oliver began to look over the slips. He picked up the phone and made his first and only call-back.

That afternoon the reference desk was busier

than Oliver had ever known it could possibly be. The public seemed to rove like a great pack of voracious wolves, circling the reference desk, insatiably starved for the nourishment only information can give. It was as if the doors of some giant institution for the deranged had suddenly opened, unleashing its slaving hordes who were told their only salvation was to go to the library and ask Oliver complicated reference questions. At times patrons were three and four deep at the desk staring at him impatiently as he tried his best to be fair and take each person in turn, giving them the best he could. At one point he overheard one patron mutter to another, "Why can't this beautiful library hire someone who knows what he's doing? This guy's pathetic!" The phone rang non-stop. Later when it was all over and Oliver lay on his bed staring at the ceiling unable to move, he recalled these remarks from one of the innumerable phone calls: "Hello, my name is Joyce Jones. I'm new in this city and I just love libraries. My aunt was a librarian and she loved books. I love books too, I guess I must have gotten it from her because my parents weren't big readers. I mean they could read, they just chose not to. My father would read the paper but that was about it. But my aunt, she would take me to the library. I guess I should have been a librarian. I bet you read a lot don't you. Anyway, I want to know if you have these ten books in your library and, if they are, whether you'd go to the shelves and see if they're in. If they're not in, could I get you to put them on reserve for me? The library in the last town I lived in had a service where they could get books from another library. Do you have a service like that? Maybe you'd see if you could get the others for me from somewhere that has them . . ." Joyce went on and on while irate patrons fumed and glared. Oliver took her number and promised to call her back. His collection of names and phone numbers grew and grew.

The questions of the patrons who came in person were no less exasperating. At the low point of the day, when poor Oliver's strength had ebbed and he had begun to entertain feverish fantasies of becoming a manual laborer in Mongolia, a man, reeking self-importance, approached the desk with this demand: "I need some statistical information for a project my company needs to finish this afternoon. Particularly, I need to know how many families in voting districts four and seven in Tar Heel County are single parent families which have minority women as head of household, have 4 or more children, an annual income between \$15,000 and \$20,000, and who share a single family dwelling with another family. My good friend, Mr.

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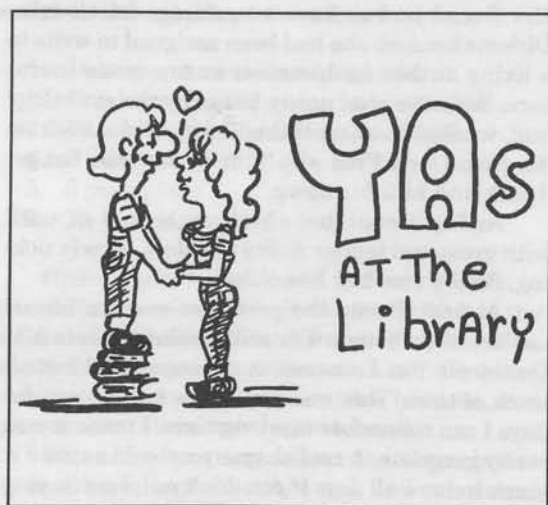
Cravy from the Kiwanis Club, told me you'd be able to provide this information easily . . ." A few minutes later, an ancient woman told Oliver in great detail about a wonderful painting she'd had for years of some cigar smoking dogs playing poker and wanted to know if the library had any information about the artist and whether the painting was worth anything. Then, a high school student needed to read a book by Truman Compote (sic). Her friend had to have an address for Charles Dickens because she had been assigned to write to a living author for her class in American literature. Someone else, newly bitten by the genealogy bug, wanted to know if the library had a book on his great Uncle Fred who "didn't do nuthin' but get drunk and kick his dawg."

And so it went that afternoon, on and on, until with great and tender mercy the clock, slowly ticking, finally reached five o'clock.

At 5:05, Brian, the part-time evening librarian arrived. "Sorry, I'm a few minutes late Mr. Quantrell. But I was out at the beach and lost all track of time. This was one of the most beautiful days I can remember in a long time. I mean it was really gorgeous. A real shame you had to spend it stuck in here all day. If you don't mind me saying

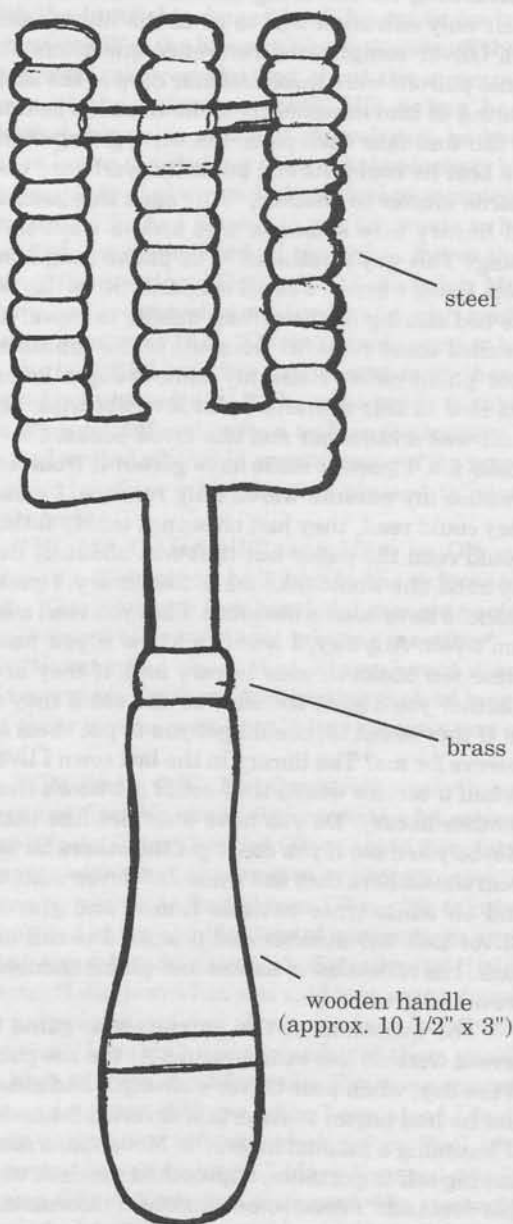
so Mr. Quantrell, you look terrible. You should really try to take some time off and get outside and enjoy the real world. Wow, there's nobody in the library. I guess they all had the same idea I did. Guess I'll have time to look over some book reviews tonight, if you don't mind." Although he was physically and mentally demolished by his experiences that day, Oliver couldn't help but smile as he handed Brian the giant stack of unfinished reference business and silently prayed he'd never see them again.

For only the second time that day, Oliver approached his desk. Standing, he looked down at the list. There was nothing he could cross off. He had an odd feeling that he had accomplished nothing, a vague and niggling sensation of failure. Picking up the calendar, Oliver paged backwards over the weeks and months and realized that very few items had been crossed off and that his best laid plans were most often, like wayward youths, led astray hand in hand by unavoidable circumstance. Warily he shrugged his shoulders and dragged himself out the back door. He was immediately transported once again by the sheer beauty of the day. The afternoon light was mellow and golden; while not as powerful as in the morning, the promise of new life was still strong. As he got into his car, and buckled his seat belt, Oliver noticed on the seat next to him the new issue of *Library Journal* he'd tossed there several days before. Glancing at the cover, he read the title of a featured article "Japanese Management Techniques for Libraries: A Fresh Approach." Thinking that he hadn't actually read an article in *LJ* since, well, library school. . . And reflecting on how successful the Suzuki Method had been for his child's tuba lessons. . . He decided he'd put reading that article first on his list for tomorrow. ■



Reference Headache #729:

What is this object?



submitted by Lisa Dalton,
Rockingham County Public Library, Eden, N.C.

Proverbs, Maxims, and True Sayings for Reference Librarians, Revised

Reprinted with the permission of the State of California Answering Service.

1. Nothing is ever simple.
2. Happiness is finding the answer in the first source you check. (Rare.)
3. The number of times you are cut off, put on hold, or transferred is directly proportional to the brevity of your deadline.
4. The specific volume of a set you need is the only one that is not on the shelf and if you're looking for the August 1938 issue of a particular magazine, your library's run will start with September 1938.
5. No one finds answers on Mondays.
6. The only person who can help you is:
 - a. on vacation
 - b. tied up in a meeting
 - c. on a six months leave
 - d. not taking calls this afternoon
 - e. retired
 - f. deceased.
7. Corollary to #5 and #6: Never call anyone on a Friday. They are all:
 - a. out of town
 - b. gone for the day
 - c. at lunch—for the rest of the afternoon
 - d. no longer working there.
8. Impossible dream #1: being two days ahead of your deadline.
9. Impossible dream #2: reaching the correct government office on the first try. Corollary: A search is generally over when the umpteenth government office refers you back to the first one you called, a maneuver known as the tight reference loop.
10. Serendipity is finding an answer to a question when looking for something else.
11. Dismay is when you've exhausted every conceivable source, and the patron requests that you continue the search.
12. The most promising citation retrieved in a database is usually in Bulgarian.
13. A NEXIS searcher and his money are soon parted.
14. Rush questions always come in threes.
15. Important phone calls are returned the instant you've stepped out of the office.
16. The depth of despair is calling the acknowledged expert in a particular field only to discover that it was that person who submitted the question.
17. Frustration is discovering that the perfect citation you have just found is a blind reference, and appears nowhere in the source cited.
18. Joy is having an impossible question cancelled before you begin working on it; gloom is getting a cancellation on a question for which you have just found the answer after four hours of searching.
19. Rapture is finding a catalog entry for a whole book on an obscure subject and *the book is on the shelf*.

Originally collected by Sally Dumax, Resources Librarian at SCAN (Southern California Answering Network), and published in the September/October 1979 (tenth anniversary) issue of *Scannings* this list was revised and reprinted in the September/October 1984 (fifteenth anniversary) issue of that publication. The list received wide dissemination among California librarians, and comes to us through a reprint distributed by BARC, the Bay Area Reference Center (now defunct). SCAN is now the State of California Answering Network.

20. The material promised from New York has not arrived because of:
- a. a dock strike
 - b. floods in the Midwest
 - c. a postal strike
 - d. a blizzard in the Rockies
 - e. all of the above.
21. Misery is having the patron find the answer after you didn't.
22. A patron's gratitude is not necessarily related to the length, difficulty, or success of the search.
23. Some of the best answers you find are to questions you will never be asked. ■



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Students and Libraries: In Their Own Words

John Lubans, Compiler

The following are selections taken from the Suggestion/Answer Book in the lobby of Perkins Library. Since late 1982 this loose-leaf notebook has recorded over 3,900 suggestions, questions, complaints, observations, compliments, pleas, and demands. An anonymous author responds to each. The author's identity is kept secret for several reasons not the least of which is the apparent appeal to students for some mystery and the resulting informality in the process of making a suggestion and receiving an answer. A student publication had this to say:

"A thick volume rests on the desk in the front lobby of Perkins. This magical three-ring binder contains the words of the resident Library Oracle, an anonymous figure capable of answering any question or suggestion posed by the mind of the tortured Duke student.

But enough talk *about* this peculiar medium for librarians and users, here is a sampling from its pages for your entertainment and, perhaps, more.

Suggestion: Why is it that the book or bound periodical one *needs most of all* for any paper is **always** missing? It's odd, because usually, the rest of the *entire* collection (in the case of bound periodicals) is there laughing at you. Every book I've never needed is here, easily found, yet when I desperately need a particular book, IT IS NEVER AROUND. **WHY?** Pardon my rambling discourse.

Answer: A phenomenon shared by more than a few. Sometimes a well grazed topic may contribute to depleted resources. We'll share your insights with the staff.

John Lubans is Associate University Librarian, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University in Durham, N.C.

Suggestion: Why must we freeze in the computer room? My hand is numb.

Answer: What happened to your other hand? Are the rumors about the polar bears true? Your plea will go to Physical Plant for their attention.

Suggestion: Why with such a pretentious (sic) reputation, is Duke in actuality (sic) an intellectual backwater, and, at least among the students, a cultural vacuum?

Answer: I beg to differ; just this morning I overheard a group of students discussing the Aristotelian qualities in "General Hospital" and "As the World Turns."

Suggestion: People using my carrel spilled orange soda on the floor; then the circulation people leave nasty notes on my desk, & my feet stick to the floor. Where are the food-sniffing Dobermans when you need them?

Answer: Heinz and Schlupferl are at summer camp being de-stressed in time for the fall semester. Fifi, our substitute patroller, yips and yaps a lot but doesn't have the same effect as the combative combo. Soon.

Suggestion: Do the "close door" buttons in elevators really work or are they a psychological pacifying device?

Answer: Pacifiers were thought to be unhygienic; the buttons won out.

Suggestion: FREE THE BOUND PERIODICALS

Answer: Under glasnost major improvements in the condition of these dissidents of the subbasement gulag have occurred. Familial visits are not permitted and on occasion, certain terms being met, escorted visits to other parts of the university are allowed.

Suggestion: Duke has to be the last major library system that manually checks out books. Is this to keep with the Gothic architecture?

Answer: Next year, we hope, will see the last of manual checkout.

Suggestion: What happens if you have a major overdue book fine, and you are a senior and emigrate to Cuba? Will you follow me to the ends of the earth? Will this affect my credit rating?

Answer: Your name and description goes to "Fat Albert" (the Navy blimp in the Florida Keys) with a "find and penalize designation" for its Bolt from the Blue program.

Suggestion: That damn bell that rings at 11:45 pm scares the hell out of me. It startles me, which is fine because it wakes me up, but it's useless because we've only got 15 min. left to study. How about ringing that damn thing around nine-ish so it'll keep us going for another few hours. Then at 11:45, you could have some "cheerful chimes" to indicate that the end of hell has come.

Answer: Sunday thru Wednesday that bell now signals an extra two hours of suffering available in the "old" building, until 2 a.m.

Suggestion: Please put a photocopier in an inconspicuous location. They are all in plain sight, and it is very difficult to photocopy our boobs without embarrassment.

Answer: Wonderful! You're the first person not to complain about malfunctioning photocopiers! Maybe they work depending on the subject matter being copied. You do know that Public Safety gets a video impression via the photocopier lens?

Suggestion: I've heard that the book-theft machine could, in some circumstances, scramble an egg. Is this true? If so, tell us so we can bring them in with us and eat breakfast.

Answer: This is true if you carry them thru the gates in a flaming pan, beating them vigorously with a wisk. Don't add salt until confiscation at the Circulation Desk.

Suggestion: I think everyone should be required to study naked in Perkins at least once during their undergrad or grad experience while here.

Answer: Perhaps this could be incorporated in the curriculum under experiential education. Sort of like an Outward Bound - type solo in Perkins. Forage for food and drink (no problem there); endure the agony of cold, black plastic seats; and become one with the environment - cope with Perkins extremes of heat and cold!

Suggestion: What's the procedure for tipping the circulation staff? They do a damn good job.

Answer: Slip a tenner inside a book you're returning. Leave it outside the Administrative Office on the second floor. We'll be sure to pass on the book for you.

Suggestion: On which day did the lord create Info-trac? Why didn't he create it sooner? When will he invent robots to do all our research for us? Why not sooner?

Answer: For freshmen of yesteryear it wasn't soon enough. Consider yourself lucky. Some let the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest* do all their research (and thinking). Resist by browsing through strange parts of the library and looking at unheard of magazines.

And then, this fan mail makes all we do seem a bit more valuable, especially on days when the mundane tends to prevail:

"The library is fantastic. I love it. Upon the outset of writing an 88 page term paper for freshman Undergraduate Writing Course, I found all 20 sources within 9.8 seconds. How do you do it? I love this library."

"No suggestions. I like this place. I like everything about this place. Well, almost everything. But even the things I don't like, I sort of like. You know? I mean, some things are kind of endearing in their very unlikability. Like this book, for instance. Like you know what I mean?"

S  E  A  S  O  N

M-I-C-K-E-Y M-I-C-R-O

Frank Newton

Originally published in the UNC Library Staff Newsletter, No. 159 (August 1989). Reprinted with permission.

The long, arduous process of automating operations in Davis Library took a dramatic turn recently with the acquisition by the Acquisitions Department of a state-of-the-art Mickey Micro BS 77 terminal. The Mickey Micro is a dedicated terminal hooked into the Remote Wireless Card-board Network and running on Microslink Whiz software. The deceptively simple interface belies a wealth of features long dreamed of by library workers but unavailable until now.

The Mickey's sophisticated olfactory software permits it to detect and respond to any of thirty-seven MARC flavors including USMARC, VanilaMarc, frankincense, myrrh, unscented MARC, and the notorious "forbidden fragrance" outlawed by the MARC Flavor Ratings Committee in the wake of AACR2.

A galaxy of search keys permits easy access to any book, no matter how inept and inarticulate its title page. For title searches, there is the cha-cha mode (three words forward, one word back) and for author searches the fuzz mode. Fuzz mode allows

one to type in Smothers and retrieve items by Smothers, Smithers, Crothers, Carruthers, Dithers, and Joyce Brothers, while a search under Huckabee retrieves items by Huckabee and by Larrabee, and vice versa. (This is the feature of the software that was especially singled out for praise by Steve "Pearly" Gates in his laudatory review of the Mickey in *Myte*.) In a revolutionary new approach, all rare and medium-frequency words—an undisclosed number in excess of 100,000—have been declared stopwords. It is rumored that the next release will consolidate all title searches into three: *Pro, of, th, a*; *sym, of, th, b*; and *his, of, th, c*.

The Mickey has the capability to produce many categories of statistics useful to administrators, such as call number averaging, comparative frequency of different initial articles, and the statistics on the relationship between ISBN and price that were so difficult to compile manually. It can round off OCLC numbers to the nearest hundred or thousand. And it comes with the famous Kit of Tools utility programs, including the cataloging code decryptor and the cessation forecaster (two months' advance notice for serial cessations, one week for publishers going out of business). When not networked, the Mickey folds up into a paper cutter or folds out into a mass deacidification facility (rewiring instructions included.)

Frank Newton is a student in the School of Information and Library Science and a graduate assistant in Davis Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



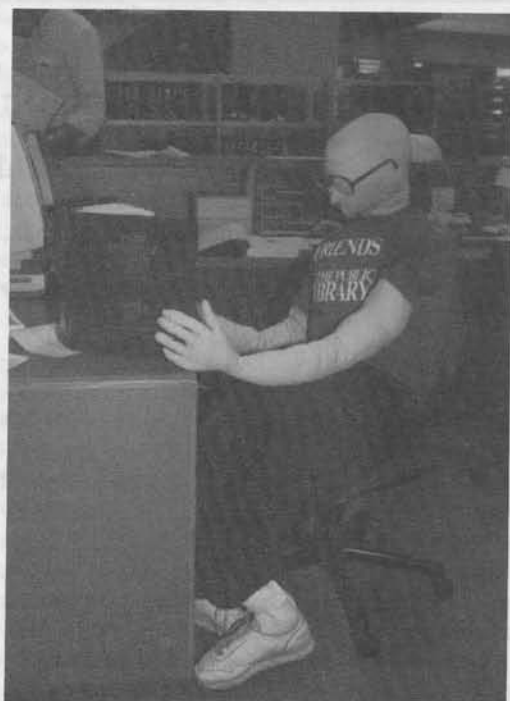
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- * Immediately available to fill any vacancy
- * Always willing to work night, weekend and holiday shifts
- * Does not argue with patrons or dispense misinformation
- * Never abuses personal phone call or sick leave privileges

Dorph
as Patron:

- * Never contests library policies and procedures
- * Accepts all overdue fines and lost materials charges
- * Increases program attendance statistics
- * Models appropriate patron behavior

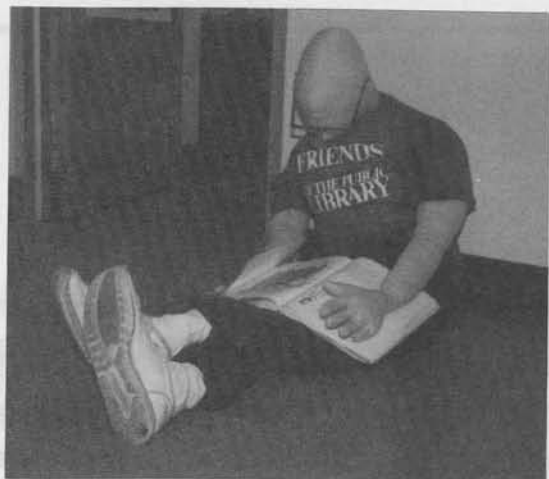
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Carols for Catalogers

As sung by the Anglo-American Carol Revisers

Texts by Suzanne Eggleston

The Twelve Trials of Cataloging

(Tune: *The 12 Days of Christmas*)

When I first tried to catalog,
My teacher gave to me
A statement of responsibility.

The second time I cataloged,
My teacher gave to me
Two quoted notes. . .
. . . Three access points. . .
. . . Four subject headings. . .
. . . Five options to apply. . .
. . . Six more books. . .
. . . Seven more chapters. . .
. . . Eight rule exceptions. . .
. . . Nine interpretations. . .
. . . Ten rule revisions. . .
. . . Eleven title changes. . .
. . . Twelve hardwood samples. . .

What File Is This?

(Tune: *Greensleeves*)

What file is this upon the screen,
With cryptic title that glows in green?
I saved them all and kept them all,
And now their contents I can't recall.

This, this, is my floppy disk,
With countless files in an endless list.
Haste, haste, to erase them all,
For I cannot bear to review them.

Suzanne Eggleston is a student in the School of Information and Library Science and a graduate assistant in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Carol of the Demanding Patrons

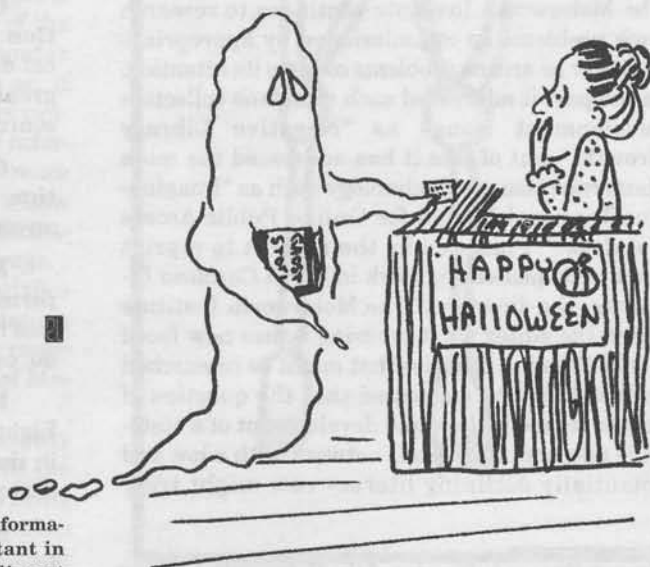
(Tune: *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*)

O bring us some information,
(repeat)
(repeat)
And bring it right here!

We won't go until we get some,
(repeat)
(repeat)
So bring it right here!

We don't want those books,
Nor yet CD-ROM.
We want you to tell us,
Then we'll write it down.

Oh, bring us some information,
(repeat)
(repeat)
And bring it right now!



The LC-NC Connection

Norman D. Stevens

"Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate."

(Henry David Thoreau)

Press Release

The North Carolina State Library announces the introduction of The LC-NC Connection. This new high technology information system will make available to all of the citizens of North Carolina, through their local library, a wealth of information to assist them in every aspect of their lives. (April 1, 1990)

Introduction

Noted since 1963 for its imaginative approach to the most serious problems facing librarianship, The Molesworth Institute continues to research such problems as commissioned by appropriate bodies or as arcane problems come to its attention. In the past it addressed such mundane collection development issues as "Negative Library Growth,"¹ but of late it has addressed the more glamorous issues of technology such as "Imaginative Terminal Design for Online Public Access Catalogs."² Flattered by the request to reprint some of its pioneering work in *North Carolina Libraries*, the director of The Molesworth Institute asked the editor what pressing issues now faced North Carolina libraries that might be researched by his staff. She suggested that the question of how to reconcile the rapid development of a state-wide telecommunications network with a low and potentially declining literacy rate might truly

challenge even our research skills. Equal to any challenge, the staff quickly retrieved Henry David Thoreau's comment on the relationship between technology and content and used that as the basis for an unusual brown earth session which led to the development of the LC-NC Connection that has been introduced by the North Carolina State Library. As the first system of this kind, the LC-NC Connection should serve, as the research of The Molesworth Institute typically does, as a model for others to follow or ignore at their peril.

Some Fundamental Laws of Information

The development of the LC-NC Connection is based primarily on a careful analysis of Thoreau's prescient comment and the following critical laws of information that were identified in the preliminary stages of this research project.

Boorstin's Law of Aliteracy: People who can read don't.

Cameron's Law of Urgency: The perceived need for information is directly proportional to the speed with which it is transmitted even if it is not needed immediately.

Cardew's Law of the Value of Information: Information supplied through a technological device is perceived to have a value twice as great as information supplied from a printed source.

Govan's Law of the Utility of Information: Any piece of information is of value to almost anyone.

Molesworth's Law of Equal Access to Information: All citizens of a state need equal access to information regardless of whether they can, do, or will make use of that information.

Pearson's Law of Information Storage: Eighty percent of the information that is supplied in the form of photocopies or computer printouts is stored, not read.

Stevens' Law of Machine Use: People will punch the buttons on a machine even if they don't know what they are doing.

Norman Stevens is Director of the Molesworth Institute in Storrs, CT.

The LC-NC Connection

The LC-NC Connection is a simple device with several unusual features that, in essence, offers users the appearance of a highly sophisticated information system. Each participating library has available in a prominent location the simplest computer keyboard and display screen ever devised with programs that are run by the simplest software imaginable. The keyboard has only the twenty-six letters of the alphabet--although a cyrillic keyboard model is being developed and a single large clearly labeled enter key. There are no number keys, no shift, lock, tab, backspace keys; there are no function or other special keys; there is not even a help key. The screen carries only the following straightforward message: *Please type your request and press the enter key.* The user is free to enter whatever information he/she chooses in whatever form he/she chooses. As the enter key is pressed, or thirty seconds after the last letter key is pressed, the machine makes appropriate noises and the requested information appears from one of two devices located at either side of the terminal. One side issues photocopies and the other side computer printouts that may contain either bibliographic entries or full text material. Thus the user enters a simple request and almost instantaneously obtains information to take away. Cameron's Law of Urgency and Cardew's Law of the Value of Information mean that the products distributed in this fashion are readily accepted as being of substantial value.

The key to the simplicity is that the entry of the information has nothing to do with the information that is supplied. Instead the information is supplied at random from an accumulation of the numerous discarded photocopies or computer printouts that now litter most libraries or, if demand is abnormally high, from materials generated at random just for the system. What information is actually supplied makes little difference given the combined application of Boorstin's Law of Aliteracy, Govan's Law of the Utility of Information and Pearson's Law of Information Storage.

At the same time, the entire process satisfies Molesworth's Law of Equal Access to Information, and intensive use of the system by a broader range of citizens is guaranteed by Stevens' Law of Machine Use.

Analysis to date has indicated that eighty percent of the users of the LC (low cost)-NC (no content) Connection describe themselves as being highly satisfied with the results of their searches which is a user satisfaction level that rivals or

exceeds that provided by more traditional library services.

References

1. Norman D. Stevens, "Negative Library Growth," *The U*n*a*b*a*s*h*e*d Librarian* 13 (Fall 1974): 6
2. Norman D. Stevens, "Imaginative Terminal Design for Online Public Access Catalogs," *Information Technology and Libraries* 8 (March 1989): 69-71.



Spine Tinglers

Real Titles Found in Real (North Carolina) Libraries

Dorothy D. Hodder and Robert G. Anthony, Jr., compilers

Joe Bob Briggs, cultural arbiter from the Lone Star State, rates drive-in movies on their effective use of the three B's: Breast, Beasts, and Blood. While librarians' lives traditionally lack this degree of drama, their sources of entertainment are no less satisfying just because they are more subtle. Title reviewing, for example, is a frequent pastime of the profession, many of whose members can rarely spare the time to read much besides tempting titles. Herewith is a small collection of titles rated high on the Title Watcher's Scale of P's: Parochialism, Prophecy, and Puns.

I. Parochialism

Includes titles of pretension and pomposity. For instance:

Presidents Who Have Known Me
I Meet My Contemporaries
The Stupid XIXth Century
Medieval American Art
Ultimate Reality and Meaning (a philosophy journal)

Titles mainly of local interest:

Patterns of Timeless Moments: A History of Montgomery County, by Mable S. Lassiter
Trout Fishery Surveillance, by Frederic F. Fish
Literature in the Albemarle, by Bettie Freshwater Pool
Ice Box Fungi (a thesis)

Special interest group newsletters:

Kudzu Vine, published (in Savannah, Georgia) by Southerners Mobilizing for Survival

Dorothy D. Hodder is Public Services Librarian at the New Hanover County Public Library in Wilmington and a member of the *North Carolina Libraries* Editorial Board. Robert G. Anthony, Jr., is Collection Development Librarian for the North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill and Book Review Editor for *North Carolina Libraries*.

Pothole Paragraphs, published by the North Carolina Road Savers Council

Some newspaper titles, mainly from the Tar Heel past:

Beans, Raleigh
Everything, Greensboro
Live Giraffe, Raleigh
Little Typo, Winston-Salem
Naked Truth, High Point
People's Literary Casket, Wadesboro
Political Broadax, Randleman
Standard Laconic, Snow Hill

And a couple of favorites from library literature:

"Waffling Along With the Bibliozombies"
"Society's Debt to Librarianship: A Suggested Recompense"

II. Prophecy

Includes titles that tell it strictly as it is:

Old Age is Not for Sissies, by Art Linkletter
Life is a Four-Letter Word, by Nicholas Monsarrat
The Mammoth Humbug, by Joseph Seawell Jones
How Porcupines Make Love and Other Titillating Nature Stuff, by Jack Aulis

U-TU (Up the University), publisher unknown but distributed at UNC-Chapel Hill

SIN (Shepard Information Notes), published by the James E. Shepard Memorial Library, NCCU

As well as titles that confirm our deepest fears about what things are coming to:

Bimbos of the Death Sun, by Sharyn McCrumb

Space Grits

*Trapped in the Lawyer's Den with
Bloodsuckers*, by Thelma N. McKoy
Whales and Destiny

III. Puns

Bazaar Happenings, published by
Cook's Bazaar of Carrboro

Clarinetwork

The Pot Speaks, published by Pine-
wood Pottery in Charlotte

Pregnant Pause (A Planned Parent-
hood publication)

Run-Off: The Friends of Rivers
Newsletter

Screw Gazette, published by the
Southern Screw Company

Sew It Seams, published by Anvil
Brand, Inc.

Society Gnus, published by the North
Carolina Zoological Society

Tarheel Yambassador, published by
the North Carolina Yam Commission

Toast Posties (Bulletin of the Chapel
Hill Toastmasters Club)

*Uncoverings: The Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group*

Reference

I.E.T. Malone, Jr. "Tattlers, Trumpets, and Blasting Powder.
100 North Carolina Newspapers with Very Uncommon
Names." *The State* (March 1989): 44-45.

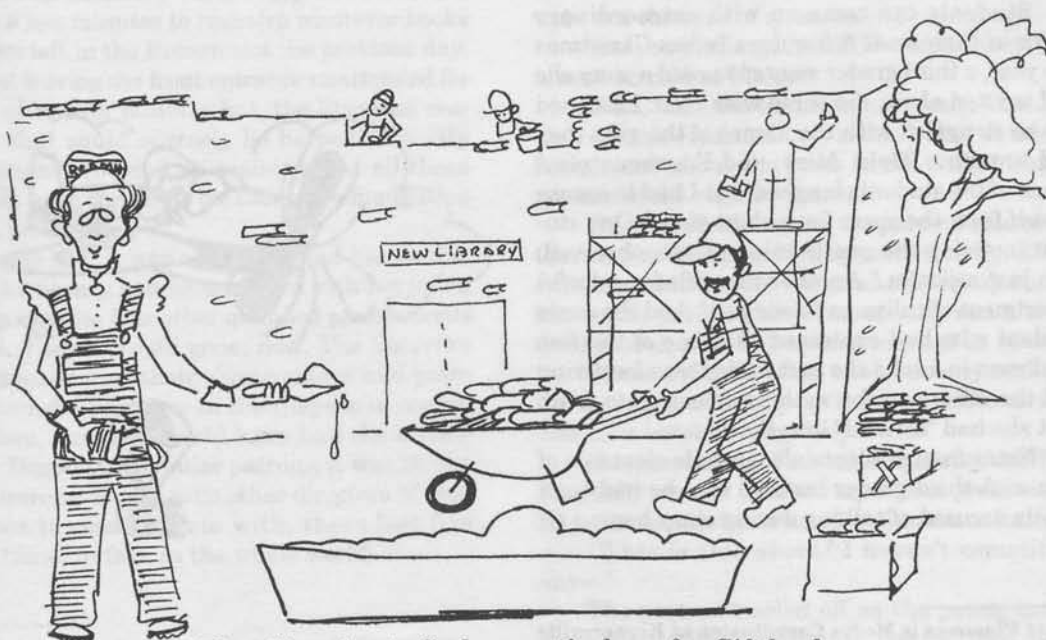
Positions Available

Children's Librarian at major public facility. Must be experi-
enced in all aspects of this complex position, including check-ins,
check-outs, shelving, inactive storage, handling fines and over-
dues, technical processing, applying spine labels, and above all
cataloging the little devils according to the latest LC standards.
Holdings include a special collection of bedwetters.

Software Librarian at Fortune 500 company located in a state
beginning with a vowel. Must be familiar with the AutoLibrar-
ian computer system, including Cataloger 1-2-3, Front Deskette,
OrderEater, TurboShelver, HyperTyper, and TrashMaster.
Magnetic personality a definite disadvantage.

Sneak-Weeder. Small college library with bulging shelves and
not a prayer for expansion seeks stealthy person or persons to
extract and dispose of outdated, unused volumes and all related
catalog cards. Must have infallible intuition for identifying vol-
umes that will not be missed by fanatically bibliophilic faculty
members. All work must remain undetected for one year or until
the Director finds another job, whichever comes later. If you are
caught, we will disavow all knowledge of you and your activities.
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Director of Library. National Center for Underachievement.
Collection includes 100,000+ volumes (count uncertain; orders
received since 9/79 have not yet been unpacked). Facility open
from after breakfast until sometime in the afternoon. Building
several stories tall, may have basement. No clocks, no calendars.
Average staff blood pressure 80/40. Those with a sense of urgency
need not apply.



First librarian to find a practical use for Gift books.

Humor in the School Library

Janet Plummer

The challenge of dealing with the spontaneity of children's unpredictable and sometimes inadvertently humorous comments is what attracts me to the elementary school library/media center. Student humor lightens the everdemanding work of teaching and makes it possible to look forward to each new day with great anticipation.

Humorous comments fly when the students are gathered for storytelling in the media center. On one occasion I was probing for the word "typhoons" in a fifth grade discussion about storms that occasionally hit Hawaii and Japan. "What do you call those winds?" I asked. "Torpedo winds" came a reply. At another time I asked, "What do I mean by the word 'defense?'" and heard, "It's like a wall that goes around a house."

Sometimes it's a matter of interpretation. I asked a fourth grader what moss was, and he replied very matter-of-factly, "They look like butterflies." And once I announced that we would be painting a mural, which caused some of the students to look puzzled. When I asked for a definition of a mural, one student quipped, "It looks like a kind of horse!" (A mule!)

Students can come up with extraordinary words of their own. A few days before Christmas one year, a third grader wanted to read a story she had written about the three wise men. I listened as she struggled with the names of the gifts they had brought: "Gold, Mire, and Frankenstein." (None of the students laughed, but I had to excuse myself from the room for a short time.) One student, noticing the gentle rain outside, observed, "It's just a-jizzlin." Another identified a colorful assortment of tulips as "bloomers." And the same student who had explained that one of the two platforms in a lake she had visited was for diving and the other was for sunburn, went on to write that she had "divided" into the water.

Notes from students also include elements of humor. A third grader insisted that he had been falsely accused of talking during story hour:

Ms. Plummer.

I didn't do it. I always get blamed for everything. Truth will prevale!

One second grader wrote this apology for jumping over a chair in the media center:

Dear Mss plummer

am sorry. I juped in the libey over the cheir. I now I was not post to do it. I post to be nice.

And during the first few weeks of school, a first grader was asked to write her name and grade number on her book card. She looked up at me seriously and said, "I'm having trouble with my 'ones' (which made me wonder about the traumas ahead when she got to the 'twos')."

But my favorite comment was this original from a second grader: "Ms. Plummer, you shine my day!" There's something about elementary school children that delights the soul. I wouldn't trade this job for anything in the world. ■



Janet Plummer is Media Coordinator at Kernersville Elementary School in Kernersville, N C.

The Last Librarian

Harry Katz

There was a dim squeaking, rhythmic and repetitive, as the librarian moved through the silent stacks. It was the kind of sound that might be made by rubber heels on a freshly-polished floor, but that wasn't what caused it.

The librarian paused at the door of the Reading Room, glancing at the few patrons sitting at the tables. Mr. Gelberstein, his age-speckled index finger marking his place as he read the difficult Old English of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the large facsimile edition. Plump, white-haired Mrs. O'Neill with her favorite, the oversized illustrated edition of *The Wizard of Oz*. All the other regular visitors to the library, at their tables and in the comfortable leather-covered chairs under the pleasant, glareless lighting. The trees outside had become bare-limbed over the last week or so, the librarian thought; soon there would be an excuse to light a fire in the Reading Room's ancient log-burning fireplace. Patrons would like that.

The librarian turned towards the front of the library, intending to take the customary position behind the polished mahogany of the Circulation Desk. It was necessary every day, just after lunch, to take a few minutes to reshelve whatever books had been left in the Return slot the previous day. It meant leaving the front entrance unattended for fifteen or twenty minutes but, the librarian reasoned, that could scarcely be helped. The city government provided no assistants at all these days, not even the funds for necessary fumigation of the stacks.

It was sad, it was sad; there had been a day when the library had been staffed with not just a director but also four other qualified professionals as well. They were all gone, now. The librarian had agonized over their shortcomings and painfully turned a blind eye to their lapses in professionalism, but now would have had them back gladly. Despite the regular patrons, it was lonely. There were no longer even other directors of area libraries to commiserate with, these last five years. None, in fact, in the whole world.

It was a sad but noble burden, to be the last librarian on earth.

As the librarian moved towards the Circulation Desk there was motion at the front entrance. A patron was entering. It took but a moment to review the faces in the Reading Room. All the regulars were already there. The librarian felt a burst of excitement; this must be someone new. But, the librarian hoped, NOT another elementary school teacher eager to lead a tribe of noisy, grubby children through the neatly kept stacks and the peaceful domain of the Reading Room. He was convinced that the last such visit was the one that had brought in those pests that were infesting the bindings of some of the older books. Surely they had never been there in the Old Days. Surely one of the staff would have reported the problem.

The patron who pushed open the front door and looked about frowning did not have the air of an elementary school teacher, however. He was a young man in a neat suit and polished shoes, carrying in one hand a hollow tube ten centimeters long, a rolled up computer. His eyes met those of the librarian, and the librarian flinched. Those were not the eyes of a patron.

"Are you in charge here?" The man's voice was almost as cold as his eyes.

"I am," said the librarian nervously. Could he be from the Health Department? Had someone complained about the pests in the books? Surely not one of the regular patrons!

The man strode over to the patrons' side of the Circulation Desk, beckoning perfunctorily. Filled with trepidation, the librarian moved up beside him as he unrolled the computer. It was a standard model, with key-spaces marked in rows at the bottom and most of the ten-by-twenty centimeter rectangle taken up by the read-write screen. The man looked over grimly.

"I represent the Federal Magistrate's Office. I formally request that you input your professional ID for transmission of an official communication."

"What is this about? I haven't committed any—"

The protest trailed off as the young man's stony glare wilted resistance. The fourteen digits

Harry Katz is a free-lance writer who lives in Greensboro.

were tapped out, followed by RETURN. There was embarrassment and shame and not a little anger. Did the young man have no respect for an ancient and honorable profession? For the world's last librarian? The librarian thought despairingly of Caesar's assault on the great collection of ancient records at Alexandria.

While he was mulling this, the liquid crystal screen of the unrolled computer brightened with line after line of closely written text. The librarian read rapidly, a sinking feeling becoming more and more intense as line after line was absorbed.

The Federal Magistrate was about to issue an order to turn an underused city facility over to the Department of the Inferior. The facility in mind was the city library. It was to be condemned, demolished, and the ground it stood on devoted to more socially relevant facilities. The librarian was invited to show cause why this order should not be executed. The time limited mentioned was twenty-four hours.

#

The judge was an elderly man with distinguished demeanor, but the counsel for the government was a tall, bald, arrogant fellow who smirked at the librarian in open contempt. The judge and the counsel alike had been incredulous when the librarian appeared in court without representation, but there were no library funds available for retaining lawyers. There were not even funds for a qualified exterminator. The librarian had tried to plead on humanitarian grounds that the library was too important to its patrons' mental health to be closed down, even on cultural grounds that the building should be preserved as a relic of the past. But the counsel had smashed his arguments each time; they had no basis in law.

The judge's voice was dry but gentle in answer to the librarian's question. "The suggestion for the demolition originated with the attorneys representing the Snail Darter Society, though that is hardly relevant."

"Your honor, does that mean that the library property will be turned into a ZOO?"

The judge looked slightly embarrassed. "Hardly a zoo, Mr., ah, Director. You know that we are legally obligated to provide a sanctuary for endangered species. Only one type of animal or plant will be housed on the property."

"B-but Your Honor, the library contains the last collection of books on earth. The very last. All the rest have been converted to electronic storage."

The judge looked regretful. He was very old, the librarian thought; perhaps he might remember the joys of real books himself, though he had certainly never patronized the library.

"All those books we've preserved with such love, all those old people who so enjoy using them. It's such a small thing to place the new facility elsewhere, Your Honor. The patrons are so happy, and so little makes them happy these days—"

The counsel broke in stridently. "That is an irrelevant matter, Your Honor. The law is very clear in the necessity of defending the existence of wildlife threatened by our ever-increasing rape of our environment. Our mechanistic worship of blind technology has made us lose all appreciation for life. We all bear collective guilt for the extinction of the passenger pigeon, the moa, and, the, uh, the, uh, mastodon. Can I respectfully request we proceed with this, ah, gentleman's grounds for dismissing the demolition action?"

The judge regarded the librarian sadly. "Sustained. Could you get on with it, please?"

The librarian felt admonished despite himself. No one wanted to be responsible for the eradication of some harmless, furry creature trying to eke out a perilous existence in a concrete-covered world. "Your—Your Honor, can you at least tell me the grounds? I mean, what species—"

"The court was not informed of the species to be sheltered in the new facility after the dedicated staff and elderly patrons are summarily ejected. Perhaps counsel for the government could provide that information?"

The bald man's smirk became a bit less arrogant. But only a bit. "It, uh, has not been finally decided, Your Honor. Either horse leeches or fire ants."

The librarian was stricken speechless for a moment while the judge gazed heavenward. "Couldn't either be placed in some other facility with some other species?"

This time the counsel's voice was smooth. The precedent is United States Vs. New York Public Library, Your Honor. The decision was that the entire facility must be preserved for the organisms responsible for leprosy and a separate but equal facility be established for those producing the Bubonic Plague. If I recall, the library of Harvard University proved adequate."

The judge nodded slowly, then turned to the librarian. "I'm afraid I shall rule against you unless you have any additional arguments to present." There was a clear note of pity in his voice.

"Nothing I've said makes any difference?"

The judge shook his head, glanced sidelong at the government counsel with his superior smile. "I'm afraid that the only grounds recognized for refusing the government's request would be that the proposed site of the wildlife sanctuary already harbors a species on the edge of extinction."

The last librarian heaved a sigh of relief. Everything was going to be all right.

#

The librarian took the last of the necessary photographs and pressed the button on the camera that transmitted the image to the national data net. The heavy old volume was closed carefully and respectfully. The librarian had no desire to injure either the brittle binding or its inhabitant, one of the dying race of bookworms.

As the librarian carried the massive Old Testament back into the stacks there was a rhythmic squeaking. It wasn't very loud, but this time the librarian noticed it and stopped. One eye extended downward to look under the smooth plastic chassis, but the sound was unmistakable. The front axle needed new bearings, no doubt about it.

Positions Available

Associate Librarian of Occult Collection of Wicca University. Must be free to work nights (exceptions: President's Day, Flag Day, and Walpurgisnacht) dusk till dawn. Damned good retirement plan. Contact B. L. Zebubb, Avenue of the Choking Mists, Haversack, NJ. Wicca University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. No Christians need apply.

Scent Librarian, Miami Zoo. Cataloger needed to classify scents according to new LC system. Three years+ experience with OnLine DataSniff, Novo-Odo, The Nose, or Olfactory InfoBase a must. No weak stomachs. Contact Litter Box 411, Miami, FL

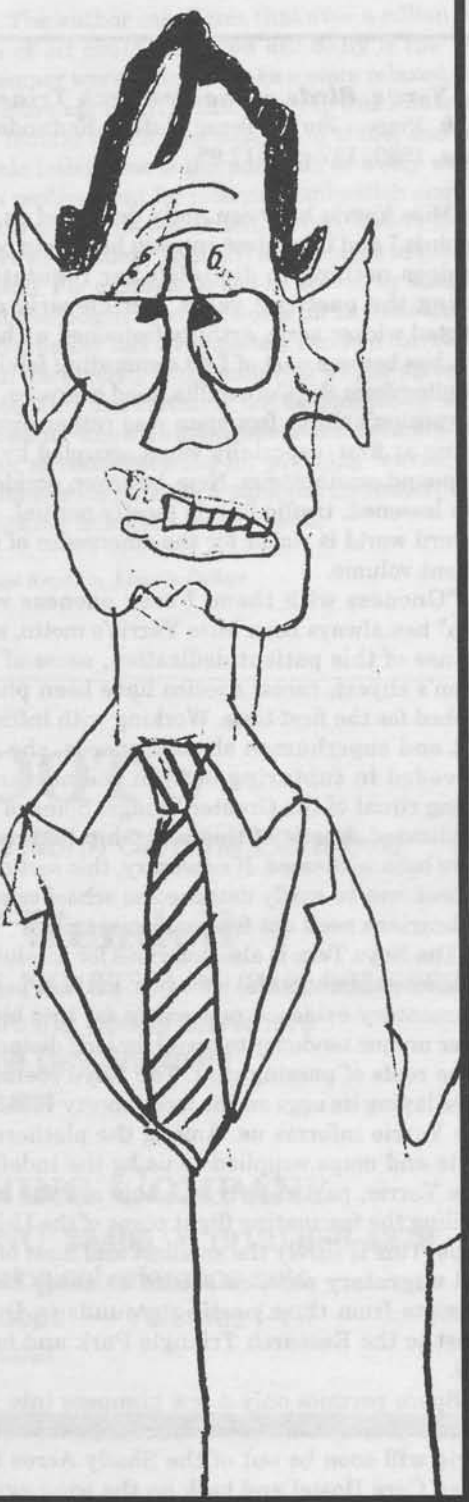
Soap Librarian, Beverly Hills Laundromat & Sauna. High school equivalency a must. No experience necessary. Competitive salary (low six figures). Applicant must be for sure totally awesome. Contact anybody around Beverly Hills.

Library Assistant to Don Giovanni, well-known local businessman and olive oil importer. Fluency in Basic, Cobol, or Sicilian dialects a must. Technical support equipment available, including computer, copier, fax, flak jacket, and .44 Magnum. Applicant should bring books for library. No wimps, please. Leave message with Rocko or Vinnie. Come alone. At night.

Director of Library at the King Ludwig of Bavaria Clinic. Collection includes only paperbacks. Patrons can be moderately eccentric but include many celebrities (Napoleon Bonaparte, Elvis Presley, Charles Manson, Barney Rubble). No deposit-no return policy simplifies checkout procedure.

Reference/Bibliographic Instruction Librarian. Whynot College, a four-year liberal arts college serving right many students in a splendidly bucolic setting, seeks a reference/bibliographic instruction librarian to provide complete reference service 60 hrs/wk; plan and implement a comprehensive BI program including orientation tours and video demonstrations; carry out all interlibrary loans using partial sets of LC NUC volumes; stimulate faculty awareness and promote library utilization, write successful grant proposals, repair and maintain AV equipment, library copier, vacuum cleaner, share shelving responsibilities. Includes non-rotating night and weekend work. ALA-accredited MLS required, PhD preferred. Salary: \$9,200 - \$9,300 depending on qualifications and experience. Write to Joe Bob Willis Dean, Whynot College, Whynot, NC 28703.

Gorge Bush



Tar Heel Books

Ava Yarrie. *Birds of the Research Triangle Park*. Pigeon Forge, Tenn: Nature Redundancy Press, 1989. 137 pp. \$17.95.

Miss Yarrie has been aptly described as "for the birds," and this latest entry in her avian odyssey does nothing to diminish her reputation. During the past two years, her cleverly constructed wicker aerie, artfully festooned with sea oats, has become part of I-40 commuting folklore. Dangling from the Cornwallis Road overpass, her contraption's thirty foot span was rather disconcerting at first, especially when occupied by the 250-pound ornithologist. Now, however, accidents have lessened, traffic flow is mostly normal, and the bird world is richer for the emergence of this opulent volume.

"Oneness with them, I seek oneness with them" has always been Miss Yarrie's motto, and, because of this patient dedication, some of the region's shyest, rarest species have been photographed for the first time. Working with infrared light and superhuman shutter speeds, she has succeeded in capturing on film the nocturnal mating ritual of the Greater Sludge. Some of the complicated details of this courtship had never before been witnessed. If necessary, this section of the book can be easily detached so school or public librarians need not fear patron reprisals.

The Noyu Tern is also notorious for its elusive and somewhat antisocial behavior. In these pages, documentary evidence now exists for this bird's rather unique tendency to travel for long distances on the roofs of passing cars. The Noyu seems to prefer laying its eggs on the more sporty vehicles, Miss Yarrie informs us. Among the plethora of charts and maps supplied to us by the indefatigable Yarrie, particularly valuable are the ones detailing the fascinating flight plans of the Urban Bustle. This is surely the smallest and most often used migratory path on record as these birds commute from their nesting grounds in Duke Forest to the Research Triangle Park and back daily.

Space permits only a few glimpses into the wonders of this volume. We must hope that Miss Yarrie will soon be out of the Shady Acres Extended Care Hostel and back on the wing again.

Recommended for all libraries interested in being on the cutting edge of bird lore.

Gene Leonardi, North Carolina Central University

Lola Sue Smith-Smith. *Tar Heel Meals for the Health-Conscious* Spivey's Corner, N. C.: Vivamus Press, 1989. 14 pp. \$24.95.

In an era when more and more North Carolinians strive to achieve immortality through the consumption of high-fiber cereals, this offering has been long overdue. The reviewer has personally tried a number of the more than six recipes included in this slim (fourteen page) volume with biodegradable covers. The pages themselves are easily recyclable, and, in fact the final recipe ("Okra Stuffed with Endive-Collard Pate") amusingly requires the use of pages four through ten from the book as a liner for a baking pan.

Particularly mouthwatering was the Mock-Ham in Ersatz-Red Eye Pseudo-Gravy, a vegetarian delight that includes one of several uses for kudzu leaves and vines. This recipe is but one of several that provides culinary delight at Blue-Light Special prices, since many of the ingredients are free (i.e. kudzu leaves), some are common household items (aspirin, Windex), and others can be obtained with little trouble if the cook is a true Tar Heel (low-cholesterol meats like Possum Waffles, good sources of fiber like hickory bark).

Written in an open, amusing style ("Deep frying in Lux Liquid produced a pork chop that was tender, pleasant-smelling, and kind to my hands—but not, alas, edible."), this book is recommended for any chef who has had a recent lobotomy.

Alfreda Fettucine, UNC-Ocracoke

Myrgatroid Cerebellum, Ph.D. *Lost Colony, Lost Continent*. Lizard Lick, NC: Rubber Room Press, 1990. 169 pp. \$12.95.

Myrgatroid Cerebellum is a familiar name to readers of this column. Over the years he has contributed nearly thirty volumes to the canon of North Caroliniana Occult, including such gems as *Is Bigfoot a Yankee?*, *Haunted Treehouses of the*

Outer Banks, and *Human Sacrifices and the ACC Tournament*. In this latest oeuvre, Dr. Cerebellum, nonagenarian professor emeritus of history at Fred's College, has provided us with a snappy new explanation for the mysterious disappearance of the Roanoke Colony.

His argument centers on the correct interpretation of CROATOAN, the only message left by the lost colonists for posterity. Cerebellum suggests that previous scholarly work has been based on a false premise, namely that CROATOAN is to be read from left to right. He points out (correctly, as it turns out) that CROATOAN is NAOTAORC when read from right to left. NAOTAORC, unlike its mysterious mirror image, has a straightforward interpretation in the language once used in the Lost Continent of Atlantis. Loosely translated, it means "Take I-40 East as far as it goes and then keep right on going".

At this point, Cerebellum's reasoning becomes somewhat more elusive than can be easily described here. We recommend this book as a gift for a child one does not particularly like.

Percival Wombat, Toast Public Library

0. Naturale. **Wooly Worms: Untapped Source of Energy**. Hanging Rock: Aerobic Press, 1989. 823 pp. Free to a good home.

The author calculates that over a zillion barrels of oil could be saved annually if the U.S. consumer were willing to take a more relaxed, low-pressure approach to life. A key to this solution to the federal deficit, the balance of trade, and harmonic imbalance is the adoption of wooly worms as a replacement for internal combustion engines. Naturale points out at length (pp. 666-712) that there are hidden "spin-off" advantages to his plan as well. For example, it can be proven by statistics that the length of wooly worm fur in Ashe County in November has a completely random correlation with the severity of the following winter across the state. This can certainly not be claimed by any of the better-known automobile manufacturers. This book is recommended for pressing leaves, as a reliable substrate for a personal computer, or for knocking intruders on the head.

Buggs Ketchum, Linville College

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Tar Heel Books

Bernie Alexandria. *Abandoned Libraries of the Carolinas*. Solid Waste Site #6: D Press, 1990. \$19.95.

This book was so depressing that I couldn't finish it. In fact, I gave up after Chapter II, "The Skeleton in the Stacks," which described the author's excavation of the former public library of Yella Houndawg, N.C. A three-hanky piece of nonfiction, this is wonderful as a cathartic for older librarians and a horror piece for younger colleagues. Not recommended for those under thirty-five.

Ursa Major, Helms AFB Library

Other Publications of Interest:

Great Potholes of Boone and Asheville. A serious and knowledgeable comparative study of these scenic wonders in two of our most memorable mountain communities. Sure to appeal to patrons planning trips to the area.

Rhymes that Don't, and Rhythms. Several thousand lines of complete drivel alleged to be serious poetry by my ex-wife, which has nothing whatever to do with my opinion.

Little-Used Bike Paths of the Tar Heel State.

The paths followed include one that runs from Cape Hatteras to Ocracoke, the Grandfather Mountain Vertical Mile, and the middle of the right lane of I-40 halfway between Greensboro and Winston-Salem at rush hour on a Friday afternoon during an ice storm.

Thorns of the Carolinas. How to recognize our state's thorn-bearing plants by touch alone. Over two hundred gut-wrenching photographs.

Behind the Barn. A thriller set in (fictional) Bunkum County, N.C. includes KGB agents, Hari Krishnas, and trained black bass. As his enemies relentlessly close in, Ethelred "Lucky" Shrike cowers behind his barn. You'll be ready to shoot him yourself by the time this book staggers to a conclusion.

Life in the Fast Lane. The nightmarish true story of a family trapped in a fuel-efficient foreign-made car when its cruise control jammed at 55 mph. The seven members of the Gerbil family almost starved to death before the vehicle ran out of gas after 6700 miles and 122 hours of perambulation.

Being Really Totally Safe. Which automatic weapons does your cost-conscious family need to ensure safety? Which anti-tank rocket gives the "most bang for the buck," the US-manufactured LAW or the Soviet RPG? Useful chapters for the whole family ("Teaching Your Toddler to Lay Mines"; "Granny Gitcher Gun"; "Uzis Aren't Just for Sissies"; "Dad's Special Napalm Recipe"). Recommended for wealthy paranoids.

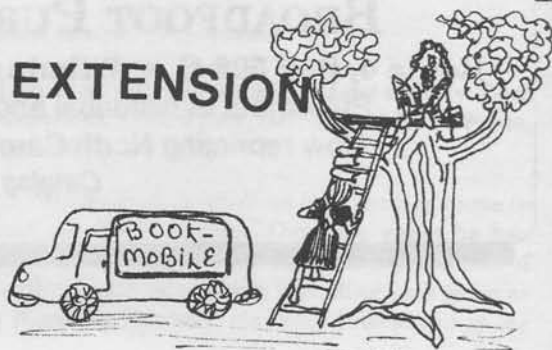
FOR I=I TO 386: READ. This product of the Research Triangle is a major literary breakthrough, the first major work of fiction written entirely in the Basic computer language. Titillating, witty, droll, and colorful, this work is recommended for IBM AT or Macintosh II. Warning: Many passages involve explicit I/O and might offend users with less than 480K of RAM.

1979 in Smothering Skunk. A novel that blows the veil of respectability off a fictional North Carolina town. Behind a thin veneer of middle-class American life, there lurk people who drink milk straight out of the bottle, don't signal before turns, and check books out of the public library. This one will keep you running to the bathroom until the final paragraph.

Mentioned at all:

Our Friend the Boll Weevil
North Carolinians Who Moved to the Falklands
I Ate My RV
My Dog, My Truck and My Gun
" " Salutes Illiteracy
Siegfried at the Circulation Desk
Coach V and the Alien Point Guard
Kernersville
1001 Uses for Chiggers
When the Outer Banks had Drive-In Windows
Defenestration at the Dean Dome
Offensive Driving Techniques for 18-Wheelers

EXTENSION



Library News Briefs

So You Think You Got Problems?

In Berkeley, CA, two patrons of the University library have sued 18-year-old reference assistant Tina Cogg for \$2.5 billion. The two allege that her failure to provide them with a copy of the prophecies of Nostradamus quickly enough prevented them from "calling in Beings from a Higher Plane" to halt the October 13 earthquake. Their lawyer, Edgar Earthman, told reporters that the city authorities are considering criminal charges of negligence and disturbing the peace. His clients are also reported to be seeking revenge by calling upon "just retribution by the Flame Beings of the Ninth Dimension." Ms. Cogg is paid \$3.35 per hour.

No Comment from Quayle

The State Library Association of a large, rectangular state recently passed a resolution that urged their congressional representatives to lobby for a Constitutional Amendment. The proposed amendment would name the Librarian of Congress as successor to the Presidency.

I Used to Know All That

HyperTech Inc. president Billy Smith, 12-year-old self-made billionaire microchippette designer, called a news conference to display a prototype of a new micromicrodevice that "just come to me, y'know?" Billy said as he proudly held up his latest miracle invention on the tip of his right index finger in a high wind.

The new device, the only one of its kind, contains the contents of the national libraries of all members of the United Nations as well as the state libraries of the Vatican, Monaco, Antarctica, Oz, Erewhon, and several low-orbiting satellites. It is easily accessed by all major microcomputers, telephones, calculators, copying machines, and manual typewriters, costs 9 cents to manufacture, and is just over 1/1000 inch on a side. It can be found somewhere in the eastern part of Utah. A reward is offered.

IdentiBook: New Aid to Librarians

An NCLA intelligence agent has uncovered an innovation in the publishing industry that promises great benefits to librarianship. A major publishing house, in a cost-cutting measure, now produces all hardcovers with identical bindings.

All IdentiBook® volumes are 9.5 x 6.5 inches, gray in color, and have no information printed on the spine. They also lack frontmatter, title pages, and page numbers, all "frills that simply add to our competitors' inflated costs," said company president John Smith. Still more impressive is the fact that all books now have the same length, 256 pages. Shorter works have been supplemented with randomly-inserted blank sheets while longer works have simply had their final sections omitted. "Nobody really reads books that long anyway," commented a company official on condition that he not be identified.

The Zero Option

City fathers in a large North Carolina city were gratified to find that after severe staff cuts the city library was well within revised budgetary guidelines. The previous director had resigned in protest over the eighty-five percent funding cut, stating that the remnants of the library staff could not deal with a collection of nearly a million volumes. A new director was hired after a long search. The director's previous experience in librarianship was somewhat limited (he lived near a library branch, though he had never visited it) and officials were not sanguine about his chances of successfully directing the facility.

In fact, they found to their surprise that in the new director's first year the library was in the black by a substantial \$790,000. A grateful mayor called the director to her office for congratulations. When questioned about innovative techniques that led to the massive surplus, the director modestly (and somewhat obscurely) referred to an unexpected windfall of overdue fines.

The following year, the library income was \$3,277,000, eclipsing traffic fines as a source of revenue. The city government then ordered an audit of the library accounts to determine how to produce similar dramatic changes in other city service departments.

While most budget figures were well within expected margins, one line item drew careful attention. The library had realized a seven-figure income from sales of discarded books.

Confronted with what was by now a considerable concern, the director readily admitted that he had been systematically selling off the collection. He defended his actions vigorously, noting that the smaller collection meant that the staff could be reduced and that since fewer books were borrowed service hours could be cut back, further cutting costs. "Besides," he said as he was led away by attendants in white uniforms, "it's a lot brighter in

there than it was with all those books blocking the sunlight."

He has denied renting newly-opened areas of the stacks to family members for picnics and camping.

New Nuclear Concern

The director of the Los Alamos Public Library has reported that radiation from nearby nuclear tests has had an unexpected effect on books and periodicals.

"At first, we thought they were just typos," he said. "I mean, you've got to figure it's a typo if a volume of *Moby Dick* starts with 'Call me Fred.'"

But staff members began reporting more serious problems, such as hardcovers turning into paperbacks, and periodicals whose covers said *Reader's Digest* but contained articles from *The Astrophysical Journal*.

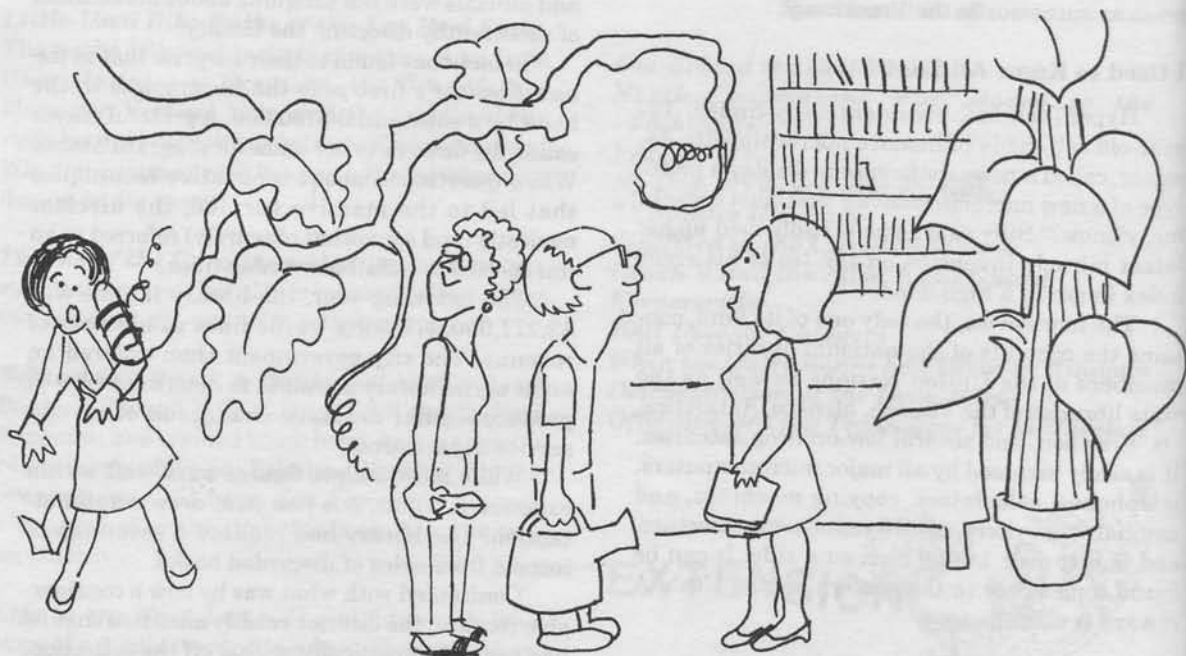
"There's no question about it," said the LAPL director. "They're mutating. No telling where it will end." He shook his head sadly as he slithered back into his office. ■

Credits for this Issue

Drawings are by **Melinda Munger**, formerly Children's Librarian at the Onslow County Public Library in Jacksonville, N.C., and now COordinator of Children's Outreach Services for the Miami-Dade Public Library System in Miami, FL. The drawings first appeared in *Down East*, a publication of the Loose Region.

Bookmark designs are contributed by the **Forsyth County Public Library** in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"False Advertising" is courtesy of **Harry Tuckmayer** and **Dorothy D. Hodder** (the creator of Dorph). Harry is Headquarters Librarian and Dorothy is Public Services Librarian at the New Hanover County Public Library in Wilmington. Both are members of the *North Carolina Libraries* Editorial Board. ■



The Garden Club's doing a wonderful job and we're very grateful, but might I suggest a lighter hand with the fertilizer?