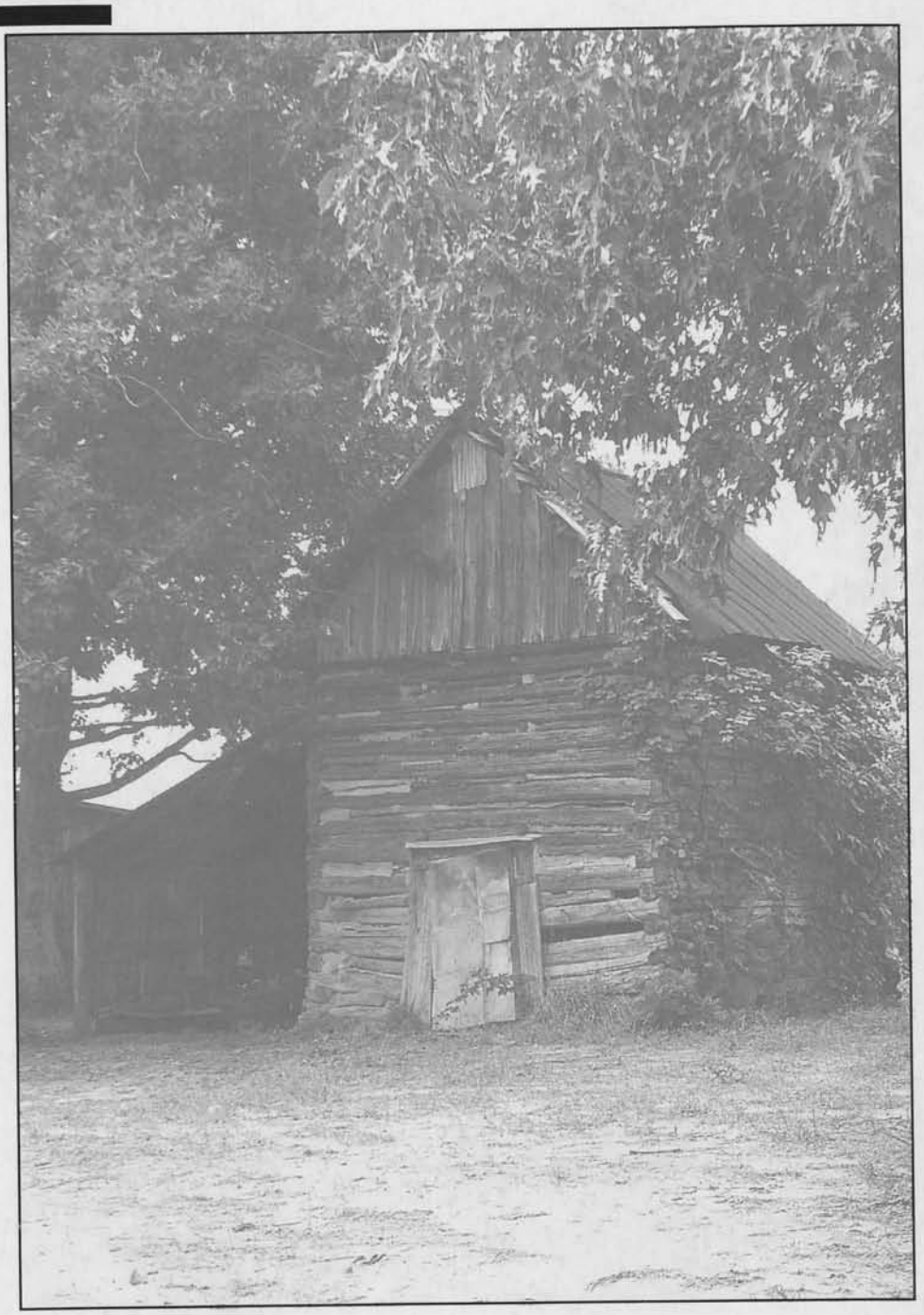
North Carolina Libraries

Special Edition 1992
Crisis in Librarianship



While others were learning to read and use the information in the books we had warehoused and classified to advance themselves and their professions, we essentially stranded our power and image in the minds of the rest of the world somewhere between the Xerox monk and Marian the Librarian.

— Howard McGinn, 1992

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From the President

Janet Freeman, President

Crises in our libraries are not new. Your crisis today may be a dripping pipe over a range of shelving. Tomorrow it may be the sudden illness of a staff member or an unusual assignment by a local teacher.

There are other kinds of crises, however, some of which are discussed in this special issue of *North Carolina Libraries*. The one I want to speak about here is the long-term economic crisis in libraries.

Some of us are acutely aware because we were early victims of budget cuts and rising prices. The more fortunate who escaped for a while are now feeling the impact.

The ramifications are serious. For all of us. For our state. For our country. For the world.

At the 1992 Midwinter Conference of the American Library Association, President Patricia Schuman launched a public relations campaign to raise the visibility of libraries and library personnel. She kicked off a telephone call-in campaign to ask Americans to call an 800 number and express their support for libraries and librarians ... of all types.

As a part of that campaign, I wrote a letter to each member of the North Carolina Library Association and asked for help communicating an important message to the American public.

Your right to know and to access information is being threatened. Locally, many libraries are facing the most severe budget cuts since the Great Depression. As always during a depressed economy, we are getting reports that library use is on the rise.

You can't exercise your right to know if your library is closed. You can't exercise your right to know if you don't know how to read. And you can't exercise your right to know if someone else is telling you what you can or can't read.

I asked about local crises. How are funding cuts affecting your library and the services you offer to your patrons?

Your responses were immediate and distressing. Here are excerpts from some of them.

— The Macon County Public Library has had the same operating budget from the county for three consecutive years. Hours have been cut. The library is now closed Sundays and Monday evenings.

— When library staff vacancies occur at the Nantahala Regional Library, the positions are being filled with lesser qualified personnel who are paid less than the state mandated salaries.

— The state no longer mandates a budget for school libraries. Money that would have been allocated to libraries is lumped together with instructional supplies and textbooks, and whether a library gets any budget at all is up to the county or the individual school. When money is scarce, as it was this year, there is simply no contest.

— Bookmobile service from the East Albemarle Regional Library has been discontinued in one county and cut in half in three others. Local budgets are frozen.

— In 1989/90 the Walter Clinton Jackson Library at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro added a third fewer books than were purchased a decade earlier, despite significant growth in enrollments and programs during that time.

— At the Shepard Pruden Memorial Library in Edenton purchase of a new heat pump for the children's room and library office has been deferred for several years.

— Public school system media coordinators are being eliminated or given additional non-library responsibilities, thus diminishing the support for school libraries and media centers.

— Increasing costs of books, CD-ROM databases, and equipment service contracts makes upgrading 10-year-old microcomputers in school libraries impossible.

Since 1987 the North Carolina State University Libraries have canceled 3,045 journal subscriptions. No new serials titles have been purchased during this five-year period, and the size of the journal and serials collection has decreased by sixteen percent. Monograph purchases have declined by more than fifty percent.

Budget for AV equipment — TV/VCRs, record players, filmstrip projectors, audiocassette tape players/recorders, etc. — was completely cut last year from another school budget.

In 1990/91 Belk Library at Appalachian State University faced a one hundred thousand dollar deficit in periodical subscription renewals, which resulted in the cancellation of over four hundred titles.

Forsyth County Public Library had to eliminate the positions of eleven full- and part-time staff. Thirty percent of all standing orders and twenty-five percent of all serials were cut. All bookmobile service has been eliminated.

A school librarian wrote, "We worry about our children's scores on the SAT, but we cut the budgets for books at school and public libraries. We talk about restructuring education, but we cut funds in the very places that could make a real difference in the way children are taught. We worry about the work force of tomorrow, but we cut the funds for technology and all the wonderful ways to access information that are now available."

A university librarian wrote, "Should we tell this generation of college students, 'Sorry, but we can't afford to provide you with the resources essential to your education. Come back when things are better.'?"

Our budgets are suffering and the short-term impact is obvious to us, but to communicate the seriousness of the long-term ramifications, we must raise the awareness of those who fund our libraries ... these repositories of the knowledge of civilization are being victimized. We as library personnel and supporters have the responsibility to speak out for libraries and see that this most democratic of all places in our society is not jeopardized.

We have made a start but we must continue. Library personnel in North Carolina rallied to spread the word and generated 2,578 calls during the "Call for America's Libraries" Campaign, the fourth highest state in the United States!

One of NCLA Executive Board's goals for this biennium is to promote libraries of all types and formulate and implement an external marketing campaign to get that word out, but the Marketing and Public Relations Committee cannot do it alone. You need to be a part of the initiative also.

Did you read Cal Shepard's excellent article "Speak Up for Kids!" in the May/June 1992 issue of *Tar Heel Libraries*? She made some practical suggestions about how to be a positive voice and take positive action which all of us can use, no matter what our type of library. I encourage you to read it.

We're in this together and unless we work together, we will not succeed.

Crisis in Librarianship:
The Editor's Perspective

by Frances Bryant Bradburn

The decision to devote a special issue to the crisis in librarianship was fraught with peril. North Carolina librarianship in crisis? Surely not! This is the state whose State Library, in conjunction with its public libraries, recently has been featured as the prototype for the successful evolution from print into the networked electronic environment in a study funded by OCLC, researched and reported by Charles R. McClure, et. al., and released on July 1, 1992, entitled "Public Libraries and the INTERNET/NREN: New Challenges, New Opportunities." This is the state that sports three major academic research libraries; the state whose school library media program is the envy of the nation. In this environment, how could eighteen individuals, albeit representative of all types of libraries, have the audacity to suggest that we, of all professions, in North Carolina, of all states, could possibly be in crisis?

Individual examples abound. NCLA President Janet Freeman highlights several throughout her President's Column. She touches only the iceberg's tip. Authors from school, public, and academic librarianship direct our attention to crises within individual libraries and the profession in general. These authors do not simply point out the problems. Rather, they suggest theories for thought and strategies for change that will allow us — and, yes, encourage us — to grow and evolve into a viable profession for the twenty-first century.

It is tempting to allow the crises to speak for themselves—the crisis of image; the crisis of a coalitionless profession; the crisis of rigid,outdated thinking; the crisis of the service-to-all-with-all mentality. Yet central to each of these issues is the crisis of personal and professional values. As Kenneth Marks states in his article, "Libraries: No Longer Free of Fee," "Perhaps one of the reasons that libraries are not valued is due to our inability to establish a value for our own activities."

Marks is referring specifically to monetary value. I suggest, however, that the crisis is far more than financial; it revolves around how we value ourselves both as individuals and as a profession. Ours is a profession that constantly fights the sour-faced, bun and brown shoes stereotype. It is a profession that annually fights inane battles for small budget increases for materials that are vital to the very survival of the institutions they support. It is a profession — we are the individuals — who will attempt to provide the same level of service that was possible two years ago when our libraries had more staff members, fewer patrons, more money, and no CD-ROMs! We hesitate to deface the image of libraries as it is included in "the American flag, motherhood, and apple pie" syndrome. But even mothers strike; Mrs. Fields advertises!

Why is it that we find our own self-promotion so difficult? Why are we as a profession — as professionals — not worth our own support? Last year the Executive Board of NCLA debated with some acrimony the cost of funding library "commercials" featuring Atlantic Coast Conference athletes and concluding with the tag, "Stay in school, use your library, and read." To be sure, a six thousand dollar investment was required, the request was hurriedly compiled, and a less rosy financial picture was beginning to surface. But these facts pale when one considers the public relations coup the previous year's spots had been and the next year's promised to be. The ACC itself estimates that millions of potential library users watched those public service announcements across the state, throughout the South, even in other parts of the United States. And these ads did not specify college libraries, school media centers, or public libraries. No, ***all*** the bases were covered; it was a marketing masterpiece. Mrs. Field would have been proud. And yet, by approving only half the request, NCLA demurred.

Why are we unable to see our own value, market our own self-worth? We cannot wait for our savior; Armageddon may appear before the Ascension. We must nurture our risk-takers, not stone them; cultivate our visionaries, not gag them. And we must recognize that there is power in numbers. We need only decide how we choose to use that power. We can use our financial resources to educate ourselves and our clientele, potential and present-day. We can use our intelligence and first-line defense of information to market ourselves individually and professionally, making ourselves totally indispensable to our targeted communities. Or we can become an incredibly powerful collective "chicken little" whose sky collapses around us leaving all the world, not just ourselves, the lesser for our fears and timidity.

Why Networking in Libraries?

by Howard F. McGinn

The CIA and the KGB have a problem. The cold war has ended. The Soviet Union is crumbling. Both are reducing staff. And, most amazingly, several months ago the television program "60 Minutes" actually televised a Soviet technician preparing laboratory slides of slices of a prominent dead Soviet's brain. But the CIA, at least, has caught a glimpse of the future, and the future is electronic information, information transfer, networking. In a recent interview, David Whipple, a former CIA station chief noted that " 'the important person in the intelligence business is no longer going to be the spymaster, it seems to me, but the analyst' - the expert able to sift and make sense of the avalanche of information freely available in the global village of the 21st century."[1]

In examining this global village, its electronic information neural system, its politics, its applications, my task is to frame the discussion in the question: "Why Networking In Libraries?" I will not concentrate on the more technical aspects of networking; the next regular issue of *North Carolina Libraries* will cover that topic extensively. I will concentrate on two important non-technical aspects. The first is the role of the librarian in networking and its massive technology shift. The second is the acquisition and use of power through networking in order to serve our citizens and communities. Perhaps the two are one and the same because in my thinking the problems and solutions inherent in the topics answer the question "Why Networking in Libraries?."

As librarians, we enter any discussion of networking with a mental construct built on a medieval item of technology called the book. I do not intend to belabor the old death-of-the-book discussion. In fact that argument is a red herring. The book will survive. It is the question of the survival of the library profession, as we know it, that forms the real basis of the death-of-the-book question. Librarianship, like no other profession in history, has identified itself, and linked its future with an implement rather than a process. In doing so it has created its own potential source of internal collapse.

Yet I think the library profession is extremely well positioned in this newborn information age to acquire and wield enormous power. The shift in information storage and dissemination from the book to the computer and telecommunications has given librarians an opportunity to reclaim power that has been eroding for many years. In fact, I suggest a case could be made that whenever a revolutionary or evolutionary shift in information technology occurs, a power position opportunity is presented to the librarian more than to any other professional.

Think back in history. Once we had great power because we were the only ones who knew how to read. Of course we may have had a second occupation as a priestess or priest, but the power was there. We had a very tightly controlled monopoly. We made the clay tablets, we illuminated the manuscripts, we bound the books. And only we were able to write on the tablets or in the books and read what we wrote; people had to abide by our interpretation of the writings. It is much like the legal profession today.

But we have come to a grinding halt in our understanding of the power of information. While we contented ourselves with the creation of elaborate classification schemes, the building of great warehouses to store books, the development of many tangential services and concerns that had nothing at all to do with the essential nature of our profession, we allowed the power to pass from our hands. The power passed because we wrapped our profession around the information storage device called the book. While others were learning to read and use the information in the books we had warehoused and classified to advance themselves and their professions, we essentially stranded our power and image in the minds of the rest of the world somewhere between the Xerox monk and Marian the Librarian. And there we have remained for decades, happily storing and stamping books.

Moreover, these other professions built themselves into monopolies through their professional associations and graduate education programs. Our graduate library education programs are dying at a disturbing rate. Who will train the information specialists needed in the information age? Probably not library schools. The majority of the specialists, especially those that earn the higher salaries, will be trained by the business, computer science, and other information-related academic departments. We have lost control over the future of our profession because we have allowed others to decrease the supply of librarians while the demand for information specialists increases.

Consider, too, the power wielded by the American Medical Association or the

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American Bar Association. Their power emanates from their creation of monopolies that control entry to the profession, control members' business practices and pricing, and threaten one with legal or physical death if one does not abide by their dictums. We librarians have permitted ourselves to become diluted as a distinct profession because we allow any person who works in a library to call himself or herself a librarian. Would the American Medical Association or the American Bar Association allow me to claim to be a physician or a lawyer? If I did, I would be arrested. What does it take to join the American Library Association or the North Carolina Library Association? The payment of dues. We have become the generic profession, right up there with Scotch tape, Xerox copiers, and Saran Wrap. Now combine a generic, come one - come all, profession with the warm fuzzy image the libraries we manage elicit in most people's minds, and you can begin to understand why we face chronic recruiting, salary, funding, and overall image problems. We are rapidly transferring our profession to others who are more aggressive, more willing to change, more willing to embrace modern information technology. And we are performing this professional suicide in an age that is information-dependent. So "Why networking in libraries"? It may save the profession. It may do so because it can help restore power.

But why should we want power? How does the acquisition of power and the preservation of the profession impact on the reasons for networking? Let's return to the discussion of our roots. The modern library evolved to serve the information needs of people. It did so primarily through information stored on paper. As information has proliferated, as information storage and dissemination technology has developed, the library profession has been presented with enormous opportunities to serve the full range of information needs of our towns and their citizens. In fact, because an increasing amount of information, especially information generated by state and federal governments, will only be available in electronic format, librarians and their funding institutions will need to make the financial and personnel investments necessary to deliver this information to their clients, especially those who can least afford it. But we had better get our funding institutions behind us quickly because in the last few months the information services landscape has experienced a cataclysmic shift. That shift is, of course, the freeing of the Baby Bells to enter the information provision business. So again I ask, "Why networking in libraries"? Let Judge Green, the judge who has spent the better part of a decade overseeing the breakup of AT&T, answer the question.

This quote is from the *Wall Street Journal*. "If the Bells do enter the information services industry, it would reshape the market, but Judge Green warned that in his view the changes wouldn't be for the better. 'The most probable consequences....will be the elimination of competition from that market and the concentration of the sources of information of the American people in just a few dominant, collaborative conglomerates, with the captive local telephone monopolies as their base.'" [2] "Why networking in libraries"? Obviously libraries do not have the financial or political clout to compete with the Baby Bells. But through networking they can lessen the monopolistic impact of the telecommunication's industry on our communities and people.

So let me summarize this gloomy scenario. Books will not disappear. There will always be books and multiple outlets for the acquisition of books. A few large warehouses across the country will assure that the preservation of important titles is accomplished. Information services will not disappear. The unleashing of the Baby Bells will insure that information will be provided to households by telephone company-controlled cable systems or through phone lines. The institution of the free public library will gradually decline in importance as more commercial book outlets are established and as phone companies franchise information service outlets.

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Academic libraries will not escape the effects of a wide open information marketplace. At the 1992 Educom Conference, I sat at a table with ten academic library directors and directors of academic computing departments. Seven of the eight library directors had just been placed under the management of their institution's academic computing center. The lone survivor was Duke University. Its library director manages the academic computing services at the university. And finally, the library profession as we know it will disappear unless drastic steps are taken by the profession as a whole and by each of us individually. "Why networking in libraries"? To save a profession by taking advantage of the opportunities presented by networking and the important market niches the Baby Bells and others will probably ignore or overlook. To assure that we do not disenfranchise the poor by making the ability to pay and the ability to process raw information into useable data the criteria for participation in the global information economy.

I mentioned above that I thought the shift in information technology that has been sweeping the world presents opportunities. Let me try to combine all of these thoughts into some final answers to the question. My answers will concentrate on service since service will lead to survival. Service starts with taking advantage of the opportunities created by the identification of needs. We need networking in libraries to help our towns, their governments and citizens, participate in the information age. The crucial information needs of the future will not be the electronic telephone pages provided over the cable systems. The real information needs will be information that enables local governments to function, to plan, to cope with the by-products of technology, to preserve the environment, to educate its citizens, to use tax dollars wisely, to digest and process and reformat all of that raw data into food for civic growth. Librarians know how to do this. The Baby Bells do not. But in order for the poorer towns, the more rural towns, to do all of the above, they must be part of a larger electronic universe that provides access to all of the information assets purchased by tax dollars and stored in libraries across the state and the country.

I want to emphasize this notion of public information assets. We take for granted that the information assets in a public library are for the use of everyone, since tax dollars were used to purchase these items. But aren't public tax dollars used to support publicly supported university libraries? Aren't public tax dollars used to pay for the information assets in publicly supported community college libraries? Isn't there a moral and legal responsibility and position of accountability for state and local governments and their citizenry to de-

mand access to public information assets, no matter where these assets are maintained? Networking in libraries provides the mechanism to make these public information assets available. And fortunately in North Carolina, our public universities and most of our other public institutions are concerned about the information needs of the state and participate vigorously in networking programs.

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But materials are not the only component of information assets. The High Performance Computing Act of 1991 has been signed into law by President Bush. This act authorizes the construction of the now-famous National Research Education Network, better known as NREN. Libraries are included in the legislation. But so are many other types of information users. We need to realize that libraries were included in the legislation at the last minute because of lobbying by ALA, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, SLA, and by private citizens like. A case in point is North Carolina Secretary of Cultural Resources Patric Dorsey who made a special trip to Washington to meet with North Carolina Congressman Tim Valentine, chair of one of two House subcommittees that held hearings on the NREN legislation. This point needs emphasis. While there is a role given to the federal Department of Education in NREN and the law says that libraries are to enjoy NREN access, universal access will not occur unless constant lobbying continues. I firmly believe that the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and even the Department of Education have no interest in allowing the "common people" of the world to have significant, daily, affordable access to NREN. Their information needs are not considered to be as important or as sophisticated as are the needs of those wanting access to supercomputers.

Yet NREN will be built with tax dollars. It is a public information asset. Ironically, it will probably take the privatization of NREN, as the legislation requires, to provide full access since Merit, MCI, IBM, or any other company operating NREN will be interested in the revenue that can be gained by opening up access to this electronic superhighway. You can counteract this trend by lobbying your congressman and senator. Because of the State Library of North Carolina's pioneering work with the University of North Carolina's Educational Computing Service to provide access to UNCECS' LINCNET system to all parts of the state, you can assure access by lobbying your General Assembly member for funding to support LINCNET and the statewide establishment of access to LINCNET. This is your key to participation in the global economy. NREN, LINCNET, and all of the federal and state operated telecommunications systems are public information assets. You and I are paying for them. We must assure that we have access to them.

Finally, some words about ourselves. We are a helping profession. We worry about the poor, the illiterate, the oppressed. We are one of the chief supporters of people's first amendment rights. We teach; we counsel; we sacrifice. But who will do all of this if we are gone, if our profession disappears? Will the Baby Bells, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the business schools? We have to keep the profession alive if for no other reason than to continue our tradition of service. In an age where information does and will carry a price tag, we need to exist. But in order to survive, we need to break our attachment to the book, abandon our meekness, become aggressive, embrace technology, form coalitions with anyone who can help us and whom we can help. We need to stop being preservers of culture and start being preservers of people. We need to become information managers, information interpreters, not information warehouse operators. Networking in libraries will demand this professional metamorphosis. And in this process of changing we will see our salaries rise, our recruiting become more successful, our image improve because we will become essential cogs in the daily functioning of our communities.

"Why networking in libraries"? Let me close with a quotation from Hedrick Smith, and some thoughts from Loren Eisley. First Hedrick Smith. In his book, *The Power Game*, Smith describes the nature of power in this way: "Power is the ability to make something happen or to keep it from happening. It can spring from tactical ingenuity and jugular timing, or simply from knowing more than anyone else at the critical moment of decision."[3] As librarians, we have the ability, because of our command of the tools of information, to make something happen, to keep something from happening, to use power with ingenuity, to "know more than anyone else." In order to preserve our profession, we need to do all of these things. If we don't, others will.

Now Loren Eisley. He writes in *The Star Thrower*: "Before act was or substance existed, imagination grew in the dark. Man partakes of that ultimate wonder and creativeness. As we turn from the galaxies to the swarming cells of our own being, which toil for something, some entity beyond their grasp, let us remember man, the self-fabricator who came across an ice age to look into the mirrors and the magic of science. Surely he did not come to see himself or his wild visage only. He came because he is at heart a listener and a searcher for some transcendent realm beyond himself."[4]

Your search for power will ultimately lead you to a confrontation with yourself. Listen to your inner voices and those of the people you must serve. Search your motives, your conscience, your soul and ask for wisdom to gain and use power. Cross the ice age of the ancient information world to the new ice age of the electronic world in the search for the transcendent realm, because it is only by reaching out beyond ourselves, by transcending ourselves, by serving all others as best we can that we ultimately gain power now and in heaven.

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Working for a Change

by Duncan Smith

The one issue around which librarianship is most likely to reach consensus is the issue of change. An overwhelming majority of the profession acknowledges and admits that in order to survive, the profession must change. The exact nature and direction of this change are open for debate. This is where the profession's consensus comes apart and we each go off into our separate corners, either by ourselves or with the faction of our choice. There is nothing alarming about this picture of our professional behavior. In fact, this has been the profession's status quo. This issue of *North Carolina Libraries* illustrates the wide range of opinion about the need for change that exists in our profession.

In his article, Howard McGinn argues that libraries and librarians must become full partners of the new information infrastructure or become extinct. His article is an organizational perspective calling for significant change in the way our organizations interact and connect with their constituencies. On the other hand, in their article, Ilene Nelson, Johannah Sherrer, and Ken Berger provide us with a view of the change that needs to occur in the reference department of the library itself. Their article is the more personal of the two and focuses on the changes that need to occur within the individual. These two articles illustrate the breadth of change that needs to occur within the profession. The profession needs to change at both the overall organizational level and within the individual members of the profession. These authors demonstrate that professional survival depends on the profession changing from top to bottom no matter which way you stand the pyramid.

What is missing from these two articles and what is missing from most of the profession's discussion of change is not the what or why, but the how. The profession is proficient at discussing and arguing for change, but it has not become adept at achieving it. Librarianship is not alone in this. How to achieve significant and lasting change in both organizations and individuals is at the heart of the debate that is raging throughout the country. It is the issue that will become a centerpiece in our soon to be held Presidential election.

A Case Study

Both McGinn and Nelson stress the importance of information and information services in their articles. Both authors focus on the provision of these services as a hallmark of the profession, and fear that information services will be one of the first losses incurred by the profession as it moves down the road to extinction. Given the centrality of these services to the profession and the emphasis given them by these authors, one would assume that this is an area in which the profession would be struggling to ensure its proficiency. A large body of evidence exists to the contrary. In fact, according to existing research, the profession provides an accurate answer to requests for information only fifty-five percent of the time. This is not new information; it has been known for a long time. It is indicative of the profession's attitude toward making change that the fifty-five percent rule has been allowed to remain the profession's status quo.

A time line of published research on unobtrusive reference will illustrate this point. The first five entries in this time line are taken from Terence Crowley's "Half-Right Reference: Is It True?"[1]

1968: Terence Crowley completes his dissertation at Rutgers on the unobtrusive measurement of reference services. He finds that the librarians in his sample answer questions with a 54.2 percent accuracy rate.

1971: Thomas Childers refines, expands, and verifies Crowley's work. Scarecrow Press publishes Childers' and Crowley's work in a book.

1978: Childers expands on his own work in a much larger and refined study. He publishes his results in a journal article.

1981: McClure and Hernon use unobtrusive methodology in a study of the effectiveness of government documents departments. This is the first example of the use of this methodology to evaluate and improve practice.

1983: Maryland State Library conducts a state-wide assessment of reference accuracy in Maryland's public libraries.

1985: Ralph Gers and Lillie J. Seward publish the results of the Maryland Study in *Library Journal*. This article identifies the six behaviors that improve reference accuracy.[2]

The profession is proficient at discussing and arguing for change, but it has not become adept at achieving it.

1986: Maryland State Library develops and trains two hundred Maryland librarians in the use of the six behaviors that improve reference accuracy.[3]

1986: Maryland State Library conducts a second unobtrusive study to assess the effectiveness of its training. This second study revealed that reference accuracy had improved to seventy-seven percent.[4]

1986: Patsy Hansel's article on the results of an unobtrusive study of reference accuracy at Cumberland County Public Library and Information

Center (CCPL&IC) is published in North Carolina Libraries. Hansel reports an accuracy score of 74.7 percent at CCPL&IC.[5]

1988: Sandy Stephan publishes an article in *Public Libraries* describing the Maryland training and its effectiveness.[6]

1991: The Reference and Adult Services Section of the North Carolina Library Association begins planning a train-the-trainer institute to begin introducing the "Maryland Model" into libraries in North Carolina.

1992: Thirty North Carolina librarians are trained in the Maryland Model with the express purpose of introducing the six model reference behaviors into their libraries and other libraries in North Carolina.

1992: Laura Isenstein publishes an article in *Library Journal* describing the incorporation of the six model reference behaviors into Baltimore County Public Library's performance evaluation process.[7]

The "How" of Change

This time line is a case study of how our profession changes. First of all, library researchers begin development of a methodology and conduct studies which provide an accurate picture of some aspect of professional practice. In this case, the picture is of the profession's ability to respond accurately to requests for information. The results of these investigations are reported in the professional literature. In this case, a book is published and the first of a series of articles discussing these investigations is published. It is important to note that four years pass between Crowley's work and the publication of this work in the book that describes his work and the work of Childers. It is also important to note that the first article to appear in the professional literature about this work is Childers', and it appears ten years after Crowley completes his dissertation on the unobtrusive evaluation of reference service.

The next step in the profession's change process is the use of the methodology to improve practice. The first instance where the work of Crowley and Childers is actually used to describe and recommend change in professional practice occurs in 1983, fifteen years after Crowley began his work. The second instance of the use of this work to improve practice begins in 1983 and culminates in 1986, when the State Library of Maryland completes its first round of training in the six model reference behaviors.

The Maryland experience needs further elaboration. First of all, the State Library of Maryland did not just replicate the work of Crowley and Childers. The State Library of Maryland improved on unobtrusive methodology by focusing not only on measuring accuracy but identifying those behaviors which lead to librarians providing an accurate answer to a request for information.[8] Once these behaviors had been identified, a training program was developed to assist Maryland librarians in using these behaviors on the job to improve their performances. Once this training had been implemented, a follow up study was conducted to evaluate the training program's effectiveness in improving reference accuracy in Maryland.

Two additional points of interest are that in both Maryland and North Carolina a decision was made to develop trainers to expand the availability of the training. Secondly, further follow-up studies by the State Library of Maryland revealed that follow-up and refresher training sessions had to be conducted to ensure that the six model reference behaviors were consistently applied. Without this follow-up and refresher training the use of the behavior declined.[9] An extension of this need for reinforcement of the model behaviors led Baltimore County Public Library to integrate the model behaviors into its performance evaluation process.

At this point, a total of twenty-four years has elapsed since Crowley's initial work. The training of North Carolina librarians in the six model reference behaviors identified by the State Library of Maryland is beginning this year. Six years after the citizens of Maryland began having their questions answered accurately seventy-seven percent of the time, there is no evidence to indicate that the citizens of North Carolina are getting anything better than "half-right reference."

Change: A Systems Perspective

What is remarkable about the "Maryland Model" time line is not that the discussed outcomes took twenty-four years to occur. Nor is it remarkable that these outcomes have only occurred in certain pockets of the profession. What is remarkable about the "Maryland Model" time line is that the outcomes occurred at all! The chain of events that led to a statewide reference accuracy score of seventy-seven percent are characterized by happenstance and are the results of highly individualized and unique actions.

Without the work of Crowley and Childers, the methodology for the State of Maryland's study would not have existed. Without the interest of personnel at the Maryland State Library, the six model reference behaviors would not have been identified. Without the staff development and training expertise of other Maryland State Library personnel, the training program responsible for the diffusion of the six model reference behaviors throughout Maryland would not have been developed. Without the publication of the results of these studies and efforts, the Reference and Adult Services Section of the North Carolina Library Association would not have learned of the "Maryland Model." Without the interest and funding of the North Carolina Library Association, the training institute that resulted in thirty North Carolina librarians becoming qualified trainers in the six model reference behaviors would not have occurred. Without the interest of these librarians and their employers, the bodies needed for the training institute would not have been available. Without these individuals, the citizens of North Carolina would continue to receive accurate answers to their questions only fifty-five percent of the time.

The major limitation of the profession's change system is that no one is in charge.

The major barrier to change in our profession is that change has no place in it.

Several of the authors in this issue of *North Carolina Libraries* imply that if the profession does not change, it will not endure. If the profession is to move from talking about change to doing it, it must recognize how change occurs. As indicated by the above case study the following steps are part of our profession's change system:

1. An accurate picture of some aspect of professional practice is achieved through research.

2. Based on this picture, strategies for improving practice are identified.

3. A technique for communicating and enabling librarians to incorporate these strategies into their practice is developed and implemented.

4. A mechanism for ensuring the continued and consistent utilization of these strategies is in place.

These four steps are basic to our profession's change system. While this change system may exist in other contexts, it is unique in our profession. It is unique to our profession in the sense that it is ours. It is unique in the sense that it belongs to us. It is a system that is decentralized. It is a system for which no one agency, organization, institution, or individual has responsibility.

Who Is Responsible

An examination of one of our profession's change tasks sheds some light on the responsibility issue. The major techniques available for communicating and enabling librarians to incorporate new strategies into their practice are continuing education and staff development. Yet continuing education and staff development are our profession's foster children. They have no permanent home in our profession. They spend their lives moving from one temporary residence to another, finding a momentary resting place in this library school, or that state library, in this section of a professional association, or in that library.

Every aspect of our profession admits that it has some responsibility for continuing education. Library schools, professional associations, state libraries, employers and librarians all admit that they have some responsibility for continuing education. Yet none of these components of our profession will admit to having continuing education as its primary purpose. Each of these components, however, can, when asked, tell you who does have primary responsibility for continuing education, and it is always someone other than the component to which you are speaking.

Given the current environment, it is unlikely that any of the agencies mentioned above will adopt continuing education and staff development as its primary responsibility. Given the nature of the change system and its elements, it is also unlikely that any one agency could incorporate all of the skills, competencies, and interests needed to ensure that meaningful and lasting change occurs in the profession. This does not doom librarianship to being a profession in which change does not occur. It simply means that when we stop talking about change and settle down to doing it, we must own the limitations of our profession's change system. The major limitation of the profession's change system is that no one is in charge. This means that those individuals who would initiate change in the profession must pay particular attention to the change tasks outlined above. These same individuals must also remember that it does not matter so much who does each of the tasks. What matters is that the tasks are done. Without attention to all four of them meaningful and lasting change is not likely to occur.

Who Will Change

Another aspect of change that the profession is reluctant to discuss is *who* will change. When change is called for, it is usually called for in sweeping, profession-wide terms. It is usually phrased in terms of "us" and "them." The speaker calling for change and the audience hearing him or her becomes the "us." The remainder of the profession becomes the "them." An interesting variation on this theme is the profession's reliance on "new blood" to produce the change it requires.

At least three major documents have been issued during the past two years which call for sweeping change in the profession. These documents are "The Statement of the Decade of the Librarian 1990-2000" produced by the American Library Association as part of its strategic planning process; *Information 2000: Library and Information Services for the 21st Century*, the summary report of the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services; and "Strategic Vision for Professional Librarians," a document produced by the Strategic Visions Steering Committee. Like the articles in this issue, these documents all call for sweeping professional change and tie change to professional survival. An examination of the major strategies of these documents to produce change is illuminating. In all three cases, the recruitment of a new type of individual to the profession is a key strategy. In all three cases, continuing education and staff development receive some mention, but only in a minor way. These three documents suggest that in order for the profession to change, "new blood" must be introduced into it. While this is a useful secondary strategy, it is doomed to failure as a primary strategy.[10]

The new recruit strategy also implies some interesting assumptions about the majority of us who are currently working in the profession. It implies that the profession's leadership has largely written us off. It implies that those who are concerned about professional survival feel that the best chance for this survival rests with a "new" few instead of with those of us who are already here.

Terminus

These fears of the profession's leadership, the ones regarding the reluctance of the vast majority of us to change, are not unfounded. There are those of us who will not change. There are, however, those of us who will.

Librarianship is a hierarchical and bureaucratic profession. It is a profession with a place for everything and a profession that prefers everything in its place. The major barrier to change in our profession is not resistance to it. The major barrier to change in our profession is that change has no place in it. No single agency or institution whose primary focus is change exists in our profession. As the "Maryland Model" case study shows, when change occurs it occurs through the involvement of several elements of our profession. It occurs through the efforts, visions, and work of several individuals who may never meet, who may never know each other.

Our profession's change system requires the networking of a variety of individuals, agencies, and resources. It requires that attention be paid to the change process and to the tasks that are required to ensure lasting and significant change. It requires our moving as individuals and as coalitions across the traditional institutional and attitudinal boundaries of our profession. It requires our coming together to talk about a change and our coming together to begin working for a change.

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The Power to Restructure:
Meeting the Challenge of Change for School Media Coordinators

by Lynda B. Fowler

For many years I have kept a file labeled "Media Profession — Thoughts On." The file contains scribbled notes of my thoughts, quotations from articles and speeches, and complete articles that have particular meaning for me as a school library media professional. Recently, as I surveyed the contents of this file, I found that all the items address the issue of change in education and how the library media profession relates to change and the restructuring process. My collection suggests that school library media coordinators have not been influential in this change process. It is frightening to realize that our profession is almost nonexistent in what is perhaps the most exciting and revolutionary time in modern education.

A headline from *DSMS Update*, a newsletter published by the Division of School Media Specialists, AECT, reads "Media Specialists in Jeopardy?"[1] This article notes that Michigan's revision of accreditation standards shall not include specific language delineating the need for school library media specialists in any school in Michigan. Daniel Barron, in an article from *School Library Activities Monthly*, asks is our "program perceived to be essential to the daily operation of the school and the realization of its mission?"[2] A quote from Kenneth Haycock reads: "There is relatively little danger to the continued existence of school libraries. The issue is the continued existence of the school librarian."[3] Again Haycock, in a keynote address to a conference of the International Association of School Librarians, notes that few administrators, teachers, or students view the school library media center as part of the instructional process.[4]

Several of my own musings in the folder ask questions about the perception of school library media coordinators. One question was generated after a discussion about several high tech schools in Minnesota. After hearing about the advanced technology, exploratory learning, and other strategies used in the schools, I was told that the school librarians play little or no role in this exciting and productive instructional situation. My question was and is, "Why and how did this happen?" What message does this send to the administrators, teachers, and other visitors to these highly successful and innovative schools? Another why-and-how-did-this-happen question was recorded after reading about Chris Whittle's plan to design for-profit, technical, state-of-the-art schools. His planning committee of highly-regarded, very influential people does not include a library, media, or information specialist. Are we to believe that state-of-the-art schools can be created and can exist without the contributions of these professionals?

In 1991, another handwritten note acknowledged the loss of seven district-level library media supervisor positions across North Carolina. The same note continues: "How many school library media coordinator positions were added with Basic Education Program funds?" Checking with the Division of Media and Technology, I found that very few BEP support positions were used for media coordinators. I also discovered that of these positions used for media, the majority were added to give schools minimal library media services or to supplant locally-funded positions. Only a few of these positions were used to increase library media services to students and teachers. Currently very few schools in North Carolina meet the BEP standard of one library media coordinator for every four hundred students.

A review of major educational reforms, beginning with *A Nation At Risk* in 1983, demonstrates how educators, politicians, and business and industry leaders perceive the school library media center. Very little, if any, reference is made to the school library media program or school library media coordinator in any of these documents. We have all read about effective schools, school-based management, and other reform and restructuring efforts in the past several years. How many references have you seen to the school library media center—even when the writings involve information literacy? How did we allow ourselves and our profession to become so lacking in influence and so non-essential that articles can be written about the information age and the need for students to learn how to use information and not mention the library media center or the library media coordinator?

During a period in which the public is demanding substantial educational reform and local administrators are responding to these demands, we must accept the fact that our profession is not having a significant impact on educational reform. We must decide what we can do to change in order to be worthy contributors to the reform process and, in turn, gain respect for our profession. We must realize that as education undertakes the improvement, restructuring process, we cannot sit idly by. We must be well prepared and willing to meet the challenge of reform. We must be able to define, defend, and prove our willingness to be a part of and to make a difference in all the issues involved in the process.

... our profession is almost non-existent in what is perhaps the most exciting and revolutionary time in modern education.

A crisis is defined as "an unstable or

crucial time or state of affairs whose outcome will make a decisive difference for better or worse."[5] Indications are that school librarianship is in a state of crisis. We have the power to determine if the crisis is to have a positive or negative outcome. That power lies in our willingness to acknowledge and examine our present status, to determine the factors that have contributed to this crucial situation, and to make a commitment to change.

A review of the literature combined with my personal thoughts leads me to propose that much of our present situation can be attributed to a lack of the following: positive image, distinct role clarification, strong partnerships with other educators, viable planning and assessment components in our programs, and direct identity with national, state, and local educational reform initiatives.

Our ***image***, a battle the profession has addressed for years, is one reason we find ourselves in an unstable time. We are often faced with negative perceptions. The possible reason for the problematic image comes from the fact that few teachers and administrators understand the "library" parts of our work and tend to associate a single image of keeper of books with the job title, even when we demonstrate many skills beyond that role. Placing sole responsibility on uninformed outsiders is no longer an acceptable excuse for the image problem of school library media coordinators. Research conducted by Kenneth Tewel and Carol Kroll " supports the perception that library media specialists still consistently place higher value on the managerial aspects of their jobs than on the cooperative planning and teaching function."[6] What message are we sending to members of the school community when we place primary importance on the functions of organization, management, acquisition, and dissemination? Granted, the managerial tasks are important to an efficient program, but do we hide behind the familiar and comfortable parts of our jobs? Do we use these tasks as a way to avoid the less comfortable and less concrete and more demanding aspects of our responsibilities? Are we deceiving ourselves by thinking we are real contributors to our school's mission by performing organizational tasks day in and day out? Do our daily routines reinforce the perceived image of book keeper?

Are we viewed by our principal or supervisor as someone always available because we don't have responsibility for a class; as someone to provide a planning time for teachers; as a teacher of "library skills"? Does the superintendent vow that school library media centers are essential, but fail to include us on curriculum committees, reform committees, or other important improvement task forces? Are decisions made about resources without consulting the very person trained in resource selection? Are reading lists formulated without our input? When these and other all-too-familiar events occur, we should stop and ask why. The real answer might lie both in our perceived image and our unwillingness to participate.

Daniel Barron, in an article entitled "Research and the National Goals" quotes from Patsy Perritt and Kathleen Heim. They conclude that "Personal skills seem to be the strongest predictor of success."[7] In the same article Barron quotes from Kenneth Haycock's *Research about Teaching and Learning through the School's Library Resource Center*: "School library media specialists who are less cautious and more extroverted tend to be more successful."[8] In order to be successful, each of us must assume responsibility for improving our personal skills. We can no longer sit back and complain. We must ask ourselves if our image is an obstacle in promoting a new view of the school library media center and of the library media coordinator, and then seek ways to create assertively an image that extends beyond that of the keeper of books.

Lack of ***role clarification*** leaves us unsure of who we are, how to act, and what to do. For the past several years we have been faced with changes in the educational process in addition to the changes in librarianship. We have been asked to deal with computers, the use and production of multimedia, distance learning by satellite, online searching and other forms of telecommunications, electronic reference sources, whole-language instruction, school-based management, interdisciplinary units, cooperative learning, etc., etc. Some of us have tried to address all of the initiatives and extended ourselves too far. Others have retreated because we knew we couldn't do and be all things. Only a few have been able to examine the initiatives, establish priorities, consider management of professional time, eliminate some practices, and continue to have a progressive and effective library media program.

For role clarification, our focus must be on *Information Power*. Our mission is "to insure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information."[9] We accomplish this by providing intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats; by providing instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas; by working with other educators to design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students; and by fulfilling our roles as information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant.[10] The more we become involved in change and reform, the more relevant and useful and powerful this document becomes. The initial reading of *Information Power* may have left you with a need for more specific information, more numbers and statistics, and clearer guidelines. We now find, upon close examination, that *Information Power* is an indispensable guide in helping us focus on the important issues of library media programs and reform and put our responsibilities in perspective with the roles we must perform as library media coordinators and as members of the school faculty. Linda Waddle, a school library media specialist, suggests, "Those who reject the roles recommended in *Information Power* no longer belong in the school library media profession."[11] A profound and perhaps unsettling statement, but one that each of us should examine closely. We should question our personal beliefs concerning our roles as information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant and determine if our acceptance level of these roles qualifies us for membership in the school library media profession. We can decide to take charge of clearly defining our roles and demonstrating, through our every action, these roles to students, faculty, and administration.

A clear, concise role definition will lead to a better understanding of our position within the instructional process. Tewel and Kroll conclude that

> before media specialists can function in a teaching role, they must be involved in the curriculum. But before that can happen, the media specialist must have a self-image of,and be viewed by others, as being an integral part of the instructional process. Simply stated, school library media specialists must perceive themselves as full-fledged faculty members before change can take place.[12]

A thorough knowledge of the curriculum, of research on various teaching strategies, of resource-based instruction, and of other instructional issues is essential to being an integral part of the instructional process.

Direct involvement with instruction is also essential. Daniel Barron classifies involvement of library media coordinators into two categories: "Passive means that the media specialist maintains a warehouse, waiting for someone to come by. Active means that the media specialist goes out to find out what people want and need, locates materials, then helps people to use them."[13] Why have we chosen to be passive and reactive in the instructional

process? Nothing in our training and background has given us the right or privilege to be on the sidelines of instructional decisions. How can researchers Tewel and Kroll be "shocked to discover that few of the media specialists surveyed wrote or spoke of integrating the library media program into the curriculum of the school"?[14] Our positions within a school cannot be justified if we are not an integral part of the instructional process. Our integrity should not allow us to be seen as non-contributors with little connection to the whole. Marilyn Miller contends that, "The survival of library media specialists as a viable part of the instructional system depends on their developing programs and services that become learning intensive."[15] Under close examination, do our programs and services meet this criterion?

The revision of the North Carolina public school curriculum, in progress, offers library media coordinators an excellent opportunity to become fully entrenched in the instructional process. The revised curriculum is more focused on process, employs more critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and requires more exploratory learning. According to the findings of Kathleen Carver, "a library offers a natural setting to employ critical thinking skills with students" and "serves as an excellent lab for applying various methods and techniques of critical thinking instruction."[16] The past indicates that we have not fulfilled our role in the instructional process. If we are to expect a positive outcome from the present, we must be prepared to assist teachers in implementing this new curriculum. David Loertscher's *Taxonomies of a School Media Program* is a helpful tool for accomplishing this task. Knowing and understanding his eleven levels of instructional involvement should be on the priority list of every library media coordinator; and, functioning at the interactive level should be a major goal.[17]

Knowledge of the curriculum and direct involvement in instruction must be teamed with the establishment of ***strong partnerships*** in order to develop an effective library media program. The lack of strong partnerships has led to misunderstanding about our role within the school and has lessened the support needed from teachers and administration. Michael Bell and Herman Totten conclude that

> Library media professionals must take steps to understand better how the characteristics of teachers, library media specialist, and the organization itself interact to facilitate or hinder cooperation between the library media center and the classroom. A better understanding of these factors should result in library media specialists who work with other school staff to make a richer contribution to the instructional program of the school.[18]

Have we studied our organizational structure and the characteristics of the staff well enough to determine how we can best establish and develop strong working relationships with teachers? What conditions do we establish that encourage teachers to form partnerships with us? What positive results can teachers recognize as a result of their partnership with us? Research indicates that more cooperation, less isolation, more intellectual sharing and collegial work arrangements are common elements in effective schools.[19] Would our programs be rated effective if evaluated on these criteria?

Tewel and Kroll also found that there exists

> a series of common institution impediments to improved relationships between media specialists and others in the school. These include the media specialists' lack of awareness of the school's educational program and of their role as curriculum specialists, their infrequent contact with classroom teachers, and their defensiveness about the importance of the library media program.[20]

Are we willing to accept the challenge of demonstrating the importance of our program rather than talking about it? Miller believes that "The school library media center program that moves into the mainstream of the instructional program in the coming years will focus on knowledge of how learners learn and the development of teaching partnerships with classroom teachers."[21] How strong and productive are our partnerships with teachers? Can successful teaching occur without us?

A ***strong planning and assessment component*** is missing from many of our programs. We cannot respond to accountability issues without this component. *Learning Connections: Guidelines for Media and Technology Programs* stresses the importance of planning and assessment and provides direction for the development of this component. It states that

> Although assessment is an important means of measuring effectiveness, it also provides the impetus for planning the services and functions necessary for media and technology programs to strengthen the overall program of the school. To cope with the climate of change related to school reform, a systematic means of program design and evaluation is needed. Planning and assessment are essential to school improvement because they provide the framework for translating the mission of the school into desired outcomes.[22]

Are systematic planning and evaluation part of our yearly routine? Have we identified the best model to use for our program planning and assessment? A mission statement, combined with the goals and objectives that drive our program, is an essential prevention against operating on a whatever-comes-our-way basis. Our plans should be substantive and relate directly to the school and system-level plans. We, along with our administrators, should use our plan and assessment information as a legitimate evaluation instrument and make future plans based on the results. We must be truly accountable for our program within the context of our school mission.

Many of us experience difficulty in articulating a ***direct identity with national, state, and local school goals and reform initiatives***. In an article entitled "The National Goals Revisited" Daniel Barron encourages us to "develop strategies and activities to show how we fit into the national goals and how schools cannot meet them without us."[23] Barron includes a copy of the position paper prepared by the American Association of School Librarians on how the national goals can be implemented through school library media programs and he encourages each state, district, and school to formulate a similar statement.

Specific requirements come with all educational reform models. Have you identified how you and your library media program can support your school and school system in meeting the requirements of School Improvement/Senate Bill 2? Are you aware of opportunities and responsibilities in reaching the goals of the school and school system? We must not only be able to identify, but also articulate how and demonstrate what we do daily, weekly, and yearly in support of these goals and requirements. Perhaps a standard question to ask before undertaking a task is, "How does this relate to the school goals?" Whatever we do in support of school and system-level goals will be a positive move toward ensuring that the outcome of our crisis is positive.

School-based management is a reform agenda item that cannot be ignored by library media professionals. An ERIC search conducted by Daniel Barron found five hundred citations on school-based man-

agement and not one included reference to school libraries with the exception of one article that he had written.[24] Barron encourages us to investigate

> what school-based management means in terms of how we can be more effective participants, what some of the potential benefits and dangers to our programs are, what the challenges may be, and some resources to help us and our school begin the process of school-based management.[25]

Why do the references not mention library media centers and coordinators? Perhaps the developers and researchers were influenced by our long-standing image or perhaps we were too passive during the development. Whatever the answer, we must be active participants in the process by becoming informed, by providing resources to the administration and faculty, and by ensuring that our program is perceived as an essential element of the school. A true school-based management model gives a school the right to make personnel decisions. When your school reaches that degree of management, will it elect to maintain the library media coordinator position?

Most schools are embracing resource-based teaching as a means to meet goals dealing with increased student achievement. Teachers are encouraged to teach the curriculum, not the textbook, using a variety of resources and multiple instructional methods. According to Loertscher, requirements for successful resource-based teaching are

> a teacher who is willing to use a wide variety of media, a well-stocked library media center, and a professional library media specialist who is willing to be a partner with the teacher in lesson/unit/research planning. The library media specialist serves as the materials and technology expert, the teacher serves as the content expert, and both draw upon the resources of the center to execute a joint teaching plan.[26]

This implies that there is an available collection of various media formats directly related to the curriculum.

Collection development is an area of our responsibility with which we should be very comfortable. We learned about it in our professional training and it still remains a top priority, basically unchanged by developments in education reform. Yet, many of our collections cannot support true resource-based instruction. If there were no textbooks, how much of the curriculum could be taught with our present collections? Lack of funds is not an acceptable excuse. We must examine how well we expend the funds we do receive and what level of impact we have on the total school budget. Do we keep teachers and administrators informed; do we prepare lesson or unit resource bibliographies for teachers; do we prepare lists of evaluated materials that support the curriculum to share with faculty as possible purchases? More importantly, we need to understand the concept of resource-based instruction and assist and support teachers as they adapt. Do our professional shelves have books and articles on the topic? Do we share information and offer support to teachers and the administration? Successful resource-based teaching depends on quality resources and strong support from the library media program.

These and other causes contribute to the present status of school librarianship; but we can no longer use them as excuses. We must be willing to accept our position, overcome the fear of doing the unfamiliar, and commit to a different agenda. The 1990s is the decade of change in education. The components of change and restructuring provide library media coordinators with a window of opportunity to restructure our roles and our image. At no other time in education have we had so much power to change and influence. Whether we do may not only affect our position within the educational process, but our very existence. The power and choice to restructure are ours.

Change is not easy. It requires total commitment, hard work, time, and an acceptance that what we have always done may not be what we need to do in the future. You don't have to be sick to get better is a phrase we hear frequently in discussions about change. An exemplary library media program in the 1980s will not be appropriate for the 1990s. Whether our programs have been rated excellent, fair, or poor, we all need to re-examine what we are doing and prepare for change.

Following the publication of *Information Power* in 1988 and the headline-making emphasis on educational structure and reform, there have been many articles and books have been written on what and how library media coordinators can and should do. And yet this emphasis has not produced an overall change in library media programs. According to Barbara Stripling this will not occur until each of us decides

> to make a commitment to change a functioning library media program . . . We can be encouraged by the fact that none of us is responsible for changing any program but our own. The summed effect of individual changes will engender change on the (local, state) and national level.[27]

Each library media coordinator's actions make a difference in the profession as a whole. We cannot depend on other coordinators to attack our individual crisis. Each of us must make a total commitment to accept the challenge of change and restructure our individual image and our roles if we are to expect a positive future for the school library media program and school library media coordinator.

Just as school-based management extends the right and responsibility for improvement to an individual school, the right and responsibility for program improvement lie with the individual library media coordinator. An individual school is held accountable to the school system and to the state. We are held accountable to the school and to our profession.

How we approach restructuring is an individual decision. However, the following are offered as suggestions for all of us to consider as a beginning:

- Reread and internalize *Information Power*
- Identify and read research on the school media program and use the information to guide practices
- Be informed about and involved in school improvement initiatives
- Prepare for and accept change.
- Read and study the following:
  Curriculum Initiative: An Agenda and Strategy for Library Media Program, by Michael B. Eisenberg and Robert E. Berkowitz (Ablex Publishing, 1988)
  Helping Teachers Teach, by Philip Turner (Libraries Unlimited, 1988)
  The School Library Program in the Curriculum, by Kenneth Haycock (Libraries Unlimited, 1990)
  Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program, by David Loertscher (Libraries Unlimited, 1988)
- Prepare meaningful plans that are undeniably linked to student learning following the guidelines in *Learning Connections*
- Write a Professional Development Plan that reflects efforts for substantial change
- Act quickly but thoughtfully
- Reach out to others for assistance
- Approach the process with a smile, knowing that you are doing something for your profession, but more importantly that you are contributing to the mission and goals of your school and school system and in turn making a difference for boys and girls.

In "Rethinking the School Library: A Practitioner's Perspective" Barbara Stripling states that the "mandate for change is from society. The power for change is in the individual."[28] As school library media coordinators, we possess the power to restructure our image, our role, and our program. Whether or not we choose to be a valuable part of the change process in our school is up to us. Ralph L. Peterson in *A Place for Caring and Celebration: The School Media Center* tells us that the "media center and what happens in it and how it happens is a reflection of you. You are the person in charge and what results is representative of your spirit, imagination, and ability."[29] Others will not solve the crisis issues in school librarianship; only we can determine if the outcomes will be negative or positive. The power to change is ours. Will we accept the challenge? Will I soon add an item to my "Media Profession — Thoughts On" file that reads "North Carolina Media Coordinators in Jeopardy?" or will I add a headline that reads "North Carolina Media Coordinators Are Making a Difference!"?

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Encountering the Twenty-First Century:

Libraries, Reference Departments, Reference Librarians

by Kenneth W. Berger, B. Ilene Nelson, and Johannah Sherrer

[Focus on the future: the library, the reference department, and yourself, the reference librarian. Ken Berger gives a glimpse of the environment in which we will be working. Johannah Sherrer offers practical suggestions for moving a reference department from the status quo to status quo ante. Ilene Nelson describes the qualities that will enable individual librarians to make the transition.]

It is the year 2010. After attending classes, our typical college student returns to her room. She turns on her computer. The first thing she checks is her e-mail, finding that someone in her Psychology 102 study group has called a meeting for the next morning. She replies that she will be there. Next she calls up the list of assignments and updates it with new ones she has just been given that day. Then she gets to work, starting with her reserve readings. She calls them up, one by one; marks and saves important passages; and prints out a complicated item for later review.

One of her assignments is to write a paper on the history of computers in education. Not knowing much about the topic, she calls up an encyclopedia article for background, while using an online dictionary for help with unknown terms. At the same time she uses an outline program to sketch out her paper. Having decided on the focus of her paper, she searches for books on the topic, and, after narrowing down to a few likely titles, scans them for relevant passages. She inserts these into her paper, with the program automatically including appropriate footnotes. (Two books were not available online, so she checks for and reserves the copy in her college library and requests that interlibrary loan get the other one for her.) In order to make sure her information is up-to-date, she also finds magazine and newspaper articles, again selecting the passages she will use.

After fleshing out her paper, she sees that there is still some information she is unable to locate. Online help is not satisfactory, so she sends a message to the Reference Department describing her need. She receives an acknowledgment and a promise to get back to her with further information; also a suggestion that it might be necessary for her to meet with a librarian for additional assistance.

Another assignment is to work on one of Anne Tyler's books. She needs to see the original manuscript, which she locates in the library. She decides to go to the library to use the materials before dinner.

After dinner she begins her final assignment, viewing the movie "Citizen Kane." She watches the movie on two thirds of her computer screen, while scanning a written commentary on the bottom third. Before going to bed she checks for electronic messages; finds a response from the library; checks her bank balance; and (finding her funds low) sends a short note to her parents. Finally, she orders a birthday gift for her sister, and schedules a flight home for the holidays.

She turns out the lights. The computer plays a soft sonata as they both drift off to sleep.

The preceding scenario paints a picture of an information environment very different from the one in which we operate today. It is characterized by an information user acting largely on her own, independent of library staff, independent of the library building, for most of her "library" needs. Yet, even in this environment, the librarian has a role.

And lest someone be left with the impression that we have almost twenty years to prepare for these changes, consider the following scenario, which is already being played out daily:

It is Tuesday, and once again Mr. Johnson is not going into the office, but he is not taking the day off from work. After breakfast with his family, he goes to his computer and checks his mail. He has received messages from his office, from his broker, from two clients (one in another country), and his daughter, a college student. Since his daughter mentions that she is low on funds, he checks his bank balance, makes a transfer to her account, and sends her a message telling about the transaction. His broker has suggested that he sell one security and buy another; he calls up market quotes and recent articles about the two companies. Then, deciding the broker's advice is sound, he sends a message to her authorizing the trades.

Next he directs his attention to the customer communications. One is concerned that recent federal legislation might affect a contract between the two companies. He checks for reports about the legislation, even retrieves a copy of the law, and then sends a message to the company legal staff to look into the matter. Another asks that their scheduled meeting in Paris next month be moved up a week, so, after checking his online appointment calendar, he connects to an airline scheduling service and makes the change.

He updates his calendar with the changes his office has sent him. The most pressing matter at the com-

pany is a marketing report, which he immediately gets to work on. In the process of writing the report, he is able to have software check his spelling and grammar, verify definitions of words, and locate appropriate quotations to accentuate his prose. When he needs market information, statistics, illustrative charts or tables, relevant articles or background information, he either checks through one of his data-base services or his CD-ROM collection. And when he does run into an information roadblock, he sends the question to his company librarian.

It is reasonable to expect that in only a decade or two users will seldom come into the library building. If they do, it will be for assistance with special problems; use of casual/recreational reading (primarily in paper format) and audio-visual/multi-media materials and equipment; access for those who lack appropriate equipment and/or expertise; contact with people; and instruction, group and individual (though some will be done via remote access or off-site visits). There are four developments which are creating this reality: availability of full-text books and articles in digital format; powerful and inexpensive computer equipment; reliable and cost-effective communications networks; and simple and intuitive searching and retrieval software.

First, publishers are beginning to see an environment where electronic access is financially beneficial. The increasingly high cost of publishing, as well as diminishing library (and personal!) acquisitions budgets are making alternative forms of distribution very attractive. Many book and journal publishers are already requesting that authors submit their manuscripts on floppy disk.

Second, faster computers with more memory, and with better monitors are becoming available at a rate that measures obsolescence in months rather than years. Within a decade or two the quality of the equipment will be such that a user will have no qualms about doing the majority of his or her reading with one. Lowered costs are also making the improving equipment available to more and more end users. While there will always be some who are not able make the purchases (but who will still need library services), the statistics on the proliferation of personal computers speak for themselves.

Third, communications systems capable of delivering the data to the end user reliably and inexpensively are already in place. Many universities, colleges, and companies have or are installing dedicated networks which allow both internal and external communications. INTERNET provides international communications between users and access to databases. Librarians are, of course, familiar with the access we have to vendors like Dialog and BRS, but end users also have other options for acquiring various kinds of useful information. A literal world of information and services — weather reports, stock market data, home shopping, encyclopedia, games, electronic mail, magazine articles, computer software, etc. — is available through systems like Compuserve, Prodigy, Genie, and America Online. These systems are aimed at the unsophisticated searcher, and their millions of subscribers point to the success of marketing and service. The widespread use of these services (recognized even by Dialog and BRS) clearly demonstrates that end users are capable of searching for themselves, and that they are also willing to pay directly for the convenience. The library is being effectively cut out of the information access process. Searching costs will become even more attractive as the number of users increases, and as assessments are more directly tied to the information user. (Once again, however, there will always be those who cannot afford to take on these costs, and their needs will probably have to be met by libraries.)

Fourth, we can see the creation of simple and intuitive (i.e., user friendly) searching and retrieval software, imperative if users are to be able to obtain most of their information electronically. Having the data at your fingertips is of no use if you don't know which keys to press or (mouse!) buttons to push to get at that data. And, once again, Compuserve, Prodigy, Genie and America Online are showing that we can provide this capability. Advanced technologies and techniques (e.g., cluster and vector analysis) will be used to index materials, making it possible to search efficiently and successfully through the large databases which will be available.

And here we come to the crux of the issue for librarians. What will the impact be of easy access, all from the comfort of one's home, to much more information and many more publications than any library could ever dream of owning? If users are able to successfully identify and retrieve the information they want, what is the role of the librarian?

Is it time to circle the wagons? Should we prepare to protect our jobs from the slings and arrows of outrageous computerization? Hardly. Yet, to assume that our role as information providers is going to remain the same is delusional. Access to information is changing dramatically and private for-profit companies are marketing these changes to an eager public. Even the smallest of libraries will find it necessary to re-envision reference services.

Librarians speculate about future roles and functions, often not realizing that the time is now. As has already been suggested, there are several fundamental trends that seem destined to impact the delivery of information:

- An increase in remote users
- An increase in end user databases
- An increasing demand for document delivery.

It is imperative that reference departments begin to alter both the structures and the mechanisms used to provide information. We cannot wait for a grand plan to run its course through ALA committees nor can we wait for the appropriate time and money to be allocated through local channels. As we hope for guidance that may never come, the challenge of keeping pace with change becomes increasingly difficult.

There are several excuses one hears repeatedly about why progress or creative change cannot go forward. These excuses, or myths, are often the reasons that librarians feel the profession is in crisis.

MYTH:
We are too over-committed to institute new services.

Do not accept the excuse that the current workload is so overwhelming that there is neither time nor energy to try something new. That line could well be a swan song. Department heads who find themselves consistently using this excuse should seriously consider resigning their management positions.

New projects or activities, even small ones, must be implemented. Talk and discussion are good only if they lead to concrete results and ultimately to the completion of those projects. Adherence to a schedule is also critical. Projects that misfire are not necessarily wastes of time or money but rather experiences from which the most is learned. There are several rules of thumb for getting projects off the ground:

- Don't talk an idea to death; give it a chance to evolve in the actual practice of the concept or project.
- Be prepared to make modifications as you go along. Appoint a project manager to oversee progress and be responsible for point of need decisions.
- Let actual circumstances determine the outcome rather than trying to achieve perfection.
- Accomplishing even the smallest of

new tasks will be invigorating and prepare the way for new directions in reference services.

MYTH:
New services require additional funding.

Do not wait for special funding to begin projects. Reallocate funding from within traditional budget lines. Change and new approaches are so much a part of what libraries are about that it is counterproductive to put new ideas on hold while waiting for ideal budgetary conditions. It is important to lobby local administrators continually for funding to effect changes in reference service. That may well mean sacrificing accepted funding patterns for new ones. In many libraries, it means hard lobbying for new budgeting practices or at the very least contriving creative definitions that ease square pegs into the more traditional round budgeting holes. We cannot allow ourselves to willingly accept budgeting conditions that restrict progress. If all a department head does is continually remind administrators that the existing budget structure must be modified, an important initial step will have been taken. A lesson in rhetorical technique can be taken from the great Roman orator Cato, who never missed an opportunity to drive home his point that Rome was in danger from neighboring Carthage. Regardless of the subject of his speeches, he ended them all with "And furthermore it is my opinion that Carthage must be destroyed." Eventually, and within Cato's lifetime, Rome destroyed Carthage.

In the Reference Department at Perkins Library we believe that if we were to wait for additional funding to materialize we would be waiting a very long time. So, we regularly enter into bargaining sessions with library administrators. In past years, we have used up to twenty-five percent of the budget slated for print reference sources for electronic sources. In other years, we have traded travel money for equipment purchases. More importantly we have found that in many cases money isn't the issue and simple solutions with minor costs can result from creative brainstorming sessions. For example, rather than waiting for the campus network to be in place before addressing the issue of serving remote users, we purchased a shareware bulletin board software called RBBS-PC to institute a twenty-four-hour electronic reference and interlibrary loan service. It was neither fancy nor sophisticated, but it allowed us an opportunity to begin interacting with patrons in a new medium.

Two years ago we determined that an additional online searching station was needed at the reference desk. The most expensive part of this new station was an additional phone line which was not approved by the library administration. In place at that time were two incoming lines and one outgoing line. After a brief investigation we learned that for less than fifty dollars we could transfer the outside line to a phone jack and thereby establish a second searching station. This was not an easy decision. In order to continue to accommodate reference queries via phone we implemented voice mail to handle calls when the remaining phone lines were in use.

MYTH:
We know what our users want or need.

While dazzling to users, the speed, ease, and glitziness of modern information access is often perplexing and challenging to traditional information providers. This dichotomy can prompt a variety of responses by librarians. Phrases such as "patrons will use the tools wrong" or "users are not technically literate enough to use expensive tools to their full advantage" are often heard. In this information age people are able to be more independent in obtaining information to solve problems. For many librarians, this poses a concern that can, unintentionally, lead to a form of censorship. While ostensibly attempting to justify the cost of new nonprint sources with a review of the product, librarians often look for reasons not to purchase rather than focusing on a unique or innovative feature of the product which makes it worth its price. It is also at this point that the subject of user needs is interjected, sometimes without actual user input. It is even more worrisome when patron input is requested, received, and then rejected.

... there is no place in our profession for any but courageous, creative librarians who are not only willing to embrace change but to anticipate it.

The ultimate decision to accept, reject, or, indeed, place any kind of value on information has always been in the hands of the user. We do not want to deny patrons the option of consulting a librarian, but it should not be a requirement. Our point of intervention or involvement in the information-seeking process is changing. Attempting to define this new role in isolation from users will doom our efforts. We must allow users more freedom, and we must be careful in our presumptions concerning user needs and user behavior.

MYTH:
Established staffing patterns and staff skill levels prohibit the implementation of new services.

Now is the time to take a long hard look at existing job descriptions. Job descriptions can and should be changed to adapt to new job requirements. Often through staff training or simple staff development sessions new experts can be found within the existing staff. All that is needed is patience and the willingness to allow the individuals involved the freedom to make mistakes. This process also provides an opportunity for reassessing existing activities in terms of reducing, streamlining, or perhaps entirely eliminating established functions.

The evolution of truly user friendly information systems is going to impact staffing decisions. Many general products such as InfoTrac actually serve, in a sense, as additional staff members. They offer broadly based reference service along the same lines as student assistants or less precisely trained staff, plus they are available more than forty hours a week and have less down time than their human counterparts. It seems very likely that technology is going to allow users to be better and more quickly served in the future and with fewer human resources.

Now is the time to objectively investigate reference positions. Department heads should seize opportunities as they arise through normal staffing attrition. In the Perkins reference department we have two programs in place that utilize short-term employment positions creatively. For many years the Reference Department has had an internship program that brings in two library science graduate students for twenty hours a week each for a period of one year. The pay back for all the training and supervision a program of this caliber requires includes a direct connection to library education and curriculum, an op-

portunity to work extensively with individuals new to the profession, and the challenge of rethinking local practices when inconsistencies are brought to our attention by new staff members. Yet, the nature of this program still clearly puts us in the driver's seat. We are the teachers. So the question remains as to how to challenge a stable, extremely talented, opinionated, and somewhat independent group of professionals.

An initial opportunity presented itself when one our staff members requested and was granted a leave of absence for one year. Rather than filling the position locally, we decided to seek a visiting librarian, currently employed elsewhere, to work with us for a nine month period. We wanted the person to secure a leave of absence from his home institution and to have no reason to wish to ingratiate himself into the Duke structure. For this first visiting position we sought an individual willing to work with each member of the department on upgrading individual basic microcomputer and searching skills. We also identified several projects involving a technological application that we wished to explore.

This concept was so successful that when normal staff attrition made it possible to keep the visiting position we did so rather than seek another long term employee. The advantages of bringing in an experienced, creative individual, willing to challenge existing local practices can be exhausting and exhilarating at the same time. It provides an opportunity to change group dynamics in a way that the internship program cannot and, in tandem with that program, it provides our group with a wide range of talents and abilities that change yearly. The overall effects of the visiting position are many. Each visiting librarian has brought a new point of view and has provided us with an opportunity to refocus our thinking on reference services. In addition to their professional expertise, they interject a new personality, a fresh perspective, and provide an opportunity for new collegial collaboration.

For 1992/93 we are seeking a faculty member from a Library School to work with us. Our job advertisement states: "We are seeking a colleague who wants to challenge the traditional roles and functions of reference services and work with us in envisioning and creating reference service for the research library of the twenty-first century. We want a person eager to investigate rapid document delivery, electronic journals, full text sources, online searching, and the use of a burgeoning array of other technological resources. We seek a risk-taker, a person who chooses to actively participate in a changing profession . . . we offer an opportunity to put theory into practice while challenging traditional assumptions." In fact, this is a statement of what each department member strives to attain. We are progressing at our own individual rates, but we are progressing!

The key to successfully meeting the future rests in each staff member's attitude or approach to his/her career. All other considerations aside, the ultimate success of the library and its departments in meeting organizational goals, and in meeting the present and future challenge, depends upon the quality of the contribution of each staff member. A creative, self-directed, approach to job performance will eventually determine the success of the individual, the department and the library itself.

In his book entitled *The Courage to Create*, Rollo May describes "creative courage":

> This brings us to the most important kind of courage of all. Whereas moral courage is the righting of wrongs, creative courage, in contrast, is the discovering of new forms, new symbols, new patterns on which a new society can be built. Every profession can and does require some creative courage. In our day scores of [professions] are in the midst of radical change and require courageous persons to appreciate and direct this change. The need for creative courage is in direct proportion to the degree of change the profession is undergoing.[1]

At this juncture there is no place in our profession for any but courageous, creative librarians who are not only willing to embrace change but to anticipate it. As the old sixties' slogan goes, "You're either part of the solution or part of the problem."[2]

But what is a creative librarian? We generally think about creativity as a quality manifested by visual artists, musicians, scientists, and inventors. However, the essence of creativity as defined by Rollo May and others is this ability to see and establish new patterns. Far from being limited to an association with a "product," creativity can be viewed easily in terms of problem-solving. So, everyone who works, everyone who is involved in problem-solving activity operates within the context of creative potential.

How creatively each of us solves problems depends upon the manner in which we use the information available in a particular situation. According to Edward de Bono we process information both vertically and laterally. Vertical thinking, the more common of the two, is high probability thought. "Vertical thinking follows the most obvious line, proceeding straight up or down."[3] ("I've heard this question before"; "This is the way we've always done it.") In contrast, lateral thinking explores "all the different ways of looking at something, rather than accepting the most promising and proceeding from that."[4] ("What if . . ."; "Let's pretend. . . .") Lateral and vertical thought are complementary. "Lateral thinking generates the ideas, and vertical thinking develops them."[5] We all have the ability to think both vertically and laterally. However, most of us have to train ourselves to think laterally. It is essential that we do so because the key to releasing creative potential seems to be in giving lateral thought initial precedence in problem-solving.

Creative problem-solving reflects the action of imagination, a fluency of ideas, curiosity, originality, flexibility, independence, persistence, drive and courage, sensitivity, a feeling of being challenged (rather than confused) by disorder, and an ability to both synthesize and abstract. These qualities have always distinguished outstanding librarians; these qualities must typify librarians as we approach the twenty-first century. Dale Shaffer has applied the characteristics of creativity specifically to librarianship, and I have further adapted them to reference librarians.

Imaginative thinking goes beyond the obvious boundaries of a problem and permits a fresh examination of what may initially seem to be an all too familiar situation.[6] When viewed imaginatively, a problem or question ceases to be a wall which must be surmounted and becomes a maze through which to pass, a puzzle containing the key to its own solution. Imaginative thinking drives creative librarians to reallign the library's departmental functions to more effectively parallel new patterns of ownership, access, and use. Imaginative thinking frees librarians to reassign funds traditionally spent for print sources in order to purchase online searching time.

"***Idea fluency*** is the ability to generate a large number of ideas and alternative solutions rapidly. Fluency also refers to the ability to take continuous advantage of a developing situation; to use each completed step as a fresh vantage point from which to plan the next move."[7] Every reference librarian demonstrates this skill while answering questions. As we approach the year 2010, it is idea fluency that will also permit us to assume a larger role as facilitators, helping patrons navigate through newly created channels of information.

Questioning ability goes beyond "getting the facts" or negotiating the reference question. This quality refers to an insatiable curiosity; a willingness to answer a question just because it's there.[8] Taking a broader view, this questioning ability is what motivates creative librarians to re-evaluate continuously their own effectiveness; the quality of the resources they use; and the validity of the policies under which they are operating. We must model ourselves after George Bernard Shaw who said, "It is an instinct with me personally to attack every idea which has been full-grown for ten years, especially if it claims to be the foundation of all human society."[9] We should probably question every idea which has been full-grown for more than three years, particularly if it claims to be an essential premise of our profession. If we are to have a professional role in the year 2010, we must question our narrow definition of reference service and expand our purview to encompass activities such as negotiating access fees for users and designing information databases.

Originality describes the ability to answer questions or solve problems in a unique or unusual manner.[10] The creative librarian sees questions initially in terms of the desired outcome rather than the manner in which the out-come will be achieved. This is a subtle yet significant point: the focus must be on the goal and not on any limitations that might prevent reaching it. We are more likely to find ways of adding new services in the face of stagnant or decreasing budgets if we are committed to the necessity of the services and not intimidated by the lack of money.

The ***ability to synthesize***[11] refers to recognition of potential; bringing disparate elements together in harmony. When we are solving problems creatively, all of the available pieces of information sort themselves out in the subconscious into new patterns. The more connections we can make, the more potential solutions we will have. For the librarian of 2010, synthesis will be essential to assembling and maintaining the ever expanding atlas of the information world.

Related to synthesis is the ***ability to abstract***. "This trait is one of proficiency at breaking down a problem or project into its component parts and comprehending the specific relationships among them."[12] Abstraction enables the creative librarian to examine the elements of a problem separately rather than as a single opaque mass. The librarian of 2010 will use abstract thought in the process of repackaging information for users.

Flexibility, in the context of librarianship, is the "[recognition] that there are many ways of interpreting the same situation. It means being willing to consider a wide variety of approaches to a problem...Creative flexibility is largely a matter of attitude.[13] "In the year 2010 the reference librarian will be operating at a much higher level of information command and will of necessity be technologically and computer literate, ready to travel, physically or through electronic communications. Flexibility will underlie every consideration of information acquisition and distribution.

Research indicates that there is a relationship between ***independence of judgment*** and originality.[14] As technological developments generate new means of accessing and displaying information, creative librarians are willing to be first in exploring applications and products. The pace of change is so rapid that we cannot afford to wait for standards to be written or for the experience of others to be reported in the literature. We must assume a proactive role, anticipating both the needs of our constituents and the means of satisfying them. We must end professional apartheid and attend the conferences and meetings our constituents sponsor or that are held by organizations which influence our libraries. We must also redefine professional reading to include journals that keep us abreast of broader societal trends relating to information delivery.

Finally, in order to solve problems creatively we must be able to feel ***challenged rather than confused by disorder.***[15] Ours is a profession which pursues order in a chaotic world. Reference librarians particularly are more likely to offer valuable assistance and achieve personal fulfillment by embracing disorder rather than trying to banish or ignore it. It is virtually impossible to create new patterns without first unraveling the old ones. When the qualities we have been discussing are in play, this follows quite naturally. In the year 2010, despite technological advances, it will still be difficult for many individuals to manage the constantly shifting base of information available to them. Professionals whose specialty is change will be welcome in this environment.

Creativity is an attitude, a habit of mind. It is independent of place or type of library or size of staff or budget. It is an approach to problem-solving to which we must re-commit ourselves daily. It is vertical thought with its logical pattern-recognition that comes naturally. We have to choose creativity. A creative approach to problem-solving energizes, brings freedom from an assortment of fears and worries and presents change as a condition to welcome rather than a crisis to be endured. Pogo's well-known statement "We has met the enemy, and it is us"[16] is very wise. We are information professionals in an information age. There are unlimited possibilities available to us if we but have the courage to be creative. If we cling to a traditional definition of our profession, we are doomed to extinction. If we seek a professional role attuned to a changing society, we will find opportunity.

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[11] Ibid., 19.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 18.

[14] Ibid., 19.

[15] Ibid., 20.

[16] Walt Kelly, *Pogo.*

Libraries: No Longer Free of Fee

by Kenneth Marks

A historic myth has pervaded American public librarianship during the twentieth century. The myth is that any member of U.S. society should have free and equal access to the library and, by definition, the resources that have been assembled. Although this has been the premise espoused most often by public librarians, it has also found considerable support among academic librarians and school librarians. Any discussion of the issue of fees for library services and collections inevitably focuses on the pros and cons of the debate. This article will briefly identify some of the arguments on each side. Of more importance from a pragmatic point of view, the question of how to determine the amount of the charge will be addressed.

This philosophical commitment to free access to information became the focus of a substantial debate beginning in the 1970s with the advent of online database searching. While there were earlier incidents (the widespread introduction of the photocopy machine) that raised the question of "free" access, online database searching became the battleground. Over the years, libraries imposed charges and fees in a variety of circumstances, including fines, book rental charges, room rental fees, film rentals, and interlibrary loan charges. These levies elicited little opposition and were accepted by the user population.

The sudden availability of online databases with their alleged advantages over the traditional means of accessing information presented libraries with a new set of challenges. The principle challenge was how to finance this new service without compromising existing library services. The typical reaction among libraries of all types was to institute a schedule of charges that would be applied to any person wishing to utilize the new technology.

Reactions among librarians from every type of library were swift in surfacing and persist to this day. There has, in fact, been no resolution of the philosophical differences identified by the protagonists in this debate. The literature is replete with exhaustive discussions of both sides of the issue. "Careful scrutiny of the literature on the fees issue reveals a recurrence of arguments or points scored on either side." According to Harry M. Kibirige, "Some are significant and others facile."[1]

Arguments Against *Charging Fees for Information*

Some of the significant points advanced include the following:

1. The American tradition of free library services is damaged by charging fees.
2. Users are double charged, first by taxes for running public services and then by charges for special services.
3. Before one can charge one must have a sound basis for charging. It is argued that methods of evaluating information are still primitive.
4. Charging fees causes inequalities vis-a-vis the users, for only those who can pay may use special services. This negates the equal access to education ethic.
5. Acquisition of materials will begin to be geared to those who can pay.

Arguments for *Charging Fees for Information*

Equally justifiable points have been presented for fees as follows:

1. The tradition of selling services to those who can pay is part of the American culture.
2. Subscription libraries as well as rental collections are well known features in American library history.
3. Users pay for other public utilities like bridges, highways, museums, and parks.
4. Fees will allow development of special services which would not otherwise be provided, like online bibliographic searches.
5. Users do not seriously object to charges for services which are vital to them.
6. If fees are not collected, some of the costly services would be abused and thus become a drain on the budget.

Additional justifications for instituting fees for service have been identified by Barbara Smith.[2] They include:

- Fees encourage efficient use of public resources.
- Fees limit waste and over-consumption.
- Fees promote service levels based on need and demand.
- Fees control growth of and lower demand for service.
- Fees encourage management improvements.
- The tradition of charging for services is part of the American culture.

The following arguments for fees are related to funding issues.

- Escalating service costs make user fees a necessity.
- Without fees, public and academic libraries could not serve the larger community or nonresidents.
- Fees cover only a small portion of the total costs of service provision.
- Fees encourage a better understanding of the financial limitations of the local government.
- In the face of funding cuts and escalating expenses, particularly telecommunications, the costs of providing online services impose a serious burden on an already strained library budget.

One or two of the arguments for and against deserve further exploration. There is the issue of "free" library service and determining exactly what it means. Does "free" mean without cost, or is the term a replacement for the word "equal"? Even before the advent of online database searching, many libraries had begun to levy charges for a variety of services or situations. Had overdue fines or room rentals made library service less free? Many library clients would

have said "no." An essential question that many librarians choose to ignore consciously or subconsciously relates to the matter of what library service is supposed to be. Does library service include the acquisition of books and journals, their storage and circulation? What about additional non-traditional materials, videotapes, audio tapes, laser disks, CDs, computer programs being included in library service? If reference assistance is part of library service, is it the traditional assistance that uses print sources, or does it include the newer technologically based resources? Until there is an accepted description of "basic" library service, it is difficult to address in a coherent fashion the issue of what should be "free" and what should be available for a fee.

The contention is presented that library fees result in a double charging for some library clients. As a person who pays taxes regularly for these community services, how can I legitimately be charged again for an activity that is an integral part of a library's functions? Is it not reasonable to think "that tax support obliges the public library to provide all of its services on an equal basis, free of charge? A failure to fund its total operation from tax revenues will, in the long run, have the effect of weakening public support for libraries."[3] A quandary exists, however, when public support will not fund even a minimally acceptable level of library service. At this point, is it appropriate to charge for selected library services, or should the services be abandoned so that no one can have access or use?

The side favoring fees may suggest that throughout American history services have been sold. This has enabled new and expensive services to enter the marketplace where they can be tested by user demand. If there is sufficient demand, then prices will fall and alternatives will be developed that will permit the extension of the service at ever-diminishing rates. Fees will minimize the tendency for clients to abuse the availability of new and attractive services. Rather than work through the process of delimiting an online search, many patrons will opt for a surfeit of citations or other data. The fact that a large percentage of the results are irrelevant to their specific needs or only minimally useful is discounted in the light of being able to use a hitherto unavailable resource.

Ignoring the legitimacy of both sides of the debate over fees, librarians have had to address the pragmatic needs of their organizations. The result has been a persistent and widespread move to utilize fees to augment the financial resources available to libraries. Type of library is an irrelevant factor in determining whether fees will be levied. According to Alice Sizer Warner, "An increasing number of libraries in not-for-profit institutions are charging fees"[4]:

- At least 75% of association libraries now have fee schedules in response to persistent requests by nonmembers for information service. Some charge members as well.
- At least one library school has contracted with a government agency to manage, for a fee, the agency's regional library.
- Increasing numbers of public libraries do research for a fee as an alternative to regular reference service. Minneapolis Public Library has done this for years, with its goal to recover the salaries of staffers in the fee-based service plus 35% to pay for their benefits. Cost of space is not recovered.
- Among university fee-based services, the University of Wisconsin/Madison library's is one of the oldest. In 1964 — long before online searching existed — the library got 539 requests for information; in 1986, UW/Madison got 20,000 requests and the number continues to rise. Purdue University Libraries offers a two-tier fee structure. Indiana residents pay $40 an hour (billable in 15-minute increments) plus librarians' out-of-pocket costs. Non-Indiana clients pay $80 an hour plus out-of-pocket expenses.

Robinson reports that "in a 1987 survey done by the American Library Association it was found that forty-one percent of public libraries charged for rental of books and thirty percent charged for videos. Of course, there are scores of other charges made for different services or classes of materials. In any event, it seems very, very clear that the tradition of charging small fees for some materials or services is both historically honored and widespread in public libraries in this country."[5]

The overriding pragmatic reality for librarians, however, is not whether it is philosophically appropriate to charge, but whether it is legal for them to levy fees. Special librarians may have the easiest time in resolving this question. Being part of a profit-making organization results in only one solution: fees will be levied or charges passed on. It is increasingly common for special libraries to be expected to recover a significant portion or all of their operating costs.

Libraries in the not-for-profit sector may face a different set of circumstances. Before proceeding to institute a fee structure, there is a need to ascertain whether charges can be legally adopted. There may be existing state statutes or municipal ordinances that dictate what a public library may or may not be able to do. The unfortunate reality is that many of these laws are so ambiguous that an unequivocal answer cannot be found. The only option may be to ask an appropriately empowered attorney at the city or state level to provide an interpretation. What will be delivered is an opinion, nothing more. A definitive assessment can only be delivered through a judicial opinion or, more unlikely, through a clarification by the relevant legislative body. Academic libraries should consult their institutional attorney to determine if instituting fees will compromise the non-profit status of the college or university. There may be no threat to the non-profit status if it can be clearly demonstrated that only costs are being recovered through the charges.

At the risk of stereotyping the profession, it can be asserted that librarians as a group tend to be uncomfortable when it comes to dealing with money. Personal finances are not in question at this point; rather the discomfort is associated with attaching a value to the work we do and the services that we deliver to our clientele. Perhaps one of the reasons that libraries are not valued is due to our inability to establish a value for our own activities.

The reason librarians may find setting values for their work and/or service difficult is due to a lack of training and preparation for engaging in that type of activity. There seems to be a mind set supporting the concept that, because we are dependent upon the public largess, we should be silent and satisfied with the allotted portion of resources, regardless of how small, that is doled to us. Librarians must acquire the skills that permit them to analyze the costs of their various activities, services, and programs. Librarians must acquire the capacity to make the very difficult decisions about ending programs, services, subscriptions, and units if new ones are to be initiated when there are limited resources. Librarians must stop believing they can be all things to all peoples or that

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they have a moral obligation to make the effort. In the process of attempting to be all things and deliver all services, too often the result is second-rate service that deprives the library's clientele of real quality.

If it has been determined that there is no legislative prohibition regarding fees, the question becomes how to proceed. Librarians are advised to proceed cautiously to introduce fees for any services that are offered. It seems apparent that librarians have failed, too often, to consider fully the implications of what they want to do. A simple checklist may help clarify some of the uncertainty.

1. What is the library's mission and will it encompass the proposed action?
2. What are the library's goals and objectives and will they encompass the proposed action?
3. What client groups will be affected by the proposed action?
4. What are the labor costs associated with the proposed action?
5. What are the equipment costs associated with the proposed action?
6. What are the miscellaneous costs associated with the proposed action?
7. What new systems will be required by the proposed action?
8. What productivity gains will be realized among library personnel by the proposed action?
9. What is the basis for concluding that the proposed action cannot be funded from existing budgetary resources?
10. What existing service or function is being used so little that it can be replaced by the proposed action?

The first two questions may be the easiest to answer. If there are no legal prohibitions, the answer is dependent on the library's interpretation of its mission, goals, and objectives. The third question is more complex because it requires a careful delineation of the library's client population. Most libraries have a core client population that can be identified with minimum difficulty. The problems arise with the clients at the margin, such as those who do not live within the legal jurisdiction of the public library but who work within the jurisdiction or those who are alumnae of a college or university but are no longer enrolled or employed by the institution. The library administration may believe in one response, but the parent institution may dictate another relationship. Once all of the possible client groups have been identified, how will charges be levied? Do some clients receive preferential treatment, or is everyone charged the same rate?

Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 require a variety of information that many libraries are unable to provide. Does the library have the hourly cost for every staff member readily at hand? Does that cost include all of the benefits or should that be factored into the equation? The non-profit nature of most libraries prevents them from amortizing the cost of equipment. As a result, libraries have tended to ignore the cost implications of equipment and supplies as the effort is made to determine the true cost of an activity. Finally, what is the cost of the technological services that we receive from outside vendors? Can it be demonstrated that all the alternatives in the marketplace have been fully explored so that the library is receiving the most competitively priced option?

Librarians typically have had little training to enable them to determine the cost of existing library services. Librarians should assume they will be called upon to explain how much it costs to buy a book or catalog a journal (generally, they can), and how much it costs to answer a reference question, circulate a book, or house a volume annually in the library (generally, they can not). As the costing of library services and functions is established, then librarians can move to the next project. Establishing performance measures and applying them is as crucial as determining costs. Librarians seem to be reluctant to establish performance measures for fear that the measures would indicate that there are more effective ways to accomplish a goal. Until there are measures of performance, however, it is nearly impossible to predict the impact that new technologies or services will have on the library.

Questions 8 and 9 raise troublesome issues, for these are topics that most librarians are ill-equipped to answer. Can it be demonstrated that the addition of a new service or technology will change the way in which work or client assistance is provided, with a subsequent improvement in the amount of work done or the number of patrons assisted? Can it be demonstrated that the proposed service or technology cannot be funded from within existing budgetary resources? How often have each of us heard the refrain that a particular item cannot be funded from a budget, but the next day another item, piece of equipment, or service suddenly can be supported? Did the library unexpectedly acquire additional funding, or did the item originally requested fall outside the established view of what is acceptable budgetarily?

It is intriguing that libraries have been willing to commit enormous sums of money to installing and utilizing new technologies and services in the "back rooms" of technical services, but less eager to put them into public areas. It may be that the traditional technical services have been more amenable to cost-benefit analysis than the public services areas, but the advent of electronic technologies facilitates the collection of data related to improved or enhanced job performance. If a similar investment in the public services segment of the library had occurred, would the question of fees for database searching or video rental even have been raised? As interesting as it might be to speculate, the answer is essentially irrelevant today. It is clear that librarians must analyze their own library's operation, especially the public services, so they will have the information necessary for making effective decisions regarding fees.

Perhaps one of the reasons that libraries are not valued is due to our inability to establish a value for our own activities.

If there is a fault with many libraries, it is an overwhelming conservatism when it comes to experimenting with new services or new technologies that might directly enhance service to the public. Librarians are reluctant to take the lead in testing promising or intriguing new technologies. They have demonstrated by conscious action or inaction that exploration and experimentation is the province of the private sector, not the public sector; and as a result, library clients have been systematically short-changed when it comes to realizing the full benefits of new technologies .

Question 10 is the most potentially damaging because libraries never abandon any service once it has been offered. What library regularly conducts any type of market survey to determine whether its existing services are being used by an acceptable number of patrons? What library regularly surveys its clientele to identify services they would find helpful? What is common practice among members of the for-profit sector is uncommon practice among libraries. In all fairness, it can be alleged that librarians are not trained to perform these types of analyses and questioning. The response might appropriately be, why not?

Librarians are instilled with the belief they are public servants prepared to respond to the needs of their clientele. Train-

ing to be a librarian tends to prepare individuals to be reactive rather than proactive in responding to established clientele. There is little, if any, education, training, or other preparation that prepares librarians to address the challenges of being in what is essentially and fundamentally a service business. The emphasis in the previous sentence is on both "service" and "business. " Until there is appropriate training and education, librarians will be unprepared to face the task of identifying the changes in patrons' needs for information.

When the appropriate analyses have been conducted and the critical decisions made, how is the calculation made so that fees can be fixed? Sometimes other libraries are contacted to learn what their fee structures are. Another approach is to examine some of the relevant bills related to the service that the library has received. There is often a suspicion that figures have been picked out of the air and have no relevance to the actual costs being incurred. If the imposition of fees is to be successful, this suspicion must be avoided at all costs. The impression can be avoided if librarians can demonstrate that they know in a fiscal sense the cost of the service or resource and its comparative value within the larger library environment.

Once the data are collected in answer to the checklist, then four critical questions can be addressed.[6]

1. Will there be a charge?
2. Who will be charged?
   a. Equal
   b. Some groups lower
   c. Some groups higher
3. What costs will be covered by the charges?
   a. Labor/staff time
   b. Computer services: connect time and print charges
   c. Other costs: equipment, supplies, etc.
4. How can an efficient charging system be operated?
   a. Communications
   b. Collection

The answer to the first critical question will be dependent upon an understanding of the legal environment, an objective assessment of client needs, and an evaluation of the costs that the library is currently incurring and potentially could incur with the new service. The answer to this question must be based upon a dispassionate consideration of all factors from the checklist presented earlier. Becoming emotionally involved to the point that the final decision is swayed by personal preference is the worst thing that can be done.

If the answer to question one is "yes, there should be a fee imposed," the next critical issue is "who will pay?" Will all library patrons be susceptible to the levy? Will only those patrons who are not within the library's legal jurisdiction be charged ? Will only those patrons with exceptional needs or demands, however defined, be liable for the fee? Careful delineation of the patrons to whom the fees apply must occur. Seek outside counsel from a variety of perspectives who will challenge the assumptions that are being used to make this decision. Too often, librarians are reluctant to confront the hidden biases as they wrestle with this issue.

The resolution of the third critical question requires at least a minimal understanding of the idea of cost recovery and the variations that are possible. There are three variations to cost recovery that can be considered: " full cost pricing; variable cost pricing; and 'free' pricing. Full cost pricing involves charging the user a price that reflects all of the costs associated with the provision of the service. These costs include the variable costs of labor, materials and specific user-chargeable fees (such as photocopy charges, postage, online search costs, and so on), as well as some pre-determined amount in fixed costs (management costs, depreciation, heat, lighting, and so on).... Variable cost pricing involves setting a price solely on the variable costs of labor, materials and specific user-chargeable fees such as photocopy charges, postage, online search costs, and so on...."[7] 'Free' pricing means that no charge is passed on to the client, the library absorbs all the related costs.

Whichever variation is adopted, be absolutely certain that all concerned in the decision making process clearly understand the cost components on which the fee will be based. The worst situation that could develop is one in which there is the perception that the fee is "making money" for the library. Be prepared to detail the specific costs that have been identified as attributable to the activity or service. Each of us may have our own opinion of "bean-counters," but this is one place where their involvement may be essential in preventing recriminations at a later date.

If, after answering the first three questions, there is still a positive decision to levy fees, there are a series of issues that focus on how the system will collect those charges in order to operate. How will the decision to impose fees be publicized? Who will be responsible for the publicity? How much lead-time will be required before the fees can be applied? Who will handle the collection of moneys? Where will be charges be levied, and where will payment be received? Will the fee have to be paid at the time the work is done or is billing permitted? If billing is allowed, what will happen to recover funds owed when bills are unpaid? Who will balance the funds received against the charges made to the library? What equipment will be necessary to provide some security for the funds received? Will cash registers be needed, a safe purchased? It is conceivable that the cost of operating the charging system will be large enough to make the service unworkable. Many of these issues and questions may be dismissed as unnecessary trivia or bureaucratic nit-picking. If these details are not resolved before fees are imposed, however, it can be extremely embarrassing to all involved to have to answer then extemporaneously during the course of providing service to the public.

As much as we may prefer that the debate over fees for service disappear from librarianship, it is unlikely that any of us will be so fortunate. Librarians are faced with intractable problems revolving around the increased cost of providing library and information collections and services at a time when the pool of available resources is shrinking. Solving the continued demand for expanded and enhanced services is going to be increasingly traumatic for most librarians. Being prepared to conduct the necessary analyses and evaluations is a prerequisite to insuring that the "correct" decision can be made. If there is a goal that should be held before all of us, it is to seek every possible way to avoid imposing fees even if it means abandoning activities that have traditionally been considered part of the core of librarianship.

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The For-Profit Syndrome: Will Libraries Be Next?

by Alice Wilkins

"How many rabid raccoons have you caught?" An eye-catching advertisement in the business section (page 10C) of the Raleigh *News & Observer* for Saturday, June 13, 1992 goes on to answer the question and to offer information services. "In 1991, there were eight rabid raccoons captured in North Carolina. How do we know? With thousands of sources at our disposal, we can get you the facts and information you need." This sounds like an aggressive, savvy, modern public library, marketing the skills of its trained, experienced reference staff. On the contrary, a call to the number given reveals that I have reached PISYS (pronounced "pie-sis") Information Quest, a division of the *News & Observer* Publishing Company, housed in the *News & Observer* building and making use of Raleigh the *News & Observer* News Research Department, formerly known as the *News & Observer* Library.

The name PISYS is an acronym derived from personal information system. PISYS IQ manager, Denise Henry, was hired in the fall of 1991 to head this new fee-based information service which began operations in November. Because business is still growing, Denise spends a portion of her time marketing the service, preparing brochures, and targeting potential customers — law firms, businesses, lobbyists, political campaigns, or anyone who finds the service valuable enough to pay the sixty-five dollars per hour fee (plus costs). Minimum fee is one hour. Denise, a trained librarian with an MLS, related a brief history of the Library/News Research Department. Originally established as a resource for journalists on the staff, the department would occasionally provide copies of *The News & Observer* articles for five dollars. Added to a staff of two professional librarians and approximately fifteen full-time and part-time staff members, Denise was recruited to exploit the library's resources for profit. As she states, "Management's concept was, we have all these resources here — let's see if we can take advantage of them."

"Sounds like Lockheed's DIALOG story!" I rejoindered. Denise agreed.

In-house libraries of corporate firms have come to be viewed as part of the overhead cost of operation, and if these departments can make their services cost-effective by marketing them, all the better for the economic health of the organization. Denise spends a lot of her time online, and she does not synthesize the material or write reports: "That's the work of my clients. My job is to find the information and turn it over to them."

The trend to for-profit information, however, is not all fun and games. Librarians who have heard the term "information brokers" are not always sure who these people are, what they do, or if their existence is good or bad for the library profession.

Our social institutions are experiencing a trend toward privatization. In the foreword to *Marketplace Medicine: the Rise of the For-Profit Hospital Chains*, Dave Lindorff states

> As the social experiments of the 1960s and 1970s and even the limited government provision of human services have been assailed by the conservative critics of the 1980s and 1990s, many sectors of American society have turned to privatization. Today we see prisons run under contract to public authorities by the private sector, sanitation work increasingly performed by private companies, private security services supplementing or replacing police protection, and even adoption services, once the virtual monopoly of public and voluntary social agencies, now facilitated on a profit-making basis by physicians and lawyers. It is therefore not surprising that hospital care should also be increasingly dominated by the private, profit-making sector.[1]

What about libraries? In recent years, book and equipment budget cuts, staff reductions, and curtailment of hours and services have shaken the foundations of libraries. Faced with an uncertain future, library personnel experience frustration, fear, and anger as part of the regular challenge of problem solving. Professional organizations respond with conferences and workshops on supportive themes. With no sarcasm intended, I wonder to what extent sitting around and talking about our financial woes is like the slogan, "When the going gets tough, the tough send out for pizza!" What are libraries doing about ***making*** money as well as ***spending*** it?

A search through *Library Literature* reveals that the subject heading "Fees for library service" appears for the first time in the 1972-73 volume. The prior, broader heading "Fines, fees, etc." hadn't appeared until the 1952-54 volume. Most of the articles from 1952 to 1972 on charging fines for overdue materials leaned toward the negative under the guiding principle that libraries should be free. Librarians also agonized over whether or not research libraries should charge usage fees to outsiders. The advent of fees for services unleashed a new rash of articles decrying the trend: "The end of free library service is at hand!"[2] Having made its debut in the early seventies (concurrent with the advent of online computer searches), the issue of charging for library expertise has subsequently received the same type of discussion and concern as the library fines issue. Though struggling to keep the principle of free libraries intact, librarians have

gradually acknowledged that, as the information system changes, libraries have to change with it, and accept the fact that some services, if offered, will have to be paid for by the patron. The alternative is not to offer those services, and to become an anachronism in the fast-changing information profession.

The term "Information brokers" first appears in *Library Literature* in 1981, narrowed from "Information services" and related terms. Isn't this simply a new term for someone paid to provide information? The profession of librarian has always been closely related to that of researcher, but somehow the term "researcher" has a less avaricious connotation than "information broker."

Can the library profession accept information brokers as colleagues who work with us and beside us? Who are they? What are they doing? Are they "horning in" on our territory? Can we look at their business tactics in a positive way to see what we can borrow for our own organizations?

In the yellow pages of the Raleigh telephone book, I found two listings under "Information Processing & Retrieval Systems & Services." I called the first one listed:

> InfoAmerica, Inc. — Business Intelligence Gathering, Information Retrieval & Enhancement, Research, Indexing, Consulting, Database Design, Data Entry, Competitive Information Market/ Consumer Data, Database Search, Publications Search, Abstracts, Facts and Statistics, Lists.

The cordial voice of Karen King answered the telephone, and she was very willing to answer my questions and discuss her work. Karen's varied background includes teaching high school, serving as an elementary school librarian ("under duress" — she does not hold an MLS), and as a director of marketing for several companies.

Karen explained that InfoAmerica has been in existence for eighteen months, that she is salaried and works up to seventy hours per week, that sixty percent of her work is related to surveys contracted by corporations, and that she depends heavily on libraries and librarians. Fees for services are forty-two dollars an hour plus costs.

Karen prefers to call herself an information specialist rather than an information broker, comparing the latter to the term "head hunter" as opposed to "recruiter." Did she think library training would enhance her skills? "No, my work is more related to my training in marketing and in my writing skills." However, she is considering taking a course taught by Dr. Evelyn Daniel at UNC-Chapel Hill on the Marketing of Information and Library Services.

In a later conversation, Dr. Daniel herself was very reassuring that librarians should not feel uncomfortable about information brokering, noting that *The News & Observer's* information provision service is "another example of collaborative effort in our community." She commented that the trend to networking is replacing the isolation of libraries, that the primary clients of libraries are other libraries seeking information, that information sources are no longer hierarchical but horizontal, and that any opportunities for direct access to information should be extended and enhanced. The marketing of such services as CompuServe directly to home customers or Lonesome Doc directly to health professionals should not be regarded as depriving librarians of their livelihood, but as an opportunity for consumers of information to have greater access. "These people will come to the librarians when they need help." Dr. Daniel further commented that information brokering is another skill and even a potential career opportunity for persons with library training.

Karen does not see her work as conflicting with libraries as so much of it is "enhancing and synthesizing" the information she obtains from libraries, making use of her writing and interpretation skills rather than the information retrieval skills of librarians. When appropriate, Karen's firm employs research assistants who have library training and expertise. "I would never think of asking a librarian to do my work for me, or imposing on their time," she stated emphatically.

Denise Henry also does not consider her work to be in competition with libraries. "Most people cannot afford our service, and I refer people all day long to other libraries who have the same databases. We know where to look; businesses come out ahead by hiring an expert who can save time rather than sending someone who will stumble around the library."

How can we translate this trend towards for-profit information to our traditional organizations? To what extent would we want to set up competing services within our own walls? In what ways are we already subsidizing our operations with usage fees, fines, photocopy charges, and book sales? In what ways can we increase such income to offset future administrative budget cuts?

According to Sue Rugge and Alfred Glossbrenner in their new book *The Information Broker's Handbook*,

> The breadth and scope of the information that exists on virtually any topic, person, or place today is simply staggering.... This, then, is the Information Age: an incredible amount of information on an infinite variety of topics readily available to virtually everyone. This is the realm in which every prospective information broker must make a living. It is a realm that needs an information broker's services because, while all of this information is indeed available, in reality, considerable skill and expertise is required to retrieve it.[3]

Rugge, who charted new territory when she founded her firm, Information on Demand, dislikes the term "information broker" ("one of the great misnomers of the age"[4]), but accepts it on the basis that this is the term the public has come to associate with the activity of fee-based information services. Rugge and Glossbrenner have again charted new territory by presenting a textbook in a field which has no acknowledged formal training other than the one-day seminars which Rugge has been offering for the past decade at locations throughout the United States.[5] *The Information Broker's Handbook* reads like a cross between a text for a library school reference course and a marketing textbook in a business school. It warns the reader that information brokering as an occupation is very hard work, financially risky, and it requires a curious, aggressive, and entrepreneuring

"Most people cannot afford our service, and I refer people all day long to other libraries who have the same databases. We know where to look; businesses come out ahead by hiring an expert who can save time rather than sending someone who will stumble around the library."

personality. It strongly advises the prospective broker to team up with someone else — one member of the team to do the information work, the other to market the service. Working alone, an information broker would have to spend at least half a day searching for potential customers.

Although the book is aimed at anyone who is interested in the field and stresses the fact that anyone who is willing to learn can do it, the authors acknowledge that "most successful practitioners today have a library background."[6] In answer to the question, "Are librarians competition for information brokers?", the authors answer "yes and no." They encourage the information broker to establish a positive relationship with "their colleagues on the other side of the reference desk" and even to use libraries who offer fee-based services as subcontractors:

> As budgets tighten, all libraries are looking for sources of additional funds. Accordingly, some libraries have begun to charge more for research services than simple pass-through database expenses. This could be considered a change for the better from an information broker's standpoint. For, if the library is making a profit on a search, it is difficult to see how anyone can complain if you employ these services in your own work. *By entering the profit-making arena*, the library and the librarians become, in effect, subcontractors."[7] (italics mine)

The authors regularly refer to the breadth and scope of information that exists on virtually any topic as the "Information Dragon." They point out that it is the skilled, seasoned information professional who will be the one who is chosen to slay this fire-breathing dragon! In the chapter entitled "The Market for Information," they state that the potential market for information and the services of an information consultant is huge. The categories of potential customers noted in this chapter are many and varied, including advertising firms, public relations firms, investors, job applicants, insurance agents, small companies which cannot afford in-house libraries, researchers, consultants, and stock brokers. The authors stress that the major difference between librarians and information brokers is that librarians do not market their skills and services: "No research librarian with a steady paycheck, benefits, and all the rest will ever have the motivation of an information broker who must make a sale to make the rent each month."[8]

Why not take that statement as a challenge? If the potential market for information brokerage is huge, why not establish a fee-based information department within the library? If part of the financial risk for an information broker is establishing an office containing expensive equipment (telephones with answering machines, fax machines, computers with modems) plus investing in information retrieval training, and these facilities already exist within libraries, why not give librarians an equipped office and let them work on the basis that their salary will be paid on a cost-recovery basis from the fees for information services? If the fact is that most information brokers are already trained librarians, let the trained librarians already working in libraries acquire marketing skills and promote their services via the library to the community. If an "Information Services Department" is able to generate income for the library, then this can help to build the library's resources, increase services, and enhance the library's status and viability within its service area. (Interestingly, Rugge and Glossbrenner exhort the prospective information broker to avoid the word librarian: "A word to the wise. You want the word `librarian' to stay as far away from this profession as possible — even if you happen to be one. It's nothing personal — some of our best friends and clients are librarians, and most successful information brokers are or once were card-carrying librarians. It is strictly a matter of image."[9]) Perhaps, just as sales clerks became sales associates and garbage collectors become sanitary engineers, it is time for librarians to call themselves information specialists!

The Information Broker's Handbook should be read by every reference librarian and every library director. It is a trailblazing guidebook to modernizing a profession that has become too dependent on subsidy, whether institutional or governmental. Libraries can pay their own way to a greater extent, and still remain free in many capacities. A fee-based information service department within the library would not interfere with the free services of lending books, providing reference resources, or the children's story hour that our patrons expect.

Rugge and Glossbrenner point out that ninety percent of their work is online and on the phone, and only ten percent is library research. Furthermore, they express surprise that more libraries are not already offering information brokering services. I believe that libraries must dip their toes into the waters of free enterprise. Agonizing over whether to charge a fine or increase fines sounds like the articles I noted in the 1950s volumes of *Library Literature*, but some of us are still doing it. "There is definitely money to be made. And there is a growing demand for professional information services."[10] If there is money to be made, let's make it ourselves!

We will all be watching with great interest as for-profit experiments progress to public schools, prisons, the welfare system, and (can we escape?) libraries. Let's learn what the for-profit libraries and information brokers are doing and see what we can apply from their marketplace methodology to our own operations. To become more profit-oriented and cost-effective, we will need administrators or governing boards who are willing to accept innovative funding concepts, willing to let librarians handle money, and willing to change some policies.

I once knew a professor who, each year, proudly justified his own salary by itemizing all of the cost-cutting ideas he thought of and recommended to the administration. I realized where the library figured in his estimation of our services when I found that he had calculated how much money the school could save if we stopped the publication of our monthly new books list. Fortunately, I was able to persuade the administration that our publication was sufficiently appreciated by students, faculty, and staff to warrant the cost of paper and preparation time. Today I might be tempted to respond by redesigning its appearance to a slick, attractive, desirable publication, and charging a subscription fee!

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[2] "The End of Free Library Service Is At Hand," *Sci-Tech News* 29 (October 1975): 98-99.

[3] Sue Rugge and Alfred Glossbrenner, *The Information Broker's Handbook* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Windcrest/McGraw Hill, 1992), 4, 6.

[4] Ibid, 15.

[5] Details on the seminars or on an Information Broker's Resource Kit can be obtained from: The Rugge Group, 2670 Mountain Gate Way, Oakland, CA 94611. (510) 530-3635 (voice) (510) 530-3325 (fax)

[6] Ibid, xviii.

[7] Ibid, 42.

[8] Ibid, 42.

[9] Ibid, 26.

[10] Ibid, xxiii.

The Crisis in Youth Services

by Satia Orange and Cal Shepard

There is, indeed, a crisis in librarianship, and, those of us providing library services to children and youth have seen it coming for years! One need not be a futurist to recognize the deteriorating status of an already "bottom of the heap" area of the library: children's service. And yet we hold the keys that can save libraries in the future!

Is Image the Problem?

On one hand, some of us see the crisis in terms of image. Children's librarians have traditionally had a poor image in the larger framework of library service. In 1956, Frances Clarke Sayers noted, "There is a certain condescension toward ... children's librarians in the profession."[1] This is still true in 1990: "Too often librarians working with children have been taken less seriously than those working in other areas of public libraries."[2] Stuck away in the basement, we timidly attend to our storyhours and bulletin boards. Don't ask us to learn the business of libraries — we are too busy arguing the merits of the latest Caldecott winner. We don't need to justify our budgets because "library service to youth is as American as mom and apple pie."[3] Yet recent developments are alarming even to the most sanguine children's professionals.

More and more paraprofessionals are "running" public library programs, schools are not-so-quietly upgrading reading specialists and discarding media coordinators, and youth services curricula are decreasing in availability in our remaining professional library schools. "Many children in this country simply do not have the services of a librarian available to them."[4] "In one (California school) district a solitary school librarian serves 8,511 students."[5]

Linda Hyde, a children's professional and middle manager at Forsyth County Public Library, sees the image controversy in another way. She asks how we see ourselves. Assuming that the power to move libraries into the 21st century remains with administration, Hyde cites the overwhelming numbers of North Carolina librarians in children's and youth services, and yet questions our strength. "We can no longer afford to be perceived as the 'extra' in library services, the 'frivolous' part."

If, indeed, image is our problem, what can we do to improve it? We need to get out of the basement and involve ourselves in the total library picture. "Successful children's librarians are skilled in organization, handling funds, and time management," states Hyde. "We must put our skills to work to fight for our needs. We must represent ourselves professionally to all (library) departments and participate in all aspects of planning." Capitalizing on the skills we already have and targeting what is within the realm of possibility for us to learn, we must expand our capabilities toward effective action for the sake of the total library profession. We need a new attitude toward reevaluation, re-education, and continued activism.

Rebecca Taylor, Youth Services Coordinator at the New Hanover County Public Library, documents statistics, accomplishments, needs, and observations in a detailed monthly report. She presents information in a manner that is usable by the library director and sends a powerful message at the same time. Taylor has learned "director-ese," impacting her staff's ability to solicit informed, targeted support from her administration.

"We can no longer afford to be perceived as the 'extra' in library services, the 'frivolous' part."

Olga Coneen, Children's Librarian at the Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) Public Library, educated herself about management issues and then utilized output measures and statistics (graphically demonstrating the high level of children's usage in her library) to get herself appointed a member of the library management team. As such, she has the power to be an advocate for her patrons in discussions of library policies and budgets. She is in a position to chart the course of her department and library rather than just going along for the ride.

Libraries are at a crossroads and children's and youth services are at the tail end of the train. Although how we as professionals are perceived, and how we perceive ourselves can dramatically affect our service delivery style, image is still not the real key.

What is Our Service Philosophy?

Many within the profession, along with directors and trustees, see two opposing philosophies of library services to children and youth. Some want us to keep our feet on solid ground and retain our book orientation, while others exhort us to cast away our buns and horn-rimmed glasses and take off on the flight to automated service delivery.

We are in the middle of an automation revolution surrounded by computers, on-line services, and CD-ROMs. Many of our library schools have added the phrase "and Information Services" to their names. Resources and materials for all ages are increasingly available in non-traditional formats. How does this revolution affect toddler and preschool storyhours? What does it have to do with the newest Caldecott winner? Where does juvenile fiction fall in the lineup of priorities? ***What impact does automation have on the traditional library needs of the young?*** Do we, in fact, have opposing teams of children's and youth professionals —

book oriented versus the "new stuff?"

Some of us see the key to solving the crisis as an automated "joyride." The lure of technology is powerful. Libraries are automating at a rapid pace, and we don't want to be left behind. Youth service professionals are dazzled and fighting for their share of the megabytes. On-line catalogs and public access computers are in place in some children's areas, with some libraries featuring their own computer room. Some public libraries include CD-ROMs for their children's departments, and youth have access to on-line services. More and more schools are using on-line services, with middle and high schools accessing more curriculum databases.

Blindly adhering to either books or technology is a no-win proposition both for librarians and the public we serve.

On the other hand, there are the contemporary traditionalists who provide on-line catalogs of library holdings, are literate in wordprocessing and desk top publishing, but don't consider automated resources to be in their realm of possibility. The print resources are the old tried-and-true way; they work well, and stay well within budgetary constraints.

Which philosophy is correct? The answer is neither. Both are needed if we are to make sure that the children and youth themselves are not the forgotten factor in the 2lst century equation. Yes, the automation blitz is affecting our budgets and our missions. "Rather than depend on sizeable new sums of money and legions of new staff, we must redirect precious resources. Library management will have to make delicate decisions regarding purchases, and library personnel will have to be channeled into new responsibilities."[6] "Even the most reasoned arguments must confront these dual realities: budgeting involves making choices; and choices reflect the chooser's values."[7] But there are success stories.

The gymnasium-size Youth Services area at the Columbus Metropolitan Library is the result of the Board of Trustees determining new building allocations based on circulation figures. The area features a wide range of traditional as well as state of the art service delivery areas for children and youth, with the latest technologies partnered with print materials. Deputy Director Rubye Kyles reports the same quality of services and programs to individual young patrons, with the addition of automated resources.

Cathy Collicutt, the media coordinator at Philo Middle School in Winston-Salem, finds that her students use the media center more often and more effectively now that she has an automated catalog *AND* online services.

Where Can We Go from Here?

It is possible to combine traditional service with the latest technology thus providing the best possible service to youth. Blindly adhering to either books or technology is a no-win proposition both for librarians and the public we serve. No single format will serve all the needs of today's library patrons. We must learn the skills necessary to manage the new technologies and integrate them with our traditional service approach.

We need to educate ourselves. We must become familiar, comfortable, and, where possible, linked into the technologies often already available in adult service areas in our libraries, so that we can expand our service expertise, resources, and capabilities in the youth areas.

We must empower ourselves through effective coalitions with other library professionals, our professional organizations and support groups, other agencies in our communities, and our government officials who control our dollars. This is especially true in the wake of the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, where the Youth Omnibus Bill was selected as the chief priority by the delegates. We need to

New technology creates excitement in the children's computer room at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Photo by Jean Johnson.

work together on the local, state, and national level to fight for the children's right to the highest quality library services.

What are the Keys to Solving our Crisis?

The keys to solving our true crisis in librarianship are the children and youth we serve today and those yet unborn. In transmitting both informational and cultural resources, we must make library resources available for every child in every school and public library. We must make sure the library environment for our young people is easily accessible, understandable, and relevant. We must use the best tools, from books to on-line services, to meet the needs of our constituents. Children's librarians must be informed of not only good mysteries or adventure books, but also of on-line networks or government documents if these will solve a child's informational need.

Children and youth are our number one priority and serving them is what children's librarians do best. We must remember this as we expand and enhance our skills to embrace the changing technology. We cannot forget books in our headlong rush into the next century, but neither can we ignore the automation revolution.

"The future is not 'out there' in the sense in which America was out there before Columbus went to discover it. The future is not predetermined, nor does it have prescribed boundaries and forms."[8] It is up to us to help shape the future, for ourselves, our patrons, and our libraries.

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[1] Frances Clarke Sayers, *Summoned by Books* (New York: Viking, 1965), 43.

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[4] GraceAnne A. DeCandido and Alan P. Mahony "Overworked and Underbudgeted: Staff and Funds for School Library Media Centers 1992, " *School Library Journal* 38 (June 1992): 25.

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[7] Robert C. Dickeson, "Reactions from a University President," in *The Evolution of Library Automation: Management Issues and Future Perspectives,* ed. Gary M. Pitkin (Westport: Meckler, 1991), 135.

[8] Pierette Kim Jamison, "Adopting a Critical Stance Toward Technology," in *Information Literacies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Virgil L.P. Blake and Renee Tjoumas (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990), 364-365.

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Instructions for the Preparation of Manuscripts for *North Carolina Libraries*

1. **North Carolina Libraries** seeks to publish articles, materials reviews, and bibliographies of professional interest to librarians in North Carolina. Articles need not be necessarily of a scholarly nature, but they should address professional concerns of the library community in the state.

2. Manuscripts should be directed to Frances B. Bradburn, Editor, **North Carolina Libraries**, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858-4353.

3. Manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate on plain white paper measuring 8 1/2" x 11" and on computer disk.

4. Manuscripts must be double-spaced (text, references, and footnotes). Macintosh computer is the computer used by **North Carolina Libraries**. Computer disks formatted for other computers must contain a file of the document in original format and a file in ASCII. Please consult editor for further information.

5. The name, position, and professional address of the author should appear in the bottom left-hand corner of a separate title page. The author's name should not appear anywhere else on the document.

6. Each page should be numbered consecutively at the top right-hand corner and carry the title (abbreviated if necessary) at the upper left-hand corner.

7. Footnotes should appear at the end of the manuscript. The editors will refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th edition. The basic forms for books and journals are as follows:

   Keyes Metcalf, Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings (New York: McGraw, 1965), 416.

   Susan K. Martin, "The Care and Feeding of the MARC Format," American Libraries 10 (September 1970): 498.

8. Photographs will be accepted for consideration but cannot be returned.

9. Upon receipt, a manuscript will be acknowledged by the editor. Following review of the manuscript by the editor and at least two jurors, a decision will be communicated to the writer. A definite publication date cannot be given since any incoming manuscript will be added to a manuscript bank from which articles are selected for each issue.

10. **North Carolina Libraries** holds the copyright for all accepted manuscripts. The journal is available both in print and electronically over the North Carolina Information Network.

11. Issue deadlines are February 10, May 10, August 10, and November 10. Manuscripts for a particular issue must be submitted at least 2 months before the issue deadline.

POINT

Librarians as Cultural Guardians and as Information Professionals

by Rose Simon

There is concern in library circles that despite our role as the "information professionals" in American society — a role we have claimed for well over a century — information vendors have succeeded in establishing for-profit entities that appear to compete with library reference services. "Our own" clients actually pay these entrepreneurs for information that we would provide for free. Worse yet, the transaction sometimes involves the sale of information that was originally given to the vendor by a library.

On a larger scale, the problem is even more serious: parent agencies are hiring groups of "computer people" to manage sizeable information systems without even considering that their own librarians might be the appropriate people to use.

How is it possible that the library profession, after decades of information service to American communities and educational institutions, could find itself so underestimated and overlooked? More importantly, what can be done about it?

Part of the problem is the old "image thing" and the ways in which we perpetuate it. Except for special librarians working for businesses, librarians work in the non-profit sector. Along with teachers and museum curators, librarians serve as the guardians of culture. As in the nineteenth century, we are committed to the notion that literacy and reading lead to enhanced knowledge, the basis of a good quality of life for the individual, and a rich and vital culture for society. We provide information in a variety of formats, and we fiercely protect the rights of access to that information on behalf of our fellow citizens. This is the basis of our professional definition, and it has not changed in over a century. Nor should it. But somehow we have remained Cultural Guardians while the computer people have, in the public view, become the Information Professionals.

Having established ourselves in a time when information transfer took place only through direct speech and the written or printed word, we still retain the trappings of our predecessors in ways that permit the computer people to look new and exciting to information seekers. Look at our library facilities and our job descriptions. Despite the fact that many catalogs are automated and that libraries offer numerous online services, libraries are basically perceived as buildings that house thousands of books, videos, and records and that offer places for learning activities ranging from story hours to simple sitting and reading or writing. Libraries are public buildings associated with books, with learning, and with general social good. Librarians are pleased to be generalists who carry out a wide variety of tasks in a given day. The same librarian who performs a DIALOG search in the morning may teach a BI class or select a number of books for purchase that afternoon. We have different areas of expertise, but few librarians profess to be specialists. Moreover, regardless of the job title, everyone is called a librarian.

Computer people are not encumbered by decades of tradition and thousands of books. Most of their resources are available online and their work place was designed for these specialized functions; they are specialists in a world that believes in the expertise of specialists; and as specialists in an area of intense demand, they command high (certainly better) salaries. If someone wants detailed information from a complex computer search, will he go to the computer person, or to the one who just finished reading *Bambi* to a group of third graders?

So how do we Cultural Guardians, who believe it is important that society continue to have us, manage also to be recognized as the Information Professionals?

Either kings must become philosophers, or philosophers must become kings. We worry that computer people lack the librarians' professional commitment to information confidentiality and information access for all citizens. But it is likely that solutions to those problems can be found by people other than professional librarians. It seems to me that if librarians believe that it is essential for us to retain our role as the Information Professionals, then we are going to have to learn a great deal more about computers and online systems, and we are going to have to demonstrate that we can deliver the product as effectively as the computer people. That means better and more thorough training, and it means emphasizing on an unprecedented scale how much the library is or can be the "information place." Parent agencies will have to be convinced that the library is where to find the right people for the job.

Librarians who are unwilling to learn the necessary technical skills and who are unable to create a new image of libraries at least as effective as the old one will remain Cultural Guardians, but they will be only that.

COUNTER POINT

So, What's Wrong With A Little Culture?

by Harry Tuchmayer, Column Editor

The only crisis I'm aware of is the one in our own minds! We are, as a profession, basically uncomfortable with admitting who we really are. Insecure, and unsure of whether or not we will be respected for what we do, librarians are continually trying to convince each other that what we do really matters anymore. In a society obsessed with labels and buzzwords, I can't help but think that we somehow feel left out of the new lexicon. While garbage collectors have become sanitation engineers, and typists, data entry specialists, librarians can't seem to convince anybody that we should be called "information specialists." Yet, the basic fact remains that we do provide people with the information they need and are considered by many to be the best source of information anywhere around.

So what's the big deal? Rose, you defined the problem beautifully when you said, "...the problem is the old image thing," but you've missed the point completely when you continue to insist that we are unwilling to learn the technical skills necessary to create a new image. We don't need to learn new skills (because most of us already have them), and we most certainly don't need a new image (because we have a damned good one). What we really need is assertiveness training! The problem is not in how we perpetuate the image of librarians, but rather that we are ashamed of it! People like, need, and yes, even respect, librarians for what they do; we just can't see it.

Part of the problem is the old "image thing" and the ways in which we perpetuate it.

— Simon

Admittedly, we could be better schooled in information retrieval techniques and computer programming, but ask any reference librarian in a public library and they'll tell you how often we are called upon to find critical information for a struggling entrepreneur, produce and retrieve scientific citations for a small manufacturing firm, or even print out the latest demographic data for local government, in between helping a "little old lady" find a less risque romance or discussing the latest Diana biography with a regular patron. We don't need new skills; we just need to be a little bit more confident in our considerable abilities to manage the information explosion.

We have succumbed to the misguided belief that modern is better than traditional ....

— Tuchmayer

No doubt, librarians have been largely bypassed by big firms and large businesses whose need for information is so great (or so specialized) that they've created their own departments to handle it. And no doubt we can do better in educating these people about the benefits of hiring librarians to manage their information needs. But what about the vast majority of information seekers, average citizens whose information needs are no less important than business; those who find in the library all the information they need to understand their illnesses, repair their roofs, evaluate their hidden treasures, or find jobs? These are the people we serve, and we serve them well. And you know what? They don't have any problem asking a librarian to help them find the information they need!

Let's stop making excuses for who we are and instead take the iniative in leading the information explosion. We must continue to remind business and government leaders that librarians are the ones who have been organizing, indexing, and disseminating information for decades and are precisely the professionals we want deciding the direction to take for the information future. Just because we aren't paid what we're worth doesn't mean our services aren't valued (and valuable).

The crisis, if there is one, is one largely of our own making. We have succumbed to the misguided belief that modern is better than traditional, and glitzy is better than commonplace. We have somehow come to believe that because we as a profession have not "spiced-up" our image and adopted a new, slick nomenclature, we have lost our competitive edge. This is pure poppycock! We have lost nothing but our own respect. We have successfully moved into the twenty-first century without abandoning our cultural heritage. Rather than vilify, we should applaud a profession that has been able to move ahead without selling out. I for one am proud of our dual role as "cultural guardians" and "information professionals," both existing under the heading of librarian.

North Carolina Library Networks:

A Bibliography on Library Cooperation Involving the Old North State

compiled by Plummer Alston Jones, Jr.

Advances in telecommunications and the widespread use of microcomputers in libraries of all types and sizes have together revolutionized access to library resources and the delivery of library services. The most obvious effect of this technological revolution is that decentralized, electronic access to information has begun to supplant centralized, on-site maintenance of library materials.

Another, more personal, effect of this revolution is that library users, having been introduced to more sophisticated methods of obtaining information, now have great expectations of libraries and librarians to fulfill and even anticipate their information needs. Paradoxically, libraries are simultaneously experiencing financial hard times. How will libraries cope with the dilemma of great expectations during hard times?

The antidote to this Dickensian dilemma also has a literary allusion. As no man is an island, to paraphrase Donne, no library is self-sufficient. Since the late 1960s, libraries have in ever increasing numbers realized that at least one solution to the dilemma is cooperation. Beginning with arguably the most successful cooperative venture in the library world to date, the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), libraries have created other networks for the electronic exchange of information. This phenomenon of library networking to solve a multitude of dilemmas has been most prevalent and conspicuous in North Carolina beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the 1990s.

The following bibliography on networks involving North Carolina libraries includes articles published since 1986 in no less than ten library periodicals reaching state, regional, and national audiences. For convenience, these articles have been classified according to the geographical areas and political arenas in which the networking activities described have had the greatest impact, for example, statewide networks, county networks, consortia crossing county boundaries, and regional consortia crossing state boundaries. Within each of these categories, citations to periodical articles are listed alphabetically by author. Citations to two or more articles by the same author are listed chronologically.

A lagniappe of this bibliography is that it serves as a preliminary or working directory of library networks throughout the Old North State, including, in addition to the statewide umbrella network, the North Carolina Information Network (NCIN), no less than thirty-seven academic libraries, six public libraries, twelve school libraries, and three special libraries. The challenge for these libraries is to keep the library community of North Carolina and the nation abreast of changes and developments in their respective networks. North Carolina libraries involved in networks which do not appear in this bibliography should publish or otherwise disseminate descriptions of their networking activities in order that the library community may benefit from the richness and variety of cooperative experiences involving the Old North State.

I. STATE:

A. North Carolina Information Network (NCIN)

Gilster, Paul. "New Network Connects Businesses with State." *North Carolina Libraries* 45 (Fall 1987): 148-49.

Gilster's article on the business-related information resources and services available through the North Carolina Information Network (NCIN) was reprinted with permission from the July 13-20, 1987 issue of *Triangle Business*. Gilster points out the State Library's decision "to be a contractor of services rather than a creator of them," and quotes then State Librarian Jane Williams, "The important thing [about the NCIN] is that we're contracting with OCLC and Western Union rather than putting millions into a mainframe here [in Raleigh] and a big staff and programming."

McClure, Charles R., Joe Ryan, Diana Lauterbach, and William E. Moen. "Site Visit: North Carolina Information Network (NCIN)." In *Public Libraries and the INTERNET/NREN: New Challenges, New Opportunities*, 9-18. Syracuse, NY: School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, 1992.

This recently published report on the role of public libraries in emerging and developing national networks includes a chapter based on a site visit to analyze and evaluate the NCIN. The NCIN was chosen because it is "a large-scale networking development effort that included a number of different types of libraries" and "an innovative leader in the application of networking services to public libraries."

McGinn, Howard F. "The North Carolina Information Network—A Vital Cog in Economic Development." *North Carolina Libraries* 44 (Fall 1986): 175-80.
In this article, the first in his series of articles on the NCIN, McGinn, in his capacity as Coordinator of Network Development for the State Library of North Carolina, calls for the establishment of a partnership between libraries and the business community. The NCIN will be at the heart of this cooperative enterprise. McGinn describes five ongoing projects of the NCIN: (1) North Carolina Online Union Catalog; (2) North Carolina Union List of Serials; (3) business, technical, and educational databases; (4) electronic mail/bulletin board service; and (5) document delivery services. In the development and nurture of the NCIN, the State Library is pledged (1) to work with other state agencies; (2) to work with statewide business organizations; (3) to conduct regional marketing surveys; (4) to develop business expert and consultation services; and (5) to coordinate planning.

———. "Information Networking and Economic Development." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 62 (Nov. 1987): 28-32.
McGinn, in his capacity as Assistant State Librarian and Director of the North Carolina Information Network, uses this national periodical forum to promote the NCIN.

———. "Electronic Services for Rural Libraries: Meeting the Challenge in North Carolina." *RQ* 29 (Summer 1990): 492-96.
Focusing on the needs of rural libraries for timely access to information, McGinn, in his current position as State Librarian of North Carolina, urges participation in the NCIN for the benefits to be derived not only in terms of cost containment and cost sharing, but also in terms of the enhancement of the professional image of the local librarian. McGinn argues convincingly that "the library that prospers will be the one that carves out a place for itself in the vital daily operations of the rural community."

———. "Information and the Development of Rural North Carolina." *Southeastern Librarian* 40 (Summer 1990): 75-79.
State Librarian McGinn discusses the business- and consumer-oriented electronic bulletin board services available on NCIN, specifically, NCBTECH, from the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, NCDATA, from the State Data Center of North Carolina, and NCSTRC, from the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Science and Technology Research Center. Electronic bulletin boards associated with the Automated Purchase Directory present timely information on business contract opportunities with the State Government. Through online access to these services, McGinn asserts that "rural areas can now participate in the global economy."

Miller, Marilyn E. "Interlibrary Loan in the North Carolina Information Network: The Impact of "Selective Users" on a Net-Lender University Library." *North Carolina Libraries* 45 (Winter 1987): 210-15.
Miller presents a case study of East Carolina University's experience in filling interlibrary loan (ILL) requests from selective users of the North Carolina Online Union Catalog and the OCLC ILL Subsystem via NCIN's dial access service. East Carolina University, the third largest university in the University of North Carolina system, is a net-lender.

"New State Library Network Starts Up in North Carolina." *Library Journal* 112 (1 Feb. 1987): 24.
This brief news release describing what will later be called the NCIN is perhaps the first official announcement to reach a national and international audience. The release announces that the North Carolina network "combines highly centralized data management with highly decentralized access."

Young, Diana. "North Carolina's Information Network and Youth Services." *Public Libraries* 27 (Spring 1988): 39-40.
———. "North Carolina Information Network." *Tar Heel Libraries* 14 (May/June 1991): 3-4.
Young's articles provide a description of several components of the NCIN, including (1) the North Carolina Online Union Catalog and the OCLC ILL subsystem; (2) North Carolina Union List of Serials; (3) electronic mail, (4) electronic bulletin board, (5) access to databases, and (6) information delivery by telefacsimile and courier. The former, more expansive article is geared to librarians serving children and young adults; the latter, a brief reference list for the general library community.

B. Other Statewide Efforts

Lithgo, Sue Wanchock. "Public Libraries/Agricultural Extension Agencies: Potential for Cooperation." *Rural Libraries* 7 (1) (1987): 7-42.
Lithgo's study encourages ongoing cooperation between public libraries, with coordination

provided by the State Library of North Carolina, and county agricultural extension agencies, with coordination provided by the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service. Cooperative planning would benefit North Carolina citizens needing agricultural information and services.

"MUGLNC [Microcomputer Users Group for Libraries in North Carolina]." *Tar Heel Libraries* 15 (May/June 1992): 14.
Celebrating the tenth anniversary of its founding in 1982, MUGLNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to basic computer education. With the explosion of computer networks throughout North Carolina, the nation, and the world, MUGLNC will begin to explore ways for libraries to collaborate and cooperate in the hi-tech environment of the 1990s.

Welch, Jeanie M., and Lorraine W. Penninger. "Hanging Together: Local Cooperation and Role Expectations Among Different Types of North Carolina Libraries." *North Carolina Libraries* 46 (Winter 1988): 237-44.
Welch and Penninger surveyed 126 libraries of different types throughout North Carolina to determine the amount and types of local cooperation and role expectations. Of the ninety-two responses received, thirty-five were from academic libraries; seventeen from public libraries; twenty-six from secondary school libraries; and fourteen from special libraries. The responses showed that North Carolina libraries are cooperating, particularly academic and public libraries with the encouragement of the State Library of North Carolina, and that libraries of all types for social and economic reasons are open to creative means of cooperation.

II. COUNTY

Bileckyj, Peter A. "The Wilson County Networking Project." *North Carolina Libraries* 44 (Fall 1986): 146-54.
The Wilson County Libraries Networking Project grew out of a ZOC (Zone of Cooperation) grant awarded in 1984 by the Steering Committee of the State Library of North Carolina's Networking Committee. Institutional members of the network are Wilson County Public Library, Wilson County Technical College, Barton College, Wilson Memorial Hospital, Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf, Beddingfield High School, Fike High School, and Hunt High School. The network has two purposes: (1) to exchange information via an electronic bulletin board system; and (2) to build bibliographical products, including union lists of periodicals and audiovisuals.

Jones, John. "Electronic Network Project." *Tar Heel Libraries* 14 (May/June 1991): 5.
Using Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title III funds, the Neuse Regional Library implemented the Electronic Network Project in the fall of 1990. The Electronic Network Project links the reference department of the Neuse Regional Library, a public library, to three high school libraries in Lenoir County, Kinston High School, North Lenoir High School, and South Lenoir High School. The project exposes high school students to telefacsimile and CD-ROM technologies. The administrations of the high schools involved have agreed to assume costs for continuing the project. A private high school in Lenoir County and a public high school in neighboring Green County have recently joined the network.

Kester, Diane D. "Access to Information—Can Schools Provide It?" *North Carolina Libraries* 44 (Fall 1986): 135-38.
Kester presents a review of the literature on school library cooperation with discussions of local and state networks involving school libraries in New York City, New York State, Alaska, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Colorado. School library participation in OCLC at the national level and in various state and regional cooperative networks is noted, including SOLINET (southeastern states), ILLINET (Illinois), INCOLSA (Indiana), OHIONET (Ohio), PACNET (six systems in the Pacific Network of OCLC), and MILO (Montgomery County, Maryland). Discussions of the Cleve-net project and the Wilson County Libraries Network project, two North Carolina networks involving school libraries, round out the review.

Perry, Douglas. "The Cleve-net Library Project: An Electronic Mail and Shared Data Network." *North Carolina Libraries* 44 (Fall 1986): 140-44.
Created with funds received from a 1984 ZOC grant from the Steering Committee of the State Library of North Carolina's Networking Committee, Cleve-net is an online electronic mail and shared data network serving the multi-type libraries of the Broad River Library/Media Association, located in Cleveland County and neighboring counties. Institutional participants in Cleve-net, since it became operational in September 1985, are Cleveland County Memorial Library, Cleveland County Technical College, Gardner-Webb College, Mauney Memorial Library, Burns High School, Crest high School, Kings Mountain High School, and Shelby High School.

Ritter, Phil. "The Information Network." *Tar Heel Libraries* 14 (May/June 1991): 3.
The Gaston County Public Library (GCPL) has established the "Information Network,"

which provides county businesses with access to current information in print and electronic formats. The GCPL also taps the information resources available through the NCIN and from the Gaston County Chamber of Commerce, Gaston College, and local business firms.

Sermons, Penny G. "DEAN: Down East Area Network." *Tar Heel Libraries* 14 (May/June 1991): 4-5.

———. "Beaufort County Community College Library Establishes Down East Area Network." *North Carolina Libraries* 49 (Summer 1991): 85.

In January 1991, the Beaufort County Community College Library (BCCCL) implemented the first phase of the Down East Area Network (DEAN) to provide access to its resources and services from two Beaufort County public high schools, Aurora High School and Northside High School, and the Beaufort-Hyde-Martin (BHM) Regional Public Library. During phase two, the BCCCL plans to include other public and school libraries in its four-county service area in eastern North Carolina.

Shannon, Donna. "Cooperation Between School and Public Libraries: A Study of One North Carolina County." *North Carolina Libraries* 49 (Summer 1991): 67-70.

The purpose of Shannon's study was to determine the nature and extent of cooperation among school and public library programs in an unidentified county with seventeen middle school libraries, thirteen high school libraries, and seventeen public libraries. Shannon confirmed the assumption that school libraries are unable to meet all the information needs of their students. As a corollary, it was important to know exactly when and for what kinds of information students turn to public libraries. Shannon asserts that commitment and communication are two essentials in developing and sustaining cooperative relationships among school and public libraries.

III. CONSORTIA

A. Mid-Carolina Academic Library Network (Mid-CAL)

Smith, Marti. "Mid-CAL: The Mid-Carolina Academic Library Network." *Tar Heel Libraries* 15 (Mar./Apr. 1992): 2-3.

The Mid-Carolina Academic Library Network (Mid- CAL) was formed in 1987 to promote library automation and networking among eleven institutions of which ten are still active participants. These ten institutions are Barton College, Campbell University, Louisburg College, Meredith College, Methodist College, North Carolina Wesleyan College, Peace College, Saint Mary's College, Shaw University, and St. Andrews Presbyterian College. In October 1990, Mid-CAL received a United States Department of Education (USDE) Title II Combination Grant of $164,000 to be used to connect the libraries of the participating institutions with the Local and Intercampus North Carolina Network (LincNet) installed by the University of North Carolina Educational Computing Service (UNCECS).

B. Mountain College Library Network (MCLN)

Hutton, Jean. "Mountain College Library Network." *Tar Heel Libraries* 15 (Mar./Apr. 1992): 2.

The original member libraries of the Mountain College Library Network (MCLN), established in 1990, were Montreat Anderson College, Mars Hill College, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, and Warren Wilson College. Since then six libraries have joined the MCLN: Brevard College, Lees- McRae College, McDowell Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Technical Community College, Lenoir Rhyne College, and the Mountain Area Health Education Center. The MCLN participants share information from periodicals via a telefacsimile service and extend borrowing privileges on site to individuals from any of the participating institutions. Future plans include cooperative collection development and automated circulation of materials.

C. Piedmont Independent College Association (PICA)

Jones, Plummer Alston, Jr. "Piedmont Independent College Association." *Tar Heel Libraries* 15 (Mar./Apr. 1992): 2.

The Piedmont Independent College Association (PICA) consortium includes the following six private colleges: Bennett College, Elon College, Greensboro College, Guilford College, High Point University, and Salem College. Using a 1989/90 USDE Title III-A grant of 2.5 million dollars over a five-year period, the PICA libraries will create an online union catalog and automated circulation systems. The central processing unit (CPU) for the network is located at Guilford College. The union catalog will be accessible not only to consortium members, but also to all North Carolina libraries via the LincNet installed and maintained by the UNCECS.

D. Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN)

Owen, Willy. "The Triangle Research Libraries Network: A History and Philosophy." *North Carolina Libraries* 47 (Spring 1989): 43-51.

The Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) was created by a consortium of three research

universities in the Research Triangle Park area of North Carolina. The TRLN consortium is unusual in that it is comprised of two public universities, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University, and one private university, Duke University. Owen's article gives not only an in-depth retrospective review of the long history of cooperation among these universities from as early as 1933, but also an introspective look at the day-to-day problems faced by the consortium that resulted from this cooperation. The purpose of TRLN is the creation, development, and maintenance of a computerized network which provides online access to the library collections of three major research universities.

Ulmschneider, John, and Patrick Mullin. "Performance Measures for Online Systems." *North Carolina Libraries* 48 (Fall 1990): 197-204.

Ulmschneider and Mullin discuss how to evaluate the system performance of an online library system using three parameters: response time, application efficiency, and capacity. Their article concludes with a case study involving performances measures applied and results obtained at the TRLN.

E. Western North Carolina Library Network (WNCLN)

Babel, Deborah B. "The Western North Carolina Library Network: 'Well Begun is Half Done.'" *North Carolina Libraries* 44 (Fall 1986): 155-58.

———. "Archival Tape Processing: Considerations for a Network." *Technical Services Quarterly* 4 (Fall 1986): 11- 18.

Babel's articles document the history of the Western North Carolina Library Network (WNCLN) formed in 1983 to enable the libraries of the three western campuses of the University of North Carolina system to have an online union catalog and automated circulation systems. The WNCLN member institutions are Appalachian State University, the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and Western Carolina University. The CPU for the network is located at Appalachian State University. All libraries in the consortium are connected via telecommunications lines to each other and to other North Carolina libraries on the LincNet.

IV. REGIONAL AND INTRASTATE

A. North Carolina/Nebraska Information Partnership

Dean, Nita. "Nebraska and North Carolina Become Information Partners." *OCLC Newsletter* no. 194 (Nov./Dec. 1991): 14.

"NE and NC State Libraries Team Up; Sharing People and Resources to Support State Economic Development." *Library Journal* 116 (Dec. 1991): 28+.

These brief news releases announce that in October 1991, Nebraska and North Carolina joined in a partnership to improve library and information services in the two states. Electronic exchange of information via the INTERNET will be the most immediate benefit of cooperation. Staff exchange programs involving Nebraska and North Carolina librarians are being discussed. Economic development in both states will be enhanced in the long term.

B. Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET)

Grisham, Frank P. "The Role of the Regional Network in Assisting the Development of Local Networks." *Southeastern Librarian* 38 (Summer 1988): 57-58.

Grisham, Executive Director of SOLINET, discusses principles in library cooperation, networking among academic libraries, and the role of SOLINET to promote and facilitate internetwork cooperation among emerging local networks. He alludes specifically to the successes of NCIN and TRLN in North Carolina.

McGinn, Howard F. "Information, Economic Development, and Competitiveness in Southeastern United States." Southeastern Librarian 38 (Fall 1988): 96-100.

McGinn's article is based on his address to the Georgia Library Association at its biennial conference in October 1987. He reports on the progress of North Carolina and other southern states to transform their economies from manufacturing-based to service-and-information-based. Using the NCIN as an example of how libraries can help in this transformational process, McGinn urges librarians to apply networking to the solution of community problems as well as library problems. The library will thus be at the heart of the information infrastructure. Along with airports, highways, water and sewer systems, libraries will then be seen "as prime candidates for the investment of scarce public funds."

"North Carolina and SOLINET." *Tarheel Libraries* 14 (May/June 1991): 5.

As of June 1991, North Carolina had eighty-one members of SOLINET and 247 Selective Users with Group Access Capability (GAC). North Carolina libraries of all types cataloged a total of 506,412 items during fiscal year 1989/90, loaned 108,381 items, with 56.7 percent going to other North Carolina libraries, and borrowed 92,209 items, with 69 percent coming from other North Carolina libraries.

The Lessons of Locust Gap: An Allegory

by Howard F. McGinn

The Appalachian Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania are forest covered now. The pine trees, oaks, and maples that have grown over the past decades give a lush texture to the ridges. Wildlife is abundant. Bears, mountain lions, deer, and other animals have proliferated. The appearance is that of virgin forests. But if you were to walk through the forests you would soon discover beneath the trees the scars of the past. The trees cover the remnants of the beginnings of the industrialization of the United States because out of these hills came the coal that powered electrical plants, fueled steamships and steam engines, and heated homes and factories across the country. Abandoned mine shafts litter the forest floor. Every now and then the foundations of long-abandoned houses or factory buildings appear in the form of mounds overgrown with vines. The trees themselves are anchored in the "strippings" of earth, shale, and coal that were brought up out of the mines and piled almost as high as some of the hills. And if you had been in the forests when the mines were working, and the sounds of warning sirens and dynamite, shift whistles and church bells filled mountain sides and valleys, you would find the present silence frightening.

These mountains and their company towns were also the first homes for thousands of European immigrants seeking the fulfillment of all immigrants — a better life. The people arrived from Poland and Ireland, from Croatia, Bohemia, Germany, and all of those long-forgotten countries that are now finding resurrection in the destruction of the Soviet Union. In the migration process to these mountains, family members were divided. Those with the most skills remained in Philadelphia or New York; the least skilled were lured by the coal companies and the railroads into the mountains by the promise of cheap housing and jobs. Most eventually discovered that the housing and jobs meant a lifetime indenture to the Reading Railroad or the United States Steel Corporation.

My grandfather was the son of immigrants whose parents had migrated from Ireland to the coal fields. He was born in the Northumberland County town of Locust Gap, Pennsylvania, in the 1880s. His parents had been among the earliest immigrants to be hired by the Reading Railroad. The railroad owned Locust Gap. In fact, the Locust Gap that he first knew disappeared in a massive mine explosion when he was an infant. The railroad company simply selected a new site, rebuilt the houses and mine buildings, and called the new settlement Locust Gap. Life went on.

My grandfather's life as a miner began at the age of seven. His two years of elementary education were considered to be sufficient by the railroad so he was sent into the mines as a child, as a muleskinner. His job was to drive the mules that pulled the loaded coal cars out of the mines, empty the cars, then drive the empty cars back into the mine. One day, whether through fatigue or carelessness, he never said, he caught his right arm between two cars loaded with coal. Instead of trying to separate the cars, the company doctor simply amputated his arm at the elbow. He lost his arm at the age of ten. He returned to his job once the wound healed and he never left the mines until the day of his retirement.

My grandfather and grandmother had four sons. My father was the oldest. When he was born in 1910, the conditions in Locust Gap had begun to improve. The market for coal was growing, the influence of the unions was beginning to be felt, and the town had entered into a sleepy, if dangerous, adulthood. A few of my grandfather's uncles had been members of the infamous Molly Maguires, an Irish terrorist organization that fought the coal companies in the towns around Locust Gap in the 1870s. This aspect of family history was not openly discussed in those days. Town life was improving. The Reading Railroad, of course, still owned most of the homes and leased them to families. Most of the leases were for ninety-nine years. But privately owned homes had begun to be built. These were usually owned by retired company officials, physicians, or attorneys. The company did allow the Catholic Parish to own its own church, school, convent, rectory, and cemetery. The Lutheran Church was afforded the same privilege.

It might be well here to describe the topography of Locust Gap since the location of the churches defined the town. Locust Gap was built on two hillsides enclosing a valley. The Catholic Church was on the northern hillside; the Protestant Church was on the southern hillside. The Railroad ran through the center of the valley. Most of the Catholic families lived on the northern hillside and, of course, the Protestant families lived on the southern hillside. The Protestant families lived on the southern hill because the mining company officials were Protestant and the company's offices, in fact the entire mine complex, was on the southern side of Locust Gap. Denominational intermingling rarely occurred outside the mine. Most of the bar rooms, and there were many, were on the northern hillside.

As I noted, though, Locust Gap was changing. A new public school was built in the 1920s for grades K-12. It attracted few students because most of the children were Catholic and went to the parochial school and were taught by

nuns. State child labor and education laws had sharply decreased the school dropout rate and in the 1920s most students were achieving at least an eighth grade education. The Great Depression of the 1930s wrought its severe effect on Locust Gap as it did in every country in the world and a few families left to find work in Philadelphia or Scranton. Locust Gap's salvation arrived through the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The war transformed Locust Gap in ways not experienced during World War I or other wars. The demand for coal grew enormously. The company, in order to keep laborers, kept improving wages and living conditions, and the population grew as people moved back to Locust Gap to work in the mines to "help the war effort." My father, though, decided he would fare better in the army and became a tank commander. He never returned to the town.

When the war ended Locust Gap began to enter its "golden age." Compared to prewar conditions, the postwar life was prosperous. New civic buildings were constructed. Funded by the GI Bill, those men and women who did serve in the armed forces bought homes and continued their education. The great dance bands of Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, both born and raised in a nearby town, performed regularly in Locust Gap. More sons and a few daughters went to college at Penn State or nearby Bloomsburg State College and returned to Locust Gap as teachers, nurses, librarians, and businessmen. The first television sets appeared and there was even a rumor that a new invention called the coaxial cable system, invented in a nearby city, would be installed to bring a better television signal to the town. There were annual Memorial Day and Fourth of July Parades, the mine was operating twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, more people bought automobiles, life was becoming good.

Life was good because the trains kept hauling tons of coal to eastern cities and ports. Every day, several times a day, trains of one hundred cars or more would pass through Locust Gap transporting the mineral to homes, power plants, and ships. The demand for coal seemed insatiable to the citizens of the town and to the officials of the Reading Railroad. The future seemed secure as Locust Gap dreamed through the early years of the Eisenhower Administration. Nobody noticed that the first signs of the town's death process had begun.

The end started quietly. In Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Boston, and cities throughout Northeastern United States, families had started switching from coal to cheaper, cleaner forms of energy to heat their homes. Natural gas, oil, even electric furnaces slowly began to replace coal-burning furnaces in old homes and in newly constructed homes. The first stirring of the environmental movement began across the state in Pittsburgh when the city, disgusted with its image of smoke and dirt caused by the steel mills, began a massive crackdown on air pollution. Even the venerable Reading Railroad began to show financial strains caused by the shift of freight from the railroads to trucks as the new interstate highway system began to be built. Technology, change, and shifting consumer habits were combining to slowly kill the hard coal industry and Locust Gap.

The death of Locust Gap was gradual. It was hard to discern a pattern of destruction. The first signs came when the mining company began to cut back on the work shifts. The people were told that the slowdown was temporary, that market demand for coal would increase, that people would always use coal. The cutback on production slowed the number of trains passing through the town. One day an announcement was made that the Reading Railroad would stop passenger service. Jobs started to be lost and a few families began to move to the cities in search of work. The town's college students stopped returning to Locust Gap after graduation. Better jobs and money were in the cities. Still, the town officials and representatives of the mining company assured the people that all was well; that they should not worry. After all, hadn't the town been in existence for over a century? Hadn't the town survived the great explosion, the Great Depression, and many mining accidents? Those leaving or not returning were just alarmists.

Then the public school was closed. The school board said it was part of a county-wide consolidation designed to reduce class size and improve the curriculum. Students would now be transported by school bus to various central school buildings in the area. The city officials and the mine owners praised the school board's action. It was a sign of progress, they said. During this time, business at the bar rooms and churches increased.

Soon another new technology arrived. A mine in a town down the road closed and the mining company imported a massive mechanized shovel that stripped the coal out of the ground in enormous bites and dumped the coal in trucks. The railroad's freight volume suffered severely; the environmental impact was terrible; the loss in jobs was enormous. The mayor of Locust Gap assured the people that their mine would not close because it was the largest in the Pennsylvania coal fields. But other unsettling events began to occur. Because of the apathy, neglect, and lack of investment by the mining companies, frequent mine shaft collapses began. Roadways started to buckle; houses started to fall into the mines; my grandparents' graves started to sink into the collapsing mine shafts. A fire started in an underground vein of coal in nearby Danville. It eventually caused the federal government to move part of the city. And then the Locust Gap mine was closed.

The resultant rapid depopulation of the town forced the Catholic Church to close the school. The Protestant Church closed completely when the mining officials moved. The older people, caught with ninety-nine year leases that the railroad would not renegotiate, remained. Soon the Reading Railroad itself ceased existence and was absorbed into Conrail. The mine was sealed.

Three years ago I returned to Locust Gap after a fifteen year absence. I wanted to check on my grandparents' graves. It took a while to find the town because the Pennsylvania Department of Highways had built a road around the few remaining buildings. Locust Gap had become irrelevant. The Catholic Church still remained but was served by a priest only on weekends. Many of the homes on the north side had been burned or had collapsed. A few remained. All of the houses on the southern hillside were gone. My grandparents' graves had not settled into the earth any further but many of the roads in the town were impassable. And like a surrealistic symbol of the past, the sole remnant of the mine was the rusted steel tower containing the giant wheels that had held the cable that had lowered the cars into the mine shaft. Nothing else remained. I was struck by the silence and the beauty of the forests that were repairing the earthen scars. I was haunted by the ghosts of those buried in graves and mine shafts and by the ghostlike figures still sitting in front of the last houses in Locust Gap.

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