

## From the Editor's Desk

We believe we have made history, but we are not sure.

Over a year ago we were privileged to indulge ourselves in an editorial statement in this space concerning aims and goals for this journal. In the piece entitled "A Reprieve," an attempt was made to apprise you of the precarious position of the Association's publishing endeavor which was and had been bankrupt for sometime in more ways than one. Those who remember will recall that the statement of aims contained talk about economies, standardization, revenues, controversy, and specific periodicity. Other than this simple statement, all your journal had at that time, to be exact, was a probationary status of eighteen months, no money, no copy except that needed for the immediate issue, and a worn-out motto which said: "We never turn down a manuscript."

As the period for our stay of execution now enters its seventeenth and next-to-final month, it seems appropriate for the members of the North Carolina Library Association to be given the opportunity to pause and ponder on just what the future of this little organ is going to be. To this end, allow us to share with you some of the developments which have taken place since the spring of a year ago, including for your information something about the problems which have been met and overcome, and finally to ask you who pay the bills to be the judge. Even a convicted man gets a last meal.

Those of you who have been receiv-

ing the journal regularly now at three-month intervals recognize that in its entirety the publication has undergone a metamorphosis. We hardly think it unfair to boast that the chief similarity between it now and the form which it enjoyed for thirty years is its six-inch by nine-inch dimensions.

Metamorphoses such as the one which this journal has undergone do not occur by themselves. Primarily they would seem to take place because of people. In our instance it occurred because of a near total restructuring of the editorial board on which the writer had himself served aimlessly for several years. Early on we sought the best advice available across the state on persons whom we might consider as candidates for positions on the board. Then once certain of those who would bring to your journal the enthusiasm, drive, energy, and determination which would be required to do the immense job which lay before us, we set out to proselytize the select few. Most pleasantly we remember a morning telephone call to Durham over a year ago to ask one who has since become a dear friend if she would be willing to help. "Help indeed," was her reply, "I want nothing to do with NCLA. It's lily-white!" Not to be easily discouraged, we rejoined: "Alright dammit, so it is. Here's your chance to do something about it!" And so she has, which causes one to wonder just how many more like her there are standing ably by in the ranks of our association, black or white.

Turn if you will to the back cover and read the names of those who have helped write one of the remarkable chapters in publishing for librarianship in North Carolina. Better still, allow us to recognize them here. They are: David Jensen, Librarian at Greensboro College; Bill Powell, Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Leland Park, Assistant Director of the Davidson College Library; Jean McDuffie of the Central Piedmont Community College Library; Ray Moore, Assistant Director of the Durham City-County Public Library; Pauline Myrick, Library Supervisor of the Moore County Schools; and William Lowe, Assistant Director for Reference Services at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

Since the spring of 1972, this board has met at least once during each calendar quarter. These meetings have been exciting times, and a sense of the importance of the board's charge has always been present. The journal as you know it today with a standardized format, definite periodicity, and certain other features on which many depend, as well as the interesting articles of an eclectic nature within the subject discipline of librarianship all is the result of the ferment of ideas which has taken place at these meetings.

There have been other results also. Have you noticed in recent months a marked improvement in the quality of the manuscripts appearing in our pages? We passed a certain milestone in editorial policy many months ago, when for the first time we were able to turn away a manuscript as being inappropriate or of insufficient quality to be presented to you. It is with a measure of pride that the editorial board reports with this writing that despite a half-dozen or so manuscripts refused (a move not calculated to make

us highly popular in certain quarters) the journal holds in excess of twenty-four manuscripts in reserve, awaiting publication.

Another of the tasks confronting the board over a year ago was to determine as rapidly as possible exactly how much it was going to cost per year to publish this journal. Once that were known it would seem to have been a simple matter to raise the necessary funds, and herein lies a problem area which has consumed a great portion of time during the last three or four months.

Beginning about four months ago, and ending after what seemed to be several weeks of agony, it was found that by some turn of fortune more than \$3,000 in advertising revenues had been raised. Compare this if you will to the \$6,000 which is the approximate current cost for the journal annually. In a time when peers are perishing, we are paying for one-half our own keep. How many state publications do you know which do that?

Publishing a small journal is an enlightening business. On many days its only relation to our profession is the content of its manuscripts. Hardly a week passes when some new problem does not arise, or some new "something-or-other" is not to be learned. Take the business of advertising for example. We soon learned that in order to solicit advertising one must first have a saleable product and one must be able to sell it. It was determined also that if the journal was to support itself in whole or in part through the sale of ad copy, then as an association we had to be willing and able to guarantee our clients that the journal would be produced on a regular basis and that in general its appearance and the quality of its contents would present an attractive

place for a firm to put its name before the public. Obviously no one wants to advertise in a "rag." We made all kinds of promises, but never any that we knew we would not be able to keep. And we have kept them all.

Which are the firms helping our journal to survive when many others are failing? The mortality rate for state journals has grown in recent years. We think the group presents an interesting mix. Joseph Ruzicka, Inc. is always among the first to give support in our state, as this firm did for the first three decades of the journal's existence. Other accounts which we are pleased to number among the sources of our advertising revenue are: the Baker and Taylor Co., the Old Book Corner in Chapel Hill, the Heckman Bindery, the Colonial Out-of-Print Book Service, Broadfoot's Bookmark, Associated Libraries, Inc., F. W. Faxon Co., Myrtle Desk Co. of High Point, John F. Blair Publishing Co. of Winston-Salem, the Xerox Corporation, and Ebsco Subscription Services. We cannot say adequately just how important the support from these quarters has been to our continued survival. But there are ways for you to do so, and we do need more ad insertion orders. What better opportunity will there be than convention time?

Several weeks ago we experimented with what we naively considered to be a sure-fire technique on one of the companies which we were soliciting. It went something to the effect that a state journal ought to put out a blacklist. Yes, proscriptio lists are always tricky business. It is only a matter of time until the circle completes itself, but the fact remains that there are many library supply firms doing a tremendous volume of business in North Carolina, whose home offices consistently resist or refuse or plead inability to sup-

port our state journal through ad copy from which they would, in turn, garner a certain amount of business. This is not as it should be, and we wish there were some simple way to correct it. Talk for a minute to one of their local representatives who rove the libraries of the state, and you will find that the way to the top, that is, the way to the home office and the company's pocketbook, is a long one indeed. Since blacklisting is a mean business, what we have done in the foregoing so as not to involve ourselves in a nice little libel suit, is to publish our own "whitelist."

Advertising is a two-way street. One of the reasons for the reluctance on the part of many to advertise with us, and this seems valid as well as primary, is that many of us in our buying habits are locked into patterns which militate against spreading our purchasing around. We are comfortable doing business with the same firm year after year. After all, isn't "whatsizname" a good 'ole boy, and do we not appreciate the relationship which has grown between us over the years? On the other hand, stop to consider this. Is his firm not making a profit from your business? Do you see the prominent name of his firm anywhere in these pages? Have you fulfilled a part of your duty to your administration by doing a little cost comparison lately?

Somehow this whole business has gotten turned completely around. Many of us continue to do business on a grand scale with firms who have no interest in us other than the profits which they know we can provide, while those who invest a little advertising money with us see little if any tangible return on their investment. You can help correct this situation in two ways. Step One would be to apply gentle, but

unmistakable and steady pressure on the representatives who solicit your business. Step Two would be to throw some of your buying power in the direction of our benefactors and let them know why you are doing so. Money is like manure. If you spread it around it can do a lot of good, but if you pile it all in one place it can make one hell of a stink.

In conclusion, we think we have saved the best until last. Therefore, we are pleased to make the announcement with the present issue, that beginning January 1, 1974 (if we are still in business) *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES* will use a part of its hard-earned keep to pay a token honorarium of \$15.00 for each article it publishes. How many other state journals, or national ones for that matter, do you know which do this? We would wager none. In fact, we know of only one other in the field which makes the same gesture, that being the *LIBRARY JOURNAL*.

We are growing too confident — a good time to stop. We sincerely hope you enjoy this issue, which has as its guest editor Nancy O'Neal, who is the editor of the *NORTH CAROLINA STATE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER*.

Your editor and his associate are exchanging responsibilities for the coming year, as the former is out of the state on study leave. David Jensen has therefore agreed to act as editor-in-chief while retaining his title of associate.

Approximately there are of you an average of 1500. If this journal is costing the Association \$6,000 per annum, and if \$3,000 of that total is being offset by advertising revenues, then the remaining \$3,000 expense is borne by you, the 1500. This breaks down to \$2.00 per year which each of you actually pays for the journal through your membership contribution. This

publication is therefore costing you \$.50 per issue. We ask you now, is it worth it? Whatever the outcome of the vote on the question of continuing the journal we believe that for eighteen months you have had an editorial board rivalled by none and a product rivalled by few in the Southeast. Your journal is emulated by regional journals, and it is appraised by many to be without peer for a state journal. Without the help of anyone save those whose ads appear in our pages presently, we can now pay our own way for another six months, or one-half of our keep for the next year. The fact remains however, that in a few weeks time we could easily be out of business, but we are not betting on it.

Share your views with us please by communicating directly with the editor's office.

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