

From the Acting Editor's Desk

Two years ago the current editorial board began its duties by putting together a conference issue featuring papers from the 1971 Biennial Conference. The progress this journal has made in those two years was detailed in the last issue, but may be quickly seen by comparing this copy with that first issue.

We believe the most important difference between these two conference issues is the selection of papers from the biennial meetings. Frankly, that journal of two years ago contained some conference papers of dubious merit. At that same conference two years ago, Daniel N. Fader ("Hooked on Books") told us that educators (including librarians) would gain no more respect than we deserve until we were willing to let poor speakers know we didn't like them.

How long are North Carolina's librarians going to put up with being patsies? We're not opposed to good speakers whether they be librarians, lawyers, writers or politicians, but they should produce and they should know from the audience when they have done a poor job. At the last conference, we not only were treated to two poor performances, we were given the pleasure of a substitute for a substitute.

ITEM: Governor Holshouser was invited to be the speaker at the second general session. He sent his regrets claiming state business would keep him away. Mrs. Grace Rhorer, Secretary, Department of Cultural Resources was then asked to speak in place of the Governor and accepted. Fine,

the Governor is a busy man, and we all recognize that he can't possibly meet with every group which would like to hear him. Mrs. Rhorer was a logical second choice because the State Library is one unit in her department. But on November 2, Mrs. Rhorer sent her regrets and a substitute, Miss Kathy McCarter. Miss McCarter read a speech she prepared herself, not one prepared by or for Mrs. Rhorer. Now the important "state" business that kept the Governor and his Cultural Resources Secretary from speaking was the Republican Convention at which the Governor was trying to put his own man in charge of the party. We don't object to the Governor's absence for that reason nor Mrs. Rhorer's absence if she was a delegate or was otherwise important to the proceedings. We do object to the assumption that North Carolina's librarians are ignorant children who can't be treated honestly, frankly and courteously. North Carolina's librarians aren't ignorant. Why, if Mrs. Rhorer was so important to the Governor at the Republican Convention, did she accept our invitation to speak and then send a substitute at the last minute when she must have known for weeks when the Republicans would meet?

Is it fair to assume that because the substitute did not read Mrs. Rhorer's speech, but her own, that Mrs. Rhorer did not have one prepared and thus did not plan to speak?

Why, if Miss McCarter had time to

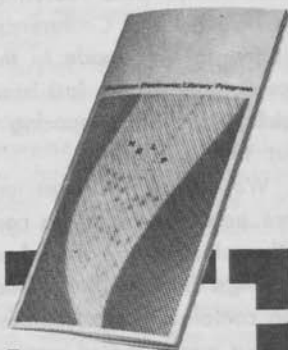
prepare a speech and the date of the Republican Convention was known in advance, were the officers of NCLA not informed of the substitution until the morning before Mrs. Rhorer was to appear? That is not just unfair and discourteous it is an assumption that libraries and librarians are so unimportant that they will accept the shabbiest treatment from their public officials.

ITEM: Dick Ellis, Public Relations Director for the Department of Cultural Resources, spoke at a JMRT luncheon filled with librarians eager to learn about "Public Relations for Libraries." What we learned was that Mr. Ellis is peculiarly adept, for a public relations director, at gaining enemies rather than friends. He told us he intended to insult us professionally, but not personally. Well, he managed to insult us all right. When librarians are called "old fuddy duddies" ("old" mind you at a Junior Members Round Table meeting), we are insulted. When librarians are talked down to, we are insulted. When librarians are told to stop doing things we are not doing, and told to start doing things we have been doing for years, we are insulted. When any speaker substitutes jokes (poor ones at that) and irrelevancies for expected intelligent comments, we are insulted. When we are taken for fools, we are insulted, and we take those insults personally.

Is the good faith of this state's librarians so taken for granted that we will put up with almost any kind of discourtesy and shoddy work? Are North Carolina's librarians going to continue taking this kind of treatment with only a few whimpers and murmurs?

One of the best Biennial Conferences in years was tarnished by two incidents which should not have happened. Let us resolve as librarians that we will not let poor speakers off the hook. Everyone invited to speak at an NCLA function should know in advance that the audience will not tolerate a second-rate performance.

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