

InULA

Innuendo

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THE TRIVIALIZATION OF NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

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Ever since I became aware of the annual spring "celebration" of National Library Week, but increasingly over the last decade as I have come to see NLW as a lost opportunity, I have looked forward to the occurrence with a mixture of annoyance and uneasiness. My general tactic has been to ignore the occasion, on the presumption that it would eventually go away, and of course it always does. It is only in the last few months, following the casual mentioning of my feelings at a meeting of the New Jersey Library Association, that I have decided to take a more assertive stand. My comments at the New Brunswick meeting were followed by sustained spontaneous applause. I had always assumed that my feelings were unique, but now I suspect that there are others who also suffer in silence. It may be time to come out of the closet, and I will be dealing with this issue later this year in my column in *Library Journal*. This audience gets a first reading.

We have known for some time that the general public does not know what librarians do, and largely that what they think they know is wrong. The general impression of public librarians is of individuals stamping due dates into books, and then recalling

those books after they become overdue. These are activities which tend to be annoying, and they are clerical in any case. Few of the individuals I encounter on airplanes in my frequent travels understand why a masters degree is necessary for our profession as they understand it, although most of them are too polite to tell me so to my face.

To counter that public misperception we have the opportunity of National Library Week, or as I would prefer National Librarians Week. However, do we use this opportunity to stress what librarians do, or even more importantly what they could do? We do not. Instead we urge people to READ, and we bolster that simplistic campaign with pictures of boxers, baseball players, ballet dancers, and rock singers, all holding books in their hands. What should people read? Anything at all, because the very process of reading is considered ennobling. My feelings are not as charitable, because I think that some reading could be better supplanted by a vigorous walk in the woods. Where does one find material to read? Why, in the library, of course. What sort of library - good, bad, or indifferent? We really don't say; apparently

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Carla J. Montori

(Carla Montori is the Head, Preservation Department, IU Libraries)

The InULA Publications Committee for 1985-86 is
Jennifer Hehman Fred Musto
Lois McCune Pat Steele
Carla J. Montori, chair Kathy Talalay

Members are drawn from the public and technical services, Bloomington main and branch libraries, and the statewide IU Libraries system, in order to have broad representation on the committee.

This issue's feature article is by Herbert White, Dean of IU's School of Library and Information Service. Dean White looks at the role of the librarian, the public's misperception of that role, and at National Library Week's failure to clear up those misperceptions. He suggests ways in which NLW could be used to improve librarians' public image.

The Publications Committee plans to address a range of topics in upcoming issues of the *InULA Innuendo*. Ideas that have been discussed include the impact of new technologies on libraries and library users, job sharing and job exchanges, branch library development, and the regional campus library system. The committee is also considering an issue written, at least in part, by users of the libraries. The committee is eager to hear from readers with suggestions for articles or for topics of discussion. Contact any Publications Committee member.

InULA PEOPLE

Lois McCune

(Lois McCune is Catalog Consultant in the Monographic Processing Services Department, IU/Bloomington)

Emily Okada is a Reference and Instruction Librarian in the Undergraduate Library. All librarians in UGL (except the Head) have the title Reference and Instruction Librarian, and each librarian has his or her own subject areas of responsibility for collection development. The subject and area librarians are often consulted about purchases. UGL buys basic books and the classics, and Emily's subject areas for collection include sociology and religion, geology, some of the sciences, agriculture, and the DU area of the LC classification which relates to Oceania.

In 1974 Emily received her BA degree from Indiana University. When asked how she had come to choose IU, Emily replied that she had been told, "You can get a good education at IU, or you can get your degree." Emily had also considered the University of Wisconsin for her BA, but there was a great deal of student unrest there in the early 1970's, and she wasn't sure she could deal with that and the big adjustment of leaving her home in Hawaii. After graduation she went to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she worked for about a year as a secretary at Marquette University. She decided to attend library school at the urging of a friend, and she got her MLS in 1976 from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. By that time, the student unrest had died down.

Emily's first library position was in the Films Division of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. After a short time, she transferred to the main branch of the library, which is in downtown Indianapolis. There she did collection development work in social sciences and religious studies. There was a rather unique feature to collection development in that the branch libraries could only do their selection based on what had already been selected for the downtown library.

In the winter of 1981, Emily and her husband left Indianapolis and went to Wisconsin to spend some time with a relative. After this extended vacation, they moved back to Bloomington where they had both done undergraduate work.

When asked if she had any favorite areas of librarianship, Emily replied that she is definitely oriented toward public services. She likes reference work and library instruction, and she enjoys interpreting the library to users. She has taught Q161/L161 which is taught by the UGL librarians on a rotating basis. Last year Emily helped out in the UGL technical services area, and she feels that she learned a lot from that experience. She learned why procedures were set up in particular ways and ended up writing quite a few memos to the UGL reference staff in order to improve their understanding of UGL technical services.

Emily Okada and Julie Bobay are the co-chairs of this year's InULA book sale, which is the chief InULA fund raiser. The proceeds of the sale go to student scholarships, the Dean's fund, and toward publication of InULA Innuendo.

Emily also worked on the sale last year, and she says, "When you've done it once, you realize how much better you can do it." Two things are really important for success: plenty of advance advertising and getting plenty of volunteers to help. People are needed to pick up book donations, to set up the sale and take it down, and to act as cashiers. Many of the volunteers are support staff and SLIS students, and the sale last year could not have succeeded without their help. More librarians are still needed to help, however. A few librarians have faithfully helped year after year, and some of them have real specialties. David Warrington helps to determine the value of many of the book donations, and Lois Heiser is a very dynamic salesperson with her blue light specials and other aggressive hawking techniques.

Emily's hobbies include "food oriented things"—cooking and reading cookbooks. She also enjoys vegetable gardening and sailing, and she says that she "sort of follows" IU basketball. When she was attending high school, her high school was the only one on the island, and the "away" basketball games could only be reached by airplane.



THE TRIVIALIZATION continued

any library will do. I see that as part of our problem. Practically anything with four walls and eight books calls itself a library, and the person who works there, with or without pay and with or without preparation or qualification, is "the librarian." Does National Library Week attempt any distinction between what libraries do and what they could do, and what professional librarians could accomplish? NLW is totally silent on any sort of professional role, and that attitude of course activates our own version of Gresham's Law of Economics. If we can't or won't differentiate between a good and a bad library, then obviously a bad library is politically preferable because it is cheaper.

I worked at IBM with one of the founders of National Secretaries Week. The initial attempt of the movement was to differentiate between true "professional" secretaries and others who falsely (at least in the eyes of the founders) laid claim to the title. National Secretaries Week failed in its original intention because it was quickly taken over by florists and candy manufacturers, who saw the opportunity of a profitable dollar based on the annual expiation of a vague sense of exploitation and guilt. National Secretaries Week failed in the purpose of its founders, but at least there is some payout for everyone whose job title is secretary, and the concentration is still on the individual and not the presumed activity. I have seen no publicity which suggests that this is National Secretaries Week, and that we should celebrate by typing something.

On the academic campus librarians are as much in need of a professional orientation for National Library Week as our colleagues in public libraries. At the more enlightened academic institutions, librarians either have faculty status or (as at Indiana) faculty equivalent status. I suspect that the latter approach is better, because it allows librarians to judge their own professional performance and growth through criteria which are more relevant than those used to evaluate teaching faculty on academic year appointments. Librarians are not faculty, they are the equivalent of faculty, and that means that what they do is not the same thing but just as significant. I would agree with Pauline Wilson that we should concentrate not on pretending that we who work in academic libraries are teaching faculty members, but that what we do is just as complex and just as important. As an individual with a foot in each camp, I would even offer the gratuitous comment that this shouldn't be difficult.

However, the professional role of librarians in the success of academic libraries is not all clear. Faculty certainly do love libraries, as major collections of materials and as impressive edifices. Their love and appreciation for the role of professional librarians to

turn what would otherwise be only a pile of expensive materials into a meaningful information resource is not nearly as clear. Part of this is because professional librarians work largely behind the scenes, performing tasks which faculty do not understand and appreciate and which, because faculty assume they already know everything worth knowing about libraries, they do not think about at all.

Ultimately, your problem with a lack of understanding and visibility for a professional role is not that different from that which faces public librarians, although in many academic libraries (although certainly not all) you have been able to build better systems of protection. Hardly a month goes by without my having to redirect a student who has inadvertently wandered into SLIS while looking for some activity in the Library. Inevitably, they tell me they were sent here by the "librarian" at the circulation desk. We know that public library patrons cannot differentiate between professional librarians (if indeed there are any) and others who work in the library, and it should not surprise us that this fuzziness of distinction also applies to university students. But are we really all that certain that faculty can all tell the difference, and know what professional librarians do? I have some sense of confidence about branch librarians and bibliographers, because here faculty contact can and should be continuous and professional, and between equals. But what about the others, whose work is just as crucial but almost totally unknown and unappreciated?

All of which brings me back to National Library Week. Instead of celebrating NLW through book sales, plant exchanges, and cookie bakes (although I like chocolate as well as anyone and more than most), let us recognize that these activities only perpetuate the misperception and the trivialization. Let us instead use National Library Week, throughout the nation but directly on the academic campus, to point out the contribution that professional librarians make, and to note how crucial that contribution is to the successful work of our colleagues, and to the mission of the University. Not the Library, they already know that. I am talking about the librarians. Let us organize seminars, exhibits, and tours of the Library inner sanctum that most teaching faculty have never seen, and let us show them what we do there and why it is important. I can't predict the initial administration, faculty, and student response to such a campaign and such a celebration. Preconceptions die slowly. But at least it will be a start, and we will be able to tell ourselves after NLW (National Librarians Week) is over that we have at least tried to do something for ourselves and our profession. Every journey starts with one step.

NOTES FROM InULA

Joanne Bailey, President

(Joanne Bailey is a Reference Librarian in the Reference Department, IU/Bloomington)

Make plans now to attend InULA's spring seminar, "Writing for Publication," which will be held Thursday, April 24, in Bloomington. Mary Krutulis and the members of the Continuing Education Committee have arranged a very exciting program with speakers including Jana Bradley, Director of Libraries at DePauw University and author of *Writing for Publication*. Robert Cole, Jr., Editor, *Phi Delta Kappan*, David Kaser, Professor, Indiana University School of Library and Information Science and author of numerous books and articles; and Barbara Markuson, Executive Director of INCOLSA, who will provide a referee's point of view. We look forward to seeing you at the seminar!

Other upcoming events include the National Library Week booksale, our major fund-raising activity. The booksale is being coordinated by Julie Bobay and Emily Okada, and will be held April 8. Rich Paustenbaugh is hard at work planning the second annual InULA auction, scheduled for the business meeting in May. Proceeds from the auction go directly to the InULA Research Incentive Fund.

Several weeks prior to the business meeting, members will receive copies of proposed changes in the InULA Constitution and By-Laws. The two proposed changes are: 1) a clarification of membership categories, and 2) a raise in the membership dues. The current dues structure, established many years ago, does not adequately support InULA's present level of activity, which includes publication of the *InULA Innuendo*, funding for continuing education conferences, a scholarship, the research incentive fund, and many other special projects. We encourage you to give careful consideration to these two items.

Last but not least, we plan to announce the recipients of the InULA Research Incentive Fund at the May business meeting. All applicants should send their forms to me no later than April 15 to ensure consideration.

Happy Spring!

InULA Executive Board, 1985-86



The members of the InULA Executive Board for 1985 include President, Joanne Bailey (Reference Department), Vice-President, Julie Bobay (Instruction & Orientation), Secretary Kristine Brancolini (Media Department), Treasurer, Marilyn Shaver (Cataloging Department); Past President, Barbara Dewey (School of Library and Instructional Science), Members-at-large, Sylvia Burbach (Cataloging) and Barbara Halporn (Subject Specialist for Classics, Philosophy, and Psychology). The members-at-large are responsible for this year's InULA membership drive.

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

The Indiana University Librarians Association will sponsor a full-day seminar on "Writing for Publication" on Thursday, April 24. The program will feature experts on various aspects of the writing and publication process. Featured speakers will include Dr. David Kaser, author, consultant and professor of Library Science, and Dr. Robert Cole, Jr., editor of the *Phi Delta KAPPAN*. Further details will be released soon.

BOOKS, ETCETERA

Library Image/Librarian Image

Pat Steele

(Pat Steele is Librarian in the SLIS library)

The past decade has seen the emergence of public relations as a factor in library management. The more competitive budget environment dictated actions designed to promote libraries and their services. The recognition of the value of professional public relations techniques quickly followed. While public libraries took the lead in this area, a review of the recent literature indicates dramatic growth in academic library interest. In "Bringing the Market to Libraries," David Lewis urges the development of a market system to match services and needs, and to expand awareness of the costs and skills necessary to provide these services.

A search in the public catalog under the heading "Public Relations—Libraries," a survey of *Library Literature* under "Publicity" or "Public Relations of Libraries," or a reading of the annual summary of PR activities in *The ALA Yearbook of Library and Information Services* provides citations on a varied range of books and articles on "selling your library" to the public. Few, however, lead you in the direction Lewis would wish, by pointing out how to showcase and communicate librarians' skills essential in providing competent library service. The literature is beginning to mention the possibilities, if not the techniques

Barbara Conroy suggests that "marketing offers the possibility of changing the librarian's image and emphasis." She advocates marketing as a means of achieving what Wilfrid Lancaster has repeatedly stressed: the profession must shift from its dependence on the library as a facility to reliance on the technical expertise of its practitioners. If individual PR activities must offset the general public's view of the profession, a fresh look at the "how to" books is needed in addition to new activities and new marketing techniques that expand the public's view to include the librarian in building that all important library image.

Note: The Bloomington Library Faculty Standards Committee will soon make a recommendation to the Bloomington Library Faculty Council that information on the professional activities of IU Librarians be forwarded to the Development Officer for dissemination in appropriate news media. This will be a significant step in defining the image of IU librarians.

References

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