

## Letters to the editor

### **Kudos to Newman: Librarians should publish**

The article by John Newman "Academic librarians as scholars" (*C&RL News*, January 1998) is excellent! I totally concur with his thesis and conclusions. He has some very timely ideas. Our profession appears to be in a period of redefining itself, and your suggestions regarding scholarship are extremely appropriate. We work in a wonderful environment of ideas and access to information, which is a genuine benefit to those who appreciate our placement. His call to publish more is an invitation to enhanced personal satisfaction and the possibility of contributing to that special world we inhabit. I was extremely thrilled as I read his article. His personal record of publishing, his articulate manner of writing, his reputation in the field of Vietnam War literature all speak to the authority of his suggesting librarians be more active in research and publishing. Smart administrators will support our scholarship endeavors, and smart librarians will embrace these opportunities aggressively.—*Walter Jones, University of Utah; wjones@alexandria.lib.utah.edu*

### **Stay home from conferences and do research**

I was gratified and happy to read John Newman's recent brief but trenchant article, "Academic librarians as scholars." He said things that have long needed saying, and said them with wit and wisdom. Sometimes a stinking pot needs a good, brisk stir, and he has the strong arm and the big stick to do it with. I especially concur with his questioning the value of conferences. I have attended many, perhaps too many, conferences, and with his encouragement, intend to stay home the next few years. I hope that *C&RL* plans to publish more articles by Newman. I sense that he has lots more to

say on this and related subjects.—*David A. Willson, Green River Community College; dwillson@grcc.ctc.edu*

### **Research does happen at conferences**

In a very short space, I am positive John Newman has without a doubt, managed to capture the attention of a very large group of people in his recent article "Academic librarians as scholars." Thoughts and comments like his are not often seen in print, nor expressed so strongly, in this type of forum, and for a librarian who has been in the profession for a short time (four years), they do cause a moment or two of serious reflection.

I chose to be an academic librarian with the knowledge that I would be expected to publish and participate in the scholarly realms of academia in order to achieve the career success I envisioned. Those of us who enjoy full faculty status, or some iteration thereof, often bristle when we are looked down upon by the teaching faculty and have many arguments ready to defend ourselves and our positions on campus and in academia. But a look at the published literature on any given topic finds too few of us contributing, even at the conferences where the "original" ideas often begin and take shape. Yes, conferences. There is a great

### **Letters to editor are welcome**

*C&RL News* welcomes your signed, typed comments on recent content in our pages or on matters of general interest to the academic or research library profession. Letters may be edited for space constraints. Send your letters to: The Editor, *C&RL News*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611-2795; fax (312) 280-2520; e-mail: medavis@ala.org.

deal of handshaking and meeting and greeting, but there are a great deal of scholarly activities that occur at conferences also. When was the last time Newman attended one? For librarians that is?

Lack of time is a critical consideration, especially when it is coupled with collection management, reference, and meetings; but Newman does have a point in the art of the management of time. Not everyone is willing to give up weekends and nights like he and I do.

And finally, it is relatively easy to do research for a particular topic but not as easy to pull it all together into a coherent, peer-reviewed worthy piece. Let us not forget, the master's degree is considered the terminal degree for this profession, and I'm sure you don't want to start a discussion on library education.—*Teresa Y. Neely, Colorado State University; tneely@manta.library.colostate.edu*

### **Faith in librarians restored by Branch's praise of reading**

I have waited 46 years for an article on reading in any library-related periodical ("The axe for the frozen sea: The value of reading for academic librarians," by Katherine Branch, *C&RL News*, Jan. 1998). When I went to Columbia University's School of Library Service, we were told that libraries provided information, education, and recreation. That's what books do. Personally, they've given me great joy, taught me about the human condition and the glories of the English language; provided me with solace in times of stress and sorrow; professionally helped me to answer patrons' requests; and taught me about subjects I care about and those which don't interest me in the slightest. Working in the social science division of the Brooklyn Public Library was the equivalent of getting a second baccalaureate degree.

I learned many things in school, but I don't remember learning how to read. It seemed as natural as eating or sleeping. My first book was an Elson reader, which I read from cover to cover every night in the first grade.

My first library experience was at a sub-branch of New York Public Library in a converted apartment near the then Bronx campus of New York University. It was so small,

you had to wait in line outside the building to return your books, and then wait in another long line to check out your two books, all that was allowed in the late 1930s. In those days a child wasn't allowed an adult library card until he was in the seventh grade. I went through the children's books from A to Z. I didn't know other libraries existed until a kind lady (in those days I didn't know she was called a librarian) told me about larger branches. I used the High Bridge branch and the Washington Heights branch until I went to college.

I lived in the West Bronx and went to Brooklyn College, which meant three hours a day on the subway. I usually managed to read six books a week on it.

Friends tell me how much fun the Internet is to play with. When I want to find something, my fun is to find it in a book, a vertical file, an information file, or an index, especially if it's a question I never had before. I go to almanacs, dictionaries, general and subject encyclopedias, and thousands of other sources which experience (30 years in the Brooklyn Public Library full time, and 15 years part time at 3 colleges, and my personal library), logic, and my mentor, the late great Marjorie Holt, founder of Brooklyn Public Library's magnificent telephone reference service, told me where the answer would be, and it usually is.

Thank you, Ms. Branch, for restoring my faith in the younger generation of librarians.—*Lillian Tudiver, Brooklyn, New York* ■

### **Register for leadership institute**

Registration is now open for ACRL's first regional institute, "Building Your Leadership Toolkit." Cosponsored by the ACRL New England Chapter and supported by EBSCO, the one-and-a-half-day institute will be held April 30–May 1, 1998, at The Tremont Hotel in Boston.

The practical workshop features plenary sessions by Bob Wedgeworth, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Cliff Lynch, Coalition for Networked Information.

Details may be found at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/leadweb3.html>. Questions? Contact Mary Ellen Davis at (800) 545-2433 ext. 2511, or [medavis@ala.org](mailto:medavis@ala.org).

*This is NOT an*  
**OPTICAL ILLUSION!**

*What you see is*  
**REAL!**

Today, when you place your academic firm orders with  
Baker & Taylor you can receive...

a **40%** first-fill rate\*

and up to

a **40%** discount  
on trade books\*\*

It's plain to see why you should call Baker & Taylor,  
the 1# Domestic Firm Order Supplier for Academic Libraries.  
Talk to your Sales Representative today and see for yourself  
that we're focused on a clearly visible improvement in service!

To set up an account or for sales representative information,  
call Information Services at (800) 775-1800.

\* for imprints on stock publishers \*\* based on potential sales volume and order mix



**BAKER & TAYLOR**  
Information and Entertainment Services

<http://www.baker-taylor.com>