

Library funding effort

The campaign spearheaded by four congressional library champions to maintain funding for federal library programs got off to a good start during National Library Week in April. Reps. Major Owens (D-NY), Jack Reed (D-RI), Pat Williams (D-MT), and Dale Kildee (D-MI) asked their colleagues to sign a joint letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The letter urges the subcommittee to maintain support for each of the currently funded library programs (including Higher Education Act title II) at a level in FY95 at least equal to FY94—\$146,309,000.

Obtaining commitments to sign the letter was a major action item for the 500 library supporters who visited congressional offices on April 19, Library Legislative Day. As of April 25, 57 House members had signed on—a good start, but more work was underway. Since the House funding subcommittee was scheduled to make its recommendations soon after Memorial Day, the campaign will be completed by the time this column reaches readers.

Meeting with the president

“Give libraries more money—not less—so they can buy more books and computers and more people can get smarter.” That was the message delivered by nine-year-old Alexandria Johnson in a visit with President Clinton on April 22. She was accompanied by her mother, Elizabeth Johnson, ALA president Hardy Franklin, and ALA executive director Peggy Sullivan. Alexandria’s statement about how the library changed her life was selected as one of the three most inspirational from more than 10,000 letters received during the first year of ALA’s “Libraries Change Lives” campaign.

Franklin presented a pen bearing the message “Do the Write Thing for Libraries!” and urged the president to restore the administration’s proposed cuts in library funding. He

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noted that federal funding for libraries comes to only about 57 cents per capita—the cost of the pen. Franklin described the President’s reaction as “sympathetic but noncommittal.”

Hearing on libraries and the NII

Library Legislative Day participants swelled the overflow crowd at the April 19 hearing by the Senate Subcommittee on Education,

Arts and the Humanities on Libraries and Their Role in the Information Infrastructure. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) chaired the hearing and said: “Libraries can provide such things as access, education and training, navigation, archiving, and cataloging of information on the superhighway in a unique way.” Simon committed himself to seeking ways to help librarians do this. Librarians from across the country testified about what services in their libraries were enhanced by electronic data transmission, and why supportive federal policy and assistance were needed.

Librarian of Congress James Billington testified, followed by an impressive technology demonstration of LC’s Internet capabilities, the LC MARVEL system, and image scanning and processing; Jeanne Hurley Simon, chair of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, also testified. Representing ALA were president Hardy Franklin, director of the D.C. Public Library, and Agnes Griffen, director of the Montgomery County Public Libraries, Rockville, Maryland. Franklin appended comments from librarians and others compiled in response to a call from the ALA Washington Office to submit information electronically for the hearing record.

Public interest summit on NII

A Public Interest Summit called “Shaping the National Information Infrastructure” (NII) was held in Washington, D.C., on March 29, co-sponsored by the Benton Foundation, other foundations, and the Clinton administration’s Information Infrastructure Task Force. Vice-President Al Gore gave the keynote speech, notable for his assurance that the NII would

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articles on health care legislation, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and the February meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. This last piece contained the splendid quote, "The things we know we do not know are much more obvious than the things we think we know but do not."

The Opinion section contained a commentary by the president of a biotechnology firm warning scientists that they are taking the government's health plan "too casually."

A complete list of the top ten articles of 1993 was reported in the Research section along with the bibliographic citation, rank, and the number of articles that cited them. This ranking was based on the findings by the Institute for Scientific Information's citation analysis of research journals for that year.

The Tools & Technology section is devoted to announcing and reviewing new laboratory equipment and computer software. Two articles on DOE (Design-Of-Experiment) software were in the issue I reviewed. The section probably comes closest to giving the active scientist useful information related to his or her research.

A report of an undergraduate women's science study program was the feature article in the Profession section. This section also contained short profiles of two Alzheimer's researchers and an obituary.

THE SCIENTIST is truly a bargain to those on the Internet. Paper subscriptions cost \$58 per year. You don't get the cartoons or crossword puzzle but all of the substance is there. While this is a resource that is obviously designed for the life sciences researcher who wants to be "in the know," it is also of value to science undergraduates who sometimes labor

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look more like the Internet than like the multichannel, video-on-demand model. He indicated the need for safeguards against monopoly control of the NII, and repeated the administration's commitment to connecting educational institutions, libraries, and hospitals.

Panels included administration officials together with representatives of the nonprofit, education, and library communities. One panel included Jean Armour Polly, director of user services for NYSERNET in New York State, and a public library Internet pioneer. Other panelists mentioned libraries as information providers and access points repeatedly. ■

under the impression that their chosen field is all facts and figures. For them, I believe, reading *THE SCIENTIST* will bring a more human and honest picture of their future workplace. —Jim Rible, Southern Oregon State College

EDUCOM Gopher. Access: gopher://gopher.educum.edu.

EDUCOM, an organization which assists higher education institutions in implementing and managing technology, maintains a gopher server of resources related to its mission.

This gopher will be of primary interest to college- and university-level librarians, faculty, and administrators, whether or not their institution maintains a membership in EDUCOM. All of EDUCOM's major publications, including the *EDUCOM Review Magazine*, *EDUPAGE*, and *The Update*, are available electronically through this gopher. Information on EDUCOM's special programs, such as the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative, is included. In addition, conferences and other events are announced here. Elementary and secondary teachers and education majors could also benefit from some of the information.

Maintained by staff at EDUCOM who update it at least biweekly, the gopher is a source of up-to-date information. On the Internet for slightly over one year, *EDUCOM Gopher* plans no major changes, but future development plans include moving toward integrating the resources currently located in the gopher into the World Wide Web (WWW).

EDUCOM Gopher provides links to the CAUSE and CREM gopher services. CAUSE and CREM are other organizations which are also interested in information technology in higher education.

This gopher is well-organized and user-friendly. While there is no directory or map of the gopher, the menu choices are well-worded and point the user in the proper direction. The ease of retrieving the full text of articles in EDUCOM publications is a good feature, since the information is posted to the gopher as soon as the publication is issued. One informative publication for busy professionals is *EDUPAGE*, a weekly digest of technology issues as they relate to education. The events calendar includes complete contact information. Through this gopher, much information on educational technology can be quickly and easily obtained.—Ann M. Tenglund, St. Bonaventure University ■