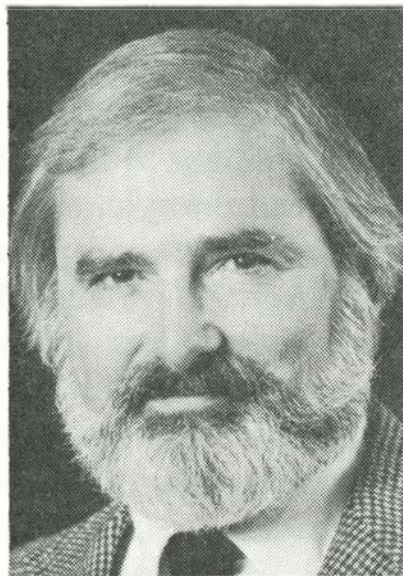

College librarians seek national advice

By William A. Moffett

Chair, ACRL College Libraries Section

College librarians will experiment with a national council at the ACRL chapter level.

The College Libraries Section is trying something new. In anticipation of the ACRL strategic planning process as well as in an attempt to forge links between the CLS Executive Committee and college librarians active at the ACRL chapter level, the section is currently engaged in setting up a national advisory council. It will have its first meeting at ALA Conference in Chicago on Saturday morning, July 6. Section members who have been looking for ways to become more involved in the life of the section are urged to attend or write for a report.



William A. Moffett

We recently invited presidents and chairs of the various ACRL chapters to nominate representatives from among the college librarians already active in their chapters. We have deliberately allowed for a good deal of self-selection too, because the primary consideration is one's willingness to assist us in making the section more effective in meeting the interests of its membership.

Why is that important? If the CLS does not succeed in becoming more responsive to the needs of

college libraries, who then will represent the interests of the small and medium-sized institutions?

The problem of better representation in ACRL, which has increasingly tended to reflect the concerns of its other constituencies, is a particularly difficult one for our section to solve, constituted as it is of a large and extremely diverse membership. It has been virtually impossible to get the membership as a whole caught up in the activities of the section, especially as the work of the section has traditionally been conducted almost entirely at the annual and midwinter meetings which the great majority of members do not attend. Developing new leaders has been haphazard at best because the system discourages many good librarians from ever getting involved. There has been absolutely no connection between the activities of college librarians at the chapter level and the national level, and no very clear expression of our constituency's needs and expectations. The needs are probably substantial; the expectations are not. We don't even know each other very well, much less what we can expect of one another.

We are especially aware of the problem when participating in the annual nomination and election of executive committee officers. With little national visibility for college librarians, there has been a tendency for the membership to rely on name recognition, with the predictable bias towards directors over rank-and-file librarians, and

towards those affiliated with better-known institutions in thickly populated regions, especially the Midwest and Middle Atlantic. A truly representative national council might enable us to overcome this tendency.

We think it would also respond to expressions of concern from a number of members who have felt left out, or who have charged that the programs sponsored by the executive committee are not relevant. Participation in the national advisory council might also provide a means of maintaining an active role for persons who have previously served on CLS committees and task forces. All too often in the recent past these people have dropped out of touch, and whatever they learned from their

former participation has been lost to the incumbent leadership.

The purpose of the council and the future of the section will be the only items on the agenda for the membership meeting in Chicago on July 6. If what is planned as a three-year experiment proves to have the value many of us think it has, we will eventually take the steps necessary to amend our by-laws and make it a permanent body.

Incidentally, we are joining the university library section in sponsoring a program on July 7 entitled, "Defining the Academic Librarian," and the CLS Executive Committee meets on July 9. Kibitzers are cordially welcome. We hope you'll come. ■■

★ ★ ★

News from the Field

Acquisitions

• The Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, has acquired the important manuscript library of the now defunct China Trade Museum, formerly of Milton, Massachusetts. The gift consists of over 50 linear feet of manuscripts plus a large collection of graphic and photographic material and 42 annotated navigation charts. A large segment of the acquisition, spanning the years 1732–1930, consists of the papers of three generations of the Forbes family: Robert Bennet, Francis Blackwell, and Francis Murray Forbes, Boston merchants. The collection surveys the China Trade from various points of view. The Samuel Austin papers provide a good insight into the China market, while those of Captain Eben Linnell record the trade and times from the quarterdeck. Samuel Shaw, first American consul at Canton, presents the view from China, the Lewis Wharf papers and Thomas Lewis papers reveal the Boston scene, while the papers of Charles A. Tomes relate his work as an agent for Russell and Company.

• Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, has received an extensive collection of state and national historical literature from newspaper publisher Warren Shonert. The Presidential Signature Series consists of portraits and photos of every President from Washington to Reagan, accompanied by authenticated signatures and personal or biographical notes. Memorabilia from past Presidential and Congressional campaigns add color and scope. The 1,500-title book collection contains Civil War literature, Kentucky history, and works on Abraham Lincoln, and is richly enhanced by several rare works, including John

Filson's *Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky*. The acquisition also includes numerous Civil War artifacts, many from the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky.

• The University of California, Los Angeles, has acquired a large number of books and documents, including much scarce and unique material, from the estate of the late Han Yu-shan, the first professor of Chinese history at UCLA. The collection is Han's personal library which he had started as a student in China sixty years ago. Highlights of the collection include: 500 examination papers and other papers related to China's civil service system dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries; materials describing individual private academies which prepared many candidates for the civil service examinations; a complete set of printing blocks for the *Diamond Sutra* (Chin-kang ching), one of the most highly regarded of the Buddhist scriptures; 24 manuscript patents from a superior conferring a promotion or other mark of distinction on someone for outstanding achievement in a scholarly or human field of endeavor, such as unusual filial piety; and a 1775 Japanese reprint of an early Chinese herbal, the *Cheng-lei pen-ts'ao*.

• The University of California, Santa Barbara, has been given a collection of maps of the 16th–18th centuries by Peggy A. Maximus, of Santa Barbara. Printed from copper plate engravings, the 310 maps of various regions of Europe were drawn by 12 master mapmakers, among them Gerhardus Mercator, Willem Blaeu, and Abraham Ortelius. Many of the maps originally had been published as part of bound atlases and later removed.

• The University of Michigan Library, Ann Ar-