

Letters

Moving Collections

To the Editor:

While Mr. Amodeo's heart is undoubtedly in the right place and his advice for the careful handling of books in transit seems generally sound (*C&RL News*, March 1983, pp. 82-83), it is doubtful that all of his recommendations are practical for a large scale move. In particular, loading both sides of each shelf of a booktruck prior to proceeding to the next shelf would easily double or triple the time required to load, and then to unload, a booktruck.

One side should be loaded entirely, the booktruck repositioned, and the other side loaded (or unloaded). While some care must be taken to avoid tipping the truck when only one side is loaded, this rapidly becomes second nature to "loading" and "unloading" personnel.

In addition to consideration of book preservation, booktruck preservation must also be considered. Loading both sides of the top shelf first, as Amodeo suggests, is a sure way to loosen up booktruck joints. Whenever possible, booktrucks should be loaded from the bottom to the top.

While little of this advice may seem crucial for the movement of a few sections or ranges, it was essential for the movement of more than 1,000,000 books during the renovation of Watson Library at the University of Kansas.—*Clifford H. Haka, Information Librarian, Michigan State University.*

To the Editor:

As one who has directed the moves of two academic libraries involving a few hundred thousand volumes on long caravans of book carts, please believe me that it never occurred to any of us to load only partially each tier on book carts and then support the loose materials with wrapped bricks. On book carts having three tiers, we loaded only the top two shelves with bound and unbound materials in an upright position. All items were loaded snugly from end to end on each book cart so that nothing could fall off during transit. No items were damaged from the so-called crushing effect and no items fell off the book carts.

Using household bricks to support loose materials is a poor idea in my opinion because of the unnecessary added weight to each loaded book cart and the wasted space used by bricks where books could be placed. However, my main concern would be the danger of loose bricks slipping off book carts and landing on someone's toes. Besides, in California, land of stucco and cedar, household bricks are hard to find.—*Paul M. Leverenz, Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library, La Jolla, California.*

The author responds:

My major concern with moving research collections was damage, not speed. Stressing speed over

care can save minutes, but costs hours in repair, re-binding, replacement, staff time, and money. If two people load and unload, repositioning the cart is unnecessary, extra time is minimal, and the level of care is better.

Loading a cart from the bottom up *does* seem better. The cart would then never be top-heavy.

In their major 1982 move, the Newberry Library used a padded "bookcase on wheels," tilted inward, with good success. A high level of care was specified in the contract with the movers and supervision by library staff was made an integral part of the moving process.

Bricks or bookends were meant to be used as supports for loading or unloading, and only for transport when the cart is not completely filled and the materials are overly loose.—*Anthony J. Amodeo.*

To the Editor:

I urge any library moving into new facilities to see that the book shelves are installed on the stack at a distance of 12 inches between shelves if a large portion of the collection is composed of bound serials.

I once worked for a library that moved into a new building. The crew of the company that installed the book shelves put the shelves 11 inches apart. Since most of the bound volumes were serials that were 11 or more inches in height, we would have been unable to put the volumes on the shelves. Even if the volumes were under 11 inches, many of them would have been damaged by future use as patrons tried to pry them out from between the shelves.

It took three people approximately one month to reset 26,000 three-foot long book shelves so that they were 12 inches apart. Fortunately the error was discovered two months before the move, or there would have been serious problems at moving time.—*Thomas K. Lindsey, Lubbock, Texas.*

To the Editor:

Check the tie bars (if there are any) across the top of the stacks. If they have been re-used they may have so many holes in them that they no longer are as strong as they should be. If the stacks are free-standing, or if the tie bars are not sufficiently strong, be especially careful when one side of the range is unloaded. If someone were to trip or otherwise move the center of gravity past the base (which is not hard to do when one is loaded and the other is not) the domino effect will create a real disaster.

Depending on the type of stack, it might be wise to check the base to make certain it can handle being unevenly loaded. If, after checking the stacks, you have some fear that they might tip over, either install temporary tie bars to them, making certain to carry them all the way to the walls on both ends, or design some other method of assuring that they cannot fall over.—*Michael D. Kathman, Director of Libraries, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.* ■■