

## Continuing Education

# Role of the Local Professional Association in Continuing Education

It is axiomatic that in almost all areas of endeavor today the training and education for professional activity are no longer a prescribed program but rather a continuum of refresher courses, workshops, programs, and conferences. All of these enlarge the participants' skills and increase their understanding of their environment and their role in it. This is especially true of librarianship; a growing awareness exists of the need to expand and improve upon the knowledge and skills of academic librarians.

Library schools have not been able to fill this need for the continuing education of practicing librarians very well for two reasons. Since there are relatively few library schools, many librarians do not have access to their resources. Second, most library schools, despite their genuine interest in and enthusiasm for continuing education, already have heavy commitments with their full-time student bodies. In fairness to the library schools, it must be noted that the practicing librarian often feels unable to commit the amount of time required for formal courses.

If these formal avenues of education are somewhat closed, where can the academic librarian look for assistance? At this point, one is reminded of the vital role that professional associations at all levels can play. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill the "Librarians Association" was formed in 1972. It is composed of all professional librarians on the campus, including the staffs of the Academic Affairs Library, the Law Library, Health Sciences, the Library School faculty and doctoral students, and several departmental libraries.

In the past eight years, the association has provided many educational activities for its members. It holds regular monthly meetings on topics ranging from curriculum reform to operational efficiency to White House conference reports. In addition, the association has sponsored several very successful conferences, which attracted colleagues from the local area as well as surrounding states. In 1976, the conference topic was library management, with speakers covering the following areas: interpersonal relationships in supervision, effective presentation of ideas, and long-range planning and budgeting. Collection development was the theme of the 1977 conference, with special emphasis on the systems used by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,

Duke, and the University of Virginia. In 1979, a conference on "Library Research for Librarians" was designed to help the practicing librarian identify research topics, devise appropriate methodology, evaluate research, and prepare articles for publication as suitable. In 1980, the conference will focus upon reference services and have the theme "Meeting the Needs of the Library's Public."

The educational benefits of attending such programs and conferences should be obvious. Other advantages are gained, however, not just from the content presented but from the experiences shared as well. At Chapel Hill, the Health Sciences and the Law Library as well as several departmental libraries are physically separate from the Academic Affairs Library. Communication and cooperation are increased as common concerns and problems are shared with other association members. Librarians also establish contact with other people who might prove helpful in daily work.

The local association has several distinct advantages over regional or national associations in preparing programs or workshops. One advantage, of course, is familiarity with the audience—their backgrounds and levels of experience. Second, the local association can tailor its programs to the specific needs and interests of its membership. Finally, because committee members are physically close together, it is easier to plan and coordinate a program (a multitude of meetings and differing schedules notwithstanding). The cost should, of course, be less when committee members do not have to make long-distance telephone calls or travel to other towns. In addition, committee service and program participation at the local level can provide excellent opportunities for younger librarians to develop skills (e.g., organizational and public speaking skills) that readily transfer to service in larger organizations.

The local association, of course, can never replace the regional or national associations, but it can provide supplemental enrichment especially in times of tight budgets, when travel money is scarce.—*Janet L. Flowers.*

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Inside Washington by James D. Lockwood  
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Higher Education Act Extension: As of mid-June it still was not clear when the HEA extension (S. 1839) would be taken up on the floor of the Senate. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee issued a 430-page report to accompany this bill on May 15. The report (S. Rept. 96-733) reveals the thinking behind some of the actions of the Committee.

The report attributes a dramatic reduction in the total dollar amounts authorized under the Title II College Library Resources, Training and Demonstration, and Research Libraries programs to current federal budget constraints. The total ceiling for these programs has been reduced to \$23 million in 1981 from \$140 million in the current year. This unusually low upper limit is not likely to hold down actual appropriations for FY 1981, however, because spending cuts in all areas will severely cramp appropriations. But, were the mood of the economy to improve, we could approach FY 1982 with an absolute cap of only \$11.9 million for College Libraries, \$5.1 million for Training and Demonstrations, and \$9 million for Research Libraries.

College librarians wondering what happened to the Carter administration proposal to establish need-based criteria for Title II-A grants can relax. The bill passed by the House last November (H.R. 5192) did not include this proposal, and the Senate committee report has followed suit.

Research librarians should note that the Senate committee report encouraged the Secretary of Education to make sure that the same small number of institutions do not repeatedly receive the Title II-C Research Libraries grants.

National Periodical Center/System: Although the final version of this entity probably will be a hybrid of the House and Senate versions of the National Periodical Center/System, the same Senate report (S. Rept. 96-733) is worth consulting, as it reveals some of the committee members' apprehensions about the House version which authorizes \$15 million for a center. The Senate approach is to authorize a system design which would then need Senate approval prior to implementation.

Federal Documents and Information Policy: Current endeavors (H.R. 5424) to attempt a massive revision of the public printing and documents laws (Title 44, U.S. Code) appear to be faltering, at least for this session. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (H.R. 6410), a related effort to place much of federal information policy decision making within the Office of Management and Budget, has sailed through the House and is expected to clear the Senate in similar form. A third development requiring immediate attention is a proposed OMB policy titled "Improved Management and Dissemination of Federal Information" (Federal Register, vol. 45, June 9, p. 38461-63). Public comments on this policy are due July 25.

This will be Jim Lockwood's final "Inside Washington" column. Lockwood has accepted a position with the Oregon State Library, and will leave the ALA Washington Office at the end of July.