

know handled a situation like this by suggesting that all present introduce themselves and describe their duties. This suggestion relaxed the group and led to the discussion of a number of interesting issues.

Now to focus on my second point. What can the interview process tell you about the library? Even before the interview the institution should provide you with materials about the library, the school, and perhaps the city or locale to help you prepare. You should receive: a job description and specifications, a library organization chart, pertinent personnel policies, insurance and retirement plans. Potential employers should describe in writing the conditions of employment that go with a job. If they do not, you may question their procedures and their consideration for the important decision you may have to make.

Note the kinds of questions you are asked during your interview. All should be directly job-related. If you want the job, you may be willing to respond to illegal, personal questions. But be

aware that an organization that finds information like this of interest may not be one in which you wish to work.

You may be interviewed by the entire staff of the department in which you would be working, or you may be interviewed by only a few top people. The way this is handled may tell you something about the management style of the library.

Some people use a stress-inducing interviewing technique. The idea is to see how you handle yourself under pressure. Other interviewers will help you over the rough spots with ego-building friendliness, while they probe for information. Here again, you have an opportunity to see how people in the library operate.

To summarize, there are two basic issues involved in interviewing that will help promote your professional survival: preparing for the interview so as to put your best foot forward and using the interview to help you determine whether a given library position would be the best for you. ■■

## Continuing Education

# Career Goals—Achieved through Continuing Education

One is tempted to brand “continuing education” a fad because a number of institutions and organizations are now rushing—or being pushed—to embrace the concept. Needless to say, this has come none too early for the library profession and for each of us as individual academic librarians.

ALA has begun, just as have other organizations, to assume a leadership role in continuing education. A Council resolution passed in January calls for the creation of a comprehensive ALA plan for continuing education. It will be interesting to see what the plan will be and how it will be implemented.

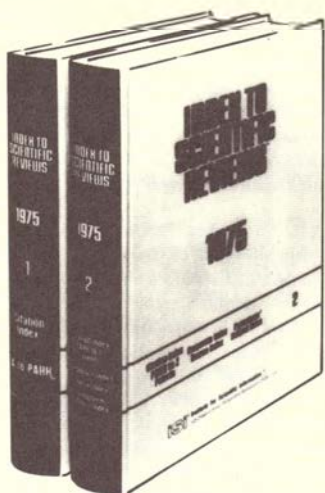
We academic librarians, like other professionals, should be careful, however, that in a frenzied rush to update credentials, to acquire new skills, and to gain new knowledge, we do not simply take any continuing education offering we can get our hands on, just for the sake of participating in continuing education. If we do, we will be disappointed, and the concept of continuing education will suffer.

We must determine, through individual career goal analysis and commitment, the kind of program we each need to fulfill our individual goals. This is an often overlooked but vital step in the whole lifelong learning process. It is only after such self-analysis that the individual will be able

to capitalize on the many offerings in increasingly varied formats—including self-directed study (reading, correspondence courses, etc.), teleconferencing, or other programs, in both traditional and nontraditional formats. In other words, all activities undertaken as a part of a career development program should be goal-oriented. Although many of us may participate in continuing education in its broadest definition, only a few ever manage to concentrate on and direct our activities and energies toward that career goal. I must stress again that most of us have participated in haphazard or sporadic education rather than a continuous or ongoing one. Instead of simply having a group of isolated, unplanned, and unintegrated learning experiences, we must move to the point where we can experience sequential modules of learning that will have a continuous and cumulative impact on our individual career development. When this has been achieved, then we can truly fulfill our continuing education obligations.—*Robert D. Stuart.*

*Editor's Note: Robert D. Stuart is dean, Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. He is a member of ALA Council's Standing Committee on Library Education and a member of the Planning Committee for the recently held ALA Continuing Education Forum.* ■■

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