

Inside Washington

James D. Lockwood
Assistant Director
ALA Washington Office

This column will regularly offer comments on developments in Washington having potential significance for college and research libraries and their users. The primary focus will be on federal programs that enhance library budgets rather than on statutes and regulations of a general nature (e.g., copyright, handicapped access, etc.).

There are a number of sources of federal subsidies for library activities. First, there are scattered federal subsidies that, when taken as a whole, comprise a significant body of aid to libraries. These subsidies have the effect of reducing the costs of a wide variety of library activities. The Special Fourth Class Library (postage) Rate, work-study funding, and an assortment of Library of Congress programs are examples of subsidies that aid college and research libraries.

Second, the many federal grant programs provide an important source of funds for college and research libraries. These programs range from prisoner education projects to foreign language training programs. In a forthcoming issue, this column will comment on some of the opportunities as well as the pitfalls associated with the grant applications process.

Third, one must mention the federal programs designed specifically to aid college and research libraries. They are the College Library Resources program, the Library Training and Demonstration Grants programs, and the Research Libraries Resources program. Known also as Titles II-A, B, and C, respectively, of the Higher Education Act, these programs often provide a shot-in-the-arm for library budgets beleaguered by inflation and increased patron demand.

The existence of such a wide variety of programs has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is that librarians have difficulty keeping track of such a diverse assortment of programs. This difficulty, coupled with the fact that many of the programs, standing alone, contribute a relatively minor portion of most college and research library budgets, makes for less vigilance on the part of librarians (even though they might stand to lose if a given program were to be curtailed). Thus, a cut in the Library of Congress budget or an increase in the Special Library Book Rate may not elicit an effective response from the large, yet widely dispersed, body of librarians. Simply put, scattered programs make difficult targets and difficult rallying points.

But therein lies an advantage. Scattered pro-

grams not only make difficult targets for supporters, they make difficult targets for legislators seeking "fat" to trim during years characterized by drives for balanced budgets and calls for "austerity." A diversity among library programs is the welcome equivalent of not having all of one's eggs in the same basket.

In future issues of the *News*, an attempt will be made to clarify the significance of various federal subsidy programs and to trace their evolution. Efforts are now underway to amend and extend the Higher Education Act. This matter, of great importance to college and research librarians, will be the focus of this column in the May issue.

Editor's Note: Beginning with this issue, James Lockwood of the Washington Office of ALA will contribute a regular column to C&RL News. Lockwood was formerly reference librarian, Indiana University School of Law, Bloomington. ■■

ALA Dallas Conference on a National Periodicals Center

A conference on a National Periodicals Center will be held on June 24 between 8 and 10 p.m. at the ALA Conference in Dallas.

The program will begin with a presentation on a National Periodicals Center by C. Lee Jones, program officer of the Council on Library Resources, and Nancy E. Gwinn, also program officer of the council.

Following the presentation, members of a reactor panel will speak briefly on the advantages and disadvantages of a National Periodicals Center from the standpoint of four types of libraries.

The panel will consist of Richard DeGennaro, director, University of Pennsylvania Libraries; Donald J. Sager, commissioner, Chicago Public Library; Aphrodite Mammoulides, librarian, Bellaire Research Center Library, Shell Development Co., Houston, Texas; and Thomas F. Jaques, state librarian, Louisiana State Library.

A question-and-answer period will conclude the program. The conference will be sponsored by the ACRL College Libraries Section, the ACRL Community and Junior College Libraries Section, the ACRL Legislation Committee, and the RTSD Serials Section. Presiding at the conference will be James T. Dodson, director, University of Texas at Dallas Library.