

# Letters

To the Editor:

W. A. Moffett's article "The Academic Job Crisis . . .," (*CRL*, May 1973), warrants special attention.

Indeed, academic libraries should seize the opportunity of today's job market and recruit librarians with Ph.D.s as subject specialists or otherwise. The Ph.D. remains the major distinguishing factor in the academic community between the librarian and the teaching faculty. Special efforts to bridge this gap will certainly enrich and upgrade the profession as a whole. Furthermore, the new recruits will provide an impetus for the librarian's drive for full faculty status with all its rights and responsibilities.

However, a word of caution should be in order here. In recruiting Ph.D. candidates, one should be reasonably sure to see first that they are of outstanding caliber and second to assess carefully the degree of their commitment to the library profession. Libraries should not serve as a stepping stone to teaching positions. This could be partially demonstrated by the candidate's willingness to obtain an MLS in addition to his subject specialty. An MLS degree should not be sacrificed as it offers the education that is basic to the library profession.

One may argue the need to revise the library school curricula not only to accommodate the new breed of librarians but to meet the continuous changes in the academic community.

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To the Editor:

Mr. Moffett's article in the May *CRL* was prefaced by a call for comment on the question of whether a library degree was important for a subject specialist Ph.D. This note, delayed by my vacation, offers one response.

My own feeling is that this question was answered fully and fairly by Phyllis A. Richmond in her article, "The Subject Ph.D. and Librarianship," in *CRL* for March 1957, p.123 ff. Rather than summarize this article, I earnestly invite your attention to it. It is clear, coherent, and cogent; indeed, I wish I had written it myself. In it, Ms. Richmond shows that "the library school provides some very essential knowledge which the Ph.D., for all his lengthy training, lacks" (p.124).

For the record, my own background is B.A. Yale (Honors English), M.A., Ph.D. Princeton (Medieval & Ren. English), and M.S. Columbia (Lib. Serv.).

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To the Editor:

W. A. Moffett's article, "The Academic Job Crisis" (May *CRL*) is thoughtful and well presented, but far from definitive. My comments and questions are presented more or less at random. No originality is claimed for them, and no answers may be possible for some of the questions at this time. If they keep the discussion going, they will be serving their purpose.

Moffett's article about bringing in subject specialists from the academic world into the library in order to improve library service begs the question as to how good or bad current library staffs are. If library staffs are inadequate, is the fault to be found in the education of librarians, the quality of people who become librarians, or is it due to unfortunate organization of the individual library and the profession so that librarians are not placed properly and are not free to function according to their ability?

How much subject knowledge should the subject specialist have minimally and how much librarianship does he need? Is it

easier to send a librarian to school to keep up with a subject, or to send a subject specialist to school to learn librarianship? Assuming that university librarians should have two master's degrees, does the doctoral dissertation make one a better librarian? Does teaching experience? How will the salaries of the new subject specialists compare with those of library school graduates? Can the library hang on very long to Ph.D.s unless they get good salaries, in case the academic job market should improve? Does that mean that library school graduates will continue to get the disgustingly low salaries they now get, or will their salaries be raised? Will libraries develop a caste system, with subject specialists not speaking to catalogers? Will the M.A.L.S. degree be a hindrance to promotion, as some paranoiacs now claim it may be?

I have a hunch, and only a hunch, that the typical academic library is a hierarchy much too old-fashioned and rigid, that librarians have far too little mobility, that it is difficult for the librarian to participate to the best of his ability in academic and professional affairs, and to make a name for himself, and that it is therefore much easier for the academician to get the more glamorous library positions of subject specialist or administrator than it is for a librarian to achieve status. A recent job announcement calls for 10 years' experience in a university library. One can get to be governor or an industrial executive with less experience.

There is no question but that many librarians in the past were mickey mouse people, satisfied with mickey mouse positions. When Archibald MacLeish came to the Library of Congress, he found nonlibrarian Jerome Wiesner much more interesting to talk to than the trained librarians on the staff. Some of these weak sisters—I apologize for the term—may still be around, but the newer crop of librarians seems to have better intellectual, educational, and personal qualifications. Professional work in a library demands a high degree of all of these, and should be judged individually and not on the basis of formal degrees and experience.

Libraries are not static. Library people should have mobility, both within the library world and within related professions.

They must have the opportunity to grow by taking courses, workshops, or by informal means, just like other professionals. The Ph.D. coming into the library will probably profit from some library courses, but may have no need for a library degree. The good academician should be allowed to chart his own course.

The academic library is a complex institution, like the multiversity, the hospital or the space program, which employ many professions. Not everybody working in the library has to be a librarian. It is more important to get the best people and give them a chance to do their job.

*John Neufeld*

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To the Editor:

In the May issue of *CRL*, Dr. Moffett feels that the academic job crisis is a potential boon for the library profession because libraries may now be able to recruit unemployed nonlibrary Ph.D.s. As an academic library director with a biology Ph.D. and a library M.S., I am responding to the editor's request for opinions on Dr. Moffett's article.

I agree with the author's assumption that a subject Ph.D. and related experience can be very helpful in improving relationships between the librarian and the rest of an academic institution. I find that having the degree both promotes a feeling of equality between the parties and, in addition, gives the librarian insight regarding the needs of the teaching and research interests.

I do not agree, however, with Dr. Moffett's suggestion that libraries should seek Ph.D.s directly from the subject disciplines because this implies that a library degree is superfluous. I have found my library M.S. to be an important asset for at least three reasons. First, it denotes to my institution's M.D.s and Ph.D.s that I should be more qualified than they to comprehend and deal with library matters. Without this sign of formal education, they would consider that my only possible claim to superior library expertise might be some practical experience shelving books. Next, the masters degree allows me to maintain a normal professional relationship with other librarians by indicating to both me and them that I

have gone through an accepted library training regimen and thus, presumably, am as competent as they to discuss the subtleties of librarianship. Finally, the coursework and personal contacts that were associated with attending library school have given me a nucleus of information and acquaintanceships upon which to build while developing my library and expanding my professional interests.

I think Dr. Moffett's article is useful because it focuses attention upon forces which are raising the normal educational requirements for librarians. No sooner has the library bachelors degree been virtually supplanted by the masters than the doctorate is now becoming increasingly common in library circles. The job shortage, of course, accelerates this trend by providing library schools with more and better qualified applicants.

I believe, however, that the author is needlessly worried about the ability of and, in fact, the desirability for library schools to respond to his so-called challenge by altering curricula and currying Ph.D.s. The same subject matter that is useful to a recent B.A. is similarly needed by a Ph.D. with no library background, so why should a graduate library program give special consideration to such Ph.D.s?

Also, rather than launching a recruitment drive to snare jobless Ph.D.s I think the schools should, instead, be extra cautious to guard against accepting Ph.D.s who are merely marking time until jobs become available in their subject areas. A Ph.D. who is interested in a library career presumably would be sufficiently familiar with her or his own institutional library to seek out its director and find out how to prepare for a role in the library profession.

Finally, it should be noted that Dr. Moffett extrapolates from the specific advantages of having Ph.D.s as academic librarians to the generalization that recruiting Ph.D.s would be a good thing for librarianship as a whole. Because nonacademic (e.g., school, public, government, and special) library positions greatly outnumber those in academic libraries, it would be regretful if library schools were to so favor Ph.D. applicants that these highly-educated scholars would culminate their library edu-

cation by vying for the privilege of running a circulation desk in a small town library.

*Donald J. Morton*

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To the Editor:

W. A. Moffett's article in *CRL* for May 1973 ("The Academic Job Crisis: A Unique Opportunity, Or Business as Usual?") sets out what ought to be, for librarians in a position to hire other librarians, a nonproblem.

That there are large numbers of persons with Ph.D.s marauding around America need concern librarians only to the extent that such a phenomenon dismays the average citizen.

It would be a happy conjunction of circumstances should individuals holding doctorates in fields of use to academic libraries actually find employment in such institutions. But these persons ought properly to have degrees in library science.

It's important to have the proper measure of respect for the Ph.D. degree. The possession of a doctorate doesn't grant the franking privilege or allow its holder to enter my room unannounced, and it would make little sense to elevate the degree to the point where we are willing to relax library standards to accommodate such people into our ranks so that, and this is the final irony, our own positions vis-à-vis the teaching faculty might be enhanced.

What we ought to get in the habit of doing is not recruiting Ph.D. subject specialists into libraries but rather into library schools.

I think the answer to Moffett's article lies in reconciling the elements of his title. The academic job crisis is very likely an opportunity for libraries to hire highly-degreed persons and in so doing to strengthen the profession and help take the unemployed off the streets. But libraries, in their own best interests, and in the interests of their clientele, ought to insist that these subject-specialists hold MLS degrees from ALA accredited library schools. Which is business as usual.

One has respect for E. M. Forster's admonition: "Only connect." But when, with whom, and under what circumstances is

more than a quibble, the mastery of these matters is the implied significance of the command.

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To the Editor:

Leo N. Flanagan, in his article "Professionalism Dismissed?" (*CRL*, May) presents a well-reasoned argument for his case that librarianship, as it exists now, is not a profession. What I cannot accept, however, is his proposed solution. Mr. Flanagan seems to feel that a "deeper and longer library-school education" would help librarians to "make themselves professionals." Yet, most librarians, unlike doctors, lawyers, or even teachers are forced to work within hierarchically-organized bureaucratic institutions. New professionals working in these institutions are expected to conform to the norms and implement the policies and programs which have already been formulated. Often a questioning of these practices or policies is considered a mark of disloyalty.

Since librarians cannot open their own practices or form partnerships with a few congenial colleagues (unless one of them happens to be a millionaire) they are constrained to operate within systems which often seem to have been designed to keep the librarians, the clients, and the materials as far apart as possible. Unless library schools can discover and then teach a method for new professionals to effect the change that they know is needed from the point at which they enter the profession (usually the bottom of an institution) it will be fruitless for them to fill the curriculum with more and deeper knowledge about what "should be" or even "could be."

As Wasserman says so well in his latest book, *The New Librarianship: Challenge for Change*, the need for change must be acknowledged at the top of the professional hierarchy before the profession can be upgraded in the ways that both Mr. Flanagan and I would like to see. No amount of education for new librarians will change that fact.

Gayl E. Koster  
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To the Editor:

In reference to "Professionalism Dismissed," by Leo N. Flanagan in the May *CRL*:

If Mr. Flanagan is so sure that librarianship is not a profession, why did he enter the field? Perhaps he is disgruntled at some happening or injustice which he encountered while a student.

The old adage, "Publish or Perish," is one of the reasons there is a "pollution of information" in various journals and periodicals. The professional fears that if he does not publish, he will lose status or be passed over for advancement.

The current trend in librarianship is to put public relations and service as the main priorities in any library. It is the assumption of this writer that librarianship is a profession. Most professional librarians are interested in providing service for their clientele. The true professional seeks to service his patron, anticipate his needs, provide for his future needs, and develop ways to attract potential patrons.

Whether I am considered a professional by Mr. Flanagan has little bearing on my functioning as a professional librarian. Many of us in the field, who have graduated from accredited A.L.A. schools of librarianship are more interested in service and public relations than the pros and cons of whether librarianship is a profession. We know it is a profession.

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To the Editor:

Since Ellsworth Mason left Hofstra University, the librarians here have become deeply involved in A.A.U.P. negotiations. The writer of this letter is serving as the elected library representative on the A.A.U.P. steering committee as well as on various fact-finding subcommittees of the negotiating team. He thus feels somewhat qualified to comment upon Dr. Mason's well-known editorial and subsequent letters to *CRL*.

To be sure, librarians at Hofstra are presently not required to terminate if tenure is

denied. It is also true that our tenure period is ten years long! Also, one cannot help but wonder which of us would be willing to remain as part of a staff which has chosen to reject that person for tenure. Is not refusing to abide by a more rigorous and considerably shorter tenure requirement akin to killing the patient rather than curing the disease? If true academic tenure is something towards which librarians ought not to strive because of its inherent faults, is it not better to change the system rather than to ignore it in the hope that it will go away? Professor Wilkinson's comment in the May issue of *CRL* that librarians "be free to speak their minds on controversial issues" is one of those axioms which (among others) stands at the crux of the tenure issue, especially for librarians.

All of us at Hofstra are gratified that Dr. Mason does "earn far more than the faculty." However, at a lesser distance from the bottom than Dr. Mason is, the picture appears rather different. In my capacity as A.A.U.P. library representative I have had numerous occasions to examine library pay scales and make comparisons between those of library-faculty and teaching-faculty. That there is a significant difference should come as no surprise since I am sure that this situation pertains on other campuses. The difference becomes worse when the twelve month work year versus the nine month work year is taken into account. It is disquieting in the extreme not to be able to join TIAA-CREF because one cannot afford the monthly deductions.

I too find librarianship "varied and exciting." It is, to me, among the most stimulating professions that one can aspire to. Yet I do not believe that it is either right or proper for those who must go through the same standards as teaching-faculty to be permanently placed in the ranks of second-class citizens; a situation which, in spite of our telling ourselves how good we are, will continue as long as we refuse to accept the responsibilities of full faculty rank tempered with a clearer understanding of the librarian's true academic role. Tenure, rank, and salary must be earned. But kindly allow those of us who wish to earn these rewards to do so without having to join the

continuous migration from one library to another.

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To the Editor:

I would like to respond to your May 1973 editorial "ALA—Is it time for an Alternative?" Yes it is time and probably has been for years. I am no longer a member of ACRL, since I chose not to belong to ALA. I objected to a dues structure that seemed exorbitant for an underpaid profession and offered very little in return. Moreover, I did not like the slice of the pie that was being dispersed to ACRL and LRTS. Granted, these were the only divisions I personally cared about, but the proportions were hardly equitable in view of size and appetite of these divisions.

Last year at Chicago I asked with a mixture of both whimsy and malevolence whether I could make out my \$40 check to ACRL, I was informed that I could not. Last year I spent my \$40 on ALA, I did not this year. Quite honestly the only reason I would join ALA again would be to have a vote that would get ACRL out of ALA.

ACRL as a totally new organization, independent and shaping its own destiny is the solution. I feel we could tend to our own affairs with a great deal more care and attention than that which was allowed us by ALA.

From the matter of ACRL's budget to the areas of support in the battles for academic status and federal funding an independent ACRL would be more responsive. I will also get satisfaction from disassociating myself from an organization that raises its budgetary demands when the members of that organization are experiencing a tremendous budget crunch. Delight will also come from disassociating myself from an organization in which I have no confidence.

ALA perhaps has ceased to fulfill the needs of ACRL because of its size. Juggernauts when they have become too large can no longer roll freely; and ALA has be-

come, over the years, a juggernaut that has grown and grown only to be stopped by its size. The momentum is gone and inertia has set in. Those that suffer are the individual divisions which need active and innovative programs.

By whatever name it adopts ACRL, AAL etc. we would collectively be better for the venture. The time to do this is now!

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To the Editor:

My conclusions upon having read McAnally and Downs (*CRL*, March 1973) are that library administration should be all the more challenging and worthwhile, because "The new type of leadership within the library requires that [the director] be a leader and not merely an authority" (p. 123) and that many of the changes in the milieu of the director should have occurred years ago.

It is interesting to note that stresses in a library are a major reason for the resignation of many directors. Any director who views librarians as professionals should not be surprised when they demand the autonomy that generally characterizes members of professions. More aggressive behavior (including unionization when necessary) by librarians and support staff years ago might have made the library world a far better one than it is. It would certainly have ensured a greater division between professional and other duties, which in turn makes it more probable both elements of the library staff would be suitably compensated. The situation that leads fastest to disharmony is one in which librarians and clerical staff members do the same kinds of work. This means that both will be badly paid and that poor morale will be the norm.

Particularly significant is Robert Miller's observation that unionization, the movement for faculty status, and similar activities represent "an attack on the father image." What is important is that Miller did not write "parent image" or "mother image." One of the underlying problems in libraries of all kinds is that most men were

at or near the top, while most women were at the bottom. Paternalism by library directors may therefore have been mixed with sexism. (This is not to suggest that Mr. Miller approves of this situation.)

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To the Editor:

In the May issue of *CRL*, Leo N. Flanagan's article "Professionalism Dismissed" cut deep into the problem of the effectiveness of library education. Mr. Flanagan's thought of curing the ills of "insecurity" by "human communication" is an essential point. Library schools should incorporate into their curriculum not only courses in interpersonal communication but also extensive and meaningful apprenticeship programs that apply these concepts. The lack of this type of training among practicing librarians is so apparent that most of us tuck it into our subconscious and try to dismiss it as unimportant.

Two cases that demonstrate this deficiency come to mind. The first involves the very basic concepts of reference technique. To be blunt, all of this "hiding behind a desk" and "fingerpointing" has become so common in academic libraries that the majority of students do not even bother to *approach* the reference librarian with research questions. It is about time for the reference librarian to *approach* the students through an effective orientation program and by circulating around the reference room *among* the students. This means both oral and body communication.

The second case involves the participation of librarians in national, regional and state organizational activities. There has been a din of complaints for years that these organizational gatherings leave the participants cold. Recently I attended the College and Research Library Section meeting of the Kentucky Library Association. It was obvious that the program was off key, for very few were excited, much less interested, in what was being said. Then, during the last session of the conference, a discussion arose over several ideas about

library orientation. There was a discernible surge of excitement, but the conference was over and so was this flurry of *words*. This example leads me to my point. If there were any amount of communication among these librarians, they would correspond and visit other libraries to follow through on these *words*. They could influence the organizers of the next meeting to plan a workshop so that they would be exposed to different types of orientation programs. This brand of constructive communication between librarians can mean positive results in their libraries.

If librarians have a yearning to be called "professionals," it will come through communication.

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#### To the Editor:

I would like to supplement the article by MacDonald and Elrod "An Approach to Developing Computer Catalogs" (*CRL*, May 1973).

The idea of separating the finding and bibliographical functions of the catalog is not of course a new one.<sup>1, 2</sup> In practice, not much has been done to follow it up, but the catalog of Bath University library, England, was recently converted to machine records with short entries (average 110 characters).<sup>3, 4</sup> An experiment is currently in progress to compare this catalog with the conventional card catalog, which is still being maintained until the experiments are completed.<sup>5</sup>

The union catalogs maintained by the British Library Lending Division (which incorporates the old National Central Library) may well be maintained in computer form in future, with records of about 100 characters on average.<sup>6</sup> This was shown to be feasible by a research study, which further showed that ambiguity was likely to occur only in a tiny minority of cases.<sup>7</sup>

If readers want bibliographical information on the books in a library, there are two main possibilities open to them. The first is to look at the books themselves, if they are not on loan. The second is to consult published bibliographies, which cover the

vast majority of items in any given library. The cost and effort of this extra checking, which will be necessary in only a small proportion of cases, have to be balanced against the lower cost of local catalog production and maintenance and the greater speed of checking most items in a smaller, more compact and more usable file. Quite apart from library costs, there is little doubt that users would benefit on the whole.

If libraries really do want bibliographical records of their own books, this may not be best achieved by conventional cataloguing, which usually aims to produce a surrogate of the title-page (and in extreme cases, the contents pages). An alternative is to microfilm the title-page and contents page(s) of each book, coding the film with codes linked to a computer file of short records so entries can be retrieved automatically. This would provide better bibliographical information, and also some very useful subject information in the contents page(s).

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Maurice B. Line  
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#### To the Editor:

Please let me take this opportunity to tell you that I am very much interested in a statement printed in the May issue of *CRL*,

"ALA—Is It Time for an Alternative?"

I attended the Las Vegas meeting in late June and was somewhat concerned and even depressed by the diversity of the meeting, particularly by the great number of programs which, in many instances, did not follow the announced theme of the meeting.

I am not a librarian, and have no formal training in the area of librarianship. My own background is in English literature, having studied at the University of North Carolina many years ago. For the past few years, at the request of our librarian, I have attended the two annual meetings of the American Library Association and have concluded that we are perhaps moving far away from the basic intellectual thrust which should seem to be necessary in an organization that is attempting to encourage the life of the mind. There is a relationship between the size of an organization and its many commitments. Perhaps the American Library Association could better serve its membership, if some of the problems concerning the welfare of librarians are the responsibility of some other organization. I am thinking particularly of the American Association of University Professors which is concerned primarily with the welfare of academic people. This is not to

suggest that the welfare of professional librarians should ever be neglected, but it is to suggest that such matters could better be served in another organization. Perhaps librarians should push harder for professional status; but this is difficult to do until librarians, themselves, have a clearer idea of the nature of the profession. I am particularly interested in the article prepared by Leo N. Flanagan in the May 1973 issue of *CRL*.

As you know, he states precisely that librarianship is not a profession and referring to the article by Mary Lee Bundy and Paul Wasserman in *CRL*, Jan. 1968, indicates that the librarian is more directly related to the druggist than to a medical doctor. The implication here is quite clear and needs no further elaboration.

The ideas which I am expressing here are not original, but they are nonetheless pertinent and even alarming. I think it's quite in order that the journal *College and Research Libraries* continue this discussion, if for no other reason than that of preventing librarians from becoming mere clerks and technicians.

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