

Letters

To the Editor:

The affiliation statement on the article, "The National Program to Microfilm Land-Grant Agricultural Documents," *College & Research Libraries*, November, 1980, failed to include the information that I was "formerly assistant reference librarian, New Mexico State University Library, Las Cruces" and project contact for that library—not the entire Southwestern Land-Grant College Microreproduction Project.—Sarah A. Garrett, *Records Management Supervisor, Gulf Oil Exploration & Production Co., Casper, Wyoming.*

To the Editor:

Over the past few years I have wondered why books reviewed in *C&RL* were frequently sent to reviewers with absolutely no expertise in the subject of the book reviewed. Latest horror is a review of the *Library Trends* issue on "Library Consulting," in the September 1980 *C&RL*. An informed reviewer of this issue would be either a librarian deeply involved in consulting or one who uses consultants frequently. Instead, this review was assigned to Davie Laird, a nice lad totally unqualified on both scores, who seems to have found the Arizona desert a great generator of bile. He first grumps that this issue of *Library Trends* is not unified like a book. This has been true of periodicals ever since I was a boy. Then he declaims (with the other fragment of his mind) "perhaps the main problem . . . is that the various authors obviously had quite different audiences in mind as they wrote." How in the name of the Chicago Office and all the other deities could a group of articles discussing consultation on buildings, collection development, computerization, labor relations, management, and staff development possibly have the same audience in mind? The articles, however, are all addressed to the same kind of need, discussing circumstances that call for use of consultants, how to

select them, what you can expect from them, how to prepare for their arrival, how to work with them on the spot, and how to evaluate their results. How unified can you get in nine diverse articles?

With Davie's opinion of the various articles I will not quarrel since he is entitled even to his ignorant opinions. However, I must rescue one from his unevaluated list of "other topics," Robert M. Hayes' article on consulting in computer applications, which in my opinion is brilliant, the best of the lot, on a field where consultancy is in very bad shape indeed. Those of us who do consulting know that consultants are often very badly chosen and very badly used. This issue of *Library Trends* provides a centralized source, for anyone who even thinks that he might need a consultant, of information that should help minimize the mistakes often made in choosing one.—Ellsworth Mason, *Head, Special Collections Department, University of Colorado, Boulder.*

To the Editor:

Dr. Mason's diatribe is a bit more passionately hostile than I expected. I suppose I should address him as Little Ellie Mason, then the next time we meet in the schoolyard we can draw a line in the dirt and shout "I dare you . . ." at each other.

I will stick with my review as worded: a journal issue unified around one theme must be reviewed as if it were a book, not a journal issue. Also, if the "target reader" of this issue was (is) librarians who have little experience with consultants, it seems eminently appropriate that such a person provide the review. I have had limited experience as a consultant and have used consultants sparingly. Unfortunately the consulting issue of *Library Trends* did not speak to me clearly. The literature of this discipline can stand some additions.—W. David Laird, *Librarian, University of Arizona, Tucson.*

To the Editor:

The September, 1980 *C&RL* includes a review of the *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services* which refers to my article on censorship and intellectual freedom—among others—as “factual and well written.” Naturally, I appreciate that, but I do not accept your reviewer’s characterization of me as “definitely outside his field and beyond the range of his expertise” in having written a statement (to which he finds “serious objection,” p.453) concerning the relationship of the Pauline Epistles and the modern “basic Christian attitude in favor of concealment and prudishness in regard to sexual matters, of veneration for asceticism and chastity.” This is not the forum to dispute Mr. Peterson at length on the credibility of my statement—but I do resent his downgrading of my expertise in this field.

After a lifetime of research and study I spent several years in writing *The Fear of the Word: Censorship and Sex*, a 362-page volume published by Scarecrow Press in 1974. It included three chapters (27 pages) with nearly 200 footnotes and citations bearing on the point of view I expressed in the statement your reviewer quoted invidiously from my encyclopedia article. I wonder if the reviewer has read these chapters: how otherwise can he judge my expertise?

As for the statement itself, in a time when the religious leader of a vast number of Christians, the current Pope, calls on husbands not to look with lust upon their own wives, it hardly seems worthwhile to belabor my point any further. My *entire* article was factual.—Eli M. Oboler, *University Librarian, Idaho State University, Pocatello.*

Editor's note: The reviewer, Kenneth G. Peterson, elected not to reply.

To the Editor:

Harold Shill has written on a topic (“Open Stacks and Library Performance”, *C&RL*, May 1980) with ramifications that reach far into the future of libraries and other information depositories. While many studies have been done, we know little about how scholars, and other users of information, utilize their information sources.

Planning the libraries of the future would be greatly helped by a clearer understanding of what happens, and why, when a closed stack collection is opened. Mr Shill has told us some of what occurred at his library, he has speculated as to why, but the conclusions he has drawn are not supported by the evidence he has presented.

Mr. Shill states in his abstract that “Direct shelf access . . . contributed to an increase in library use and a decrease in circulation.” The figures for nonreserve circulation excluding building loans show a decrease for the two years before the stacks were opened. The rate of decrease accelerated during the first year of direct access and then dropped sharply during the last two years of the study. Building use increased the year before the stacks were opened and continued to increase thereafter. No evidence shows that direct access “contributed” to these established trends.

Enrollment increased by 37.89 percent through the period of the study. Mr. Shill says “. . . allowances for this change have been made in the analysis.” He doesn’t tell us what the allowances were or how they were made. The evidence presented leaves the reader with no alternative but to question why Mr. Shill does not consider that the enrollment increase is at least partly responsible for the increase in building use. His curious disclaimer that “This upsurge in building use cannot be attributed to the increase in enrollment . . . given a simultaneous decrease in circulation figures” is incomprehensible. Nothing in the study correlates these three elements.

Two extrapolations from Mr. Shill’s data lead me to a different conclusion. The ratio of enrolled students to library use was 1:28.4 in 1973 and 1:23.9 in 1978—a reduction of more than fifteen percent. The 37.89 percent increase in enrollment compares with an increase in building use of only 15.97 percent. It seems to me that these data show a net decrease in library use.

Words and terminology should not mislead the reader. In the abstract we read that “. . . book availability . . . improved significantly . . .” while in the text we see, twice, the word “mild” describing the improvement in book availability. The two words are not synonymous. Which is cor-

rect, Mr. Shill? He refers to "... significantly increased library use in 1976 ... a year in which enrollment ... declined." He doesn't give us the comparable enrollment figures. Library use data show that the increase in 1976 from 1975 was 4.04 percent, while the increase in 1975 from 1974 was 3.26 percent. Does an increase in rate of less than one percent warrant the word "significantly"?

When presenting data it is important to put all figures in the same form, and all tables should cover the same time periods. Enrollment figures are given for only the first and last years of the study. Table 3 gives percentage figures and the other tables use whole numbers. The reader is thus deprived of the data to make his own comparisons and analyses.

Mr. Shill concludes that the study shows that "... stacks can be opened... with significant benefits for individual patrons..." The only benefit that can be adduced from the evidence presented is the improvement in book availability. However, even here, the results are inconclusive because the data covers only three years of the study.

Questions are raised because of the omission of information. For example, what was the effect of direct access on the statistics of two significant indicators of collection use—the size and the use of the reserve book collection, and the number of books picked up by staff for reshelving? Exclusion of this data increases the possibility of inadequate and inappropriate interpretation of the figures that are given.—*Ronald P. Naylor, librarian at large, Waxahachie, Texas.*

To the Editor:

In order to distinguish the legitimate criticism in Ronald Naylor's letter from several misinterpretations of my findings, I am compelled to review the preparation of my article and the analysis of my data.

The data in "Open Stacks and Library Performance" are longitudinal and were extracted *after the study period* from operational records maintained consistently over time. Library use patterns, like analyses in other areas of social science inquiry, are susceptible to *ex post facto* statistical analysis. Obviously, this approach permits only

the use of pre-existing data, a limitation less frequently affecting sample surveys and experimental studies. Data on books collected in the stacks had not been maintained during the study period and, therefore, could not be used in the present study. Data from a 1975 book delivery study were excluded because the coding categories used that year were incompatible with those in the other three studies. In short, I have worked within the real limitations of operational data collected years before this study was conceived. This is stated clearly in my introductory paragraphs.

Naylor seems to imply that I am somehow at fault for failing to amass every conceivable datum concerning the opening of the stacks at West Virginia University's Main Library. In so assuming, he applies criteria appropriate for evaluating a pre-planned study to judge a retrospective analysis. In real-life situations, administrators seldom structure their decisions for the convenience of scholarly analysis. In this case, WVU's library administration did not decide in 1972 or earlier that the stacks would be opened February 1976. This is a limitation inherent in historical analyses of organizational behavior. Rather than consider beyond the scope of statistical analysis past decisions for which the entire spectrum of relevant data is unavailable, however, we must carefully assemble available data, perform necessary statistical operations, and present conclusions within the data parameters. I have approached the open access question from this perspective.

The article itself examines the impact upon three indicators of library performance—circulation, book availability and library use—of a decision to open the stacks in one academic library building. Earlier studies assumed that open access would increase circulation and reduce book availability, while the question of building use was not addressed previously. Each of these possible relationships was stated as a hypothesis to be confirmed or rejected on the basis of available data.

The hypothesis that circulation would increase after the stacks were opened was rejected on the basis of Table 1 data. Naylor acknowledges that circulation declined throughout the study period, correctly not-

ing that the decline was sharpest in the first year of direct access. His focus on rates of decline is spurious, however, since the hypothesis being tested is that circulation would increase if the stacks were opened. The continued decline in circulation clearly supports my conclusion. Additional computation shows that 46% of the 1973-78 circulation decline occurred in 1976, the first year of open stacks. This finding further strengthens my argument. The overwhelming evidence that circulation did not increase when the stacks were opened cannot be facily dismissed by lumping circulation and building use together as "established trends." Given the weight of evidence supporting my conclusion, the verb "contributed" seems to appropriately describe this inverse correlation.

The finding that book availability did not decline after the stacks were opened is as important as the circulation finding, since anticipated shelf disorder is the strongest managerial argument against direct access. The continued improvement in book delivery two years after the stacks were opened is hardly "inconclusive," since a sharp decline in across-the-desk delivery success would be expected as patrons located a greater percentage of correctly-shelved books without staff assistance. This finding may also indicate a high level of patron search failure, though neither my original article nor Naylor's letter addresses that issue. Table 3 data were presented as percentages rather than raw numbers to facilitate interpretation; since the number of across-the-desk requests declined sharply (as expected) after the stacks were opened, the direction of this trend ("mild" is the correct and intended adjective) would not be readily apparent from the raw figures. Data in other tables could easily be converted to percentages and, therefore, be made consistent, by readers wishing to perform statistical tests upon them.

The one important and valid criticism in Naylor's letter is his assertion that enrollment has not been adequately controlled as a variable affecting library use, a point raised previously by P. Robert Paustian ("Letters," Nov. 1980). Given the data supplied, both men are correct, and I acknowledge the point. A re-check of major refer-

ence sources revealed some startling disparities in reported enrollment figures. The enrollment data in my article, which were evidently drawn from the *World Almanac*, were obsolete. Accurate enrollment figures, as supplied by our Office of Institutional Research, are 17,649 for spring 1973 and 20,025 for spring 1978. Using Naylor's ratio upon enrollment and building use figures for the six years examined, I find per capita visitation rates of 24.44, 23.71, and 23.43 in the three years before the stacks were opened. The rates in the first three years of open access were 24.22, 24.85 and 24.98, respectively. Though these data are compatible with my conclusion, they were not included in the article. This is a matter of oversight, however; there is nothing conspiratorial here.

It is disturbing that Naylor could not deliver this appropriate criticism without misrepresenting other findings and indulging in innuendo. Several phrases ("curious disclaimer," "Which is correct, Mr. Shill?" "Words and terminology should not mislead the reader," the smug injection of irony in the last sentence) are slick examples of verbal overkill which contribute nothing to scholarly dialogue.—*Harold B. Shill, Head Librarian, Evansdale Library, West Virginia University, Morgantown.*

To the Editor:

I find it ironic that an issue devoted in part to the importance of library research (May 1980) contains an article as frivolous as Turner's "Femininity and the Librarian—Another Test." The author admits that his findings are not generalizable. Even were they, I doubt that society's perception of the library profession would be changed by its awareness of test results concerning the sex-role orientation of librarians.

I submit that our social image is in fact dependent on how well we provide the information and service required by library users in accordance with our own professional standards and ethics. The personal characteristics of librarians of interest to us therefore, should be in the areas of intellectual or moral or ethical development rather than in who might or might not be "athletic" (p.237).

I fervently hope that in the "ongoing

search for knowledge about the personality and characteristics of the library science student and the librarian" (p.241), not another study of this type is undertaken.—*Charlotta Hensley, Head, Serials Department, University of Colorado, Boulder.*

Editor's note: The author, Robert L. Turner, elected not to reply.

To the Editor:

Thomas Gaughan's article on "Resume Essentials for the Academic Librarian" (*C&RL*, March 1980) could more accurately have been titled as "Resume Minima." What Gaughan describes are the minimum elements which allow a resume to pass a preliminary checklist screening by a typical personnel librarian. However, there is a great difference between passing this initial screening and being seriously considered for the job.

To get the job, one must convince the employer that one can succeed in performing to a high degree the responsibilities attendant to the position available. Nothing gives assurance of future success like a record of previous success, but nowhere in the items ranked by Gaughan and his colleagues can one find mention of an applicant's achievements, accomplishments or promise for the future. Offices "held" and degrees awarded do not necessarily relate directly to success on the job. Listing duties and responsibilities gives virtually no clue as to how well those responsibilities were acquitted. Experience is passive—anyone can acquire some by reporting to work—but real achievements on the job reveal a successful worker.

The persons cited as references will speak to a candidate's achievements, it is true, but

in today's tight job market, the successful job seekers must do all they can to advance their searches for desired positions. This means that resumes must be tailored to the job being sought, giving the employer the best possible grounds to believe that the applicant will succeed on the job. Thus the resume should list accomplishments in past and present positions, as well as publications, degrees and professional activity.

Guidelines for the construction of such resumes and accompanying cover letters may be found in such books as Richard Lathrop's *Who's Hiring Who*. [*Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 1977.*] Any librarian seeking work in today's market should read this book first, and then begin the task of convincing prospective employers that the applicant can succeed in the position available, as well as meet minimum resume requirements.—*Steve Marquardt, Assistant Director for Resources and Technical Services, Ohio University, Athens.*

Editor's note: The author, Thomas Gaughan, elected not to reply.

To the Editor:

In the September, 1980, issue of *College & Research Libraries* the article by David G. E. Sparks "Academic Librarianship: Professional Strivings and Political Realities" has an incomplete reference. Reference 58, p. 421, reads: Adeline Tallau, "Faculty Status and Library Governance," *Library Journal* 99:1521-23 (June 1, 1974). It should read: Adeline Tallau and Benjamin R. Beede, "Faculty Status and Library Governance," *Library Journal* 99:1521-23 (June 1, 1974).—*Mathilda O'Bryant, Head, Cataloging Department, University Libraries, University of Notre Dame, Indiana.*

HELP YOUR PATRONS PREDICT THE ECONOMIC FUTURE...

with two new books from Facts On File

○ **WORLD ENERGY: THE FACTS AND THE FUTURE**

(From Euromonitor)

Provides a wide array of information on this important topic which will be equally useful to the layman or the energy executive. The structure of world energy during the last decade is examined, and likely developments in supply and demand (to the year 2000) are projected. There are chapters on the problems that will be faced by major countries, and chapters on the major fuels and the possible alternatives. Charts, diagrams, and 150 tables clarify the text of this volume essential for anyone interested in our energy future.

\$22.50; paper; 300 pages; 6 x 8½. ISBN: 0-87196-564-X.

○ **A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC FORECASTING**

—by Robert Fildes with David Dews and Syd Howell

Lists over 4,000 items—journal articles, books, etc.—with material relevant to the selection of the best forecasting model for any problem. This is the only comprehensive bibliography of forecasting available, and will be an essential reference for consultants, academic researchers, managers, and management and business students, as well as businesses. For easy access each entry is marked with a key word chosen from some 500 topics of research. There is a main index, a quick index of the major categories used, and a glossary of terms used in the key words.

\$35.00; cloth, 424 pages. ISBN: 0-87196-555-0.

FACTS ON FILE, INC.

460 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016