Letters

To the Editor:

As the person principally responsible for the "network of acquisitional interests" and the chief advocate of the extensive blanket and approval procurement arrangements at Stanford, I feel constrained to comment on Mr. Rouse's article "Automation Stops Here" (*CRL*, May 1970).

I shall not speculate at length on the reasons for Oklahoma State University's unhappy experience with these plans. The comparatively modest intake of books (for 1968/69, a gross of 42,560 volumes and a net of 40,913) and the subject concentrations indicated by the degrees granted and the course offerings in the catalog suggest that any blanket or approval services would have to be governed by very stringent subject criteria; since these criteria are not described in detail, it is impossible to judge whether they were or were not appropriate. Evidently the dealer's service was considered extremely unsatisfactory; again, it is impossible to guess why, if the University's criteria and handling arrangements were well organized. Stanford's experience with its procurement plans, which are based on carefully formulated and detailed schedules of criteria for inclusion and exclusion, and are constantly monitored by library staff, are generally regarded as highly satisfactory to both faculty and staff. In fact, they are one area of library activity which everyone at Stanford is anxious to protect in a period of financial stringency.

It is of cardinal importance to correct one misapprehension regarding these arrangements, namely, that the library must in every case be "willing to relinquish the selection responsibility to an outside party." This *is* indeed the case with blanket orders, which are therefore generally appropriate only for narrowly defined fields in which the library wishes very heavy coverage, or for types of material which cannot efficiently be obtained in any other way. Examples are U.S. and state documents, UN and OAS publications, materials obtained from CILA and LACAP, and books in highly specific subject fields in which the university has heavy commitments. Of course very large libraries like the Library of Congress, which have extremely broad obligations, can maintain blanket orders on a much more inclusive scale than most university libraries. In a sense the mention of Stanford's seventeen plans by Mr. Rouse is misleading, for this figure includes all these arrangements, many of which are common to most university libraries of any size.

The real problem comes in the masses of American and English imprints, and publications from high-production countries like Germany, issued by trade and university presses. The rationale for the approval arrangement here is that the dealer presents to the library a selection of published materials which he chooses in accordance with a carefully drawn schedule of criteria; and from this dealer's selection the librarians, with such help as they require from faculty, choose those books to be incorporated in the collections and return the rest. The dealer does *not* make a final selection; he merely offers to librarians and others on the campus an opportunity to examine the books themselves before buying—which appears to be a considerably more effective way of judging them than to select from citations, as is done with LC proof slips or *Publishers' Weekly* entries. In fact, every book accepted at Stanford from an approval shipment is examined before purchase, often by several librarians. Mr. Rouse's feeling that too much time may be given to reading prefaces and tables of content, and to skimming, seems a poor argument, if book selection really means bringing an intellectual judgment to bear on a particular book.

This idea of selection from the books is by no means new. C. E. Walton at Harvard suggested some thirty years ago that

/ 341

publishers ship all new imprints to his department for examination and possible purchase. I do not believe that anything came of the scheme, but the idea was the same. And approval plans are an old story now—Stanford came late to this device. Ideally, faculty, library staff, and students ought to be able to scan the entire universe of scholarly publishing, to select personally those works that should be in the library. In fact, no bookstore can possibly furnish such opportunities, and the approval plan is merely an attempt to bring the bookstore stock of most interest to the University into the library in manageable quantities, so that the books can be examined at leisure, though it is unfortunately not possible to arrange regular faculty or student review of all possible purchases.

It is an illusion to suppose that such plans can do the work of competent book selectors. Stanford's development of extensive blanket and approval order plans coincided with the growth of the curatorial system in the University Libraries (it had previously existed in the Hoover Institution) and the assignment of specific subject specializations in the General Reference Department; it already existed in the branch and departmental libraries. Of four curators on the UL staff three have Ph.D. degrees and one is working on his dissertation; of two on the Hoover staff who also work for the University Libraries, one has his doctorate. These people all have broad language and subject responsibilities; the four reference librarians and twelve branch librarians who act as subject experts in more limited fields (e.g., English and American literature, Art, Education, Music, Chemistry, Physics, etc.) have other professional duties, but we believe at least a master's degree in the subject is very desirable. These members of the University Libraries staff, together with the librarians of the "coordinate libraries" (Hoover Institution, with six curators; and the Law, Medical, Business Administration, Food Research and Linear Accelerator Libraries) form the "network of acquisitional interests" to which Mr. Rouse refers. The Associate Director attempts to coordinate their work to prevent unnecessary duplication of materials and gaps in the collections, and to facilitate communication and discussion of common problems.

If these librarians are to serve faculty members effectively in book selection, they must cultivate close relations with the departments they serve, in order to be alert to their interests and to create confidence among the faculty that their needs are understood. For this reason we believe the professional library training of curators, who have few administrative duties, to be of minor importance; scholarly interests and attainments, and the ability to establish sympathetic relationships with scholars are of the greatest importance. Since the Undergraduate Library has its own selection procedures, the curators and many of the other selectors concentrate on the research collections, but they are frequently called upon to advise and assist faculty and students, both graduate and undergraduate, to whom their special knowledge can be helpful. Several have done teaching in the past, and one will serve as a faculty member at one of the overseas campuses within the next year. Each curator has two assistants with language and subject competence.

Mr. Rouse found that the dealer sent many books of doubtful value and missed many important ones. The first problem should have been avoided by careful preparation of criteria and careful examination of the books before acceptance, though if the dealer is incompetent, no amount of care by the library will obviate a troublesome and perhaps impossible rate of return. I should so describe the 50 percent Mr. Rouse mentions. The second problem is of course always a danger. At Stanford it is handled by careful scrutiny of the *Publishers' Weekly, British National Bibliography, Oesterreichische Bibliographie, Deutsche Bibliographie,* and *Das Schweizer Buch.* Copies of these are marked by the dealer to show books sent; the librarians—generally seven or eight in number—who examine them mark other titles which should be in the library. These are searched to avoid duplication and Xerox copies of the pages carrying wanted titles are sent to the dealer as orders. This permits the library to check new reprints (excluded from all blanket and approval arrangements) for searching, so that they are not

duplicated; and it brings books in subjects in which Stanford is so selective that they are specifically excluded from coverage— agriculture, theology, etc. In these, and in subjects in which the library lacks high-level competence, the library's selector is expected to consult frequently with faculty members regarding proposed purchases of both new and old imprints. This is currently the case with Oriental religions and Etruscan linguistics, among other subjects; here close and cordial relations with faculty and students working in the field are essential.

Second-hand lists and lists from countries like Israel, India, or some African nations, for which publications often do not appear in the usual media, must of course be given special examination; and the same is true of certain subject sources like the *Exchange Bibliographies* of the Council of Planning Librarians and *PAIS*. LC proof slips and publishers' announcements are routed to subject specialists for information and as a means of catching important materials which might otherwise escape; but no title which is known or presumed to appear in any of the checked bibliographies mentioned above, or to be received on blanket or approval order, is to be searched again, unless special discounts or other particular circumstances make it advantageous. If we miss a few books that we ought to buy, it is unfortunate; but a large-scale acquisition program cannot be operated on the basis of multiple searches if they can be avoided. Of course individual orders are still required for many publications, new and old, that are not obtainable on blanket or approval orders. The latter will only supply current imprints, and not all of those. Here again it is necessary to understand what can and what cannot be expected of them.

As to how many books Stanford or any other large university needs, this is a question that can be debated indefinitely without reaching any conclusion. There is no doubt that a large part of a research library is seldom if ever used. The problem is to identify accurately the comparatively useless portion. A daily examination of interlibrary loan requests from other libraries, and from Stanford to other libraries, to identify important lacunae, has convinced this observer that prediction of faculty and student needs is indeed a dubious enterprise. A desperate search by a faculty member or graduate student through three or four or more libraries for a title which he needs is by no means unusual. During years of inadequate book funds Stanford was cursed with a "buy-it-when-someone-needs-it" policy, and as a result it now spends vast sums on out-of-print books, reprints and microforms, many of them specifically requested by faculty or students. With fifty-eight departments offering doctorates (excluding M.D.'s and J.D.'s), and concentrations within these departments totalling several hundred (ten in History alone) we must try to obtain materials while they are yet in print for thousands of dissertations yet unwritten, faculty members not yet appointed and perhaps not yet born, and new developments and emphases within subject fields that cannot be foreseen. Is it possible to do this effectively? We do not know. We do know that it is difficult and that it requires the best brains we can find, working in close collaboration with faculty and students, and with dealers who make a serious effort to understand and meet the library's needs. We feel that most of ours do, and that dealers ought to be included as a fourth partner in the collaborating team of library staff, faculty, and students.

It would be rash to assert that every book bought by a large library is necessary to its clientele. On the other hand, there is an essential fallacy in the idea that because "the technology library at Northwestern University could be reduced by 75 percent and still satisfy 99 percent of its present users," it was a mistake for the library to purchase 75 percent of its books. The question is, were the books useful when purchased? An early treatment of an old subject, or the fourth edition of a book now in its fifteenth edition, or a bad book later superseded by a good one, may now be useless lumber in the stacks; but when they appeared they may have been essential. Stanford in recent years has withdrawn thousands of volumes, mostly duplicates, which were once heavily used. They are junk now, but they were a part of the essential teaching apparatus once. The

problem here is not the purchase of too many books; it is the high cost of removal from stacks, catalog, and shelf list. Last-copy withdrawal on a large scale is impossible.

Finally, I must reject emphatically Perry Morrison's assertions that the "automatic plan" builds an uncritical collection—it does so only if there are no critical librarians to monitor it; or that a library becomes dependent on one supplier and subject to the tyranny of his computer. Again, this can happen, but if it does, the fault lies with the librarian running the plan as much as the dealer. It need not and certainly should not happen.

As to the cost factors adduced by Mr. Thom, these are a matter of management and procedure. Stanford's acquisition librarians are convinced that our plans save us money, primarily because our dealers for the most part type process slips which serve also as invoices. The typing of thousands of orders, and their transmission by mail to the dealer have been eliminated. We find no substantial difference in the time required to obtain a book. We do find that a large proportion of the current books requested by faculty and students have already arrived.

I am convinced that Stanford could not, under present circumstances, maintain its current research strength through title-by-title selection from citations. I am convinced, too, that Stanford's system may well be inappropriate to other libraries, and that there may well be other selection and procurement systems better adapted to their needs. Our own procedures will without question change under the impact of automation, publishing innovations, and other factors. Mr. Rouse's article does a genuine service to acquisition librarians by recording the experience of one library with an acquisition plan that should, like all library operations, be subjected to severe and frequent scrutiny.

> E. M. Grieder
> *Associate Director*
> *Stanford University Libraries*

Mr. Rouse responds: Mr. Grieder makes one important point better than I did in my paper. His staff of subject and language specialists, curators, selectors and bibliographers with advanced degrees obviously do an admirable job in working with procurement plans. My question is, are both the large staff *and* automatic procurement plans really necessary?

To the Editor:

I do not doubt that an unsuccessful attempt at setting up an "automatic-book-buying plan" (as reported by Roscoe Rouse in "Automation Stops Here: A Case for Man-Made Book Collections," *CRL*, May 1970) can be "a disappointing experience," however, I believe that approval plans are able to provide titles faster and at less cost.

If an approval plan is to be successful, certain conditions are necessary. A close working relationship between the dealer and the library to iron out wrinkles, and close communication between technical services and the subject bibliographers must exist. The program and its limitations must be understood by the subject bibliographers. It must also be understood that no acquisitions program is intended to be handled *in toto* by such a plan. Local operations and record keeping must be studied and sometimes even changed to handle best the new program which could consume a large percentage of the book budget.

Part of the onus for the failure of the program expressed by Mr. Rouse should not be put on the dealer. The bibliographic entry (cited as the prime reason for the failure of the plan) need not be problematic if depository cards and the order file are arranged by title. Whether the dealer's entry becomes that which is used by the Library of Congress is not crucial. The new Anglo-American code has made the choice of main entry extremely flexible, and the dealer ought not to be faulted when he cannot outwit LC. Now even librarians often cannot outwit the national library.

If 80 percent of the orders (prior to the plan) had indeed been made from proof slips, OSU must have lacked many current titles. The approval unit at the University of Colorado Libraries, which receives depository cards, locates, upon initial checking, proof for an average of only 32.3 per-

cent of the books which are received each week. Books with proof are sent on for cataloging when the week's shipment is taken down, and those lacking proof are shelved by control number. One of the multiple forms supplied by the dealer is filed in the depository file by title. Later the proof card and the multiform slip are forwarded to the holding unit, and the book is released to the Catalog Department. The need to recheck for proof periodically is eliminated, and the search for copy need not become, as Mr. Rouse fears, "almost a professional task."

The charge that selection from proofs is faster and more satisfactory is questionable. Subject headings describe the subject matter of a book, but they do not evaluate the treatment of the subject. What better way is there to determine this than by examining the book itself to achieve the quality which Mr. Rouse is concerned about?

The shortcoming of the plan, according to subject librarians, is attributed to the "narrow bibliographic base upon which the agent operated," and the lack of coverage in a certain subject is attributed to the dealer's not furnishing "materials from a number of U.S. publishers or from societies, institutions, and associations which issue scholarly publications." This statement reveals a lack of understanding of what an approval plan can and cannot do, and of the publishing industry. I would theorize that a large percentage (say 75%) of domestic titles of interest to an academic library are produced by as few as 400 publishers, and that less than one hundred of these publishers are responsible for the output of 50 percent of these titles. It should also be remembered that some of the nontrade organizations do not sell to dealers. Libraries must obtain such titles directly. Then there are publishers that do not accept returns. Such titles would be unreturnable, and the very principle of what an approval book is would be lost. It would be unfair to ask the dealer to send the book on approval and to be stuck with these returns.

It is only natural to be apprehensive in the beginning as to whether a title will be received. When in doubt, it is a simple matter to Xerox a copy of the request and

to claim it against the plan. A full order packet need not be created—simply stamp the request "Anticipated on Approval" and file in the order file. Such a move would insure the receipt of the desired item and would serve in refining the specifications of the program. Eventually claims would become minimal.

Four months is not enough time to test any approval program. It may take four months to set it up, but to get the program to a point where the faculty and librarian can depend on it will take at least a year. The University of Colorado has a U.S. approval program with exclusions common to other academic libraries. Excluded are reprints, fiction, introductory textbooks, and agriculture. It has been in operation since September 1965. It is run by the Bibliographic Department with thirty hours of student help and about two and a half hours of a searcher's time per week. The operations include searching for proof, filing receipt slips, ordering added copies, checking serials and titles in series in serial records, displaying the current week's shipment for inspection, taking down the previous week's shipment, returning rejections and duplicates, and resolving whatever conflicts arise. The University of Colorado Libraries, like OSU, is organized on a divisional plan, and the subject librarians work with the faculty in collection development.

Harriet K. Rebuldela
Head, Bibliographic Department
University of Colorado Libraries

Mr. Rouse responds: I have always presumed that librarians are expected to determine main entries with reasonable accuracy and I cannot accept a philosophy which excuses librarians *or* dealers who cannot do so.

Miss Rebuldela undoubtedly misunderstands my use of 80% in stating the proportion of books ordered via proof slips. This percentage has nothing to do with the percentage of current titles ordered; the remaining 20% may well have been new titles ordered from equally current sources. I doubt it, however, since a major research library cannot exist on current imprints alone and we order heavily from o.p. and foreign catalogs, listings of periodical backfiles, etc.

Her proposals for means of obviating apprehension about whether or not a title will be received suggest more steps, more Xerox copies, more files . . . No thanks!

To the Editor:

Roscoe Rouse has done us all a service by calling attention to a number of problems connected with approval plans in his article, "Automation Stops Here: A Case for Man-Made Book Collections" (*CRL,* May 1970). However, when he cited "Book Selection in Academic Libraries: A New Approach" (*CRL,* September 1969), he misread our article—Ruth Adams and I were concerned only with retrospective collection building, and not with current acquisitions.

I would be among the first to agree that many of Mr. Rouse's points are well taken. I suspect that the most serious problem with approval programs is that the quality varies from vendor to vendor—or even from office to office for firms with regional offices—to such a degree that programs often bear little similarity to each other. Still, in spite of the difficulties, I think approval programs are a valuable adjunct to current acquisitions programs for most academic libraries. I say "most" because there are some libraries that cannot profit from approval programs. Small libraries, with budgets so limited that every book must be chosen with great care, should wait until critical reviews appear long after the date of publication, and a few of the largest libraries, that want every book on a topic of collecting interest regardless of quality, would probably benefit most from blanket orders. But for the majority, approval plans offer real advantages.

Much of the criticism laid against approval programs is based on unrealistic expectations, or rather, a lack of understanding as to what they can and cannot do. Most academic librarians today agree that they ought to acquire important new imprints as soon as possible after the date of publication, and getting current material to students and faculty with a minimum of delay has become an important goal for college and university libraries. The question, then, is how best to acquire current

imprints, and three factors govern the choice of a current acquisitions program: (1) quality of selection, (2) speed of receipt, and (3) costs. It is against these factors that approval programs have to be measured, and advantages and disadvantages I have noted over several years' experience with such programs are as follows:

1. *Quality of selection.* Among the most vehement arguments against approval programs is that libraries abrogate their selection responsibility to a bookseller. Nothing could be further from the truth. The vendor sends books that fall within the library's scope of collecting, whereupon, with book in hand, librarians must decide whether it is good or bad and whether to keep it or return it. No book must be kept, and if librarians fail to return as many books as they should, this is not a failing of approval programs. A truly competent librarian can make a much better decision about a book after examining it than he can from a *PW* entry or an LC proof. A second criticism is that approval programs miss important titles. But whereas it is certainly true that approval programs do miss important titles, librarians using *PW* or proofs are not likely to do much better. The value of a book is not established until reviews appear—often a couple of years after publication—in scholarly and professional journals of the various disciplines. Any current acquisitions program, whether it uses an approval plan or not, should supplement original selections with additional titles selected on the basis of critical reviews.

2. *Speed of receipt.* Libraries that do not use approval plans frequently delay ordering until the book has been listed in *PW*, reviewed in *LJ*, or appears on LC proofs. Once selections have been made, additional delays are incurred in checking, typing orders, and waiting for the material to be supplied by the vendor. On the other hand, books received on approval are usually shipped as soon after publication as possible, and are in the library, waiting to be cataloged, by the time LC proof arrives. (Unfortunately, many books wait a long time for LC proof to arrive.)

3. *Costs.* Another common argument against approval plans is that they are costly. There is no doubt that better discounts

can be obtained, but whatever loss there is in approval buying is more than offset by a saving of staff time. A smoothly functioning program can save a library many hours of preparing order cards, bibliographic checking, and order typing.

There is another question that is close to the heart of this problem. This concerns bibliographic control. No single source will ever provide all the new titles a library requires. Most approval programs are limited to English-language trade books. Academic libraries must seek other sources for foreign, societal, and governmental publications and similar material. These must normally be ordered from specialized vendors.

In summary, approval plans are not without their drawbacks; no one will dispute that. But the real point that Mr. Rouse missed is that no single source will satisfy the current needs of an academic library. Approval programs are a valuable supplement to existing methods in that (1) they improve the quality of selection by enabling librarians to examine the books themselves; (2) they get new imprints into the hands of users more quickly; and (3) they save staff time spent processing orders.

> *Jasper G. Schad*
> *Associate College Librarian*
> *San Fernando State College*
> *Northridge, California*

Mr. Rouse responds: I went back to my red-underlined copy of Mr. Schad's article and read it again. The inference is still there that he refers to current and retrospective acquisitions alike. Not only I, but colleagues whom I questioned about the article also "misread" it. Nowhere does he suggest that the paper is concerned only with *retrospective* collection building.

Points two and three in the last paragraph, I suspect, should be given more introspection than is permitted. I do not agree with number two and as for number three, staff time may be saved in processing orders but an equal amount of time is required elsewhere in the process.

To the Editor:

Following are comments about two articles in the May 1970, *CRL:*

First, this writer wishes to underscore the statement in Dr. Hiatt's editorial calling for more service-oriented academic libraries, stimulating use of collections, not stopping at their mere acquisition. Evidence of the value placed on collection building appears in the laudatory write-ups in the literature, on the occasion of the arrival or departure of library heads of academic institutions. A career highlight is cited as the great growth of the library's collection or facilities during the subject's tenure there. During the past two decades of burgeoning enrollments and budgets, collection growth alone would hardly be a unique accomplishment in any academic library.

This next decade, with funds less free, at least at the outset, the measure of academic library accomplishment may necessarily be more in terms of service rather than in collection building. Facilities may well be designed to enhance service and use of the collection, but, as Dr. Hiatt stated, something still needs to be *done*, besides just being there.

Regarding the account by Mr. Rouse of Oklahoma State's experience with an approval plan, objective comments are difficult without a knowledge of the institutional situation itself. But the view of an outsider, however inaccurate, may at least give a different perspective. It seems, from the account of the near flawless selection routine in operation before the approval plan, that there may have been some inherent prejudgment of the dealer's ability to follow with as capable a performance. The reason for OSU's entering the plan was not too clear, especially if selection was being done so satisfactorily. One reason for entering approval plans is speed—to acquire books rapidly, and possibly to eliminate processing hang-ups. An approval plan, therefore, should also be judged on the basis of rapidity of receipt of books, and the speed with which they can be made available to the users. This factor could be difficult to measure, especially in so short a time; Mr. Rouse admitted that four months at OSU was possibly too brief to allow for complete fairness.

In the matter of bibliographic entry, which was cited as the main problem— could not some of this have been eased by

a different method of searching for LC copy? If proof slips, for example, had been filed by LC card number, incoming books, most of them bearing card numbers, could then be matched numerically, requiring no bibliographic expertise. Or instead of using the proof slips this way, the library might subscribe to one of the services providing indexes to LC cards by card number. (Admittedly, an extra cost consideration for the card index service is involved here.)

The routine at OSU for receipt of ordered books is described as fairly simple, when it comes to locating the slip in the orders-outstanding file. Yet there seems to be a gap in the explanation, in that the arrangement of the orders-outstanding file is not specified, nor the means by which the incoming book is matched to the card in that file. If it is alphabetical, and no copy of the order slip accompanies the book on receipt, a bibliographic search from the title page would seem necessary, the same as that for approval books searched against the depository file. If orders-outstanding is filed numerically, by preassigned order numbers, the matching by number need be no simpler than matching of LC card numbers between book and proof slip for approval titles. (Granted, some books will lack the number, and an entry search of the depository file would be necessary.)

Since bibliographic entry was a prime cause of failure of the experiment, possibly more experimenting to adjust for this contingency would have been helpful. Perhaps OSU tried to begin something new while still retaining too many old ways, and by not considering what other internal adjustments might make things run more smoothly.

Shortcomings on the part of the jobber were cited as another prime reason for failure of the plan. The complaints enumerated do give strong justification for its termination. But one wonders if the use of library selection and acquisition expertise on the scene at the jobber's establishment might improve his service. It was noted that company representatives visited the library. What would happen if a library representative were to go to the site of company operations? Librarians are so used to conducting their business under one roof, tied to collections and buildings, that such a proposal might seem ridiculous. Yet if a selection-liaison officer from the library worked with the jobber for certain periods of time, could a more effective routine be achieved? Obviously, the administration of such a plan could be a problem, and one can see a jobber throwing up his hands at the prospect of fifty liaison-librarians descending on him from fifty different accounts. If the jobbers and the librarians really want something which will work for the benefit of both establishments, though, such an innovative arrangement might be worth a trial with certain institutions which are desperate for a solution.

Throughout the account of the experience at OSU there seems to be the feeling that the library staff was never *really* ready to take the plunge, but always kept one foot on the shore. One would hope that the "we've always done it that way" syndrome is not beneath the surface of this candid revelation of a brief affair.

A. F. Schnaitter
USOE Doctoral Fellow
Indiana University
Graduate Library School

Mr. Rouse responds: In response to your last paragraph, we hope not too, Mr. Schnaitter, and we are reasonably confident that this was not the case.

Regarding the suggestion on the use of LC card number access to proof slips, I wonder if someone who has used this approach might enlighten us as to its advantages and/or problems. I should think we might lose more than we would gain.

To the Editor:

No doubt Peter Hiatt's recent editorial (*CRL*, May 1970) was intended to be provocative; in any case, I am provoked enough to respond. This remarkable point of view with respect to academic librarianship should not pass unnoticed.

Mr. Hiatt objects to a statement (recently made in a university library's annual report) which maintains that " . . . the principal business of a library is to acquire

books that are needed either currently or potentially." On the basis of this simple sentence, Mr. Hiatt mounts his charger to attack the academic librarian for his lack of social conscience and his apparent resistance to serving the academic community.

Mr. Hiatt's logic is curious, and his allegiance to the untested assumption worthy of note. He assumes, for example, that because only 2 percent of the members of the Adult Services Division of ALA are academic librarians, such librarians are not sufficiently interested in service. Given the same data, one might reasonably come up with other conclusions.

In recognizing a need for more aggressive librarians, Mr. Hiatt is responding to the mood of the time. At the moment, involvement is more fashionable than detachment. A sound historical perspective might suggest, however, that both detachment and involvement can result in contributions to the solution of social problems.

As to "the principal business of a library," Mr. Hiatt thinks it is "to stimulate the effective and efficient use of man's recorded knowledge with the ultimate aim of helping individuals and groups to deal realistically with and develop sound solutions to problems." This definition implies a limited and slanted view of a library's functions, as well as a narrowly pragmatic concept of human knowledge.

A substantial portion of every library's holdings is rightly and legitimately unconcerned with problem-solving or with social issues. The literature resulting from detached scholarship or aesthetic response may contribute to the solution of social or other problems, or it may not. It remains a valid and valuable expression of human experience.

On the whole, I prefer the definition of "the principal business of a library" which Mr. Hiatt rejects to that which he favors. Service is important. Involvement is important. What a library does has its importance. What is in the library is more important. Like all citizens, academic librarians have an individual responsibility to concern themselves with the social issues dominant in their time. As librarians, they also have a professional responsibility to make relevant library materials available to their specific communities. But the issues change and the generations pass away. The libraries remain as a continuing source for individual enrichment, expanding knowledge, and social renewal.

W. Royce Butler
University Librarian
Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan

To the Editor:

The editorial in the May 1970, *CRL* exposes anew the basic questions encircling the library's function in any social organization. Is a library a catalysis for maturity? If so, in what topics and for which patron? When we pose this latter statement as a query, we begin to dig into the subterranean paradigm containing the value judgments and vested commitments of humankind and their cultural apparatus. What does a library do with what it has?

Here, we start to speculate about societal capabilities and ideological potentials. But no matter what our attitudes might be toward the phenomenon of intellectual progression, facts do become archaic. Environments alter. And so, libraries must continuously strive to remain contemporary in structure and in knowledge while simultaneously circulating historical data to and from literary museums without ever disrupting the human niche.

Claude Hayden
Berkeley, California

To the Editor:

The article by Roscoe Rouse in the May *CRL* makes some good points in favor of selection by librarians, rather than for librarians. Margit Kraft's views (*Library Quarterly*, July 1967) are apropos in this context, as Mr. Rouse reminds us. Rouse and Kraft are among those who prefer a more selective kind of selection process, and to have that process re-humanized— carried out by the library staff instead of by dealers and agents. How effectively librarians can handle this vital function remains an open question; we cannot forget

the warnings in Lawrence Thompson's "Dogma of Book Selection in University Libraries" (*CRL*, November 1960). The issue may resolve itself on the basis of individual competence of the librarians charged with selection of scholarly materials.

How is your competence, gentle reader? This test will tell you all about yourself. Originally intended for national television presentation, it is offered to you apologetically in archaic printed format. For TV we needed a sponsor, and we couldn't persuade SRRT to pick up the bill.

THE NATIONAL BOOK SELECTION TEST
(ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS SECTION)

Test Begins Here: Time Allowed—
One Coffee Break.

1. Write here the name of your university. . . . .

2. Write here the name of the subject field in which you consider yourself most competent to select scholarly materials. . . . .

3. List five very prominent scholars in that field.

    Scoring: Take one point for each one you can address by his or her first name.

4. List three leading scholars in the field who teach in your university.

    Scoring: Take one point for each one you have had lunch with this year. Subtract three points for each one you have never met.

5. Aside from LC and NYPL, which five American libraries have the strongest collections in the field?

6. What five libraries outside the U.S. have the strongest collections?

    Scoring: Take one point for each American library listed which you have visited personally for the purpose of examining the collection in your field. Take three points for each foreign library visited for that purpose.

7. If you have not examined any of the ten leading collections just listed, give here the name of the most significant research collection in your field which you have examined:

    Scoring: If this answer is the same as answer #1, subtract two points.

8. Give the name of the most important book which surveys the literature in your field:

    Scoring: If this book is on your desk right now, take one point. However, if you have the library's only copy, subtract two points. If you have checked library holdings in it, add three points.

9. In what three languages, other than English, is the principal research literature of your field now being written?

    Scoring: Give yourself two points for each language you can read easily, and one point for each one you can manage somewhat. If one of the languages is Russian and you cannot decipher the Cyrillic alphabet, subtract three points.

10. In your library, approximately what percent of current book acquisition in the field of your competence is in the three foreign languages mentioned in #9?

    Scoring: no points for this one, but it makes you stop and think doesn't it?

11. Give the names of three book reviewers whose judgment you particularly respect (in your field) and the journals they write in.

12. Identify at least two, and more if applicable, "schools of thought" among scholars in your field.

    Scoring: two points for placing each of the reviewers in answer #11 in the correct "school" of #12.

13. List five principal English language scholarly journals in your field.

14. List five principal non-English language journals in your field.

    Scoring: Three points for every book review, five points for every article, you have had published in any journal cited in #13 or #14. Subtract three points for every incomplete file in your library of any journal named. Subtract two points for every journal named which you have taken home before the faculty could get at it.

15. List as many new journals of the field (first issued in last year or so) as you can think of.

    Scoring: Subtract two points for each one not yet received and shelved in your library.

16. Name a 1970 book of major scholarly interest in your subject.

    Scoring: Take two points if your library has it, processed and shelved. Take two more points if you have advised departmental faculty of its arrival. Add two points if you have read it, and three more points if you can talk about it. Subtract three points if it is in your office today, unprocessed, un-advised, and un-read.

17. Have you attended any workshops or institutes in the subject field?

    Scoring: Two points each; four points each if you paid all your own expenses.

18. Do you have a desiderata file?

    Scoring: One point if yes. Extra point if you have added a title to it in past week.

19. Do you have a file of current dealers' catalogs?

    Scoring: One point if yes. Two points extra if you have checked desiderata against at least one dealer catalog in past week.

20. Citation game. Open any recent issue of a journal listed in #13 at random; turn pages until you come to a footnote reference. If the first item cited in the footnote is in your library or in your desiderata file, give yourself two points. Do the same with journals in #14, but count three points for each success.

Now add up your score. If you reached the highest possible total points (200), you are eligible for the grand prize: a weekend for two in any university library reading room in the world.

Guy A. Marco
School of Library Science
Kent State University

To the Editor:

I heartily agree with your proposal (Editorial in the March 1970, *CRL*) that middle-management level librarians in academic libraries be provided with opportunities for an administrative intern program in leading academic libraries. I would also propose that the library schools offering doctorates provide a similar approach. About half of our doctoral graduates have been going into administrative positions in college and university libraries. They should not go through the same degree requirements as those preparing to be library science teachers. Instead, their programs of study should include courses in management, human relations, computer science, higher education and at least a one-semester internship at a university library. Included also should be a dissertation project based on needed research at the academic library of their internship.

We at the School of Library Science at the University of Kentucky are working toward such a degree as one alternative of our doctoral program which is now in the planning stages.

Dr. George S. Bobinski
Assistant Dean
University of Kentucky

To the Editor:

After reading the article by Logan Wilson ("Library Roles in American Higher Education," *CRL*, March 1970), it isn't clear whether or not he is aware that *The Old Librarian's Almanack* is a hoax, dating not from 1773 but from 1909. It was

written by Edmund Lester Pearson and published by the Elm Tree Press in Woodstock, Vt. This very attractive volume was reprinted by G. K. Hall in 1962, as a Christmas keepsake, with a note in the back pointing out the hoax. But old hoaxes never die, as witness Mencken's bathtub hoax. Wayne State University's Howard Sullivan wrote an article about the Old Librarian and his Almanack, which appeared in Stechert-Haffner *Book News* (Jan., 1963) and *Library Journal* (Mar. 15, 1964).

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State Library Division
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To the Editor:

The evaluation of Andrew Sarris' *The American Cinema* (Selected Reference Books of 1968/69, *CRL*, March 1970, p. 113-114) does not mention that this book has become for many "The one reference book you need by the TV set if you are addicted to late TV movies." Whether you agree or not with all of Mr. Sarris' evaluations of directors, the viewer previously faced with a jungle of four or five movies to choose from in that insomniac's joy (or sorrow) can now make his choice via the director rather than the movie star. Before Mr. Sarris, it was not easy to make a choice between Frank Borgaze (Three Comrades), Henry Hathaway (13 Rue Madeline), or Victor Fleming (A Guy Named Joe). Indeed, if Sarris has done anything for American cinema, it is the giving of the director his just place in an industry (and art) that overemphasized the movie star. The Directoral index has one shortcoming. There are no page references. One must go from the back of the book (index) to the front of the book (contents) to see if the particular director is analyzed. But, by that time the opening commercials are usually over anyhow.

Allen Cohen
Head Cataloger
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
City University of New York

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