

Letters

To the Editor:

In letters to the editors of *Library Journal* and several other library periodicals over the past few years, I have expressed considerable scepticism about the advisability of recruiting unemployed college teachers for library work. W. A. Moffett's "Academic Job Crisis" (*CRL*, May 1973), offers a much more viable approach than the proposals that drew my criticism.

There are grave dangers, as Moffett perceives. People may enter the field with a view to exploiting their positions, i.e., using work time for their research. Even worse is the prospect of seeing many male Ph.D.'s obtaining excellent positions at the expense of women who have been in the library field for years. If subject specialists are willing to remain specialists, well and good. However, if Ph.D.'s with a year or two of library experience successfully demand preference for administrative positions solely on the basis of their advanced degrees, grave inequities can occur.

Moffett is surely right when he suggests a recruiting program would be necessary to attract Ph.D.'s to the library field. I am at the dissertation stage of a doctorate in political science. Colleagues in political science assume, until I tell them otherwise, that I shall seek a teaching position immediately upon finishing my degree. I suspect my experience can be projected upon people in other academic fields.

It is not altogether clear from Moffett's article whether he feels the subject specialist must always get an M.L.S. or not. I gather that he does. I concur with this. I strongly oppose any effort to make entrance into the library field too easy for subject specialists. Many Ph.D.'s take post doctoral studies anyway. Therefore, those who wish to become librarians can hardly object to fulfilling some additional requirements (another degree).

There are some disturbing statements in Moffett's essay. He seems to be saying there will have to be changes in the library school curriculum to accommodate subject Ph.D.'s. I do not follow this reasoning. The M.L.S.

is designed to train students to be librarians. Why would it be necessary to modify programs for the benefit of a certain group of people who wish to enter the profession? Moffett also mentions the "availability of loans and scholarships." While I think recruiting a few former or would-be college teachers for specialized positions would be desirable, provided certain safeguards are established, I am less happy about the prospects for special financial support. If a particular graduate school of library service has lavish funds for minority or other group programs, it might consider making available a few scholarships to Ph.D.'s.

In summation, I believe Moffett's proposals are on the whole well taken. Great caution will be needed to ensure that people already in library work are not disadvantaged by the recruitment of Ph.D.'s. An alternative approach, that of providing financial assistance and time off to librarians who have long wanted to pursue graduate studies in subject fields, should not be ignored. Finally, librarians should not compromise on the matter of the library degree. If anyone is to be a librarian, he or she should have an M.L.S. Moffett makes much of using subject specialists to bridge gaps between librarians and professors. While academic librarians all wish to eliminate these gaps, we must ensure that the subject specialist has had a background at least partly in common with his or her colleagues in other departments of the library such as serials, government documents, and reference. In other words, the specialist should have had the full course of library instruction.

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To the Editor:

Although I have always subscribed to *CRL*, I have never joined ALA simply because as an academic librarian I felt that ALA simply did not provide anything for

us. I am happy to see that your editorial backs up my feelings.

I agree completely that it is time for an alternative and the AAL sounds like a great idea.

Richard J. M. Parker
 Librarian, Chemistry Library
 Harvard University
 Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

Professor Jack A. Clarke in the May 1973 issue of *CRL* discussed the problems involved in preserving popular culture sources in libraries. He touched upon special archival collections, colleges, and universities which offer courses in popular culture, the complexity of the subject and the need for adequate organization of ephemeral material. For the purpose of the article he defined popular culture "as that part of culture abstracted from the total body of intellectual and imaginative work which each generation receives, which is not narrowly elitist or aimed at special audiences, and which is generally (but not necessarily) disseminated via the mass media."¹ He continued to say that it includes the subdivisions of popular, mass, and folk culture.

As the authors of this letter are respectively a folklorist and a librarian, we thought it necessary to present folk culture as a discipline in itself and not merely as a "subdivision" of popular culture. ". . . folk culture and popular culture are mutually influential, although certainly two different levels of culture. . . ."² Defining the term folk culture for years has been a point of contention among folklorists. Folklore is usually thought of in terms of oral tradition, whereas customs and material culture may also be included under the rubric of folk culture. The sources needed for the study of this discipline are as varied as those necessary for studying popular culture. Photographs, maps, diaries, recipes, cookbooks, dress patterns, song books, autograph albums, and technical journals are just a sampling of the material used by the folklorist.

The lack of adequate bibliographical references are again a problem. Charles Hayward's *Bibliography of North American Folklore* is the only cumulative bibliography on the subject. The American Folklore

Society publishes *Abstracts of Folklore Studies* which attempts to keep abreast of the latest studies, and *Southern Folklore Quarterly* publishes a bibliography annually.

There are archives located around the country which serve as repositories for material pertaining to folk culture. Among these there are the Georgia Folklore Archives, the Institute of Ethnomusicology and the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology located at the University of California—Los Angeles, the University of Pennsylvania, and Indiana University. Especially strong in traditional material culture is the Cooperstown Archive at the New York State Historical Association.

During the last few years there has been an increase of interest in the study of folklore, and colleges and universities throughout the country responded by offering related courses in their curricula. According to a survey conducted in 1968, 170 institutions offer folklore courses.³ Indiana University, UCLA, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Pennsylvania grant M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in folklore. In 1964 the New York State Historical Association and the State University College at Oneonta began an M.A. program leading to a degree in American Folk Culture. The resources of Cooperstown—the Farmer's Museum, and the Fenimore House—provide an excellent training ground for the study of material culture.

The *Journal of American Folklore* is the primary scholarly periodical in the field of American folklore. However the *Journal of the Folklore Institute* published by Indiana University, *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, and *Western Folklore* also exemplify a more scholarly approach. In contrast to these journals there are local periodicals which emphasize folk culture peculiar to their region. *New York Folklore Quarterly*, *Pennsylvania Folklife*, and the *Journal of the Ohio Folklore Society* are examples of periodicals in this category.

We believe that folk culture is an autonomous discipline and that there is a need for greater recognition of this discipline in our libraries. If college and university librarians are cognizant of the types of sources needed for preservation, our folk

culture can be studied more completely by present and future folklorists.

REFERENCES

1. "This definition is taken from an interview with Professor Arthur Brown, a distinguished scholar in this field as reported by Barb Brucker 'Popular Culture Study: The Wave of Tomorrow,' *The BG News* (18 Jan. 1972)" as quoted by Professor Jack A. Clarke in "Popular Culture in Libraries," *CRL* 34:215 (May 1973).
2. Ronald L. Baker, "Folklore Courses and Programs in American Colleges and Universities," *Journal of American Folklore* 84:224 (April-June 1971). See also Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), p.17-33 on "Patterns of Folk and Popular Interaction."
3. Baker, p.225. See appendix for a list of colleges and universities offering folklore courses.
4. *Ibid.*, p.223-25.

Kenneth and Sandra Roff
Brooklyn, New York

To the Editor:

I was interested in Mr. Goyal's article on the allocation of library funds in your May issue. Unfortunately I feel that he has missed the main criteria by which library funds ought to be allocated, and one doubts the practicality in these interdisciplinary days of allocating funds to departments at all.

The important things which Mr. Goyal has ignored are the library intensiveness of different subjects, the number of books published in each subject field, the state of the stock on the library shelves, the various problems of keeping material up to date, the development of new modules within courses, and revision of course structures. It is things like this which are relevant to library expenditure as opposed to Mr. Goyal's conceptions of the importance that society or universities attach to the work of a department.

I feel that his article would have been more useful if it had tackled realistic library problems rather than sociological imponderables.

K. G. E. Harris, Librarian
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To the Editor:

Upon re-reading the McAnally and Downs piece in the March 1973 issue of *CRL*, I am compelled to offer the following observations as an addition to the commentaries already made with respect to that article:

The paper was apparently written on the premise that a "stable" directorship is somehow a good or desirable phenomenon. The authors commence by observing that "traditionally the directorship of a major university library has been a life-time post," then lament that in the 1960s "all was not well in the library directors' world" with the "seriousness of the situation" becoming pointed in 1971-72 when seven directors of Big Ten university libraries left their positions, "only one a normal retirement for age." I submit that there is little, if any, evidence to suggest that longevity in office is *prima facie* beneficial to anyone except, perhaps, the incumbent; and, in fact there is evidence to suggest that it is not.

Among the "solutions" aired in this rather lengthy apology for librarians' failure to compete and adapt on the campuses, is that of somehow elevating the status of the director. Among the suggestions for "restoring confidence and credibility in the director" are "establishing an effective working relationship with the administrative officers . . . , providing a framework in which the director can operate effectively within the university's power structure" (Buckman), or that the director "be made a vice-president" (Booz, Allen, & Hamilton). The big question that remains, of course, is: *who* is going to do the establishing, the providing, and the making? I venture to say that it will be neither those librarians who have thus far *failed* to compete and adapt nor university administrators who have succeeded in competing and adapting. My bets go with those without a prime concern for longevity and who are adept at negotiating in what have become very unstable milieus.

Edward S. Warner
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To the Editor:

Ms. Terwilliger, the reviewer of my book

"Information and Library Science Source Book" (*CRL*, July 1973) states: "Both the author's preface and the publisher's releases stipulate that the items summarized range from mid-1964 through 1969, which of necessity restricts information in the items themselves to early in the year of 1969, allowing for preparation and publication." This is not "necessarily" so. Her statement is an assumption—not a fact. The word "through" means "from beginning to end." And that is exactly what my research covered. The standard indexing and abstracting journals in the library and information field and in other disciplines were searched by me through 1970 for the specific purpose of locating 1969 articles, books, and reports that were not included in the indexing and abstracting services for 1969. Had Ms. Terwilliger carefully examined the references in my book, she would have found a large percentage of items published in 1969 covering the entire year.

But, the statement that disqualifies Ms. Terwilliger as a reliable reviewer is found in the second paragraph of her review. She states that I failed to include a significant article on the Colorado Academic Libraries Book Processing Center which appeared in the Winter 1969 issue of *Library Resources & Technical Services*. I refer Ms. Terwilliger to page 125 of my book where the article is listed under R. M. Dougherty who was the editor of that 3-part study. The full study which was published in book form by Scarecrow Press in 1969 is also included in my book on p.167 where it is listed under the senior author, L. E. Leonard.

Gertrude Schutze
Woodhaven, New York

To the Editor:

While Eric J. Carpenter did not identify the school of which he wrote in his letter in the July issue, an error of fact should be corrected. He writes, "Enrollment at my own library school rose 30 percent the year that I began my studies there." This is not correct. Aside from relatively small fluctuations, caused by the difficulty of predicting how many admitted students will actually show up, the Library School here at Madison has had a quite stable enrollment for the past few years.

Mr. Carpenter was a fine student, and I am pleased to have it become known that his school is Wisconsin-Madison. However, one point he makes is not grounded in fact, in my opinion. I do not think that many library school administrators are deceived by vacancy listings in the library press or elsewhere. All the library school educators that I know are very aware of the tight job market for beginning librarians. And yet, few of them think that educational opportunity (or the supply of new professional talent) should be (or indeed can be) turned off and on like a spigot. While I am not certain of the wisdom of our approach of holding the line on enrollment size while seeking to educate librarians that can respond to both continuing and developing needs of the profession, I take comfort in one fact. Had our school imposed some of the limitations that Mr. Carpenter advises, he might still be an English Ph.D. student facing unemployment and Lockwood Memorial Library might have been denied a fine librarian.

Charles A. Bunge
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To the Editor:

I have finally got to reading through the July issue of *CRL*, noting the editorial exhorting us to more research and thinking to myself, "What kind of research, on what, what for? can it be that research exists as a thing unto itself which should be done for its own sake?" I read on and came to what I take to be a piece of research, "Search Versus Experiment—The Role of the Research Librarian," by Albert H. Rubenstein, David J. Werner, Gustave Rath, John A. Kernaghan, and Robert D. O'Keefe. And I thought to myself that we do not need more research at all, not if it is to be trivial and repetitious research of this kind.

If Mrs. A. could have found Dr. B.'s answer in 11 minutes she or her ilk could have told Rubenstein, Werner, Rath, Kernaghan, and O'Keefe what their answer would be in as short a time without calling anyone up. That is nothing I intuited or suppose that medical librarians intuit, it is one of the things you find out soon enough

working in academic and, I suppose, medical libraries. It has a good bit more to do with the personal doubts, fears, insecurities, and even shame of potential clients and librarians as well. Some years ago when I was working in a large university library I noticed that it was not the older and thoroughly scholarly teachers who hesitated to ask questions—indeed some of them did ask questions and they were terribly difficult ones. When a real scholar has exhausted his or her resources then one has a problem at hand. It was the younger ones, from middle age on down who seemed to be less and less competent as they were younger and younger who were reluctant to approach a reference librarian (I have toyed from time to time with the idea of changing my title to research librarian, but it seems such proud foolishness). From time to time they do and find out that someone like Mrs. A. can find the answer in 11 minutes and they are embarrassed and ashamed and all the less likely to ever ask Mrs. A. anything again except something that will degrade her as she degraded them. Supposed researchers and professors are often proud and not particularly bright. As Pierre van den Berghe noted in *Academic Gamesmanship* (London, New York, Toronto, Abelard-Schuman) academics do not tend to be much more or less intelligent than the general populace (nor do librarians). But they do tend to be more anxious about their status than much of the general population, as I hope to show more fully in something I am working on about profession in which I intend to use scholarship as a profession completely out of touch with its own traditions and for that and other reasons in the last stages of degeneration. In any event we have a good many putative scholars and researchers and practitioners within various professions who cannot, indeed, find anything. In addition we have a good many "trained" and "qualified" librarians who can't find much either and whom the doubtful researchers have little cause to trust (what true scholar *does* let anyone else do his or her research anyway)?

It makes one's stomach churn to see a supposedly well-trained and qualified librarian stopped dead by a question, to see him or her waver, blither and dither, and

begin running around in circles making excuses all the while and far too busily engaged in that to find anything, and yet the sight is not uncommon. Thomas Yen-Ran Yeh, in "Library Peer Evaluation for Promotion and Merit Increase: How It Works" (i.e., where he is) in the same issue of *CRL* assumes that the women in the library are "less prepared than the male faculty" because they, "held fewer advanced degrees beyond M.A.L.S. and listed fewer scholarly activities." Better prepared for what? does preparation, like research exist in a vacuum? Do advanced degrees and scholarly activities prepare one not to fold or blither and dither when presented with a hard question? Michael H. Harris, in the editorial, wishes that the library schools had the time and facilities to prepare research librarians but hopes at least they will be "able to train adequately a generation of scholars to fill research positions elsewhere." Where elsewhere? are they not hard enough pressed to prepare librarians to do the sort of work that is available? and which, indeed, needs to be done? We need more well-educated librarians who have a far greater knowledge of personal and social interaction who can cope with day to day problems in libraries. Such people could, after gaining the smattering of knowledge available in library school as well become well trained by practicing with and under the supervision of master librarians, just as a Ph.D. candidate, one hopes, learns to become a scholar by working with scholars—the degree should connote what has happened already. It should be a recognition of being, and what one possessing such a degree should be, presumably, is a scholar. In what way does preparation as a scholar prepare one to work as a librarian? I do not think that enough thought has been given to that within our, er, profession and doubt that further research like "Search Versus Experiment—the Role of the Research Librarian" will turn up the answer.

Let me comment on the conclusions of "Search Versus Experiment." In the ordinary library it is almost impossible to implement any of their suggestions. The people best able to do it are all too often pinned to stations such as reference desks, to get

out and around sufficiently to establish colleague relationships with researchers or anyone else. Most reference or research librarians lack the authority within the paramilitary organizations they operate within (as best they can) to insure that they are always deployed on work which is commensurate with their abilities. In addition, it is easy enough to establish and advertise one's expertise in information retrieval, which is the easiest part of my work. Building client confidence in one's ability to discover knowledge or at least informed opinion is much more difficult and difficult to advertise except by word of mouth. Ellsworth Mason has already commented, I thought definitively, on the phoney subject specialties of librarians. No real scholar can respect someone who claims to be a specialist in generalities, and yet here Rubenstein et al. are back with it again. I do not know of any library that has enough reference or research librarians or information officers that there can be one for each subject even during the daytime. At night and on weekends all are back to the hardy little band of necessary generalists and none of those generalists can afford the solipsistic view that when one goes home at five on Friday the library disappears. (I knew of one director who used to work on Saturday mornings to show his awareness that the library was open on the weekend, but he always worked in his office and might as well have not been there at all.)

Finally, it is true that, "If researchers could be trained in the efficient use of information systems and services, existing systems and services could function more effectively." It is also true that a stitch in time saves nine and that truth will, in the end, out, and that if all librarians were really well trained and qualified for their work they would be better trained and qualified than most everyone else in the academic world and . . . so?

Roger Horn
Clarion, Pennsylvania

To the Editor:

Rejoinder to a review of *What Black Librarians Are Saying*, ed. by E. J. Josey, reviewed by Norman Lederer.

Book reviewing in America is, indeed, a

dying art. Nonetheless, in its waning years some of its practitioners do, at least, attempt to write a few creditable reviews. Unfortunately, Norman Lederer is not one of the more successful practitioners of the art. His review of *What Black Librarians Are Saying*, ed. by E. J. Josey, *CRL*, vol. 34, no. 4, July 1973) is a rather pathetic attempt at book reviewing.

Upon reading Mr. Lederer's review one wonders whether he really read with any understanding *What Black Librarians Are Saying* or just skimmed through its pages in search of spurious evidence to support his preconceived notions about the book and black people. Mr. Lederer's review is factually inaccurate, filled with inept statements, and pompous and paternalistic in tone.

Mr. Lederer's review opens with an inaccurate statement.

"Following by several years his compilation *The Black Librarian in America*, E. J. Josey, chief of the Bureau of Academic and Research Libraries for the New York State Education Department, has submitted another collection. . . ."

The Black Librarian in America was published in 1970. *What Black Librarians Are Saying* was published in 1972. The time span between the two books is not several years. It is just two years.

Throughout Mr. Lederer's review are scattered several inept statements. Many of these statements give false impressions of the nature of the work.

Mr. Lederer, for instance, refers to the book as a compilation. The book is a work of solicited essays. The title page, introduction, and general format of the book indicate this fact. Wouldn't it be more appropriate, especially for a professional librarian, to refer to the work as a collection and not a compilation?

In another instance Mr. Lederer refers to *What Black Librarians Are Saying* and *The Black Librarian in America* as: "[a] collection of statements and remarks from black librarians throughout the nation." This phraseology is unsuitable in view of the fact that none of the essays in the book were originally presented as speeches or extemporaneous remarks.

Aside from the aforementioned criticisms,

perhaps the most glaring flaw in Mr. Lederer's review is its lack of vision. Mr. Lederer does not seem to want to understand or grapple with the basic and underlying issue of the book: the dilemma of being a black librarian in America.

An essay entitled "The Black Librarian's Dilemma," by Walter J. Fraser, explores in its broadest aspects the plight of the black librarian in America caught between racial loyalties and professional commitments. Mr. Lederer pompously dismisses this essay as:

"... a long garbled and almost impenetrable essay by Walter J. Fraser concerning the dilemma faced by the black librarian..."

Did Mr. Lederer understand this essay? Or was he unwilling to deal with its content?

*Alex Ladenson
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To the Editor:

Norman Lederer's comments on E. J. Josey's *What Black Librarians Are Saying*

(*CRL*, July 1973) appear to disqualify him as an objective reviewer of anything written by a black person. If he finds it noteworthy that the writings of these highly respected professionals are "remarkably sober and rational in tone," one wonders if he would also find sobriety and rationality "remarkable" in all librarians regardless of race. With the admirable credentials of these black librarians at his disposal in "Notes on Contributors," Mr. Lederer still thinks it necessary to compliment these blacks who do not "engage in polemical attack for its own sake." Obviously the color of their skins has more effect on Mr. Lederer's conclusions than the fact that, at the very least, these librarians are his intellectual equals.

Perhaps the various articles which Mr. Lederer finds so repetitive stem from the frustrations of his black colleagues who find communication with other Norman Lederers an exasperating experience.

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