maintain clarity of publications and ideas as they are developed and to encourage further discussion and action on the agenda that emanated from the Think Tank. We hope that this letter helps to achieve that goal. —*BIS Think Tank Steering Committee; Betsy Baker and Mary Ellen Larson, co-chairs; Beth Sandore, Randy Hensley, Melanie Dodson, Deborah Campana.*

Response from Hannelore Rader:
I appreciate the thoughtful letter submitted by the BIS Think Tank Steering Committee clarifying the purpose of the BIS second think tank meeting held before the 1989 ALA Annual Conference in Dallas. It was not my intention to misrepresent the purpose, rationale, or content of this most important and exciting event. However, it was my intention to stimulate debate on the relationship of bibliographic instruction and information literacy and I am pleased that this is now beginning.—*Hannelore Rader, Director, University Libraries, Cleveland State University.*

■■

INNOVATIONS

❋ Fines for food: A citation system to control food and drink consumption in the library

By Pat L. Weaver-Meyers

Access Services Department Head
University of Oklahoma Libraries

and Stephen D. Ramsey

Security Supervisor
University of Oklahoma Libraries

Many libraries face the problems associated with food and drink consumption by patrons. Some institutions have student lounges within the library; others simply cope with food and drink brought in by patrons. Uncontrolled, the situation can pose a potential hazard to the collection and an unsightly custodial challenge. In 1985 the University of Oklahoma Libraries implemented a citation system to control food and drink consumption in unauthorized areas in the library. The system has proven reasonably effective and has provided some additional unforeseen benefits.

Background

In 1982 Bizzell Library at the University of Oklahoma opened a new wing that doubled the square footage of the main library structure. The new facility included a student lounge that con-tained vending machines for snacks and drinks. The lounge was posted with signs indicating that consumption of food and drink outside of the lounge area was strictly prohibited. Not surprisingly, the signs were virtually ignored and library custodians soon began a losing battle with candy wrappers, drink cups, and associated litter. Library staff were drafted to confront violators and demand that they retire to the lounge with food or else dispose of it. Neither the custodians nor staff appeared to have any measurable impact on the consumption of food and drink, and concern for the safety of the collection began to develop.

At the same time the new wing was opened, student library security assistants were hired to patrol the library due to the increased square footage and remote, poorly lit areas of the building. Although not originally hired with this intention, the new assistants were soon conscripted into the

War on Snacks. Unfortunately, assistants and staff were ignored, or worse, became the victims of some rather well-organized mob protests. One staff member told of an incident in which an entire reading room full of students booed and hissed as the left carrying a confiscated soda cup. Needless to say, staff enthusiasm for enforcing the rules quickly abated. However, the custodians' enthusiasm for resolving the problem did not and concern for the safety of the collections continued to rise.

For the next two years, strident protests were voiced about closing the student lounge, mostly heard from the ill-fated, would-be enforcers. Meanwhile, turnover in the student security assistant positions remained high and staff tended to look the other way rather than confront a patron with food or drink in their possession outside of the lounge area.

As the problem escalated, several possible strategies were investigated. Twice, exhibits were prepared that explained the potential insect problems and the libraries' concern about the safety of materials. The exhibits seemed to measurably reduce the number of wrappers and cups found by custodians for a few weeks. However, improvement proved temporary. Eventually, consultation with student government and student affairs personnel led to the possibility of a different enforcement strategy.

At that time, the university housing authorities used a citation system to enforce violations of housing policy in dormitories. The citations were issued to residents by resident advisers or by community service officers when violations occurred. Violations included minor infractions such as littering and more serious concerns such as defacement of property and possession of alcohol. Once issued, citations were filed with the student affairs office, which handled any appeals and completed the paperwork required to place a fine on the student's university account. Fines doubled if not appealed or paid within five working days. The citation system was an alternative to the filing of formal charges, and was part of the formal student code. Since it provided a simple and direct incentive, fines from $10.00 to $50.00, the method was judged appropriate for the type of problem the library had.

Implementation

Several steps had to be taken to adapt the citation system to the library environment:

1. Formal procedures for changing the student code were negotiated by the public services director with the assistance of student government. Changes included adding the proscribed conduct, "Violation of posted library food and beverage restrictions," to the existing list of citation offenses.

2. Two-part citation forms were designed in accordance with the code and the requirements of the Office of Student Affairs.

3. The University Police Department was consulted to verify that library security assistants and staff would be authorized to issue citations and to inform the police that the library was implementing the system.

4. Procedures were established with the Office of Student Affairs to handle the paperwork associated with the citations.

5. New signage was created warning patrons of potential fines if they did not comply with regulations: "Food and drink not permitted: Violators may be fined, Title XIII Student Code."

TABLE 1
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES' CITATIONS ISSUED, 1985–1989

Proscribed Conduct	Number of Citations Issued per Year				
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Unauthorized entry	0	1	0	0	0
Littering	0	0	0	0	0
Removal of furniture/fixture	0	0	1	0	0
Propping open security doors	0	0	0	2	0
Possession of alcohol	0	0	0	0	0
Noise	4	3	0	4	0
Violation of posted library food and beverage regulations	34	58	38	44	10
Failure to comply with officials acting in performance of their duties	1	13	14	21	4
Misuse of institution property	0	1	3	2	2
Defacement of University property	0	2	1	1	2
Totals	39	75	56	74	18

Upon the adoption of the changes in the student code and the printing of citation forms, the library began using citations to enforce the ban on food and drink in the stack areas. Immediately there was a noticeable improvement in student security assistant morale and a reduction of candy wrapper debris throughout the library. Table 1 is a summary of the number of citations issued since the program was implemented in October 1985.

As can be seen, there was an initial flurry of activity when the program was first implemented. More citations were issued in the last three months of 1985 than were issued in the first six months of the following year. Violations still do occur, but once patrons clearly understood that lack of compliance was punishable, most chose to remain in the student lounge with consumables. Although the major objective of the program was to enforce food and beverage policies, the system has proven useful in other ways.

The statistics in Table 1 indicate that the most frequent use of the citation system is for food and drink violations. However, failure to comply with an official and noise violations account for a number of issuances. Failure to comply with an official has proven to be a useful generic category. For example, citations in this category have been issued to patrons for such reasons as:

a. the use of chewing tobacco, which is not allowed in the building;

b. non-compliance with the two-hour time limit for microcomputer use;

c. failure to leave the building at closing time;

d. non-compliance with group study room policies.

In addition, the prohibitions on defacement and misuse of university property have allowed assistants to fine patrons for such pranks as stealing signage or books and hiding them in the backpack of an unsuspecting friend.

Overall, the program has given the student security assistants the authority to enforce policies and cope with the peer pressure often associated with such a task. Certainly, the assistants find that most difficult patron situations can be handled with a warning and a verbal request for compliance. In fact, a the end of 1987, we stopped issuing citations for food and drink to freshmen and required an initial verbal warning. However, the occasional recalcitrant patron who refuses to comply presents a difficult dilemma. The citation system offers a solution to that problem and may prove a viable alternative to libraries with similar concerns.

✸ Humor and creativity: A bulletin from the front lines in the war on mediocrity

By John Maxstadt

Instruction Librarian
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

The University Libraries at Middle States University, a medium-size research institution, recently made headlines throughout academia as the result of a comprehensive library assessment performed by Maxine LeCouteau, the assistant director for library systems. LeCouteau's amazing findings, which were published in the prestigious journal *Academic Library Update,* indicated that the Middle States University Libraries performed at exactly the national average on all standard measures of library collections and services for academic and research libraries.

All of the Libraries' collections were of perfectly average size; circulation statistics matched the national average for academic and research libraries in every detail. The average number of interlibrary loan requests were received, and an average percentage were filled in the average length of time. The backlog in cataloging exactly duplicated the national average. The reference department routinely provided incorrect and incomplete answers to between 14.7% and 61.8% of all patron queries,[1] the exact figure varying to match the latest estimated average published in the library research journals. Even patron theft and vandalism cost the Libraries a sum exactly equal to the national average.

---

[1]Ian Douglas, "Reducing Failures in Reference Service," *RQ* 28 (Fall 1988): 95.