

formation retrieval. They are not even worried that the books they are buying may be out of date, containing "bad" information. I am aware of my own surprise at seeing people scoop up old periodicals, reference books, damaged materials, antique editions, etc., that we routinely throw away at the library.

A large children's book illustrated by Maxfield Parrish has caught the attention of the crowd; the bidding is intense, going higher and higher until the book—which is in pretty good condition but still somewhat worn—sells for \$650. Some of us from the professional book world shake our heads in disbelief, but the book buyers seem unperturbed as the sale moves right along to 19th century bound volumes of *The Youth's Companion*, editions of James Whitcomb Riley (obviously a favorite for Hoosiers), boxes of old *Life* magazines, and then to an old art textbook. A handbook on raising flowers in your garden is sold next to a first edition of Mark Twain (a disintegrating leather tome with detached covers repaired with old, yellowing cellophane tape), and a coffee-table book on gems of the world next to a numbered, limited edition set of Dickens' works. This mad gamble has brought out a common

theme in the disparate denizens of this backyard drama: all these people love books!

By the end of the day my face is sunburned and my feet tired, but my own little stack of treasures has grown tall. Through an amazing distribution process the lifelong book collection of someone we will never know has been parcelled out to a hoard of people who may

... here are hundreds of average, everyday people actually pawing their way through a sweaty crowd for the sole purpose of acquiring books!

never come together again but who will return home with books to be read, cherished as works of art, or marked up in price and resold to other bibliophiles. Somehow I can't see these people forsaking their books for computer screens or spending all their spare hours staring at reruns of old movies on television. The good news is that there still is a "real world" where books and literacy are not yet dead. ■

Letters

Are standards appropriate?

To the Editor:

The revised *Standards for Faculty Status* (May 1992) seem to me to make perfect sense but for their apparent assumption that the status of teaching faculties (referred to as if appropriate to them, although that may be doubted) is everywhere and automatically appropriate to academic librarians. Surely it is strange to set forth as standards whatever working conditions apply to larger populations laboring alongside those persons whom the standards in question are intended to benefit.

I hope that librarians contemplating employment in colleges and universities that have accepted the nine standards will scrutinize every aspect of employment to which the standards refer (especially tenure and promotion) and then decide whether conditions at particular institutions are ones they not only can endure but can, as it were, joyfully embrace. (But why are we not setting forth our own standards—standards applicable to all academic librarians,

indeed, to all members of the profession regardless of the kinds of libraries that employ them? A related question: Is academic librarianship essentially a subset of library service or a subset of higher education? If the latter, ACRL should consider leaving ALA and emigrating to what?—the AAUP?—even if to enjoy only marginal status there.)—*Robert M. Pierson, cataloger, The Santa Fe Indian School, New Mexico*

Kudos for Washington Hotline

To the Editor:

I was pleased to see "Washington Hotline" focus on telecommunications issues (April 1992). Librarians have a lot of homework to do to keep up with these complex and important issues.—*Mark Scott, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

(C&RL News welcomes your signed, typed comment on recent content in our pages or on matters of interest to the academic or research library profession. Send to: *The Editor*, C&RL News, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611-2795; fax: (312) 280-7663; bitnet: U38398@UICVM.bitnet ■

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