Librarians: The AAA of the information highway

In the academic setting, librarians and classroom faculty must continue to work together to ensure that students view searching, reading, and writing as interconnected parts of the journey we call the research process.[2] Questioning, searching, gathering, reading, and evaluating are components of a cycle repeated throughout the process of writing a paper or preparing a presentation. No matter how much fun, or how easy, the technology has made information gathering, we still have to read and think about what we find in order to prepare to write. There is an urgent need for faculty to make this clear to students, and to discuss the purpose of assignments and papers among the objectives of a class.[3] Librarians are strategically positioned to help students and faculty develop good navigational habits grounded in an understanding of how knowledge is synthesized and produced in the various disciplines.

At the risk of carrying a metaphor to extremes, librarians are the equivalent of AAA for the information superhighway. We can help travelers plan their journeys, point out the scenic routes, highlight rest stops, and respond to roadside emergencies. We can also suggest alternative forms of transportation (formats and access points). Librarians possess the knowledge and expertise to bring those who have joined the "computer as goddess" cult back to reality, and to encourage those who are still riding a horse and buggy to try something new. One of the most effective ways we can accomplish these goals is by strengthening our traditional role on campus as one of the primary loci of support for the process of intellectual inquiry for all members of the community. The faster the maps change, the more important the navigators become!

Notes

1. Cerise Oberman, "Library Instruction: Concepts & Pedagogy in the Electronic Environment," *RQ* 35 (spring 1996): 318.

2. For more on the holistic approach, see Barbara Fister, "Teaching the Rhetorical Dimensions of Research," *Research Strategies* 11 (fall 1993): 211–219, and Raymond G. McInnis and Dal S. Symes, "Running Backwards from the Finish Line: A New Concept for Bibliographic Instruction," *Library Trends* 39 (winter 1991): 223–37.

3. Robert A. Schwegler and Linda K. Shamoon, "The Aims and Process of the Research Paper," *College English* 44 (December 1982): 817–24, present a useful study of how students view the purpose of writing papers and why the result is often not what the instructor expected. ∎

C&RL News 30th anniversary quiz

Here is the next *C&RL News* 30th anniversary quiz. Test your recollection of events reported in *C&RL News* since 1966.

1. **When did James Cagney, John Wayne,** and Humphrey Bogart appear in *C&RL News?*
2. **The 1979 President of the American Association of University Professors was a li-** brarian. Who was she and where did she work as a librarian?
3. **What ACRL committee met for the first** time at ALA's 1991 Midwinter Conference?
4. **According to the results of the 1993** ACRL member survey, what was the number one reason for ACRL membership?
5. **Who was Michael Kunashko, and what** was his significance in the history of librarianship?

Answers: 1. North Texas State University won a Special Award in the 1987 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award Contest for its "Tough Guys Fight Crime" PR campaign against mutilation and theft which featured the three actors on posters and bookmarks (June 1987). 2. Martha Friedman was an associate professor and history and philosophy librarian at the University of Illinois, Urbana (February 1979). 3. The ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee (April 1991). 4. To update knowledge of library practice (June 1994). 5. Michael Kunashko pleaded guilty to book theft from the General Library at the University of California, Berkeley. He received a six-month sentence to county jail, which was suspended, and was placed on probation and forced to pay restitution to the university and to the booksellers to whom he had sold stolen books (June 1984).