
National Adult and Continuing Education Week

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Changes in academic libraries and the need for upgrading professional skills.

November 9–15, 1986, has been designated National Adult and Continuing Education Week. The theme for this year is, “Learning Never Ends: Adult Learners Seizing Opportunities.” This period of national attention on adult and continuing education is an appropriate occasion for academic librarians to take stock of their commitment to an active pursuit of continued growth and learning for themselves and their colleagues.

Articles, conferences, and workshops abound with the theme of change in society, higher education and academic libraries, indicating that professionals are well aware of the scope and pace of change anticipated in the environment. While much of the predicted change appears exciting, questions are also raised about a loss of tradition and a loss of influence and control over library decisions and activities.

A question expressed in many different ways is, “Will academic libraries simply be swept along over an ever-changing tide of technology?” As change surrounds us and affects every aspect of our professional lives, we can choose to keep pace—indeed, set the pace—by acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for the future. Academic librarians, as members of the educational community, should value education not only for others but for themselves. This should be a priority.

In the next decade the pace and direction of change is not likely to alter; academic librarians will be faced with countless new situations requiring new knowledge and techniques, and the application of traditional knowledge and skills in new situations. Equally important, academic librarians will need to cultivate new attitudes regarding their role in the academic setting and become involved in the new services and activities that will emerge. How do we remain in control of our destinies? How do we plan and shape the future?

A critical component of managing changing is to be prepared to change. Academic librarians need to anticipate change, provide direction, and be leaders within their institutions. In order to do this successfully, academic librarians will need to focus time and energy on their own growth and development by identifying both formal and informal educational activities from which they would benefit. A starting point is for the academic librarian to assess his or her own strengths and weaknesses in relation to current professional requirements as well as emerging expectations. They need to consider trends and developments in higher education and academic libraries in order to plan how they will prepare themselves for anticipated changes in services and professional responsibilities. A number of reports and studies over the past several years have

identified a range of critical topics: knowledge and application of technology, management expertise (particularly in the area of personnel), research ability, and analytical and statistical skills. The acquiring of new areas of knowledge though, cannot be at the expense of strengthening such traditional areas as subject knowledge, language skills, reference and teaching abilities, and many others.

Whether focusing on strengthening traditional knowledge or acquiring new skills and abilities, academic librarians must be willing to invest time and energy and dollars in their own continued education. They should also be more demanding of library administrators to provide staff development programs and to support continuing education activities through release time and financial support.

For small academic libraries, cooperation and network arrangements with other libraries in their geographic area could be considered as a way to provide programs locally. There are no obstacles to pursuing continued learning that cannot be overcome; there are only excuses. Whatever the approach, an investment of library dollars in providing learning opportunities may mean less funding in another library area of need such as furniture or equipment, and librarians will have to accept realistic trade-offs.

Beyond participation in continuing education activities, librarians must be willing to try new

ideas and techniques, to experiment and even risk that something might not work. And librarians will need to provide support for the implementation of new ideas by colleagues even when agreement is absent. For involvement in learning and development to have an impact on the library, it must be applied and tested. Without the application of what has been learned, we will be in no better shape to implement and direct change.

While the search for new and refined knowledge and skills should be a constant activity, it should not be pursued uncritically. Academic librarians should ask lots of questions before participating in a workshop, seminar or conference; every attempt should be made to assess appropriateness and quality before attending. Standards for formal continuing education programs should be very high.

Finally, academic librarians have a professional responsibility to develop library support staff. Librarians should create opportunities both for learning and for the staff to use new knowledge and skills.

The future of academic libraries is both exciting and unsettling. There is much that requires our everyday attention and there is never enough time. But if we are to be successful in the future, we will need to acknowledge that time and energy devoted to continued learning is not a price to pay—but a gift to ourselves. ■ ■

New Brazilian national plan for academic libraries

The Brazilian Ministry of Education has enacted a law that puts into effect a National Plan for University Libraries. The Brazilian Bureau of Higher Education has responsibility for implementing the plan, which became valid on April 24, 1986. Their objectives are to define standards for systems and services in university libraries, to develop inter-institutional library networks, and ultimately to build a Brazilian University Libraries System.

Brazil's National Plan contains many points that American librarians may find enviable (or perhaps unsettling). Among many other things, the new law authorizes the Bureau to:

- define minimum levels of statistical information that university libraries must collect systematically;
- establish appropriate and adequate minimum standards for effective functioning of university libraries;
- define a minimum percentage in university budgets for allocations intended to ensure continuing collection development and public service;
- encourage library staff to upgrade their skills through continuing education courses and participation in conferences;

- define specific criteria for hiring professional and support personnel;
- examine career reorganization to allow personnel advancement, with measures to be adopted for providing salary advantages in proportion to postgraduate education, scientific activities, and cumulative professional experience;
- define criteria for construction, remodeling, and modernization of university libraries, in keeping with local environmental and cultural conditions;
- define guidelines for acquisition and collection development;
- develop means for evaluating collection use;
- introduce a policy for planned cooperative acquisition of serials;
- define compatible standards for cataloging and subject headings;
- develop a national bibliographic utility;
- encourage development of suitable software for automating all library functions;
- and develop a collective means of publicizing university library activities.

The National Plan was developed after extensive consultation with the university community in

Brazil. Respect for university autonomy and for the characteristics of individual libraries was a fundamental principle in preparing the plan. The forerunner of the plan was a document presented at the Fourth University Libraries Seminar in Campinas in February 1985. A later version of this document incorporated the recommendations of a select group of librarians, information scientists, and users. This revised text was then distributed to more

than 80 higher education institutions and Brazilian agencies, whose recommendations resulted in improving 30% of the entire text.

ACRL has obtained a translation of the National Plan (Ministry of Education Directive No. 287, April 24, 1986). A photocopy of this 16-page document may be obtained by sending \$2.00 to: Brazilian National Plan, ACRL Publications, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. ■■

U.S. and Japanese academic librarians meet in Tokyo

For the first time since 1975, American and Japanese university and research librarians met formally to discuss common concerns facing library service to researchers in both countries. The theme of the one-day gathering was, "Japan-U.S. Library Technology in Higher Education."

The seminar was held on August 24, 1986, at the Gakushi-Kaikan in Tokyo, and was attended by 22 U.S. delegates primarily representing universities, but also included senior officials from the Library of Congress, the Association of Research Libraries, the Research Libraries Group, and the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC). The chairperson for the American delegation, and co-chair of the seminar, was Theodore F. Welch, director of libraries at Northern Illinois University. The meeting was co-sponsored by ALA's International Relations Advisory Committee on Liaison with Japanese Libraries, also chaired by Welch, and the Japan University Library International Relations Committee, made up of representatives of national, public, and private libraries in Japan. The Japanese Committee is chaired by Hiro Yamasaki, director of the library system at the University of Tokyo.

The meeting reached the following five-point set of recommendations:

1. In view of the past three Japan-U.S. Library Conferences for Higher Education (held in 1969, 1972, and 1975), and in consideration of the rapid changes and developments within university libraries in Japan and the United States since 1975, it is desirable that a fourth conference be held in the near future to discuss and share widely the issues facing university libraries in both countries.

2. In consideration of the development of bibliographic utilities in Japan and the United States, national-level machine-readable records as well as specific subject-area computerized union catalogs should be exchanged between the two countries and made available by the bibliographic utilities for use by university libraries. Also, library networking should be promoted on a binational basis.

3. In light of the development of the optical disk and other technology, the proper means towards standardization in library use should be explored.

4. In consideration of the fact that the past interchange of professional librarians between Japan and the United States has made a significant contribution not only to the development of professional librarianship but also to the understanding of the culture of both nations, continued effective personnel exchanges and binational educational opportunities should be promoted in the future.

5. Research conducted at universities has benefited greatly through cooperation with non-academic and special-purpose organizations. Since university library activities will share increasingly more issues and concerns with the special libraries of such organizations in the future, means to enhance necessary cooperation between these types of libraries in both Japan and the United States should be explored.

Representing the U.S. as speakers were Robert Wedgeworth, dean of library services, Columbia University; Richard De Gennaro, director of libraries, University of Pennsylvania; and Susan Martin, director of Johns Hopkins University Libraries. Also in attendance were Hideo Kaneko, Yale University Libraries East Asia Collection curator; Hisao Matsumoto, Library of Congress Japan Section chief; and Brooke Sheldon, dean of library services, Texas Women's University. Each served as co-moderators of the discussion of papers presented at seminar sessions. ■■

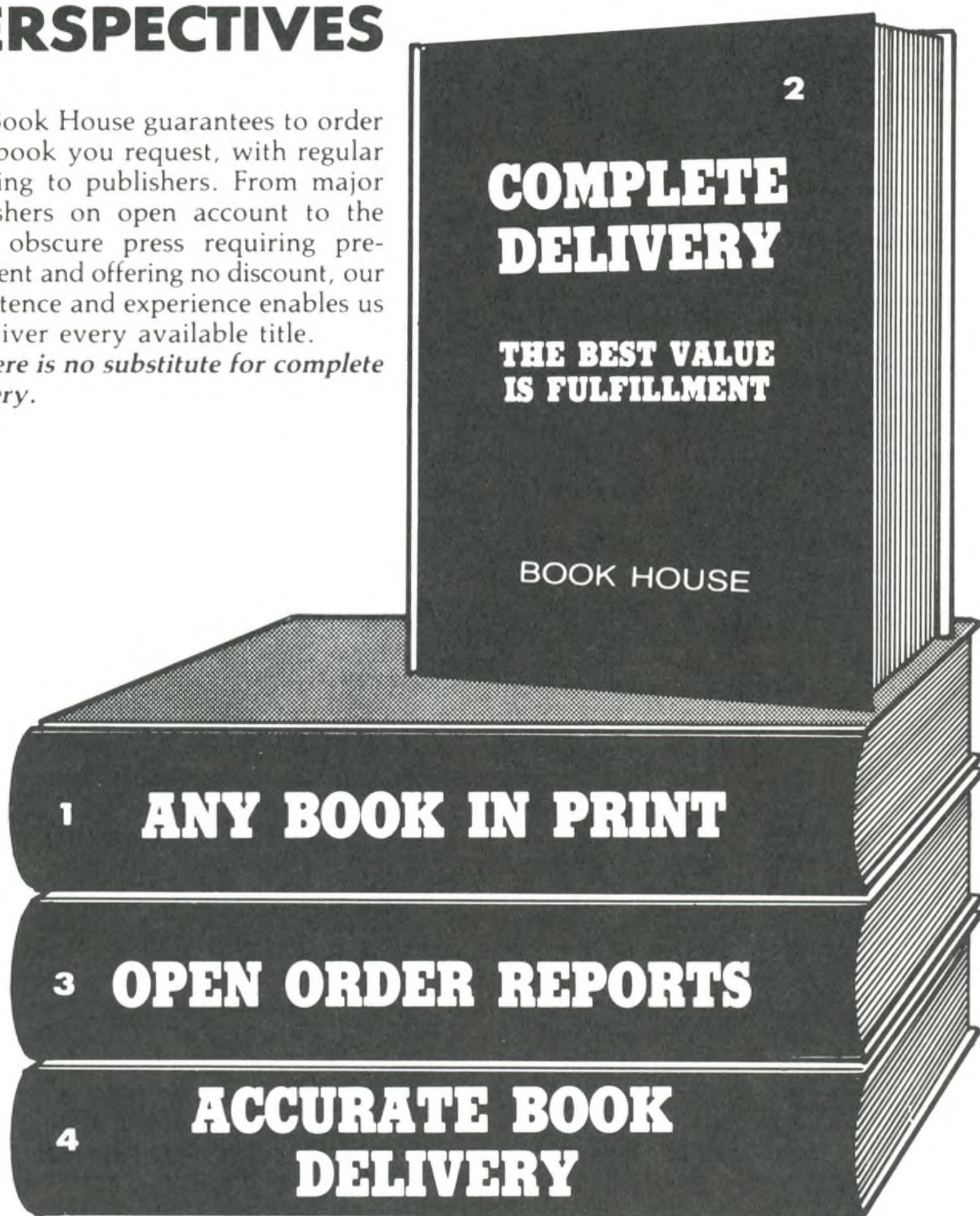
Bookplate competition

The Dickinson College Friends of the Library has announced an international competition for a new Dickinson College Library bookplate. Prizes of \$500, \$250, and \$150 will be awarded. There will be no restrictions on medium or size; the text should designate, "Dickinson College Library." Entries must be submitted before March 16, 1987, to: Annette M. LeClair, Chairperson, Dickinson College Library, Carlisle, PA 17013. The entries may be included in an exhibit at Dickinson in April and May, 1987.

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